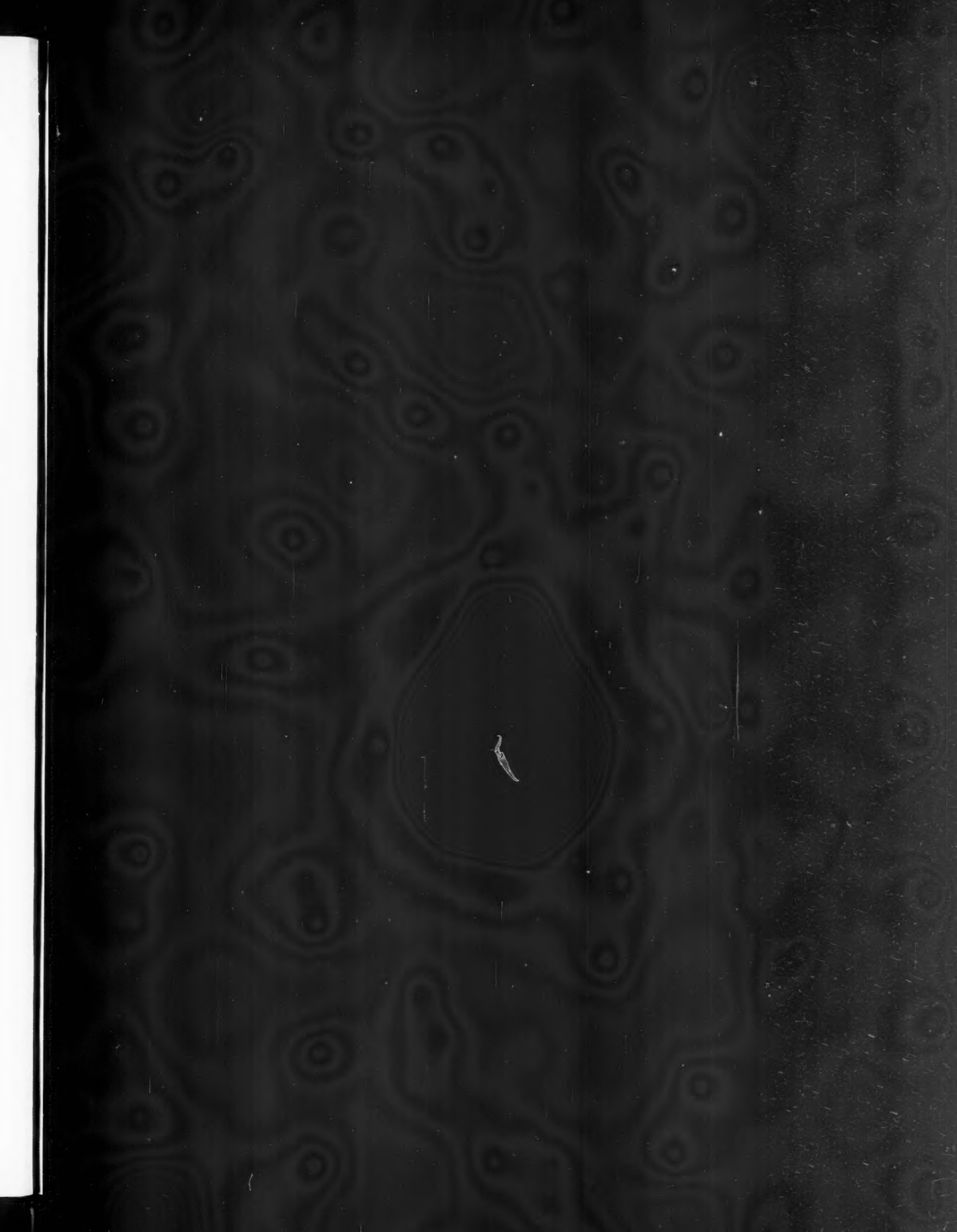
THE ARCHITECTURAL REVIEW

A Magazine of Architecture & Decoration

Two Shillings and Sixpence Net

Vol. XCII July 1942 No. 547



The Architectural Review

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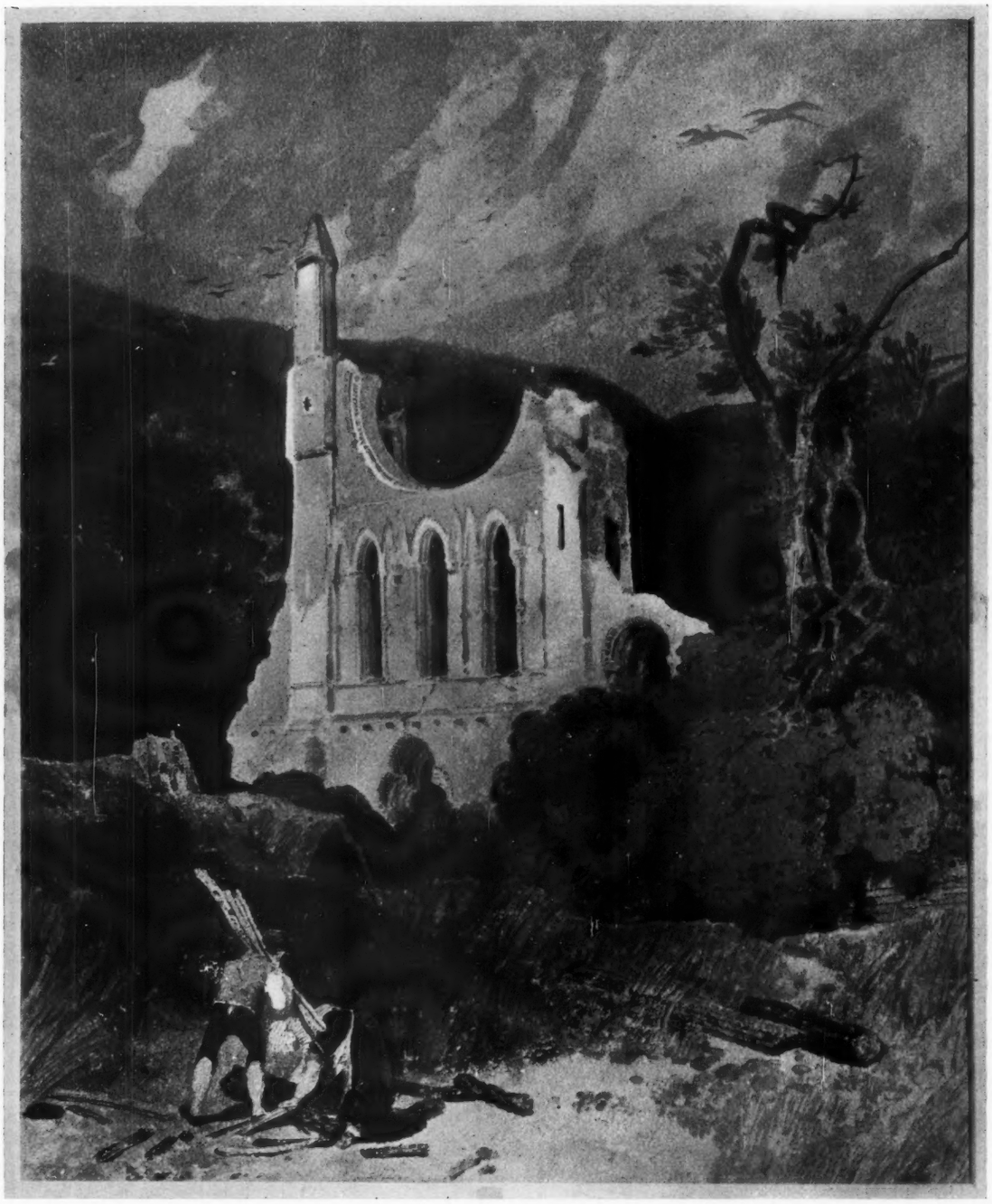
SUBSCRIPTION RATES: United Kingdom, £1 5s. 0d. per annum, post free. U.S.A., $3 per annum, post free. Elsewhere abroad, £1 5s. 0d. per annum, post free. An index is issued every six months, covering the period January to June, and July to December, and can be obtained without charge on application to the publishers:

THE ARCHITECTURAL PRESS,
45, The Avenue, Cheam, Surrey
Telephone: Vigilant 0087

Vol. XCII *No. 547*



Cotman's favourite subjects were architectural ones, especially ruins or mouldering churches in the rank settings the still unrestored Gothic architecture enjoyed in his time. He is therefore an artist who should be of exceptional interest to architects. He had the early nineteenth century romantic feeling for ruins as objects in the landscape, and also a unique eye for the pictorial qualities of buildings themselves—not the sophisticated associative qualities belonging to their architectural style of a building, but those inherent in the fabric itself, enriched by time and weather. Cotman died a hundred years ago this month, and his centenary is observed by an article by John Piper, beginning on page 9 of this issue.

B Y L A N D A B B E Y By John Sell Cotman

The End of Reconstruction

IF the average person is inclined to take, just now, a rather sceptical view of the Post-War Reconstruction activities which are so prominent a feature of the contemporary scene, it is not because our cities do not really need reconstructing, nor because the ideals on which these activities are founded are unworthy ones; it is because too much emphasis on the post-war nature of the tasks reconstruction sets itself, gives it an unreal character. It does more—it distracts attention from the *immediate* reconstruction tasks on which the potential usefulness of a long-term programme depends. The people who indulge in post-war planning of the more optimistic kind, only need to look at history to learn that agreement about the future on the part of however many enlightened individuals does nothing whatever to bring it nearer; that Utopias have a disappointing habit of remaining exactly the same distance ahead. They only need, for example, to learn obvious lessons from the experience of reconstruction in the last war,* when the theoretical discussion of it took almost exactly the same course as it has taken during the past year or so, employing exactly the same terms and catch-phrases, and resulting in such uncivilized horrors as Peacehaven, which was named without intentional irony after the glorious peace of 1918.

