

TOWN-PLANNING AND HOUSING.

*Supplement to
The Architectural Review*

TOWN PLANNING IN BERLIN

BY RAYMOND UNWIN



BERLIN has been growing very rapidly in recent years. It has outgrown the provisions for intercommunication in the centre, and is so rapidly spreading in the suburbs that, inspite of much town-planning work carried out by the indi-

vidual local authorities, the need for some comprehensive scheme covering the whole ground has become imperative. There are certain points in the city where great congestion of traffic exists. This is due to various causes, one of the most potent of which is the influence of the lines of railway, which have the effect of stopping free communication from east to west for a considerable distance both on the north and south of the Tiergarten. Taking Unter den Linden and its continuation westward through the Tiergarten as a sort of axis line through the city, there are on the north of it two important stations, the Lehrter Bahnhof and the Stettiner Bahnhof, which, with

their sidings, form a very definite bar to east-and-west traffic north of the Spree. To the south are two other important stations, the Potsdamer Bahnhof and the Anhalter Bahnhof, which in turn, with their sidings, form an equally effective bar south of the Potsdamer Platz. The result is great congestion of traffic in this Platz, where much of the ordinary vehicular and all the street-car traffic from east to west in the centre of the city crosses the considerable north-to-south traffic between



The avenue seen in the centre is Unter den Linden, leading to the Tiergarten. The domed building on the right is the new Cathedral, and that on the left the Royal Palace.
VIEW OF BERLIN FROM THE TOWER OF THE RATHAUS

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the two groups of railway stations, as well as other north-to-south traffic guided to this point by the railway lines. It should be explained that Unter den Linden is not allowed to be used for street-tram or car traffic, and a glance at the map of Berlin will show that south of Unter den Linden the Leipzigerstrasse is the first street which runs through from east to west with any communication at both ends to other main thoroughfares.

Another point of great congestion exists at the other end of the Leipzigerstrasse in the Spittelmarkt, where much of the street traffic coming from the Old Town passes on its way to the Leipzigerstrasse and the west of Berlin.

The Alexander Platz, the Monbijou Platz, and

bassadors and the Houses of Parliament; and if, further, we could imagine this avenue leading at once direct into and through the centre of Hyde Park, then we should perhaps have some parallel to the way in which the central features of Berlin group themselves along and at the two ends of Unter den Linden.

Here in London, with the municipal centre in the City and the royal centre partly at Westminster and partly at the end of the Mall, no such sense of total effect is obtained as that which characterises the central area of Berlin. The Tiergarten, too, through which pass some of the busiest roads in the city, and which in size and shape is similar to Hyde Park and Kensington



EASTERN END OF UNTER DEN LINDEN, WITH ROYAL PALACE

the Belle Alliance Platz, are all additional points where great concentration of traffic takes place and where relief is required.

Berlin is a city having a central area much more definitely concentrated in character than anything in London. If we could imagine Buckingham Palace, Marlborough House, and several other of the royal palaces, together with the British Museum and the National Gallery, grouped around St. Paul's Cathedral in the City, with a long straight avenue such as Unter den Linden taking the place of Ludgate Hill and Fleet Street, and at the end of this, about where Aldwych enters the Strand, a collection of the Ministries and their residences, such as we have in Whitehall, with the residences of all the foreign am-

Gardens combined, is nowhere enclosed by railings, but is open night and day. Traversed as it is in many directions by long straight alleys through the trees, this great open space forms a much more intimate part of Berlin than do the great parks of London, railed off from the ordinary life and traffic, and this in spite of the fact that much of the Tiergarten resembles a forest rather than a park.

The old heart of Berlin, which occupies roughly a circular area, having as its centre the large island formed by the division of the Spree (on which stand the Royal Palace and many other public buildings, including the new cathedral), is characterised by the usual mediaeval type of irregular plan, the roads following the lines of



