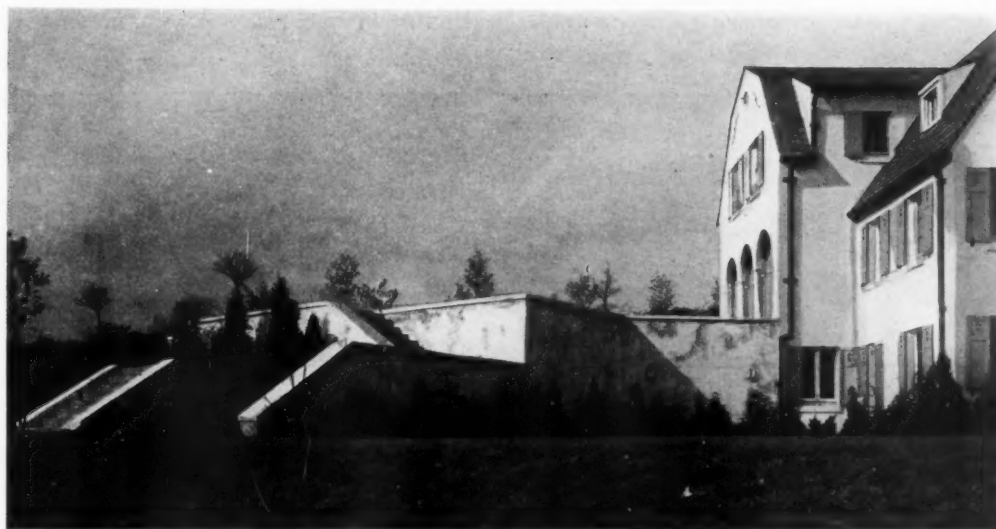


THE AMERICAN ARCHITECT

VOL. CXII

WEDNESDAY, DECEMBER 19, 1917

NUMBER 2191



VILLA FLORA

R. T. PRYOR, ARCHITECT

When an Architect Builds for Himself

With special reference to Villa Flora, the house of R. T. Pryor, at Dongan Hills, Staten Island, New York

WHEN Mr. Pryor was asked to give us some details as to the house he had built for himself down on Staten Island, it was with the intention to secure information from which to construct an article to accompany the illustrations, something that would enable the reader to learn of such details of construction as could not be observed by scanning the pictures and drawings. Mr. Pryor agreed to let us have this information and kept his promise in a personal letter that is such a complete and thorough description of his house and how he set about its design and construction and so intimately refers to a problem that every architect hopes to take up and solve at one time or another, that we are printing this letter, with Mr. Pryor's permission, just as it was received.

The letter, like the house, has a certain charm, a personal touch. To alter the letter in any way would

be to mar the pleasure that we are sure every architect will have in its perusal in its present form.

Editors, THE AMERICAN ARCHITECT.

I PRESUME that every architect at some time or other wants to build a house for himself. Do something where his own ideas can form themselves without being subject to some client's whim or fancy and where he can be just as erratic and unusual as he pleases, being confined only by the limits of the amount he has to expend. And in this matter of expenditure, I presume the architect has an advantage, for he can profit by the experience he has had in building houses for others and by knowing the troubles and snares that every owner seems to always be getting into. The architect knows how much he can spend and must "trim ship" to fit that sum.

Copyright, 1917, The Architectural & Building Press (Inc.)

THE AMERICAN ARCHITECT

I wanted to get as much as I could for my money so I constituted myself my own contractor and sublet all of the different trades. The materials going into the house I bought direct. I cut out the middleman as much as possible, in some cases going directly to the original source of manufacture.

In choosing a site for a home, my wife and I searched for almost two years before we found what we wanted.

The idea of simply a flat piece of ground bounded on two sides by just houses and faced in a similar

We have cut into the side of the hill and one-half of our house is on the upper side and the other half slides down, as it were, and sets on the lower side. In this way, our basement, which in most houses is dark and useless, except as furnace and store rooms, is a clear story and as useful as any other portion of our house. It is in this basement or first story of the lower half that are located the children's play room and servants' rooms and the laundry—all rooms full of light and sunshine.

Because in Italy stucco is so characteristic, our



PORCH

way was not my idea of a real home. It seems to me you want something individual and if you search long and carefully, knowing what you want, you will find what you have in mind and can find it within your means.

I think we found it, the side of a hill looking down to a narrow plain and then the open sea. My wife and I have lived many years in Italy and the little villas lying on the hills around Amalfi always held a charm for us.

And as nearly as we can we have followed the Italian villa style. The setting here is Italian.

house is stucco, white and smooth. What an opportunity it gives for decoration and what shadows you get! I think our white house looks really most attractive by moonlight for it is so white and bright and seems to be so much a part of the hill it is formed to fit.

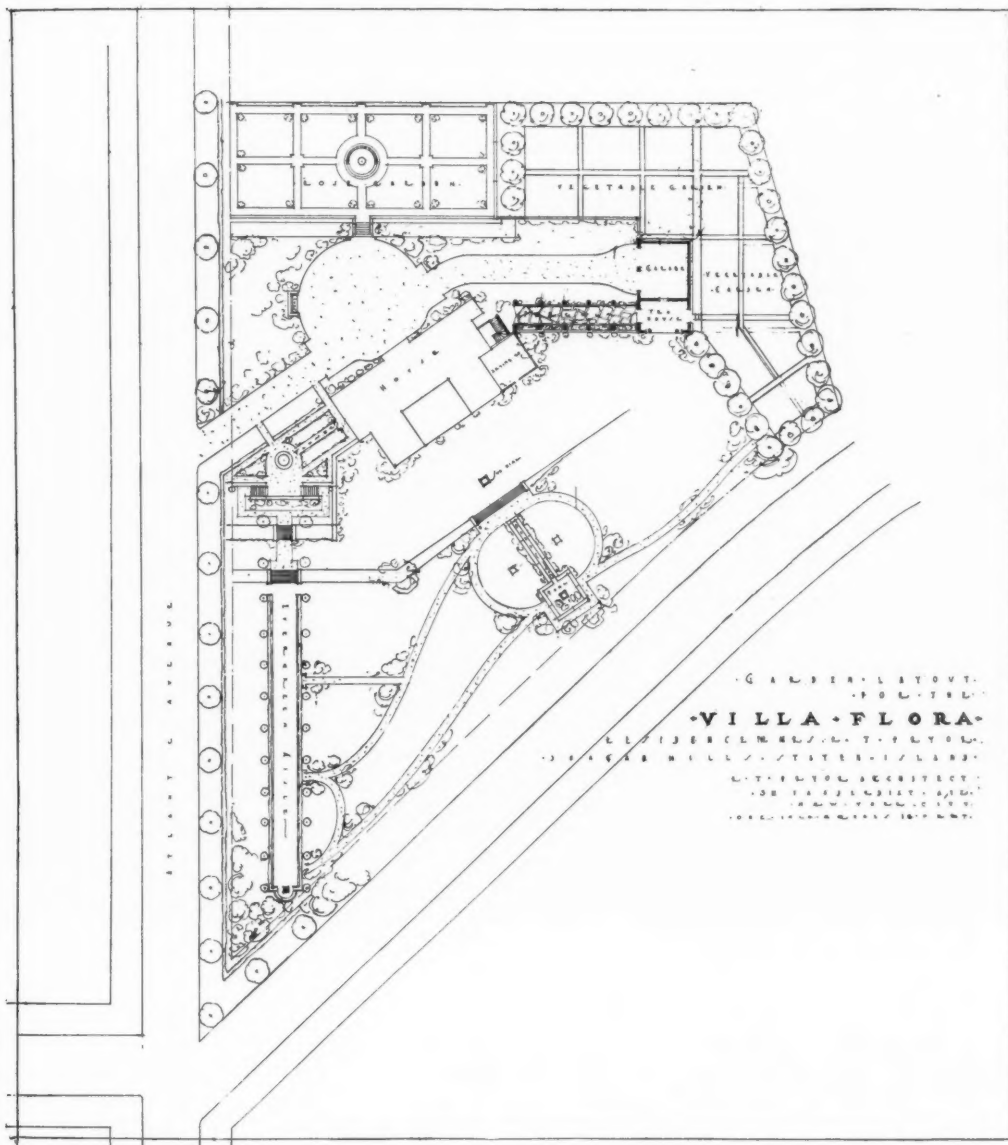
On the white stucco one can work in spots of color, of sgraffito and tile, until every bit of surface has some bit of interest.

In Amalfi in Italy there is a lovely old pergola all grown over with vines and roses. Between the house and the garage we have built a replica of this

THE AMERICAN ARCHITECT

pergola, not as many columns, perhaps, but as rustic and free as it was possible to make it. How difficult it was to persuade the workmen to build those columns by hand and not straighten the stucco surfaces with a straight edge! How many days I spent

to sea. Why not make the garage attractive and allow the whole group, house, pergola, garage and tea-house form a pleasing composition rather than as is so often done, build an attractive house and spoil it with a common building almost joining.



myself with an axe in the woods hunting and cutting trees for the lattice roof in order not to have a mechanical affair of beam sawn ends and regular purlins. At the end of our pergola the garage forms itself into a tea house where we can sit looking out

Cutting the cloth to the suit is a thing to think of. A second story on the garage would be desirable but had to be postponed. You will see that that which is built is a composition but the drawing indicates what will be done when circumstances permit.

THE AMERICAN ARCHITECT

Attention to detail makes for eventual economy and is also one of the touches in a building which give character and pleasure. For instance when a slate roof is laid the board sheathing is usually extended down to almost the edge of the first row of slate. You will note from the photograph that I took rough-edged slate 6 in. wide and laid it along the edge of all eaves and overhangs. The effect is unusual, and is especially pleasing. But the economy is there, too. The metal hangers for the gutters always retain moisture, and in time, with a

were left over from the roof, and we have a rough-edge tile floor of mottled colored slate having every appearance of much study.

Even the cutouts in the shutters can be studied, as evidenced by the flower pot for first-story windows and the use of the flower only for the second-story windows.

Scale is so important a thing to keep in mind. My house seems large, and I believe very largely because the scale is small. Every item is studied to fit that scale. Every room is but 8 ft. high, and



LIBRARY

wooden-eave board, rot starts in. The slate eliminates all this trouble.

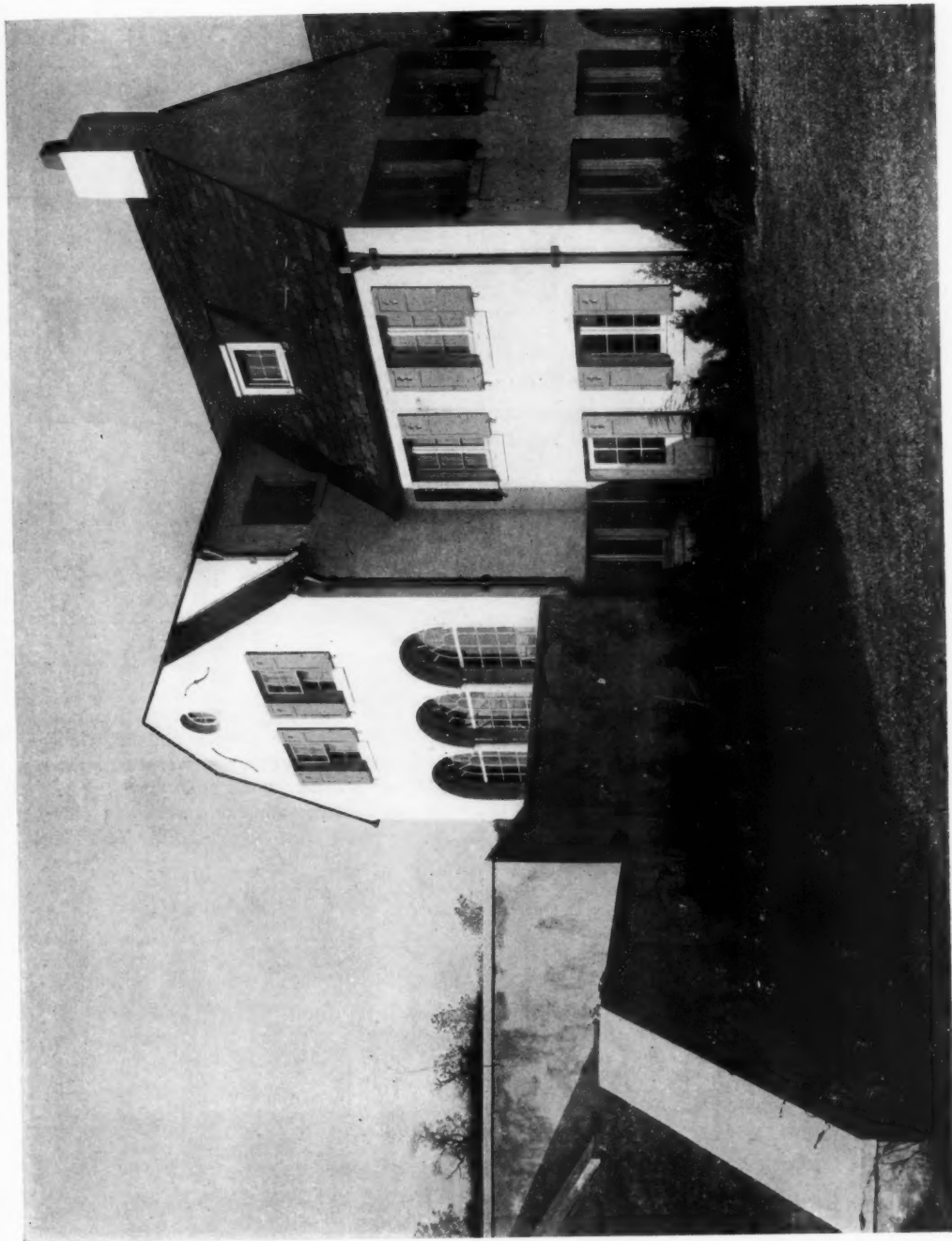
Scuppers in retaining walls are usually holes. An interesting scroll or lip does the work, and gives a bit of snappy shadow on the broad white walls.