That is the negative case against the vaguely hopeful kind of post-war planning typical of the present time. What kind of attitude represents a positive alternative? For to condemn Utopianism and wishful thinking is not to say that no thought should be taken for the future. There is obviously need for forethought and for laying down standards of design more closely related to human needs; above all there is need for a clear conception of the sort of world we are fighting for. But a vision of the future implies determination to achieve it, something more explicit than the mere wish to see it come to pass. It needs the kind of determination that translates itself into immediate action.

That is the central point of these remarks: that the future grows out of the present and a more distant future can only be envisaged in terms of the conditions that are going to make it possible. These conditions have to be determined by our action now. In short, there can be no hard-and-fast line between war-time and a post-war period suddenly packed with opportunities. Reconstruction, if it is to lead to anything, must begin here and now—in war-time and in relation to war-time needs. The commonest argument for the other point of view is that war-time is a time of emergency and that creative planning will not get its chance till the emergency is over. But that is a delusion. The present is always an emergency of one kind or another. There is always the temptation to postpone immediate action in favour of preparation for action at a future time when it looks as though everything will be easier. But—it cannot be too often repeated—what we are in a position to do then depends on what we do now.

What does that mean stated in terms of 1942? It means that a large proportion of the energy and goodwill that is being spent in discussing plans that are in danger of always remaining *future* plans should be applied to dealing, with just as much vision and intelligence, with the urgent problems of to-day. This does not mean shutting our eyes to the future in order to concentrate on work of ephemeral importance. For despite the apparently profound disparity between war-time and peace-time, the prerequisites of good and socially useful planning in either circumstance are the same. They are vision, a broad conception of the social responsibility of planning, a habit of intelligent forethought, a downright refusal to be obstructed by selfish interest or mere conservatism. All these are badly needed now, to help prosecute the war efficiently and effectively, to increase production, to maintain morale—which latter is far more affected by the consciousness of muddle and purposelessness than by hardships or military reverses. If we can achieve them now we shall have made the biggest step—and the most essential one—towards genuine reconstruction in the post-war period, a far more important step than the mere getting out of plans, which, given this initial advance, is only a matter of the expert application of available means to ascertainable needs. It may be said that we must prepare the ground for after the war by passing much-needed planning legislation in advance, but the reply to that is that if we first achieve the state of grace just described (the habit of bold and democratic forethought), there will be no difficulty about putting through this kind of legislation as we need it, while if we do not we shall never reach the goal of good planning with or without the legislation.

The answer to the question, what is it that needs doing now? is that there are plenty of urgent problems to which our planning energies, our vision and goodwill can be applied: the social problems aroused by evacuation—and still half unsolved—the provision of nursery schools for war-workers' children, the organization of war-time health and education services, the provision of a civilized environment for the temporarily brought-together populations of hostels, barracks and new industrial centres. These are all, in every sense, samples of the sort of problems post-war planning will have to tackle. They need the same qualities that effective democratic planning will always need—courage, vision, efficient organization, a habit of mind that allows scientific use to be made of actual resources, willingness to be ruthless in suppressing individual interests if these conflict with the interests of the public—and here they are, waiting for us to try our hand at them.*

A special issue of THE ARCHITECTURAL REVIEW, published a year ago, introduced the subject of Reconstruction by defining this war as "inevitable change passing through one of its intense (and most unpleasant)

* The 1917-18 reconstruction history was discussed in THE ARCHITECTURAL REVIEW for July, 1941.

* To-day's newspapers contain a striking instance, though it does not happen to be an architectural one. While the post-war planners are busy with their schemes, which include the reconstruction of the coal industry, the increase of coal production and its more efficient distribution is an urgent topic of the moment. It is *now* that the reconstruction is wanted—not as part of a post-war programme—and, what is more, there will never be a stronger case than there is now (or a more united opposition to selfish interests) for putting into practice the wholesale kind of reconstruction the post-war planners are aiming at.

phases." It went on to say that, " we should not think of this war as something that can be isolated, an interlude which will come to an end sooner or later, after which we shall be back again in peace-time. The days when war was an interval between periods of peace—even the days when peace was the interval between wars—have gone. In due course we shall presumably again be, in a sense, at peace, but we shall not be *back again* at peace. We shall be living in a world as different in its own way from the world before the war as our present war-time world is. . . . Architecture cannot go into cold storage or it runs the risk of staying there for good. Architecture must become even more active in order to keep pace with the revolutionary changes that surround it. . . . One task of architecture to-day, as of everything else, is to admit at once that the old days have gone for good and to keep in touch with the new days, refusing at all costs to allow our own war, revolution, violent upheaval of civilization or whatever we care to call it, to cut architecture adrift from the realities on which it depends —adrift into a new eclectic age in which architecture is a respected professional mystery but not an essential part of the machinery of civilization."

The series of Reconstruction Supplements that these words introduced were designed to place before the public the architectural issues raised by a sudden leap forward in the tempo of sociological change, and particularly to take advantage of the sudden willingness of the public to take an interest in planning possibilities, a willingness that the destruction of cities by bombing had created in place of the old inertia by which the very idea of planning had been stifled for so long. This public interest in post-war opportunities has had its effect. Reconstruction has come to stay, and the public insistence that it is fighting this war both for something better and something different is reinforced by the politicians. Recent speeches by Mr. Eden, Sir Stafford Cripps and others make it quite clear that a reconstructed world is in their minds when the future is being discussed.

This fact being established means, paradoxically enough, that Reconstruction as a self-contained activity can now come to an end. It is now accepted that there are not *present* problems and, in addition, *reconstruction* problems. There are only urgent planning and architectural problems, needing application of the kind of intelligence on which we are also counting to ensure a future in accordance with planners' dreams and the politicians' promises : one that combines practical sense with long-term vision.

The REVIEW'S Reconstruction Supplements have thus served their purpose. At this new stage, which has been brought about by the universal acceptance of reconstruction as the form the future is going to take, to perpetuate the distinction between the REVIEW itself and a Supplement dealing with reconstruction would be to perpetuate a now out-of-date distinction between present and future purposes. It would, indeed, be doing more : it would be depriving the everyday contents of the REVIEW of its ability to look at the past and present in relation to future possibilities. It is a commonplace that the continuity of the process represented by history is what gives it vitality and interest. To put the future in a category by itself is to devitalize our interest in past and present.

" Post-War Reconstruction " has had a good run for its money. It is now the business of all of us, the struggle to establish the idea of reconstruction having been won, to direct our energies on to present problems, and out of the solution of these to manufacture a world in which the plans foreseen under the tutelage of "Reconstruction" propaganda now ending can actually be put into operation.

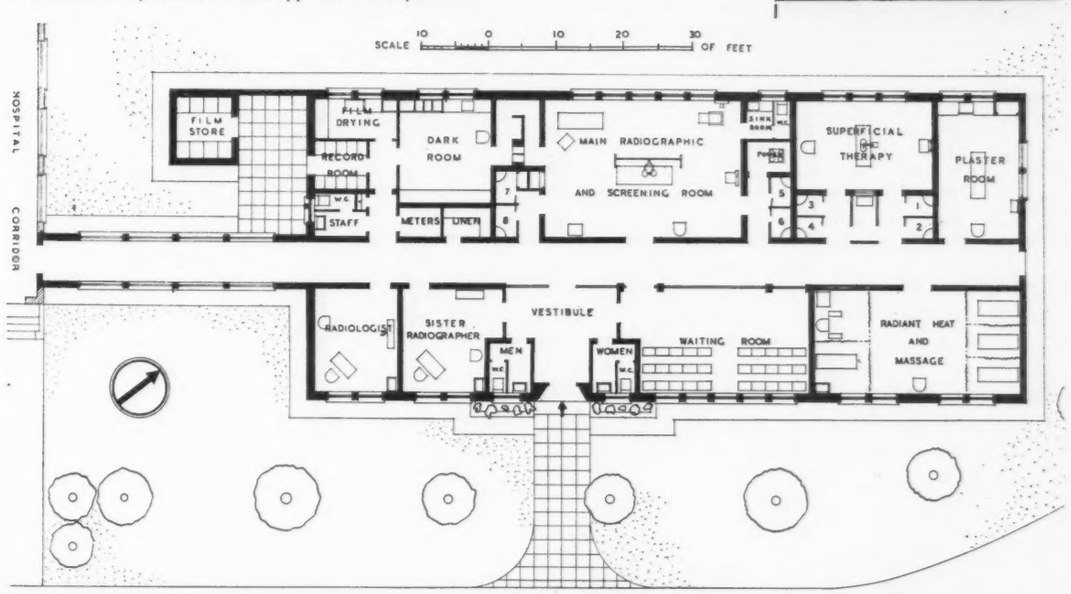
THE EDITOR

HOSPITAL BUILDINGS

D. A. GOLDFINCH

SITE—This is a new X-ray department added to the Borough General Hospital at Southampton. It is placed on the north-east side of the existing hospital, and connected with it by a corridor. The existing hospital corridor is on the left-hand side of the plan below.

PLANNING—Outpatients reach the new department through the central entrance approach from a service road opposite the Nurses' Home annexe. Both outpatients and patients from the hospital itself share a waiting-room, seating thirty, placed alongside this entrance and separated by a glass screen from the central corridor, either side of which the X-ray and actinotherapy rooms are planned.



1, the building from the service road. 2, a close-up of the entrance front showing the corridor connecting the new building with the hospital on the left.

2

HOSPITAL BUILDINGS

D. A. GOLDFINCH

CONSTRUCTION AND MATERIALS —The roof, which has been designed as a future first floor, is of fire-resisting hollow concrete construction. The walls of the corridors, changing cubicles and dark room have a special cold glaze finish ; elsewhere the walls are plastered and finished in flat enamel. Floors, generally, are in rigid rubber tiles, having an asbestos cement core, those of the X-ray rooms, sister-radiographer's office and radiologist's consulting room are strip boarded in white American oak, and the lavatories, film drying room and dark room are floored in encaustic tiles.

