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THE ARCHITECTURAL REVIEW

A Magazine of Architecture & Decoration.



The Bear Inn and St. Mary's Chapel, Castle Street, Reading
From a Drawing by Hanslip Fletcher

JANUARY 1918

27-29, Tothill St., Westminster. London. S.W.

VOL. XLIII

ONE SHILLING NET.

NO. 254



ON YOUR SHOULDERS

— whether you be owner, director, shareholder, consultant, manager, architect, or in any other way connected with an industrial or commercial concern—rests the responsibility of seeing that the consumption of fuel in that undertaking is regulated as science and patriotism demand.

To burn crude coal wherever gaseous fuel can be used in substitution is indefensible waste of a precious national asset, of which we possess far less in proportion than our keenest competitors.

When peace comes—and for long enough after—we shall have to pay for the war (and then to maintain our position among the nations) by increasing our output. Are our industries, our merchant service, and our railways to be hampered by scarce and dear coal?

Science points out the common-sensible alternative. Gasify the coal, getting the maximum of heating power out of each ton of it, and in addition many valuable by-products otherwise lost; then the nation will benefit and likewise the individual, for the experience of war time has proved conclusively that the use of gas means increased production with decreased costs.

That is not a wild statement, as we shall be delighted to demonstrate by concrete instances to anyone who writes to us for particulars.

There is no time to lose: we have already delayed reform too long. Reform there must be; and it is the duty of every British professional and business man to make himself acquainted with the true facts of the fuel problem, than which none other has a more direct bearing on the future of this Empire.

DURING THE WAR

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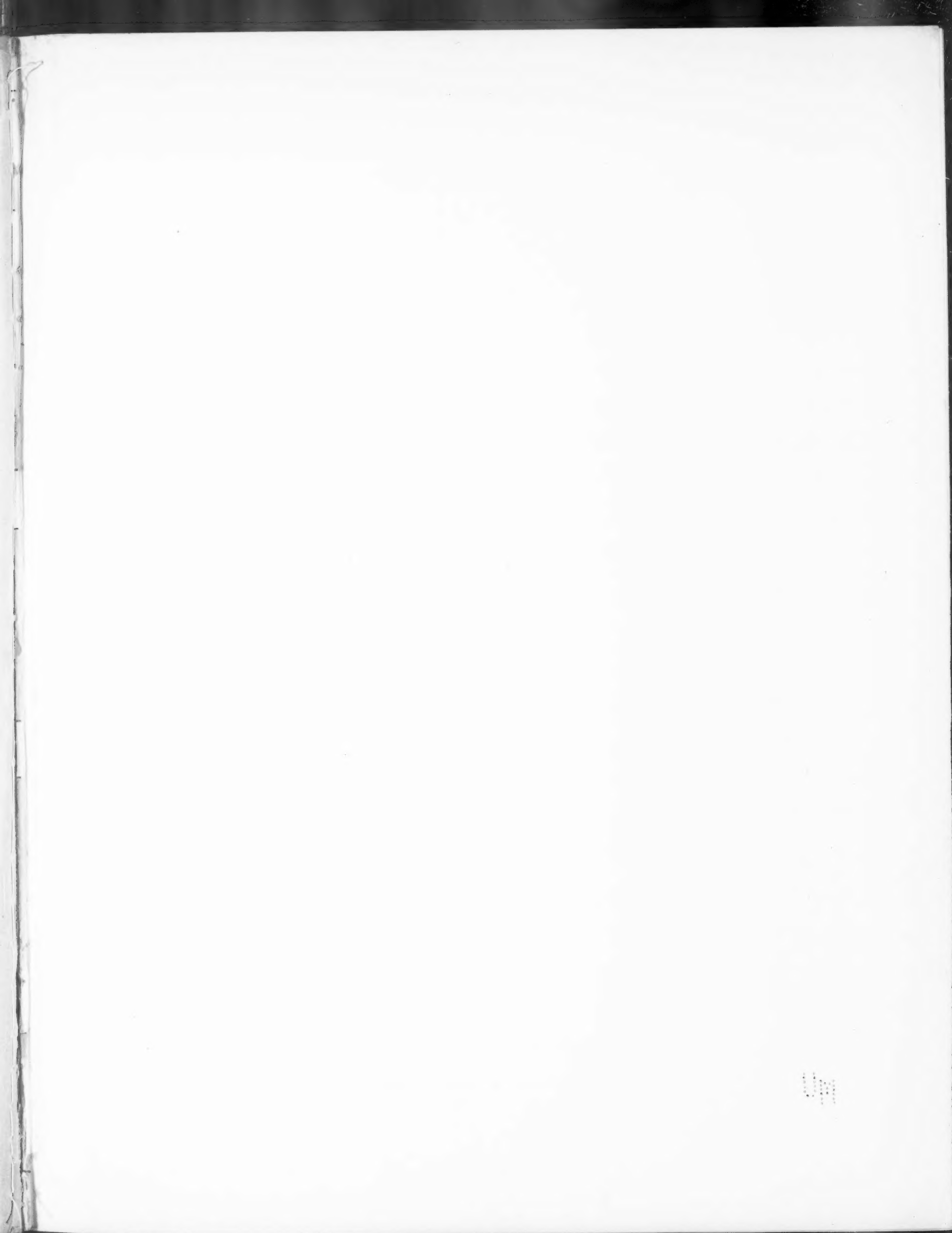
War Needs First—Home Needs After.

* * *

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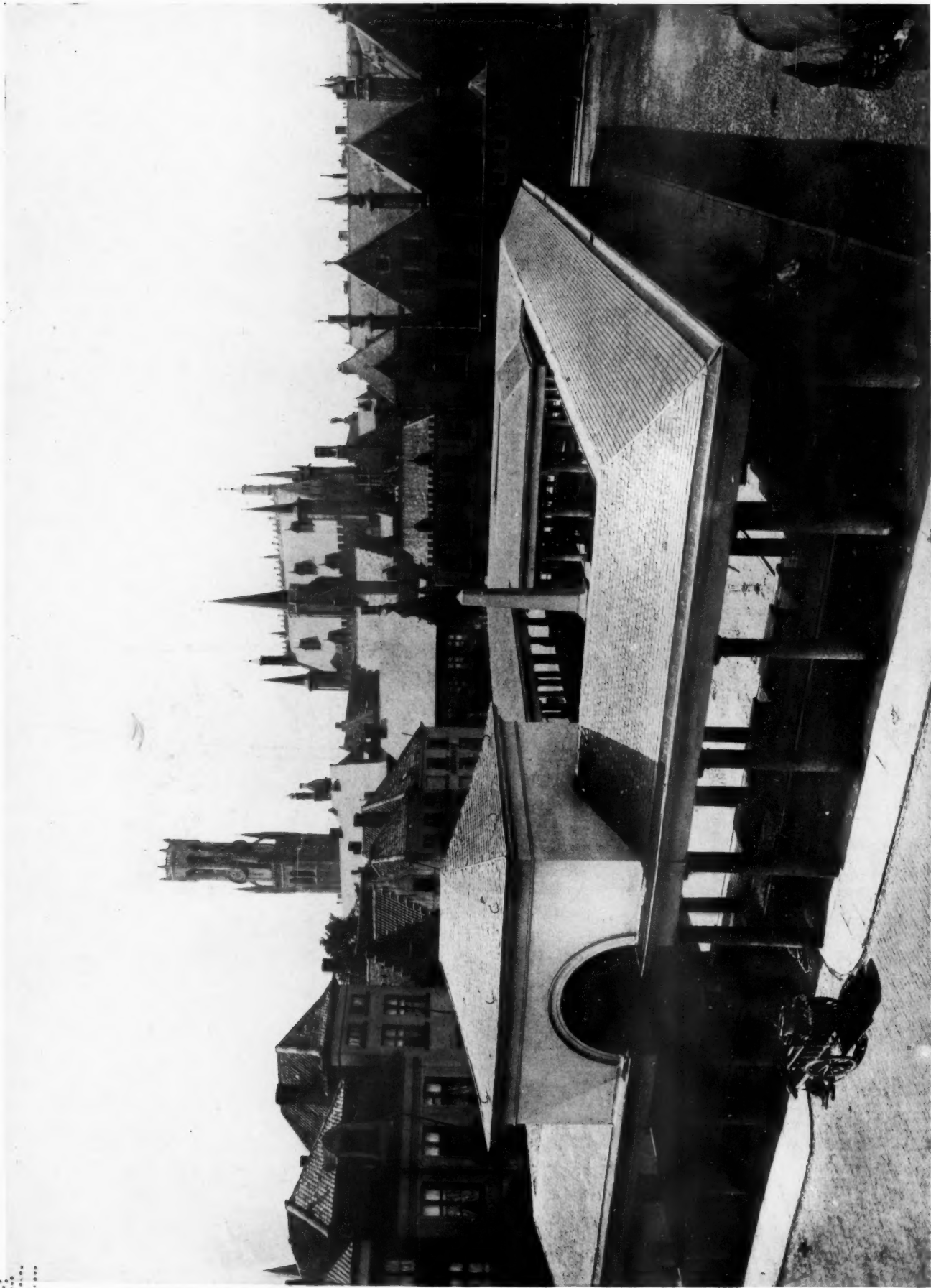


Plate I.

January 1918.

THE MARCHÉ AUX POISSONS IN THE PLACE DE BRAAMBERG, BRUGES, WITH THE BELFRY, HÔTEL DE VILLE, AND
THE PALAIS DU FRANC IN THE DISTANCE.

THE ARCHITECTURE OF BRUGES.—II.

By ARTHUR STRATTON, F.S.A., F.R.I.B.A.

(Continued from p. 116, No. 253.)

IN mediæval times, flat country offered full opportunity for tower and spire building; especially was this realized by builders dwelling amidst the plains and dunes of Western Flanders. For centuries Bruges proclaimed herself to the traveller far afield through the numberless towers, spires, and spirelets which, piercing the sky, made a rich diadem above the clustering roofs of the water-girt city. To this day, the lofty spire of the church of Notre Dame and the great brick tower of the cathedral church of Saint Sauveur command the city almost as much as the Belfry does; while here and there a church tower and a turret, more than usually lofty, rise above the general sky line. But just as the Belfry has been shorn of the greater part of its majesty by the substitution of a stone parapet for its soaring metal-covered *flèche*, so many another building has been robbed of a feature which made it a landmark for miles around and contributed to the sparkling effect which artists so happily seized upon when depicting Bruges at the height of her fame. But it is only with the help of such records that one can now bring back a picture which can scarcely have been equalled elsewhere in Europe.

For many years past, in any view from a height, the three commanding towers have stood out in comparative isolation above a mass of red-tiled roofs crowded together in the most amazing confusion, but, unlike Venice, broken here and there by the verdure of a wooded park or the orderly rows of trees surrounding some open *Place*.

Viewed as a whole, Bruges assuredly gives the impression of a brick-built city. The fact that stone was used for so many of the civic buildings is rather remarkable, seeing that brick was the material most ready to hand, and that in its use the Flemish builders knew how to strike out a line of their own. They handled brick with a confidence that entitles them to rank among the best brick builders that Europe has ever produced; it was in the use of a small material giving excellent colour and texture that these builders excelled. By a judicious blending of warm-coloured brick and stone, good colour effects could be easily obtained, and a sympathetic touch

was unconsciously imparted to the architecture. The fascination of most Flemish towns, and certainly of Bruges, lurks behind this reliance upon texture and colour effects in the buildings *en masse*. If one examines individual designs critically, it will be apparent that they are not characterized by that unity of idea and singleness of purpose that underlies Classic art. The architecture, in short, is not academic. There was nothing in the characters of the men who reared it that could possibly call forth an academic style. Burghers who thought of their freedom and were willing to give their lives for it when occasion demanded, traders who were engrossed in some branch or another of the weaving industry, and artists who loved good craftsmanship more than abstract

ideas, wanted to put into their buildings something of the rugged strength and unbounded vitality which was the essence of their being. But, in the absence of the academic, another ideal has invariably made its appeal and carried all before it—one which finds expression in unrestraint and exuberance of unaffected beauty. If there is one



GENERAL VIEW OF BRUGES IN 1914, LOOKING NORTH-EAST.

word which expresses this quest, it may be summed up as the "picturesque." A dangerous pursuit, that of the "picturesque," because directly it is striven for, it loses its natural spontaneity and ceases to be convincing. The Flemish builders, however, were not self-conscious, and Bruges is essentially picturesque in the best sense of the word. It is not in great buildings, laid out on monumental lines, that one looks for the local character which gives the whole charm to the place; one seeks it rather in the display of native talent which built and adorned according to no preconceived standard of beauty, but nevertheless achieved much through the genius of a beauty-loving people.