Iron railings? There are quite a number of them, and could any scrollwork be finer than three-fourth-in. rods spread 8 in. on center? They look like black slender threads on a background of white.

The floor of the tea house: In the soft, fresh waterproofing which also forms the roof to the tool house beneath we laid at random the slate which

is homelike. The doors are but 6 ft. 6 in. high, but they fit. The tops of the columns in the arcade are on the level of my eye, but because scale is there you do not realize that every other one you might see on another house would be twice the height. Even the planting which has been put in around the house is all low-growing stuff, and will never dwarf the house, which would so easily happen by injudicious planting.

Interior upkeep in a house is always studied. In baths and laundry and kitchen, and especially pantries and kitchen closets, the tile floors and walls,



VILLA FLORA—DONGAN HILLS, STATEN ISLAND, NEW YORK
R. T. PRYOR, ARCHITECT

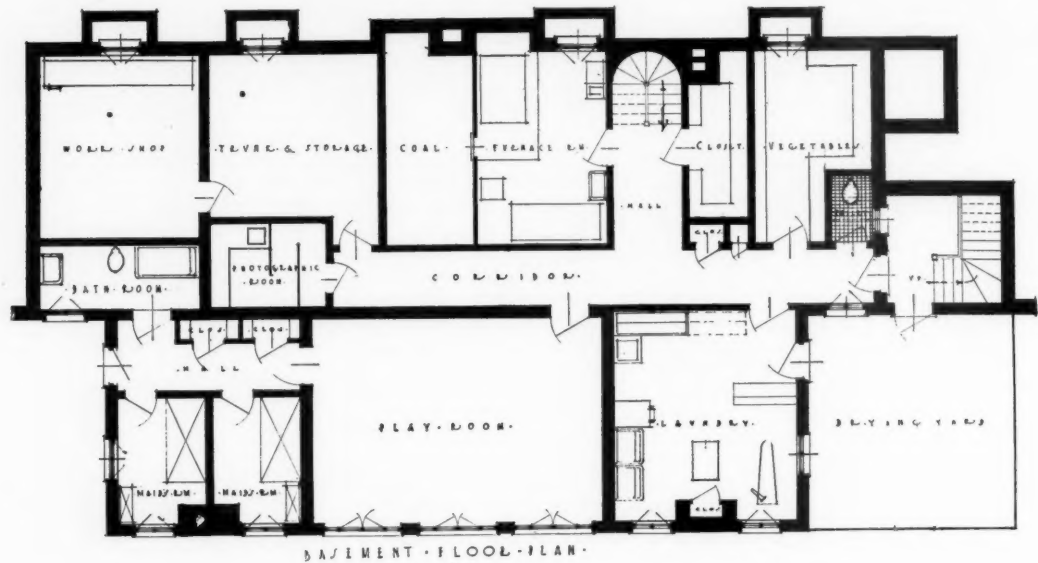
THE AMERICAN ARCHITECT

with curved tile corners, help keep the dirt away. Water can be used freely even with a hose, and you really are clean, which the whiteness helps to emphasize.

All baths are built in. The tile turns up from the

in the long run labor saved, time not wasted and a permanent and always clean and fresh woodwork and wall make you know you have invested well.

The first-story floors are the result of a search through a mill where a stock of old ship deck oak



floor and encloses the tubs and thus there are no dirty holes or pockets to require time and labor to clean. Enamel, though with a dull finish, on bedroom walls allows water to be freely used and keeps the dirt away. The initial cost is a little more, but

plank had lain fourteen years in the open weather. They're seasoned, those planks, and are richer in color and texture than any newly sawn flooring could possibly be. Gumwood and cypress panels on the walls will take the usage and wear of children.

R. T. PRYOR.





GREEK SCULPTURE FROM THE TEMPLE OF APOLLO AT MILETOS, NOW IN THE LOUVRE, PARIS

Illustrating the free treatment of early Greek work found in the later Syrian and Byzantine art.

Art in the Eastern Empire from the Time of Constantine

BY CLEMENT HEATON

III—The Formation of Syrian Art

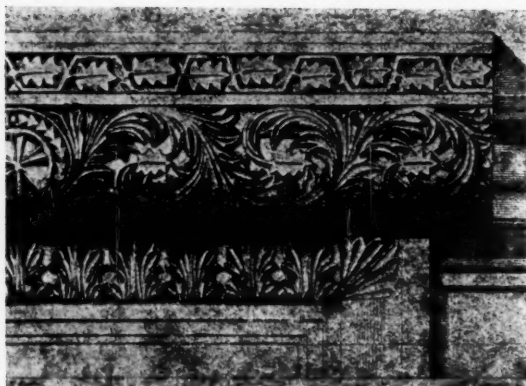
IT is a fact recognized by the first authorities on Christian art, that after the loss of Roman tradition Italy was dominated by Byzantine influence (R. Cattaneo, Charles Diehl, E. Bertaux, O. Dalton, Dr. Frothingham). But under the convenient term "Byzantine" have been classed elements from various centres and Constantinople has been credited with an artistic leadership she did not possess for long. On account of this it has been proposed to substitute the term "East-Christian." Italy was, therefore, subjected to East-Christian influences, and through Italy, all Western Europe was affected.

The change made in Roman law in Justinian's code, concerning the building corporations, was under this Eastern influence, and was no mere accident. Another atmosphere existed around the Aegean Sea to that in Italy, and when Constantine transferred the seat of Empire from Rome, he did not subjugate the East, but the East dissolved the Roman tradition. Of Roman buildings, nothing remains at Constantinople, and all that has taken their place had its source in the locality.

The freedom of imitation, the absence of formal monotony, has been remarked in classic Greek art. Fergusson speaks of the picturesque grouping of the buildings. Penrose long ago demonstrated the presence of subtle varieties in measurements and curves. Professor William Goodyear has recently demonstrated the presence of many refinements in classic Greek art. Dr. A. S. Murray of the British Museum demonstrated the inventiveness of the early Greeks in 1902, and presented three types of Ionic capital found in one building. An examination of the sculpture in the British Museum and the Louvre, shows that every detail is full of freedom and life, and the same is true of the ceramic vases. We are indeed far from the prevalent notion that Greek art was of stereotyped uniformity, in the presence of the actual remains.

After the classic period, Greece like Italy, passed through centuries of darkness and suffering, being invaded by both Romans and barbarians. Her art was stopped, her sculptures carried off and her buildings ruined. But in Mesopotamia there was more continuity. There, where now desolation

THE AMERICAN ARCHITECT



SCULPTURE FROM THE GREAT PYRAMID OF
EL BORAH
Syria—IV-V Century—de Vogue

reigns, were prosperous cities, and from their remains it has been concluded that the tradition of Alexander the Great survived there. This seems to be so, to judge by the ornaments found, compared with a piece of ornament carved in Athenian marble, preserved in the Museum of Geneva, Switzerland.

At Mschatta, on the road from Damascus to Mecca, is a remarkable building in which is found



SCULPTURE FROM THE GREAT PYRAMID OF
EL BORAH
Syria—IV-V Century—de Vogue.

Persian influence, and from Mesopotamia it is claimed that both Greek and Persian tradition traveled down into Syria. This was then a fertile and rich district lying east of the Jordan River, where prosperous cities continued to build stone monuments from the Second to the Seventh Century. The fertility of the district slowly disap-

peared with the loss of its forests and finally conquest and destruction put an end to all its life.

But during the period when both Italy and Greece were in a state of decline, Syria was prosperous and progressive, and while tradition from Rome was slowly dissolved, the splendor of Syrian art increased and it became an original style. At the same time, Paganism slowly gave way before Christianity and the art of Syria at first Pagan, becomes in time Christian. So what is generally



CHRISTIAN MONOGRAM FROM SYRIA
An intermediate form between those at El Barst and those at Ravenna, Italy.

known as "East-Christian" seems to be specifically Syrian. When, therefore, M. Bertaux affirms that Syrian influence extended through Italy into France, we can see the reason. For Syria was a center of light and wealth when Western Europe was decadent and barbaric, in constant warfare and political chaos. Syrian ivories and illuminations were exported, and a powerful movement resulted from the originality of Syrian art. The origin of Byzantine iconography is now traced to the *Syro-Palestinian* region.

This is then a necessary link in the historic chain, and the researches carried on in Syria by the University of Princeton, are of peculiar value. Full-sized reproductions preserved there, show both the early Pagan art and the later Christian phase. In friezes and lintels are found ornamental designs in



PLATE 284

VILLA FLORA, DONGAN HILLS, STATEN ISLAND, N. Y.

R. T. PRYOR, ARCHITECT

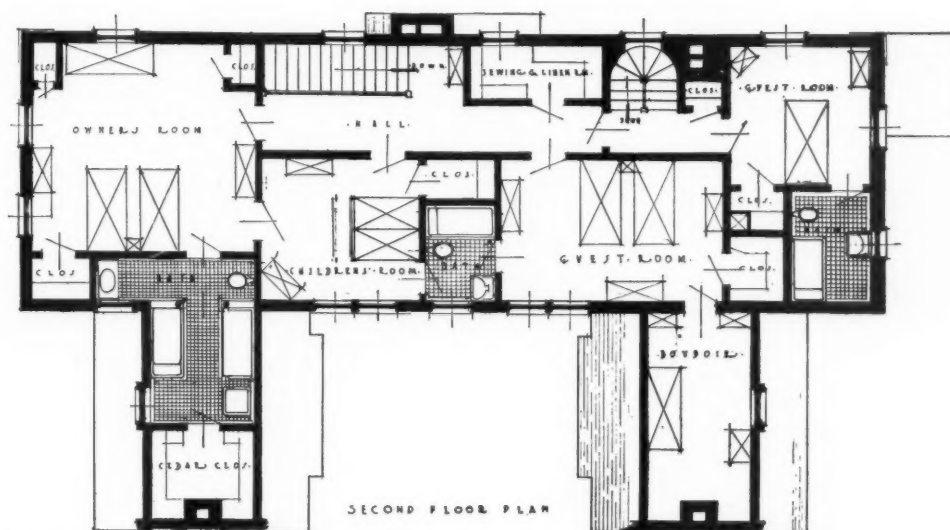
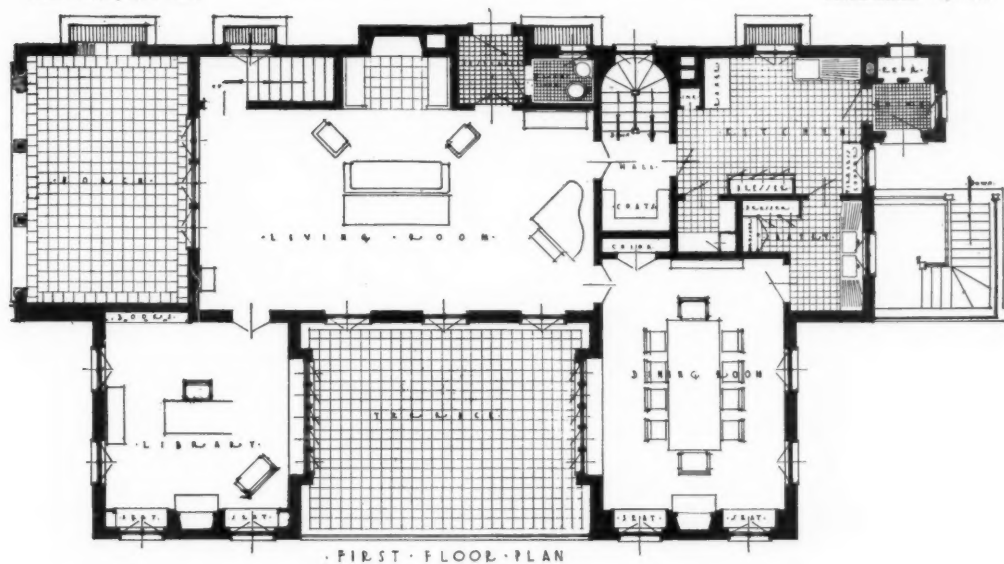


PLATE 285

VILLA FLORA, DONGAN HILLS, STATEN ISLAND, N. Y.

