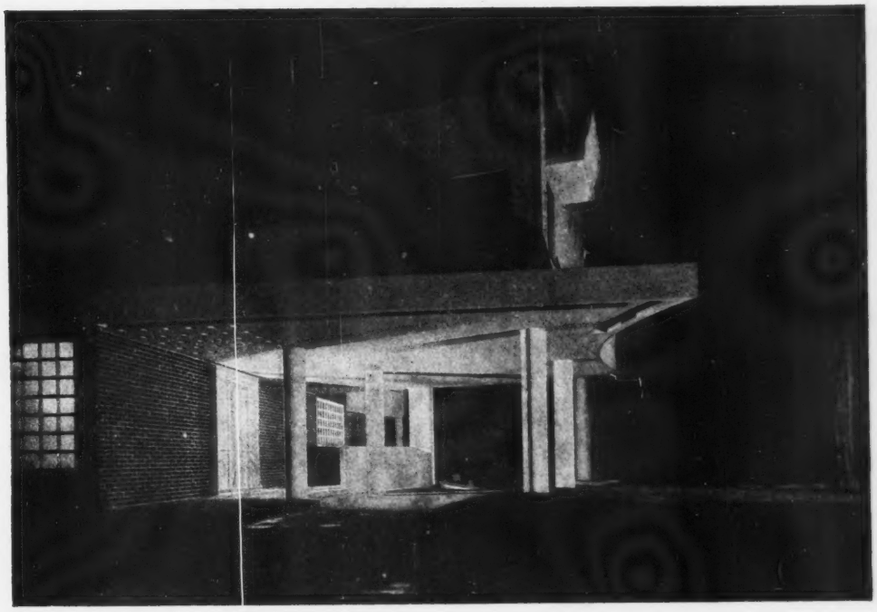
THE ARCHITECTURAL REVIEW

A Magazine of Architecture & Decoration



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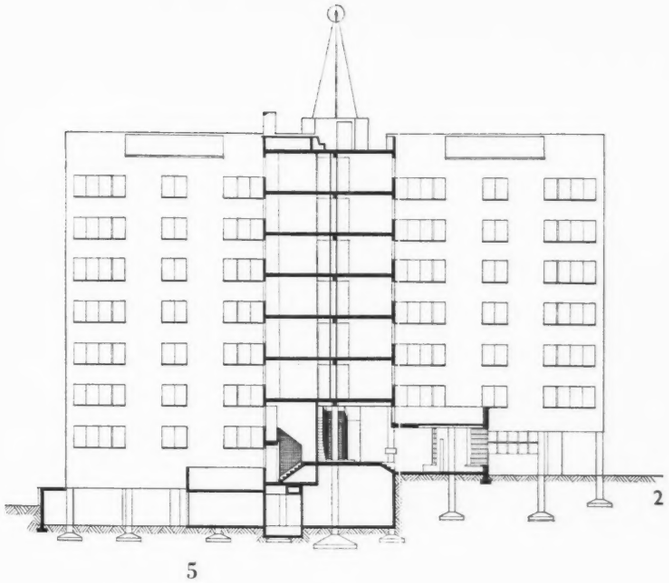
Seated Buddha in white porcelain; height 72 cm.; late Ming Dynasty (lent by Mr. S. D. Winkworth, London). From the current Exhibition of Chinese Art at Burlington House, Piccadilly.

FLATS AT HIGHGATE

1

LUBETKIN AND TECTON, ARCHITECTS



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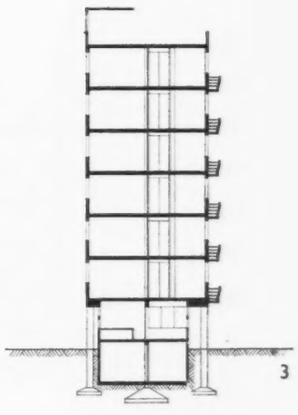
This block of 60 flats, known as Highpoint, stands on very high ground ; its roof is said to be the highest point in London. The flats are arranged on a double cruciform plan, as seen in the air view, 1, each flat occupying a complete wing. The large garden belonging to the flats is seen in the foreground. The existing grounds shown round it are preserved by covenant as permanent open spaces. The block is eight storeys in height and is constructed entirely in reinforced concrete.



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H I G H P O I N T F L A T S ,

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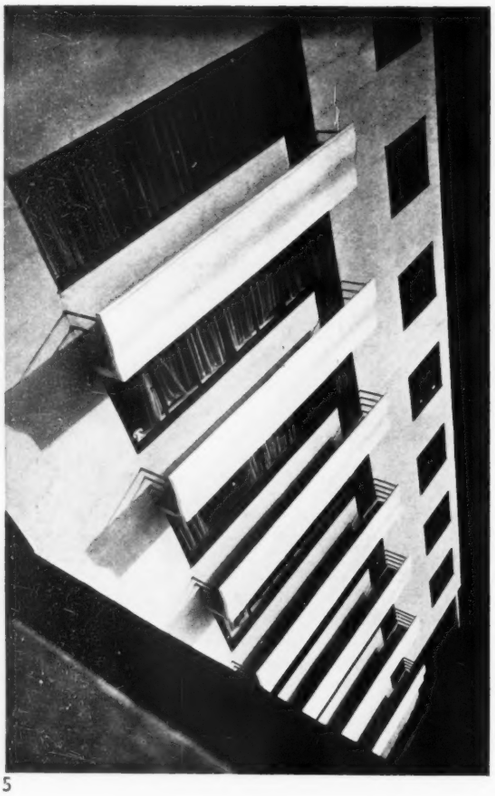

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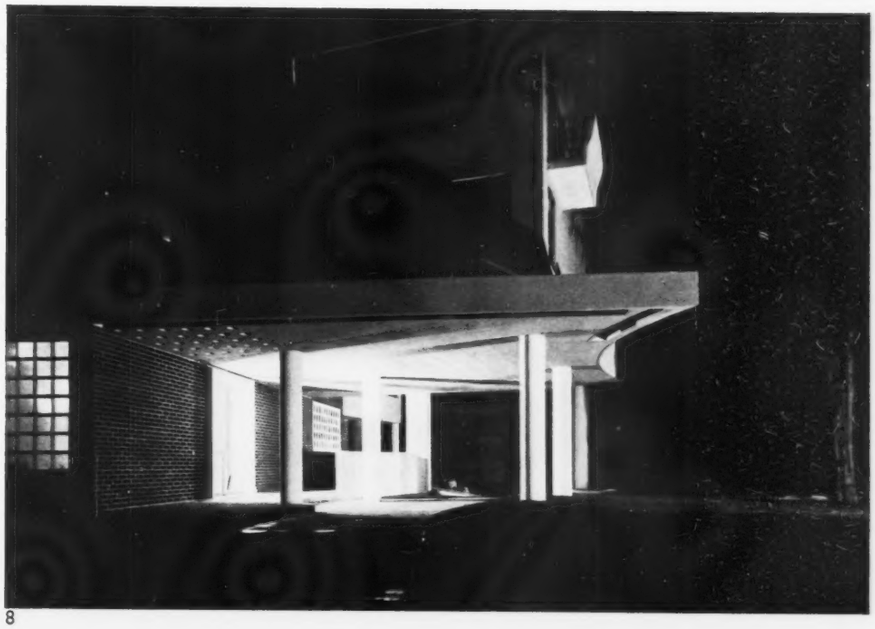
6

7

The roof of the building, 4, has an exceptionally fine view over London. It is designed as a promenade and roof-garden, and is provided with terraces and shelters, seen in 4 and 6, and seats. The roof is paved with square pumice concrete tiles, laid with open joints so that rain-water shall penetrate to a waterproofed under-surface. The pumice concrete is a sufficient insulating material to prevent direct sunshine overheating the flats beneath. The circular holes seen in the side wall of the concrete canopy, 6, are provided as resting places for pigeons, which were found to alight in large numbers on the top of the building, making it a halt in long carrier flights. 5 is a view looking from the roof down the series of reinforced concrete cantilevered balconies, which are provided in each flat with direct access from the living rooms. 7 is a general view of the building from the road, showing the main entrance beneath a projecting canopy, supported on circular columns.

H I G H G A T E

The entrance, with its covered drive-in, is seen in more detail in 8, taken at night from the road approach. The main door consists of two leaves, each of a single sheet of glass, framed in metal. Another night photograph, 9, is taken from further along the road approach at the corner of the ramp that leads down to the garage and service yard. It shows in the foreground the rockery which separates the balcony of the ground floor flat from the public approach. The use of brick for parts of the ground floor gives some feeling of continuity between the building and its brick-built neighbours on either side.



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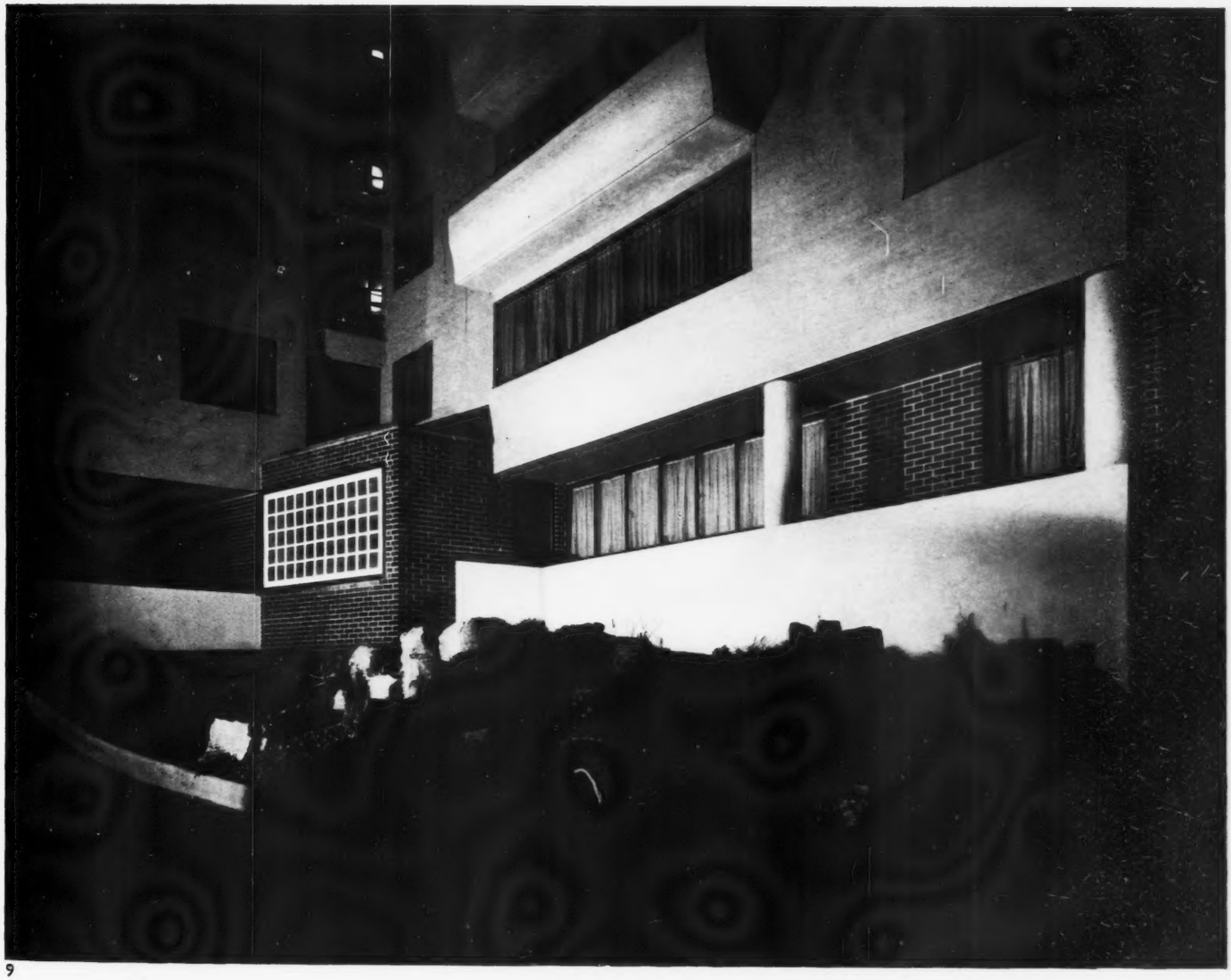

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F L A T S A T H I G H G A T E

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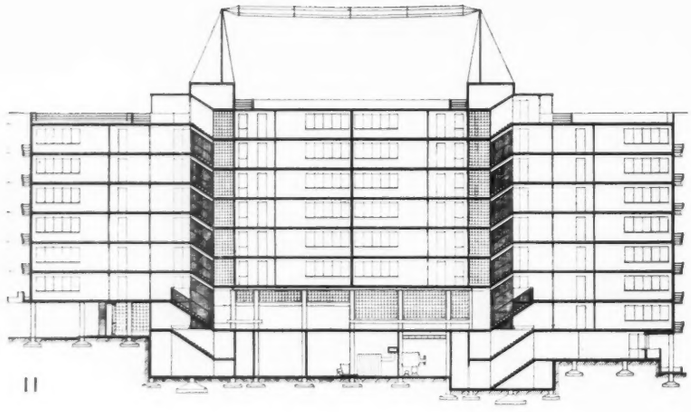


11

10 shows the building from the garden side with, at the bottom of the projecting wing, the freely planned ramps and terraces that lead from a communal tea-room on the ground floor into the garden. This freedom of planning, here and internally, at ground floor level is made possible by concentrating the load on a minimum number of points. Above, construction is monolithic, all external walls and floors being part of the structure. The reinforced concrete walls are insulated with 1 in. of cork. The floors are reinforced concrete slabs with two layers of cork separated by a layer of hard screeding, the latter being isolated from the walls by cork to prevent transmission of vibration. The concrete work was constructed with a patent system of movable wood shuttering. 11 is a section through the centre of the building, on the axis at right angles to the road.

THE VERTICAL GARDEN CITY

By Le Corbusier

I believe that in periods of a new beginning, in epochs of the birth of new civilizations, ideas must be human before being national. This because nations are only artificial products of circumstance. I have visited the large block of flats just completed at Highgate. This beautiful building sets a question of principle: to follow tradition or to break with it? I reply unhesitatingly by stating my personal point of view; a new tradition must be created.

In England, undoubtedly, there exists a very strong domestic tradition. England, seen from the air, is a green country, subdivided by high hedges into a crazy paving, based on some system which is incomprehensible, but whose effect is very clearly defined. From above, it seems impossible to alter the subdivision which was devised in the remotest past. I leave it to whoever it may concern to study this question; it would be very interesting to explore it.

But the aeroplane goes on, and passes over London. A colossal spectacle, amazing phenomenon. From Croydon, the suburbs stretch out of sight, multiply, and follow one upon another. The earth, in all its vast extent, is covered with them. Suddenly, a town—the Town; but we have already passed over it. It was the City. After it, the puzzle of suburbs goes on again.

Let us stand on the solid earth again; let us undergo the daily lot of 10,000,000 inhabitants, walking on the ground and going about their business. 10,000,000 inhabitants, in the course of their ordinary occupations, make the London street intense, magnificent, and seething with life. The traffic, resolving the paradox of terrific distances, bus, tube, tram, taxi, car, roll us on in an irresistible torrent. The buses are splendid—red, covered with beautiful lettering; tall, strategic towers. The lay-out of the London tube impresses me by its size, its pleasantness, and the comfort put at the passengers' disposal, and by the care the public takes of the accommodation it has been given.

The breakwaters of the torrent are the London shops—full of goods, polished glass, clean marble, and brilliant brass. One feels the abundance of merchandise, the weight of production, the quality. Then, involved in this violent adventure, the martyred pedestrian. What adaptability; what perseverance; what resignation, and what optimism! He does not revolt (not yet); he accepts a new rôle that was unknown to his ancestors.

This intensity of life in the street is an entertaining distraction, enthralling in its dynamic quality. But it is crazy, so stupid it makes one cry. More than that, it is an economic disaster.

What statistician would consent to calculate the capital which could be mobilized from the gigantic expenditure represented by the consumption of petrol and tyres of all these vehicles; and, above all, by the hours wasted by the innumerable workers who toil at production and distribution. We, with this capital emerging triumphantly, could achieve a new vindication of realistic town-planning, and the page would be turned. Then only, another life would begin—the new epoch with its new towns. . . .

What I have just said will let me return to Highgate. Where does this pedestrian go after his day's work in London? He goes home to his little two-storey house. London has millions of these houses, each with its little bit of garden.

The house is probably, even certainly, very intimate; but what kind of intimacy is it? The windows open on to those of the next house; it is a few yards from one front door to the next. The landscape?—invisible from the garden, the street, or the window.

Let us examine the question from another point of view: those 10,000 000 individuals are spread out to the horizon thick as sand. Naturally a tradition grows up and creates a way of thinking and acting, which becomes specifically that of the Londoner, and, by imitation, probably that of the Englishman. It is rightly said that there is an English tradition, but founded upon what? On these exact phenomena of circulation and housing—phenomena which are deficient.

When the village was a village, when London was a normal town, when the motor car, the bus, and the Underground were still in the dim future, the proportion was different; it was radically different, possible, human. Proportion existed; it is no more.

I think I felt around me, in my London journey, a certain tiredness and desire for change. This terrific extension has led to a dislocation of everyday life, and to the weariness of the people: slow and penetrating symptoms of disintegration. This, at any rate, is apparent — certain of the vital elements of modern life have been strangled: the civic qualities which activate the spirit of the citizen outside the simple obligations of work, especially the feeling of participation in a common enterprise, in a work which is visible, whose function one can understand, through which one walks, which exists materially, optically, and plastically. I speak of a town; of a town which represents the spirit of an epoch, a spiritual event.

Have modern times the right to create their own towns, to manifest their spiritual significance? I believe that this tradition, which we recognize as existing, is broken and smashed today by the paradox of a town immeasurably extended, and I believe that a new tradition is being born which will safeguard all that was the prime motive power of the preceding tradition. It will be the new tradition of vertical garden-cities, made possible by modern technique. It will replace the horizontal garden-cities by giving what those have ceased to give, bringing what they have ceased to bring; everyday joys, much more real than the illusions of today. Our immense progress will bring immense benefits.

The vertical garden-city:

(a) Brings the solution of modern speed: the separation of automobile and pedestrian routes. The whole site is at the disposal of the pedestrian, out of danger from cars.

(b) Gives facilities for the organization of communal services: liberation from domestic slavery, of great importance for women.

(c) Safeguards the site: creates a real landscape and provides the opportunity of admiring it, by means of eloquent avenues superimposed one upon another.

(d) Restores the land for useful purposes, one of which, at least, is to provide sport facilities at the very feet of the houses; another, if necessary, to provide vegetable gardens for intensive cultivation; much more interesting than the traditional small garden system.

So we find in Highgate the seed of something, the seed of a vertical garden-city as opposed to the horizontal extension. The building is large enough to be an example, a demonstration, a proof. The response of the public, also, is eloquent; it is enthusiasm. Almost all the flats are let, before the block is finished. Thanks to the construction on stanchions, the ground floor is no longer that part of the building usually sacrificed, where strangled rooms crowd around access corridors to the staircase, between heavy carrying walls. The ground floor here extends like the superb surface of a lake, absorbing easily the lines of traffic of different speed and direction; the cars into their own door, pedestrians elsewhere, services elsewhere again. Perambulators and bicycles have easy access, the cars are garaged in the right place. But more than circulation, this surface contains real parking spaces: a huge hall, full of light and air, extremely attractive architecturally, and leading with enormous virtuosity towards the two vertical services of stairs and lifts. And here again, full light from top to bottom of these essential services.

The top is no longer composed of an academic pitched roof folklore: it is a product of reinforced concrete. A great area of repose, broken only by wind-screens and shelters from the sun and rain which stand out against the sky. From the roof the view on all sides is incomparable: framed in concrete bays the whole sky

appears, and the forests, and the garden suburbs, and the church spires, and the distant roads. A spectacle. When it is finished, plantations of bushes and flowers will give this roof garden of a new era the necessary intimacy and pleasantness. . . . Here then are two new events brought about by modern technique ; the stanchions with a distribution of circulation on the ground floor, and the roof garden accessible by lifts—now the current means of vertical transport. Between these two new elements are inserted, with all the standardization capable of uniting efficiency with economy, the sixty flats. These are of two types ; they could, if necessary, be of ten or more ; standardization of structural elements leaves perfect liberty for architectural initiative.

These flats possess the most important factor of all domestic architecture : sun and space and intimacy. What do interior subtleties matter ? They take second place behind this predominant reality ; immense bays, opening on the country. Before fixing the standard of these flats, the architects have studied the question of interior arrangement very skilfully and profoundly. It is worth while, when one multiplies one's experience by sixty, to do it well. The result of standardization is here an excellent quality in the smallest details ; well studied, once and for all, they extend their benefits to the whole building. For a long time I have dreamed of executing dwellings in such conditions for the good of humanity. The building at Highgate is an achievement of the first rank, and a milestone which will be useful to everybody. It is amusing to point out here the obstinacy with which the conservative and reactionary spirit tries to maintain its position. Highpoint could only be constructed because until today the local regulations did not consider at all the problem of building in height. These rules were created chiefly for the building of normal houses of the garden-city type. The architects of Highpoint were able to sweep away, as a torrent sweeps a dam, the feeble resistance which these regulations were able to oppose to them. The building grew but, as soon as it was up, the authorities gave the alarm ; they immediately added a clause forbidding the repetition of such an adventure. This is characteristic ; it is also heartbreaking. It might have been imagined that the legislation was really created to give freedom to intelligent initiative. No. The regulations are blind tyrants, red-taped and bureaucratic. When a new building legislation, a free legislation, induces the builders not to perpetrate anachronisms, but to open, on the contrary, the door to modern times, for the total transformation of architecture and town planning, this transformation will be the gift of modern technique.

THE BUILDING

By J. M. Richards

THE time has come when we have the right to demand a high standard of finish and mechanical craftsmanship in modern buildings. For some while after the Modern Movement had been introduced into this country, there was certain justification for our being content with making the modern gesture in producing buildings that were appropriate in spirit, somewhat carelessly of the refinements that were ultimately to become one of our most essential criteria. But now it is time that our efforts became more thorough than the mere making of a gesture allows. The revolution has arrived : the stability and authority of the *régime* it has initiated depend on modern architecture being able to compete on spiritual and humanitarian grounds, as well as on grounds of economy and practicality, with the kind of architecture it has superseded. Architects must realize that thorough consideration of detail and finish is now important, if only because that is the province in which the validity of modern architecture will be tested.

Modern architecture's greatest strength is that it is able to reach its highest degree of perfection by utilizing the already well-developed potentialities of modern technics. The outstanding modern characteristics are the precision, grace and consciousness of exactness that come from study and apt utilization of the machine. The criticism to which examples of modern architecture in England have been hitherto most open is that this characteristic of exactness—the species of refinement, as differentiated from refinement of eclectic ornament, that is typical of the modern æsthetic—has been lacking. Instead has been apparent a certain clumsiness and a lack of concern for the accurate structural elimination and careful finish that produce the precision and grace typical of the modern masterpieces on the Continent—almost as though it was intended to preserve some of the quality of handicraft methods and materials : " modern " buildings have been evident whose solid masses of concrete have most affinity with the Monumental and whose crude edges with the Picturesque—neither of which qualities is called for to serve the contemporary environment.

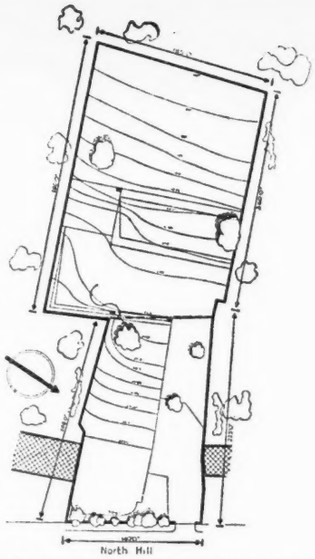
Highpoint Flats, at Highgate, do show appreciation of where the affinities of modern architecture lie. They show a considerable degree of success in expressing this appreciation in a significant concrete form ; as well as the essential virtue of thorough study of detail and finish. The building is remarkable for the amount of work that has obviously been put into details that might go unnoticed by the casual passer-by—even by the occupants of the flats—but which contribute to the spirit of order and exactness.

The architectural conscience, or architectural idealism, that sets these high standards of finish, introduces at the same time new difficulties into the architect's work. Industry, for example, is found not to be in a position to cope with his new, particular demands. It is signifiant that in this building a great many of the ordinary fittings—door-handles, window-fastenings, taps, and so on—were specially designed by the architects ; not in order that these should be peculiar to this building but simply because the architects' requirements were not satisfied by the standard fittings available. Until industry is producing a standard of modern equipment good enough to satisfy the demands of the best modern architecture, economic considerations will make an absolute degree of perfection of finish impossible even to aim at. How high the architects in this case tried to aim is shown by the fact that even the mechanism of an electric switch was redesigned in order that its pattern should conform to a new ideal of compactness and efficiency.

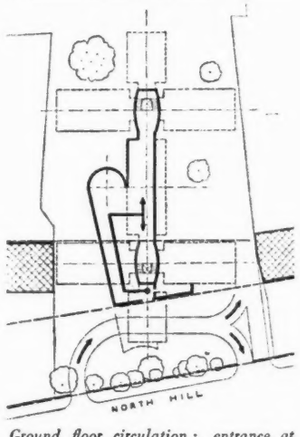
The result of this thorough attention to detail is that Highpoint is one of the two or three examples of modern architecture in England (there are still not more than two or three—outside the sphere of small-house design) that can be judged by international standards ; that we can place beside the output of the rank and file of modern Continental architects, without having to employ a rather careful balancing of virtues against defects because the examples are a product of this country.

This is not to say that Highpoint is without faults ; only to admire the standard at which it aims and which it comes within reasonable reach of. It is a conscientious solution of a problem that is beset with any number of difficulties—and a solution that has several brilliant points.