EQUIPMENT — Electrically operated extract fans ensure efficient ventilation by means of a duct over the central service corridor, while the building is heated by thermostatically controlled electric tubular heaters fixed in front of the low level fresh air inlets. The diagnostic equipment of the main radiographic and screening room is of the very latest type, incorporating a high tension generator having an output of 500 milliamperes at 100,000 volts. The accessory equipment consists of a special X-ray table which can be used in the vertical or horizontal, or at any intermediate, position. The changing of position is effected by an electrical motor drive. Two X-ray tubes are used, one of which is of very special design, incorporating a rotating anode which permits the use of the highest power for high speed radiography. In addition, there are two smaller units, one of which is designed entirely for dental X-ray examination. The second is intended for the examination of the smaller parts of the body. Being mobile, it will also be available for X-ray examinations in the wards or operating theatres.

3, the waiting-room, which has tubular chairs, 50 per cent. painted orange and 50 per cent. dark green, these colours corresponding to the colours of the patients' treatment record cards for X-ray or actinotherapy respectively. This system enables the Sister to see at a glance the proportion of patients awaiting either treatment. 4, a detail of the main entrance. 5, the dark room, which communicates with the main radiographic room by means of a light lock.

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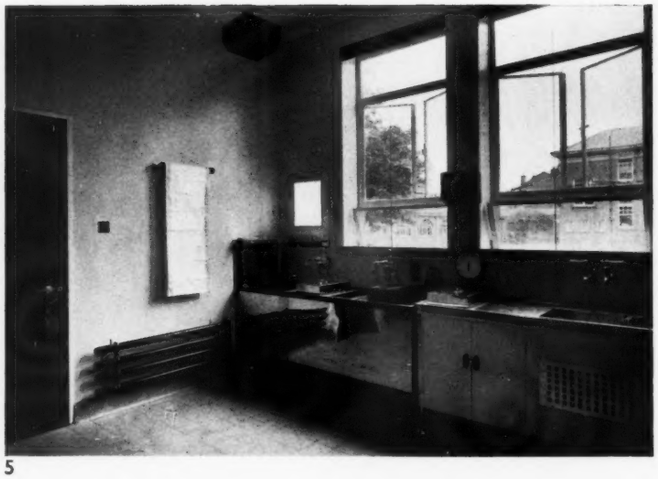

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INFORMATION CENTRE

MATTHEWS AND SON

SITE—Islington, London. Erected by the Borough Council as an Administrative Centre and Information Bureau, and incorporating in one building all the services provided for persons suffering as the result of air raids. This avoids persons requiring help having to visit different offices.

PLANNING — It was desired that the accommodation should be able to deal with a large number of inquiries as the result of a serious air raid, and also, without waste, to deal with the limited number likely to be made on other occasions. The large central reception hall is therefore planned symmetrically on the longer axis, to enable either the whole or one-

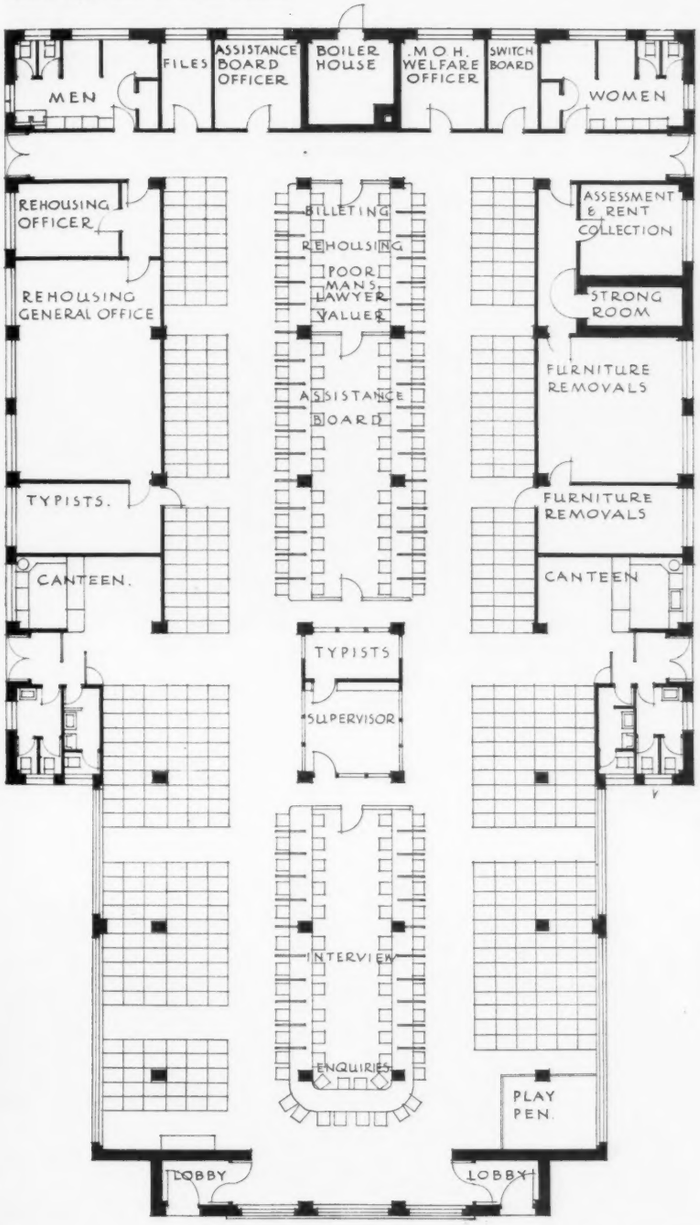
1, the street front showing the double entrance and the clerestory lighting of the main hall above the entrance lobby.

1

half of the seating and inquiry accommodation to be used. After reception and recording at the inquiries counter adjacent to the entrance, applicants will be directed to counters for interviews, and thence to departments where their special requirements are dealt with. Seating for 450 persons awaiting or receiving attention is provided. There are two small canteens, a play-pen for children and lavatories.

CONSTRUCTION—The building is designed to afford the same protection against air raids as is required for public shelters. The main structure is a reinforced concrete frame designed for a superimposed load of 200 lb. per sq. ft. and a lateral load on the frame of 200 lb. per lineal ft. The external walls are built as panels between the columns 1 ft. 1½ in. thick, with rustic flettons externally and sand-lime bricks internally. The columns are supported by mass concrete foundations and were cast *in situ* in 4½ in. brick casings. The external walls are carried on reinforced concrete ground beams spanning between the columns, the beams being cast *in situ* with 4½ in. brickwork constructed with salvage bricks as formwork. The roof slab, which has a minimum thickness of 5 in., was cast *in situ* on metal trough shuttering, timber being used only for beam casings and the eaves projections. The external lights are constructed with heavy lenses in reinforced concrete frames so as to be blast-resisting. The internal divisions are 4½ in. brickwork built off the site concrete.

INTERNAL FINISHES—The floor to the central hall is finished in granolithic ; the floors in the offices and between the counters is covered with ¼ in. linoleum on a cement screed. The internal surfaces to walls and ceilings are finished with a silicate paint. In the central hall the walls are dove grey, ceiling pale terra-cotta, curtains and linoleum terra-cotta, linoleum to counter tops royal blue, and the doors royal blue in white frames.



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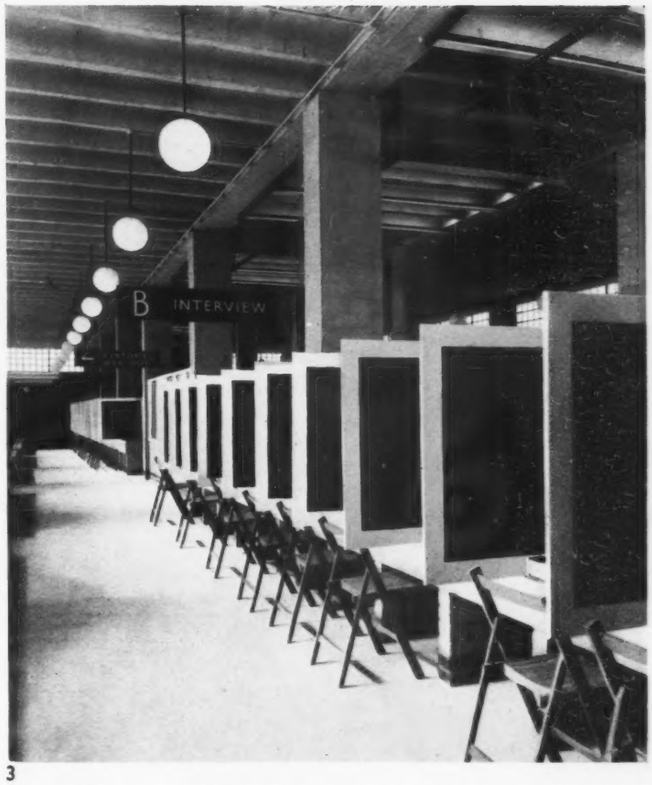

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2, the enquiry counter with, in the background, one of the two entrances and the children's play-pen. 3, one of the main interview counters, showing the screens that give privacy to each individual. The walls are grey, ceilings pale terra-cotta and screens royal blue with white frames.

MATTHEWS AND SON

INFORMATION CENTRE

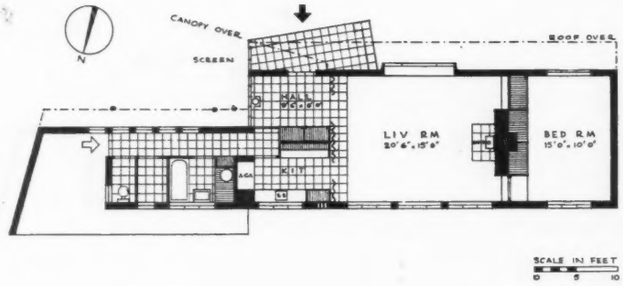
HOUSE

KENNETH BAYES

SITE—Shanagarry, Co. Cork, Ireland. The site has a road on the north side and the sea on the south. The big window of the living-room is focused on a lighthouse and island, the focal point of the bay.