R. T. PRYOR, ARCHITECT

THE AMERICAN ARCHITECT

VOL. CXII, NO. 2191

DECEMBER 19, 1917



PLATE 286

VILLA FLORA, DONGAN HILLS, STATEN ISLAND, N. Y.

R. T. PRYOR, ARCHITECT



PLATE 287

VILLA FLORA, DONGAN HILLS, STATEN ISLAND, N. Y.

R. T. PRYOR, ARCHITECT



PLATE 288

VILLA FLORA, DONGAN HILLS, STATEN ISLAND, N. Y.

R. T. PRYOR, ARCHITECT



PLATE 289

VILLA FLORA, DONGAN HILLS, STATEN ISLAND, N. Y.

R. T. PRYOR, ARCHITECT

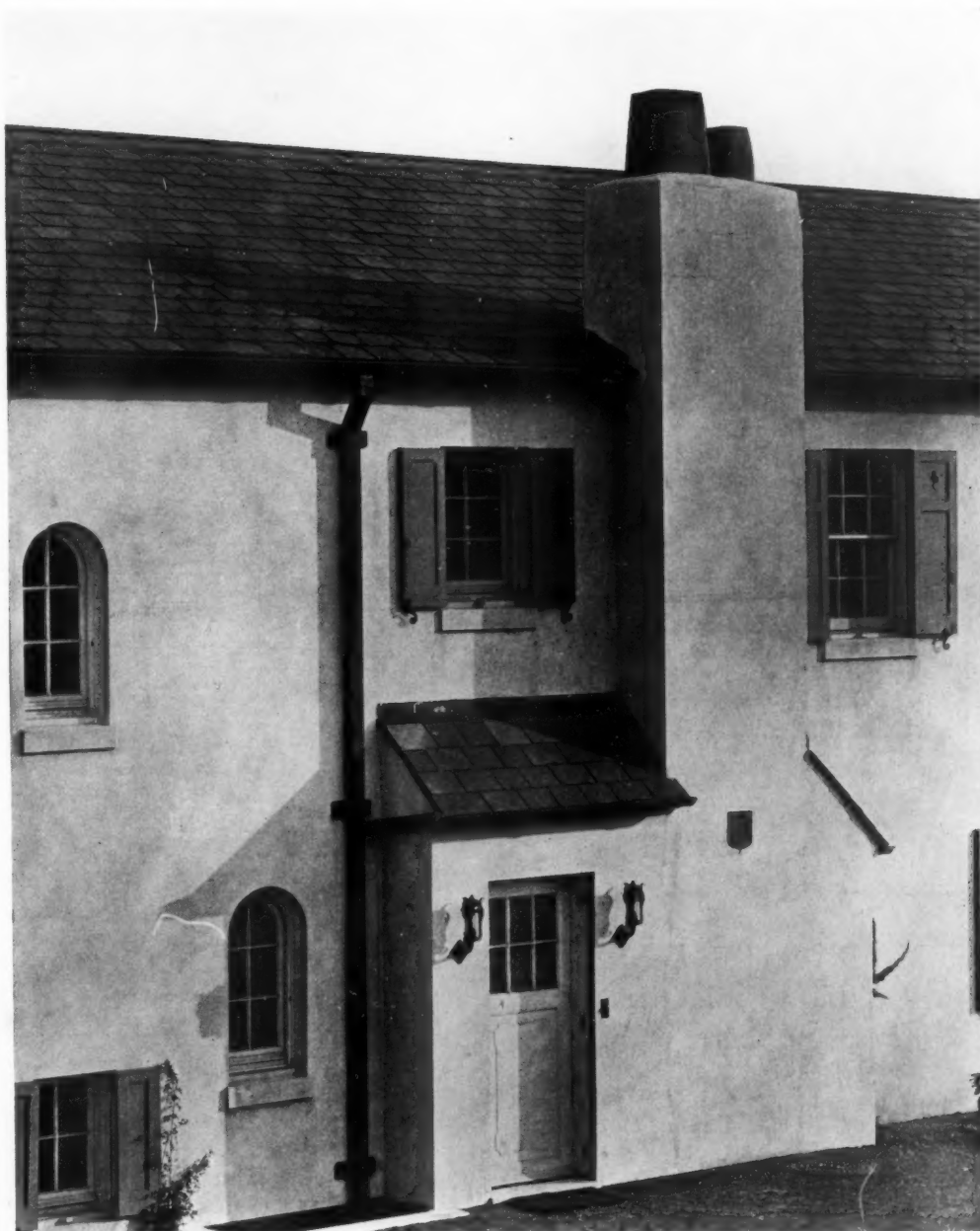


PLATE 290

VILLA FLORA, DONGAN HILLS, STATEN ISLAND, N. Y.
R. T. PRYOR, ARCHITECT



LIVING ROOM



PLATE 291

LIVING ROOM

VILLA FLORA, DONGAN HILLS, STATEN ISLAND, N. Y.

R. T. PRYOR, ARCHITECT

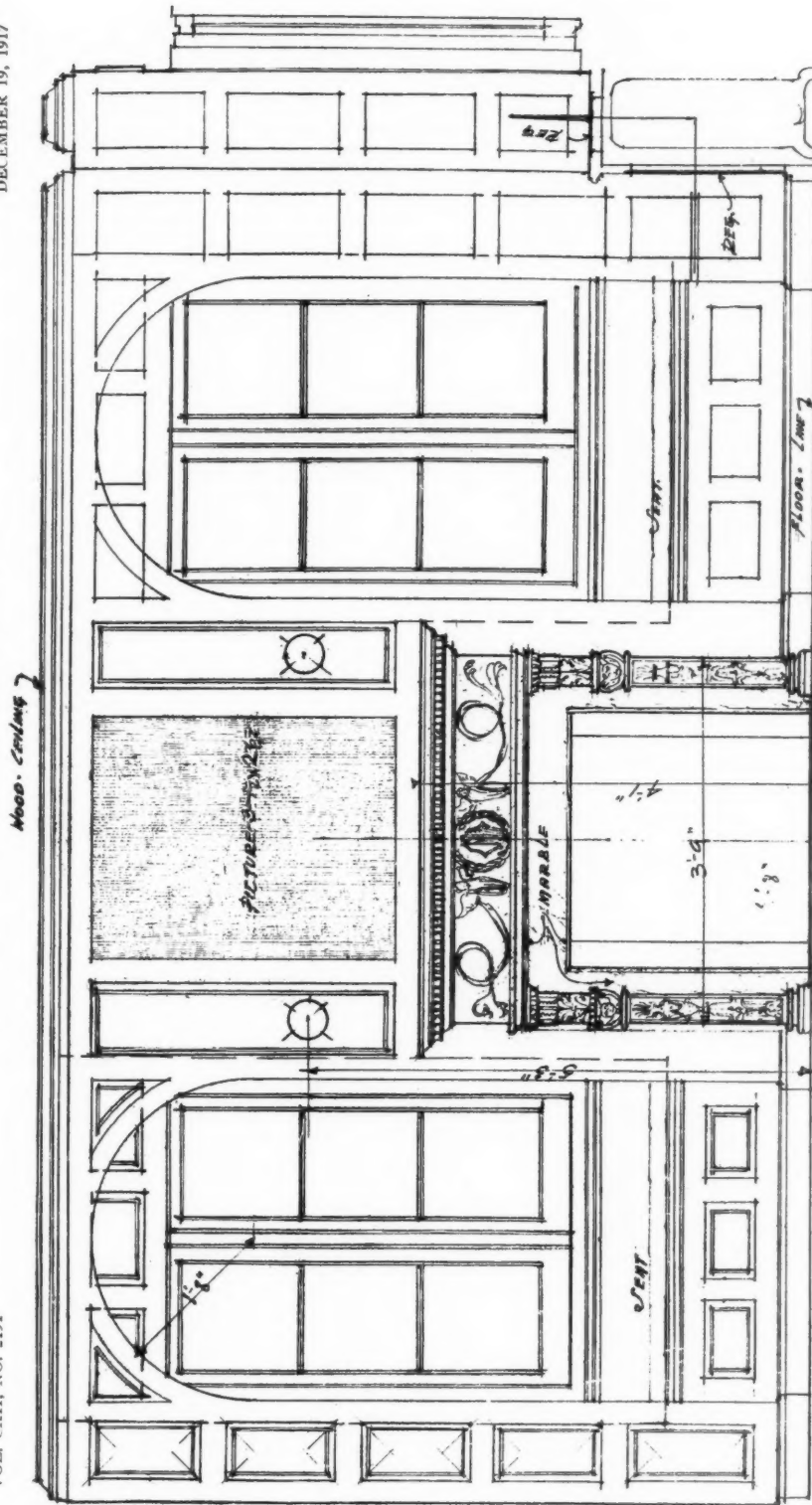


PLATE 292

MANTLE ELEVATION, DINING ROOM

VILLA FLORA, DONGAN HILLS, STATEN ISLAND, N. Y.

R. T. PRYOR, ARCHITECT

Wood-Graining

PLASTER CORNICE.

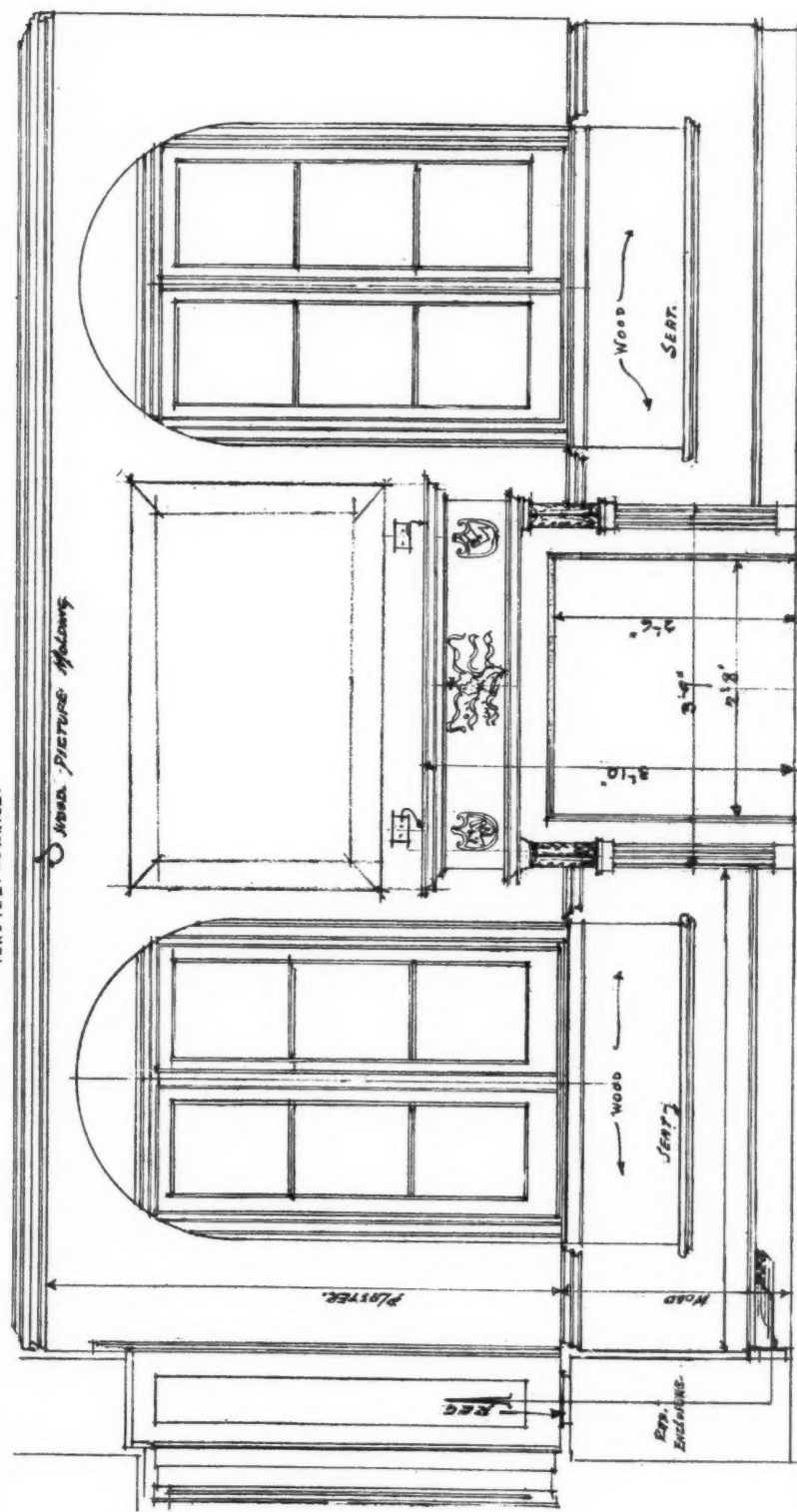


PLATE 293

SOUTHEAST ELEVATION, LIBRARY

VILLA FLORA, DONGAN HILLS, STATEN ISLAND, N. Y.