That Bruges was a town of much importance in the days when Flanders really was ruled by Flemings, is made evident by the frequent references of chroniclers and by the solid remains of round-arched and early pointed work in stone still to be seen in some of the churches. It is not, however, to study Romanesque or early Gothic architecture that one looks to Bruges, neither do such vestiges of timber construction as have survived throw any light on the methods of early

medieval builders that cannot be gleaned elsewhere. To the historian of Bruges the twelfth and thirteenth centuries are alive with incident; but to the architect they are somewhat barren. Although the city enjoyed fame as a trading centre second to none in the west all through the period when Charles le Bon was contesting the immemorial rights of the "Karls" or freemen, when Thierry d'Alsace was pursuing his ventures as a Crusader, and when Baldwin IX was following up his ambitions in the East, it is to the fourteenth century and to the period when the union of the houses of Flanders and Burgundy saw Bruges installed as the seat of the most brilliant Court in Europe, that the artist involuntarily turns. This most propitious, yet most disastrous, union came about through the marriage of Philippe le Hardi, Duke of Burgundy, with Marguerite, daughter and heiress of Louis de Maele, Count of Flanders. Henceforth the humiliation of Bruges in a political sense was gradually brought about; but for close on a century, in spite of the turmoil of persecution and tyranny meted to the burghers by one unscrupulous ruler after another, the prosperity of Bruges was

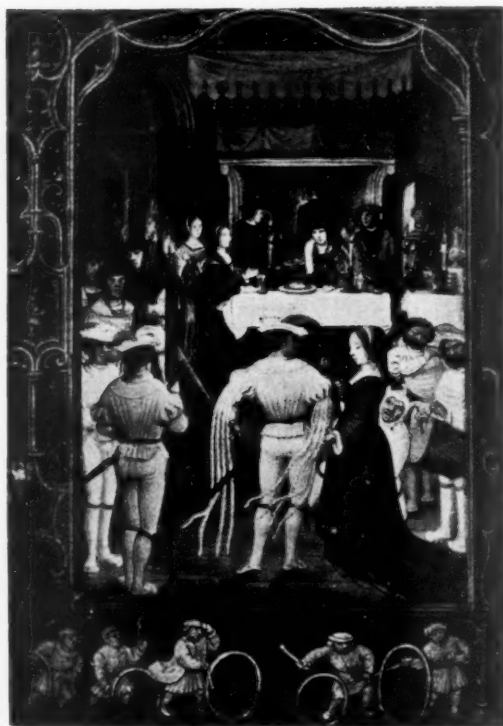
proverbial and the vitality of its arts unquenchable.

Writing of this century of Burgundian rule (1383-1477), a native writer has well expressed the amazing contrast between the downward trend of a Commune groaning under the weight of oppressive burdens and the upward tendency of the arts to a zenith rarely equalled in the world's history. "La Flandre," he says, "perdit toute individualité politique. Elle connut, par contre, durant l'époque bourguignonne, une prospérité commerciale et une grandeur artistique inoubliables. Bruges, pendant le XV^e siècle, fut l'une des cités les plus opulentes de l'Europe occidentale, et, à certains égards, la capitale de l'art Chrétien."*

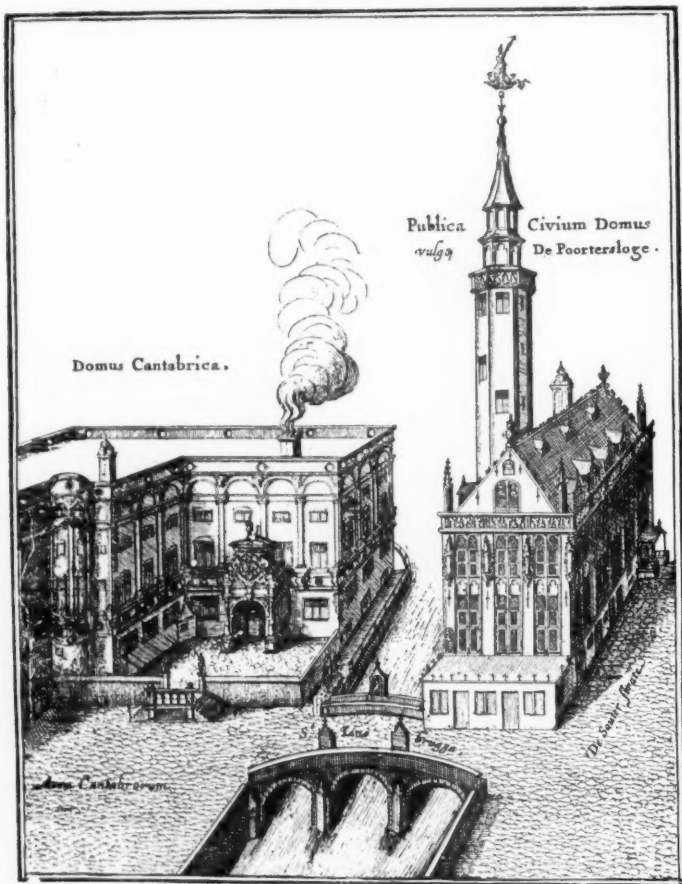
The less mercy these dukes of Burgundy showed to their subjects, the more zealous they seem to have been of the welfare of the arts. Jean sans Peur (1404-19) encouraged Flemish artists to journey to Dijon, fostering on the soil of France, no less than on that of Flanders, the wonderful work of the "imagers" in wood and stone and

marble that he loved so well. Philippe le Bon, too (1419-67),

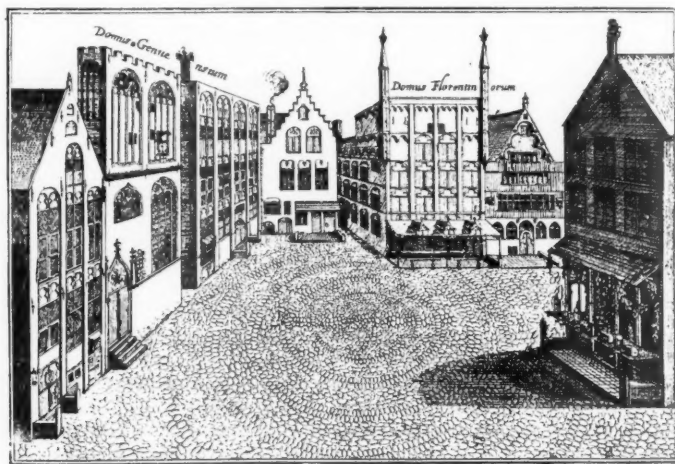
* Psychologie d'une ville: essai sur Bruges, par Fierens-Gevaert, Paris, 1908.



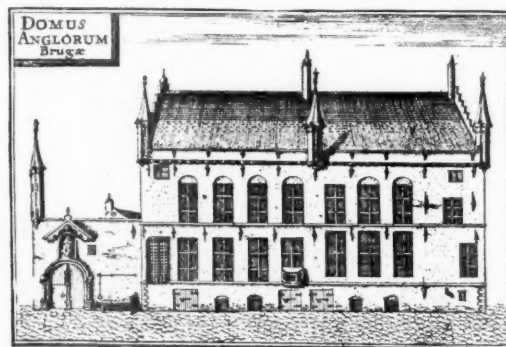
BANQUET SCENE FROM THE EARLY SIXTEENTH CENTURY ILLUMINATED MANUSCRIPT KNOWN AS THE "BOOK OF GOLF," EXECUTED AT BRUGES.



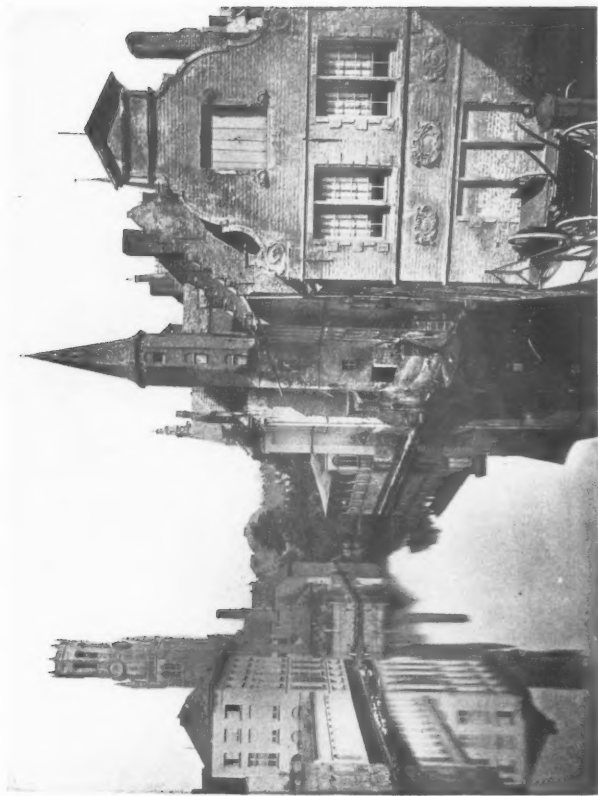
THE POORTERSLOGE AND THE HEADQUARTERS OF THE SPANISH MERCHANTS. From Sanderus.



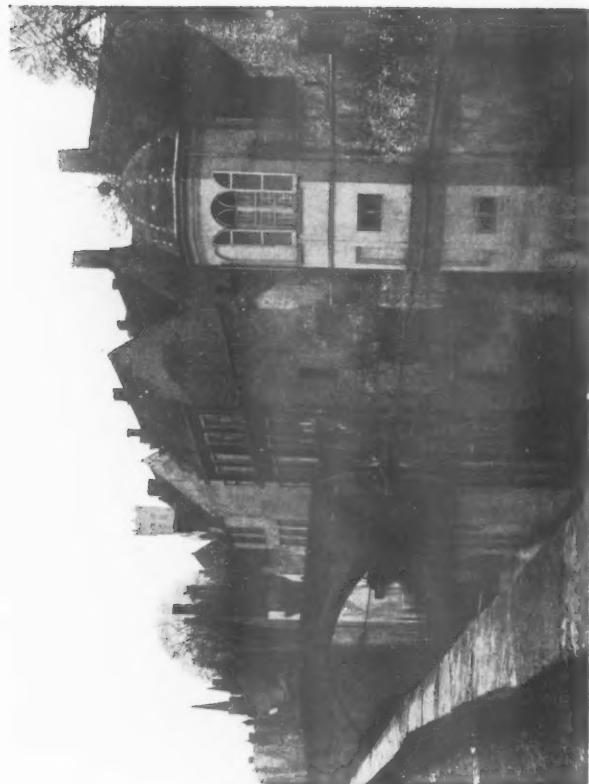
THE ITALIAN HEADQUARTERS AND "BURSA BRUGENSES." From Sanderus.



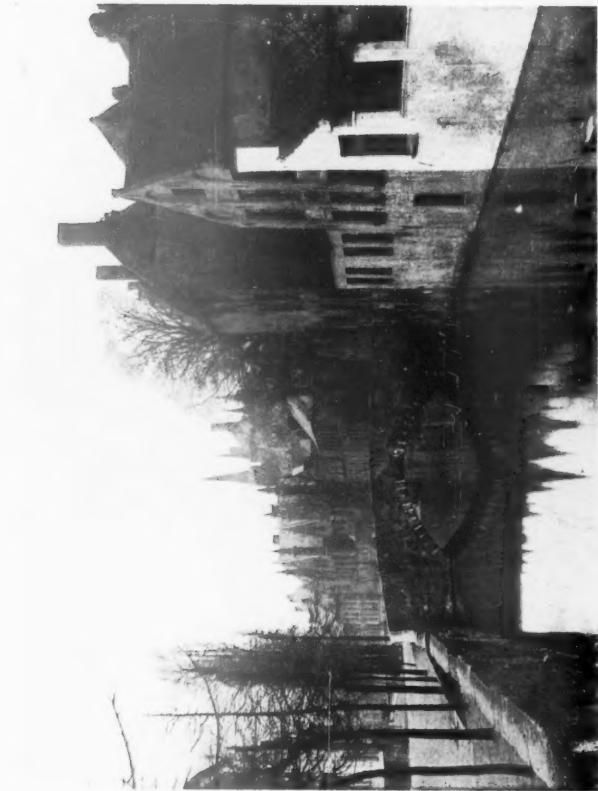
THE ENGLISH HEADQUARTERS. From Sanderus.



View from the Quai du Rosaire.



View from the Quai Vert.



View from the Quai Vert with Palais du Franc in the distance.
January 1918.