PLANNING—The origin of the plan is the traditional Irish cottage—one large general living-room with a fireplace at one end and a bedroom beyond. This has been elaborated by the subdivision of the living space into three separate but openly planned units—living-room, hall and kitchen—and by the addition of a "utilities" block at one end. The house is for two people only and was required to be of minimum size and to be run without domestic help, but added accommodation is planned for a later date in the form of a bedroom wing of two storeys projecting to the south, at the east end of the passage. The present bedroom will then be used as a study. The three elements of the plan—living, sleeping and utilities—are expressed by the different roof heights, the two smaller units buttressing the main central one. The one-way sloping roofs form low eaves on the road side and provide an unpretentious and unexciting elevation, in contrast to that on the south, where the wide, coloured soffits, threaded with white rafters, point up and out to sea, shading the big window from the hottest summer sun.

CONSTRUCTION AND MATERIALS—Walls are of 9 in. concrete blocks, laid in lime-mortar and plastered inside and out. Roofs are of timber, boarded and insulated and finished with grey corrugated asbestos cement sheeting. Windows are steel, in Columbian pine frames, except the large south window, which has a reinforced concrete frame.



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1, the exterior from the north. 2, the kitchen. 3, a detail of the south front, with the large living-room window. The walls are limewashed, picked out with bright colours. 4, the living-room, with sea-pebble wall, whitened, as background to stove. In the interior the sloping roofs and rafters are visible in all rooms, except in the hall and kitchen, where low, flat ceilings contrast with the lofty living-room and give tank and storage space above. Photographs are by J. B. Haynes.

JOHN SELL COTMAN, 1782-1842

On the twenty-fourth of this month, a hundred years ago, Cotman died. After a period of being out of fashion, his work is once more being appreciated for its real qualities, so the following article and the summary of his career and personality that accompanies it are more than a token recognition of his centenary. They are a tribute to an artist whose work has now passed the test all art has to undergo, its capability of emerging with its value enhanced from any period of obscurity into which the cycle of taste may plunge it. The architectural significance of Cotman's work needs no emphasis, since his achievement is founded on what he saw in old buildings. Above, 1, *is "Crosby Hall," a water-colour. The photographs of pictures illustrating this article are reproduced by courtesy of the Tate Gallery, Walker's Galleries* (*Nos.* 1, 2, 6, 10) *and Agnew's Gallery* (*Frontispiece, and No.* 8). *The etchings are from the* Antiquities of Norfolk.

By John Piper

1782. Born at Norwich, May 16. Father a silk mercer; not prosperous.

1794, c. Headmaster of Norwich Grammar School finds a realistic black cat cut out of cardboard on his desk. Says, "I know who is the only boy who could have done this."

1798. London. Assistant at Ackermann's Repository of Arts: colouring aquatints and transparencies. "London, with all its fog and smoke, is the only air for an artist to breathe in."

1799. Working for Dr. Monro (as Girtin and Turner did), copying drawings.

1800. Picturesque tour in Wales.

1801. First etching. Visited Devon and Somerset. Became one of "The Brothers"—pre-Pre-Raphaelite drawing society, of which Girtin was a member. A rule: "After ten o'clock all drawing shall cease, when simple fare shall be produced with Ale and Porter."

1802. Drawings for copying by smart misses, sold in print shop where he lived. Second tour in Wales.

IN the period "since Cézanne" Cotman has not had his due from intelligent critics. His virtues as an artist were directly opposed to those virtues of the old masters that the genius of Cézanne had indicated for emulation. Cotman was a romantic in the English tradition, and his virtues seemed like undesirable "overtones" to the serious Post-Impressionist, whose concern was with structure; with weight, volume and recession. What was wanted, Cézanne had said, was "to do Poussin all over again from nature," and to "make of Impressionism something solid and durable, like the old masters." The main part of this design has been completed, and the tide of genuine romanticism begins to wash in again, and with it come Blake, Palmer and the pre-Raphaelites and, at a respectable distance, Cotman. And so by chance, on the centenary of his death, he is almost fashionable again.

To argue the case for Cotman with a Post-Impressionist is to argue with an enemy; and, when it is Roger Fry, a dangerous enemy. In *Reflections on British Painting* (1934) he stated the case against Cotman with all his usual skill. "... I think Cotman's a very overrated reputation. Unlike Crome, he was, I think, the slave of his water-colour technique, instead of its master. ... Almost all his pictures look as though they might have been planned for a pupil to copy, so skilfully has he found conventions for tree masses, for sky and water, of such elementary simplicity that they can be stated without difficulty in that exacting medium.

"... Always he is the slave of his medium, always he will risk nothing that might imperil the charm and decorative amenity of his surface, and for that end, too, colour must be kept in a narrow range of safe and irreproachable harmonies. And nearly always it is only scenic effectiveness that he looks for in nature, although the obviousness and vulgarity of that reaction is covered up with so much taste and an air of almost archaic austerity that I recognise how scandalous such a criticism must sound. It is essentially the same thing with Cotman as with some of our modern archaistic sculpture which finds such a warm welcome from a certain type of cultured people who fail to see its underlying sentimental vulgarity."

The few years that have passed since this was written have given words like "underlying sentimental vulgarity" a different meaning, and it is more respectable than it was to recognise in Cotman a distant kindred spirit. He came at the end of the period of full romantic energy and free expression, which tolerated (though it did not encourage) the existence of a Blake, and he lived to see the desirable "vulgarity" of romantic art swamped by the machinery of early Victorianism; and he lived to see flooding in the baser vulgarity of shams, the idealisation of respectability and the machine. His "underlying sentimental vulgarity"—that is his love of ruins, his urge to find a simple, public method of expression, his natural bent for the old and the picturesque—are things that do not damn him for us as they damned him in the æsthetic view of the nineteen-twenties.

There is less chance of visiting beauty spots in 1942 than there was before the days of trains and

1803. Yorkshire. First patron—Cholmeley. Drawings at Rievaulx of "chapels that had been turned into cow byres."
Richmond-Durham. First view of the Greta. Kirkstall. Harewood. Duncombe Park. Byland.

1804. Met life-long patron, Dawson Turner, banker-antiquary of Gt. Yarmouth. "Peterborough is too perfect for my pencil. Every architect can make a better Drawing from that than I can."
(Of Ely): "Very superior to Peterborough as to grotesque beauty. I saw it during my getting completely wet, though to great advantage—lighted up by the last rays of the sun and a violent storm passing over. The lightning seemed to dart immediately upon the Roof."

1805. Third visit to Cholmeleys at Brandsby. Series of water-colours on the Greta and at Castle Howard—*Greta Bridge*, *Sarcophagus in a Park*, etc. These, "coloured from nature," did *not* move Dawson Turner. "How unsuccessful a winter."

1806. Return to Norwich. "I know I have naturally many bad qualities—doing anything I dislike for one, keeping accounts for another."

1807. First oil paintings.

1809. Married Ann Miles at Felbrigg. Drawing master.

1810. Pictures not selling. Serious attention to etching.

1812. "Ever since I have seen the splendid collection of Etchings by Piranesi I have hardly thought of anything else." Went (apprehensively) to live at Gt. Yarmouth, as antiquarian draughtsman to Dawson Turner, and drawing master to his family. "Fever fits very severe."

1817. July 4. *Promises, promises*—and so slipt this day away. . . . I feel oppressed with the magnitude of my undertakings—they weigh me down—and to reflect what I have still to see and do.
Aug. 3. "Sketched two views, was observed and prevented continuing. . . ."
First tour in Normandy, for Dawson Turner. "Mr. Cotman very much regrets that it was not in his power to do this porch the justice that it deserves, in consequence of the continual interruptions to which he was exposed by the lower class of the inhabitants."
"The *curious* churches are not so remarkable as I supposed they would be. I have not yet seen one so fine or so curious as our Castle Rising Church."
"The curious churches here are not beautiful, and the beautiful ones are not considered curious."
"My ascent to my chamber was through every stench in Nature."
"To be alone in a strange country is truly unpleasant."
"Business may take me to France again, but never, oh! never, shall I be led there by pleasure."

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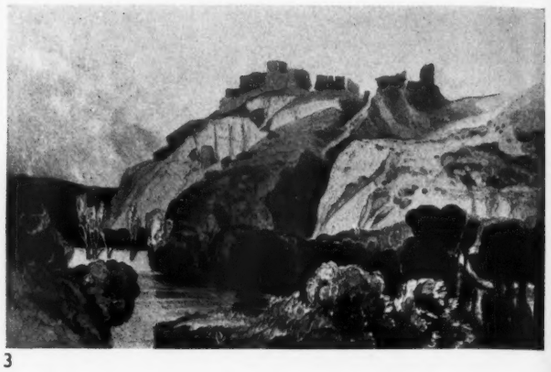

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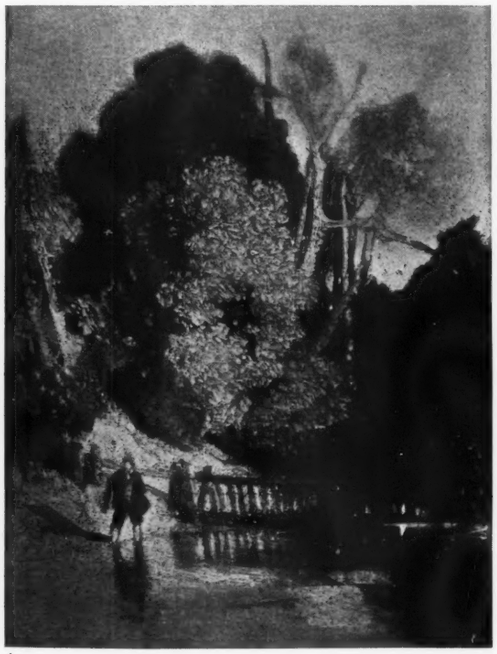

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2, *Westgate, Yarmouth*; 3, *Château Gaillard, Normandy*; 4, *Crowland Abbey*; 5, *Dropgate*. 2, 3, 5, *water-colours*. 4, *oil*. 3, 4, *and* 5 *by courtesy of the Tate Gallery*.