R. T. PRYOR, ARCHITECT

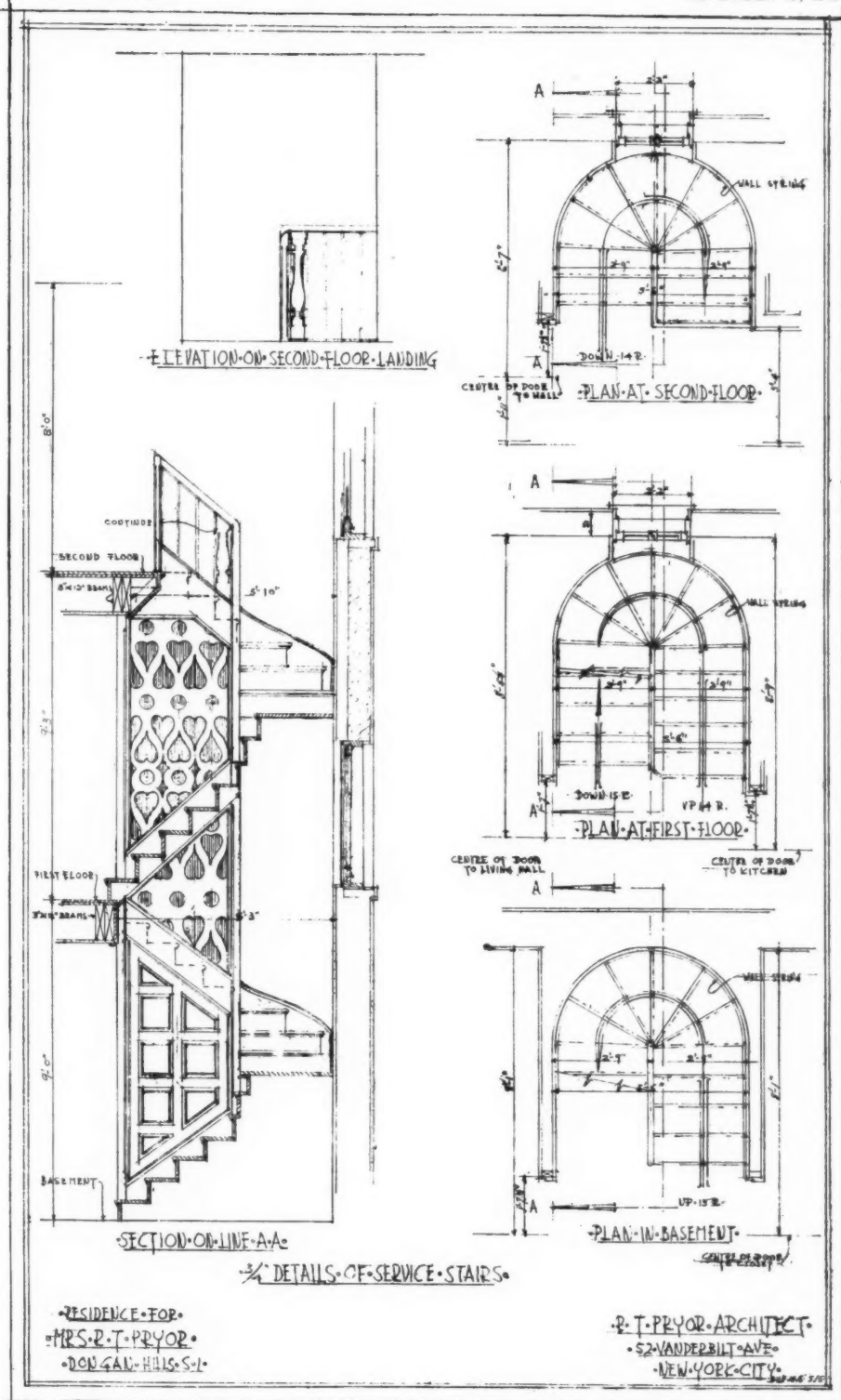
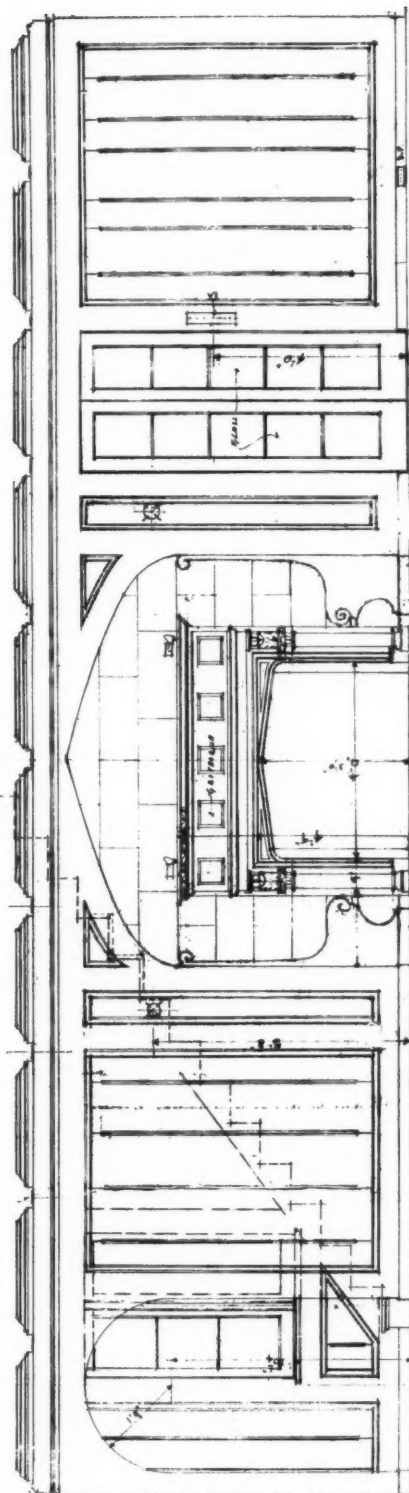


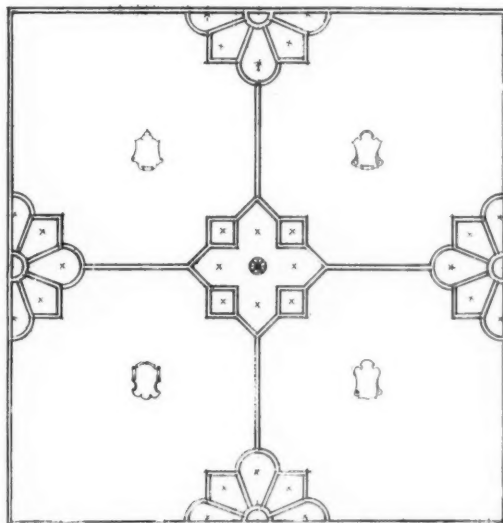
PLATE 294

VILLA FLORA, DONGAN HILLS, STATEN ISLAND, N. Y.

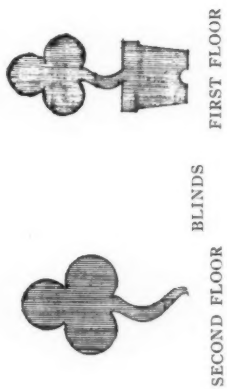
R. T. PRYOR, ARCHITECT



NORTHWEST ELEVATION, LIVING ROOM



PLAN OF LIBRARY CEILING



BLINDS

VILLA FLORA, DONGAN HILLS, STATEN ISLAND, N. Y.

R. T. PRYOR, ARCHITECT

THE AMERICAN ARCHITECT

which the vine leaf and grape hold a large place. Besides this is a frequent use of discs, with devices and monograms. This peculiar feature is traced to Assyria as source, and is explained as being used as a charm against demons who were supposed to be located in certain parts of the buildings.

As Paganism gave way to Christianity, the sacred monogram and the Cross took the place of emblems used in earlier times, while the use of the disc remained, and was associated with the elements derived from the late Greek tradition through Mesopotamia.

This seems a satisfactory and natural explanation, and it is not surprising, therefore, to find the persistence of characteristics found in classic Greek art in a modified form in Syria. As the Greek language continued to be used in the form of a local dialect, so the Greek heart-shaped leaf is found in Mesopotamia and in Syria. A slow evolution is seen going on, in which finally elements from East and West merge into one type. But this is always rendered, not as a servile copy, but freely cut by the artist who designed it, who seems indeed to have designed as he worked. Not only is there much vitality and freedom of touch, but one can see the reason of the modifications he made, due to the use of tool and the capacity of the material. Consequently Syrian art remained vital and progressive at a time when Roman art was decadent and Byzantine art was in the making.

In eleven cases the word "*technites*" was found



DAMASCUS

carved on the work. This is the title of the sculptor and indicates the presence of a workman, probably corresponding to the Macedonian "*Protomeistor*." As the palace of Diocletian at Spalato is said to be due to a Syrian architect, and reveals characteristics unusual in Roman art, it would appear that already in this time an expansive power existed, and this fact prepares us for other discoveries.

Asher Benjamin Revived*

By RICHARD F. BACH

FOR the original type of inspiration, for the particular form taken by the five published works of Asher Benjamin, we must go back to English prototypes, as we are bound to do for the greater part of our architectural inspiration along all so-called Colonial lines. In the years between the opening of the nineteenth century and the disturbances that led to the Civil War were issued a number of interesting works, now to be sure of little more than archaeological value, and chiefly suggested by English forerunners. Such undertakings

were usually graced with the title of "Companion," "Jewel," "Assistant," or "Guide," combined with the word "Carpenter's" or "Builder's." It is interesting to note that such literary helps were never qualified as the architect's, since this was a still undiscovered species at that time, at least so far as its independent existence was concerned. By way of illustration we might mention *The Builder's and Workman's Treasury of Design*, a London publication, under date of 1756, containing every manner of instruction in geometry and in carpentry, in the orders and in planning. It is recorded, for instance, that a copy of this work served as text book of valuable information, if not for actual form imitation, for Elias Carter and his son Timothy, who are

*Asher Benjamin, a Reprint of *The Country Builder's Assistant*, *The American Builder's Companion*, *The Rudiments of Architecture*, *The Practical House Carpenter*, *Practice of Architecture* by Asher Benjamin, Plates and Text Selected and Edited by Aymar Embury II, Architect. Quarto: pp. x+169, plates numbered according to originals, but following regular pagination in reprint. For sale by U. P. C. Book Co., 243 W. 39th Street, price \$12.50.

THE AMERICAN ARCHITECT

known to have designed a number of structures in the valley of the Connecticut River.

Following the spirit of independence which was the order of the day we may soon expect American works of similar nature; and Asher Benjamin's *Country Builder's Assistant* may be said to justify such expectations with characteristic promptness. This was issued in 1805; no doubt, this is the date of its first publication, although we have seen it stated that Benjamin's first work saw the light as early as 1797. The *Country Builder's Assistant* was the initial volume in a series of five books, of which at least two may be regarded as in part reprints of their predecessors. At any rate, together with the two immediately following, namely, *The American Builder's Companion* and *The Rudiments of Architecture*, issued in 1806 and 1814 respectively, this work was a product of a time when Colonial architecture was granted a thorough and intelligent comprehension, and for this reason the books in question retain even now a fundamental interest commensurate with their direct response to a fine period in American building. The two later publications, entitled *The Practical House Carpenter* and *Practice of Architecture*, dated 1832 and 1833, are more distinctly imbued with the growing menace of the ill-starred Greek Revival, some of whose products still goad us to inarticulate anger. The diminished value of the two later works is seen, of course, in the fact that Benjamin was himself a practicing architect as well as an architectural writer, and therefore, may be expected to follow the trend of his time in stylistic expression. Fortunately, however, his theories were essentially correct, as his executed work will testify, his detail delicate, his design well ordered and sound; while, in addition, the drawings he has left us offer to the architect and draftsman the appeal of his *métier*, the fascination of antiquity in the architectural indication.

No doubt Asher Benjamin's various publications enjoyed a wide distribution in the early years of the nineteenth century among builders, masons, and "carpenters." We can readily visualize the old workshops, each provided with copies of these or similar formularies, carefully preserved as the most important of its assets, and referred to as final authority in the determination of all questions of form, dimensions, proportions, and scale. Indeed, at a time when systematic instruction was not available, what better guide could have been resorted to than a standard work, which had stood the test of much use and which was responsible, incidentally, as much as any other single agency in the growth of early American architecture, for the steady maintenance of some degree of uniformity and constructive good sense.