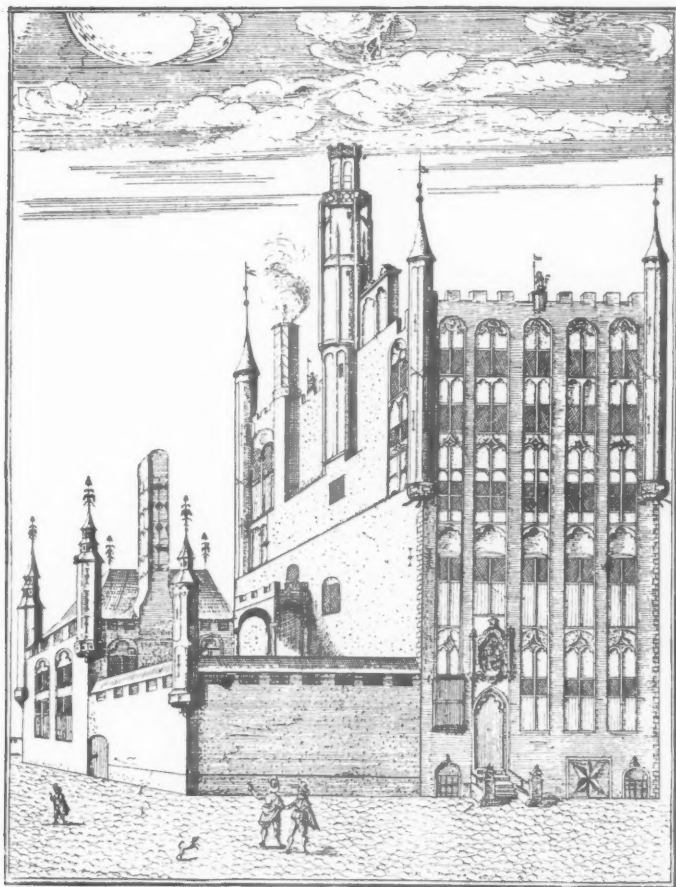


View from the Quai de la Poterie with the Poortersloge in the distance.

Photos: F. R. Yerbury

THE CANALS AND BRIDGES OF BRUGES.

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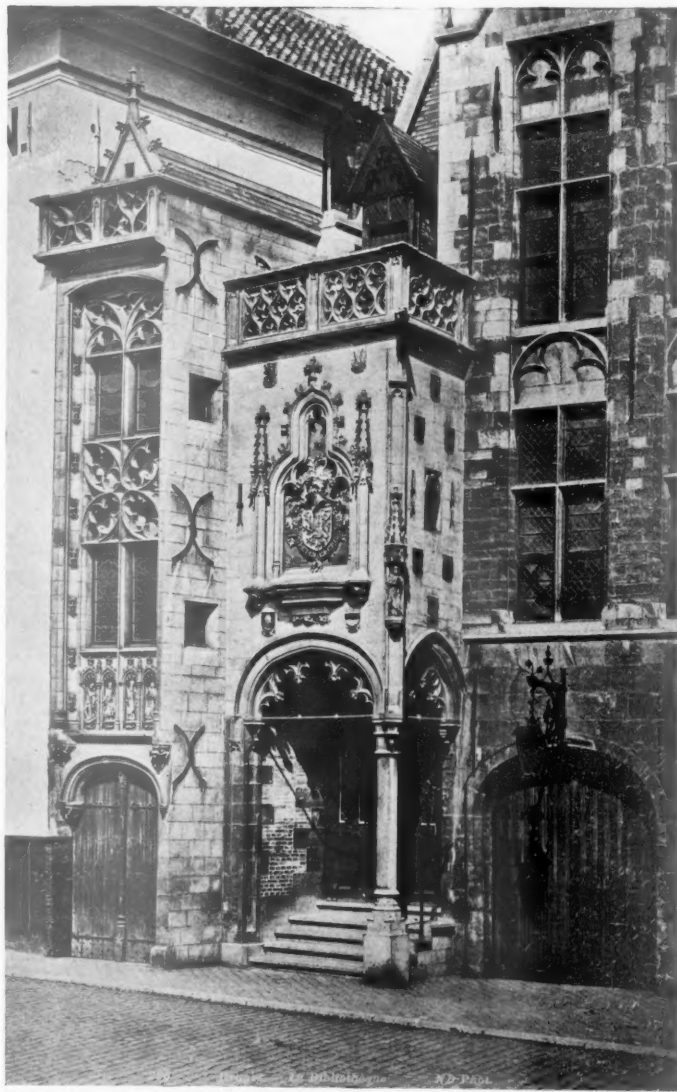
THE HÔTEL DES ORIENTAUX AS BUILT IN 1478.

From Sanderus.

whose affix was not won through any clemency to the people of Bruges, surrounded himself with artists and craftsmen, and numbered Jean van Eyck amongst his closest friends. In 1430, on the occasion of his marriage with Isabelle of Portugal in the church of Notre Dame, he founded the order of the Toison d'Or—the Golden Fleece. At root a political move, this flattered the citizens, inasmuch as it symbolized to them the dignity of their accomplishments, which for centuries had been associated with the weaving industry. In 1468 the nuptials of Charles le Téméraire, the last of the Burgundian rulers of Flanders, with Margaret of York, sister of Edward IV of England, were marked by the most wonderful feastings and revellings. It was an age of jousts, and tourneys, and pageantry, the winding streets and open spaces of the city, ablaze with colour and costly hangings, making the most gorgeous setting for the rich panoply of State processions. Triumphal arches were set up on the line of route, and popular revels were encouraged around fantastic fountains which spouted wine and hydromel.* Fête succeeded fête, and the luxury and display encouraged at Court were reflected on every hand. Chroniclers dwell on the prodigality and sparkling brilliance of scenes which, to at least one English guest, recalled the wonders of the days of King Arthur and his Round Table. From that precious illustrated manuscript ascribed to Simon Bening (1483-1561), now in the British Museum, an excellent idea of the costumes of the period can be obtained, especially from the glimpse of a banquet scene reproduced on page 2.

* That this custom was perpetuated in later days is evident from the woodcuts in that fascinating book "La Tryomphante Entrée de Charles Quint à Bruges," par Maistre Remy Dupuys, Paris, 1515. The fact that *brasseries d'hydromel* existed in Bruges is borne out by Ad. Duclos, "Bruges, Histoire et Souvenirs," 1910, p. 552.

Without this lordly patronage it is not improbable that the best artists and craftsmen would have sought elsewhere the protection without which they could scarcely have pursued their handiworks: it acted as an antidote to the miseries which their autocratic masters sowed only too freely for all outside their magic circles. Bruges suffered cruelly from these haughty ambitions, and Philippe le Bon practically ruined the woollen industry through his ill-timed quarrels with England. Charles, who succeeded him, tried to restore the vital intercourse, but with little success; for the weavers had already flocked to our shores, bringing their secrets with them, and the merchants and bankers had begun to forgather elsewhere. The attractions of the rising port of Antwerp were enticing: no waterway was silting up there and threatening to complete disaster. So the decline in the fortunes of Bruges which began to manifest itself in the fifteenth century was unmistakable before the next century had grown very old, and empty houses could be counted by the thousand. Grave events, inimical to the well-being of the city, were enacted under the rule of Maximilian of Austria, husband of Mary of Burgundy, and religious wars in the reign of Philip II hastened the *débâcle*. By the end of the sixteenth century Bruges had lost commercial as well as political supremacy; since then the wheel of fortune has gone round many times,



THE PORCH TO THE LIBRARY, WITH THE LOGE DES PORTEFAIX ON THE LEFT AND GRAND TONLIEU ON THE RIGHT.

and a nineteenth-century revival was leading to further advance when Belgium was once more engulfed in the cockpit of Europe.

It is the architecture of Bruges reared under the Burgundian régime and during the succeeding decades that is so world-famed. At that time it was not the case of a Commune building a Belfry or a Halle; it was rather the people, linked together in communities or Guilds, who built dwelling-houses and meeting-places, and merchants, both native and foreign, who congregated in colonies, erected sumptuous "hôtels" for their dwellings and for the transaction of their affairs.

Lombard and Venetian merchants with deep-laden argosies;
Ministers from twenty nations; more than royal pomp and ease.

No fewer than sixteen associations of merchants of different nationalities were established within the city, each possessing palatial headquarters; but traces even of many of these are now difficult to discover, while those which have survived have been shorn of all their grandeur. As Marc Gheeraerts in the sixteenth century recorded the general lines of the city in his wonderful bird's-eye plan, so Antonio Sanderus in the seventeenth century drew in more detail the principal buildings, and left in his volumes a priceless record of many a gem which has long since been levelled to the ground.* In the illustration on page 2, the chief of the Italian "hôtels," or "prætoria," as he called them, is seen, facing a cobbled *place* which was the original open-air meeting-place for the merchants. Sanderus refers to this as the "Bursa Brugensi," and of the Genoese establishment says, "Hoc Ædificium Ædificari Fecerunt Mercatores Januenses Brugis Commorantes Anno CIOCCCLXI." Very little of this building is standing, and still less of the Florentine. Near by stood the "Domus Cantabrica," frequented by the Spanish colony; from the illustration of this on the same page, it is evident that a flat roof (*tecto plano*) was used for a building of considerable size, a somewhat unusual expedient in those days so far North, and noteworthy in a city of steep tiled roofs. On the other side of a spacious *place* was the Portuguese centre, while near by, separated only by the canal which flowed past the Waterhalle in the Grand' Place, is seen the "Publica Civium Domus," commonly known as the Poortersloge. This stone building, which was originally the place of assembly of the *Poorters* or citizens of Bruges, has had a chequered career, but with its lofty turret it still appears in many a glimpse from quayside or narrow street (see Plate II). Dating from the fourteenth century, it was rebuilt in the fifteenth and again in recent times, when it was adapted to receive the voluminous archives; search amongst these parchments is of more profit to the student than study of the restored building which enshrines them.

The English and Scotch also had their headquarters in the

city, but little of interest is left of the "Domus Anglorum" (see illustration on p. 2), while the most sumptuous of all these merchant palaces seems to have been the "Domus Osterlingorum," variously known as the Hôtel des Orientaux or Maison de la Hanse. In 1348 the Teutons settled in Bruges: a quarrel with the inhabitants forced them to leave in 1354, but differences having been reconciled before long, they returned to engage in vast commercial undertakings. In 1478 they began the magnificent "hôtel" in brick seen in the illustration on p. 3. The works were entrusted to Jean van de Poele, a master mason of note, whose skill was shown here at its highest. The building was on a large scale, lofty, embattled and flanked by turrets at the angles, a taller one, without *flèche*, dominating the whole. Sculptured lions bearing banners figured on the parapets, and all the metal vanes were gilded. The principal entrance was reached through a courtyard, and there were two other doorways, one facing the canal, above which the arms of the Hanse towns were set up; the other faced the side street known as the Cour de Gand. This latter doorway, seen in the view, was approached by six steps, and above it were sculptured the arms of the Archduke of Austria. The building was practically demolished in the latter years of the eighteenth century, a piece of vandalism which must be numbered amongst many ruthless acts committed at a time when the prosperity of the city was at its lowest ebb. To do justice to vanished Bruges would require a volume; rather than dwell on the melancholy theme of their destruction, it is preferable to concentrate one's attention upon such works of art as have survived.

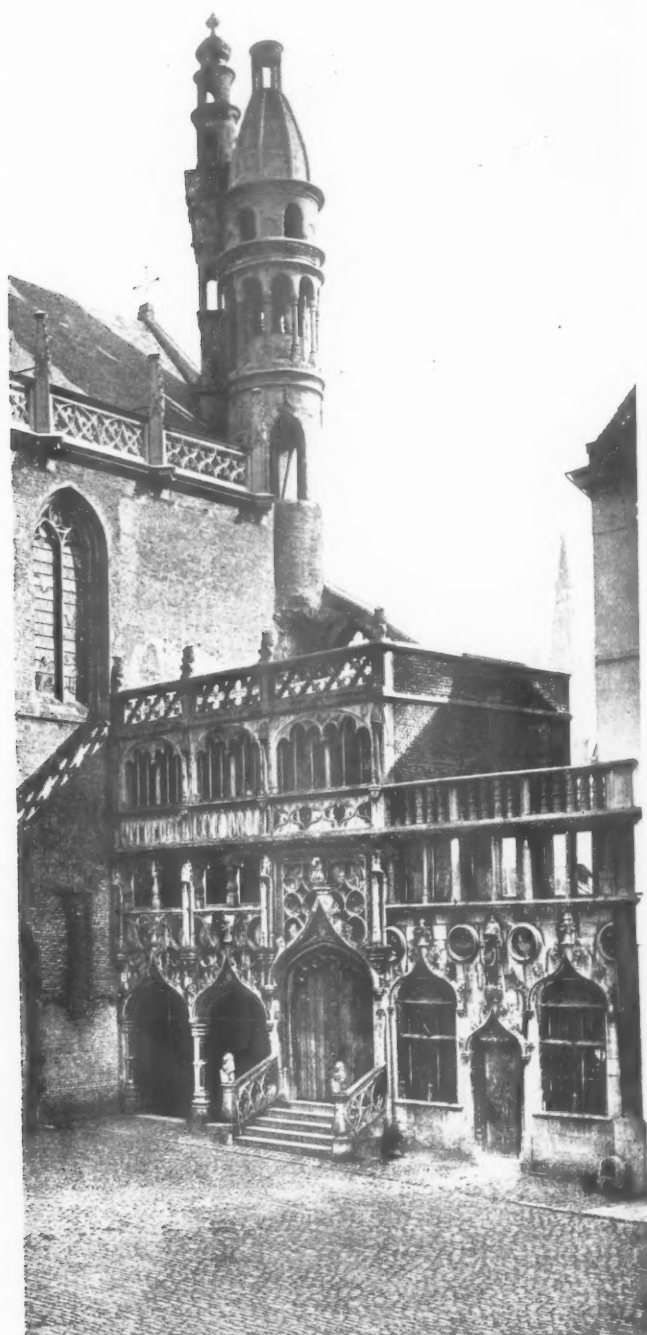
On the north side of the Place van Eyck stands a group of white stone buildings, erected at a time when local traditions in architecture were as yet unassailed. This group, consisting of the Grand Tonlieu and the Loge des Portefaix, or *Pynders*, is esteemed for the porch and the doorways on either side of it, seen in the illustration on page 3. The designation of



L'ANCIEN GREFFE CIVIL (C. 1530) IN THE PLACE DU BOURG BETWEEN THE
HÔTEL DE VILLE (1376) AND THE PALAIS DE JUSTICE (1722).