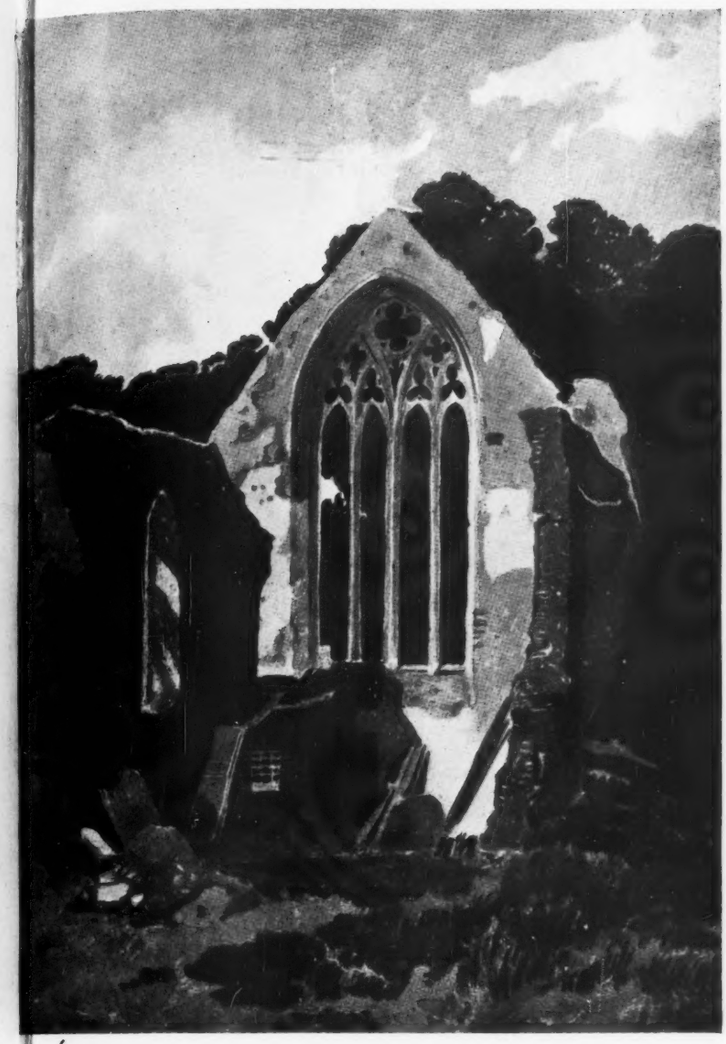
[Continued from page 9]

chars-à-bancs, and we can envy Cotman's vulgar enthusiasm when he wrote in 1811: "Lynn will be my route: Castle Rising and Castle Acre my chief objects. But should I hear of anything either to the lee or to the windward of me, I shall crowd all sail. Happy shall I be should I make a prize."

He was employed by a tyrant of an antiquarian—Dawson Turner—but he never lost his enthusiasm for ruins and beauty spots; which were not then, it is true, wilting under the gaze of generations of tourists and which had a more natural grace in decay than they have to-day in the hands of the Office of Works, among oversmooth lawns and within constricting fences with turnstiles. He never lost his admirable tourist's enthusiasm, legacy of William Gilpin and the picturesque tourists—not even in Normandy, where all the roads shook his body till he ached, where all the beds had fleas and the smells in all the passage-ways demanded that he should hold his nose. "Another 135 drawings . . ." Such was his enviable vulgarity.

Many of his pictures *were* planned for pupils to copy. Such pictures, besides being useful as models for study, provided his substitute for public exhibition. Cotman was over-conscious of being provincial, conscious that he "did not mix with the first minds of the age," jealous of Turner, jealous of the financially successful artists of his generation. He felt himself to be working away in a corner, unrecognised—which he was—and there was not enough self-reliance, though there is some pride, in his groaning letters. Constable said "my limited and abstracted art is to be found in every lane and under every hedge"—a conscious mis-statement for a stupid audience. There must have been times, however, when Cotman really believed such things of *his* art. He tried to find the public. He wanted passionately to be a success; to paint large oils; to move in high-art society in London. As second or third best he lived above his income in a too-big house in Norwich.

His drawings are expressed in a "public" way—his conventions are, as Roger Fry says, of "elementary simplicity"—but this simplicity does not reduce them to decoration; and he invented a formal language in which every particular at least has its due, and in which on occasions of real inspiration (not rare with Cotman) the expression can develop such force and conciseness that it grows into a rich symbolism. This, when it happens, is true romanticism; unlike the



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6, *Walsingham Priory, Norfolk (water-colour); 7, Haddiscoe, near Lowestoft, one of the many etchings of Norfolk churches done for Dawson Turner, Cotman's life-long patron.*

general statement or the platitude of the average antiquarian and topographical draughtsman. This stock of "conventions" that Cotman used was manageable enough to be called at least a respectable formal language. The drawings of Norfolk and Normandy churches are never mere decoration (though the etchings sometimes are)—they are portraits of architectural characters, done with passion and without exaggeration. His views of towns—Norwich, Dieppe, Cherbourg—have the character of place as well as a sense of particular grandeur. The pattern of lights and darks in a sea-piece such as the *Dismasted Brig*, a cliff scene such as *The Needles*, or an architectural interior such as *Crosby Hall*, have a distinction and a descriptive power that would, in any case, cancel out the slur implied in "decorative."

The texture of a wall interested Cotman more than its solidity. There lies his strength as well as his weakness. He was much obsessed by death and decay in old buildings; and this is another reason for present sympathy with him. The texture of walls in bombed cities is a prominent reality at the moment. He saw a desecrated chapel or a decrepit brick wall toppling above long grass as a symbol full of meaning. For he saw in such things the symbolic flames of his own life

1819. Second tour in Normandy, with Dawson Turner family. Mrs. Dawson Turner to her husband: "Pray come quickly . . . I had to come as an interpreter between Mr. Cotman and M. Le Prévost, the former not understanding at all the good French of the latter, though M. Le P. could tolerably make out Mr. C.'s *not* good English. . . . I was sadly imposed on. . . . But indeed, my dear Dawson, women cannot dispute these things. Mr. Cotman was willing enough, but was too tongue-tied to be able to do so. . . ."
"One hundred and thirty-five fresh subjects."

1820. Fifth child born. Third tour in Normandy. Alone. ". . . Everything a painter could wish for, and the day from being very rainy cleared up and turned out an artist's day; fine clouds, the shadows of which gave life and spirit to everything, and change upon change took place like magic—from light tones to the darkest purples. . . ."
"This most delightful country."

1822. *Architectural Antiquities of Normandy* published.
Collapse and depression, attributed by C. to "inadvertently swallowing a bone."
Varley: "Why, Cotman, you are not such a fool as to think you are going to die! Impossible! No such thing! I tell you there are twenty years for you yet to come." Exactly right guess.

1823. Back to Norwich. Opened a "School for Drawing and Painting in Water-Colours." Terms, one guinea and a half the Quarter. Large water-colours: *Dieppe*, etc.

1824. Between two and three hundred drawings sold at Christie's in bulk. Average price, 12s. 6d. Bought by dealers, including Britton.

1826. "The sun has set for ever on my career and all is darkness before me. . . . My pupils diminish to such a degree that it is impossible for me to live in any [house], save a *Workhouse* or a *Prison*. As for myself, *I do nothing*. . . ."
"A mere drawing master—*the very thing I dreaded most on setting out in life*." Heard one of his children say: "Why, papa *smiled*."

1827. "A tide has I hope at last set in my favour. . . . For many weeks one overwhelming flood of despairing thoughts made every atom of my composition a separate torture. Thank God it is past. It has been a bitter but a useful lesson."

1828. Foreign scenes after Harriott.

1829. "My views in life are so completely blasted that I sink under the repeated and constant exertion of body and mind. Every effort has been tried, even without the hope of success. Hence that loss of spirits amounting almost to despair. . . . My amiable and deserving wife bears her part with fortitude—but the worm is there. My children cannot but feel the contagion."

1830. Drawing of *Crosby Hall*. Drawings in body colour or paste.
"At Homes" given by Norwich artists. "It was the most brilliant thing ever witnessed for Norwich Art. . . . *We, the Artists*, have reason to be perfectly satisfied. . . . I have not been to bed till past four o'clock for this month past. . . ."

1831. "J. S. Cotman & Son resume their instructions in Drawing and Painting in oil and water-colours. . . ." Costume pieces; studies of Armour.

1832. Sea pieces; classical landscapes; historical compositions; whimsical drawings of knights.

1833. Summer: despair.

1834. Lady Palgrave to her father: "Mr. Cotman came to tea last night, in very high spirits, which make me tremble." Appointment as Professor of Drawing at King's College, London. "My views are clear and splendid—never more so. I *must* come in contact with the first men in the country for talent, intellect and integrity. In all this I live, I breathe and feel a Man. This is what I have ever loved and tried to realize." Family settles in Bloomsbury.

1836. Auction at Christie's. British Museum *Greta Bridge* fetched 8s. 0d. Honorary member of Institute of British Architects.

1837. D. G. and W. M. Rossetti (9 and 8 respectively) pupils in Cotman's drawing class.
W. M. Rossetti: "The seeds of madness lurked in this distinguished artist, although apart from a rather excitable or abrupt manner in ruling his bear-garden, I never saw any symptoms of it."