In accordance with contemporary practice in book

making the title pages of Benjamin's books contain the entire contents. An index can be dispensed with, a table of contents would be but a duplication, and the task of the reviewer of the time resolved itself into a verbatim reprint of the title page, for he could add but little, granted of course that his opinion was favorable. Thus we have, for instance, *The American Builder's Companion*, followed by "or, a New System of Architecture: particularly adapted to the Present Style of Building in the United States of America, containing forty-four engravings, representing Geometrical Lines, Twenty different Designs for Mouldings, the Five Orders of Architecture, with great alterations, both in size and expense. Glueing up and diminishing of Columns . . . Urns, Banisters, Key Stones, &c., Plans and Elevations of three Houses for Town, and two for Country, etc., etc.," nor do we reprint more than a third of the detailed title. In fact the captions of the five works, if reprinted as a whole would require practically two-thirds of a page of this journal.

In the first publication the author appears as simply Asher Benjamin; in the second there are two authors: Asher Benjamin, architect and carpenter, and Daniel Raynerd, architect and stucco worker; in the third Asher Benjamin is sole author without stated profession; in the fourth and fifth the author has resumed his title of architect. It is noteworthy that he has gained so much courage in the two last issued works as to write himself architect; evidently the profession had by then been able to demonstrate, with the great assistance of that fine gentleman-architect, Thomas Jefferson, something of its importance in the growth of public taste and comfort. In the second book, however, we still find Benjamin reluctant to adopt the still unaccustomed title and he prints himself architect and carpenter; perhaps we should find some consolation in the arrangement of the two words, construing a precedence for the first. Still, in 1806, we do not hesitate to believe that Benjamin himself would have been at a loss to say finally by which of these professional titles he would rather be known to posterity.

Through the editorial agency of Mr. Aymar Embury, all five of Asher Benjamin's works have been issued in reprints in a volume of excellent quality as to reproductions, selections of plates and text, letter press, paper stock and binding. Needless to say the reprint is partial, for the obvious reason that so large a number of the original plates were given over to solutions in geometry, to matters of minor interest at the present time, or even to actual duplications from volume to volume. The present work will prove of unlimited interest to students and men in practice.

THE AMERICAN ARCHITECT

THE AMERICAN ARCHITECT

Founded 1876

PUBLISHED EVERY WEDNESDAY BY

THE ARCHITECTURAL AND BUILDING
PRESS, INC.

No. 243 West Thirty-ninth Street, New York

E. J. ROSENCRANS, PRESIDENT AND TREASURER
WILLARD C. HOWE, VICE-PRESIDENT

JAMES KNOX TAYLOR—WILLIAM H. CROCKER
Editors

Subscriptions in the United States and Possessions,
Mexico and Cuba, TEN DOLLARS. Other Countries
TWELVE DOLLARS
SINGLE COPIES (Regular Issue) 25 CENTS

CHICAGO OFFICE, Mallery Building
Page A. Robinson, Western Manager

Owned by United Publishers Corporation—H. M. Swetland, President;
Charles G. Phillips, Vice-President; W. H. Taylor, Treasurer;
A. C. Pearson, Secretary. Entered as second-class matter January
6, 1909, at the Post Office at New York, New York, under the Act of
March 3, 1879.

VOL. CXII DECEMBER 19, 1917 No. 2191

Washington State Capitol Group

EVERY indication would seem to show that in spite of the dignified protest of the Washington Chapter of the American Institute of Architects, admirably supported by President Mauran, the State Capitol Group plan at Olympia, Wash., adopted in 1911, will be either abandoned as a whole, or so altered, or perhaps more accurately stated, mutilated, as to destroy its beauty.

It is inconceivable that any State would contemplate placing itself on record in an effort to evade a moral, and by some considered, legal, responsibility of this nature. Yet, if the reports printed in the daily press are accurate statements, it would appear that not only is it proposed to abandon the plan of Wilder & White, but also to substitute the designs of another architect, which, on careful comparison of the originally accepted design with the illustration of the drawings of the proposed substitution published in Washington newspapers, does not present any but the most minor changes.

The element, purely political of course, that is trying to induce the State of Washington to substitute the new plan is stalking behind the time-worn excuse of economy. Inasmuch as the funds necessary for the carrying to completion of the plan of Wilder & White were to be derived from the sale of certain State lands, and that no appropriation of

public money derived from taxation was contemplated, the excuse is not valid, even if the change resulted in material saving.

The plan of Wilder & White was selected in a competition held in 1911, and this acceptance duly adopted by the Washington State government. The competition was participated in by a group of distinguished architects representing every section, and was one of the notable events in the architectural field of that year. The drawings of Messrs. Wilder & White were illustrated and the program printed in *THE AMERICAN ARCHITECT*, issue of Sept. 13, 1911. While there has been no definite action in this matter up to the present time, the intention to proceed in repudiating the State's contract with the architects who won the competition is so apparent that it is well to impress, and in the strongest possible manner, the protest of the profession toward what if carried forward would be a reprehensible practice, closely bordering on the dishonorable.

NEW YORK CITY, in a lesser but equally important degree, is now confronted, if we are to credit the expressed intentions of the incoming administration, with a similar repudiation of a contract entered into by the city.

Mayor-elect Hylan is quoted in the daily press as holding views strongly antagonistic to the carrying to completion of the duly accepted design and plan of Guy Lowell for the New York County Court House.

The vicissitudes surrounding the preliminary work before this competition was held, the, in some cases farcical, objections to Mr. Lowell's plan, and the sharply criticized methods attending the condemnation proceedings for the land required for the site, are all matters of record. One by one, every objection was overcome, the judges who found fault with the plan were won over, either through well chosen argument or such minor modifications as could be made to meet what were really unimportant objections. The condemnation proceedings were halted pending an inquiry into the methods being pursued, and the Court House Commission quite naturally believed that all the difficulties technical and political had been overcome and the Court House would rise, in all its well designed proportions, without further delay.

We could make no criticism of Judge Hylan's attitude toward this project further than to class it with similar objections born really through lack of real knowledge of the beauty of the scheme, were it not for the fact that to abandon the project at this time, or to attempt, as is being done at Olympia, to substitute another and not equally well approved scheme, would constitute an act of bad faith for

THE AMERICAN ARCHITECT

which no valid excuse could be urged in extenuation.

These two competitions were held more or less directly under the authorization of program and method of procedure of the Committee on Competitions of the Institute. Every architect participating was duly proven qualified to enter into an important competition and to carry forward to completion the work that might be entrusted to him. His professional status and responsibility were in each case duly proven. Each competitor gave time and its equivalent, money, in the serious work involved in the preparation of the competition drawings. While the architects' responsibility was subject to investigation or demonstration, the integrity of the State or municipality was not, as the acceptance of the program and conditions of the competition constituted in the belief of every competitor an agreement on the part of the client to abide by his obligations under the contract.

The avowed intention not to abide by the contract is one of such contemplated bad faith that it takes no knowledge of the finer points of law to determine that, based on its moral aspect alone, it becomes an act that in an individual would cause him to be regarded as lacking in those finer moral attributes that go to make an upright and just man. If these schemes to repudiate contracts are successful, it would seem that the "scrap of paper" idea was gaining adherents in this country.

Government Aid in Financing Industrial Housing

GOVERNMENT aid in the financing of industrial housing operations appears to be the only solution of one of our most pressing war problems. Assistance on the part of European governments in similar operations has been usual in peace times, and the assistance given now is based on methods merely the extension of a practice of long custom.

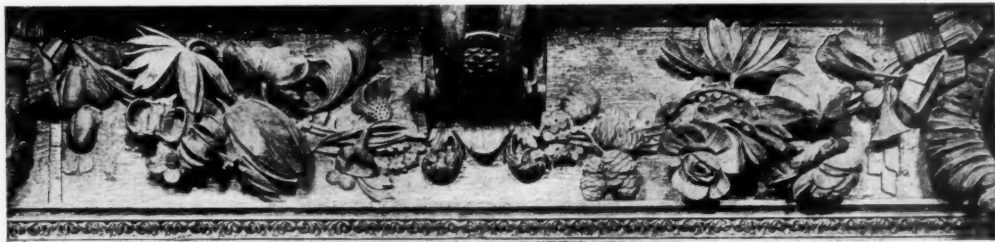
With us in the United States the problem is newer and is being approached slowly and with hesitancy, the result that always attends the working out of a new idea.

In a very informing article contributed by Frank Backus Williams to the November issue of the *Journal of the American Institute of Architects* valuable facts are presented with relation to government aid to housing in the light of foreign experience.

It is interesting to learn that all of the countries of Europe, and even in such less advanced countries as Spain, Roumania, India, Chili, and China, there has during normal peace times been extended aid to the housing of that class of the population requiring low cost houses at small rentals. Just at this time it is helpful to learn of the methods of financing practiced by the various European governments, as a basis for the development of housing operations in the United States. Mr. Williams states that the various European governments in time of peace have lent money to limited dividend corporations at from $2\frac{1}{2}$ to $3\frac{1}{2}$ per cent. In England these rates have advanced since the war began to $5\frac{1}{2}$ and even 6 per cent. The amounts advanced in peace times in the different countries have ranged from 50 per cent of the value to 90 per cent of the cost of the house and land. In England, during peace, the advance represented about two-thirds of the value, but these advances when they become a war measure are often extended to as much as 90 per cent and in some instances to the full value.

Following the example set by foreign countries, there is an apparent possibility that the amounts that will be required to finance these industrial housing operations in the United States will represent the full value of cost, with the added agreement that the borrowers will be permitted to write off a portion of it, as has been done in England. This last provision is based on the contingency that when peace has been declared and construction becomes less expensive, the companies might be compelled to pay more than the cost of the house, estimated at prices during peace.

In all of these vital matters there are many useful lessons to be learned. The policy of our government will undoubtedly be based on such knowledge as may be gained by close scrutiny of conditions that at present exist in Europe where the aid of governments in financing industrial housing has the benefit of many years of actual operations.



Criticism and Comment

The following communications, addressed to the editors, with reference to the editorial, *Architects as Slackers*, are of interest as indicating the mental attitude of architects toward their work:

Frank E. Wallis writes:

"Inasmuch as the practising architects of the country—by those I mean the real men—are compelled by the very method of their profession to continue with an open mind toward any subject, and as they are very far above the men of average intelligence, of necessity, it would seem to me, that any journal or any discussion coming through a professional society or otherwise, would interest them.

"An architect must interest himself in finance, economics, trade and transportation conditions, what the other fellow is doing and many other subjects of like character, otherwise, he is not an architect. Among my acquaintances in the profession, I find them interesting themselves in the journals of their societies as well as in the topics discussed in other supply trade journals."

Another well-known architect in New York City whose name is withheld by request, stated in an interview:

"Without having as large an acquaintance among my confreres as I should wish, I find generally that architects may be divided into two general classes. One class emphasizes the professional aspect of their work, and the other the business side. I am afraid I belong to the latter class, because I have found that the professional side of architecture did not interest the men I am working for as much as the other phase. I grant that a combination of the two is entirely possible, but I don't think that it is usual. Consequently the proceedings of the profession have never interested me very greatly, though I heartily approve of the work which the American Institute of Architects is doing and has done in elevating and maintaining a high standard of architectural ethics, and I confess that I am one of those who have profited by their work, and yet have given very little time to it myself."

Mr. D. Everett Waid frankly admits that the exacting demands on an architect's time prevent the close reading that would make "a full man." He writes:

"I confess to a large degree of guilt and presume that other members of the profession can do likewise, with the excuse that we are too busy to read all that we would like to or should read. Some, I know, plead guilty on the ground that our professional magazines, aside from their plates, have little in them worth reading, but none of us I am sure are willing to admit 'a lack of interest in any movement tending to better conditions.'"

Editors, *THE AMERICAN ARCHITECT*:

I cannot say what other architects or firms may do in the matter of reading the text in their professional journals. Individually, I have always made it a rule to read the texts the first thing after glancing through the illustrations.

I have read the texts of *THE AMERICAN ARCHITECT* since about '80, and have always considered it the most useful matter to the architect in the professional journals. Few men make a success unless they are readers, keep up with current events and up to date in all matters of their profession, the legal decisions as well as strictly professional business. Some men are more interested in work they expect to get than in equipping themselves for work they are carrying out. Most successful men of my acquaintance read and digest their journals.

Yours truly,

OCTAVIUS MORGAN.

Editors *THE AMERICAN ARCHITECT*:

The classic joke of the architect who built a theater without dressing rooms is so well known that it probably acts as a reminder to each man who draws the plans of a new house.

Is it possible to bring another commission to the notice of the great body of architects?

Recently I have had occasion to visit several of the new theaters in this city and I have yet to find any provision for the working staff of the theater.

A small crescent-shaped pit into which two or three men and a piano are barely able to squeeze, necessitating the removal of one or two rows of seats when a larger band is required, to the disgust of the manager who loses the revenue on the seats, spoils the looks of the house and also requires the services of the carpenter to build a platform for the players.

This directly interests the manager.

Underneath the stage there is no room for coats, hats, and cases; no room in which to store instruments costing hundreds of dollars, and in one case that I know of, no sanitary accommodations.

Coats and even hats are frequently stolen, and while it is possible to always carry an instrument with you, it is most inconvenient and in the present condition of travel on the subway and elevated, rather risky.