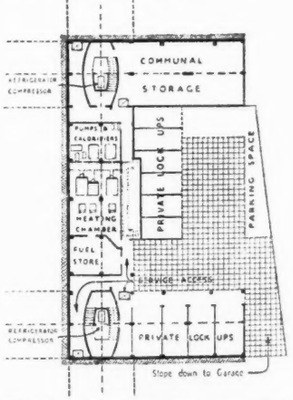
One of the greatest difficulties that flat planning has to contend with is that arising from questions of land values and economics generally. In order to make a block of flats economi-



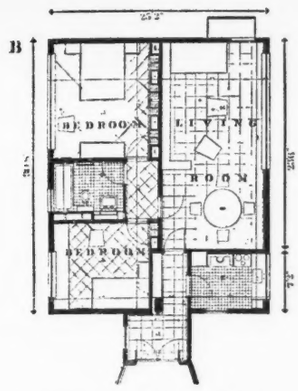
Front portion of site the only one that could be built on ; larger back portion (the garden) protected by covenant ; land surrounding it also protected as permanent open space. Tall building therefore demanded ; air, light and view ; relatively small ground plan dictated by regulation setback from road.



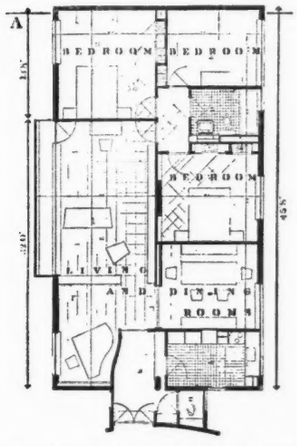
Ground floor circulation : entrance at centre to allow motor drive in and out, halting beneath overhanging wing of cruciform superstructure (see plans, page 12). Entrance hall along building line at right angles to road, leading to central hall with staircase at either end. Drive down, right, to garage.



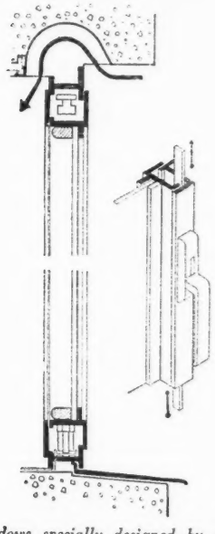
Planning of basement floor : access from low-level courtyard utilizing existing excavation. Service entrances along open passages to goods lifts serving all flats ; also garbage collection. Centrally planned heating and hot water plant. Provision of lock-up storage space for seldom-wanted property, in charge of porter, for occupants of flats.



Two standard sizes of flat (see plans, page 12). Kitchens and bathrooms standardized throughout. Flat B: adjacent kitchen and living room, with serving hatch between; two bedrooms and bathroom as separate unit, reached through living rooms; small balcony at end of living room.



Flat A: serving hatch from kitchen leads to dining recess, divided from living room by sliding doors; three bedrooms (also off separate lobby) reached through living room; balcony along one side of living room; separate w.c. off entrance hall. All flats have cross-ventilation; built-in wardrobes in all bedrooms.



Windows specially designed by architects: arrangement of head to provide 100 sq. ins. of permanent ventilation as required by bye-laws; interior metal cill tucked under frame. Neat handle fitted in thickness of frame; secure fastening top and bottom.

cally efficient; that is to say, in order to ensure an adequate return on ground rent (or purchase), capital expenditure and running costs, a certain minimum number of flats must be provided on the site. There are restrictions as to height; in the case of Highpoint by regulation far more severely than by the demands of rational design. When development is taking place on small quantities of land at one time it is most unlikely that consideration of both these factors will allow of an ideal solution. There are a number of needs that the ideal solution would provide for and that all have to be considered in planning a building of this sort: orientation to the view and to the sun; admission of light and air; privacy; accessibility; insulation against noise—all matters (except, to a certain degree, insulation) of design and expediency rather than of building technique. In the case of Highpoint privacy is the quality that has had to be partially sacrificed to economic and topographical necessity. The overlooking of each wing by another at right-angles that the double cruciform plan allows is not an ideal arrangement; though, an ideal solution not being possible, it is probably the best, commensurate with the other amenities that are provided, that circumstances allowed.

The architects would appear deliberately to have given priority to view and sunlight as essential amenities in every flat, believing perhaps that a high degree of privacy is only a passing virtue. Indeed, the standard of privacy by which Highpoint can be criticized is really that of the country house—not of the urban community. It is infinitely higher than that of the villa estate.

The double cruciform plan already referred to has a number of decided advantages not possessed by other type-plans that have been evolved. The plan means that each flat occupies a whole wing by itself, and so has three outside walls (except in the case of the two centre flats on each floor, which have two). This, given adequate insulation against heat and cold, has great advantages: among them, cross ventilation in every flat, sunshine for many hours of the day and the possibility of noise transmission from above and below only—there are a minimum number of party walls. This plan also allows very simple access. There are two public staircases, each with an open well serving as a lift-shaft. These stairs and lifts give on to small landings in the intersections of the crosses, from which the front doors open. There are therefore no access passages. Goods and service lifts run up the corners of the crosses, giving on to open-air landings from which the trades doors of the flats open. The service lifts rise from the service entrances at basement level, reached from the courtyard; so that no goods deliveries or other services need take place by way of the public entrances.

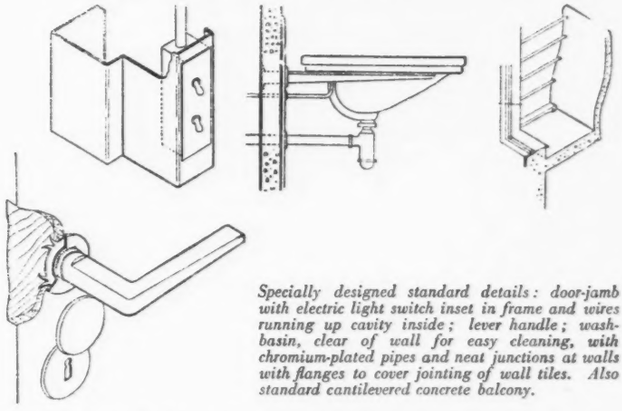
In this basement floor all the mechanical services are concentrated, such as heating and refrigeration plant. These are soundly and economically planned. The courtyard at this level makes use of an already excavated portion of the site. The same courtyard serves as parking space—not very large for the size of the building, but presumably the best that could be contrived. The lock-up garages open off it, and the number of these, also, seems a weak point in the planning. Ten garages for a block of 60 flats, in a building largely occupied by people with a car-owning income—especially in a building which carefully tries to anticipate a future mode of life—seems seriously inadequate.

The planning of the ground or entrance floor of the building is the result of a first-rate piece of imaginative thinking. Instead of the usual poky vestibule or lift-hall, entered direct from the street, with hardly habitable flats on either side, Highpoint has a spacious asymmetrical approach providing public space of a character that suggests the social elements in a communal way of living—and the flats themselves begin, out of the public way, on the first floor.

The way the load of the upper storeys is concentrated at ground floor level on a few points of support allows great flexibility of planning, and the loose shapes comprising the ground floor plan effect an appropriate transition between the disorderly street and landscape around and the rigid geometrical planning above. Inside, the two staircase wells are joined by a long pillared lounge-hall of simple shape and pleasant colour, lit by a glass and concrete screen. This is beneath the centre of the building. Alongside it, linking it with the entrance vestibule, is an oddly but interestingly shaped passage hall. Its shape is derived from its outside wall being made to run at right angles to the line of the street, the main building being placed at a slight angle (parallel with the main direction of the site). The taper this gives to the hall is justified also by its pleasant directional value. It is a single-storey structure, and is differentiated as such from the hall beneath the main building by having exposed ceiling beams instead of one flat ceiling slab. This difference also provides an interesting and necessary contrast of surfaces. Beside this hall is the porter's flat and office, conveniently placed to control the entrance. At the end of it, making a second right-angle turn, back to the original line, necessary before reaching the main entrance, is the entrance vestibule. The rest of the ground floor is occupied by a tea room, facing the garden and joined to it by a series of freely planned ramps and terraces, maids' bedrooms—an unusual and rather experimental feature—and a single flat that can be converted if desirable into a café. On the outside of the building the same eccentricity of ground floor planning forms an interesting base to the severe superstructure. The single-storey hall and porter's lodge stop the sharp vertical edge of the forward wing. The canopy over the entrance, curved in plan, repeats in the air the ground curve of the drive. A very good feature, on the opposite side of the building from the ramp down to the service courtyard, is the vista right through to the garden at the back. This is important because it draws attention to the existence of unbuilt-on spaces behind—and therefore to the open view obtained from a large proportion of the flats; counteracting the misleading appearance of restriction given by the close proximity of the block to the road (the latter due to an existing covenant that forebade any building on the hinder portion of the site).

It is interesting to note the use of brick for parts of the ground floor road frontage, carrying on the scale and material of adjoining buildings. The rest of the exterior is concrete; the bare structural concrete, as it left the wood shuttering, being treated with a cream-coloured concrete paint. This gives a pleasant enough surface, which it is hoped will preserve its cleanliness against weather and time. The exterior of the building is very simple in outline, relying for its dignity on well-proportioned masses. Formal contrast is provided by the slightly stylized balconies, whose *cyma*-shaped fronts are useful as foils to the large plane concrete surfaces whether or not they are functionally justifiable. The entrance elevation contains what is to my mind the only thoroughly bad piece of design in the whole building: the name-sign "Highpoint," which is rather coarsely inset in a somewhat arbitrarily stepped concrete fascia above the entrance canopy. It is unfortunate that this single specimen of detail that has not the otherwise universal sensitiveness and assurance, should be almost the only one seen from the road. On the same elevation the nearly blank end wall to the wing (which is not unpleasing—only unexpected in a building of this kind) is explained by one of those bargains that nearly always have to be struck with local authorities before any building that makes a departure from tradition is accepted.

Standardization is one of the most sensible roads to economy, as well as conducing to that very necessary appearance of order—of dependence on what



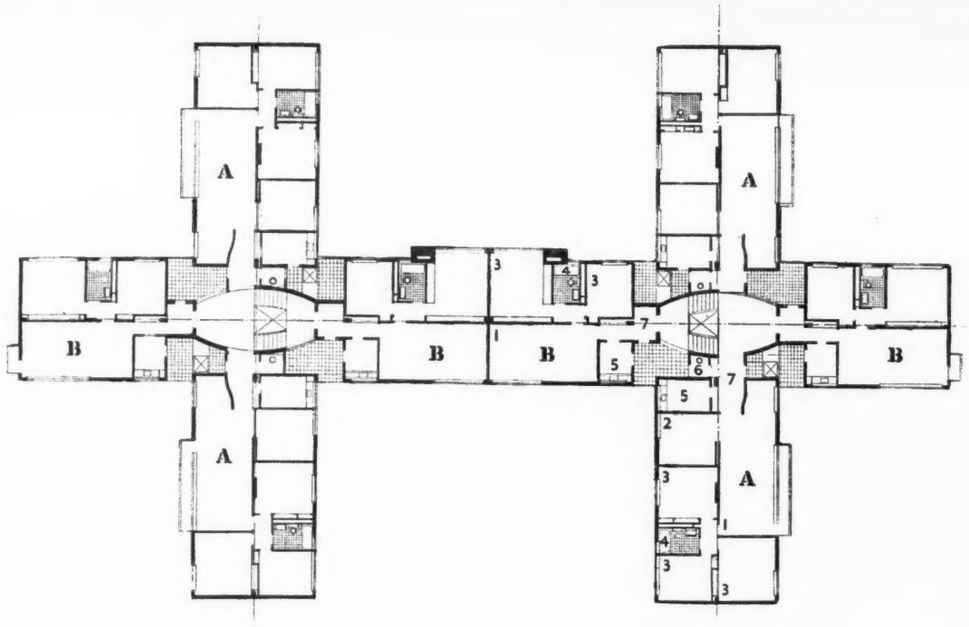
Specially designed standard details: door-jamb with electric light switch inset in frame and wires running up cavity inside; lever handle; wash-basin, clear of wall for easy cleaning, with chromium-plated pipes and neat junctions at walls with flanges to cover jointing of wall tiles. Also standard cantilevered concrete balcony.

is essential. The architects of Highpoint have adopted several basic standardizations. The plan of each floor (except the ground floor, containing the entrances, and the top floor, containing special studio-flats) is absolutely standardized, with four three-room flats and four four-room flats on each. These two types of flat are standardized throughout the building, as are all kitchens and all bathrooms. These major standardizations lead to many minor ones (with the ensuing economies) in fittings, finishes and services. The internal planning in each type of flat has two unusual characteristics: first, the large size of the living-rooms, provided in the sound belief that it is in living-rooms that space is needed to make permanent flat-life bearable—that if it is provided in living-rooms, others can be (even ought to be) reduced to a serviceable minimum; secondly, the provision of access to the bedrooms only through the living-rooms. The former provision succeeds in making an economical flat spacious at the same time. The size of the rooms is made to look smaller by the relatively low ceilings, noticeably in the four-roomed flats, but the effective floor area is not, of course, thereby reduced. It is questionable, again particularly in the case of the four-roomed flats, whether the long narrow proportion of the living-rooms is ideal from the point of view of furnishing and habitation. The through access, though generally considered a disadvantage, would work, I believe, as here planned, with no inconvenience.

In the interior of the building the quality of clarity and orderliness is well maintained and is most clearly seen in the way the services are concealed. Forethought has been exercised to run the many pipes and conduits without either exposing them to view (in contrast with many so-called modern buildings that still have their service pipes draped over the outside) or burying them in a way that makes them inaccessible for repair. In some instances the position of the services has been most ingeniously contrived. The electricity service for the lift, for example, as well as the ordinary electric wiring, runs inside the vertical tubing that forms the frame to the lift enclosure; so that the staircases are kept quite free from confusion of any sort. Inside the flats electric and telephone wires run in a small duct behind a removable coved cork skirting. Electric light wiring runs up a space left behind the return flange of the pressed steel door frames, the switches being set actually in the frames. In the bathrooms the pipes conducting hot water to the towel rails which are fixed against one side wall are made to pass under the floor so as slightly to warm the tiled surface.

I have already referred to the thorough consideration of detail observable throughout the building. Inside the flats this quality is again noticeable in the finishes. The simple plaster surfaces terminate neatly against the metal trim. The warm-coloured cork floor meets the walls in an easily swept coved skirting. The windows are particularly well designed, opening with a wide hinge for easy cleaning and remaining fixed in any position by a specially designed friction fastening. They are spaciously proportioned, and those in the living rooms are of the sliding-folding type, so that in fine weather the whole width of the room can be thrown open to sunlight and air. Unobtrusive heating is provided by the panel-warming system and unobtrusive ventilation by the permanent air inlet contrived in the head of every window.

The flats are planned with compactness in the service portions, which are very completely equipped and the processes they serve properly visualized. The restraint and simplicity of the rest leaves the individual inhabitant free to add his own contribution. The whole spirit, indeed, of the building is one of restraint (though not without imagination): it has none of the aggressive monumentality that it is sometimes thought necessary to provide even in the simple housing unit. If in these notes, analyzing some of the elements that give it its special qualities, parts of the design have been stringently criticized, that is because the building deserves the compliment of being judged by the highest standards.



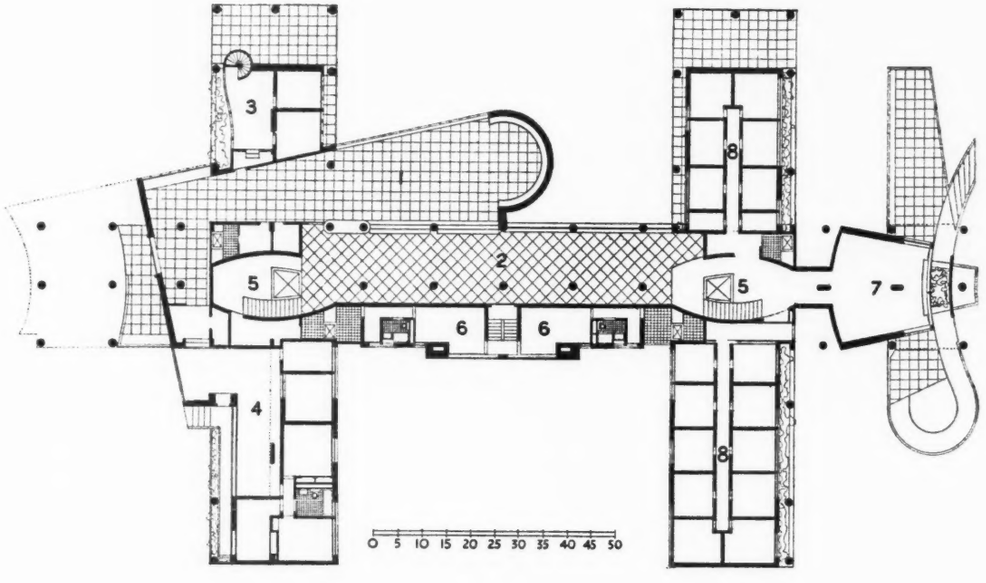
The double cruciform plan, standardized on each of the upper floors (above) allows cross ventilation in each flat, sun on two elevations in most flats, complete isolation from neighbours (except above and below). Public and service access grouped at centres of crosses; no access corridors. Ground floor (below) freely planned to make transition with street and garden. Long central hall gives each staircase equal importance; single storey block containing passage-hall and porter's flat, the latter conveniently placed to control entrance; curved entrance canopy repeats curve of drive; view through to garden from street beneath ends of two cross wings; tea room at back linked to garden by terraces and ramps, appropriately informal in plan; front flat, adjacent to entrance vestibule, could be made into café.

UPPER FLOOR

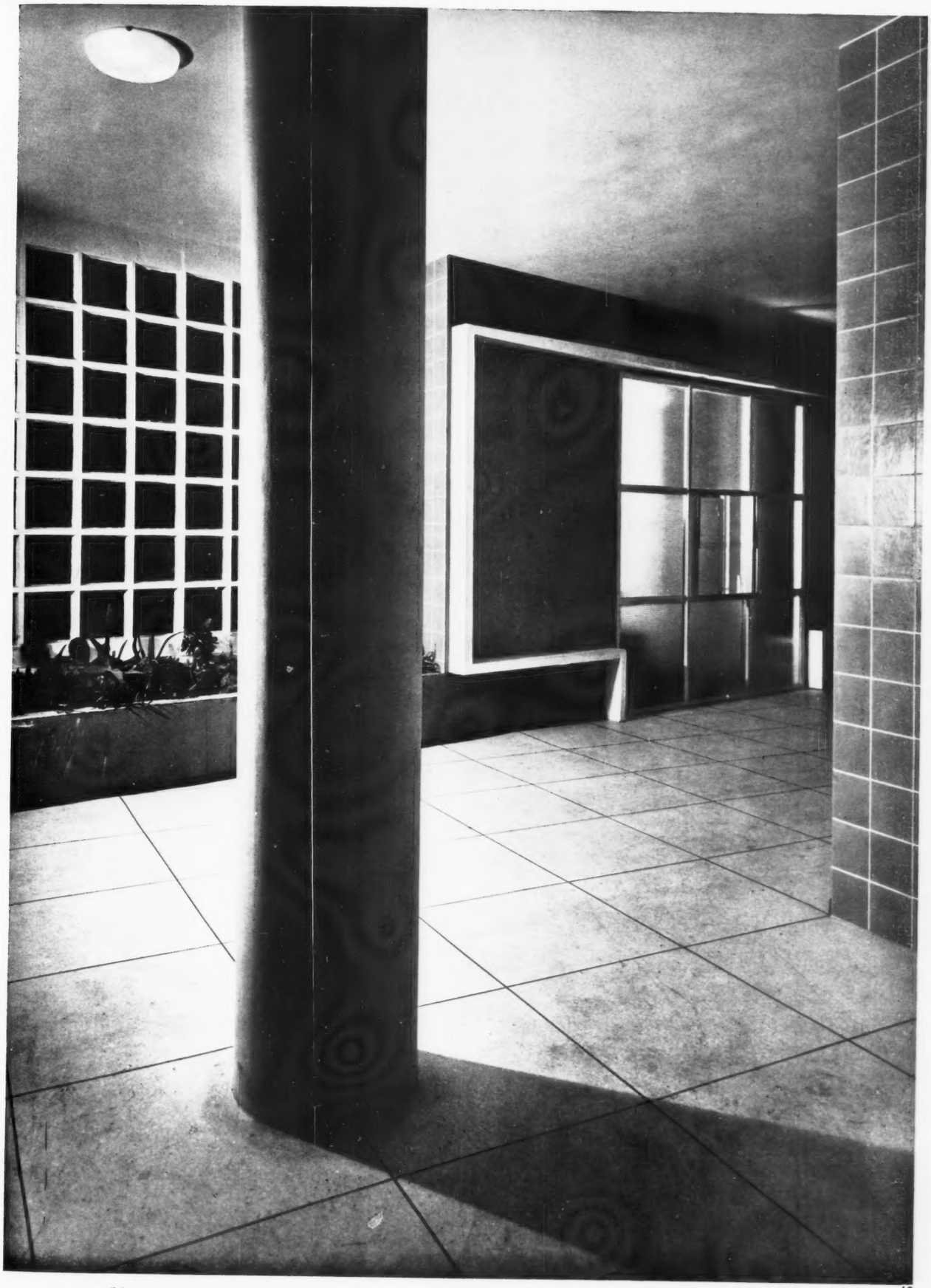
1, LIVING ROOM 5, KITCHEN
2, DINING RECESS 6, W.C.
3, BEDROOMS 7, ENTRANCE HALL
4, BATHROOM

GROUND FLOOR

1, HALL AND WINTER GARDEN 5, LIFTS AND STAIRCASES
2, HALL 6, ONE-ROOM FLATS
3, PORTER'S FLAT 7, TEA-ROOM
4, LARGE FLAT 8, MAIDS' BEDROOMS



F L A T S A T H I G H G A T E



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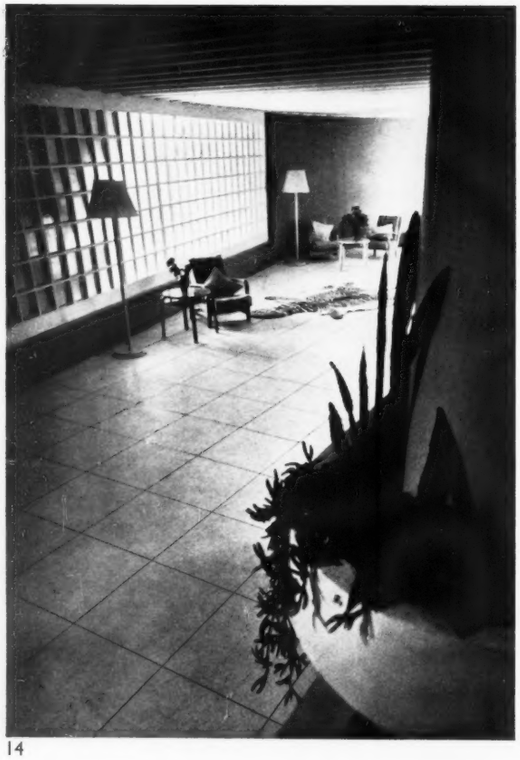

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The main door from the road gives into a square entrance vestibule, from which a left-hand turn leads into the passage-hall. 12 (on the preceding page) is a view from the vestibule looking into this hall. It shows, on the right, the blue tiles with which the end wall of the vestibule is faced —a hard surface, slightly suggesting from the inside the approach to external conditions—and, on the left, the porter's office, which is also seen in 15, a view straight down the same hall. The porter's flat is on this floor, behind his office. This hall, 14 and 15, is a single-storey structure, lit by a concrete window, and terminating in a semicircular blank wall, a future site for a mural painting. Alongside it, on a slightly higher level, is the inner hall, 13, connecting the two staircases and lifts. The columns here and the flat ceiling are white, and the side wall painted a dark blue. The two halls are decorated with tropical plants, growing in concrete boxes. The stairs and lifts lead to a small landing on each floor, lit by concrete windows, from which the flats are reached. 16 is a view from one of these landings with the front door of the flat open. It shows the free-standing structural column which occurs in the hall of each flat. The flats are of two standardized kinds : with two bedrooms and with three (see plans on page 12). They are remarkable for the large living rooms (the three-bedroom flat having also a dining recess adjoining the living room) and the high standard of equipment and finish. The rents for the two sizes of flat are from £145 a year to £175 and from £150 to £225, including heating and hot water. 17, 18 and 19 are typical interiors in one of the flats. In the bedroom, 17, note the built-in cupboards that form the whole left-hand wall and the long window on the right. In the kitchen, 18, and the bathroom, 19, note the very complete built-in equipment, which includes in the former centrally operated refrigerators and, in the latter, a laundry chute. Living rooms are shown on page 16.

H I G H G A T E

15

16

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18

19

FLATS AT HIGHGATE

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21

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The living room of each flat is a long, narrow room with a window occupying almost the whole of one side, and a glazed door leading to one of the cantilevered concrete balconies. An electric fire is built into the other side wall. The window is of the "harmonica" type, opening to its full width. The walls are finished in plaster and the floor in cork. 20 is a view from the entrance end of the living room of one of the three-room flats —the same flat that is illustrated on the preceding page. It is the flat occupied by Mr. B. Lubetkin, the architect. The other photographs, 21 and 22, of other examples of the same standardized living room, are given to suggest the adaptability of a restrained rational room-design to any kind of furnishing. Provided the furniture, hangings, etc., are good of their kind, a harmony is obtainable with elements of any period. The modern furniture in Mr. Lubetkin's flat, 20, can be replaced by the period furniture in the flat of Miss Beatrix Lehmann, 21 (seen from the same view-point, with a Queen Anne writing desk against the end wall and a William Morris table under the window) or that in the flat of Professor Albert Rutherston, 22.