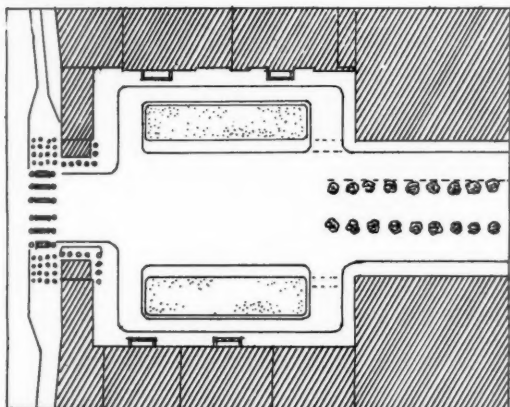
PLAN OF THE CENTRE OF BERLIN

TOWN PLANNING IN BERLIN



THE BRANDENBURGER THOR, WHICH CLOSES
THE WESTERN END OF UNTER DEN LINDEN

old fortifications, the banks of the river, or, possibly, ancient field-tracks. But much of the newer town surrounding this area is marked by more formal plans, particularly the area immediately to the west, which is laid out on rectangular lines with many long straight roads. Of these the chief is Unter den Linden, which, continuing in a straight line from the Schloss right through the Tiergarten to Charlottenburg, forms a very definite east-and-west axis-line to the modern plan of Berlin. The Friedrichstrasse



PLAN OF PARISER PLATZ AND BRANDENBURGER THOR
AS PROPOSED TO BE ALTERED



SEMI-CIRCULAR SPACE TO THE WEST OF THE
BRANDENBURGER THOR, WITH TIERGARTEN BEYOND

crosses it at right angles and forms a north-to-south axis-line some 3,200 metres long.

Unter den Linden is a finely-proportioned avenue. It gives the impression of being less in width than its actual 60 metres, I think, because of the great width of the central avenue between the two roadways, which, when looking at the street from either of the side footways, is not quite realised, the width of the half-roadway immediately in the foreground being the one which chiefly strikes the eye.

This noble street was laid out in the seventeenth century. Dr. Brinckmann says Blessen-

dorf made a sketch for the area north of the Lindenallee, and in 1673 marked out the streets, while the great architect Nering, under Frederick the First's direction, prepared a building plan for the district south of the Lindenallee shortly afterwards. The first building here was erected in 1688. Nering prepared designs for many of the buildings along the streets, and apparently the elevations of the buildings which he did not design had to be approved by him in order to secure unity of effect.

The fine Brandenburg Thor, which closes the western end of the street and forms the gateway to the Tiergarten, was

designed by C. G. Langhans and built about 1790. It has five different passages separated by Doric columns, and is flanked by colonnades which are used as footways and are connected with the guardroom, the whole being surmounted by the bronze figure of Victory standing in a chariot driving four horses, which, since its recovery from Napoleon, is placed driving into the city. The street at this end opens out into the Pariser Platz, a square measuring about 400 ft. each way, which, together with the Brandenburger Thor, makes an impressive terminal. At the other end the street really terminates in the Schloss Bridge and the Imperial Palace, although beyond the great Frederick Statue the avenue of trees is discontinued and the treatment is more that of an open *place*; indeed, parts of it are called the Opernhaus Platz and the Zeughaus Platz. Around these two *places* and across the bridge are grouped the main public buildings of Berlin.

GREATER BERLIN

The problem of dealing more effectively with Greater Berlin has been under consideration for

some years. The chief architectural societies drew up a report in 1907, which was published under the title of "Gross-Berlin." In this was included a sketch programme of a competition for securing a new town plan for Greater Berlin, which should include a reorganisation of the existing railways where necessary, the provision of new railway communications, both internal and suburban, and the provision also of suitable railway accommodation for handling goods traffic



VIEW IN TIERGARTEN, SHOWING MONUMENT TO FREDERICK WILLIAM III



UNTER DEN LINDEN, WITH MONUMENT TO FREDERICK THE GREAT IN CENTRE

TOWN PLANNING IN BERLIN



Wertheim shop premises on left.
LEIPZIGER PLATZ AND LEIPZIGERSTRASSE

and accommodating the factories and workshops; for Berlin, as well as being a capital city, is a very large industrial centre. The scheme was also to include such improvements in the streets of existing Berlin as would relieve the traffic congestion at the various points, either by making new streets, by widening old ones, or by diverting existing street junctions. Provision was also to be made for the rapid growth of the suburbs of Berlin, and consideration given to radiating and ring streets and street-railways, including the provision of sufficient areas properly provided with the conveniences of railway and water carriage, to allow ample scope for the development of the city's industries. Finally, suggestions were to be included for dealing with open spaces, parks, playgrounds, and pleasure-places generally, including lakes for boating and suitable places for exhibitions and race-courses; also proper provision for cemeteries, the placing and designing of which receives much greater attention in Germany than in England. The ground to be brought within the area of the competition was that lying within a circle having a radius of fifteen miles from the centre of Berlin, including a population of some three and a

half millions. The problem to solve was a truly gigantic one, but twenty-seven competitors have been found willing to face it. A committee was formed, representing the municipal authorities of Berlin itself, with ten important and something like a hundred minor local authorities having jurisdiction within the area prescribed, and £8,000 was subscribed by these bodies for the purpose of instituting a competition. This has now taken place, and the schemes which have been submitted formed one of the most interesting features of the Town Planning Exhibition recently held in the Royal School of Art at Charlottenburg.