* Antonio Sanderus, "Flandria Illustrata," Hague, 1641-44.

the former building is cunningly expressed by the sculptured figures, bending under their loads, which make such delightful corbels just above the arched doorhead; this dates from about 1470, and its neighbour from about 1477. The Tonlieu was, to all intents and purposes, the Customs House, and the arms in the sculptured panel are those of Pierre de Luxembourg, Knight of the Order of the Golden Fleece, who was "Collector" at the time of its erection. The upper stories of the building, approached through this porch, have since 1883 been used for the Public Library, and legion are the treasures housed there. Colard Mansion, a pioneer in the art of printing, set up his press at Bruges under the patronage of Louis of Gruuthuse, and there it was that Caxton was initiated into the mysteries of the craft. Caxton lived in the city some thirty-five years, and printed his earliest books there. When he returned to England in 1477 and established his



THE PORCH OF S. BASIL AND ENTRANCE TO THE CHAPEL OF SAINT-SANG IN THE PLACE DU BOURG.

press at Westminster, he won for all time the distinction of having founded the first printing press in England; but he had learned the art in Bruges.

The coming of the Renaissance was heralded in the works of painters and sculptors long before the builders allowed themselves to be carried away by innovations which appeared strange in their eyes. This irresistible movement, nevertheless, swept aside age-old traditions as surely in Bruges as in many another mediæval city; but the transition was gradual and productive of some curious results. One of the first public buildings to show this was a court of law, the Ancien Greffe Civil in the Place du Bourg (see illustration, page 4). This stone façade, set up soon after 1530, shows that strange interposition of Classic orders which betrays zeal rather than knowledge on the part of the designer. Placed as it is between the Gothic Hôtel de Ville and the matured classic Palais de Justice, it is a valued link in the evolution which the Brugean architects worked out for themselves; but it should no more be taken seriously than many other similar attempts to keep abreast of the wave that it calls to mind. The Flemish love of display was not yet quenched, and the fanciful scroll-shaped gables surmounted by statues lead up appropriately to the culminating figure of Justice in the centre. Near by is the porch leading to the staircase to the Chapel of Saint-Sang, built 1529-34 by Chrétien Sixdeniers. In this much-restored façade in *pietre bleue* (see illustration on this page) similar evidences of a transitional style are apparent; but the ecclesiastical origin of the building accounts for the Gothic note being stronger than in the Greffe Civil. The double turret, "si svelte et un peu bizarre," set up about 1460 and prominent in the illustration, has that Eastern flavour—even more pronounced in one of the churches to be discussed later—which may owe something to the journeyings of religious devotees, to whom it served as a souvenir of their wanderings in the Holy Land.

The mere fact that prosperity had passed from Bruges before the Classic Renaissance had reached its height accounts to no small extent for the city's retention of its mediæval aspect. The standard of taste changed; Classic purists became intolerant of the freedom enjoyed by generations of craftsmen who knew no restraint other than that imposed upon them by the limitations of the materials in which they worked. Had the means been forthcoming, the buildings lining many a canal and street would have been ruled into conformity; their varied gables would have made way for the exacting Classic cornice. As it happened, neglect was the fate meted them more often than demolition. But, when occasion demanded, a site was cleared, no matter how precious the heritage that stood upon it. That part of the Palais du Franc which had been rebuilt in the first quarter of the sixteenth century at the south-east angle of the Place du Bourg was destroyed and a new courtyard and façade built in 1722 from the designs of the architect Verkrüys. It was a calamity that such a sumptuous brick building as the Palais du Franc, judged from the existing façade with its three gables and pinnacled turrets seen from the Quai des Marbriers (Frontispiece), and in the distance from the Quai Vert (Plate II), should have been despoiled in favour of a commonplace Palladian structure. In one instance only has the Classic note been struck with telling effect, and that was about the year 1821. The Marché aux Poissons (Frontispiece), with its Doric colonnades, designed by Jean-Robert Calloigne, is so strong in its simplicity, and so restful in its colour and composition, that it serves as an excellent foil amidst so much that is varied and rich in colour and outline.

(To be concluded.)

READING: A VIGNETTE.

With Sketches specially made for THE ARCHITECTURAL REVIEW by Hanslip Fletcher.

NOT very far from Hyde Park Corner, as distance is measured in these days, and a third of the way to Bath, is the county town of Berkshire. The place is of Saxon origin, the site chosen, perhaps, for the warmth of the valley in which it lies ensconced; but more reasonably for its contiguity to the Roman road and its convenient proximity to the waters of the Thames and the Kennet. Reading at one time was the seat of a nunnery; later the Danes rowed up the river and left its early buildings in ruins, for when Domesday Book was compiled it was a half-ruined and almost forgotten hamlet. Nearly half a century after the bricks and stones of the Benedictine Abbey at St. Albans towered above the scenery of Hertfordshire, Henry I determined to erect a similar establishment in a westerly direction within easy distance of London, and so the fortunes of the town were founded.

The Abbey towns of Bury St. Edmunds, St. Albans, and Reading in mediæval times had an affinity in their monastic establishments; hence the origin of the highway which traverses Suffolk, Essex, Herts, Bucks, and Berks, forming a pilgrim track which use developed into a road that struck across England and opened up a new system of communication for countless multitudes from East Anglia to Somerset and Devon. Roads, prior to the introduction of railways, influenced building in a remarkable way, for they provided direct means for the transference of ideas as well as material, and in this fact lies the secret of the growth of Reading.

First impressions of towns, as of individuals, are lasting; we are attracted or repelled directly we set foot in the main street, according to humour. We are impressed and guided in our decision without doubt by the facial aspect of the buildings. Reading is a curious town—half manufacturing and half residential. It has a quality entirely its own. Moreover, it has always been a hospitable place, and one intimately associated with gastronomic delights, as the famed Abbot found to his cost when he mistook the ponderous figure of Henry VIII for one of the Royal guardsmen from Windsor.

To-day the chief industry of this cheerful brickly town is baking, and the smoke of ovens acts as a sure barometer when the relaxing climate is threatened with change. Old towns must be lived in to be fully understood—their idiosyncrasies must be analysed. Odd corners need to be explored and obscure interest sought out, for the spirit of the mighty past which hovers over the streets feeds our imagination, whets our appetite for beauty, and uplifts us from being mere theorizers to the level of poets.

In Reading we chance upon tangible set pieces and other conventional scenery arranged for the enjoyment of our forbears. It does not need much effort or illusion to conjure up the comedy that once formed the life of the streets, for while we stare about us the old actors and supers strut the pavements to rub shoulders with the new, the past and present become one, suiting our whim to jest or shed tears as the mood takes us. If we enter the town by road from the London side we comment on the umbrageous avenues and well-kept gardens; if from the west, we are impressed by the classic setting which distinguishes the entrance to Reading from Bath. The trees are plentiful, and stand on guard like giant umbrellas to protect the people from the cloud-bursts to which the locality is subjected. Did the sculptor who portrayed the figure of the late Mr. Palmer surmounting the pedestal in Broad Street with ever-ready gamp intend a subtle gibe at the character of this parliamentary borough?

From the railway, the aspect of the town is even more curious. There is no hint to be gathered, even from the vantage point of a corner seat, of the crescents and wide roads, neither is it possible to discern the paved walks on the banks of the Kennet, recalling Amsterdam. Our impression as the train speeds through is that we are lucky in not having to stop in such a place. We view the fortress silhouette of the jail with apprehension, and retain vivid recollections of the town's manufacturing side, through which we have been jolted over a maze of rails for fifty miles down the line.

If by chance we travel down from Paddington expectant of encountering good hotels and inns on our arrival, we shall not be disappointed, for immediately facing the station is the "Great Western," a solidly comfortable building largely



BUILDINGS AT THE JUNCTION OF LONDON STREET AND SILVER STREET.



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 Plate III

THE ROYAL BERKSHIRE HOSPITAL, READING.

From a Drawing by Hanslip Fletcher.

January 1918.

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STONE BRIDGE OVER THE RIVER KENNET.

expressed in lines of unmistakable Victorian Italian and heavily furnished in the mode of seventy years past; while for enthusiasts of the coaching era ancient hostelrys abound in every street. Viewed from the heights north and south of the river, the houses straggle in a westerly direction as if eager to reach to Oxford, and are only brought to a standstill by the headlands forming the gap at Goring.

There is an ultra "west end" where distinguished persons formerly lived, an "east end" free from squalor, while modern villas enclose the old ways in a bow to the south. The hub of the place is mediæval, with an inlay of variegated pattern, the latter contributed in Stuart, Georgian, and Regency days, and besides there is the inevitable sprinkling of modern emporia with plate-glass fronts. Sufficient it is that Reading has a past like other English towns of similar extent. Queen Elizabeth paid half a dozen visits to its streets; it witnessed the discomfiture of its Abbot at the hands of Henry the Eighth and the demolition of its Abbey; the Parliamentary forces laid siege to its loyalty and Cromwell scored the church towers with round shot. The River has played a part in its pageantry from the time the Saxons and Danes struggled for the mastery until the Norman bow levelled them, and over the placid waters the luxurious court of Charles the Second journeyed to Oxford to escape the Plague that ravaged London.

Merely to chronicle the list of notables who passed through the town in the eighteenth century would need a catalogue of unwieldy size; but to omit to mention the association of Jane Austen

and Charles Dickens with the glamour of the buildings would be to commit an egregious mistake. So our summary brings us to the period when ruin threatened the coaching industry and the innkeepers were donning sackcloth in anticipation of disaster to their calling. Then Brunel the wizard touched Reading with his steel wand, and gave the town new life, for the broad gauge and sixty miles an hour were irresistible. The times are hard, but travellers war-weary and fevered, can still find solace in the charm of its inns; and if the sheets do not smell of lavender and the courtyards no longer resound to the stamp of hoofs and the slamming of coach-doors, the old associations are tenacious, and for that we must be thankful. Entering the town from the London side, the traveller is impressed by the trees marking the principal approach. At first he thinks of Cheltenham or Bath—a thought heightened by the stone-fronted houses in King's Road, should his footsteps chance in that direction.

He is quick to observe the villas of Eldon Square—poke-bonneted and crinolined in the manner of London; he is astonished at the

stately aspect of the Royal Berkshire Hospital with its correct Prienean portico, and imagines that he is confronted with a smaller edition of the British Museum (see Plate III), an illusion fostered by the character of the piers and spear-head railings enclosing the courtyard. Further along, his eye notes the formal terraces of the Regency period, with private drives in front, and the greenery foiling the excessive neatness of the doorways and fanlights. In the past, fashionable people rented apartments in these terraces, and from the comfort of the drawing-room floor viewed an endless procession of coaches and post-chaises whirling to Bath. Although in these strenuous times the painted fronts need revivifying and the stucco is scaling, the comfort of the interiors is more than transitory, and we should be grateful for rooms enriched with sound architectural detail.

At its western extremity the London road makes a right-



HOUSE IN THE FORBURY.

angled junction with Silver Street and London Street, and here is to be seen a severe building uniformed in brick and plaster like an illustration from Malton (see page 6). London Street is particularly rich in treasures of later Georgian days, to describe which would require many pages and innumerable sketches; so, leaving this to the activities of after-the-war students, we cross the Kennet over the Piranesian bridge (see page 7), note the Ship Inn, row cased in modern dress, and make our way to the Market Place to encounter a minor work by that eminent London architect, Sir John Soane, whose early life was associated with Reading, and who had an especial interest when he designed the Market Cross to give emphasis to what is still the centre of the town (see opposite sketch). As we view this monument, our thoughts are transported to the Architects' Library in Lincoln's Inn Fields, we see the black-clothed figure of Soane making his nervous drawings and incorporating ideas from Piranesi's suggestive plates into the scheme of the cross he intended should distinguish his own country town. This obelisk seems as lasting as the Bank of England, to which it is related in point of detail.