Besides the musicians, there are numbers of men employed in each theater, who in a quiet, unobtrusive way are more necessary to the working of a play than the star. The play and the star may come and go, but they stay with such accommodation as they may devise for themselves.

WARWICK F. WILLIAMS.

The above communication from a professional musician is interesting as indicating the point of view of an intelligent member of a theater's staff toward the plan and arrangement of the musicians' space.

Digest of Commercial and Financial News

Affecting the Practice of Architecture

PLANS for the entertainment of the 2000 expected delegates to the annual conference of the National Foreign Trade Association, to be held in Cincinnati, Feb. 7, 8 and 9, were approved at the special meeting of the Convention and Publicity Department of the Chamber of Commerce, Monday.

At this meeting the special committee, comprising Thomas Quinlan, of the Convention and Publicity Department; R. S. Alter, President, and William Biddle, Treasurer, respectively, of the Foreign Trade Association of the Chamber of Commerce, made a report on the plans suggested at the special meeting of the Plan and Scope Committee of the National Association, held in New York last Saturday.

THE Council of National Defense has just issued a statement relating to the demands of the Government for more supplies of every sort and variety due to the enormous war conditions.

In order to secure a basis of facts on which to work out policies, the statement says, the director is authorized to undertake the following work:

1. To determine present and probable future demands for labor in war industries.
2. To determine in connection with the Priorities Committee of the War Industries Board the relative priorities of the labor demand.
3. To arrange for the supplying of the demand through the Department of Labor or such other governmental or civilian agencies as can best meet the demand.
4. To determine the needs for dilution of labor, including the introduction of women into industry, and recommend policies to be followed in regard thereto.

This work under the Council has been put under the immediate charge of Mr. L. C. Marshall, who is designated Chief of the Section on Industrial Service. Mr. Marshall comes to this work from the deanship of the School of Commerce and Administration of the University of Chicago. He has given his time recently to the special consideration of labor matters as affecting certain procurement divisions of the War Department, and thus takes up the new work with broad general information and special detailed knowledge of a number of the more pressing problems.

It is not contemplated that there will be created under the Council any agencies for executive action

with respect to the problems concerned. The purpose is to have under the Council a section to which these various labor problems may be brought for common consideration. The new section will work in close co-operation with the War Industries Board and its Priorities Committee and will, like the War Industries Board, bring to the Council digested information from all Government departments as to the above subjects. Policies can then be worked out to secure the most efficient utilization of existing agencies and to facilitate the development of such new agencies as may be necessary.

THE United States has loaned to other nations engaged in war with Germany something over three billion dollars, taking for the sums advanced the obligations of such nations, bearing the same interest and maturing at the same time as the Liberty Loan Bonds.

The wisdom of this policy is beyond question. By strengthening these nations and making them as powerful and as effective as possible we are greatly aiding in the shortening of the struggle; we are doing much to insure an ultimate victory; we are doing only that which it is our duty to do toward our allies in this tremendous war against an autocracy which would debase and enslave all nations and men.

The fact that if we did not advance this money much of the work which the allies are doing would have to be done with American money and American men establishes clearly the intelligence and wisdom of our policy.

There is work to be done which requires the expenditure of blood and treasure. In making these money advances to Great Britain, France, Italy and other nations we are lending money which will be returned to us, instead of expending sums possibly as great, possibly greater, with no hope of return. In addition, we are saving the lives of American soldiers.

No policy the American Government has pursued is wiser or more truly economical and patriotic.

IN an interview with Mr. Franklin T. Miller which was printed in a recent issue of the *New York Times*, in which he discusses the present building situation, he states that the high price of labor and material, the shortage of mortgage money and

THE AMERICAN ARCHITECT

transportation and the intention of the Government to concentrate all possible energy upon war necessities are causing much concern in the building industries. The questions now affecting that industry are fraught with difficulty and it will be necessary for those engaged in it to be thoroughly prepared to meet the conditions that will undoubtedly arise. These conditions are so very unusual and so new that none of the methods heretofore employed will serve the purpose and whatever is done will be in a way that will create precedent in this direction. Fortunately we are not facing a business depression, for all the conditions throughout the country would appear to be excellent. What we have to know now is just exactly where we stand, not only with regard to the present, but as far as possible to determine what will confront us in the near future.

The information collected by the Government in its many chambers of commerce is being widely circulated and every architect should be able to form for himself an opinion based on the most authoritative data.

Mr. Miller states in conclusion of the interview:

"When possibly within two or three years at most, the world has at last returned to peaceful operations, there is no other one industry which gives so certain a prospect of becoming the leader as that of providing material to repair the enormous destruction that has occurred since the war began."

THE following resolutions were adopted at a recent meeting of the Illinois Society of Architects:

WHEREAS, The City Council of the City of Chicago is considering the abandonment during the period of the war of practically all public improvements, and

WHEREAS, Should this action be taken, many other cities throughout the United States will follow the example set by Chicago, and

WHEREAS, The war must be financed largely out of the people's savings and these savings necessarily bear a direct ratio to the people's earning power, it becomes of paramount importance that every line of business not definitely interfering with or curtailing the prosecution of the Government's war program should be continued and encouraged to the fullest extent in order that the earning power of the people be increased to the maximum and unemployment be reduced to the minimum, and

WHEREAS, The experience of other nations seems to have shown that the added industrial and financial burden assumed by them through participation in the war can best be met by maintenance wherever possible of employment in usual channels rather than by a radical readjustment of

employment made necessary by a forced suspension or disorganization of long-established and important lines of business, public or private, and

WHEREAS, In order to render its best service to state or nation every community should be held to its highest state of proficiency. A cessation of all public work immediately sets in action forces of deterioration which impair this proficiency and in the end are extremely uneconomical.

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED, By the Illinois Society of Architects in regular meeting assembled that we urge upon the City Council of the City of Chicago the wisdom of a continuance of all public improvements, this action being justified, in our belief, by consideration of economy and patriotism.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, That a copy of this resolution be mailed to His Honor the Mayor and to each member of the City Council over the signatures of the president and secretary and under the seal of the Society.

WITH a view to crystallizing business opinion on questions of price control, the United States Chamber of Commerce recently submitted seven resolutions to business organizations throughout the country with a request that they be voted upon. The result was an almost overwhelming vote of business men in favor of price control, as will be seen by the resolutions themselves with figures of the vote.

1. That additional legislation be passed to create authority to control prices during the war. In favor, 974; opposed, 110.

2. That authority to control prices should extend to all articles which have importance in basic industries as well as in war, and which enter into the necessities of every-day life. In favor, 978; opposed, 116.

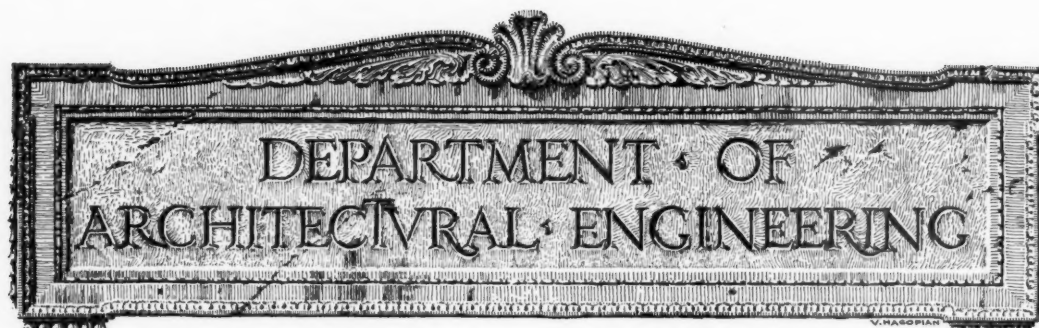
3. That authority to control prices should extend to raw materials and finished products. In favor, 977; opposed, 117.

4. That authority to control prices should extend to the prices the public pays as well as those paid by the Government. In favor, 946; opposed, 146.

5. That authority to control prices should be administered by a small executive board appointed by the President. In favor, 964; opposed, 121.

6. That an agency working in harmony with the board controlling prices should have authority to distribute available supplies to those purchasers whose needs are most directly related to public welfare. In favor, 975; opposed, 117.

7. That each leading industry and trade should create a representative committee to represent it in conference and to advise with agencies that control prices and distribution. In favor, 984; opposed, 97.



The Out-of-Doors Sleeping Room

By A. T. NORTH

WITH each succeeding year the number of persons who make it a practice to sleep as nearly out of doors as domestic conditions will permit is rapidly growing and it is a matter of comment that up to the present time there are no accommodations provided in the modern hotel for out-of-door sleeping rooms. It is quite possible that if such provision were made, the small investment necessary would prove to be profitable.

In most hotels there is sufficient roof space to enable its utilization for rooms of this character and it is the purpose of this article to suggest in a certain way a structure that will meet the requirements of hotel service. As the details of construction would obviously vary with each building, no attempt will be made to enter upon a description of them.

Logically the elevator service will deliver the guest to the roof level and on one or both sides of the corridor leading from the elevator exits apartments might be arranged. Each apartment will consist of an inclosed room with walls and ceiling, and adjoining this room will be an open room with walls on three sides to the height of the inclosed room. The fourth side will remain open. There will further be a roof over the entire structure placed above and free from the ceilings of the inclosed room and the corridor. From the corridor the inclosed room is entered. This room will contain a bathroom with the usual accessories and a recessed wall cabinet. A clothes closet and the usual guest room accessories will complete this portion of the apartment. The bathroom will be in contact with a utility chamber and will be ventilated by means of a wall register. The utility chamber will have a ceiling through which is placed a cylindrical ventilator extending through the roof, with hood, in the usual manner. In the open sleeping room,

partitions on either side will separate it from the adjoining rooms and be built to the height of the inclosed room. The end opposite the inclosed room will be open except that a wall 2 feet 6 inches high will be provided. Between the top of this low partition and the underside of the roof will be placed a heavy wire screen made of 3/16-in. wire, 1½-inch mesh. Over this room and at the level of the top of the side partitions will be placed a heavy horizontal screen of the same kind, forming, as it were, a ceiling for this room. The purpose of these screens is to prevent access to the apartment through these openings and to prevent observing the adjoining room by looking over the partition.

A fine wire screen is to be placed in the open end of this room extending from the top of the low partition to the underside of the roof. There will also be a fine copper wire screen placed in the ventilator from the utility chamber. The object of these fine screens is to prevent the ingress of winged insects.

The roof will form the ceiling of this room and will extend beyond the room to afford a measure of protection from the elements and will support a heavy canvas curtain.

The open room should be large enough to permit placing the bed in any direction of the compass to suit the desires of the occupant. By means of the arrangement here described, a free passage of air is secured through the open room, over the inclosed room and corridor and out through the opposite side. The partitions between the rooms, not extending to the roof, permit a free circulation of air in this direction. The intent of this entire arrangement is to provide a roof over an inclosed corridor and rooms and an open room, allowing a free circulation of air in all directions.

From the edge of the roof will be suspended a

THE AMERICAN ARCHITECT

heavy canvas curtain operated from within the room. This will serve as an awning, giving protection against driving rain and snow, and also light. If such a curtain were placed close to the screen, it would strike against the screen during a high wind and the noise would annoy some persons. Placed as indicated, the noise due to this cause will be reduced to a minimum.

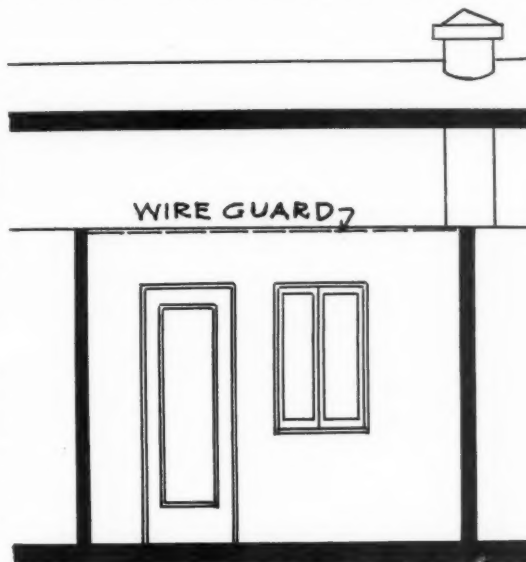
Access must be provided to the space above the inclosed rooms and the roof to permit the removal of dust by means of a vacuum cleaner or otherwise.

The floors of the corridor and the inclosed rooms are to be finished like the other rooms in the building. The floor of the open room is to be finished in tile and slightly pitched to the open end, having drainage through a pipe on to the roof of the main building. This pipe should have a check valve to guard against the entrance of mosquitoes. The floor can then be washed with a hose to remove the dust and possibly to cool the atmosphere.

All partitions should be of hollow tile 3 and 4 inches thick. The ceiling and roof construction should be of hollow tile, with a maximum content of that material. This result can be secured by means of the Johnson System or similar construction. By providing the maximum content of hollow tile, the roof and ceiling will be less hot during the summer than by using any other type of fire-proof construction. A roof so built would also be less noisy during a severe fall of rain. All exterior walls and the underside of the roof should be smoothly plastered with Portland cement to prevent as much as possible the lodgment of dust. Perhaps these surfaces might be painted or enameled.