An examination of the schemes reveals very considerable diversity of opinion as to the best methods of dealing with the great problem; and it is interesting to find that the competition is generally recognised as being a preliminary step only in the development of a scheme suitable to be carried out. The chief competitors have gone into the matter with very great thoroughness. Several of them have printed the description of their proposals in the form of quite bulky publications. Some of the schemes have been based on a very close study of the conditions, notably the scheme by Hermann



To the left of the footway is a riding track under the trees, and beyond that is the carriage way, this arrangement being repeated on the other side, with statues.
THE SIEGES ALLEE, IN THE TIERGARTEN

Jansen—one of the two prize-winners whom the jury bracketed equal for the first place. This shows an absolute knowledge of all the land around Berlin which possesses special beauty, or is particularly adapted to be preserved as open space.

The scheme adjudged to follow the two first in order is the work of the architect Bruno Möhring in co-operation with Professor Rudolph Eberstadt the economist and Richard Petersen the engineer. It is certainly one of the most interesting, and shows the great value to be derived from the association of a skilled economist and sociologist in such work as the laying out of a city. The monograph on this scheme includes a valuable plan of Berlin, illustrating graphically the relative density of population in different parts of the city and the amount of increase since 1880, while a very careful examination of the bearing of town planning upon land values (a subject of which Professor Eberstadt is a master) itself makes the treatise of interest far outside the limits of Berlin. An illustration is here given (see p. 102) showing Prof. Eberstadt's proposal to meet the difficulty of the high value of land on the main road frontages by continuing to build block dwellings fronting on to the main roads, while at the same time developing the interior of the parcels of land by means of much less expensive roads, so making it possible to build cottages in this position. Professor Möhring's coloured sketches show a masterly handling of the architectural problems.

While one competitor recommends the formation of five great radiating roads leading outwards from Berlin, supplied with a street or suburban railway, and three circular lines of railway passing round the city at different distances from the centre, some of the others consider that these suggestions are not economically sound. Some favour the retention of a complete belt of country round the present Berlin and the development of



CHARLOTTENBURG: BISMARCKSTRASSE AND BERLINERSTRASSE

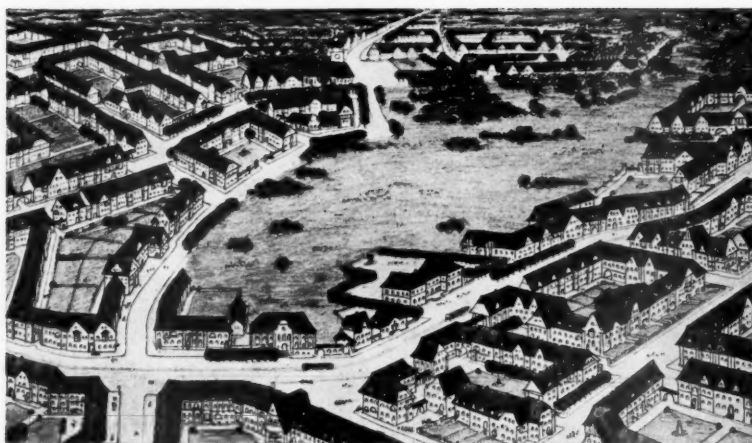


Note tramways with grass plots on either side.

CHARLOTTENBURG: HARDENBERGSTRASSE, WITH ROYAL SCHOOL OF ART

a ring of suburbs beyond. Others consider it better that the open spaces should be so arranged as to reach inwards towards the centre and radiate outwards to the ring of natural country beyond the suburbs. Some take it for granted that, apart from the islands of ground reserved for open spaces, the suburbs will spread evenly outwards, like the expanding margin of the rising water in a shallow lake, while another competitor seeks a solution of the problem in the creation of numerous little townlets and villages linked together with railways, roads, and waterways, but each forming a complete colony having its own centre, and in many cases its own industrial area for factories and workshops.