In one of the three-room flats at Highpoint, Highgate: a view of the living-room. *Architects, Lubetkin and Tecton.*

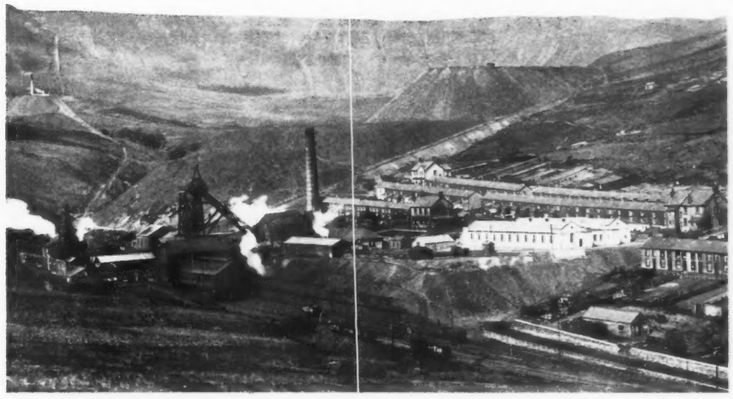
THE ENGLISH TRADITION

in

The Town

By Thomas Sharp

II. Hell, Utopia and Middlesbrough



THE series of articles of which this is the second is a parallel one to that published in March, April and May of last year. That dealt with the Countryside; this with the Town. In his articles, "The English Tradition in the Countryside," Mr. W. A. Eden traced, it will be remembered, the growth of the English landscape; interpreting the changes that have taken place as a process of progressive humanization, only interrupted in the nineteenth century as a result of commercial expansion, the growth of urban population and the loss of the cohesive character of the urban centre. He concluded by suggesting that the only way out of present-day chaos was through a return to the English tradition of humanization—by way of intelligent development of the countryside rather than by sterile preservation.

In the case of the town Mr. Thomas Sharp traces a parallel story. Though the problems of the town and of the countryside are only different parts of the same problem, one of finding a way back to tradition through recognition of the function of each according to contemporary needs, it is not illogical to treat them separately for purposes of analysis. Each benefited and suffered in turn under different phases of the same cultural and sociological influences. Further, a new separation of the two—a redefinition of urban and rural function, must be one of the first steps in this necessary return to tradition.

In the first of his articles Mr. Sharp introduced the critical attitude to present-day urban characteristics, and traced the growth of the town from the early settlements, through the commercial and social agglomerations of the middle ages, through the discovery of the street as a unit of design, to the ordered eighteenth-century town that that discovery led to. In the present instalment he describes the revolutionary influence of the industrial nineteenth century. The third instalment will bring the story up to the present day.

SYNOPSIS*

The essential idea behind towns and town life is that of co-operation. In the mediæval town, however, that co-operation was instinctive rather than conscious, and though often enough a strong group association was displayed in the wealth and pride of its principal buildings, the jumbled confusion and the meanness of the greater part of the town showed that men's association there was largely that of the mob rather than of an ordered society. There was not as yet any clear consciousness of man's relationship to his physical environment, nor an understanding of the collective basis of city life. These things came with the Renaissance. That great awakening brought the discovery of the Street, of the possibility of achieving an architectural unity in the town's buildings which reflected the co-operation and sociability of the urban way of life. In the development and perfection of the Street, the English people showed a marked genius, and during the course of two hundred years they developed a tradition of town building which took an individual line in that while most towns have glorified the autocracy that dominated them, the English town, in its charming domesticity, glorified the social order of its own citizens. By the end of the eighteenth century the English were showing themselves to be the finest town builders in the world.

IT is a saddening fact that having extolled the achievements of almost any period of history one must immediately proceed to qualify and excuse. We may rightly say that the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries were the golden age of civic design in England. But having said that it is necessary to remember that gold is notoriously a currency of limited circulation and that while its shining splendour may have gleamed in the building transactions of the fortunate few, the majority of the people had as usual to be content with a much baser metal.

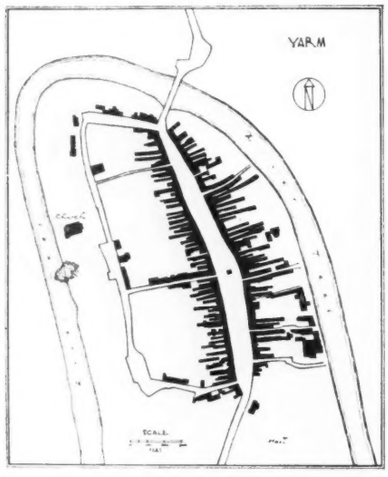
Ironically enough no better example of this disparity in currency can be found than in Edinburgh New Town, the inequality being rendered the more significant since it arose out of a conscious course of action. In the planning of this new town, in contrast to nearly all the rest of the civic design of the age, it was recognized that the lower middle classes, at least, were members, albeit humble, of the social body dominated by God's elected few. They were therefore to have a place provided for them: a place chosen with the most careful deliberation. George Street and the other principal streets were to be wide, spacious, dignified, built with the greatest degree of elegance and taste. Those were for the mighty. Rose Street and Thistle Street were to be hidden away out of sight, a mere 30 ft. wide, "built of an inferior style of architecture and of rougher work for the accommodation of shopkeepers and others, with narrow lanes for stabling purposes behind." The provision was a trifle derogatory. Yet even in that the shopkeepers had been afforded unusual privilege, for the general mob of citizens was left entirely unprovided for, to remain in that fearful congestion on "the tail o' the crag" which had driven the

*The first article was published in November, 1935

upper classes to seek out their more salubrious quarters elsewhere.

The same nice distinctions in social values were reflected in the old and new towns in all parts of the country. The glories of Bath and Cheltenham were not to be seen in the quarters inhabited by the less fashionable members of the community. Behind the pleasant façades of the houses of the gentry and the more prosperous merchants which lined the main streets of the country towns, out of sight beyond the narrow archways that gave the dead-end alleys and wyndes access to the main street, the "lower orders of society" were congregated in crowding and crowded cottages, 2. In London there had been other building than that of fine streets and fashionable squares, and the old houses that were deserted for those elegant new ones in Bloomsbury and the West End remained to become the teeming rookeries of the poor.

Further, even in the best of the new developments the perfection of the architecture of the street was not accompanied by the perfection of that less inspiring but none the less necessary art, the regulation of its sanitation. Water supply was still indifferent in the best of places: the disposal of sewage and refuse was carried out, if at all, by the most primitive of methods. Even the cleansing and repair of the public streets was so unorganized that as late as 1761 every man was responsible for removing the dirt and repairing the pavement in front of his own door[5]. In all these things there was still little or no realization of the necessity of co-operative action. It was all too rarely that a corporation considered it necessary to appoint an expert to report on "the Paving, Lighting and Draining of the Town," as did the governors of Abergavenny when they commissioned John Nash to do so in 1793.[4] Yet important though these things undoubtedly are, it is as easy to over-



2. *The eighteenth century may be called the "golden age" of town development in England; but, behind the pleasant façades of the principal streets, the narrow alleys where "the lower orders of society" lived, contained more dross than gold. Yarm, Yorkshire, was typical of all country towns in this respect.*

3. *At the end of the eighteenth century all parts of the towns, London included, were still within easy reach of the countryside. Westminster, 1764.*

emphasize as to under-emphasize their effect on the pleasantness of the Georgian town.

For one thing the towns were still small, and all of them were in close association with the countryside. London was far away the largest city; and yet the fields were still within so close reach of almost every part of it that even towards the end of the eighteenth century a writer could complain of the outskirts of Westminster, 3, that they were invaded on Sundays by "dirty blackguards, and poor parentless children, who have not any friends to take care of them, going about the fields and ditches where wild honeysuckles, nettles and thistles grow, with bottles and catching of bees, wasps, ladybirds, bluebottles and other winged insects."[5] Bristol, with 100,000 inhabitants, was still easily the second town in England. For the rest, the greater part of even the flourishing places contained only from two to four thousand people, and away beyond their boundaries stretched not only fields and orchards but sometimes extensive commons that were available for sport and pleasure. So that, bad as conditions often were, it was only later, when the small hand-working towns were turned through the advent of steam power and the growth of the factory system into mass-working industrial towns with greatly increased populations, that sanitary questions and the general problems of town organization became, as they rapidly did become, desperately urgent.

It was the overwhelming increase of working class population, reacting on the ill-balanced social code, that caused the disaster. How the growing needs of the machine could immediately result in an increase in the fertility of its slaves is still something of a mystery, though it is undoubtedly true that a low standard of life stimulates the growth of population. There certainly can be no doubt that the standard of living which the new factory system imposed upon the hordes of workers it absorbed (among them a great body of peasantry disinherited through that inclosure movement which was so largely responsible for the pictorial "improvement" of the countryside) was inhumanly low. So there came within a period of a few decades a complete transformation of the map of England. It was not only that the population increased at an amazing rate. Its new distribution was equally striking. In 1700 the most populous counties had been Middlesex, Somerset, Gloucester, Wiltshire and Northampton. In 1800 only Middlesex, with London accounting for most of its population, remained on this list. Lancashire, West Riding, Staffordshire and Warwickshire had all leaped beyond the others even thus early in the new industrial dispensation.[6] How that happened, how the incidence of the new industrialism fell as it did so that certain industries which had hitherto flourished in the south migrated northwards, as iron working migrated from Sussex to the coalfields, and as woollen manufacture became centralized in Yorkshire through the inadaptability of the southern manufacturers to new conditions, it is no part of our business here to describe. But one point about it is worthy of notice, for it has had its effect on the whole course of English social history.

4 EDGAR WARD

5

With the coming of the Industrial Revolution, England became almost two countries. The Midlands and the North advanced grimly along a hideous road of industrialism, while the south slumbered fitfully in half-dead small towns and villages. **4.** *Hanley, Staffordshire.* **5.** *Amersham, Buckinghamshire.*

Henceforward England became almost two countries. The Midlands and the North advanced grimly along a hideous road of industrialism, **4**, while the South (in which, significantly, was situated the capital city) slumbered fitfully in the tree-folded parks and the half-dead small towns and villages, **5**, of its improved landscape.

Some idea of the rapidity of the growth of the new manufacturing towns may be gained from the following instances. In 1801 Liverpool had a population of 77,000; in 1821 it had 118,000; by 1841 it had some 300,000. Manchester had 95,000 in 1801: in 1821 it had 238,000. In 1801 Leeds had 60,000; Sheffield 45,000; Birmingham 73,000; by 1821 they had 123,000, 91,000 and 146,000 respectively, all having grown by 100 per cent. or more in twenty years. And while the growth of the existing towns was of this spectacular kind, the sudden upshooting of new towns where before had been virgin fields, or at most a hamlet of a few houses, was even more remarkable. Parishes which for centuries had housed but a few score people, in a space of a few years could count their ten thousand. As the workers flocked into them, English and Welsh, Irish from the distressed districts, Highlanders from the depopulated glens, the towns sprang up at a nightmare rate and of a nightmare character. Fastest of all grew the cotton towns: the iron towns, the pottery towns, the woollen towns, followed hardly less swiftly; while all about the coalfields gaunt mining villages, **8**, grew side by side with fiery waste heaps in the very shadow of the pitheads, often enough in the pit yards themselves.

In the feverish activity and the intoxication of dreams of wealth that all this change entailed, what were the influences of that so recent golden age of town development? A tradition that has been gathering strength and maturity for a hundred and fifty years, however limited it may be in its application, can hardly go by the board in the space of a decade or two. Nor did it. For well into the middle of the century, in the west-end developments in London, in the health resorts, and in one remarkable instance in an industrial city (Newcastle 1830–1840), the tradition was maintained with splendid effect. And though, as has been shown, the middle and working class housing development had never been brought within the scope of civic design, at least it continued to share to a considerable degree the common building tradition, so that most of even the early slum streets were architecturally, if not hygienically, decent.

In one respect the speed with which the new industrial towns grew should have

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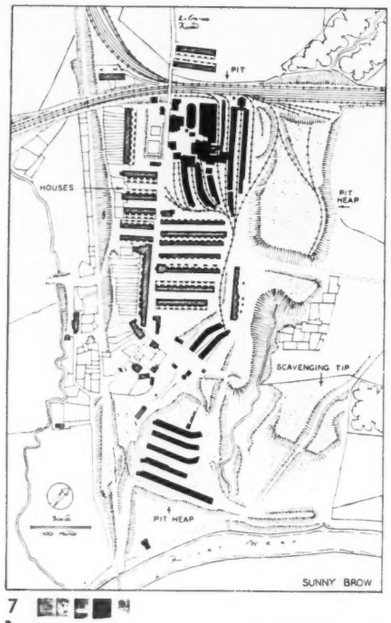

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The early Victorian towns and villages, in most of their ancient beastliness, are still the places where a considerable proportion of the working class must live. 6. A typical slum court. 7 and 8. A typical company-owned colliery village: Sunnybrow, Co. Durham.

assisted in the establishment of careful planning, for where before in all except the quickly growing fashionable resorts, the slow accumulative growth of a house here and a cottage there had made organized growth difficult, now the necessity of building whole streets at a time demanded, of itself, a plan of some sort or other. The result, of course, was bound to be affected by what determined the plan. And what did determine the plan, the social values of the time being what they were, was the cost of land. It has been said that in Lancashire the rental of land was increased through the development of the factory system by as much as 3,000 per cent.[6] in the course of a few years. So, money being a consideration above all others, the sensible method of building new towns was to build them as tightly and as inexpensively as possible.

And tightly and cheaply they were built. The problem resolved itself into the simple terms of the greatest possible number of the smallest possible houses on the least possible space. So the new town grew progressively more solid as the mad scramble for wealth and production quickened towards its mid-century climax of brutality: until eventually, as in the back-to-back houses and in the crammed courts and alleyways, the town consisted solely of buildings and the means of access to them, **6**.

Added to all this was a fantastic intensification of that neglect of sanitary organization which had always hitherto characterized men's urban association. This was the most dreadful feature of all. The new townsmen breathed and drank each other's filth and the filth of their factories. Modern imagination boggles at the outrageous horror of the common conditions of that time. But since it is easy to fall into unfairness as well as into perhaps inaccurate generalization in applying the standards of today to these conditions of a hundred years ago, it may be as well to quote briefly one or two descriptions of contemporary observers of that awful progression to darkness.

Here, then, is Friedrich Engels's well-known sketch of an urban prospect in the Manchester of 1844:—

"In a rather deep hole, in a curve of the Medlock, and surrounded on all sides by tall factories and high embankments covered with buildings, stand two groups of about two hundred cottages, built chiefly back-to-back, in which live about two thousand human beings, most of them Irish. The cottages are old, dirty, and of the smallest sort, the streets uneven, fallen into ruts and in part without drains or pavements; masses of refuse, offal and sickening filth lie among standing pools in all directions; the atmosphere is poisoned by the effluvia from these, and laden and darkened by the smoke of a dozen tall factory chimneys. A horde of ragged women and children swarm about here, as filthy as the swine that thrive upon the garbage heaps and in the puddles. . . . In the whole region, for each one hundred and twenty persons, one usually inaccessible privy is provided."

Here, again, is Nassau Senior, about the same time, describing new settlements around the same city. "These towns, for in extent and number of inhabitants they are towns, have been erected with the utmost disregard of everything except the immediate advantage of the speculating builder" (how familiar a ring it still has!). "In one place we found a whole street following a ditch because in this way cellars could be secured without the cost of digging. . . . Not one house of this street escaped the cholera."

Or, again, here are the results of a survey made in Leeds in the 1830's. Out of 568 streets examined, only 68 were paved. Whole streets floated with sewage, and one of these, with 176 families in it, had not been cleaned for 15 years. In these 568 streets there were 451 public houses, 98 brothels, two churches and 39 meeting houses.[7] In Bristol, out of 3,000 houses examined, 1,300 were without water. In Manchester one family in ten, in Liverpool one family in every five, lived in a cellar. And so the tale could go on over the whole country, south as well as north, in old expanding city as well as in new upstart town.

If the pre-Renaissance town can still be occasionally glimpsed in corners of a few of our cathedral cities, these early Victorian towns can more readily be seen; for they are still the places where a considerable proportion of the working class of twentieth-century England must live. As parts of the later towns and cities that have since grown around them, they have been tidied up and much improved. They have been sewered; their roads have been paved. But the genuine article in almost all its original impurity may still be sampled in hundreds of company-owned colliery villages in any of the older coalfields. There the gaunt, gardenless, even yardless, rows face back and front on to roads still unpaved after a hundred years; and the old privies and middens stand naked and unashamed down the middle of the public streets, as ever they stood, **8**. Yet even these places have in one direction been improved. They have been drained in an elementary kind of way. And that has made an important difference in that their inhabitants may now expect a normal span of comparatively healthy, if unemployed, life.

Which is more than their predecessors could. It has been said that the population increased at an amazing rate. So did the death rate. In Ancoats, Manchester, out of every 100 children born only 40, or sometimes 35, lived to the age of five.[7] In Bradford the average expectation of life was twenty years. It was reported by a Commission of 1842 that "each generation of this class of the population (i.e., miners) is commonly extinct soon after fifty." Swift-dealing plagues and fevers stalked as common visitants, and all the "thousand ills that flesh is heir to" reaped three-fold dividends in the hells that English towns had now become.

Such were the new towns through which England gained half the world and lost her own soul. But the word "town" needs some qualification in such a context, for if,

When the nightmare of the early Victorian camp was over, the awakening that succeeded it was of a most depressing dreariness. The town, governed now through the bye-laws founded on the Public Health Acts, might no longer be foul but it was dead flat. Houses, factories, railways were tangled together into a characterless mass, without plan, without cohesion, unquickened by any quality of pride, untouched by any spark of imaginative design. Preston : a typical " bye-law town."

PLATE iii *January 1936*

as we have postulated, a town is a place where through their co-operative association men expand their humanity, develop their culture, achieve and symbolize their civilization, these places were not towns at all. They were camps—camps, all too permanent, in which the one solace obtainable was that vouchsafed to the rising Methodists when they sang in a peculiarly appropriate metaphor:—

I nightly pitch my moving tent,
A day's march nearer Home.

As the Hammonds put it in that noble book *The Town Labourer*: "Perhaps the best way to describe the new towns and their form of government would be to say that so far from checking the power of circumstances over men's lives, they symbolized the absolute dependence and helplessness of the mass of people living in them. They were not so much towns as barracks, not the refuge of a civilization but the barracks of an industry. This character was stamped on their form and life and government. The mediæval town had reflected the minds of centuries and the subtle associations of a living society with a history; these towns reflected the violent enterprise of an hour, the single passion that had thrown street on street in a frantic monotony of disorder . . . These towns were precisely what they looked. They were settlements of great masses of people collected in a particular place because their fingers or their muscles were needed on the brink of a stream here or the mouth of a furnace there. These people were not citizens of this or that town, but hands of this or that master. . . . The idea of the town as a focus of a civilization, a centre where the emancipating and enlightening influences of the time can act with rapidity and with effect, the school of the social arts, the nursery of social enterprise, the witness of the beauty and order and freedom that man can bring into their lives, had vanished from all minds."

Not quite from all minds, fortunately. Not all were completely blinded in this scramble for the glittering prizes of expanding markets. A few saw the shameful horror of it. But if the glitter blinded the rest, the horror blinded most of these. What, for instance, did the architects do—those immediate inheritors of that great tradition that had been so recently overthrown? Did they rise up and attempt to re-establish the tradition, to broaden it out and bring within its influence all this vast activity in a sphere which had been for so long ignored? They did not. Seduced by romanticism, they hated the tradition as much as the chaos that had succeeded it. Instead, they drew themselves apart, and, extolling the glories not of the recent but of the remote past, they fled, as Pugin fled, crying out against the gasworks, the railways, the foundries and all the rest of the instruments of the horrible present, to find refuge in a dream of Gothic spires rising above a world unsullied by hard and bitter realities.

9. *Another example of the late nineteenth-century industrial town. From the film "The Face of Britain," by Paul Rotha.*

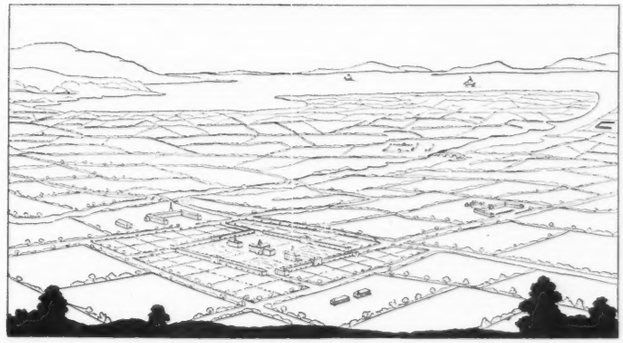
In contrast to this flight of the technicians into the past, a few courageous prophets gazed into the future. One or two did more even than that: they set about them to show what might be done immediately. Thus Robert Owen, that early practical Socialist, after producing in 1816 a plan, 10, for the establishment of small self-contained industrial-agricultural communities at intervals throughout the countryside, himself attempted to develop a model industrial town at Orbiston, near Motherwell (1820). Much later, in 1852, one Titus Salt planned and built a reasonably civilized village (directly inspired by Disraeli's *Coningsby*) around his factory at Saltaire, near Bradford. But most interesting of all was a plan suggested and worked out in great detail by that curious man, James Silk Buckingham, in his book, *National Evils and Practical Remedies* (1848).

"The objects chiefly kept in view," he wrote of Victoria, his Associated Temperance Community,

"have been to unite the greatest degree of order, symmetry, space and healthfulness, in the largest supply of air and light, and in the most perfect system of drainage, with the comfort and convenience of all classes; the one proportion of accommodation to the probable numbers and circumstances of various ranks; ready accessibility to all parts of the town under continuous shelter from sun and rain when necessary; with the disposition of public buildings in such localities as to make them easy of approach from all quarters, and surrounded with space for numerous avenues of entrance and exit. And in addition to all these a large admixture of grass lawn, garden ground and flowers, and an abundant supply of water—the whole to be united with as much elegance and economy as may be found practicable."

Here was a prophet indeed for 1848. No escapist, this. Victoria, 11, was to be a town of here and now, not an impossible recreation of some dim mediæval dream. All the most recent advances in science and technology were to be utilized in its creation. The time was the age of iron? Very well, the entire town will be built of iron. An age of smoke and darkness? There will be no smoke in this town. Special appliances will prevent it, or where unpreventable will consume it. Nor shall this be any city of dreadful night. One enormous electric light on a thirty-foot tower in the centre will illuminate the entire place. Nor will it ever grow vast and ungainly. While it shall have every form of building and equipment to facilitate a

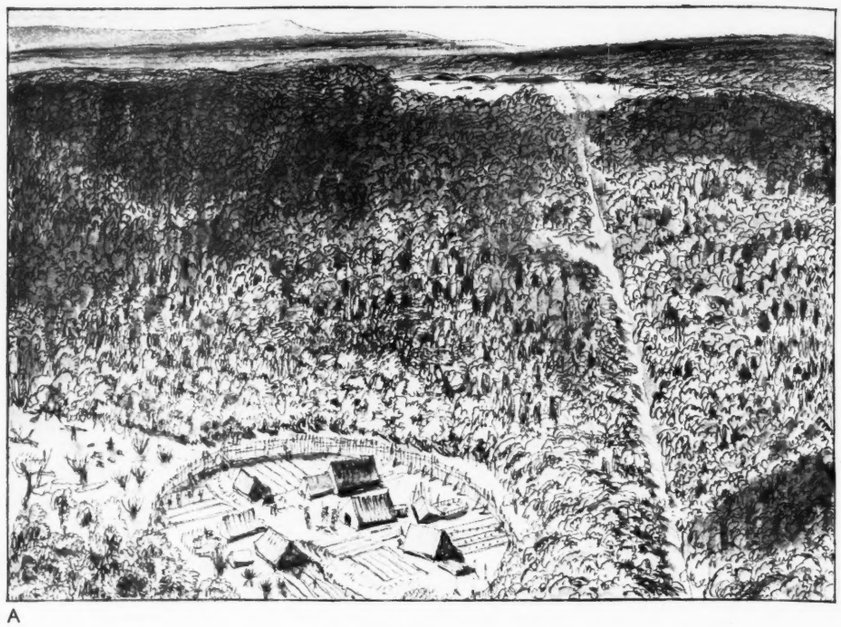
[Continued on page 24]



10. *In contrast to the flight of the architects, social reformers attempted to re-establish the civilized town. Robert Owen's plan* (1816) *for the establishment of self-contained industrial-agricultural communities throughout the countryside.*

A. 900. Saxon Landscape

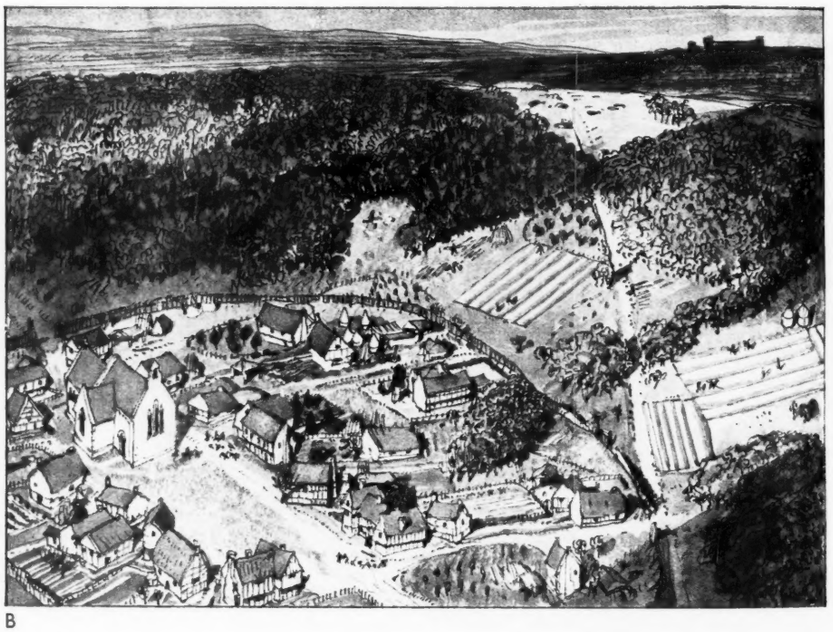
- The land covered with forest.
- Vestiges of a Roman road. In the distance, remains of a Roman Camp.
- A primitive settlement : slight cultivation.