The ancient Forbury next claims our attention, particularly a stalwart house of early eighteenth-century date with two enormous bay-windows heavily sashed and symmetrically arranged, hinting of panelled rooms and giant fireplaces. This house may not be the neatest, but it is certainly the most



THE MARKET PLACE, WITH SIR JOHN SOANE'S MARKET CROSS.



THE BEAR INN AND ST. MARY'S CHAPEL, CASTLE STREET.



ST. LAWRENCE, FROM THE MARKET PLACE.

substantial in the town, and an object lesson to all builders whose inclinations run in the direction of bay-windows (see page 7). Near the church of the Grey Friars is another brick house with wings, which was built a century later, and shows the hand of one who followed the teaching of Soane, but here we see Soane's style free from tattooing.

Castle Street is another thoroughfare of interest to those in quest of architectural character. Here, standing in juxtaposition, are several survivals of three centuries—namely, the Bear Inn, St. Mary's Chapel, and a neat house of the 1790 period. Opposite is an interesting example of the Jacobean

manner, and as we proceed westwards up the hill the pages of the eighteenth century are turned back and memories of Bath again recur (see page 8). In several of the lesser streets comfort will be found in the aspect of the brick fronts, which are notable for their exquisite proportion. There are several in Russell Street, a name reminiscent of Bloomsbury, as the architecture is; and these, with the terraced walks in Southampton Street, show how the builders who wrought during the Napoleonic wars paid strict attention to the English vernacular without sacrificing individuality.

In this impression of a county town so much of moment has to be omitted. One would like to speak of Strathfieldsaye, the home of Wellington. One desires to illustrate the column to the great captain on Riseley Common and to treat of the treasures housed in the Wellington Club, among which there is a barometer of carved wood embellished with arms in the fashion of a war trophy. If space permitted, something more could be written concerning the coaching inns, such as "The Bear," and "The George," with its old furniture, and the Chippendale chair bearing a brass plate to the memory of Charles Dickens. Reading has ever been a hospitable place; it is a little metropolis in the minds of the country folk who have no use for the railway and the joys of London. Perhaps this explains the unique scenes in Forbury on market days, when homely carriers' vans, covered with the dust of the roads from twenty miles around, outspan in readiness for the lumbering journey home.

This vignette of Reading is only a synopsis of the real interest of the place; it follows no definite programme, it aims at no accurate rendering of dates—in a word, it only attempts to touch upon the atmosphere of the place as it affected the writer during two months of military training.

A. E. R.



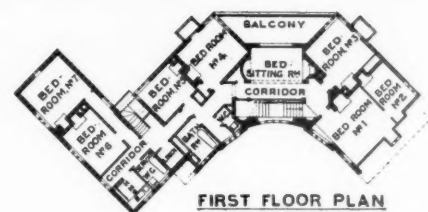
ST. MARY'S, BUTTS.

RECENT ENGLISH DOMESTIC ARCHITECTURE.

THE most casual inquiry into the history of English domestic architecture reveals the fact that the root cause of much that is admittedly amiss in modern work is to be found embedded in the early years of the nineteenth century. With the advent of steam locomotion the outlook visibly widened; formerly remote localities became easy of access, and insularity was lost. Environment ceased to have any necessary relation to architecture, and local tradition waned, or was forcibly set aside. The changes that accompanied the newly adapted power were more profound, more comprehensive, more penetrating than the Renaissance; for the rejuvenation affected not merely literature and the arts, but every individual member of the community.

The arrest of artistic progress and the subsequent lamentable retrogression were the inevitable consequences of so violent a revolution. The loss of our architectural tradition—the introduction of machinery for manufacturing purposes, together with its correlative the factory system, and the consequent decline of the arts and crafts—these were the principal fruits of the most extraordinary period in the world's development.

The Gothic Revival, which, while attempting to recover mediæval tradi-



ASHFIELDS," LOUGHTON, ESSEX: ENTRANCE FRONT.



"ASHFIELDS," LOUGHTON, ESSEX: VIEW IN SITTING HALL.
E. Turner Powell, F.R.I.B.A., Architect.

tion, only succeeded in capturing its form without its spirit; the Classic Revival, with its cold and uninspired imitations of Greek and Roman buildings; the horrible bathos of the Victorian period; the partial recovery in the 'seventies of a sane tradition, which gradually gained strength until *Art Nouveau* turned it badly awry—all this is familiar history. It brings us down to the early years of the twentieth century, the salient characteristic of which has been a general return to the vernacular styles that persisted and developed in England during the sixteenth, seventeenth, and eighteenth centuries. These fall naturally into two groups: (1) The farmhouse or country cottage type of building, and (2) that which, for want of a better term, is generally described as "Georgian."

Though much very attractive work has been produced in both manners, it cannot be said that we have achieved a style that is truly characteristic of modern times. We have been too ready to take over our respective models and



View of Entrance Front.



View towards the South-west.

Plate IV.

January 1918.

"ASHFIELDS," LOUGHTON, ESSEX.
E. Turner Powell, F.R.I.B.A., Architect.

100



View looking West.



View towards the South-west.

Plate V.

January 1918.

"ASHFIELDS," LOUGHTON, ESSEX.

E. Turner Powell, F.R.I.B.A., Architect.



copy them faithfully in all their details—bad as well as good. Indeed, so closely, in some instances, have we imitated old work that our descendants will be in some trouble to distinguish the copy from the original.

If, at a stroke, the architectural literature of the twentieth century were to be destroyed, the historian of the future, endeavouring to trace the development of English domestic architecture, would find himself confronted by a task of no little difficulty. We may assume that within, let us say, a hundred years, when present-day work stands "foreshortened in the tract of time," it will have taken on something of that mellowness which only age can impart. The difficulty, therefore, of distinguishing at a later date between much that is modern and the genuine original work upon which it is based is manifest at a glance. Certain internal evidence of material and construction would, no doubt, arouse suspicions in the mind of the assiduous historian; but clear and indisputable proof of period and origin would still be lacking.

The difficulty of assigning even approximate dates to numberless old buildings, particularly those of the vernacular type, which we attribute to the Tudor and Stuart periods, is notorious. No building can be typical in all its parts of the

period at which it was first built; rather must it be the accretion of years, renewed, altered, and added to from time to time—sometimes in the manner of the original work, sometimes in the style or fashion of a newer age—thus becoming, in the fullness of time, a somewhat baffling problem for the student who would know something of its "strange eventful history." Remembering all this, the historian of the future will hesitate to deliver judgment on much present-day work. The modern taste for exact copies of old work—a taste that frequently insists on the use of the adze and other archaic tools—must inevitably upset the calculations of those of our descendants who choose to base their conclusions on external evidence, which, chronologically, should of course be incontestable.

But, in addition to falsifying history, merely to copy the buildings of the past is bad art. The old builders carried on a manner of building traditional to the locality in which they lived. What they did they did naturally and unaffectedly, almost unconsciously. They built with the cheapest materials and those nearest to hand. In the farmsteads, cottages, and larger houses that have come down to us as a heritage from Tudor times the discerning eye may see the natural influence of materials over structure and design. Timber with wattle

and daub, timber with brick nogging, timber frame and a preponderance of brick—these and many other variations distinguish the building traditions of definitely prescribed areas, showing how character was invariably determined by local conditions and materials. Likewise the picturesque grouping of many of these old buildings is due not so much to conscious effort as to chance—to the changes wrought by successive generations of builders working in the traditional manner of the neighbourhood.

Unmindful of all this, and in too enthusiastic an appreciation of the undoubted beauties of these more or less fortuitous assemblages of wood, brick, stone, and tile, we have copied them wholesale in localities to which by all natural laws they are totally inappropriate. We have erected them by the hundred in garden suburbs, imparting to what in most cases is a colony of city workers, a character of rusticity that is wholly and obviously out of place. We have endeavoured to achieve the communal spirit by assembling a large number of individual and unrelated units—beautiful in themselves, perhaps, if discovered in the heart of the country, but altogether a misfit when well within the reek of a great city and connected with it by tub: railways, omnibuses, and trams.

In this way we shall not find deliverance. If we are to succeed we shall have to sacrifice something of our native love of individuality and what we choose to regard as freedom. In other words, in the interests of the community a man will have to be content to live in a house that is not violently in conflict with that of his neighbour. He will have to contribute to the surrounding amenities by



GROUND FLOOR PLAN



FIRST FLOOR PLAN



"BENEFFREY," POLLOKSHIELDS, GLASGOW.
Wm. Hunter McNab, F.R.I.B.A., Architect.



Lower Hall and Staircase.

subordinating something of his own strong (and perhaps obnoxious) personality.

We are hoping that a broader outlook and a more generous spirit will be born of the War, and this will have to be expressed in the homes of the people. Already a step in the right direction has been taken by the Government in authorizing the R.I.B.A. to secure designs for better working-class houses. Unfortunately, the word "standardization" has provoked a certain amount of hostility to the competitions which have been inaugurated. "Standard" plans, as Mr. Mervyn Macartney indicated in his very interesting article published in the October number of the *REVIEW*, have been more or less the rule in all suburban developments for years past. But standard plans do not necessarily mean standard elevations, nor is this the intention of the R.I.B.A. competitions. We may rest assured that the Institute will allow no undue violence to be done to local tradition and amenity throughout the country, certainly not so much as has already been inflicted upon it by the misguided advocates of "freedom."

Substitute the word "orderliness" for "standardization," and we have the real aim and purpose of the housing competitions. Orderliness of a most delightful character was achieved by the Georgian builders, who worked in the main with a few simple elements (to which the term "standard" might with some truth be applied); yet they produced a wonderful variety of designs. They have left to us a tradition of homely vernacular building that is unequalled by any other country in the world. This may easily be adapted

to modern requirements, which are not unduly exacting. The hope of a revived domestic architecture rests almost wholly upon the work of the Georgian period. We have only to study it carefully and sympathetically in order to provide ourselves with an admirable means of solving the housing problem. Incidentally, we shall again establish contact with the domestic tradition which was so rudely broken in the early years of the nineteenth century.

* * * *

Following are brief notes on the accompanying illustrations of some recent domestic buildings, most of which were completed before the War.

"ASHFIELDS," LOUGHTON, ESSEX.

The house shown by the illustrations reproduced on p. 10, and Plates IV and V, stands on a site which, bordering on Epping Forest, was at one time within its precincts. The property was occupied at the road entrance by an old cottage, remarkable for a very fine wisteria, the foliage of which covered the entire roof, and in the early summer it was a mass of mauve from the brilliant flowering of this fine old tree. Consequently, one of the principal objects was to save it, and bring it into the new garden scheme which would grow up with the house. This was exceedingly difficult, as the cottage had to be pulled down.

Two other features of interest were also brought into the garden scheme—a very old cherry-tree, which blossomed in the spring until it looked like snow, and a stagnant pool



Dining-room.

"BENEFFREY," POLLOKSHIELDS, GLASGOW.

Wm. Hunter McNab, F.R.I.B.A., Architect.

with a large willow-tree in the centre. This latter has now been enlarged into a big pond, and forms the principal feature in the water garden.

The site was by no means an easy one upon which to scheme out a home and gardens, the principal difficulty being the levels, which, however, were overcome with the results shown. The house was begun in the early part of 1915, and was completed in August 1916, including what is shown of the gardens, which were also designed by the architect.

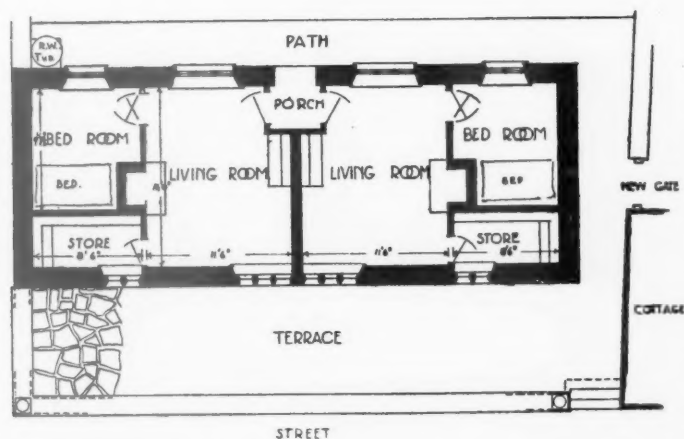
The external walls are built of random flint, with knapped flint quoins and chalk dressings; they are $13\frac{1}{2}$ in. thick, with $4\frac{1}{2}$ in. of flint bonded at intervals into the brickwork. The roofs are covered with tiles of so beautiful a colour that they might be old. The weather tiles also are similar. They provoked a considerable amount of interest and speculation among a group of young architects in training at Romford with the "Artists," who led the architect's foreman no easy life in answering their many questions, especially when the valleys were being swept. The garage roof is covered with old tiles from the cottage.