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SCHEME FOR SUBURBAN DEVELOPMENT OF BERLIN, BY HERMANN JANSEN

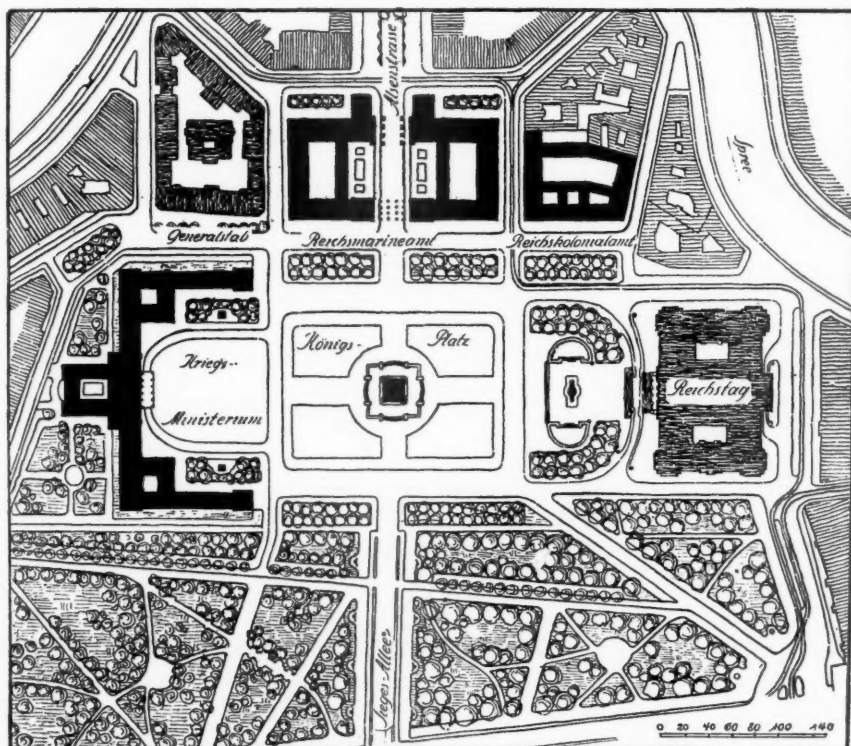
The association of railway engineers with some of the competitors lends a new feature of interest and actuality to their methods of dealing with the railway problem. Some proceed on the lines of moving the great railway stations further from the heart of Berlin and leaving more room there, while others (I think decidedly the more influential) recommend the linking-up of all the railways and the formation of one central station for the interchange of traffic. Several schemes for this are planned with great care, some of them carrying the linking lines through Berlin underground, and arranging for the great central station to be below street level. In this matter of railway communication Berlin is much like London, having a cluster of important stations to the north of the Tiergarten and another cluster to the south. A large amount of traffic takes place between these two groups of stations and greatly increases the congestion, due to the fact that nearly all the east-to-west traffic of Berlin is also concentrated in this small area between the two groups.

It is particularly noteworthy that, although town-planning powers have been exercised for many years by the different municipalities around Berlin, for want of common action and a

central body co-ordinating their work, many parts of Berlin, though well planned as isolated portions, have grown up with little more proper relation to the whole plan of the city than we find in the different areas of London. It is the realisation of this fact which has led to the great competition alluded to above, and it is hoped that, general interest in the subject having been stimulated by the exhibition of the schemes, some authority will be formed for dealing with Greater Berlin

as a whole. To us in London this may be taken as a very forcible indication of the importance of securing the proper co-operation of all the different local authorities now possessing town-planning powers, and the co-ordination of their different plans under the guidance of some central body, either voluntary or statutory. It is a good sign that a commencement has already been made in this direction by the organisation of a voluntary advisory committee under the auspices of the National Housing and Town Planning Council.

With regard to the style of the planning displayed in the competitive schemes for Greater Berlin, in the main this follows the irregular lines



PLAN OF SCHEME FOR TREATMENT OF KÖNIGS PLATZ, BY BRUNO MÖHRING

TOWN PLANNING IN BERLIN

which have characterised the German work since Camillo Sitte drew the attention of town-planners to the beauties of mediaeval towns: see suggestions by Hermann Jansen for street improvements around the Belle Alliance Platz (p. 102), also his sketch for suburban development (p. 100). There are, however, not wanting very distinct signs of reaction from excessive irregularity; and certainly a more formal and regular treatment would show greater sympathy with Berlin as it exists, and would tend to preserve the marked individuality which the present city possesses.