A

B. 1300. The Town

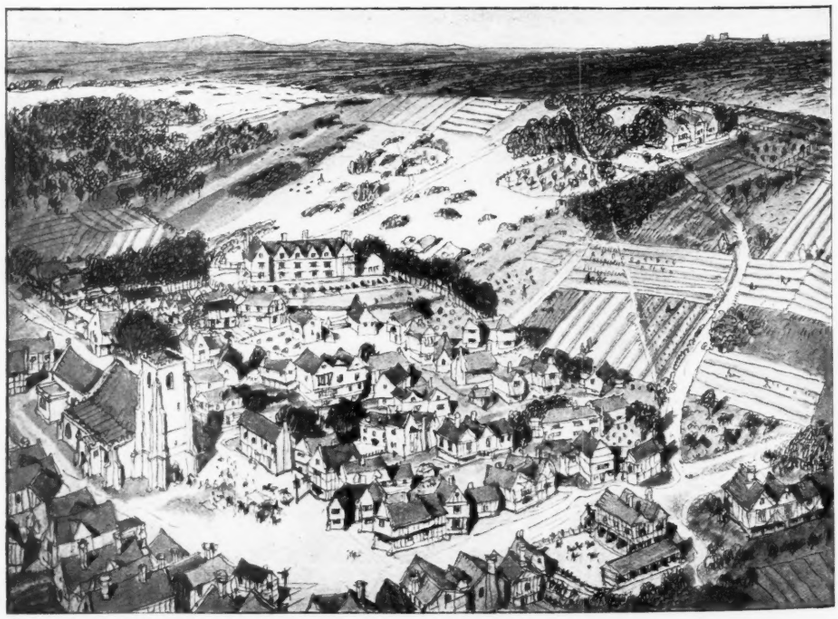
- First, urban congregation round a Norman Castle ; then a new community—a competitor, commerce (represented by wool, the staple commodity) demanding freedom from feudal restriction ; the growth of the guilds.
- A disorderly group of buildings within protective palisades.
- Cultivation spreads : the Roman road becomes fainter.
- A primitive market place.



B

C. 1550. The Market Town

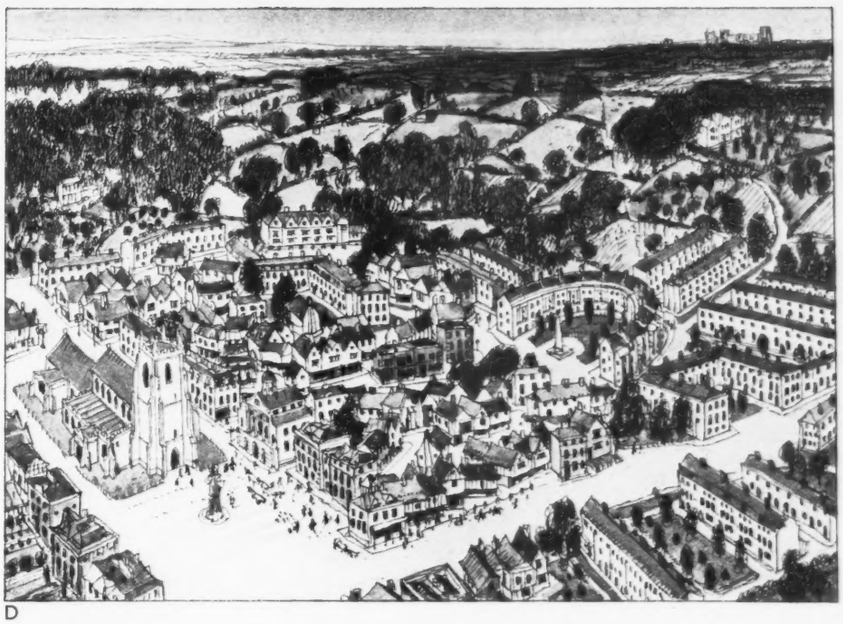
- Widespread cultivation ; the disappearance of the forest.
- Private ownership of land.
- The Castle remains, but the new town is the centre of busy life founded on the wool market.
- The parish church and the market-place ; hospitals and schools.
- Growth of the town, still without order and now spreading beyond the palisade.
- Narrow alleys and courts.
- An isolated and unfortified manor-house.



C

D. 1750. The Georgian Town

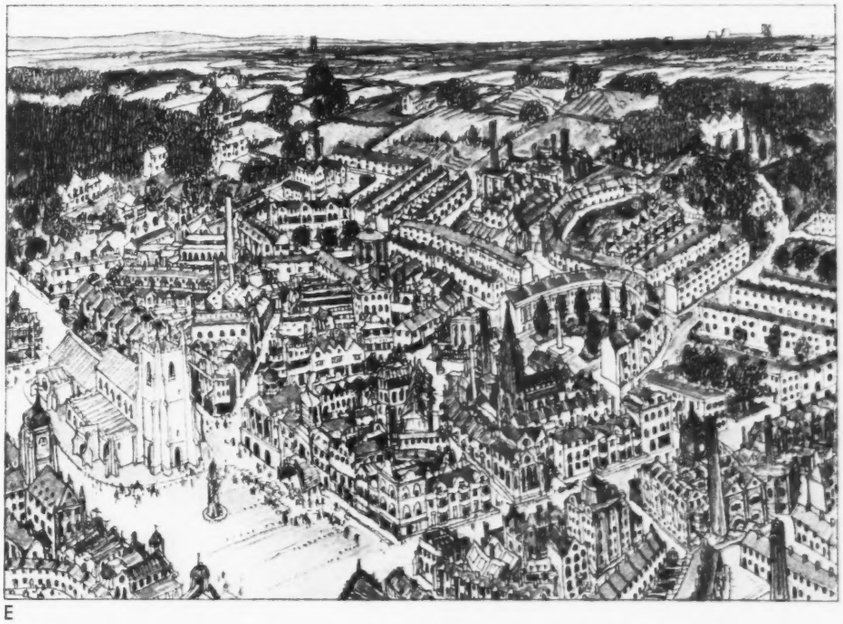
- The planted landscape.
- The castle in ruins.
- Gentlemen's houses among the trees.
- A busy country town. The mediæval jumble of houses remains as the nucleus, with the church and market-place the same, but the new buildings show the discovery of the street.
- Planned development; spacious squares and terraces on the outskirts.
- A monument in the market place.
- Planting within the squares.



D

E. 1850. Industry Arrives—

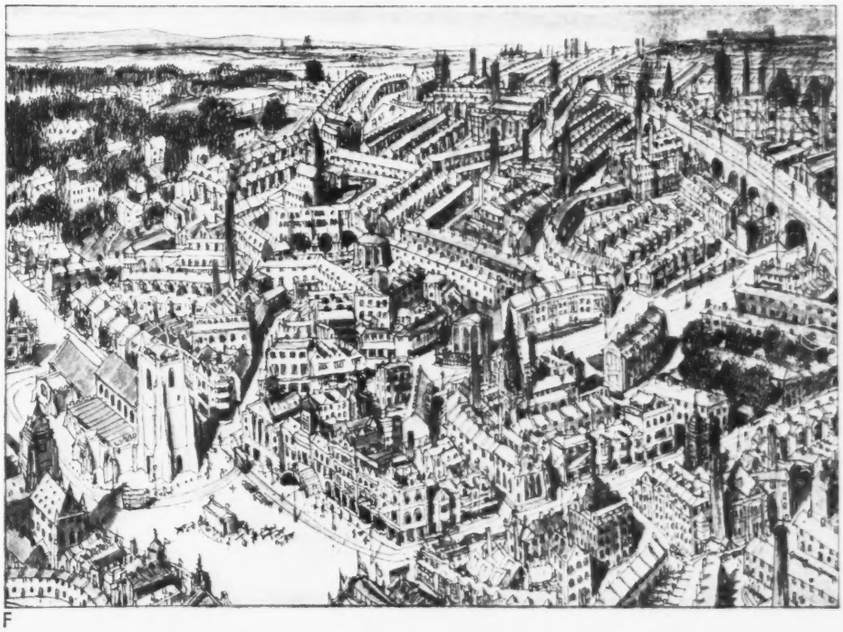
- Factories among the houses.
- Housing for workers in the factories.
- Middle-class villas in the fields.
- Municipal buildings, shops, dissenting Chapels haphazardly placed; confusion of architectural styles.
- Back to the mediæval jumble.
- Decline of agriculture as the staple occupation.



E

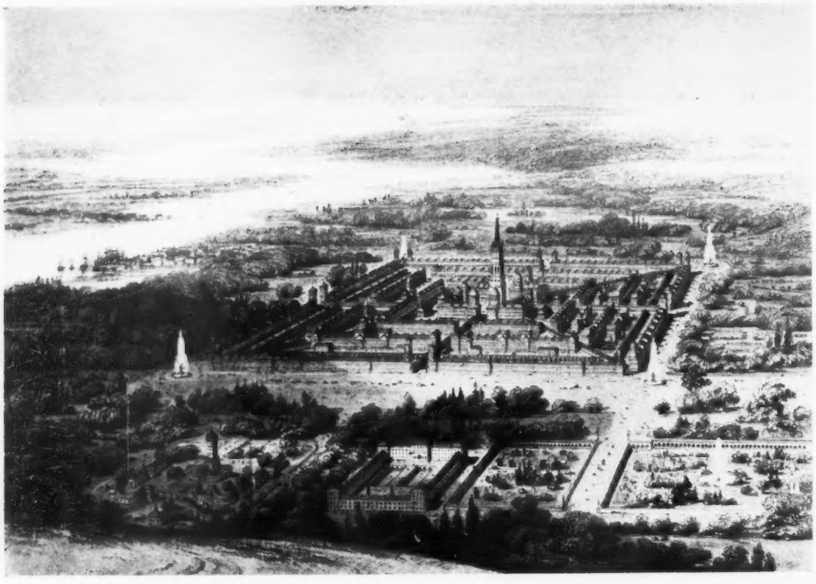
F. 1900. —and overwhelms the Town

- Workers' dwellings in bye-law streets: crowded, but more sanitary than the slums.
- The railway.
- More factories; gas-works.
- Acres of suburbs in unplanned confusion.
- The countryside is being pushed away.
- Tenement housing in the centre.
- Trams and motor-cars.
- Public lavatory in the market place.



F

Specially drawn for *THE ARCHITECTURAL REVIEW* by ROBERT AUSTIN.



11. *James Silk Buckingham's proposed model town of Victoria* (1848).

full community life, its size will be limited. Beyond the factories outside the town, beyond the green belt of open country surrounding it, "smaller offspring might be formed, fostered and assisted by the Parent Town from which they spring." Brave Buckingham! His plans came to naught: but his was indeed a remarkable vision in that age of darkness and despair.

Victoria might remain for ever a paper town but the reform of the hell that the English towns had now become could not much longer be delayed. To put any measure of reform into operation, however, there had got to be some efficient means of local government. And that was precisely what the towns had not got. In the 1830's London (outside the city) was administered by no less than 300 bodies consisting of 10,500 persons (many of whom were self-elected) working under 250 Acts.[7] Manchester, a community of over 200,000 people, was governed by the local Lord of the Manor—who lived some 30 or 40 miles away in Staffordshire. Most of the new towns were in the same position. It was obvious that something had got to be done about it. So in 1835 a Municipal Corporation Act was passed which put the towns in the way of that democratic government through which they are organized today.

12. *If at the end of the eighteenth century the street had been brought near to perfection, by the end of the nineteenth it was brought to the final limits of degradation. A typical "bye-law street."*

Once the organization of this local basis of government was established the story of the towns henceforward became bound up with the slow acquisition, mostly from reluctant Parliaments, of the powers necessary to make that organization successful. This is not the place to recount the development of local government. We are much more concerned with its results. And though in many ways that government has been most admirably successful, the physical form and appearance of our towns today bear witness to the depths of its failure in others.

Since local government itself first arose out of those conditions of insanitation which we have described, so throughout the whole of the remainder of the nineteenth century it was directed almost solely towards the improvement of those old conditions and their avoidance in new developments. The enormous extensions of the existing towns, and the still further new towns which continued to grow at a wild-fire rate to house the ever accelerating increase of population, were controlled by a succession of Public Health Acts culminating in that one of 1875 which is still regarded as the charter of the modern town. After three-quarters of a century the nightmare was over. Streets were paved; filth was taken away in sewers. Water was "laid on." Every family had an inalienable right to a certain minimum of light and air. The camp was cleaned up—but it still remained a camp.

For if the nightmare was passed, the awakening that succeeded it was of a most depressing dreariness. The town might no longer be foul but it was dead flat. It was also very stale though by no means unprofitable. Restrictive hygiene had produced a dull sterility which the swollen bodies of the ever-expanding cities made all the more fearful to contemplate.

THE ENGLISH TRADITION

It is useless to attempt to recount the progress of this all-pervading dullness. Even horror has its story. Dullness has none. Year after year the towns developed, continually thrusting outwards, coalescing, many of them, into vast unescapable deserts of arid brick. Houses, factories, railways, tangled together into a shapeless characterless mass, without plan, without cohesion, unquickened by any quality of pride, untouched by any spark of imaginative design, Plate iii. Still more houses, still more factories. Here a small sooty park "landscaped" to a most touching incongruity. Here an extremely Gothic Town Hall; there a no less Gothic sewage farm. Still more houses and then again still more. Dreariness, drabness, dullness—the sanitary Victorian town.

It was all inevitably exemplified in the Street. If at the end of the eighteenth century the Street had been brought near to perfection, here at the end of the nineteenth in that awful creation contemptuously known as the "Byelaw Street," it was brought to the final limits of degradation. 9 and 12. Where before street and square had been the pattern to which buildings subscribed in their co-operative association, the pattern within which the design of the various units had been subordinated to the design of the whole for the glory of the town, the street had now become but a row of mean, featureless cells that were closely associated for no other reason than that economy demanded it. The earlier uniformity had been that willingly adopted for social harmony by a body of free agents conscious of their independence and power. Now the pattern was unmistakably that of a uniform thrust forcibly upon an undifferentiated mob of human ciphers. No longer did even a small part of the town glorify man, the Citizen. He was of no account even in his own place. Nothing was glorified. Not even industry. Within a hundred years the nation that had once seemed likely to build the finest was now building the foulest towns the world has ever known.

Now, indeed, the town had lost in men's eyes its proud place as a symbol of their civilization, as "the school of the social arts, the nursery of social enterprise, the witness of the beauty and order and freedom that men can bring into their lives." It was none of these things. It was a dark prison from which they longed to escape, if only some means of escape were possible. Now, indeed, the street had lost all possibility of beauty in the very country that had once brought it to perfection. In only too terrible truth was it the quintessence of the town, 9. It symbolized all the hopelessness, the dreariness, the degradation, the repression, the cold and squalid monotony of contemporary urban life. The town might have to remain, of economic necessity. But the street, the symbol of its tyranny, was doomed.

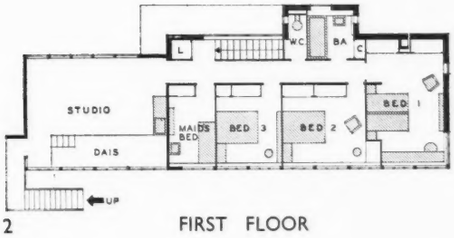
BIBLIOGRAPHY (for this and the preceding article). [1] Pirenne, *Mediæval Cities*; [2] Lipson, *Woollen and Worsted Industries*; [3] Barman, *Architecture*; [4] Summerson, *John Nash*; [5] George, *London* (*in Johnson's England*); [6] Hammond, *The Town Labourer*; [7] Mottram, *Town Life* (*in Early Victorian England*).

[To be continued]

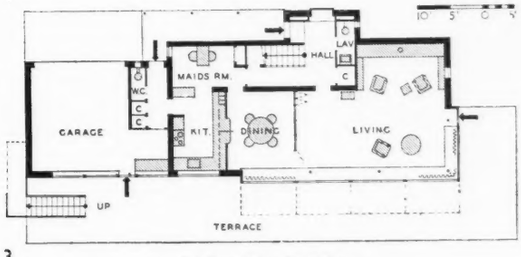
THREE HOUSES

1

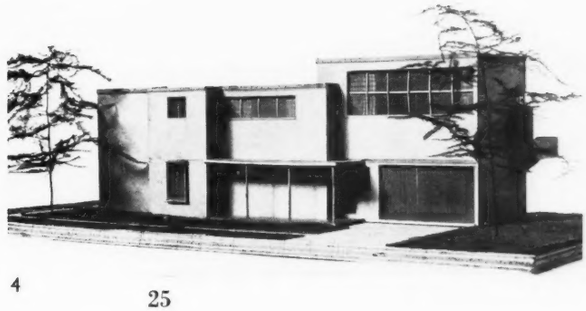
E. MAXWELL FRY, ARCHITECT



2 FIRST FLOOR



3 GROUND FLOOR



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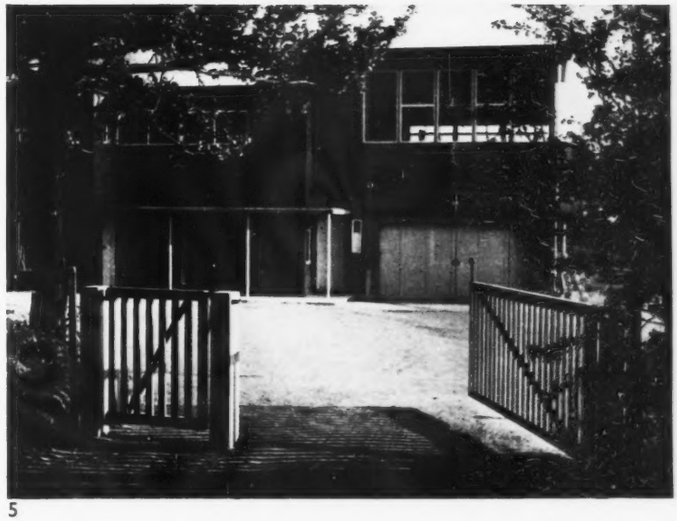
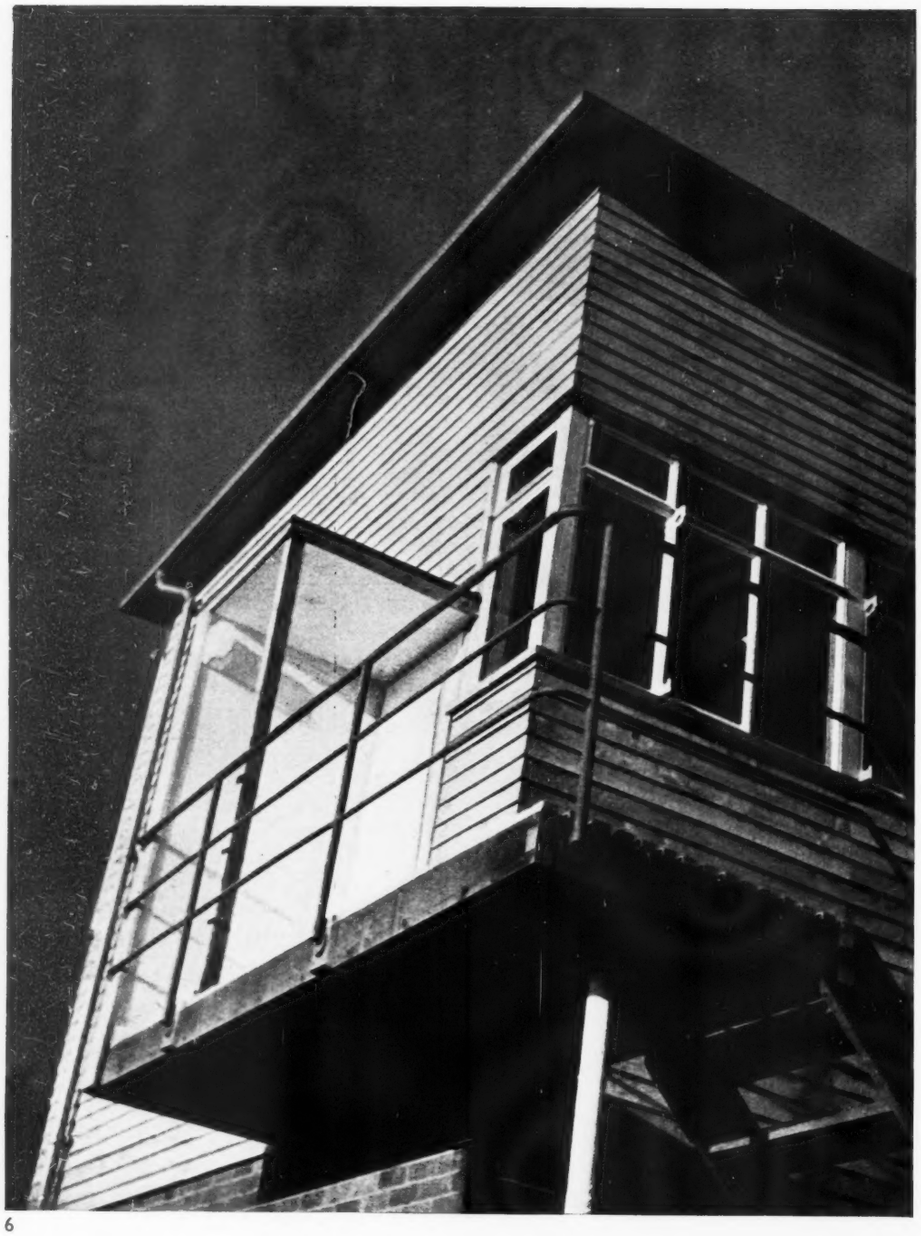


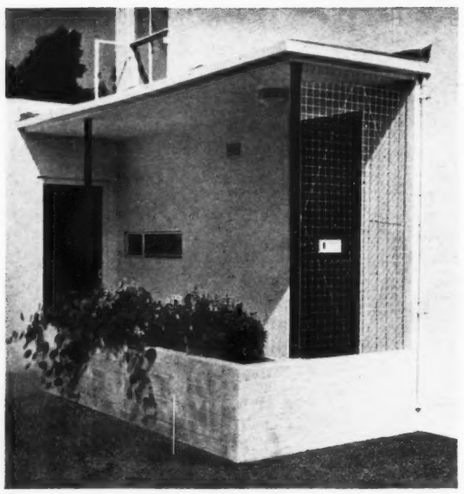
5

This house was originally designed in reinforced concrete for a site at Burhill, but the design was rejected by the Burhill Estate. Land was then found at Chipperfield, and the design rejected by the Watford Rural District Council under the Town Planning Act. 4 is a model of the original design for the Chipperfield site. After prolonged negotiations an ultimatum was produced by the Council that, if in reinforced concrete, the house *must* have a pitched roof; if without a pitched roof it must be in "traditional" materials. Honour was finally satisfied by the latter alternative. Local bricks and oak weatherboarding were used in conjunction with large plate-glass windows and a flat roof. The result, 1, is rich in colour and contrast, and provides an interesting example of modern architecture that is not entirely dependent on "modern" materials. The accommodation required included a large studio. This is framed in teak, lined externally with oak weatherboard, and internally with insulating board and plaster. Otherwise construction is brick and timber, with large window-surround in reinforced concrete with steel columns. The sliding windows have about 45 ft. continuous run of 7 ft. by 8 ft. plate-glass panes. All services are electric, as local rates are low. 5 shows the house through the entrance gates.



6

6 shows the external landing and staircase at the corner of the first-floor studio in the house at Chipperfield described overleaf. 8, 9 and 10 are second, first and ground floor plans of a house at Wimbledon. The exterior of the house from the entrance side, showing the garage and staircase window, is seen in 11. It is constructed in sand-lime bricks with wood floors and flat asphalted roof. The site was narrow and badly orientated, hence the three floors and the large living room window, designed to catch the sun without overlooking neighbours. 7 shows the entrance porch with built-in flower boxes.



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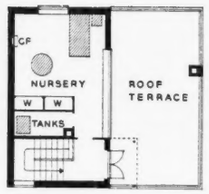

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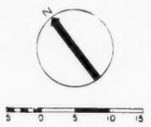
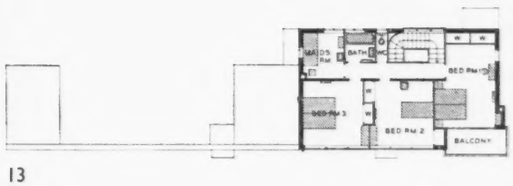


10

11

The third house, at Bagshot, of which 12, 13 and 14 show the exterior and the plans, is designed for a doctor, and has therefore two independent functions, each with its own circulation : the consulting room function, and the living-and-sleeping function. The rooms for the former purpose had also to be planned so that, if the house were sold, they could be converted into ordinary living-rooms. The house is constructed in brick, with wood floors and roof. Windows are in deal with teak frames. The long windows on the first floor support the roof members.

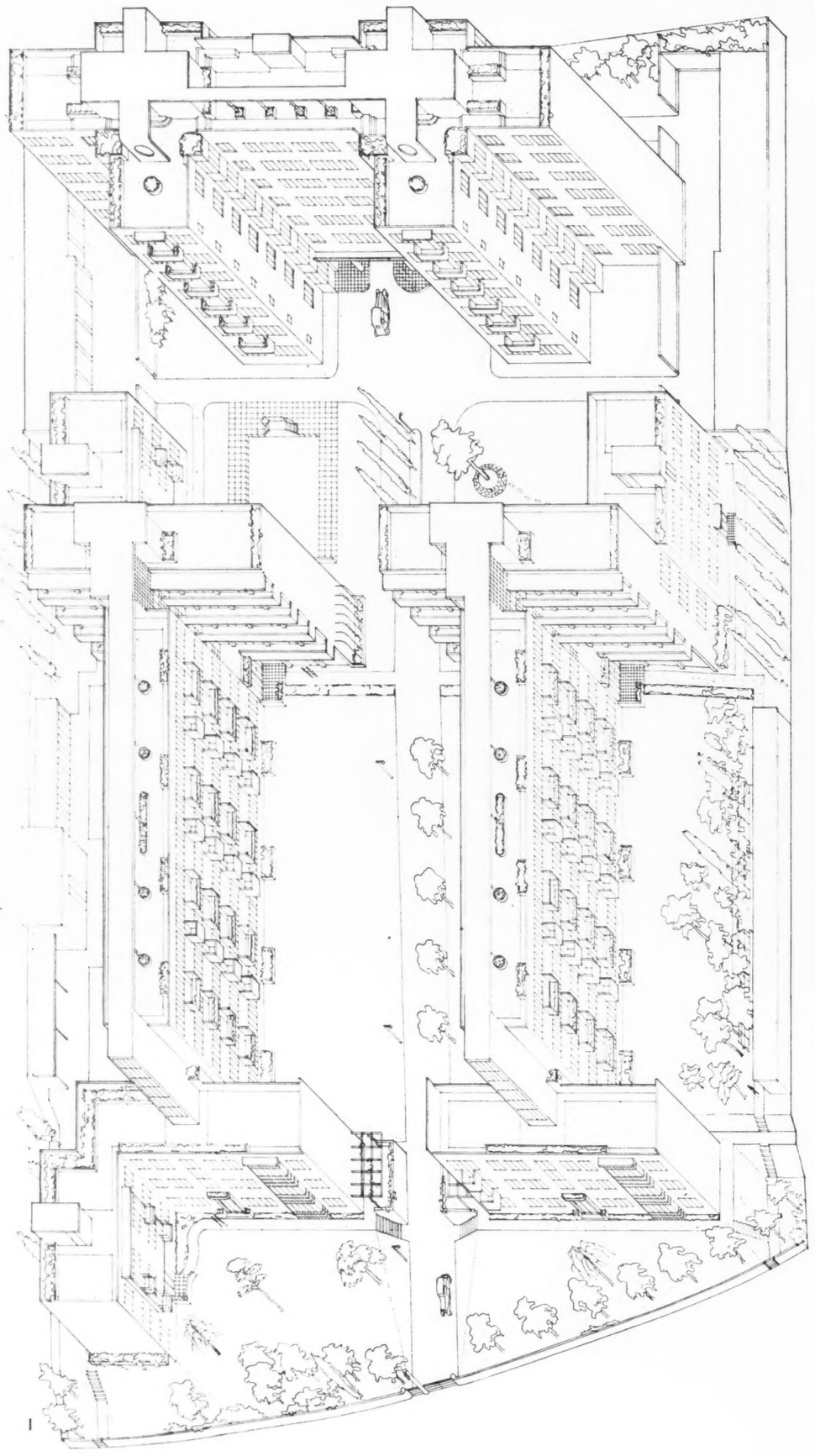
12



13

14

FLATS AT STREATHAM



This new block of flats, known as Pullman Court, is built on a site of an area of about $2\frac{3}{4}$ acres, with a frontage to Streatham Hill of 258 feet. The site slopes gently up from the road on the west side to the edge of a covered reservoir, which forms a large open space on the east.