The hall, staircase, and sitting-room lounge on the first floor, opening on to the balcony, were panelled up to the cornice, and were painted that peculiar faint grey so much in vogue with the French in their panelled rooms. This always seems to strike the right note, owing to its peculiar restfulness to the eye; and it forms an admirable background. The open fireplace in the hall was carried out in chalk, the carved key having been executed by Mr. A. Broadbent.

Owing to the steep slope of the ground, it was found



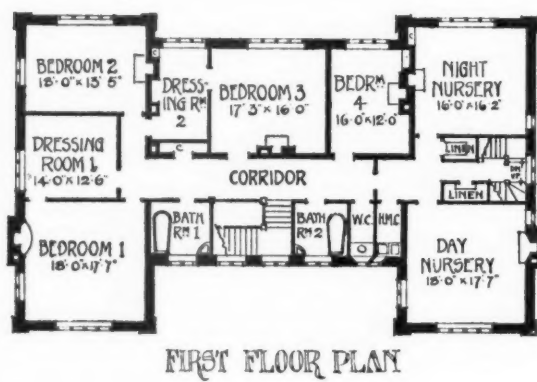
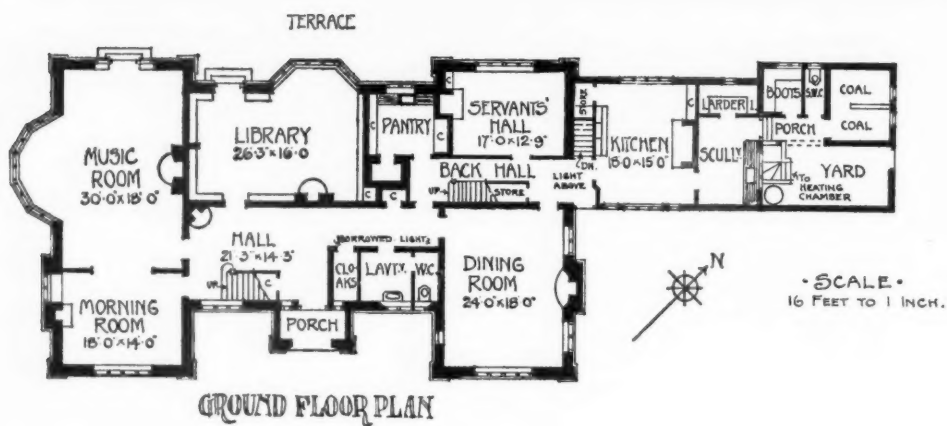
ALMSHOUSES, OUNDLE: DETAIL OF DOORWAY.
Traylen and Son (H. F. Traylen and F. J. Lenton, A.A.R.I.B.A.) Architects.



ALMSHOUSE COTTAGES, APETHORPE, NORTHANTS,
Traylen and Son (H. F. Traylen and F. J. Lenton, A.A.R.I.B.A.) Architects.

possible to form a heating chamber and fuel store, etc., under the kitchen wing without undue excavation; and in the same way the space under the stone-paved terraces around the garden side of the house was utilized as a fruit store, potting sheds, etc. Under one of the terraces a large rainwater tank was formed, into which all the roof-water is taken to be used for gardening purposes, the water flowing to stand-pipe draw-offs by gravitation.

Approached from the west end of the main terrace by a stone-paved path is a serpentine flint wall, over which the old wisteria has been trained, on old oak beams taken from

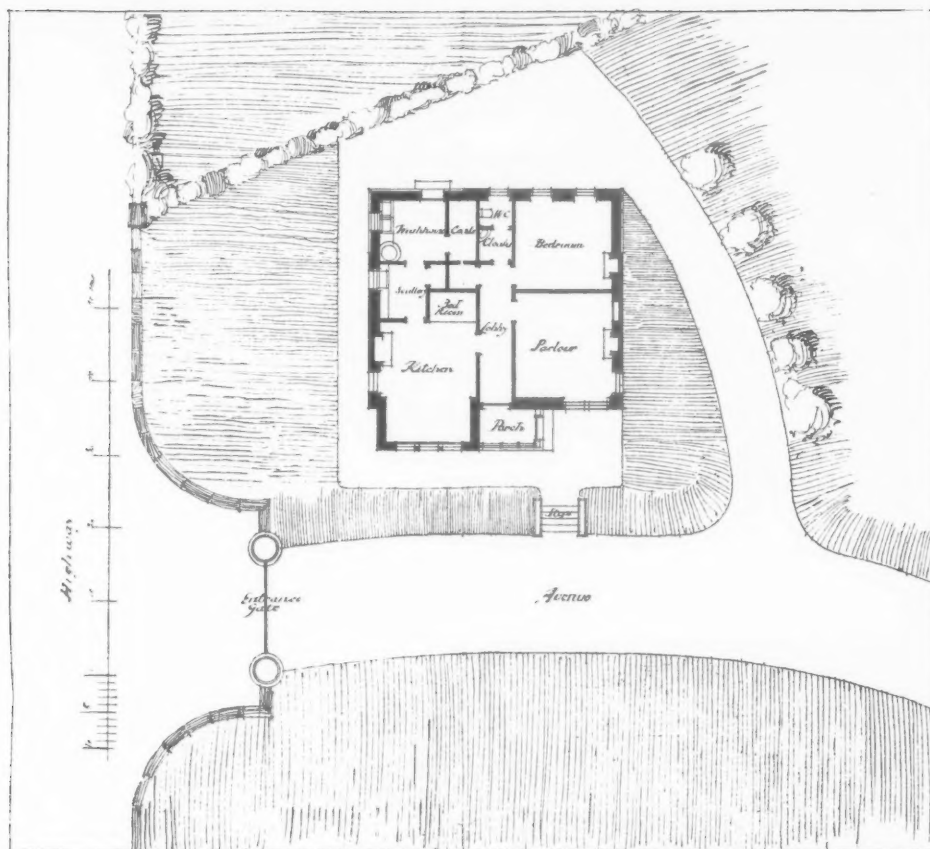


NOTE.

BASEMENT CONTAINS:—
COLD LARDER, WINE STORE,
HEATING CHAMBER & COKE STORES.

SECOND FLOOR CONTAINS:—
5 BEDROOMS AVERAGE SIZE:—
13'9" x 15'0".
3 STORE & DRYING ROOMS.
3 LARGE BOX LOFTS.
CISTERN ROOM &c.

HOUSE AT WIMBLEDON, SURREY.
M. E. Walker, A.R.I.B.A., and A. W. Harwood, Architects.



GATE LODGE, CHAPELTOWN, AYRSHIRE.

Alex. Cullen, Lochhead, and Brown, Architects.



NO. 31 WEYMOUTH STREET, LONDON, W.
The late John Belcher, R.A., and J. J. Joass, F.R.I.B.A., Architects.

the cottage. Mr. E. Turner Powell, F.R.I.B.A., of London, was the architect.

The general contractors were Messrs. T. Rider and Son, of London; and the following were sub-contractors: Mr. A. Broadbent, Fulham Studios, stonework; Messrs. Martin Van Straaten & Co., London, wall tiles; Mr. William Pearce, Birmingham, casements, etc.; Messrs. Dent and Hellyer, London, sanitary ware, etc.; Mr. W. A. Hole, London, electric wiring; Messrs. Duncan Tucker & Co., London, conservatories; Messrs. William Paul and Son, Waltham Cross, Herts, shrubs and trees.

"BENEFFREY," POLLOKSHIELDS, GLASGOW.

This house, a typical example of the modern Scottish Baronial style of domestic work, was designed by Mr. William Hunter McNab, F.R.I.B.A. The internal finishings, panelling, etc., are generally in kauri pine, stained and polished to harmonize with the doors, which are of Austrian oak. The stair is formed in reinforced concrete and finished in oak. The roofs are covered with Ellerwater sea-green slates. The general contractors were Messrs. P. and W. Anderson, and the following were sub-contractors: Mr. John Cochrane (joiner work), Mr. William Anderson (plumber work), Messrs. A. and D. McKay (slate work), Messrs. George Rome & Co. (plasterwork), Mr. George P. Bankart (ornamental plasterwork), Messrs. Osborne and Hunter (electric lighting), Messrs. James Combe and Son (heating), Messrs. Henry Hope and Sons, Ltd. (glazing—leadbatten and casements), Messrs. J. and W. Guthrie and Andrew Wells, Ltd. (painting), Messrs. Galbraith and Winton (tile work), Messrs. James Young and Son (stone carving).

LATHAM'S HOSPITAL IN OUNDLE, NORTHANTS.

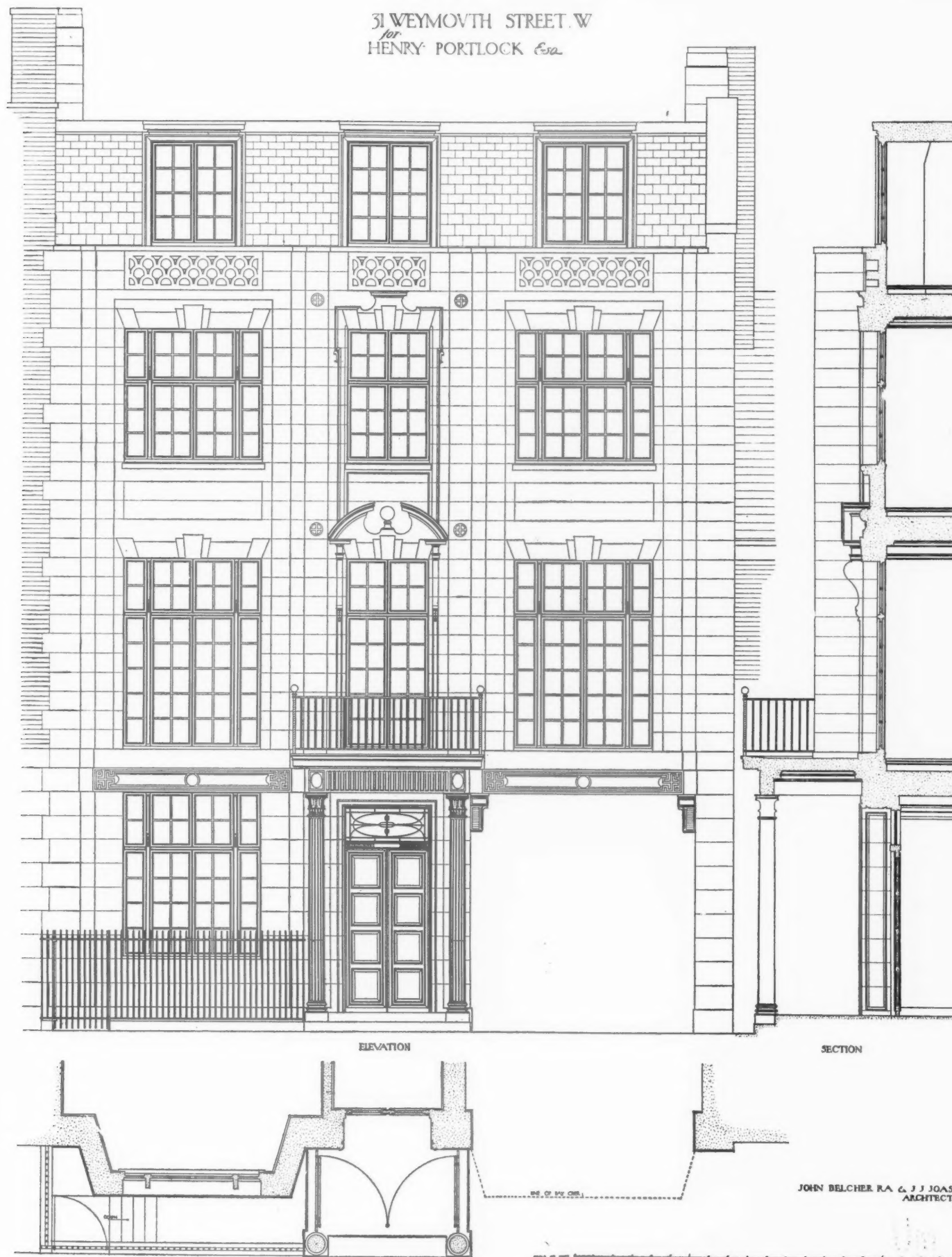
These are old almshouses for women. They have been entirely gutted and remodelled, but still retain all the old outer walls and features of value or interest. The accommodation is for twelve inmates, each having a living-room with small cooker, bed recess, and a separate lighted and ventilated store for food. The matron has a bed-sitting-room and a kitchen, with a large range for any special cooking. A large hall has been formed on the first floor. The view illustrated on p. 13 is from the garden door looking into the courtyard and street. The floors and stairs are of Hy-Rib reinforced concrete (Trussed Concrete Steel Co., Ltd., of Westminster), and lintels also are of reinforced concrete. The joinery is all of English oak, dull waxed. Messrs. Traylen and Son, of Stamford, were the architects.

ALMSHOUSE COTTAGES, APETHORPE, NORTHANTS.