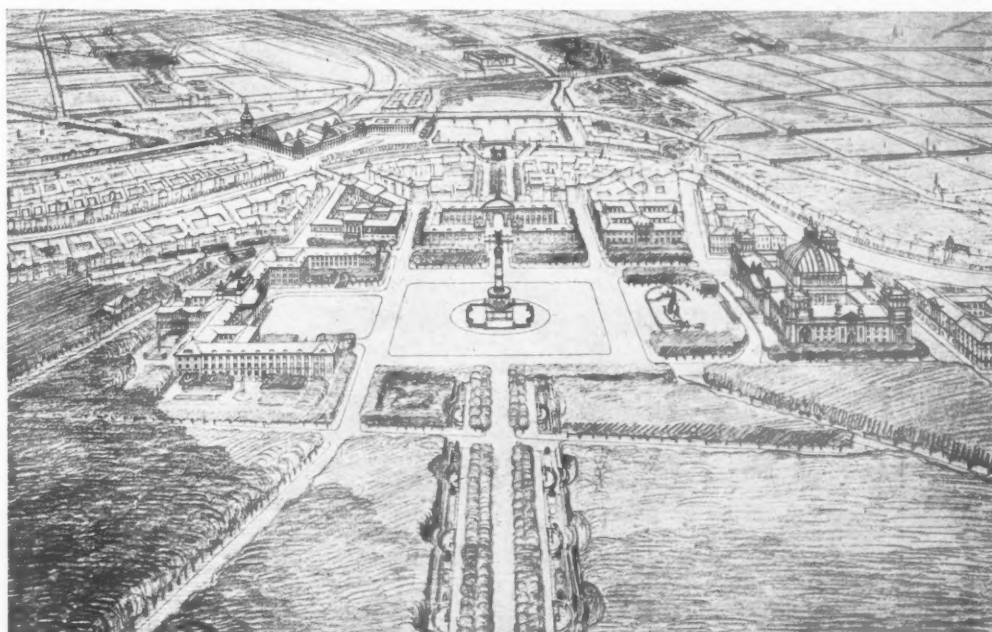
I think there is little doubt that the influence of architecture upon town planning in Germany will be very strongly in the direction of more formal and architectural treatment. There is a marked degree of unity in the general style of

with the newer thought and requirements; and Messel has been followed by Hoffmann and others, many of whose buildings are of great beauty. The number of such buildings is already giving character to some parts of Berlin. One has only to look at the fine sketch-designs for the treatment of the Königs Platz and other proposed new places by Bruno Möhring and others, to realise how this broader treatment of the architecture of town buildings is already having its influence, and is tending towards a more formal system of town planning.

BOOK REVIEWS

MEDIAEVAL TOWN PLANNING

At a time when town planning and the lay-out of public spaces is occupying so large a place in the



SKETCH DESIGN FOR TREATMENT OF KÖNIGS PLATZ, BY BRUNO MÖHRING

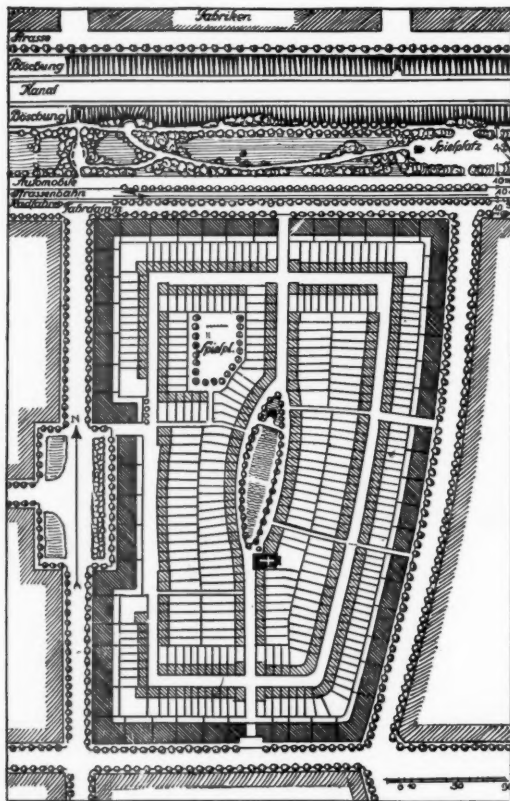
architectural treatment in most of the competitors' schemes. The architects of Berlin seem to be settling down to a style which is at once dignified and restrained, and adapts itself to the requirements of modern buildings. The new Hotel Adlon (by the architects Gause and Leibnetz) in the Unter den Linden is a strikingly successful example which falls into its place among the older buildings around the Pariser Platz and yet bears an unmistakable stamp of originality. The style seems to have profited by the experimental work of earlier architects, which was by no means entirely successful. It owes much to the originality of Otto March, and was brought to a high level by Messel, who seems to have combined much of the fine German Renaissance tradition