The inclosed rooms are about 8 feet high from floor to ceiling, ventilated by wall outlets or from the base. They should be so arranged and shaded that they serve the purpose for which they were

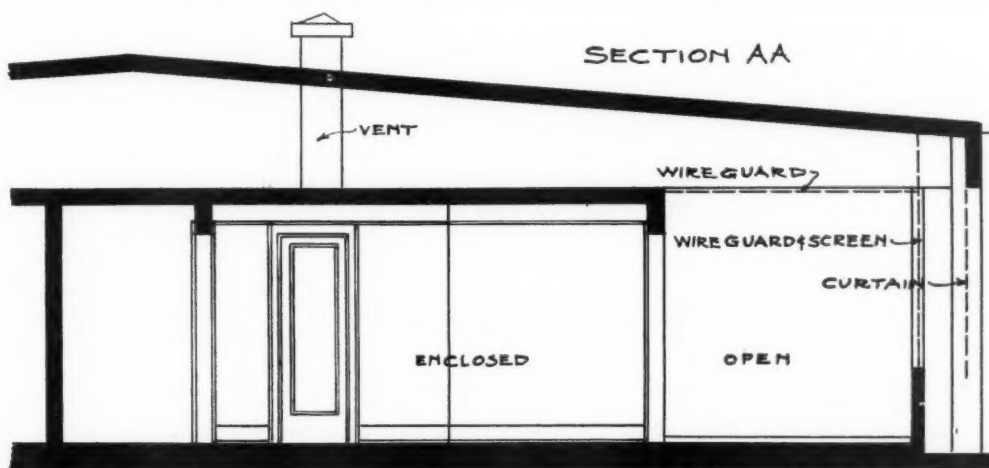
intended. Very few hotels have lights so arranged and shaded that reading is a pleasure. The open room should have no light whatever because a room so lighted would reflect light from the underside of the roof into the adjoining room. There should be a switch at the door entering the inclosed room



SECTION BB
SCHEME 1

from the open room, permitting the inclosed room to be lighted as entered.

The inclosed room should be furnished with the usual equipment of a baggage stand, chairs, telephone stand, desk and a couch. The couch is necessary as some persons are unable to remain in



SCHEME 1

THE AMERICAN ARCHITECT

the open during severe electrical storms and would retire to the inclosed room at such times.

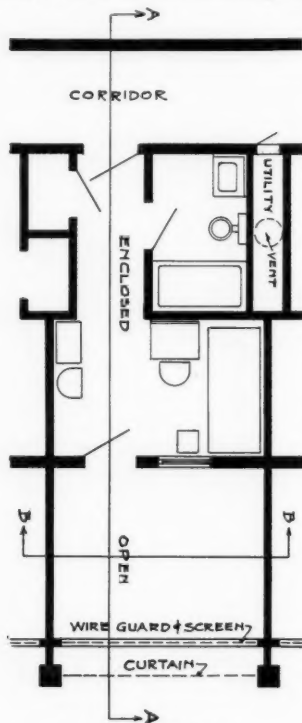
The above arrangement is indicated by the drawings of Scheme 1 consisting of plan and two sections. Scheme 2 is shown in plan only and is similar to Scheme 1, both being complete layouts. Scheme 3 is shown in plan only and is predicated on the supposition that the guest secures an ordinary room in the building with an out-door sleeping room on the roof in connection.

In this case there is provided a dis-

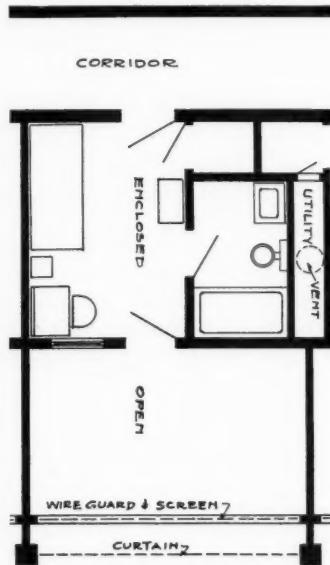
inclosed rooms and the floor above must be maintained for ventilation.

If this subject proves of interest, it is hoped that this crude suggestion will be worked out to a perfect arrangement for the purpose indicated, and that such service may ultimately be available for such persons as may desire it. One drawback to open sleeping rooms on a roof will be the dust which seems to have an affinity for roofs. The main roof of the building should be a smooth one which can be washed with a hose as required. This matter of dust on roofs was very ably discussed by a prominent architect a few years ago.

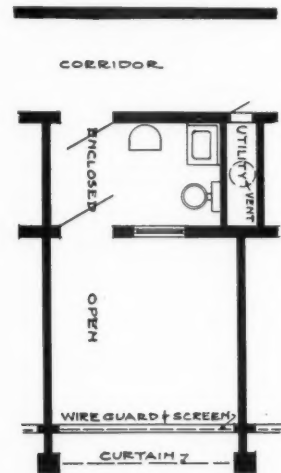
Given an accommodation similar to that here described, the occupant would be removed from



SCHEME 1



SCHEME 3



SCHEME 2

robing room containing a lavatory and water-closet. A couch could be provided for the purpose already stated or the guest could retire to his other room during a severe storm if he so wished. Schemes 2 and 3 would be similar in section to that of Scheme 1.

It is entirely feasible to construct several stories of such rooms. In that case the roof becomes a floor and the open space between the ceiling of the

the noise of the poor street car rail joints and crossings, flat wheels, noisy and ill-smelling automobiles and the nocturnal whistler and disputant. Then, provided the parapet wall was not illuminated and no hideous electric signs made day, the conditions would be ideal and homelike—except that no one has, as yet, discovered an effective muffler for the heavy breather in the next room.

Annual Report Supervising Architect of the Treasury Department

The annual report of James A. Wetmore, Acting Supervising Architect, of the Treasury Department, for the year ending June 30, last, is an interesting document at this time, for it shows that all building conditions were carried on under unusual conditions.

Building material and labor were exceedingly high at the beginning of the year and continued to go higher, this condition prevailing in almost every line of material. The report refers to the fact that many contractors reported unusual difficulty in securing quotations from producers of certain materials when a definite time for delivery was involved. Car shortages and freight embargoes were frequent occurrences, oftentimes lasting for a considerable period. The resignations of experienced members of the office and field forces to enter the military services of the government caused a great deal of embarrassment. These and other causes contributed to increase the cost of construction of public buildings and to retard their completion.

Progress, however, notwithstanding these conditions, was made on the building program and the record was at the rate of a building or extension completed on the average of every five and one-third calendar days approximately, and a building or extension placed under contract every four and one-third calendar days. The office is now no longer four or more years behind in construction authorized by Congress. There were sixty-three public building projects completed during the fiscal year. Contracts were placed for seventy-six buildings and for seven extension or remodeling projects. Plans and specifications were prepared for thirty-four other buildings, and proposals for their construction received; no awards were made, as the advances in costs made all the bids in excess of the limits fixed in the authorizations.

"Except for the abnormal increase in cost of construction since these buildings were authorized," says Acting Supervising Architect Wetmore, "they could readily have been built well within the limits of costs fixed therefor."

By substituting other types or by altering the plans of construction it is expected that some of the construction work can be obtained within the costs limits. Congress may have to increase the limit of costs on a number of the buildings which will not yield to this economy revision of structure. There are 1500 completed and occupied public buildings over the United States that are maintained, furnished, cared for and repaired under the direction of the

office. Under authorizations of law there remain fifty-two sites for public buildings still to be acquired. "If building conditions do not interfere with the anticipated output of the office, it is possible, unless additional public buildings are authorized meanwhile," predicts the acting supervising architect, "that the work in the construction branch of this office proper will be practically completed in eighteen months and in the field by the end of the calendar year 1920."

The Secretary of the Treasury awarded twenty-seven contracts for the standardized type of public buildings during the year. It is a fact worthy to be noted that the value of a standard type of building has been demonstrated for all time. But by reason of abnormal costs of labor and material it was really impossible to satisfactorily determine variations of costs in the various parts of the country. It has been found impossible to make contracts for coal for service this fiscal year for many public buildings even at advanced prices, and it is expected to get supplies direct from the mines. One of the greatest difficulties of the departments is in keeping a satisfactory force of employees to care for public buildings, as the appropriations by Congress do not permit of adequate salaries. Competent workers command better salaries in other occupations. Unless the Government provides better remuneration it must be content with the kind of service it can obtain at the rates of compensation that are less than are paid on the outside.

Cass Gilbert to Design New Treasury Building

Secretary of the Treasury McAdoo has placed in the hands of Cass Gilbert, the New York architect, the task of preparing the plans and specifications for the new Treasury Building to be erected at the corner of Pennsylvania Avenue and Madison Place, directly opposite the present Treasury Building.

In the closing days of the last session of Congress a bill was passed for the erection of the new building at a cost of \$1,250,000. The bill as passed provided that the Secretary of the Treasury could employ special assistants for the work, thus removing it from the office of the Supervising Architect, the usual official having to do with the erection of public buildings. Mr. Gilbert has already presented a general design for the building. Work will be rushed with the plans, for no unnecessary delay is desired. The plans under consideration are for a building of six stories with basement, which will occupy the entire site. The building will also provide for an annex and there will be a subway under the

THE AMERICAN ARCHITECT

avenue connecting the new building with the main Treasury Building. The designs prepared by Mr. Gilbert provide for a building costing \$1,050,000, leaving \$200,000 for subway, heating plant and incidentals.

Gothic Art, the War and After

A. Kingsley Porter, in an article contributed to the October issue of *The Journal of the American Institute of Architects*, writes:

"We must realize frankly that the destroyed churches of France are in danger of a fate even worse than that which has already befallen them. Ill-advised enthusiasm among people whose perceptions are not specially trained, is very liable to result in crowding the competent authority—which is the official *Commission des Monuments Historiques*—into sanctioning or even promoting the restoration of these buildings.

"Gothic churches cannot and must not be restored. What is done cannot be undone. The losses caused by the Revolution, in ignorance, were great. Of an important part of the heritage which earlier centuries had already in ignorance depleted, the Germans have in knowledge deprived all humanity. Let us not make the matter worse and still further reduce the patrimony by restoration. Works of restoration should be undertaken only when necessary to prevent further disintegration. Let the destroyed monuments of France stand as ruins, but noble, poetic, beautiful ruins, not machine-made, modern churches. Let them stand a sempiternal reproach and source of shame to the Germans; but let it never be said that their friends destroyed what their enemies had spared."

Housing Our Soldiers Abroad

Means to promptly meet the nation's requirements for housing millions of soldiers abroad were discussed at a general conference of lumbermen recently held in New Orleans by the Southern Pine Emergency Bureau. Plans prepared by War Department architects were submitted. These plans provide for houses to be made up in panels, put together by bolts, shipped knocked-down, and bolted together by soldiers in France. Although the lumbermen saw no difficulty in carrying out the general idea outlined, present specifications were regarded as in many respects impracticable from a mill standpoint.

It was the general opinion of those present that best results could be obtained by a co-operative effort of lumber manufacturers and contractors.

Use of material of standard sizes was also urged. The lumbermen considered that they should not undertake the manufacture of panels, a work with which they are unfamiliar, but that they should confine their efforts to producing the lumber needed, and delivering this lumber to contractors, who would engage carpenters to put together the boards in such form that they might be easily converted into buildings.

Labor is unobtainable in Europe for construction purposes; hence the idea of panels to be bolted together. In this way soldiers may quickly erect either a one-room shelter or a house of sufficient size for the care of hundreds of hospital patients.

The Car Shortage as Affecting Northern Orders for Lumber

Southern lumber interests see hope of relief from serious car difficulties during the coming winter months in statements from Washington that hundreds of cars loaded with export materials will be shortly converted from the congested Eastern districts and routed through New Orleans. This decision is said to have been reached by the railroads' war board. With empties plentiful in this section, mills will have no difficulty in handling Northern orders.

Competition for a \$6000 House

A feature of the Columbus, Ohio, Real Estate and Building Show to be held in that city Jan. 21-30 will be a competition for the design of a \$6,000 house. This competition will be conducted by the Columbus Chapter of the American Institute of Architects and will close on Dec. 26. The prizes to be awarded are as follows: First, \$200; second, \$125; third, \$75; fourth, \$50; fifth, \$25; sixth, \$15; seventh, \$10.

All prize-winning drawings will be on exhibition at the Real Estate and Building Show. The committee in charge consists of Frank L. Packard, George H. Bulford and Charles L. Inscho.

Zoning Laws

The adoption of a zoning law in New York City has served markedly to stimulate interest in this important matter in other cities. New York's scheme has recently been studied by delegations from Newark, Cambridge, Philadelphia, St. Louis, Dallas, Chicago, San Francisco and Baltimore.