218 flats are provided altogether, making this scheme one of the largest of the many that have recently been undertaken in the London area. It is certainly the largest in which the owner has had the courage and foresight to allow a modern architect unrestricted opportunity in matters of design.

The flats are built in blocks of three heights, as seen in the isometric drawing, 1, and in the layout plan, 3. Three-storey blocks, seen in 2, 4, 5 and 6, face Streatham Hill, set well back from the road to preserve an existing belt of trees and to avoid too serious traffic noises. Behind them at right-angles, on either side of a central access drive, run two long five-storey blocks, 7, containing one- and two-room flats. These are 100 feet apart and, though provided with lifts, were limited to five storeys to give a good angle of light. Beyond these, closing the main axis and up against the rear boundary of the site, is a seven-storey block containing three-room flats. This tall building is approximately equidistant between the buildings in Streatham Hill and those on the far side of the covered reservoir.

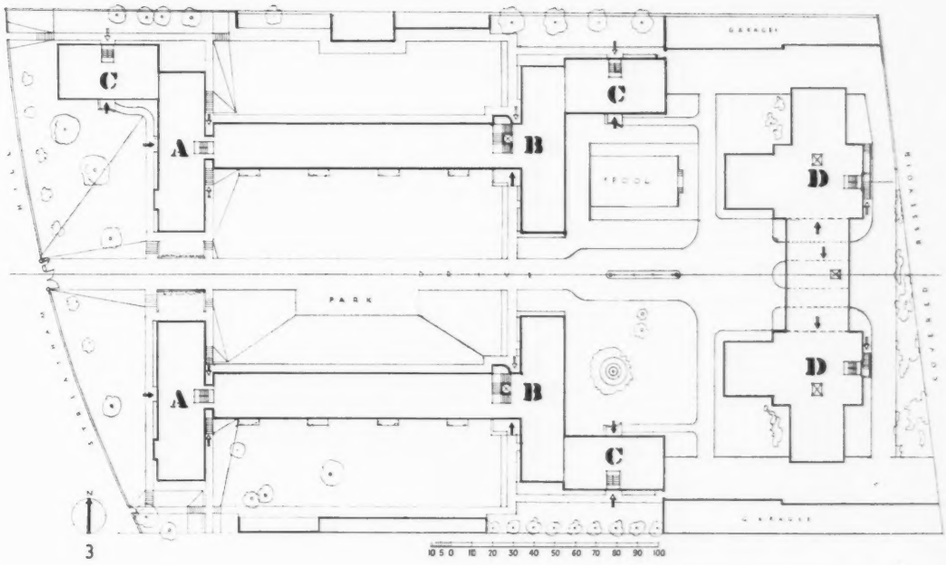
The buildings are constructed with a reinforced concrete frame and panel wall 4 inches thick, lined with 1 inch of cork for insulation. Externally the walls are painted in different bright colours, the colours and tones changing with change of plane. Browns and pinks are used chiefly on the blocks nearest the road and greys and blues on the rear blocks ; a kind of decoration that successfully emphasizes and defines the form without confusion or extravagance. Columns and beams have been standardized within economic limits, and arranged wherever possible so that beams are not visible in the rooms (in one of the blocks, for example, all the beams are 5 inches wide, the width of a double partition plus air-space). Floors are of hollow tiles of a total thickness of $5\frac{1}{2}$ inches. Balcony and gallery floor slabs are in reinforced concrete. The constructional material was selected on grounds of economy after com-

2

FREDERICK GIBBERD, ARCHITECT

parative prices had been obtained for various methods of construction. Two of the blocks, C and D on the lay-out plan, were intended to have a reinforced concrete spine with weight-carrying reinforced concrete external walls erected by climbing shuttering. This system did not meet with L.C.C. requirements, so framed structures were used throughout.

The scheme provides flats of three sizes, one-room, two-room and three-room. These are planned with three distinct types of access : by external galleries (as in the block marked B in the lay-out plan) ; by grouping round a lift-hall (as in the tall block, D) and by entrances on either side of a staircase (as in blocks C). These three types were experimented with in order to discover which type the public preferred and which was the most economical

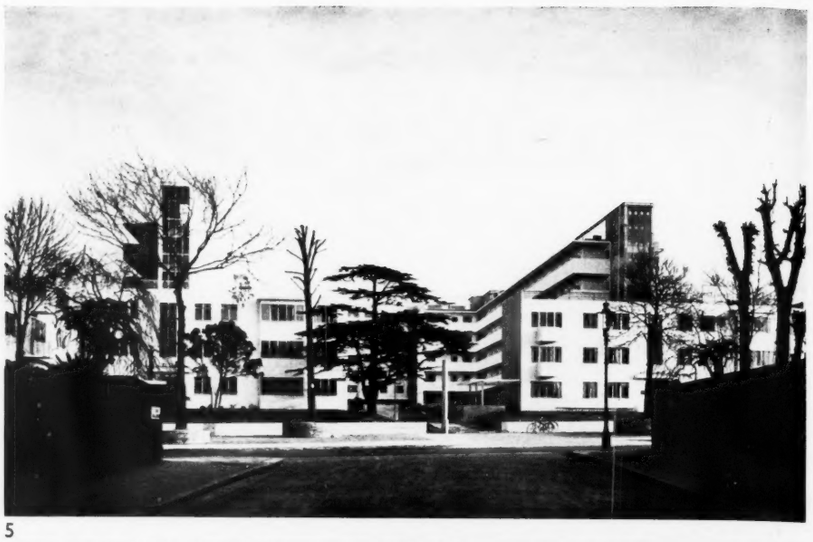


3

to build and to maintain. In the long blocks, B, of alternating one- and two-room flats, of which there is the largest quantity, the plan is divided structurally into a number of bays, each 11 feet 3 inches wide and 21 feet 6 inches deep. A one-room flat occupies one bay and a two-room flat two bays. The three-room flats in the seven-storey building are in two blocks, each consisting of five flats grouped round a central lift-hall. The two halls are connected by a corridor to provide the necessary alternative means of escape. The ground-floor flats are omitted in the centre to provide direct access to the lifts and circulation to the garages. The three-room flats in blocks C are intended as family flats, with two double bedrooms.

The most remarkable quality of this scheme is the rent at which the flats are to be let. This is exceptionally low, seeing the degree of pleasantness and spaciousness maintained and the number of services provided. These include roof gardens and a swimming pool. The rents are £68 for a one-room flat, £80-90 for a two-room and £105-130 for a three-room.

An interesting point is that the economics of the scheme have allowed for repainting the external walls every five years. To make this possible without the erection of scaffolding, a permanent steel cradle-rail, cantilevered from the wall face, is fixed at roof level. This rail can be seen in 7.



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F L A T S A T S T R E A T H A M H I L L

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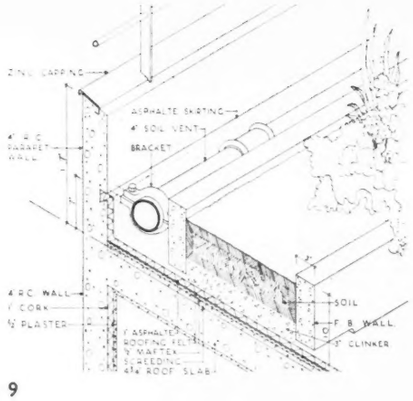
Central heating and hot water are supplied from a central plant beneath the seven-storey block. The height of this makes a tall detached flue unnecessary. Its position means that the prevailing wind carries the smoke away from the other flats. Plumbing is on the one-pipe system. The diagram, 9, shows the construction of the roof and roof-gardens. The soil pipe is concealed between the parapet and the flower-boxes.



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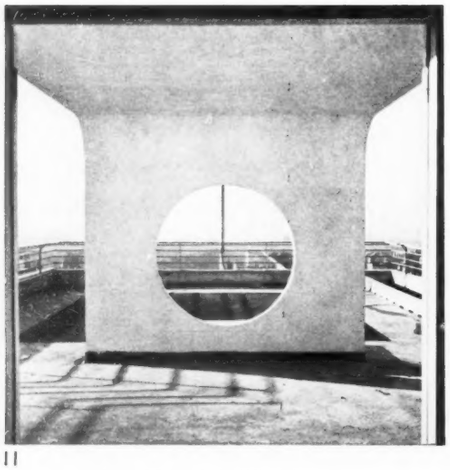

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8 shows the top portion of the seven-storey block, from the upper flats of which a magnificent view is obtained. 10 is a sketch showing the appearance of this block from the central courtyard, with the swimming-pool in the foreground. 11 is a detail of one of the concrete shelters on the roof, and 12 of the covered car-entrance in the centre. The interiors of some typical flats in this scheme, with furniture designed by the architect, are illustrated in the Decoration Supplement, pages 41–44.

"The number of momentous and significant figures that the age produced was nothing short of amazing. Even in art, while we must criticize its results, we must admit that its exponents stood big in their trade or profession. The doctrinaire confidence that is to most of us so unattractive and so mistaken itself made the century the prolific parent of eminent figures. . . . The Victorians never for a moment doubted themselves. The middle class was rich and dominating, but not corrupt. It had a right to believe in its integrity; and similarly, even those who revolted most boldly from the Victorian idea of life, had the confidence in their own revolt that is an essential condition of monumental living and of great creative effort. That their quality is sometimes second-rate comes from the numerous conflicts of one ideal with another, from the fact that there was little united belief except the middle-class one."

H. J. and HUGH MASSINGHAM, *The Great Victorians.*

1—Cuthbert Brodrick

OR CABBAGES AT SALONA

By Dudley Harbron

On December 1, 1821, there was born in a plain Georgian house, No. 39 George Street, Hull: Cuthbert, the sixth son of John Brodrick and his wife Hannah, *née* Foster. The child's father, John Brodrick, was a shipowner and shipbroker, whose place of business was in the High Street. He was an unexceptional man. Well-to-do but not wealthy. His house was situated in the best residential part of the town. From the windows at the back he could observe the shipping lying in the dock (the earliest in the country). From his front windows he had the view of other sedate brick residences slightly smaller than that in which he lived. In this typical earliest suburb beyond the recently removed mediæval walls, Cuthbert Brodrick spent his childhood.

When he was old enough, he was apprenticed to Henry Francis Lockwood, F.S.A., an architect whose office was just round the corner at No. 8 Dock Street. Mr. Lockwood had designed some of the chief buildings in the district, and was considered because of them to be the best architect in Hull. Two of his principal works at least remain: St. Stephen's Church, with its slender spire and useful clock that vouches for the punctual arrival of the trains in Paragon Station; Kingston College, now used as an almshouse for retired seafarers, a poorly designed red brick building in the imitation perpendicular Gothic then fashionable.

Brodrick was a diligent apprentice, and not only diligent, but talented. He very early indicated that he was superior to the usual pupil, for in 1840 he was awarded a medal by the Academy for a measured drawing of the Percy Tomb, Beverley Minster, that remarkable decorated Gothic monument. When he was twenty-one years of age, and had completed his time with Mr. Lockwood, he continued his training by measuring and sketching the principal Gothic buildings within easy distance of Hull, namely, Cottingham and Hedon Churches, neighbouring parish churches, and the local parish church of Holy Trinity. Except for some few spirited classical compositions made in 1843, the whole of his attention at this time was devoted to the study of Gothic architecture. For at this date Welby Pugin was doing his best to make the building of any other sort of architecture impossible.

He left Hull in May, 1844, on the first stage of a tour which was to keep him away from home for over a year. He first visited Salisbury and Winchester, where he made studies of much that interested him. From Salisbury he went to London, where he studied in the Abbey. From London he passed into Kent, and from there he crossed the Channel into France, where he continued his preoccupation with Gothic buildings in Carentan, Bayeaux, Caen, Rouen, Amiens and St. Omer. Even in London he had not been attracted to any renaissance work, and it was not until September, 1844, when he arrived in Paris, that he found any renaissance examples to interest him. There the interior of the Bourse, the plan of the Pantheon, and the decorations of the Louvre and Hotel de Ville excited his attention. Distinct recollections of the buildings are to be found in his own work.

From Paris he went by way of Avignon–Genoa to Florence and Sienna, following in the track of his predecessors in the eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries. He reached Rome, the most distant point of his journey, in April of 1845.

On his arrival home, Cuthbert Brodrick opened an office as an architect on his own account at No. 1 Savile Street, Hull, near to his father's house. There he awaited the arrival of such clients as his family and friends could persuade to cross his threshold. Though his friends spoke of his return from abroad, nobody seemed to require the services of the new architect. Rather than remain idle he decided to go in for any suitable competition advertised. At that time, competitions were very unsatisfactory. Moreover, with rare exceptions were the awards made upon the architectural merits of the designs; rather was success the result of wire-pulling behind the scenes. This condition of affairs was the persistent theme of complaints by architects in the building press, and as a result of the commotion provoked by disgruntled competitors, conditions were gradually becoming more reasonable and awards somewhat more circumspect. Anyway, Brodrick entered the competition race. He was soon successful in a local competition for the design of Gates and Lodges

2. *From Cuthbert Brodrick's sketch-book: a pen-and-ink and wash drawing of the church of Santa Maria della Salute, Venice.*

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3, Brodrick's winning design for the Gates and Lodges for the General Cemetery, Hull. 4, his drawing of the interior of Leeds Town Hall, his most important work. 5, his design for a Monument to the Earl of Carlisle. 6, some of his rough sketches for a National Gallery to be erected in Trafalgar Square.

for the General Cemetery, Hull, **3**. These remained standing and in use until a few years ago. They were not executed quite in accord with the successful competition drawings, which seem to have been for buildings more ornate than afforded by the promoters. This minor award was doubtless encouraging, but Brodrick was not satisfied with simple local prestige. He intended to become a national figure. Toward this ultimate ambition he was helped by the award of a medal by the Jury of the Lille Cathedral Competition. This distinction, won in competition with the most celebrated architects in Europe, was more highly valued by him than any of his subsequent successes. He was justifiably proud of the drawings by which he gained the medal, they remained his favourite work throughout his life, and were hanging on the walls of the room in which he died.

He was twenty-nine years of age when he designed Leeds Town Hall, **4**. The competition was a singular one. The Council offered a premium of £200 for a design which was to include the provision of working drawings and detailed specification sufficient to allow of the obtaining of a tender, the accommodation including a great hall sufficiently large to hold 8,000 persons standing! The conditions quite rightly excited much unfavourable comment from the profession. It was said that no doubt office boys would enter for the scheme which included a hall comparable to the "Bath of Caracalla or Westminster Hall." It is a matter for wonder that, despite all the cross currents of intrigue, jeers and sneers, Cuthbert Brodrick not only won this competition but built the magnificent pile. He had the honour to conduct the Prince Consort and Colonel Ponsonby up the uncompleted tower at the conclusion of the opening ceremony by Queen Victoria.

In appearance the architect was a tall, dashing-looking man, clean shaven save for sideboards like those worn by Prince Albert. His hair was brushed back from his forehead, and he affected an artistic negligence in his dress. He was a striking looking man. The fame of Leeds Town Hall was now on every lip, and henceforth the author could do nothing but it must be referred to and coupled with his name. He was nicknamed after his building, "Town Hall, Leeds"—to which city he removed his office. From his new address in East Parade he carried all before him, winning the competition for Leeds Corn Exchange in June, 1860, the Mechanics Institute in December the same year, the Oriental Buildings (in Moorish character) and two large hotels, all in Leeds. The press supported him enthusiastically, averring that the Town Hall had raised the standard of architecture in the City and that in future nothing but the best would satisfy the citizens. Leeds annexed him for herself. Outside Leeds he built the Hydropathic, Ilkley and the Grand Hotel, Scarborough. The last is a social document which it is to be hoped will be preserved unaltered. He was elected a Fellow of the Institute in 1860.

On the 17th of January, 1861, the Corporation of Hull decided to hold a competition for designs for a new Town Hall. On the following 9th of August forty designs were submitted to a committee of the Corporation who recommended the acceptance of that bearing the motto, *Prodesse quam conspici*. After a heated debate in the full Council this recommendation was rejected, and it was resolved to send the whole of the forty designs to Mr. William Tite, for his consideration and report. In due course Mr. Tite replied, placing first in order of merit the design under the pseudonym *Con Amore*, relegating to the fourth place that originally recommended by the selection committee. On opening the envelopes it was found that *Con Amore* concealed (as most knew beforehand) Cuthbert Brodrick. The Council at once passed a resolution thanking Mr. Tite for his gratuitous services. It had been the desire of the majority that the new Town Hall should be the design of their absent townsman, and that wish had been gratified. It is interesting to find that No. 4, the design originally selected by the Committee, was the work of a local gentleman, Mr. R. G. Smith, the Surveyor to the Council. Mr. Smith appears to have been compensated by his employment to superintend the execution of the work which his rival had designed.

Hull Town Hall has since been pulled down. It was in the Venetian type of the Italian Renaissance; undoubtedly because the architect thought this appropriate to a town having such similar associations with commerce and the sea.

The brilliant gentleman could not now be ignored. He had become

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a national figure. In 1866 he was one of the ten architects selected to submit designs to the Government for the rebuilding or alteration of the National Gallery in Trafalgar Square, 6. Brodrick submitted three designs; of these there is a full account in the *Builder* for January 19, 1867. The original drawings have disappeared, but photographs of them remain from which it is evident that his No. 1 design was exceptionally fine. The competition was abortive, the Committee, on which Tite served as architectural member, considering that none of the designs met the requirements. They did, however, say that the design which approximated most nearly was that of E. M. Barry.

Cuthbert Brodrick vanished from the architectural scene as suddenly as he had entered upon it. It is said that an early retirement had always been his intention; this he achieved, for he left England in 1869 and never returned to this country or to architecture.

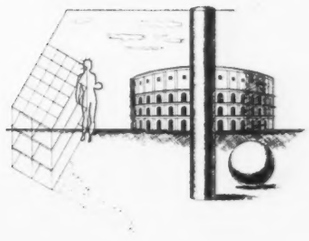
He retired to a flat in Paris where he turned to painting as an art less trammelled. But the time when he took this step was unfavourable, the Franco-German war and the subsequent Commune were inimicable to the establishment of an artist in France. During the Commune he had to live in the basement. He saved his furniture and pictures by allowing a French officer and some of his men to share his flat, over which he hung out a large Union Jack. He grew a beard and became less slim.

Officially he severed his connection with the profession in 1875, after which his name no longer appears in the list of members of the Institute. At that time he had moved into the country and was resident in a villa at Le Vésinet, still painting and exhibiting his work in the Salon, but becoming more and more engrossed in the development of a large garden which his friends likened to the Parc Monçeau. The headpiece to this article is reproduced from one his own self-portraits.

In the middle 'eighties he entirely discontinued as a painter. Actually the last drawing he made was one of his villa at Le Vésinet in 1889. Ten years later he sold the house in France and went to live with his niece in Jersey, where he rented La Colline, Gorey, and again devoted his time to gardening, himself working at the task of design, construction and planting.

From now forward until his death at La Colline on March 2, 1905, when his prowess in the 'sixties was dimly recalled by the newspapers, his life was quiet and uneventful. He seldom spoke of his architectural past, preferring to talk of his family history and to describe the places he had visited. His grave is in St. Martin's Churchyard, Jersey.

Street by Street



A Critical Tour of Famous Thoroughfares

By Professor C. H. Reilly

1, THE STRAND (North Side)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"Let us all go down the Strand" and try and see what its buildings are really like. Admittedly that is strange treatment through which to put such a dear, silly old friend who can never make up her mind whether she belongs to the City or to the West End, and who consequently shares the bad habits of both. Sometimes she is clumsily ponderous, sometimes stupidly gay. Yet one cannot help being fond of her as she meanders along, swinging from side to side so that one often has a far better view of her buildings than if she kept to the straight and narrow way.

Let us begin our stroll on the south side from Trafalgar Square, looking across the traffic to the north. First of all there is Sir Herbert Baker's South Africa House, **1** and **2**, new and clean and with a fine portico, doing nothing but looking rather well, at the corner of the Square, but with other porticos of various sizes at various levels elsewhere. I remember as a child I had a box of bricks with just such varying lengths of columns and used them in just the same way. My childish classical building, however, always had a straight front. It had not to be bent to the kinks in the street. That's the worst of this ready-made classical stuff, it's not very adaptable.

Just ahead, however, there is a different kind of classical architecture, made to measure, though all in ancient, dirty plaster. It is the fine building of Smirke's with its twin circular towers, **3**, where the post office was. This suits itself to the site turning the oblique corner with Duncannon Street with perfect ease, **4**. It then spreads along the Strand in simple, straightforward, elegant stuff in spite of the modern advertisements it is forced to carry, until it is broken into in the middle of its run by the tall stone mass of Coutts' Bank, **5**, with its tall pompous columns, two storeys of them, one upon the other, fluted and dirty and with no spirit in them at all. There never was a tamer structure in spite of its size. Probably the bank was so anxious about good form that all life was knocked out of the architect's work, if it ever had any.

After this "gentlemanly" interruption, Smirke's really gentlemanly work goes on its quiet way to turn the next corner with another circular tower. It must have been a very fine composition, stretching from cross street to cross street, and as good as any of the


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similar ones in old Regent Street. If one turns one's head to glance back at it, St. Martin's Church comes into the picture, while straight ahead and set back a little from the Strand is a similar circular tower-like corner paying deference to it, **6**. This latter is the end of the Charing Cross Hospital. For the moment, and just to show it is still alive, the hospital has had its cornices and other architectural features painted a vivid green. Admittedly this is in the Strand party-spirit, but it is a little hard on the serious old stuff, it really is.

At the opposite side of Agar Street is Charles Holden's medical building, **7**, still unmutilated by its new African users and looking very jaunty with its vertical lines and little cornices breaking round them—he would not do that to-day—and its upper storeys and famous sculpture flecked with white where the weather has caught them. It is a spirited pre-war affair put up, I suppose, about the time of Coutts' Bank. What a contrast! Next is the Civil Service block, **8**, plain and multiple-shop-like; that is to say, it might be repeated in any provincial shopping street and do it no harm.

From Bedford Street to Southampton Street we have a typical Strand stretch, **9, 10, 11**, a jolly old muddle and cuddle of modern buildings, all but one as cheerfully bad as can be. The only semi-serious one is that for New Zealand. This does look at the street with a straightforward smile and not a twisted leer. It is just beyond the Yates wine lodge, **10**, pushing its face out between its bigger neighbours in true mediæval manner, but with no mediæval charm or delicacy. No doubt the narrow widths of the old sites have helped to maintain this manner. The worst of the lot in sheer vulgarity is the Adelphi Theatre, as it is to-day, **12**, covered with coloured photographs of actors and actresses and with, at the same time, a huge white Buddha-like bust of poor William Shakespeare. One cannot see the building. It *might* even be a good one. The Vaudeville theatre next door, however, is thoroughly suburban. There is no doubt about that. One must not call these things provincial. I know no provincial street with such a run of silly stuff as this stretch with these theatres and then Romano's, **13**, in some yellow stick-jaw material with little innocent cherubs dancing about, then a house entirely given over from the ground floor upwards to a whisky advertisement and with the silly childish scribbling of advertisements everywhere else over the fronts. Suddenly, however, after this fit of high jinks the street becomes serious with two big blocks —Manfield House and the Strand Palace Hotel, **14, 15**, stretching from side street to side street. I am not sure, however, especially in the Strand, that the bazaar-like nonsense we have just passed is not preferable to these imitations of Second Empire Paris buildings with no subtlety in their detail. Someone has tried to cheer up the hotel entrance with a heavy canopy, **16**, all triangles of metal and glass, but I did not find the result tempting. Up a side street just here one has a view of a really workaday world in a clean new building for Messrs. Newnes, **17**, a building with no frills at all. It makes a sobering contrast. The Strand could not stand seeing much of such commonsense and retain its character. It is the skeleton at the feast. Let us take warning, of course, but return to the bibulous old lady we are following.

From Burleigh Street to Aldwych there is still a little plain old plaster work left, all badly wanting paint and much childishly scribbled over. One building has a very suitable fuddle of ideas—a barrel hanging out as a sign, with a clock let into either end of it. When the Strand, like old Regent Street, was bright with newly painted plaster and with a few hanging signs above the shops, it must have been twice as gay and sunny as it is to-day, with its clumsy brick and stone buildings all choked up with the gilt letters to which they form the worst possible background.