1838. (To his son, John Joseph): "If you wish to be an artist you *must* leave Norwich. . . ." "*Leave out, but add nothing.*"

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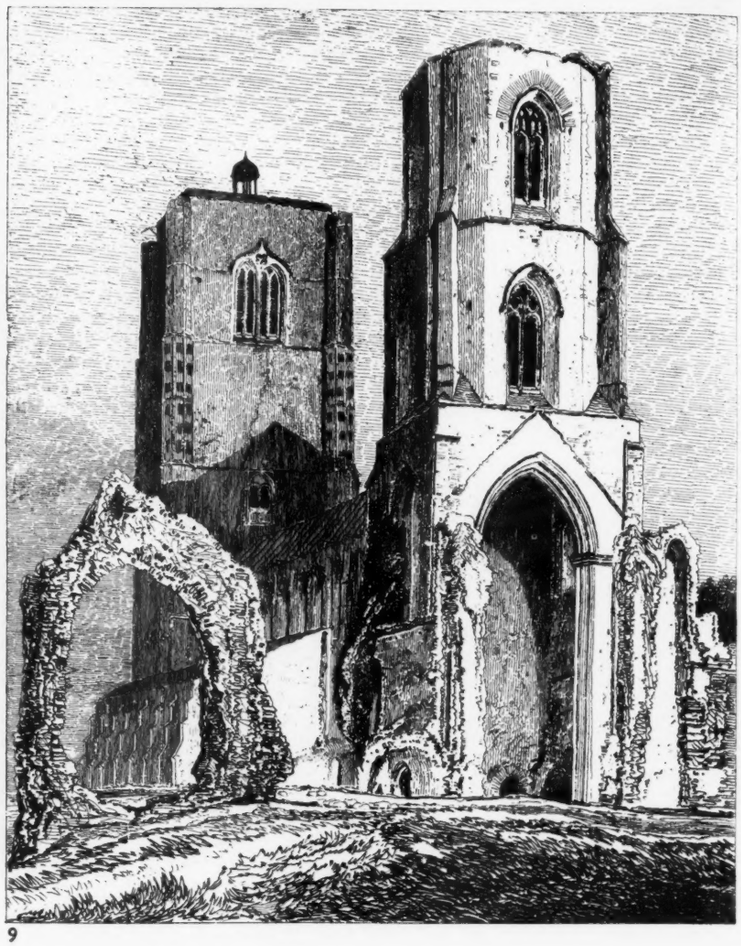

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8, *A Ruined House (water-colour)*; 9, *Wymondham, Norfolk (etching)*; 10, *Great Chrishall, Cambs. (water-colour)*; 11, *Pentney Abbey Gate (pencil drawing)*.

1841. Revisited Norfolk. "I came here really for my health. Judge for yourself my happiness on finding your Norfolk flints capable of once more creating a blaze in my heart, and I have been hard at work. . . ." "All was desolation and dreariness. It was sublime. It was a day to be remembered . . . it gave a power to wildness that I never before even imagined." Many landscape drawings.

1842. "Natural decay" caused death. July 24: Cotman buried in churchyard of St. John's Wood Chapel, Marylebone.

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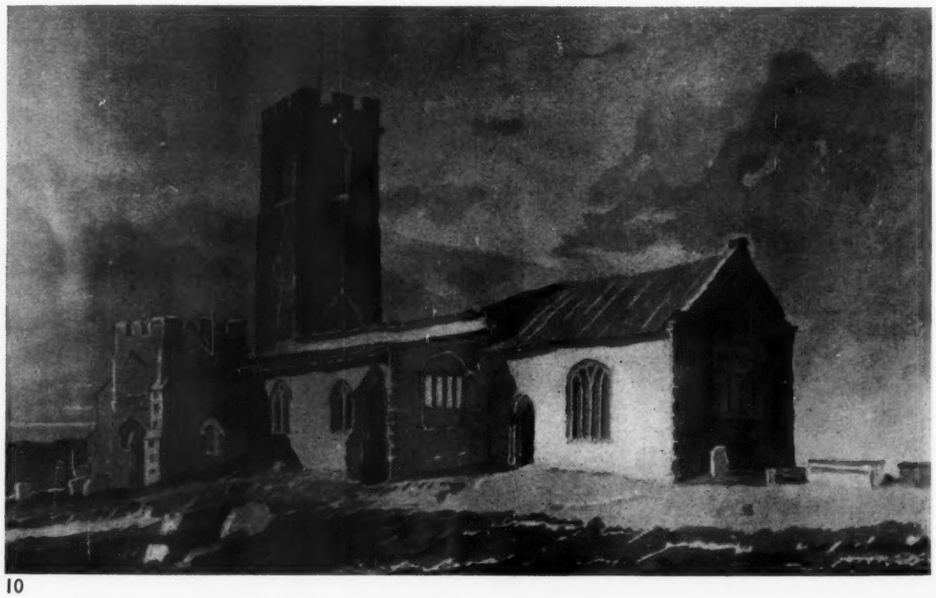

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[Continued from page 11]

from which he hoped (with increasing despair) that a phœnix would rise. Ruins were the stock-in-trade of many artists of his age, but for Cotman ruins had vivid personalities, and they almost had passions.

The mental approach to Cotman is unprofitable —it seems to give a view only of flat washes and theatrical silhouettes. Under the severe gaze of the thinker Cotman's decaying walls crumble away altogether and his churches fade into guide-book agglomerations of Trans. and Dec. and Perp. His reputation may slip round the corner now and again, away from a too severe taste with its intellectual spectacles on; but there will always remain a few oil paintings and a thousand or two drawings with something more than charm about them for the enjoyment of the romantic with sensibility.

BOMB DAMAGE TO NOTABLE BUILDINGS

BRISTOL

AND CLIFTON

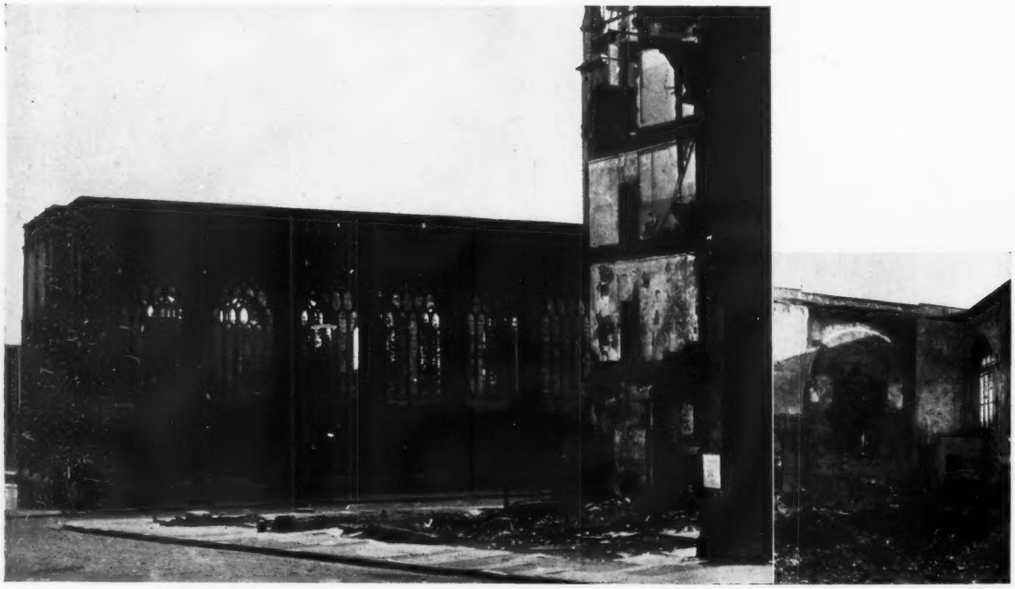
THE CASTLE of Bristol is represented by two vaulted rooms built into a modern shop in Tower Street and carefully preserved until the recent damage to the premises as a whole. Both these rooms probably belonged to the palace built in the castle precincts. This palace had a large Norman hall to which a porch—one of the two surviving rooms—was added in the 13th century. The other room, rather later in date and of plainer character, may have been the undercroft of the Royal Chapel.

Churches

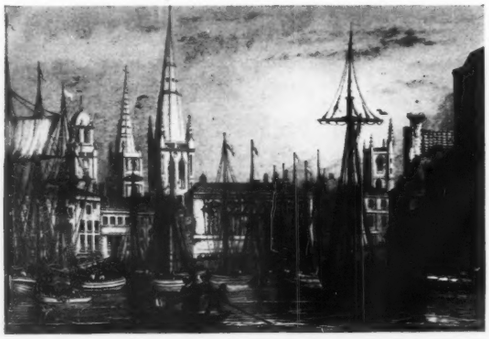
ST. MARY-LE-PORT CHURCH stood on a constricted site in Mary-le-Port Street (top picture) and had but one aisle. Generous 15th century windows overlooked the small churchyard to the south, and there was a plain tower at the west end. The chief ornament of the church was a handsome wooden reredos, dating from the beginning of the 18th century, modelled, evidently, on the earlier one in St. Peter's (see below) but more refined in design and more sensitive in execution. Most of Bristol's old churches had these fine reredoses at one time, and the three best survivors, those at St. Peter's, St. Mary-le-Port and St. Nicholas, have disappeared during the raids.

ST. PETER'S CHURCH was typical of Bristol architecture at the height of the City's mediæval prosperity. Like the Temple Church and St. Mary-le-Port, it had no clerestory, but great rows of perpendicular windows in the aisles. The sturdy tower, which survives, is partly Romanesque, echoing the style of the once adjoining castle. The Corinthian reredos was an important feature. It was made by John Mitchell, a London joiner, who helped to furnish several of Wren's churches, and it set a fashion for such fittings in Bristol which persisted till the end of the 18th century. In the south aisle two elaborate tombs survive, though seriously damaged. The later of the two is that of Robert Aldworth, whose house, later known as St. Peter's Hospital, was burnt with the church (see page 15).