architectural mind it is not without a certain curious interest that we turn to a writer who has something to tell us about the lay-out of a mediaeval city. Mr. Heywood is not an architect, and although he has written many books about Italy he is no lover of the Renaissance, so that when he has cause to speak of the buildings erected during that period he describes them as "that vast army of Renaissance buildings which have shamelessly thrust their sacrilegious shoulders among the monuments of a nobler past." The writer of "A History of Perugia" is a true mediaevalist, and being unblinded by what he may perhaps consider the flaunting insincerities and lying boastfulness of the Renaissance, he writes as one inspired. We are brought to under-

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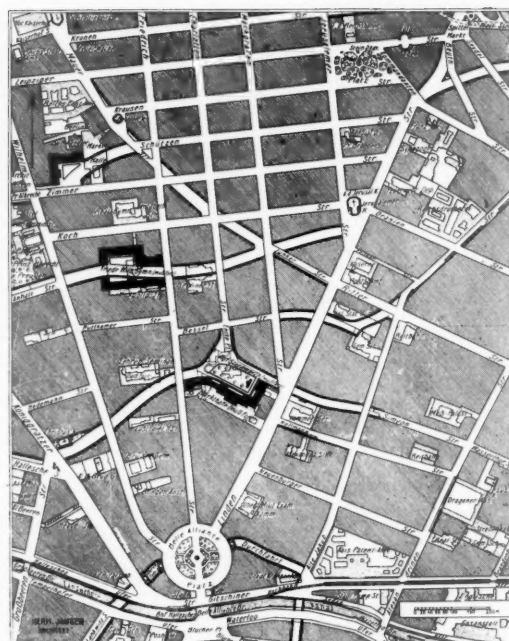
stand all that really matters in planning or designing, whether it be a private house or the central space of a great city. Will scientifically-proportioned streets and nicely calculated converging lines in the city of the future ever produce *quite* the same feeling of reverence and awe mingled with pleasure as we experience in some odd, unplanned, uncalculated corners of—let us say, Florence, Nuremberg, or Bruges? The present writer thinks not, stage effects being unreal.

Those who would learn how Perugia—and it was the same, doubtless, with all other mediaeval cities—took her present shape will find what they seek in the book under review. Mr. Heywood, whose every page positively bristles with notes bearing quiet witness to his erudition, has traced the growth of a mediaeval city so vividly that he almost thrusts us back into that past in which he himself seems to live. He takes us to the Etruscan walls with that splendid gateway named after



High tenement buildings are shown on the street frontages, and cottages on the enclosed area.

PLAN OF HOUSING SCHEME BY
PROFESSOR EBERSTADT



SCHEME FOR TREATMENT OF BELLE ALLIANCE
PLATZ, BY HERMANN JANSEN

Augustus, which in itself bears the imprint of the Etruscans, and then to the Romans and later peoples: he leads us to the Piazza, "the natural, political, commercial, and religious centre, as well as the scene of most of the festivals arranged for the benefit of the populace," and in like manner we are led through the quaint *strade* and *vie* which dive, twist, turn, mount, and again descend, according to the convenience of far-off days or the formation of the ground. Here we find no axial planning, no careful lay-out: yet who shall say that such cities are not as beautiful as modern Paris, Turin, or an American city? So perhaps there may be another side to the question of planning cities.

These matters concern only the last hundred pages of "A History of Perugia." The preceding chapters are exclusively concerned with the history of the city. As such they are less germane to architecture, but for those whose interest in Italy extends beyond her art the book has abiding attractions. It is a history and a bibliography in one, a book in which he who lists may follow a valiant people through all their upward struggles towards a freedom which was never really theirs until the several States of Italy were finally united under one king.

"A History of Perugia." By William Heywood. London: Methuen. 8vo., xvi, 411 pp., and 21 illustrations in monotone. Price 21s. 6d. nett.

R. W. C.