With the Aldwych corner we come to what was once a fine modern building, perhaps the most elegant modern building in London, the *Morning Post* one, **18**, designed by Messrs. Mewès and Davis. Its long curved front, delicately moulded in granite and Portland stone, ran down tapering to a small rounded end on the Strand, where it was crowned with a pear-shaped dome. Now its elegance has been destroyed and its beautiful dome half buried by two additional storeys some illustrated paper people have added. This French building used to make a marvellous contrast with Norman Shaw's bull-dog English building over on the opposite corner for the Gaiety Theatre, **19, 20**; than which, of course, there was never anything less gay. It is a heavy layered building finishing with a stubby dome and widely spaced colonnades. It is not bad, of course, and would have made a respectable Victorian town hall. For the Gaiety Theatre, however, it has the gaiety of an elephant with its legs in the air. Poor thing, it, too, has suffered. All its front now is covered with neon sign letters and scribbled lines. That democracy treats the work of a Royal Academician as it does that of an ordinary decent architect is perhaps some comfort.

After this we come to the heavily monumental Australia House, **21**, bedecked all round with great useless columns which occupy a good deal of space and crowned with a quadriga, while other sculpture piles itself up acrobatically against the piers at the corner entrance. Walking under the columns one gets a rare view of horses' hoofs against the sky. After a further stretch of pompous dullness beyond Aldwych we come to Gibbs's lovely, gay little church, **22**, and the great Bush building holding out loving arms to it, but doing it no damage, rather enhancing its beauties by the contrast of its own plain surfaces. One does not seem to mind the applied columns to the church. They are part of a scheme of decoration not just an advertisement of size or importance, and they were put there, of course, in a far less self-conscious age. But all this part of the street is well known, and one need not linger. Bush House, **23, 24, 25**, is the best great modern building we have. I think, which pays any tribute at all to the old traditional ways. Its central pediment, its arched entrance, on this side anyhow, and its linking colonnades are all detailed with the utmost discretion. The architect has treated his dying style as he would his grandmother, gently and reverently. Across Aldwych one might have looked at General Buildings, **27, 28**, and seen a last attempt in another spirit to give it life. I prefer the Bush method.

Finally, passing Brock's calm statue of Gladstone, **29**, with its shrieking gesticulating women at its base, and Wren's playful church, one comes to that hard deadly thing, yet still, unfortunately, clean and strong and sharp, Street's Law Courts, **30, 31, 32**. It is an ungainly Peter Pan, which will never grow up and never grow old. It should be with Mr. Alfred Waterhouse's similar buildings in Manchester, where its suggestions of Victorian self-righteousness and religious cruelty would find more suitable neighbours. It is indeed the last building to find a place in the Strand, and it *is* the last. Next month, if the Editor will still put up with me and my old-fashioned stuff in the clean new world of his REVIEW, we will return and look at the other side of the street.


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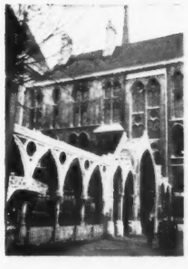
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Book of the Month

Old Art from New Aspects

By W. W. Winkworth

CHINESE ART. By Leigh Ashton and Basil Gray. London: Faber and Faber. Price 21s. net.

No praise can be too high for the combined efforts which have produced this book. The authors have had many advantages in their task; it would have been very sad if their book had not been as good as it is, considering the opportunities they have had. Both are museum officials. People often imagine that museum officials have nothing to do but write books all day. This is far from the truth; they are not allowed (which always seems to me a great pity) to write books in museum hours at all. But what they are in a splendid position to do is exactly what, in this case, they and the publishers have wisely decided should be done, namely to collect examples and append to each a short explanatory note, so arranging the book as to form a sort of lecture illustrated with slides, but telling us far more than, with his clumsy actor's technique, a lecturer can ever do.

They begin with prehistoric times, and go down almost till the present day. Mr. Gray does the paintings and Mr. Ashton the rest, I imagine, though this is nowhere explicitly stated, since Mr. Gray has charge of paintings at the British Museum, and Mr. Ashton, who arranged the Burlington House exhibition—I mean, arranged the cases, fittings and objects—has a wide knowledge covering almost all branches of Chinese art.

For a book like this, it is absolutely necessary, and very few people in Europe possess it. Mr. Ashton is one of those few. It is no easy task to keep pace with the rapid developments that have taken place in our knowledge of Chinese art during the last twenty years. It is hardly too much to say that Chinese art as it is presented in this book, was only twenty years ago almost unknown. I do not say that all the objects illustrated were not then in existence—that is the conclusion that the timid collector sometimes draws, but he is wrong. So rich have been the finds in recent years that it has hardly been worth while for the Chinese to produce forgeries, and only one or two classes of forgery are good. The majority are so clumsy that the merest beginner can see they are simply bad objects, however old they are supposed to be.

Only one class of Chinese works of art is really dangerous to those who collect, and I find that on the whole most people realize the fact—namely paintings. These have been not only actually forged in large numbers, but enormously copied and repeated. Those who want genuine Chinese pictures had better try to find good modern ones. These exist: they are not dealt with in this book, however, which is the only fault I have to find with it. But perhaps the authors will one day do another book entitled "Chinese Art without dates," for then they could treat what they write about simply on its merits technically and artistically. I am sure the book would not sell, however, because the one thing most people know about the subject is that Chinese art should be old; the older the better. The Chinese themselves rather encourage this idea, or seem to. That does not alter the fact that, with regard to painting at any rate, the Chinese really have quite a different view of the past from us. For them it still exists; they do not know enough about it to realize, as we realize with European art (about the past of which we know far more than the Chinese do about theirs) exactly why it is that it is impossible to repeat it. Their great art is, of course, calligraphy, and here the difficulties of the archaic impulse are less. We have revived with great success, lately, much of our fine old writing, chiefly in the form of type, as is natural. The Chinese have done this too, but they have always extended the procedure to handwriting as well.

What perhaps makes Chinese art so interesting to us is just this fact, that the Chinese are really unable, except perhaps in calligraphy, not to be "modern." They have never had museums or the vast art-literature which we know, so what they do seldom has that dullness which comes from academic standards. When some knowledgeable man did suddenly feel he had discovered a well-spring of life in the art of some past age, which did, of course, happen in painting especially, he had to invent most of it, because he could never find enough material to give him an excuse for not using his own imagination. In the crafts that is invariably true. Innumerable branches of craft just began, flourished, and then stopped almost dead, or changed and began anew from another angle. That did happen in Europe too, of course; but considering that China is one country, it does indeed seem extraordinary that all the things in this book can really have been produced by the same race. That is partly what makes the book so fascinating. The authors say of Ming art (fourteenth to seventeenth

centuries) that its founder " swept everything aside in favour of a return to the glories of the past. The effect of this was to further academic interests and for a time, at all events, this academic quality is very noticeable, in the major arts at least. Ming sculpture is of very little interest. . ." That is in a way true; but what really happened was that sculpture, essentially a Buddhist activity, died out almost completely, just as Buddhism did. But take porcelain: there, there was a sudden and startling rebirth. So there was really in painting, because although the fifteenth-century artists tried to " go back " they had so little to go back on that they really had to start again.

What they chiefly did in practice was to go on with what the fourteenth-century masters had begun; they knew a little of the twelfth and thirteenth century ones, but the earlier styles had really completely vanished and were never revived at all, though of course they were talked about a lot. I think those who open this book anywhere will agree that at every page there is something new, something different. In the days when our knowledge extended only to what we had of Chinese art in the last century, there seemed a sameness about it that depressed many people. The situation is changed now, and those who have this book will find that it reveals quite unexpected worlds to them.

The photographs, which are all in half-tone, are excellent, and are drawn from such a variety of unusual sources that I think it may partly be said that no book giving such a comprehensive view of the subject has ever before appeared in English. There are things here which will be new even to those who have thoroughly looked at everything at Burlington House; and I imagine that a lot of people will find that looking at Chinese art in a book is easier than looking at it in a crowd.

Colour in the Home

COLOUR DESIGNS FOR MODERN INTERIORS. A series of eighty plates in full colours. London: The Architectural Press. Price £2 2s. net. Stuttgart: Julius Hoffmann.

A DESIGN for a present-day room may be utilitarian; a pastiche or reproduction of an old convention; or may foretell and even achieve a new and suitable convention for present-day life.

It is interesting to group these well reproduced German perspectives of interiors into such categories and to reflect on the sociological significance of each. The Study, No. 38, is clearly in the first category. Examples such as Nos. 8 and 32, the Smoking Room with its oak beams, Elk head and fire basket, and the Room in a Tower, with its row of family portraits and picturesque gallery, are in the second, and the Living Room with terrace, No. 31, achieves the third.

The technical excellence of the sketches is noteworthy. One rarely sees in England such convincing pictorial skill expended on interior projects.

There is a short introduction and the 80 plates are both useful as records and inspiring in some cases as precepts. The use of colour varies, but in some cases is pleasantly robust. Although the interiors are classified, it would be extremely valuable, in addition, to have particulars of the programme in the case of each room. The aspect, the cost and the particular circumstances must play a part in any logical appreciation of their design.

The Architectural Press is to be congratulated on the production of so comprehensive an annual review of decorative tendencies in a country of so many vital changes in other directions.

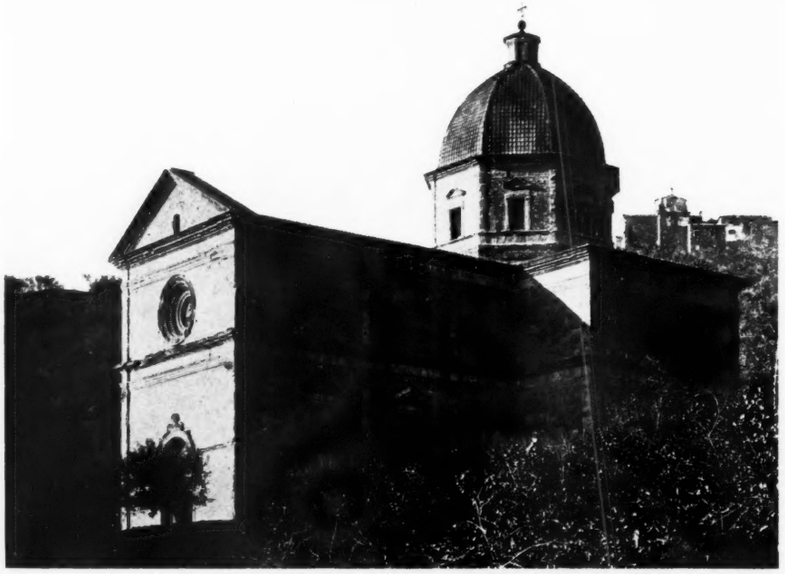
J. M. HOLMES

Narcissus the Etruscan

FRANCESCO DI GEORGIO MARTINI OF SIENNA. Part 2. By Selwyn Brinton, M.A., F.R.S.A. London: Besant & Co., Ltd. Price 10s. 6d. net.

FRANCESCO di Georgio Martini of Sienna was a painter, sculptor, architect and engineer who was born in 1439, died in 1506, and enjoyed a considerable reputation in his time. In 1490 he was employed by the young Duke of Milan and the Duke of Urbino, and a little later by Ferdinand of Aragon at Naples. He made a model for the lantern of Milan Cathedral, wrote a treatise on architecture, and was an important personage and a magistrate much esteemed in his native town. Yet he is hardly known except to students of the Italian Renaissance, such as Venturi and Mr. Selwyn Brinton himself. He is not mentioned at all in Anderson's and Spiers' handbook on Italian Renaissance Architecture. Vasari gives him a rather scanty notice, and says that he was an excellent sculptor and architect who was greatly interested in arms and instruments of war, and being possessed of a private fortune, was able to work not for gain but to please himself. With the second part of Mr. Selwyn Brinton's book before me, the question is, where are we to place Francesco di Georgio? Mr. Brinton, whose studies of the Renaissance are well known, is an enthusiastic admirer, and places him very high. He has already devoted one volume to this artist's paintings, miniatures and drawings, and has followed it up with this second part dealing with his architecture, sculpture and military engineering, an attractive little volume well illustrated with photographs. I admire Mr. Brinton's unfailing loyalty to his hero, but on the evidence of his illustrations, I find myself unable to accept his critical judgments. Francesco di Georgio is said to have designed the Communal Palace at Jesi, a little town some 17 miles W. of Ancona. I have not seen it but, as shown in the illustrations, it appears to be a dull heavy building of no particular quality, little to make one look at it twice. Nor can one trace in the details of his design that knowledge of antiquity with which he is credited by Vasari and Mr. Brinton. It is thin and meagre, the long attenuated pilasters of his doorways might please M. Tengbom of Stockholm, but would have been repudiated with scorn by the better architects of the Renaissance, and if the double arcades of the Cortile of the Cancelleria at Rome were really completed by Bramente from a design by Francesco di Georgio, this would account for the very unsatisfactory character of the design. The quiet little church of S.M. Delle Grazie at Cortona, reproduced here, is much the best example of Francesco di Georgio's architecture that Mr. Brinton produces—in fact, it is so good that it hardly seems to be by the same hand as the rest of his work.

Military engineering is another of the accomplishments attributed to Francesco, and from the documentary evidence produced by Mr. Brinton, there seems to be no doubt that he was held in high esteem as a military engineer, but unfortunately no examples of his skill are given. The chapter on this subject (" The Invasion of Naples " by Charles VIII) is devoted to the correspondence between the Duke of Calabria who wanted him to fortify Naples, and the Siennese, who wanted him to repair their water-pipes, and the only thing that I can learn from this chapter is that Francesco was skilled in devising mines for blowing up fortresses. A strange story is told of a mysterious person called " Narcissus the Etruscan," who blew up a tower of the Castel Nuovo at Naples, and so enabled Ferdinand of Aragon to drive out the French. On no particular evidence and on the



The Church of S. M. Delle Grazie at Cortona. Francesco di Georgio Martini of Sienna, architect. From " Francesco di Georgio Martini of Sienna."

Lady's bedroom. designed by D. Ronay. *From* "Colour Designs for Modern Interiors."

PLATE iv *January 1936*

The Hyde Park Scene : right, the last century ; below, to-day. From "This Man's Father."

strength of a rudimentary drawing of a tower being blown up, it is assumed that this "Narcissus the Etruscan" was Francesco di Georgio. The Italians of the Renaissance were probably the most skilful military engineers of the time, but so far as Francesco is concerned, no evidence is produced of his having possessed in this regard anything approaching the ability of Peruzzi at Sienna, or of Michelangelo at Florence, least of all of Sanmichele, whose two gateways at Verona are still the unequalled masterpieces of military architecture. On the whole, I am sceptical of the merits of Francesco di Georgio Martini as an architect and engineer. Of his sculpture, by far the most attractive example is the figure of S. Catherine of Sienna. His architectural detail was the stock-in-trade of every competent Italian ornamentalist of the time.

Mr. Brinton has produced a very interesting book, and has devoted a great deal of research to his subject, but the impression that he leaves in my mind is that Francesco di Georgio Martini was not the heaven-born master of Mr. Brinton's fancy, but just one of those skilful, but in fact rather second-rate, artists who pursued a more or less lucrative trade in Italy in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries. It seems ungrateful to say so, but I doubt if the researches of enthusiastic students will rescue him from the comparative oblivion in which time has left him. It is not often that the verdict of history is reversed.

REGINALD BLOMFIELD

A Tale of Two Centuries

THIS MAN'S FATHER. By Noel Carrington and Jocelyn Rae. Oxford: Oxford University Press. Price 7s. 6d. net.

IT has been remarked by, I think, Mr. Evelyn Waugh, that whatever else may be lacking in the mental make-up of the present generation, it has been superabundantly endowed with a sense of period. Never before, he says, has this by-product of the critical faculties been so highly developed. The truth of this statement is amply proved not only by the enormous popularity of such plays as *Bitter Sweet* and *Cavalcade* and—the new lease of life now being enjoyed by "The Man on the Flying Trapeze" and similar ditties caricaturing the tastes of a vanished age, but also by the continuous stream of books giving us a pictorial glimpse of "Our Fathers" and "Our Mothers." Despite the blandishments of Messrs. Wells and Huxley ("ancestral voices prophesying woe") the remembrance of things past remains for most of us a far more enjoyable pastime than the contemplation of the shape of things to come.

The idea of the present volume, namely to provide a pictorial contrast between our manner of life and that prevailing in the latter half of the Victorian era, by means of printing side by side contemporary photographs of some everyday activity common to both generations, was an excellent one: unfortunately, however, the realization has not been altogether successful and will prove likely, one fears, to produce reactions quite different from those anticipated by the authors.

The reason for this lies, I fancy, in the fact that the two sides of the page make unequal demands on our credence and that it is, strangely enough, the 1935 section that calls for the greater act of faith. The charming crinolined beauties and their whiskered beaux who confront us on the left-hand pages are, despite the differences in clothes and hairdressing, mortals like ourselves; whereas the saxophone playing bathing belles and the motor show Adonises, chosen to play opposite them on the right, have no existence whatever outside the advertisement pages of the press. The ancients are flesh and blood, we have met and conversed with their like, but the moderns are a monstrous and fabulous race, the fearful progeny of Mr. and Mrs. Everyman, the predestined victims of pyorrhea and night starvation.

However, the contrast between real people and the phantasmagoric creations of the advertising magnate does not dominate the whole work for, luckily, in the latter half of the book we move away from the region of domesticity

"By this time the Underground Railways were the common mode of travel to the City. On the District and Metropolitan lines (of last century) the trains were steam-drawn, and in consequence the tunnels were smoky and the carriages dirty." To-day: the Tube. From "This Man's Father."

and are given some admirable scenes of the life of the streets and public places. Here some sort of rational comparison becomes possible, for the modern pictures do actually represent these scenes as they are and not as we fancy them to be.

In both sections there are some lovely individual photographs, notably, in the modern section, the greatest snapshot ever taken, "Naked Boys pursued by Policewoman" and among the Victorian masterpieces the charming group of musicians on page ? (an annoying feature of the make-up is the absence of page numbers) and the small picture of an omnibus on the title page. There is also a remarkable picture of cook-shop loiterers that might almost be a Moscow Art Theatre setting for "The Lower Depths" so stark and grim is it. Notice particularly the figure of the old man, it is an implied criticism of the whole era. The method of reproduction employed throughout is not one that seems always to produce the best results, and it was surely a mistake to sacrifice the admirable sharpness and clarity that is so characteristic of the Victorian photograph at its best by enlarging a *carte de visite* to full page dimensions, as appears to have been done more than once.

In conclusion one can praise wholeheartedly the magnificent collection of nineteenth-century photographs assembled by the industrious compilers of this volume, and would willingly record unalloyed enjoyment of the whole book were it not for the chastening reflection that there seems every likelihood of future generations judging us exclusively from the evidence provided by commercial photography. Is one unwarrantably conceited if one fancies that the verdict on our present civilization arrived at by future archæologists will be unduly harsh, if our Venus de Milo is to be the Persil blonde, our Nefertiti the Kodak girl ?

OSBERT LANCASTER

The Domestic Needs of Mankind

THE HOUSE A MACHINE FOR LIVING IN. By Anthony Bertram. London: A. & C. Black, Ltd. Price 5s. net.

It is time surely that Corbusier's catchword* was estimated at its proper value—as a corrective to the comfortable romanticism of so much architectural thinking. Actually his phrase that the house is a machine for living in is merely one of those stimulating remarks one throws to the company to start a discussion, and as such it has served its purpose nobly. On the other hand as an architectural axiom it is not only too aggressive, it is too vague, especially in its English translation, and even dashed with a touch of nonsense. A machine after all is an extremely specialized sort of thing, only remotely suggesting habitation and then simply a stationary bus converted into a week-end cottage. This is an elementary way of regarding the phrase, of course, but in a counter-corrective perhaps this may be excused. Further, living is not and presumably never will be a particularly specialized proceeding. It cannot be provided for by nice calculation. The human being is an extraordinarily complex creature and perhaps nothing distinguishes him more from the rest of the animal world than his inconsistency, fantasticalness and faddiness. Functionalism and utilitarianism cannot satisfy such a creature for very long. Periodical doses of one or the other do him good and correct opposite tendencies that have taken him too far in the other direction, but he will not machinate functionally all the time. Stress functionalism a little too much and reaction will not be long in arriving. Deprive him of his much abused ornament and you will be merely sweeping and cleaning the chamber for the entrance of seven further devils. Policy surely indicates some slight letting up of our present emphasis on functionalism, for after all we do not practise it with quite the austerity revealed in our preaching.

The virtue of the book that has prompted these remarks is that it does not live up to the extremism of its title. The ground covered is the progressive attempts of mankind to meet his domestic needs as adequately and satisfactorily as circumstances will allow him. Within the limitations of thirty thousand words this vast subject is fairly well attacked. Naturally, space has permitted of only a representative survey and has, therefore, dictated a certain eclecticism in both the opinions expressed and the illustrations chosen. Nevertheless, the book is spiced with originality and written in a conversational easy-going style which should popularize a subject that has still to percolate to all whom it may concern. Some things are said very freshly, others with the disarming downrightness of enthusiasm. Thus: "Various firms make exceptionally well-designed geysers, objects that are as beautiful as a Schneider Cup trophy, that require no cleaning, make no smell: but the stately bathrooms of England still display their battered verdigrised old brass affairs, with spouts like the village pump. From this a piddle of scalding or tepid water valiantly tackles an enormous cubic area of yellow paint, flaked off at the bottom and surrounded by mahogany marked with soapy generations. Across and over the side of this hang assorted wire hammocks through whose mesh the soap slips playfully." Not all the book is written quite like this. Nevertheless, for those who still regard this manner of writing as a novelty there are sufficient plums of this description to jam the pills underneath. It might be said that the jam on the pill corresponds to ornament on structure, but frequent protestations by the author against the crime of architectural jam should tend to correct this impression. The illustrations by A. G. Wise support the text loyally.

RAYMOND McGRATH

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* "Une maison est une machine à habiter . . . . Une fauteuil est une machine à s'asseoir, etc."
—"Vers une Architecture—(Les yeux qui ne voient pas)."
Le Corbusier, 1923.
"A chair is a machine to sit in. A house is a machine to live in. The human body is a machine to be worked by will. A tree is a machine to bear fruit. A plant is a machine to bear flowers and seeds. And, as I've admitted before somewhere, a heart is a suction-pump. Does that idea thrill you? Trite as it is, it may be as well to think it over because the *least* any of these things may be *is* just that."
—Kahn Lectures for 1930, Frank Lloyd Wright.

OVERLEAF, *AT CLOSE RANGE*

"Moreover, he (Albert Augustus) had the *entrée* to the salon of the most famous actress of the time. In later life he would often tell his friends of an occasion when his bouquet was accepted and placed in one of her beautiful vases." The salon of two generations ago (the model selected for illustration is that of Mrs. Langtry) and, below, its contemporary equivalent. From *This Man's Father*, by Noel Carrington and Jocelyn Rae.