In Illinois a bill allowing cities and villages to adopt a districting scheme has already passed the

THE AMERICAN ARCHITECT

Senate. As soon as it becomes law, Chicago will appoint a districting commission and will prepare a zoning plan.

The legislature of New Jersey, at its last session, passed a law authorizing all cities of the first class to adopt zoning schemes. Jersey City and Newark are now preparing to take advantage of this law. Among other cities which have appointed commissions are Oakland, Philadelphia, Milwaukee and St. Louis.

Zoning in California

In order to give small cities authority to zone or district themselves, the Third California Conference on City Planning went to the Legislature in January, 1917, and secured the passage of a state-wide zoning or districting act. This act provides that any city may by ordinance divide itself into districts, limiting the use, height and bulk of improvements. These districts may segregate the various classes of business and industries and determine the specific locations for apartment houses, for two-family dwellings, and single-family dwellings.

Eighteen planning commissions in California are now acting under this authority. New ordinances have been prepared for Fresno, Palo Alto, San Rafael and Turlock, and it is expected to have these established shortly. It is anticipated that within a year there will be at least forty city planning commissions in California.

The Billboard Nuisance

Los Angeles has a billboard ordinance, states the *Indianapolis News*, that is significant because passed after the decision of the United States Supreme Court holding the Chicago ordinance valid and based on the ruling of the court in that case. The ruling is referred to on the following page. Two features of this decision, that billboards may be prohibited as a menace in the sheltering of a nuisance, as a danger to passers, or a fire hazard, rather than as an offense to the eye; and that the consent of property holders to the erection of billboards may be required, are recognized in the Los Angeles ordinance. A central business district, a semi-business district, a suburban and a residence district are set apart by the law. In the business district no new restrictions are placed on the maintenance of the signs; in the semi-business district the consent of 51 per cent of the property frontage is required for the erection of boards more than twelve square feet—not twelve feet square; in the suburban district ordinary billboards can be erected, but they must be at least fifty feet from any residence; in the resi-

dence district an ordinary billboard cannot be erected either with or without the consent of property holders.

The passage of this ordinance followed a bitter fight. The billboards were made the chief issue in a city election and the candidates opposing restriction were decisively defeated. The councilman who proposed the ordinance was one of the leaders of his ticket. Advantages urged for the measure are that it is adjustable to the growth of the city and effective in the removal of the advertising signs in the districts where they are most offensive.

The case indicates that when the billboard issue is put before the people the decision is likely to be favorable to civic cleanliness and beauty. As time passes the billboards become more numerous and more offensive. It ought to be possible for property owners in the districts affected to prevent damage being done to their property.

An Electric Station Building in the Canal Zone

The roof of an electric station building recently erected at Cristobal, in the Panama Canal Zone, is supported by central columns, and the side walls bear no weight, but are suspended from the eaves. Says *Engineering and Contracting*: "In order to assure the electric charging station at the Cristobal terminal of the Panama Canal against settlement, it was constructed with a continuous reinforced concrete beam which extends the length of the building on the center columns, and from which the side walls are literally suspended by means of cantilever beams set at intervals of 10 feet. The walls are only 4 in. thick. The wall on the sea side is made fast to the paving by means of anchor bolts. . . . The weight of the building is carried on a row of columns extending along the longitudinal axis, and these columns are supported on the steel and concrete caissons, on which rests the paving at the head of the slip. On the side next the land the paving is supported on timber piles which have settled slightly."

University Chair in Civic Art

Sheffield University, of Sheffield, England, has recently established a Chair in Civic Art and Professor William Rothenstein has been appointed to the position. This appointment is of peculiar interest, in that it marks the growing disposition of great educational foundations to recognize the importance of instruction in the esthetic aspects of city planning and administration.

THE AMERICAN ARCHITECT

War Teaches Building Ideas

ITALY HAS DEVELOPED COMMUNITY HOUSE

British architects and town-planning experts, who are making plans for a great remodeling of British cities after the war, declare that one of the most successful experiments in new types of industrial and urban housing is that which has been made by the Italian Good Dwellings Society in Rome. The idea of adopting something similar in England has been proposed.

"The Italian society," says a report on the Rome experiment, "has erected a block of working class flats containing 800 dwellings, designed for all types and sizes of families. The flats are built on four sides of a square, with a garden in the center, in which the 'children's house' stands by itself.

"This central building also contains a 'surgery,' where a doctor is in attendance at stated times and any tenant may have free advice. If tenants need attention in their own apartments there is a fee of 20 cents. Twice a week the doctor examines all the school children.

"The buildings are equipped with numerous bathrooms but hot water is obtainable only at stated times. The flats are of various sizes. Overcrowding is forbidden, and families must move into larger flats as their numbers increase. The largest flats are designed to accommodate the parents and five children. Tenants who rise above a certain standard in the care of their dwellings receive a percentage of their rent back in an annual bonus."

Billboards and the Supreme Court

In the 1917 year book of the American Scenic and Historic Preservation Society attention is called to a recent and very important decision of the United States Supreme Court. Mr. Justice Clarke delivered this opinion on January 15, 1917, in the case of Thomas Cusack Company, plaintiff in error, against the City of Chicago et al. It sustains the constitutionality of Section 707 of the Building Ordinance of the City of Chicago. This provides that no billboard shall be erected in any city block in which one-half of the buildings are used for residential purposes, without the consent of the owners of a majority of the frontage. The full text of the voluminous opinion is presented in the year book referred to.

To Restore a Historic Hotel

The Hotel Association of New York will raise sufficient funds to restore the Noble Rose Hotel, at Furnes, Belgium, as their gift to the Belgian people. An architect will be commissioned to visit Belgium and report the amount needed for its restoration.

The Noble Rose is one of the most famous hostels in Europe. Always exceedingly popular with Americans, it was frequently used as a headquarters by King Albert. It was built in 1832. Shell fire and later visits from Germans ruined it.

Deterioration in Heating Value of Coal During Storage

The Bureau of Mines, Washington, D. C., has issued an illustrated 40 pp. booklet on this subject which can be had of the Government Printing Office for *ten cents* (Bulletin 136, Bureau of Mines). A similar series of experiments, begun in 1910, has been summarized by the University of Illinois in Bulletin No. 97, Engineering Experiment Station. This may be had without charge on application to C. R. Richards, Director, Urbana, Ill.

"Doing Their Bit"

Paul S. Howes of the architectural firm of Howes & Howes, Springfield, Mass., has been commissioned in the Engineer Corps, and will be engaged in special work in the Ordnance Department in Washington.

George F. Diemer of Block & Diemer, architects Rochester, N. Y., has been commissioned a second lieutenant in the Aviation Corps of the army, and has joined his corps at Morrison, Va.

Personals

John Noyes, for the past four years landscape architect to the Missouri Botanical Garden, St. Louis, Mo., has opened an office for the professional practice of landscape architecture in the Central National Bank Building, St. Louis. Mr. Noyes retains his connection with the Botanical Garden.



Gas Boilers

The Peerless Heater Company of Pittsburgh, in a recent catalog, sets forth the advantages of natural gas for heating purposes and points out the claims for its superiority as a fuel over coal. Figures are cited to prove these statements. Recommendations are also given to steam fitters in regard to the installation of this company's Peerless Patented Gas Boilers, while a number of illustrations show important buildings where they are already in use.

Natural gas has been a practical factor for only about a quarter of a century, and has been, it is stated, grossly wasted. It is now known, however, that the supply is not inexhaustible, but that by economy and a wise use of this most valuable natural resource the flow of natural gas can be greatly conserved. This is claimed to have been accomplished in the construction of this particular type of gas boilers.

Surveying and Drawing Instruments

The Eugene Dietzgen Company of Chicago, with branch offices in principal cities, in a revised price list gives illustrations and data in regard to its drawing materials and surveying instruments. Specific information as to the large line of drawing materials made and handled by the company is supplied in the catalog.

New Ideas in Vacuum Cleaning

The principles that have proved the valuable efficiency of the vacuum cleaner have been, we learn from a pamphlet recently issued by Dodge and Zuill of Syracuse, N. Y., applied to the modern laundry machine for washing purposes. These washing machines are constructed entirely of metal; the heavy copper tub is tin-lined, and fitted with a removable one-piece cover. No wood enters into

their composition. The motor equipment is the usual form for a vacuum cleaner.

The pamphlet illustrates a considerable range in sizes and capacity, and shows by a number of illustrations the convenient attachment of the washing machines to the usual laundry equipment. We learn from the booklet that these machines received the highest award in their class at the Panama-Pacific International Exposition. As a new feature of laundry equipment their merits would appear to be worthy of investigation.

Tile

A portfolio issued by the Enfield Pottery and Tile Works of Enfield, Pa., contains a number of loose leaves illustrating the artistic adaptation of the tile made by this company. As one of the oldest materials for interior decoration tile has always possessed considerable interest for architects, and by means of this method of showing actual results architects are enabled to become intimately acquainted with the artistic possibilities of the tile made by this company. The portfolio can be had on application.

Designs in Pipe Organs

In a handsomely illustrated catalog recently issued, the Hook & Hastings Company, with main office and works at Kendal Green, Mass., sets forth the advantages of its special makes of pipe organs. This historic instrument has been slowly perfected through the centuries, until to-day the finished product, it would seem, is before us in many such examples as those under consideration.

While in European cathedrals and churches the great organs, representing a lifetime of patient effort on the part of their constructors, remain unsurpassed, the instruments of to-day prove that the les-

THE AMERICAN ARCHITECT

sons of bygone ages have been fully learned, and, it can be suggested, even improved upon. At least, the inventions of the present, the use of electricity, the many appliances, and elaborate apparatus, have gone far in placing the best music within the reach of all who hear it. For instance, it is stated in this Hook & Hastings catalog, in regard to their Solo Auto Player, that, by a simple control, this instrument "will render a solo on any of the manuals, a separate accompaniment on any other manual, and a bass accompaniment on the pedal organ; or all can be played in unison on the entire organ simultaneously."

Still other ingenious devices have been arranged for organs installed in private residences. The whole subject is included in one of the allied arts that come within the limits of the architectural profession.

Concrete Highways

In a booklet published by the Portland Cement Association, 111 West Washington Street, Chicago, several problems as to the construction of concrete highways appear to be successfully handled. The building and repair of roads where particularly heavy traffic is expected, the cold-weather construction of concrete roads, the use of "concealed joints" in a certain type of highway—all these questions, as well as others, are fully dealt with. A list is given of firms who, it is claimed, are using concrete construction for roadways with particularly satisfactory results.

"Creo-dipt" Thatched Roofs

The illustrated pamphlet issued by the Creo-dipt Company, Inc., of North Tonawanda, N. Y., deals with the subject of thatched roofs, or the present-day imitation of this highly picturesque roof covering, and illustrates the methods used by this company in treating their "weathered straw" shingles in tones of green, brown and red. An ingenious style of roofing has been evolved.

Fire Protection Hardware

The recent catalog issued by James Bates & Son, of 1934 Front Street, Philadelphia, gives specifications and prices in regard to fire doors, ventilator controlling rods, and wrought iron hardware. The company states that they are also prepared to manufacture to order hardware specialties in iron and steel.

Full directions are given in this catalog for hanging the Peters sliding fire door appliances. The

"panic exit door" bolts and latches manufactured by this company for use in public buildings are warranted to be "fool proof," and surely, in view of possible disasters, too great precautions along these lines cannot be taken.

An interesting minor product of this company are ornamental wrought iron hinges, their design having apparently been suggested by medieval models.

Water Softeners and Purifiers

In a booklet published by the William Graver Tank Works, East Chicago, Ind., much valuable information is given in regard to the chemical analysis of water. "Hardness," it is stated, means the presence of soluble salts of calcium, magnesium, iron and aluminum, constituents which serve to destroy much of the water's usefulness. The Bartlett-Graver water softener and purifier aims, by a chemical process, to precipitate these ingredients, so that they can be mechanically removed.

Several types of water softeners and filters are described in this booklet, and detailed information is given in regard to their construction. Some interesting statements are made. For instance, water may be "temporarily" or "permanently" hard, according to whether its ingredients can or can not be precipitated by boiling. A completely softened water also should not contain any sulphates, chlorides, or nitrates of either magnesium or calcium. The Bartlett-Graver Company especially point to their representative installations in ice plants, where their methods, it is claimed, have been particularly valuable.

Vertical Files for Drawings and Blueprints

In devising a working method for the proper care of photographs, blueprints, drawings, etc., the Eugene Dietzgen Company of Chicago, New York, and other cities, claim to have found the solution of a puzzling question. Their illustrated booklet sets forth several styles of wall and floor cases, fitted out with ingenious attachments to prevent the creasing or tearing of their contents.

Larger files for the storing of transferred matter in vaults and filing rooms seem to have the advantage of occupying a minimum of space, while still entirely available. A simple plan for indexing the contents of the files is also suggested. Architects might find it worth their while to investigate the claims for such products, thereby saving themselves much time and annoyance.



DETAIL, CHURCH OF S. MARIA MAGGIORE, ROME

THE AMERICAN ARCHITECT