These cottages are built on almshouse lines and provide accommodation for old women. They are small but comfortable houses, and involve only a minimum of work for the tenants. The living-room fireplaces are recessed into bedrooms and form warm corners for the beds. There is a common wash-house and earth closet in the garden. Walls are of local stone, and roofs are covered with Colleyweston slates. The living-room fireplaces are constructed of thin red sand-bricks and tiles. Messrs. Traylen and Son, of Stamford, were the architects.

HOUSE AT WIMBLEDON.

This house is situated close to Wimbledon Common, and stands in its own grounds, which surround a fine lake. The



NO. 31 WEYMOUTH STREET, LONDON, W.: SCALE DRAWING OF ELEVATION.

The late John Belcher, R.A., and J. J. Joass, F.R.I.B.A., Architects.

problem set was to obtain as much sun as possible in the various rooms at the times when it would be most acceptable, and also to take full advantage of the fine view across the lake, which necessitated a north-west aspect. Hence the dining-room and the day nursery above it receive the morning and early afternoon sun, while the morning-room has all-day sunshine. These rooms have garden views. The music- or drawing-room and the library obtain the afternoon sun and the lake view.

The service from kitchen to dining-room is short and quite disconnected from the hall; and the day and night nurseries, offices, and servants' bedrooms are entirely cut off from the rest of the house.

The hall has an oak staircase and panelled dado, and the library is fitted with specially designed oak bookcases with cupboards below around the room. The house, including drains and terrace, but exclusive of electric lighting and hot-water heating, cost £4,300. The builders were Messrs. Drowley & Co., of Woking; Messrs. Langston Jones & Co., of Kingston-on-Thames, were the electricians; and Messrs. Deane and Beal, of London, were the heating engineers.

The door and window furniture was specially designed by the architects, and was made by Messrs. Whiteside and Caslake, of London.

GATE LODGE, CHAPELTOUN, Ayrshire.

Chapeltoun is situated about two miles from Stewarton. The gate lodge is placed by the side of the main highway, and is built of brick, rough-cast, and slated with Tilberthwaite rustic peggies. The architects were Alex. Cullen, Lochhead, and Brown, of Hamilton, and Messrs. D. and J. Milligan, of Ayr, were the builders.

NO. 31 WEYMOUTH STREET, LONDON, W.

This building is erected upon a site having a frontage of only 22 ft. The first and upper floors are carried across the carriage entrance to the mews, etc., which lie to the rear. The house was originally designed to be executed in 2 in. bricks, with a stone ground story and window dressings; but, owing to the requirements of the Howard de Walden estate, Portland stone had to be substituted throughout. This change of material has necessarily altered the character of the façade,

and cannot be regarded as an improvement. Had brick been used, this house would have recalled the Colonial work in Philadelphia, of which many fine specimens still exist. The late Mr. John Belcher, R.A., and Mr. J. J. Joass, F.R.I.B.A., were the architects.

The general contractors were Messrs. Holloway Bros., Ltd., of London, who also supplied the Portland stone. The following were sub-contractors: Messrs. Waring and Gillow, London, W. (stoves); Messrs. Shanks & Co., Barrhead, Glasgow (sanitary ware); Messrs. G. A. Brown & Co., London, W. (plasterwork); Mr. Jas. Gibbons, Wolverhampton (door furniture); Mr. W. Gould (heating and ventilating).

COTTAGE AT BEAULIEU, HAMPSHIRE.

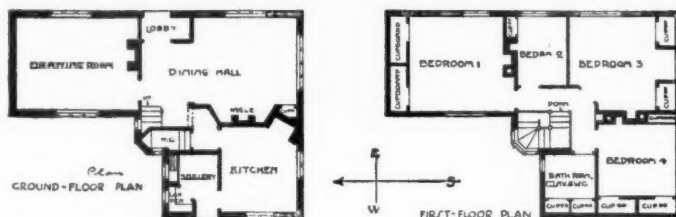
This cottage, known as "The Lonesome Pine," is built on the border of Lord Montagu's estate in the New Forest country. From the high road from the Southampton neighbourhood to Exbury it can be readily identified by the conspicuous single pine-tree standing guard over the house. The site is a particularly charming one, standing high—skirted on one side by a thick belt of woodland, and on the other by open heath stretching toward Southampton Water and the Solent.

Hollow walling of local brick in the lower part of the house changes to broad half-timber work above the ground-floor windows, and the roofing is of local tiles. The walling timbers are of British oak with adzed, uneven edges, and already, after one winter's rains and winds, are turning silver grey.

The plan is arranged to suit the requirements of the owner, and to make the most of sun and views. Both the living- and drawing-rooms and two of the bedrooms have windows overlooking woodland on the one side and heath on another. Except

in the drawing-room, all the interior woodwork is stained and polished; and in the living-hall some old oak beams are introduced from the roof of Lymington Church, demolished some time ago. Embossed on the iron canopy of the ingle fire is a pictorial reminder of the solitary tree outside, which guards and names the house.

The architects were Messrs. M. E. Walker, A.R.I.B.A., and A. W. Harwood, of London, and the building contractors were Messrs. Stone and St. John, of Lymington. The total cost of the building was under £650.



COTTAGE AT BEAULIEU, HAMPSHIRE.

M. E. Walker, A.R.I.B.A., and A. W. Harwood, Architects.

HOUSING AND TOWN PLANNING AFTER THE WAR: A VALUABLE REPORT.

THE following highly valuable interim report has been prepared by the technical conference set up by the National Housing and Town Planning Council to consider and report on various problems which are likely to present themselves for solution in regard to housing and town-planning action at the close of the War, and more especially the following points:—

1. The methods by which the best designs and site plans can be secured for housing schemes to be carried into effect at the close of the War in both urban and rural areas.

2. The methods by which the proper planning of those areas in which after-the-War housing schemes to be carried into effect can be secured, including the relaxation of conditions as to road width in residential roads.

3. The provision of workable solutions of technical difficulties arising in regard to:

- (1) The shortage of materials (and more especially timber), where such shortage is due to the abnormal demand which will arise at the close of the War;

- (2) The economical adoption and use in building construction of new materials or new forms of materials;

- (3) The substitution of materials in construction, e.g., the substitution of concrete for timber in floor joists, etc.

4. The provision of labour-saving appliances in the equipment of houses.

5. The provision of useful opportunities for experiment.

6. The statement of the scope and possibilities of useful standardization in the production of component parts.

7. The statement of the point on which the by-laws usually in operation in (1) urban and (2) rural areas should be amended in order to permit of the adoption of new ideas in building construction.

The members of the conference have not considered such questions as (1) the extent and character of such financial assistance which should be given by the State to secure the provision of houses at the close of the War, or (2) the agencies which should be called upon by the State to undertake the work of providing these houses.

These questions are being dealt with by the general committee of the National Housing and Town Planning Council, and are not included in the terms of reference of this technical conference.

It has, however, been necessary for the members of the conference to take as the basis of their inquiries some definite estimate as to the number of houses for the working classes likely to be built with the financial assistance of the State in the year following the close of the War, and the figure of 300,000 for England and Wales mentioned by the President of the Local Government Board, the Right Hon. W. Hayes Fisher, M.P., in a speech delivered at Manchester on 6 November 1917, has been adopted.

The members of the conference have, to give still further clearness to their inquiries, assumed that these houses will, approximately, be distributed as follows:—Urban areas, 200,000; rural areas, 100,000.

These figures apply only to England and Wales, and do not include estimates as to the number of houses which should be built to meet the undoubtedly grave and pressing housing needs in Scotland.

With regard to this estimate for England and Wales of 300,000, the members of the conference desire to emphasize the

fact that the building of this number of houses will not do more than make up for the shortage of the supply of new houses directly due to the cessation of building activity during the War itself, and will leave untouched the general housing question, with all that this means with regard to insanitary, unwholesome, and overcrowded dwellings in town and country alike.

The members of the conference are satisfied that if 300,000 houses are to be erected in one year the organizing ability and energy of at least one-half of the employers in the building trade will be needed, and the labour of not fewer than 400,000 workmen will be required for the accomplishment of the task.

The same proportion applies to the subsidiary trades engaged in the production of building materials, for at least one-half of the productive energy available in normal times will be needed to supply the materials to build these houses.

The Recommendations.

Dealing first in order with point 1 in the terms of reference, the members of the conference have realized that it is now beyond question that a large number of local authorities have responded to the invitation extended to them by the President of the Local Government Board.

In the circular letter issued by the Board on 28 July 1917, "substantial financial assistance" has been promised, and, provided that this is satisfactory to local authorities, at least the greater part of the number of houses mentioned by Mr. Hayes Fisher in his Manchester speech will be built.

With regard to the designs of these houses, the members of the conference urge that these should not only be designed with a high measure of skill, but should also be executed in a substantial manner under most careful supervision. They should also mark a clear advance on the type of houses built for the working classes in the period preceding the War. In this relation the members of the conference desire to emphasize the fact that it will be necessary at the close of the War to ask the tenants of the new houses to pay higher rents than those current before the War. For this reason, if for no other, the new houses must be made so attractive as to secure that they shall be fully in demand and be regarded by those living in them as possessing valuable amenities well worth the extra rent charged.

The members of the conference take the view that, given the exercise of architectural skill in designing, the cost of a well-designed and well-planned cottage need not be substantially greater than that of the "brick box" in a row built abutting on the street.

With regard to detailed points in construction, they desire to urge local authorities to insist that in all plans adopted by them the following clear points in good cottage building shall be observed:—

1. The houses should be broad rather than deep, in order to secure that all the rooms shall have ample light. This will involve the giving of increased frontages, but the additional cost can be met by economy in road construction under modern town-planning conditions.

2. Back extensions are better avoided, and all the rooms should be brought under the main roof. In the old type of workman's cottage the room most used is generally the most gloomy. The kitchen-living-room is the workroom of the wife, and should be the sunniest and pleasantest room in the house.

3. Three bedrooms should be provided in all the new houses. There are hundreds of thousands of two-bedroom cottages in existence, and the members of the conference therefore take the view that the cottages now to be built should be of the three-bedroom type.

4. The houses should, as a rule, be provided with parlours. The working people of this country know what they want in this respect, and the great majority desire the parlour cottage. Wherever possible this desire should be met, whilst securing at the same time that the kitchen-living-room shall be of ample size and the sunniest and most cheerful room in the house.

5. Each house should have a bath, with provision for hot-water supply, either in a separate bathroom or in the scullery.

6. Ample window space should be given, and the windows should be carried as near to the ceiling as possible.

7. Where the by-laws do not already demand it, an impervious layer of concrete, or other approved impervious material, should be laid under all floors to prevent damp rising, and the proper damp-proof course should be provided to all walls. The neglect of these elementary conditions of good cottage building has been responsible for much suffering amongst the poor in both urban and rural districts.

8. The level of the ground floor of the house should be above the level of the ground immediately surrounding it. The members of the conference suggest that in the case of all housing schemes for which subsidies are granted the Government should insist that the necessary safeguards described in 7 and 8 should be adopted where the by-laws or methods in operation do not already require them.

9. The assistance of women with close knowledge of household economy should be sought in regard to details of interior construction, such as the design of the stairs, the provision of cupboards, larders, and storage accommodation. These and other minor details occupy a prominent place in the domestic economy of the home, and should, therefore, receive great care and attention.

Planning of Housing Estates.

On this point the members of the conference desire to submit the following resolution:—

This conference is of opinion that the Government should be advised to lend or grant money in connexion with "Housing Schemes after the War" only when the "lay-out" of the estate or area on which the housing scheme is to be carried out meets with the approval of the Local Government Board, has been prepared on town-planning lines, and is in conformity with a general outline town plan for that portion of the district of which the housing scheme forms a part.

In the opinion of the members of the conference, the Government will commit a blunder of an inexcusable kind if for any reason—other than that of housing the poorest at the centre of cities (as in the case of the schemes of the Liverpool Corporation)—it permits housing schemes to be carried into effect under the old conditions of lay-out.

By the passing of the town-planning clauses of the Housing and Town Planning Act of 1909 the national policy in this respect was made clear, and it is that good planning is in the public interest.

There is, moreover, a strong feeling that at an early date town-planning action by local authorities should cease to be permissive and become obligatory, and members of the conference are of opinion that the Government should show no hesitancy, but insist that post-war housing schemes shall bear

witness to skill and foresight in planning, and shall embody good standards, more especially in regard to:—

- (a) The limitation of the number of houses per acre;
- (b) The provision of open spaces;
- (c) The securing of arterial roads of adequate width;
- (d) The relaxation of conditions in regard to width of roads in residential streets;
- (e) The fixing of building lines, etc.

With regard to these points the members of the conference are of opinion:—

(a) That the number of houses per acre in urban housing schemes should not exceed twelve.