PLATE v *January 1936*

DECORATION

12

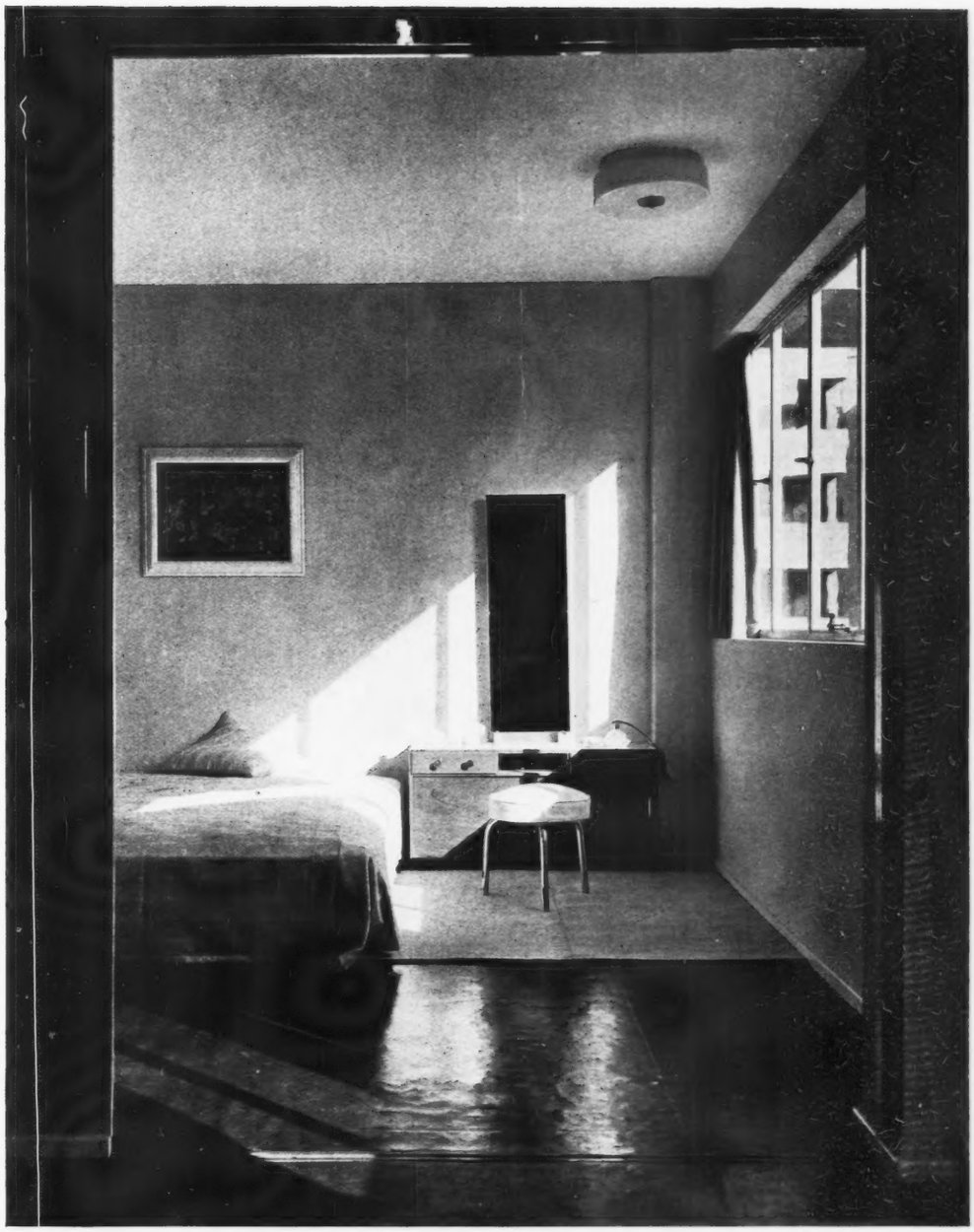
THE

ARCHITECTURAL

REVIEW

SUPPLEMENT

FLATS AT STREATHAM HILL: THE INTERIORS, FURNISHING AND FINISHES. FREDERICK GIBBERD, ARCHITECT



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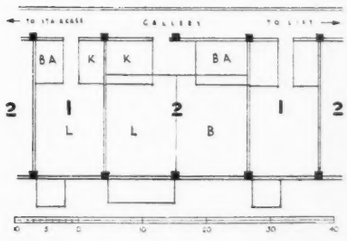
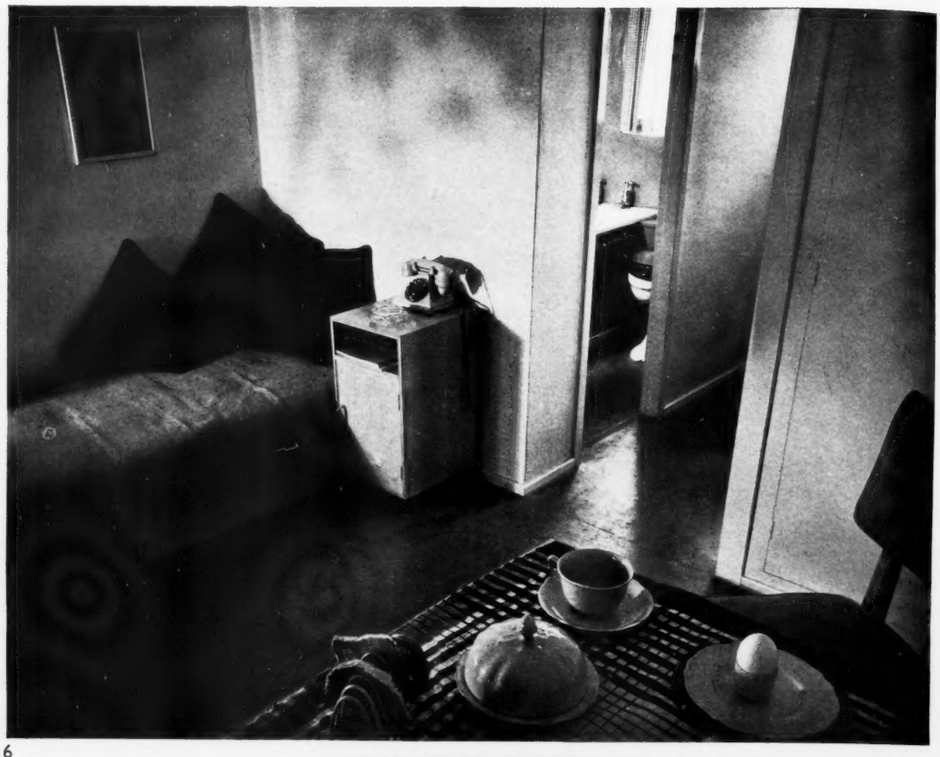


1

2

The long five-storey blocks at Pullman Court, Streatham (the lay-out and exterior design of which are described on pages 28–32), are planned with one-room and two-room flats alternating throughout their length, the one-room flats occupying one, and the two-room flats two, of the standardized structural bays of 11 ft. 3 ins., as seen in the plan. 1. 2 and 3 show the two-room flat; 2 is a view in the living-room, showing the built-in electric fire which is a standard fitting in all flats, and 3 a view looking into the bedroom through the sliding doors dividing it from the living-room. All the furniture has been designed by the architect. In each block the living-rooms and bedrooms are on the south side and have windows running from column to column (see drawing on the next page). Each living-room has a southerly balcony. Kitchens, bathrooms and entrances are in all cases on the north side, facing the access galleries, forming small cells to insulate the living-rooms from the cold.

4



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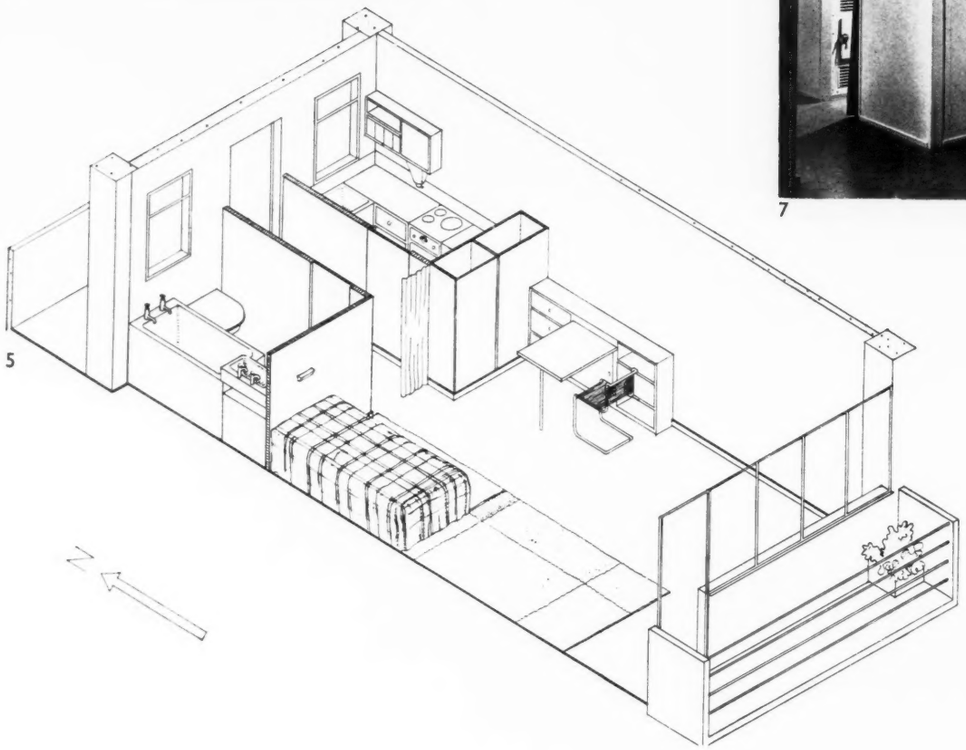
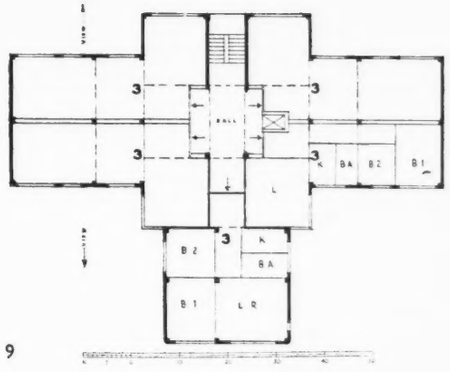


5

5 is a drawing showing the lay-out of the standard one-room flat (see plan on preceding page) and 4, 6 and 7 are views of the interior showing, respectively, the living corner with the built-in electric fire and radio and the wide south window, the sleeping end with the bed, the entrance passage and the doorway to the bathroom, and the dining corner showing also the built-in cupboards. The rent of this flat is £68 a year including heating, hot water, etc.

8



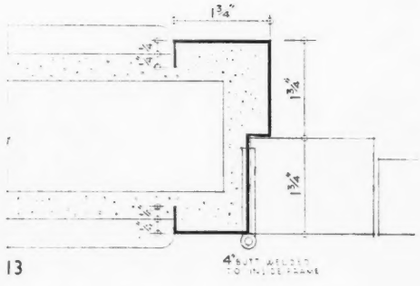
9

10

The seven-storey terminal block (D in the lay-out plan on page 29) contains only three-room flats. 9 is a plan of half the block, the other half being identical. The flats occupying the projecting wing are luxury flats, having extra large living-rooms and light and view on three sides. These are the most expensive in the scheme, the rent being £130. 8 shows the living-room in one of these flats with furniture designed by the architect. 10 is the entrance hall of the same flat, looking towards the living-room.

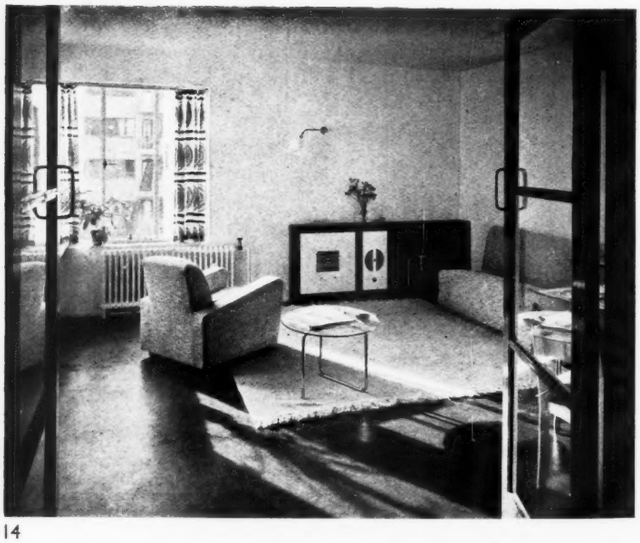
11

12



13

The living-room in 14 is a view in one of the normal three-room flats, taken through the double glazed doors. 11 is a kitchen interior, typical of all flats, the photograph being taken in one of the three-room flats. 12 is a typical bathroom. The bathrooms are standardized throughout the scheme, the only difference in flats of different price being in the finishes. 13 is a sketch showing the standard door jamb treatment. The door frames are of sheet steel, and are made complete with sole plate and butt hinge welded on, drilled and tapped ready to receive the striking plate or ball catch. The windows are also of steel, with a specially designed jamb and cill section having an overlapping flange to bed the frame tight against the wall face.



14

The Designers

By Geoffrey Boumphrey

6.* Wells Coates

In the first half of this series I was concerned chiefly with ideals: and so it was possible for me to order my course to a great extent by the principles of logic. Now that I come to the actual work of the designers, it is inevitable that we find the issues, if not obliterated, at least obscured by the fact that human beings are what is called "not logical." That is to say, they are complex creatures, working out their resolutions between many impulses and influences: the logic by which they work is not that of the schoolroom, but the logic of living organisms—and none the less logic for that. They are, in fact, *more* not *less* logical than the theorist who takes a few arguments out of the many in order to make his points, thereby oversimplifying the issue. I have grossly and deliberately oversimplified all issues so far. I hasten to point this out in order that the charming and distinguished victims whom I propose to dissect may realize that I am well aware of this limitation—as I hope the reader will be. Any criticism of a designer's work is subject to innumerable qualifications (such as—to take an obvious case—the influence of the CLIENT) which must expose direct criticism to the risks of harshness and unfairness. I propose, therefore, to limit myself in the main to general observations: when personal criticism creeps in I trust that the victim, no less than the reader, will realize that this should be qualified by the consideration of many unmentioned circumstances. I shall be attempting not so much to criticize the designer as to discover in his work examples that may point the arguments I have already enunciated.

1

The quality which seems to me to mark Wells Coates so strongly among his contemporaries is his clear perception of the tendencies of modern life. Among the cross-currents of habit and purpose he perceives the move of the tide—the resultant of two singularly intractable components. In the field of interior equipment (if we leave beauty out of it for the moment) he would, I think, rank mobility close after convenience. He sees modern living as essentially dynamic: we change our homes with increasing frequency; we spend less and less time in them—and expect to cram just as much, if not more, into them than before, with greater comfort. To achieve this, the modern home must be designed to fit the habits of the user as certain racing cars are built to fit the body of the driver. Everything that can reasonably be built in is built in. A move from one Wells Coates house to another would require no pantechnicon: clothes, a few chairs and a table or two, pots and pans, books, a few works of art (if detachable), and little else—a handcart would take the lot.

2

1. A Wells Coates dining-room. The lines of the chairs are so obviously comfortable that one is inclined to miss their important contribution to the look of the room. The windows, covered with shantung silk, provide artificial light at night from the same direction as natural illumination by day. The decorative panel is painted on rotary-cut American birch. Solid sound-proof sliding doors can be drawn across to cut off— 2.—the adjoining room. A built-in fitting (Australian walnut), which ministers to many of the needs of man. It consists of a cocktail cabinet, wireless set, self-changing radiogramophone, record cabinet, loudspeaker, bookshelves and cupboards. The same things scattered about are usually enough to spoil the look of any ordinary room.

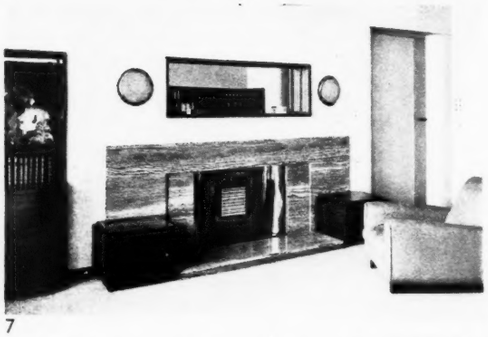
* Articles on Sir Ambrose Heal, Gordon Russell, Arundell Clarke, J. Duncan Miller, and Betty Joel, were published in the July, August, September, October and November issues.

Following the special issue of THE ARCHITECTURAL REVIEW, published last month, on *Interior House Equipment*, it is intended to begin shortly, as part of the *Decoration Supplement*, a monthly bulletin giving news of new standard designs and articles of equipment, as examples that reach a certain level of merit appear on the market. It is hoped that, by doing this, the service the December number initiated will be kept up to date.

3

6

4



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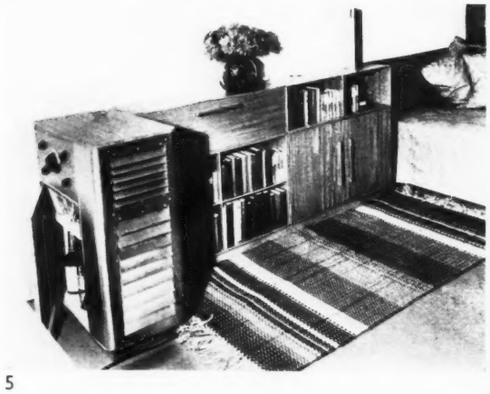

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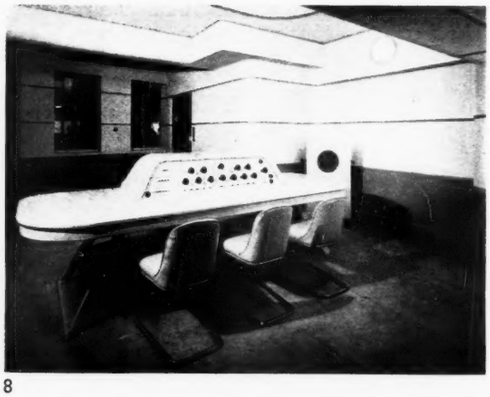


8

3. Another interior. Sliding doors of shantung silk on a cedar frame. Upholstery of green heather-mixture tweed. Carpet two shades of cocoa-brown, furniture in sapele mahogany. The lack of "decoration" is hardly perceptible!

4. Corner fitting for a study in Honduras mahogany. The shallow top shelf to the bookcase provides shelter for books in use, current periodicals, etc. (The chair is by Gordon Russell.)

5. Another *multum in parvo*, particularly interesting in that, as well as providing bookshelves, cocktail cabinet, wireless and cupboards, it suggests a solution to the fireside problem. The lower louvres (of polished copper) conceal electric heating elements, heat from which is thrown forward off parabolic reflectors. The result is not only visible but sensible. Construction throughout is of un-framed plywood, box-jointed.

6. A dining corner of the same room. The table is supported at its far end on a horizontal wall rail, and can be slid into the corner when not in use. Again a sliding door to save space.

7. Setting for an electric fire. Though an early work, this seemed to me worth showing. The electric fire can be removed in winter and its place taken by an open fire; the curved polished copper surfaces reflect the light of either. The surround is of German travertine. The two bulkhead lights hinge outwards and downwards, and so serve either for general illumination or to throw a localized light round the most intimate part of the room.

8. This, one of the Dramatic Control tables at Broadcasting House, London, designed by Wells Coates, has little to do with interior decoration, but is included as an outstanding example of the new order of beauty which is occasionally produced by strict attention to function—and nowhere more often than in the work of Wells Coates. The problem was to seat three aside so placed that they could work simultaneously on relatively small panels, and to provide additional space at the ends for a possible two more, for manuscripts, scores, etc. The solution now seems obviously the best. All leads are taken up inside the steel legs (at the far end in the illustration), which are of standard streamline tubular section. The top casing is easily removable. The whole thing is undoubtedly beautiful.

In his work Wells Coates is quite clearly the sensitive engineer (and this is meant for praise—I was an engineer myself). Of the many variations of a design which will achieve its purpose as completely as may be, he chooses that one which looks best. His preliminary analysis of the conditions is singularly complete and acute: his solution is often refreshingly original: he adds nothing *for effect—and he gives us from time to time veritable glimpses of what I have called the New Beauty.*

ANTHOLOGY

Wanted: a Man

What is most striking in London is its vastness. It is the illimitable feeling that gives it a special character. London is not grand. It possesses only one of the qualifications of a grand city, size: but it wants the equally important one, beauty. It is the union of these two qualities that produced the grand cities, the Romes, the Babylons, the hundred portals of the Pharaohs: multitudes and magnificence: the millions influenced by art. Grand cities are unknown since the beautiful has ceased to be the principle of invention. Paris, of modern capitals, has aspired to this character: but if Paris be a beautiful city, it certainly is not a grand one: its population is too limited, and, from the nature of their dwellings, they cover a comparatively small space. Constantinople is picturesque: nature has furnished a sublime site, but it has little architectural splendour, and you reach the environs with a fatal facility. London overpowers us with its vastness.

Place a Forum or an Acropolis in its centre, and the effect of the metropolitan mass, which now has neither head nor heart, instead of being stupefying, would be ennobling. Nothing more completely represents a nation than a public building. A member of Parliament only represents at the most the united constituencies: but the Palace of the Sovereign, a National Gallery, or a Museum baptized with the name of the country, these are monuments to which all should be able to look up with pride: and which should exercise an elevating influence upon the spirit of the humblest. What is their influence in London? Let us not criticize what all condemn. But how remedy the evil? What is wanted in architecture, as in so many things, is, a man. Shall we find a refuge in a Committee of Taste? Escape from the mediocrity of one to the mediocrity of many? We only multiply our feebleness, and aggravate our deficiencies. But one suggestion might be made. No profession in England has done its duty until it has furnished its victim. The pure administration of justice dates from the deposition of Macclesfield. Even our boasted navy never achieved a great victory until we shot an admiral. Suppose an architect were hanged? Terror has its inspiration as well as competition.

BENJAMIN DISRAELI
[Tancred]

MARGINALIA

A job we wouldn't care to do

"Seven L.N.E.R. stations—Leyton, Leytonstone, Snaresbrook, George Lane, Woodford, Buckhurst Hill and Loughton—are to be redecorated in 1936 in colour schemes varied to suit local conditions.

"Linoleum is to be laid in the waiting-rooms and new figured glass panels are to be provided in waiting-room doors and windows."

Evening Standard.

A Curious Fact

"Leeds is now taking a census together with measurements of the accommodation of all houses in the city. It is a curious fact that while many of the back-to-back houses have been condemned some are still being erected in Leeds. In view of the criticism, both locally and nationally, levelled against this type of house, it will surprise many people to know that back-to-back houses are still allowed to be built."

The Times.

Special Issue

The February issue of THE ARCHITECTURAL REVIEW will be a special one on the subject of Timber, continuing the series dealing exhaustively with particular materials that was begun with the Steel and Concrete issue of November, 1932. Modern architecture is not dependent exclusively on the modern materials: one of the essential traditional materials is timber. Its uses both as a natural material and in its new forms such as plywood and laminated board, will here be described in articles and pictures. There will be a technical section dealing with the properties and behaviour of Timber. The issue will be published at the usual price of 2s. 6d.

My? What a House

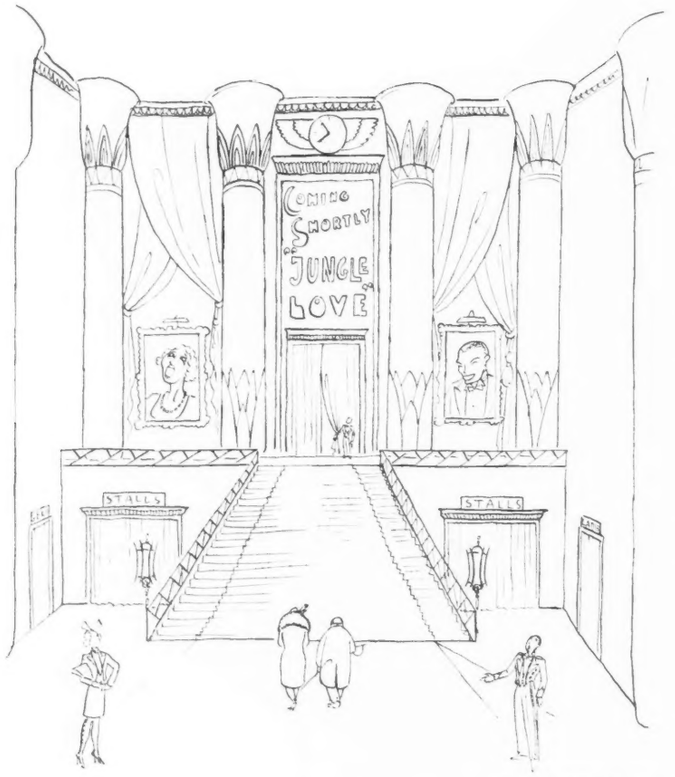
Observe the mansion, stucco-faced,
Devoid of every sign of taste,
Berkshire's sweet and balmy air
Knows no scene less calm and fair.
From weather-cock to bogus knocker,
The house is like a shilling shocker:
Chandeliers and alabaster,
Scarlet plush and painted plaster.
First, there is the marble hall
(It's fake, not really stone at all):
Here, beneath electric rays,
A silly, noisy fountain plays.
Against the wall, a charming spinet
But there is no music in it!
Emancipated from the stable,
Turned into a useful table.
On its stands a marble group:
Blancmange ladies posed to droop
About a central, marble dish,
Of marble grapes and pears and fish.
The prospect almost makes you ill.
You lean upon the window sill
And see the lawns, where peacocks strut
Among the Gods—an awful glut.
Apollo here, there Aphrodite,
In a flowing, marble nightie.
Urns and sundials, bath for birds:
Too ornate and bad for words.

Step on, my dear, to further gloom.
Here we find the drawing-room.
The first offender in the vista
Is a sturdy aspidistra:
Its fifty leaves that glint and shine,
Grace a cooler made for wine.
On the walls, some pictures hang,
By Tadema and all his gang.
A Knight in armour, made of tin,
Kicking up an awful din
When he tries to bow to earth,
Before a maid of gentle birth.
There she stands! The silly fool
Is out of doors, all dressed in tulle.
Is that Beatrice? Aint it sweet!
Meeting Dante in the street.
Here's a bust of Julius Cæsar,
There's the leaning tower of Pisa:
Knick and knack are both unravelled.
My, that woman must have travelled!

There she is! Look! Quite obscene!
Gardening in *crepe de chine!*
No, my pet, don't stay to tea!
Let the monstrous woman be.
Ring the bell, please, by the sofa,
Ask her maid to send my chauffeur.
I hate this zoo of tiger rugs,
Benares ware and Toby jugs.
Look, my dear, this last corruption!
Vesuvius, all in eruption,
Worked in wool, by her own hand!
I really cannot understand
That we should *dream* of taking tea
With a drab as drab as she.

HECTOR BOLITHO

WITH OPEN EYES IN CITY STREETS



Drawn by Osbert Lancaster

This month we have pleasure in presenting to our readers a picture of a new Luxor ("Luxi") Cinema in a Suburb. As it is obviously impossible, so familiar must all our readers be with the outstanding characteristics of the Ancient Egyptian style here so happily adapted for modern purposes, this month to arrange our material in competition form, our readers must rest content with a short, but discerning, analysis of the various influences from the past in decoration of the building here depicted.

The scheme of decoration decided upon by the management was Egyptian than which, it will readily be agreed, there is no style more acceptable to the taste of modern cinema audiences. However, the austerity of that particular epoch is here softened by the introduction of several motifs drawn from Renaissance sources. Note particularly the "Strozzi" lamps at the foot of the Grand Staircase.

The opportunity which this column offers for acknowledging the great debt of gratitude we all owe to the cinema companies for their splendid efforts in offering us all that is BEST in the art of the past, softened and refined by the increased knowledge and capacity of the modern epoch, is one which we gratefully embrace.

The Church Builders

"The proposal of St. Clement's (Steeple) Church to build new halls on the north side of the church is exercising the Works Committee of Dundee Town Council.

"The Lord Provost said that if it was to be connected with the church it might be possible for the architect to work it so that they could still have their scheme for the churches to be surrounded by a sward. In Old St. Paul's case it was to have been quite a separate building.

"In the course of further discussion on the proposal, the plans of which were not before the meeting, Mr. M'Lay said he had seen the plans.

"Treasurer Phin said it was a huge thing with a turret and a spire.

"Convener Thomas Macpherson expressed the opinion that an excrescence built out of the church would be unsound architecturally.

"'It would be very stupid to put up a building and have to get it taken down. It seems to me they want the same treatment as the other one,' said Treasurer Phin.

"Lord Provost Buist: 'Well, I don't know.' . . ."

The Evening Telegraph and Post.

Erratum

In the December issue of THE ARCHITECTURAL REVIEW a printer's error inverted the sense of a passage in the article, "Towards a Rational Æsthetic," by Mr. J. M. Richards. On page 216, a sentence, referring to the functional exhibitionism typified in unnatural emphasis of characteristic forms, read: "The misleading phrase, 'to express its purpose,' is made the excuse for a new, a historical brand of stylization." It should, of course, have read: 'a new ahistorical brand of stylization.'

A Brighter Whitehall?

And all in "the best tradition"

"Mr. Francis A. Taylor, head of the Hackney School of Art, suggested in a paper read before the Royal Society of Arts, that the walls of Whitehall should be 'decorated all the way down with Cabinet Ministers gambolling across to the House of Commons.'