Bristol Churches



ST. NICHOLAS CHURCH is a Gothic building of 1763-8 raised on a late mediæval crypt. Its large windows, with simple tracery, are quite in the ancient Bristol tradition and no doubt prompted Walpole's description of the church as " neat and truly Gothic." The interior was also neat, but even Walpole can hardly have found it truly Gothic, for it was as perfectly Rococo as anything in England. The ceiling, in particular, was a gay and skilful design, the work of a famous west-country group of plasterers. The architect of the church was Bridges, a local man. He incorporated in the building the early 18th century reredos and some wonderful wrought-iron-work from the old church. In the engraving below, taken from Bristol Bridge, St. Nicholas is seen in the centre with its " neat and truly Gothic " steeple. To the left of it are Christ Church and All Saints (both undamaged). To the right is the tower of St. Mary-le-Port.



THE TEMPLE CHURCH originally belonged, as its name implies, to the Templars, but was rebuilt after their time, in the 14th and 15th centuries. The upper part of the tower (undamaged) was added about 1460 with alarming consequences, the whole tower tilting sharply westwards and coming to rest, thanks to a rapidly improvised internal buttress, 5 ft. out of the perpendicular. The church's chief treasure, a 15th century candelabrum, escaped destruction.

ST. PETER'S HOSPITAL adjoining St. Peter's Church, was a mediæval mansion, largely reconstructed in 1610 by the sugar-refiner, Robert Aldworth, whose splendid tomb still survives in the ruined church. In 1698 the mansion was turned into a work-house, one of the earliest institutions of its kind, and received the name of St. Peter's Hospital. As such it was used till 1865. It was occupied by the Bristol Public Assistance Committee at the time of its destruction.

THE UPPER ARCADE, together with the undamaged Lower Arcade, formed a street improvement carried out in 1824-5 and designed by the local Mr. James Foster, the architect of Clifton church (see page 17). The line of these arcades linked up St. James's Barton and Broadmead. They were gracefully designed, with a pitched glass roof in compartments, but like so many of their kind they became rather drab commercial backwaters and never lived up to the distinction of their architecture.

Domestic

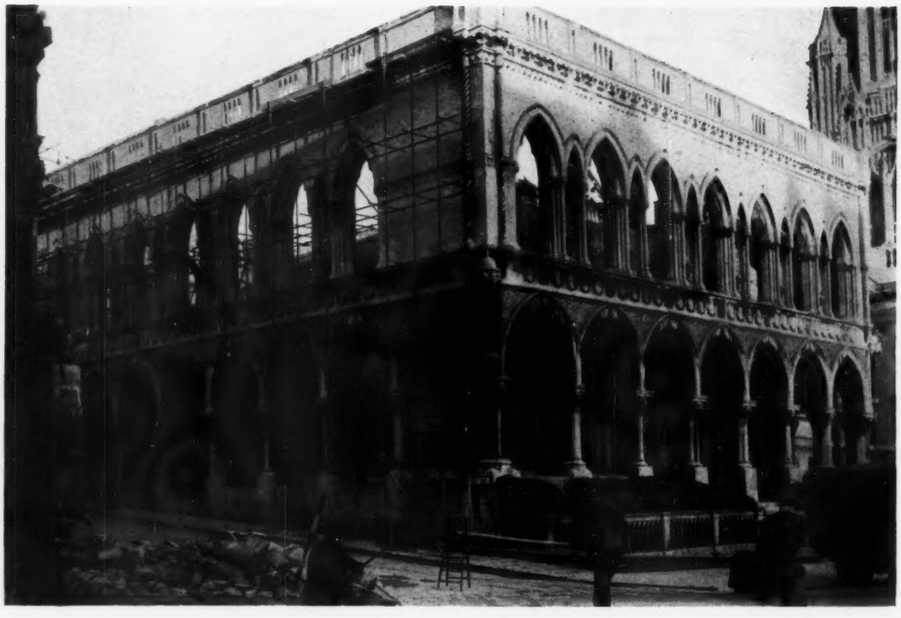
BERKELEY SQUARE was laid out on the eastern edge of the city in 1786, and built up slowly, houses still being offered for sale half finished in 1799. The Square is built on a gentle diagonal slope and the houses are stepped to accommodate the changing levels. Each separate cornice is carefully returned, and the string-courses stop against pilasters cleverly introduced to avoid the confusion of "loose ends" which would otherwise result. The pedimented feature in the centre of one side gives variety, though considering the one-way slope of the whole, such central emphasis seems hardly the thing.

THE DUTCH HOUSE was a conspicuous and admirable example of early 17th century domestic work, standing at the corner of Wine Street and High Street. It is traditionally supposed to have been constructed in Holland and shipped to Bristol, but the story is an unlikely one. The epithet "Dutch" was applied to any unwrought timber imported from the Continent and it is just conceivable, though hardly probable at the period, that the house was built with imported oak.

Bristol Public Buildings

THE MERCHANT VENTURERS' ALMSHOUSES, in King Street, were built in 1696-8 at the expense of Bristol's great merchant-philanthropist, Edward Colston. They formed a small quadrangle adjoining the Merchant Venturers' Hall of 1701, which, together with part of the almshouses, has been destroyed. They are unpretentious buildings with a wooden eaves cornice and pretty carved door-hoods.

FREEMASONS' HALL, Park Street, on the left in both the pictures alongside, was built as the Philosophical and Literary Institution in 1820-23. The architect, thirty-two-year-old C. R. Cockerell, gave the Institution the benefit of his Greek researches and attached a " tholos ", with details suggested by what he had found at Bassae, to the corner of the building. The interior, burnt out, was of little architectural consequence. Beyond Cockerell's building are seen the jagged party-walls of houses in **PARK STREET,** one-third of which has been destroyed. It was a fine, regular street, all of Bath stone, laid out in 1740 and built up from 1762 onwards. Sloping up north-west from the Green to the University tower (seen in the bottom picture) it could very well claim to be the handsomest shopping street in England.



THE MUSEUM owes its character largely, no doubt, to John Ruskin and *The Stones of Venice.* But it is not a fanatically Ruskinian building and its architects, Foster and Wood, derived from the Doge's Palace no qualities more profound than the decorative and the picturesque. Built in brown stone and yellow brick, the building has real charm. It was begun in 1866, a joint venture by two Bristol institutions, and only completed when taken over by the City in 1893.

Clifton Churches

CLIFTON PARISH CHURCH was built in 1819-22. It was paid for out of the sale of free-hold pew-rights, about two-thirds of the sittings in the church being disposed of in this way. The rich and largely non-resident population were prepared to pay handsomely for the prestige of a prominent and comfortable pew; the "free" sittings were largely occupied by powdered footmen. This curious financial adventure led to embarrassment when it was found that none of the pew-holders was willing to pay for the upkeep of the fabric. By 1884 it was decided that there was no alternative but to buy them out. This was gradually done and the church reseated. The architect of Clifton church was James Foster, a one-time assistant of the Bristol architect, Paty, and his design has all the characteristics of late Georgian Gothic. It may be compared with three other burnt churches of the same type, St. Nicholas', Bristol (page 14), and St. Luke's and St. Nicholas', Liverpool. The two lower pictures show the staircases at the west end, where 18th and early 19th century monuments from the old parish church, built during the Commonwealth, were re-fixed.

Clifton Churches

HOLY TRINITY, HOTWELLS, was one of the least known, though not the least interesting, works of C. R. Cockerell. Built in 1829-32, when most churches were oblong boxes done up with Greek or Gothic detail, this one struck a new course. The plan was of the central-dome type so much used by Wren. The interior, somewhat altered by A. R. Gough, was pleasant enough; but the most strikingly beautiful part of the church was, and remains, the Italian entrance façade. Cockerell had the finest taste of any English architect of his time, and the delicate modelling of the niched entrance, the pilasters and pediment and the romantic little bell turret bear witness to this. A little earlier, Cockerell had designed the Hanover Chapel (long since demolished) in Regent Street, where he likewise adopted a Wren plan and developed it in his own charming and original way. If the Hotwells church is not rebuilt as a whole, the entrance front is a fragment well worth preserving for its beauty.

ALL SAINTS, CLIFTON, was an important church by George Edmund Street, begun in 1863 and finished many years later. A curious feature is the abrupt junction of the nave arcades with the chancel aisles. This bold solution of the problem of combining a broad nave, suitable for Anglican worship, with a narrow chancel, may be compared with Street's very different treatment, in this respect, of St. John's, Kennington (illustrated in January). The materials are local rubble, Bath stone and Pennant stone. The pulpit was by Pearson, 1892. The upper stage of the tower and a flamboyant lead-covered lantern were added by F. C. Eden in 1926-7.

Treasure Hunt

By Peter F. R. Donner

The object of this series of articles is to stimulate an interest in the "Coburg style," i.e., the architecture of Britain between 1837 and the last war. Ninety-five per cent. of the buildings that surround us where we live and where we work belong to it. Yet hardly anybody looks at them with a view to understanding their meaning, their charm and their shortcomings. In this month's examples, meaning is at least as important as aesthetic peculiarities. And as for charm, it will not be easy for the untrained eye to discover it. So if the author has succeeded in extracting treasures, albeit treasures of minor excellence, from these tenement houses of Westminster, he has certainly proved that Victorian treasure hunting is a pastime worth going in for, however unpromising the objects of a hunt may at first appear.

Old Pye Street

Perkins Rents

Great Peter Street

SPECIMEN No. 1

Old Pye Street

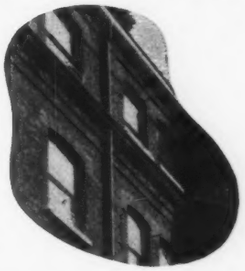
Buildings such as this can be seen wherever slum-clearance and "metropolitan improvements" went on between 1860 and 1890. They were put up to re-house the "labouring classes." To us they look grim, but at their time they were welcomed as healthy and salutary. And as office buildings and even luxury hotels of the sixties have very much the same grimness, we must take it that to the Victorians these forms conveyed nothing but security and solidity.