The members of the conference also strongly recommend that whenever housing schemes require the acquisition of several acres of land, a substantial proportion of the area—10 per cent. is suggested—should be devoted to recreation grounds, playgrounds for children, and open spaces. In the provision of these open spaces it is desirable, wherever possible, that no house should be more than 300 yards from a children's playground, which should be accessible without crossing a main road, and, wherever possible, recreation grounds should be adjacent to public school playgrounds, so that the shelters, etc., may be available for them both.

(b) That attention should be given to the planning of arterial roads, so that future expenditure on road widening may be avoided.

(c) That on condition that the preparation of a town-planning scheme is entered upon within a reasonable period local authorities should be permitted to relax for the purposes of these housing schemes their by-laws and customary provisions relative to the width and construction of streets in residential areas.

The members of the conference regard this economy as of great importance. Provided that ample space is given between houses on opposite sides of residential streets, so planned as to be in effect non-traffic streets, it is in the interest of the public to diminish the width of road to be made (and maintained), and to devote the space to the "green of useful garden instead of the grey of useless road surface," to quote the dictum of the Right Hon. J. H. Whitley, M.P., the Deputy Speaker of the House of Commons. It will be advisable, in the opinion of the members of the conference, to give local authorities power, under well-defined conditions, to declare such residential streets open only to limited traffic, and to forbid the access of exceptionally heavy traffic, such as industrial motor lorries of great weight.

(d) That building lines should be fixed to secure the proper set-back of cottages.

In suggesting under (a) above that not more than twelve houses per gross acre shall be permitted in urban areas, the members of the conference desire to emphasize the national aspect of this question.

There will probably be a world shortage in regard to food supplies in the period following the war, and, both on the grounds of individual economy and national well-being, adequate garden space should be the rule, and not, as to-day, the exception.

Rural Planning.

Under the head of "Rural Planning" the members of the conference desire to urge the Government to make a condition of housing loans and grants in aid for rural housing schemes:—

1. That there shall be in every case a proper lay-out scheme submitted;

2. That where a scheme is large enough to justify it, an open space shall be provided;

3. That the provision of land for cottages shall, as a rule, be not less than one-eighth of an acre per cottage.

4. That even where only a few cottages are built care shall be taken in their grouping (and especially in the set-back from the main roads, which should be ample in view of possible future requirements).

The following resolution has been unanimously adopted:—

That the members of this conference are of opinion that sanction should be given by the Local Government Board, and loans should be granted without delay by the Treasury, for the purchase of suitable housing sites.

It is felt that unless action along the lines suggested is taken much regrettable delay will be caused, and that, therefore, it will be impossible to have schemes fully ready to be placed in operation directly the War closes.

Materials.

With regard to point 3 in the terms of reference, the members of the conference have given careful consideration to questions relative to the supply of the following materials: Bricks, stone, timber, glass, cement, lime, ironmongery, and light castings (baths, stoves, grates), roof coverings, etc.

In making the following recommendations the members of the conference recognize that the most economical method of employing the labour of men available at the close of the War will be to follow methods of construction with which workmen were familiar before the War. At the same time they advocate that all new methods of sound hygienic construction should receive careful and favourable consideration.

Bricks and Stone.

Given proper organization, the supply of enormous quantities of bricks and stone for the construction of the 300,000 houses does not present any insuperable difficulty.

Such questions as the supply of fuel for brickmaking, the rapid and prior demobilization of brickmakers and quarrymen, and the organization of additional transit facilities in the shape of motor lorries (which towards the close of the War will be released from military work, etc.), must, however, be given careful attention, and be made the subject of wise foresight in planning adequate "ways and means" of overcoming difficulties.

The members of the conference will in a later stage deal in detail with several points arising in this relation, but meanwhile they desire to plead urgency for the consideration of the present conditions of the brickmaking industry on the ground that if the present condition of affairs is left unremedied the efforts of the Government to secure an adequate supply of bricks will be hampered and thwarted.

At the present time the manufacturing plant of scores of brickyards is rapidly being destroyed by the elements, and, as a result of the absence of orders, the owners of these brickyards are likely to go into liquidation.

To permit the decay and destruction of the plant of the business organization on which the production of bricks at the close of the War must depend will be unwise in the extreme, and the members of the conference beg to submit the following resolution:—

That the attention of the Government be drawn to the serious condition of the brickmaking industry throughout the country. An investigation is recommended to ascertain what steps (if any) can be taken to keep this industry alive, so that the brickyards may be kept in efficient working order and sufficient stocks of bricks be available at the close of the War.

Timber.

In discussing the shortage of timber supplies at the close of the War, the members of the conference have realized from the outset that the problem is one in regard to which they have not (and cannot hope to have) the knowledge necessary to enable them to arrive at a sound judgment as to the possibility of importing timber from the Baltic, Sweden, Norway, Canada, and America at the close of the War.

But they nevertheless realize that the two following points may be stated quite clearly:—

1. The demand for seasoned timber from European sources of supply will be very great at the close of the War.

2. The supply of shipping available for the transshipment of all the timber which can be secured for England, Scotland, and Wales will be below the normal.

The members of the conference regard it as clear, therefore, that measures of the most vigorous kind should be taken to secure a great increase in the cutting and seasoning of timber in various areas of probable supply.

In view of the great demand which will certainly be made for the timber of Sweden and Norway, and the prospect that (if we are helplessly dependent on these markets) the price will be a greatly inflated one, the members of the conference desire to suggest that special action should be taken to secure the cutting without delay and the seasoning of timber in Newfoundland, Canada, and other parts of the Empire, and the United States.

With regard to the timber of the United States, the shipping engaged in the return of the war material of the American Army might well carry a great deal of timber on the journey to Europe. In view, however, of the fact that the scantlings of the American timbers are unfamiliar to those engaged in constructional work here, authoritative action should be taken to demonstrate to users of timber that constructional timbers of such sections as are in common use in the United States may be adopted with safety for similar work in Great Britain.

With regard to home timber, according to the "Statesman's Year Book" there were in England 1,666,000 acres; Wales, 182,000 acres; and Scotland, 878,000 acres in woods and plantations.

In this relation the members of the conference desire to point out that prior to the latter half of the nineteenth century the timber used in rural areas and in most urban areas was home-grown timber. It is not, therefore, in accordance with the facts to say that British-grown timber is of no service.

It will probably not be necessary to rely to a great extent on home-grown timber, but the members of the conference desire to urge the Government to take steps to secure that an endeavour shall be made to furnish at least home-grown timber for the 100,000 rural cottages.

To bring timber hundreds of miles across the sea, and then to send it many miles on overworked railway lines to rural districts in the centre of England, whilst in the woodlands of the rural counties timber can be found in relative abundance, will be to enter upon a wasteful and uneconomic course of action.

From one point of view this question is urgent. Artificial methods for seasoning timber are costly, and if home-grown timber is to be used to a great extent in the building of cottages at the close of the War the trees should be felled before the sap rises in the spring of 1918. It will probably not be possible to do more than this until the end of the War is clearly in sight; but then, without delay, steps should be taken to pass quickly through the final stages of seasoning.

(To be concluded.)

"THE WORKING-CLASS HOUSING PROBLEM AND ITS SOLUTION."

WE have received the following further letters on the above subject:—

SIR,

In reply to Mr. Macartney's remarks with regard to my letter and plan, I should like to point out that my plan, illustrated in your November issue, only relates to one type of house. There will, I venture to think, be three required:—

- (1) The provision for the agricultural labourer, which would not require a parlour similar to that illustrated in your October issue.
- (2) The housing of newly married couples and elderly people in our large towns.
- (3) The house for the better class artisan.

My plan illustrated in your November issue relates to the last named, and fits in with your plan No. 1, having the same frontage and depth, with the same bedroom plan.

The better class artisan will insist upon having a parlour; and though, as I pointed out in my last letter, it may be contended he does not use it much, he is certainly using it more, and will do so still more in the future.

With this type of plan a projecting scullery becomes a necessity. To place the sculleries together on the party wall of a semi-detached cottage as Mr. Macartney suggests is a very natural improvement, but it would upset the very thing I have sought to avoid, namely, the overlapping of the kitchen by the scullery projection, which necessitates the kitchen window being placed in the corner of the room. The door into the

scullery would also destroy the comfort of the kitchen by opening on to the fireplace.

By placing the scullery as shown on my plan, on the outside wall, this objectionable projection is done away with, for the scullery is pushed back over the line of the coal-place and larder, thus leaving the kitchen with a centre window and the doors situated in the right place, away from the fireplace.

To reverse the position of the chimney-breast and the larder and place the former on the outside wall and the latter on the inside would of course be most objectionable in semi-detached cottages, as the larder and coal-place would have no outside windows, and the chimney-breasts would be unsatisfactory as regards cost, warmth, and appearance.

With all Mr. Macartney's other remarks on the subject I thoroughly agree, especially in regard to the height of the rooms. What is required is greater horizontal and less vertical spread, and this is the key to the whole situation, which is dominated by the cost of the roads, which, sooner or later, I venture to think, will have to be provided and maintained by the local authorities.

It is impossible for any individual to make a financial success of any cottage building scheme burdened by the cost of the roads unless rents are enormously increased.

Yours, etc.,

ALBERT N. BROMLEY, F.R.I.B.A.

Prudential Buildings, Nottingham.

SIR,

My attention has been drawn to the articles and letters on this subject in the October and November numbers of THE ARCHITECTURAL REVIEW.

It may perhaps interest you to know that similarly planned cottages were designed and erected under my supervision for the London County Council in 1903 and 1907.

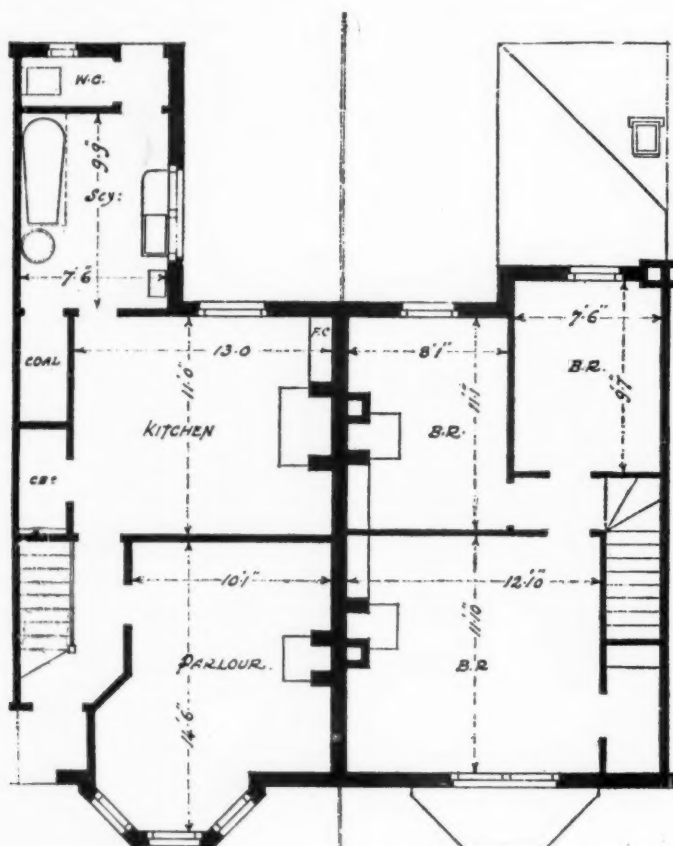
I enclose copies of the plans, which you are at liberty to publish.

Yours, etc.,

W. E. RILEY,

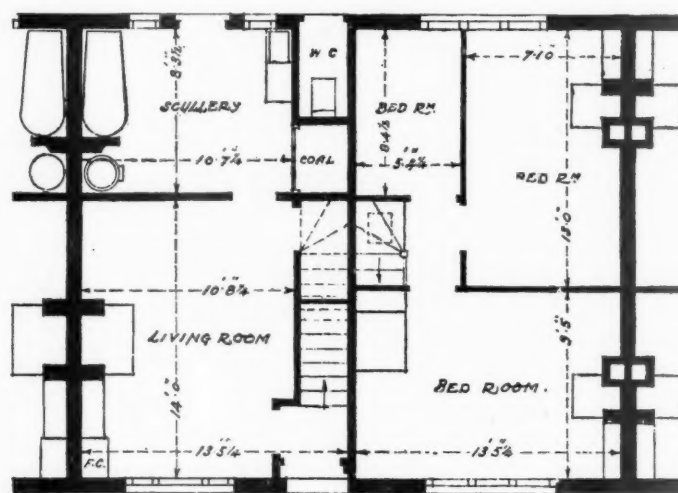
Superintending Architect, L.C.C.

County Hall, Spring Gardens, S.W.



GROUND FLOOR FIRST FLOOR

On the White Hart Lane Estate (1907).



GROUND FLOOR FIRST FLOOR

On the Tottenham Fields Estate (1903).

TYPICAL PLANS OF WORKING-CLASS HOUSES ERECTED BY THE LONDON COUNTY COUNCIL.

W. E. Riley, F.R.I.B.A., Superintending Architect.