"He has just returned from a tour of the Continent and he pointed out that the outside walls of the Municipal Offices in Zurich are decorated with mosaics representing contemporary figures going about their daily occupations.

"'The technique,' he added, 'is in the best tradition and very effective. I see no reason why we cannot decorate the outside of our public buildings also.'"

Daily Telegraph.

The Modern School

"Dagenham parents are criticising the appearance of a new school which has been opened in the district. They say it looks like a factory.

"The school, which has been named Triptons, and which is situated at Becontree Heath, is a long, two-storeyed building with a flat roof, and was designed by Mr. J. Stuart, the Essex County Council architect.

"When the school was officially opened it was admitted by representatives of the Essex Education Committee that criticisms had been made of the design, but it was also pointed out that the building represented the latest advance in school architecture.

1

2

3

A series of mural paintings, illustrating a number of Æsop's Fables, has just been completed in the hall of the Brockley County School for Boys, Hilly Fields. They are the work of Mr. Cyril Mahoney, assisted by three students from the Royal College of Art, and are executed in a wax medium, painted directly on to the prepared plaster walls. 1, The fable of "The Crow and the Pitcher" is depicted in the spandrel and "The Cock and the Jewel" in the lunette. By Miss Evelyn Dunbar. 2. "The Milkmaid and the Pail of Milk," also by Miss Dunbar. 3. "Fortune and the Boy," by Cyril Mahoney.

" Miss E. Tabor, vice-chairman of the committee, said :

" 'Factories are very fine things, especially when they are turning boys and girls into useful citizens.

" 'It is a modern idea that if a building fulfils its purpose it doesn't matter about the beauty—that will look after itself. This school is absolutely suitable for its purpose. It has plenty of light and plenty of air.' "

Evening Standard.

Have they asked Mr. Henry Ford what he thinks about it, we wonder ?

What happens when the Church "grapples"

" The Bishop of Kensington dedicated what is claimed to be the most modern place of worship of its kind in this country—Holy Angels Church at Cranford, Middlesex. Speaking of the appearance of the church, he likened it to a 'glorified Nissen hut.' 'More modern people,' he said, 'may not feel at home in an old-fashioned church. Your clergy are grappling with a terrific growth of population here, and they are now offering you something very modern in churches.'

" The church will be flood-lighted outside, and there will be concealed lighting inside, with a spotlight on the preacher, who will speak from the altar steps. Hymn numbers are to be displayed on an illuminated board and, instead of bells, the church may be equipped with a hooter. It is intended to have a statue of St. Michael, dressed, probably, as an airman."

The Times.

Correspondence

The Editor,

THE ARCHITECTURAL REVIEW.

SIR,—In the penultimate sentence of his article on my furniture (in the November issue), Mr. Boumphrey says : " Mrs. Joel, it will be observed, does not approve of functionalism." In this, the key to his entire misunderstanding of my work, he is hopelessly wrong—so hopelessly wrong that one almost despairs of saving his soul. For Mr. Boumphrey is a child of the New Movement, the organism of twentieth-century culture—the affected culture of so-called functionalism, that emphasizes the CULT in culture, and incidentally the FUNK in functionalism. It is absurd to say of anyone that he or she " does not believe in " functionalism. Of course any sane man or woman believes in functionalism—believes, in other words, in things that work efficiently, do the things they are meant to do in the best possible way, and if possible do them as cheaply and unobtrusively as possible. That is without doubt what functionalism really means. But what does Mr. Boumphrey make it mean ? One can only conclude from his usage of the word and his references to it that, to him, it means something which, if it works, must work as ostentatiously as possible, and look as much as possible like " something that works." In fact, we imagine that Mr. Boumphrey would delight in those cars which have been described as " sports cars with their guts hanging out "—anything in which he can see the wheels going round and the cranks cranking—almost anything, in fact, that is cranky enough not to be beautiful.

His chief complaint, in spite of his fear that it is " avoiding the issue," seems to be that of expense. In fact, I can but turn on him with a *tu quoque* and accuse him of being less interested in function than in foisting on his " masses " (or " man in the street ") something cheap and nasty, whose only virtue need be that it LOOKS as though it works. He even complains of me that the craftsman " gets the upper hand of the designer." If he were truly concerned with FUNCTION, this would delight him. But he is not truly concerned with it. (I am sure he would not buy a Rolls-Royce, because Rolls-Royces don't have exhaust pipes and superchargers hanging out of them.)

To say that he emphasizes the " funk " in functionalism is more than a horrible pun, for he is patently afraid to desert the prescribed boundaries of the New Movement—he is a propagandist for this creed of functionalism where he ought to be a prophet of things to come.

Painful as it is to me, I have to accuse Mr. Boumphrey of snobbery. He says the " masses are those who take their ideas ready-made instead of working them out for themselves." That is plain nonsense. There is, in fact, no one who takes his ideas more ready-made than the intellectual snob who treasures his membership of some esoteric clique because it saves him the pain of thinking for himself. It is not the clever, " functional " people who write treatises and give lectures who do the real thinking.

but the "men in the street" who come up hard against real problems.

As for Mr. Boumphrey's practical criticism of my work—his annotations to the photographs: he evidently does not consider the *Encyclopædia Britannica* bookcase to be as purely functional as we think it. He forgets the considerable weight of these sixteen heavy books. I should be prepared to contest with any committee of experts that the construction of this bookcase represents a well-balanced combination of solid timber, plywood and veneer, involving the latest practise and the minimum size of materials for its purpose.

We feel that Mr. Boumphrey's whole trouble is explained in his own preface. He has admittedly tried to do what no genuine artist critic or seeker after truth should do. He has set himself principles and tried to find facts to excuse them. Let him rather aim at a more sympathetic knowledge of his facts, and evolve his æsthetic principles therefrom.—Your obedient servant,

BETTY JOEL.

Face-lifting in Hanover Street, Mayfair. "This job was an economic method of giving a modern and striking appearance to a plain elevation." the people who did it.

Mr. Boumphrey's Reply

The Editor,

THE ARCHITECTURAL REVIEW.

SIR,—Exciting though it is for me to read such a long letter about myself, I cannot help feeling that the readers of this REVIEW might have preferred more about the criticism and less about the critic. The trouble is that Mrs. Joel has evidently not read (or remembered) the articles in which the principles I decided to stand by were carefully argued out. The following references may help her to see what she ought to have tackled: "Functionalism"—ARCHITECTURAL REVIEW, April, pp. 175–8, and June, p. 278. She will find no justification there for the views she imputes to me. "Expense"—May, pp. 229–30. Her statement that "if he were truly concerned with function, he would be delighted to see the craftsman getting the upper hand of the designer," shows such a complete miscomprehension of the whole subject that I need do no more than pillory it by repetition.

As to myself, (i) Of course I am a snob: any critic must be. (ii) I am a member of no clique. The New Movement is not esoteric: one of its main justifications is, in fact, its exotericism—as I pointed out (May, p. 229). (iii) It is nice that Mrs. Joel thinks me clever (though she takes off much of the gilt by adding "functional"—evidently a term of abuse with her, in spite of her opening sentence): but need I be any the less a man-in-the-street for that? Actually I have designed and made a great deal of furniture and other things, in wood and metal, with my own hands. With the same I have drained and plumbed (h. and c.), wired, replastered, redecorated and largely reconstructed more than one house. I have even (with the aid of an old kid glove and some glue) mended the "oo" of a monosyllabic cuckoo-clock! In fact, I claim to be a practical man. I was an engineer 20 years before I ever wrote a treatise or gave a lecture. But enough of me—I wish Mrs. Joel had gone into battle against the principles rather than their ignoble enunciator.—Your obedient servant,

GEOFFREY BOUMPHREY.

ARCHITECTURE IN THE SPORTING NORTH

Our Angus (née Forfarshire) correspondent sends us this fine picture of a Mortuary Lodge in Arbroath.

Sevenoaks

The Editor,

THE ARCHITECTURAL REVIEW.

SIR,—I enjoyed Professor Reilly's interesting article on the "Multiple Shop," and endorse most of what he says. But I am sorry to say that he does Messrs. Woolworth a real injustice, and pays to Sevenoaks quite undeserved compliments. The shop that is going up in Sevenoaks High Street will have as its neighbours, not a row of old and venerable façades—though a few remain as silent reproach to the town—but a modern Boots the Chemist, a new red brick Barclays bank, a huge white monstrosity of new shops, a large and rather ugly co-operative store, and, just completed, a new "super"-cinema. In spite of all this, Sevenoaks has made a lot of fuss about its new Woolworth's—but I think in reality its façade will be more pleasing than the rather shabby-looking furniture store that has made room for it. I am sorry to shatter Professor Reilly's dream, but Sevenoaks is now full of New Ideal Homesteads and is served by the Southern Electric.

And all within a mile or two of Knole House.—Your obedient servant,

G. E. DE BURGH WILMOT.

Esholt,

Sevenoaks, Kent.

P.S.—Professor Reilly's reference to the "repressed minds" of *Sevenoaks's* old ladies comes unduly from one who is embarrassed by fat sows! (ALL our clever intellectuals should be forced to live a part of their lives on a REAL *honest to goodness* live-stock farm. England, my England!)

G.E.W.

Professor Reilly says regretfully he is too old now for farm-yard life.—ED.

Trade News and Reviews

By Brian Grant

Neither here nor there

I have been told recently the pathetic story of a man who took unto himself a particularly plain and dowdy wife. Stop me if you have heard it—I believe that is the correct expression. I would hate to start a new year with a chestnut.

• • •

He was a very good looking and popular young man, a most excellent all-round athlete.

And she . . . well, to say that she was only plain would cause the peachiest of peach-tinted mirrors to crack itself with ironical laughter. As our American cousins would say—"Gee, that girl had a dial!"

• • •

But they got married. And in the days, weeks and months that immediately followed the wedding our good looking young athlete was seen nowhere unless accompanied by his blushing but unbeautiful bride. If he went to the club for a game of bridge or billiards, she went too; at the golf club over the week-ends she was his constant companion—just whenever and wherever he went she, like Mary's little lamb, was sure to go.

• • •

Rather naturally his friends grew a little annoyed . . . I mean to say, they couldn't stop him marrying the girl, that was his funeral, but this . . . well, it was more than a bit of a bore, not "cricket" and all that. So one evening at the club they took him to one side very determinedly and lodged their complaint, put it to him as "men to man," so to speak.

The good looking young husband was pained and apologetic. "I'm sorry, you fellows," he said. "It grieves me as much as it does you, but what the deuce am I to do? I just cannot pluck up the courage to kiss her good-bye."

• • •

I can sympathize with this poor fellow in his predicament, but I cannot extend the same hand of sympathy to those foolishly sentimental folk who blindly refuse to "kiss good-bye" to what they regard mistakenly as "tradition."

• • •

Design and the Twentieth Century

I have been looking through the December number of the REVIEW with an extremist die-hard friend of mine. We sat in his library surrounded by his collection of Victorian oddments, the electric light filtered down upon us unsatisfactorily from imitation candles with chunks of imitation grease pretending to trickle down their sides. Apart from that the atmosphere was thoroughly electric.

My friend knew that I had brought the REVIEW round to him in a spirit of friendly challenge and was, I had no doubt, prepared for battle with his fund of well-worn argument and grandfatherly badinage.

• • •

I knew exactly what to expect, having listened to it all before on countless occasions.

"What you young fellows lack is a sense of balance; you are all for 'cutting the roots'; unconscious of any sort of artistic background, you consider yourselves to be a law unto yourselves and refuse even to pay respect to the fine traditions that have

for centuries been the inspiration of the artist, the architect, the craftsman."

• • •

Pray, what exactly, sir, are these roots you reverence so profoundly? Can you not see that the roots themselves have died a natural death, that they cannot properly be cultivated in today's soil. Is it not time, sir, that we recognized the inevitability of the machine and turned our attention seriously and strenuously towards the development of a new aesthetic, a machine aesthetic?

It isn't that we young men, as you will call us (though we are most of us middle-aged now) have lost admiration for the noble architecture and fine craftsmanship of our great-grandfathers—if we were working today in the same materials, with the same tools, in the same handicraft guilds, we would almost certainly be turning out work very similar in character to the finest work of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries.

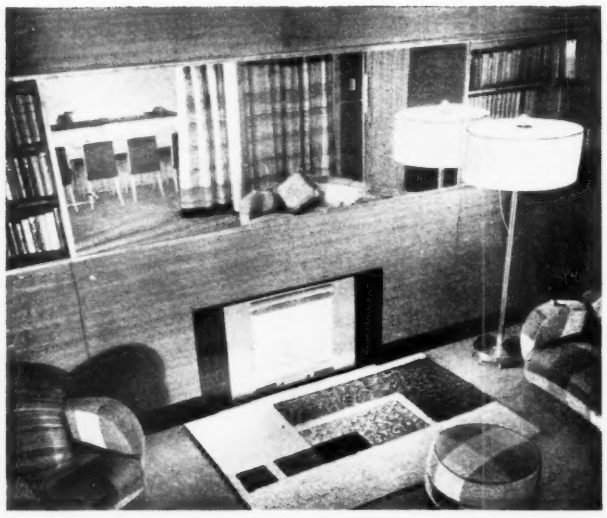
• • •

Our problem is a new problem. The rules that govern manufacture today are a new set of rules formulated by the introduction of new materials and dictated by the development of new and more economical methods of production.

• • •

The machine production of furniture, if we are to use the machine intelligently and progressively, must create an entirely different outlook upon furniture design.

Is it not something approaching insanity, sir, that the twentieth-century electric light fitting should borrow its form from the design originally made for wax candles? You do not ask, sir, that the modern motor car should follow the traditional lines of the private carriage of the early nineteenth century, nor that the motor coach should emulate ye olde stage coach. It is not, as you seem to suspect, that the designer of today is trying to impose his own little whims and fancies upon a suffering world. Out of the chaos that has existed for so long (a chaos brought about by the too sudden advent of changed conditions, new materials



Fireside scene in the twentieth century. Raymond McGrath, architect.

"HIGHPOINT," HIGHGATE — Architects: Messrs. Lubetkin & Tecton

and a sweeping advance in the technique of manufacturing methods), we are very gradually emerging into a rational æsthetic. This ARCHITECTURAL REVIEW that we are looking at, sir, this survey of interior house equipment provides, I think, the first solid glimpse we have yet had of the dawning of this new era.

• • •

It is, as the Editor in his foreword suggests, merely a catalogue; but the publication of such a catalogue has, to my mind, very great significance. As you turn over page after page and examine each photograph individually, you will find much to criticize, but if your criticism is to be constructive and valuable then you must eliminate comparison. It is idle to compare products of machine manufacture with hand-made articles of bygone ceaturies. I have heard students of chirography bemoan the passing of pencraft—penmanship is a lost art, they will tell you. Well, that is true enough. Progress has replaced chirography by typography and the designer of type faces has very wisely refrained from attempting to make the printed word emulate the character and style of perfect handwriting. Not, mark you, because he despised fine pencraft! The printing press and the typewriter are mightier than the pen: and in the factories and workshops throughout the universe machine production has supplanted handicraft in every sphere of manufacture. If you will recognize, sir, that the real problem that confronts the contemporary designer is *not* the adaptation of machine production to the æsthetic standards of handicraft, but the establishment of new æsthetic standards for entirely new methods of production, then, I believe, you will agree that we can take encouragement from what we see in this December number of the REVIEW.

• • •

Through the Letter Box

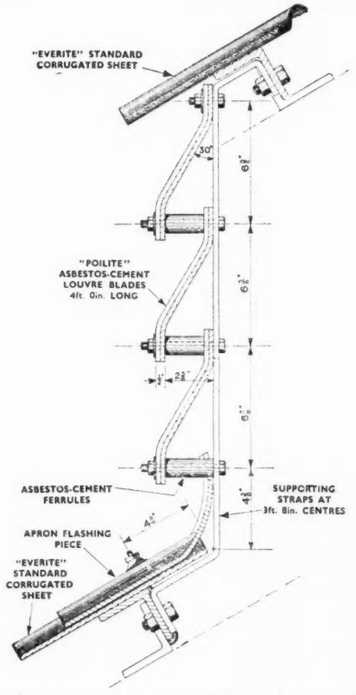
Asbestos Cement

One of the weightiest catalogues that I have received in many months has just reached me from the Turners Asbestos Cement Company—it is an exceedingly comprehensive and well-illustrated survey of the many uses of asbestos cement in modern building construction and decoration. The survey is conveniently subdivided into twenty-six sections, each section dealing adequately and yet concisely with a different application of the material. Requests for copies should be made to Turners Asbestos Cement Company at their Central Office, Trafford Park, Manchester, their London Office in Southwark Street, S.E.1, or any of their Branch Offices.

• • •

The "Expamet" Handbook

Here is a handbook that should be in the possession of every architect, engineer and building contractor; it has been produced with commendable attention to detail and is well charged with information and data of a most practical nature. Copies may be obtained from the Expanded Metal Co., Ltd.,



A louvred vent to a corrugated asbestos-cement roof—drawing reproduced from a catalogue on asbestos cement uses issued by Turners Asbestos Cement Company.

of Burwood House, Caxton Street, London, S.W.1.

• • •

Automatic Coke Firing

Hartley and Sugden, Ltd., of Halifax and London, have just published a new brochure describing their "Gravico" Gravity Feed Coke Storage Automatic Boiler for central warming by hot water and for domestic hot water tap supply. These boilers are made in four series covering the requirements from the smallest to the largest buildings. Their general catalogue covering the complete range of their manufactures is also now available. Application for copies should be addressed to the company's Head Office in Halifax.

• • •

Change of Address

United Water Softeners, Ltd., ask me to announce that they have moved from Aldwych House to more extensive showrooms at 151 Regent Street. One floor of the showroom is being equipped especially for the benefit of architects and engineers and will contain industrial water softening equipment actually in operation.

• • •

Roofing Tiles

The Courtrai-du Nord Tile Company send me a small booklet illustrated in colour, describing the many different types of roofing tiles which they are now producing: the booklet includes a full draft specification, suggestions for laying, and the complete range of standard colours in which the tiles are being manufactured. Copies may be obtained upon application to the company at 161 Borough High Street, S.E.1.

The Buildings Illustrated

Highpoint Flats. Highgate.
Architects: **Lubetkin & Tecton.**

The general contractors were Messrs. J. L. Kier & Co., Ltd. Among the craftsmen and sub-contractors were the following: Permanite, Ltd. (asphalt), Accrington Brick and Tile Co., Ltd. (bricks), Lenscrete, Ltd. (reinforced concrete framed windows), Armstrong Cork Co., Ltd. (cork flooring), G. N. Haden and Sons, Ltd. (central heating, ventilation, plumbing), Duncan Watson (Electrical Engineers), Ltd. (electric wiring and fixtures), Shanks & Co., Ltd. (sanitary fittings), Joseph Sankey and Sons, Ltd. (pressed steel frames and window cills), Nettlefold and Sons, Ltd. (door furniture), Oscar Kanter (door furniture), Williams and Williams, Ltd. (casements), Frigidaire, Ltd. (refrigerators), Gliksten Doors, Ltd. (doors), P. C. Henderson Ltd. (sliding door gear), Thomas and Wilson, Ltd. (plaster), A. Bagnall and Sons, Ltd. (decorators), Sharp Bros. and Knight, Ltd. (joinery), Fairways, Ltd. (floor tiling), Minton Hollins & Co., Ltd. (wall tiling), D. Burkle and Sons, Ltd. (kitchen equipment), Hammond Bros. and Champness, Ltd. (lifts), A. Sanderson and Sons, Ltd. (Japanese grass cloth), Oswald Hollmann, Ltd., Troughton and Young, Ltd. (light fittings), Plan, Ltd. and Finmar, Ltd. (furniture), Ferranti, Ltd. (electric fires), Kirsch & Co. (curtain runways), Redalon Co., Ltd. (Redalon liquid), Gordon Russell, Ltd. (fabrics and curtains).

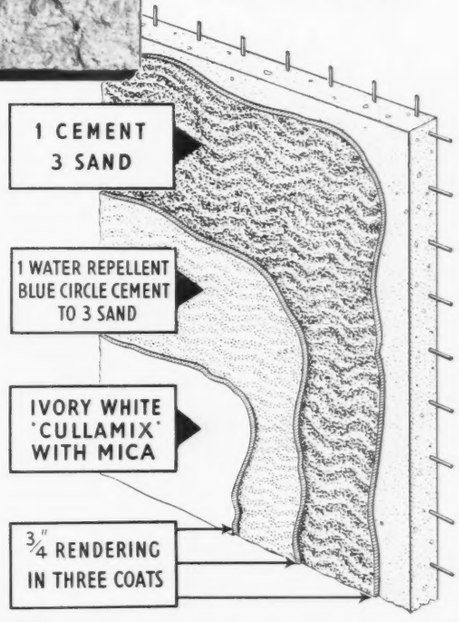
• • •

Pullman Court, Streatham Hill.
Architect: **Frederick Gibberd, A.I.A.A.**

The general contractors were Messrs. Rice and Sons, Ltd. Among the craftsmen and sub-contractors were the following: Helical Bar and Engineering Co., Ltd. (engineers), Albion Iron Co. (London, 1918), Ltd. (sanitary fittings), Anderson Angell & Co., Ltd. (electrical installation), Bell Bros. (Manchester, 1927), Ltd. (water purification plant for swimming pool), Best and Lloyd, Ltd. (electric light fittings), British Vitrolite Co., Ltd. (vitrolite panelling), Walter Cowen, Ltd. (plumbing), County of London Electric Supply Co., Ltd. (lighting, heating and power installations), Cellulin Flooring Co. (flooring), C. and T. Painters, Ltd. (external and internal decoration), W. H. Gaze and Sons, Ltd. (lay-out of grounds), Griffiths Bros. & Co. (London), Ltd. (paint), Kandya, Ltd. (wardrobe and cupboard fitments), James Latham, Ltd. (doors), Marryat and Scott, Ltd. (lifts), Norris Warming Co., Ltd. (heating and hot water installation), Osgood & Co. (tiling), Pyrene Co., Ltd. (fire appliances), Pilkington Bros., Ltd.

Scraped Texture —

THE EXTERNAL FACING OF THE **BEXHILL** PAVILION



'CULLAMIX' rendering is universally popular for imparting colour and texture to buildings of all types.

For the Bexhill Municipal Pavilion (Architects: Erich Mendelssohn and Serge Chermayeff, F.R.I.B.A.), ivory white 'Cullamix,' finished in scraped texture, has been applied to the external 'curtain' walls of reinforced concrete, and has provided a finish appropriate in every respect to the design of the building.

Coloured concrete is indeed a feature; in addition to its use for the external decorative scheme, over 3,000 yards of paving made with 'Colorcrete' have been laid on roof and terraces; these tiles are bonded with sunk joints of Earle's 'Mastic.'

'Cullamix'

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House at Little Winch. Chipperfield Common. Herts.
Architect : **E. Maxwell Fry.**

The general contractors were Messrs. E. J. Waterhouse and Sons, Ltd., Chipperfield. Among the craftsmen and sub-contractors were the following : West London Brick Co. (bricks), Wm. Briggs and Son (asphalt), Pilkington Bros., Ltd. (patent glazing), Turner's Asbestos Cement Co. (roof insulaton and "Decolite" flooring), Mortimer Gall Co., Ltd. (central heating and wiring), Unity Heating Ltd. (electric tubular heaters and water heaters), Imperial Chemical Industries, Ltd. (Pioneer building blocks), Cozy Stove Co., Ltd. (grates), General Electric Co., Ltd., Hailwood and Ackroyd, Ltd., Troughton and Young, Ltd., Ascog, Ltd. and Merchant Adventurers of London, Ltd. (electric light fixtures), Shanks and Co., Ltd. (sanitary fittings), Oscar Kanter and Baldwins (Birmingham) Ltd. (door furniture), Williams and Williams, Ltd. (casements), General Post Office (telephones), Hilmor, Ltd. (tubular steel stair rail), Venesta, Ltd. (doors), Fairways, Ltd. (tiling), St. James Tile Co., Ltd. (tiling, fire surrounds), Hunter and Hyland, Ltd. (curtain railway).

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House at Queensmere Road. Wimbledon.
Architect : **E. Maxwell Fry.**

The general contractors were H. E. Wensell, Ltd. Among the craftsmen and sub-contractors were the following : Limmer and Trinidad Lake Asphalt Co., Ltd. (asphalt), London Brick Co. and Forders, Ltd. (bricks), Tentest Fibre Board Co., Ltd. (roof insulation), Imperial Chemical Industries, Ltd. (Pioneer plaster blocks), British Vitrolite Co., Ltd. (patent glazing), White Bays and White, Ltd. (central heating), Bratt Colbran & Co., Ltd. (grates), Davis Gas Stove Co., Ltd. (gas fires), Wandsworth Gas Co. (gas fittings), Merchant Adventurers of London, Ltd., Ascog, Ltd. and Oscar Kanter (electric light fixtures), Baldwins (Birmingham), Ltd. (sanitary fittings and ironmongery), Hilmor, Ltd. (door furniture), James Couper & Co., Ltd. (steel casements), Keene's (plaster), Allen and Greaves (metalwork-railings), British Aluminium Co., Ltd. (aluminium picture rails), Evos Doorways, Ltd. (joinery).

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House at White Lodge. Guildford Road. Bagshot.
Architect : **E. Maxwell Fry.**

The general contractors were Messrs. G. Church & Co. Among the craftsmen and sub-contractors were the following : Imperial Chemical Industries, Ltd. (Pioneer plaster partitions), Ronuk, Ltd. (stained floors), Bratt Colbran & Co., Ltd. (grates), Davis Gas Stove Co., Ltd. (gas fires), Arthur Cozens (electric wiring and heating), Merchant Adventurers of London, Ltd., Best and Lloyd, Ltd., Troughton and Young, Ltd., General Electric Co., Ltd. and Ascog, Ltd. (electric light fixtures), Oscar Kanter (Wehag light fittings), Baldwins (Birmingham), Ltd. (sanitary fittings, door and window furniture), Hilmor, Ltd. (door furniture and bell pushes), Williams and Williams, Ltd. (casements), General Post Office (telephones), Fairways, Ltd. (tiling), B. Cohen and Sons, Ltd. (furniture, curtains, etc.), Hunter and Hyland Ltd. (curtain railway).