These six-storeyed buildings of cheap brick with bay-windows at intervals all the way up and no decoration but crudely modillioned cornices and string-courses, and a feeble attempt at an alternation of lighter and darker strips on ground floor and first floor, are to be found in many places in the City of London, the City of Westminster and the inner suburbs, i.e., wherever improvements were going on between 1860 and 1890. They were built to house what was then called with a term of a characteristic biblical flavour the "labouring classes." To us they appear grim and raw. At the time of their erection they were hailed as a magnificent advance, which in fact they were. Looking at them in the spirit of the æsthetical treasure hunter, there does not seem much to gratify curiosity, though enough to date them pretty accurately. The striped lower floors point in a humble way to the sixties and the architects who succumbed to Ruskin's propaganda for Italian Gothic. An example, dated 1862, of this so-called streaky-bacon style was illustrated in May. The heavy window surrounds and the weight of so much massive unrelieved wall confirm this date. You find them surprisingly similar, e.g., in John Giles's Langham Hotel of 1862-63. Their appearance in a luxury hotel, as forbidding as in any contemporary slum-clearance estate, and moreover their appearance in so prominent a position as that of the Langham Hotel, prove beyond doubt that what we interpret as joyless gloom was meant to demonstrate nothing but commendable solidity.

John Giles: Langham Hotel, 186-?-1863

SPECIMEN No. 2

Old Pye Street



Heavy and crowded brackets—a leitmotif of 1850-1870.

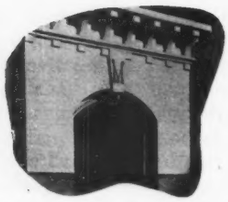
Heavy are also the individual motifs of decoration, squat the proportions of the windows, and coarse the cornices. It is eminently Mid-Victorian to overdo size and number of brackets or modillions to cornices. The Norfolk Hotel at Brighton is one of many telling examples, picked out at random from *The Builder* of 1865. Participants in the Treasure Hunts will remember its instructive appearance in the Adelaide-Belsize district about the same time.

H. N. Goulty, Norfolk Hotel, Brighton, 1865

SPECIMEN No. 3

Old Pye Street

The effect of these brackets is more easily seen above the entrances. They are unmoulded in section, perhaps for reasons of cheapness, perhaps because this crudity of detail matches the general sturdiness of the building. No black and white illustration can, how-



Heavy brackets and hygienic paint.

ever, fully convey how painful the associations are that these entrances will evoke in the minds of most of us. You must see for yourself the dingy chocolate colour of the lower and the equally dingy cream colour of the upper part to believe how irresistibly they conjure up stale reminiscences of the Victorian " Early Hygienic " in charitable and educational establishments that might at some time have impressed themselves into your soul and lain dormant there ever since.

SPECIMEN No. 4

Old Pye Street

Typical lettering of the sixties: splayed serifs and nobbly points.

There are many of these entrances along the backs of such groups of tenement houses, all identical and each serving a number of flats. They are marked with capital letters of a shape again exceedingly typical of their date. If you look up Miss Nicolette Gray's delightful and enlightening book on Victorian lettering and type-faces, you will find in printers' type-books of the sixties and seventies letters with such splayed ends instead of serifs, and such a thickening as is here produced by the loops. The two illustrated are of 1862.

Capital letters from J. Wood's type-book of 1862

SPECIMEN No. 5

Perkins Rents

A none too happy attempt at adorning such tenement houses for the poor. The thin treatment of Jacobean forms is that of Loudon and the thirties and forties. But the house cannot be earlier than 1860 or 1870. So the gable was wholly out of date when put up. But an architect of renown never touched such jobs. They were left to builders or to minor architects.

It is rare for Mid-Victorian blocks of flats erected to serve the needs of working-class tenants to find any effort made at a more ambitious decoration than that discussed in the Old Pye Street building. However, next to it, in Perkins Rents stands another block primly displaying three Elizabethan gables. They look incongruous enough on top of a front with nothing to prepare for this outburst of stateliness. The flat treatment and the thinness of the inscribed lines connect them with the interpretation of the Tudor style by architects of the thirties and forties and separate them clearly from the sturdier and archæologically more correct Neo-Jacobean of the Mid-Victorians. Yet, although I have not been able to trace any closer parallels than those with Loudon's never failing *Encyclopædia* of 1833 (second enlarged edition 1846), the house in Perkins Rents can hardly be earlier than the sixties. For the development of that part of Westminster, beginning with the cutting through of Victoria Street, dates almost entirely from 1860-75. So the architect, if thus he can be called, must have gone for inspiration to books then already hopelessly old-fashioned. One need not be surprised at that, for it is well enough known that work for the labouring classes did not interest any of the æsthetically leading architects before the very end of the nineteenth century. It was left to minor men with a stronger sense of social responsibility than of artistic entertainment.

From Loudon's Encyclopædia, 1833

SPECIMEN No. 6

Old Pye Street

The movement for improving the dwellings of the poor had been started by such men as Lord Shaftesbury and Prince Albert. But the first body to erect blocks of working-class flats on a large scale was the Peabody Trust, founded by George Peabody, an American millionaire, in 1862. Most of its estates were built to the same design down to every detail.

Who was it that commissioned such groups of tenement houses? The history of early working-class architecture has yet to be written. This much, however, is known: Scarcely any blocks of flats were put up for slum-clearance purposes before 1850. The need was felt only after the publication of Chadwick's famous report. Lord Shaftesbury became the leader of the movement. Prince Albert took a very active interest in it. But all remained on a small scale, until George Peabody, an American millionaire, who had settled down in London in 1837, appeared on the scene. Here is what *The Builder* wrote in 1862:

> MR. PEABODY AND THE LONDON POOR.
> Mr. Geo. Peabody, the American banker, has given a formal shape to his intention, already mentioned by us, of conveying to trustees 150,000*l.* to be applied "exclusively to such purposes as may be calculated directly to ameliorate the condition and augment the comforts of the poor who, either by birth or established residence, form a recognized portion of the population of London." He sti-

He had an open mind as to how the money should be spent (to which incidentally he added more and more in later years). But *The Builder* adds:

> Mr. Peabody points out the probable desirability of applying "the fund, or a portion of it, in the construction of such improved dwellings for the poor as may combine in the utmost possible degree the essentials of healthfulness, comfort, social enjoyment, and economy;" and names the

So these are the dwellings supposed to be healthy, comfortable and enjoyable. They were put up in clusters in whatever neighbourhood slum-clearance proceeded. The same standard designs down to every detail were used, designs which, we can now say, must go back to the earliest years of the trust.

SPECIMEN No. 7

Great Peter Street

The friendlier and more sensitive detail of working class flats about 1900, or a little later. Most of the motifs used here and in the very similar estates of the L.C.C. are of Neo-Georgian origin. But the steep, broken gable came from Germany.

Friendlier designs came in only much later, in connection, it seems, with the housing activities of that progressive body, the newly founded L.C.C. There, stimulated by such adventurous ideas as those that resulted in Toynbee Hall and the Garden Cities movement, the necessity was recognized for flats of a lighter, cleaner and jollier appearance. The results were designs such as that of the Peabody Estate in Great Peter Street, of about 1905-10. They have the more intimate scale, the better materials, and the more comfortable relation of window openings to walls which characterize contemporary L.C.C. estates. The Palladian window is a typical motif, but the broken gable

Percy Adams: Midhurst Sanatorium, 1903-6

H. T. Hare: Old White House, Oxford, 1898

appeared as a stranger in London architecture. It seems to have come from Germany, where, just as over here, by about 1900 an eighteenth century revival had taken place. There some younger architects had adopted this form of gable that belongs logically to the mansard roof. And as their designs appeared fairly regularly in certain English architectural magazines, they influenced, though for a few years only, the more Continental younger architects of Britain.

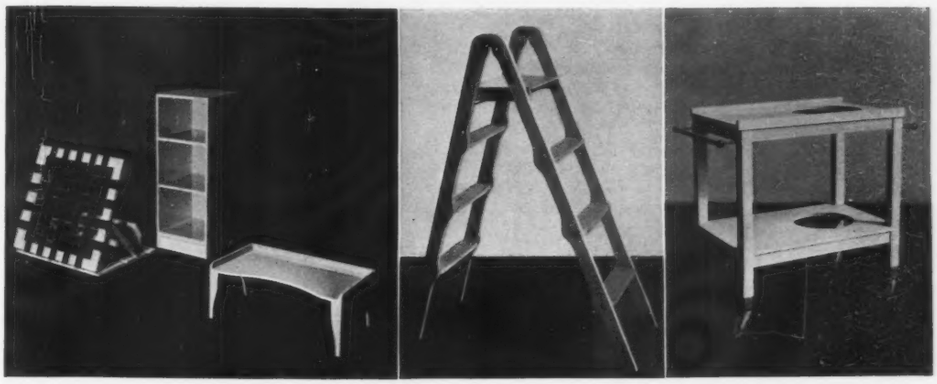
Cottage near Essen, 1903

One word in addition to raise a question rather than to solve it. The house below is in Old Pye Street close to those so far discussed. It is called Westminster Buildings. The lettering looks decidedly pre-1860. The Gothic motifs at the corner also appear of a comparably early date. So seem the pointed relieving arches above the windows. Could this not be a building for the labouring classes put up before any of the others? I speculated on this possibility, when Pevsner drew my attention to a passage in H. Roberts's *Improvements of the Dwellings of the Labouring Classes* of 1859. There a lodging house, in Great Peter Street, is mentioned as "amongst the earliest if not the earliest individual efforts of the kind." Have we got this incunabulum in Westminster Buildings? Great Peter Street is only two hundred feet from it site. I should be grateful if someone could tell me more about it.

Westminster Buildings, Old Pye Street, Westminster. Who can tell Mr. Donner something about its history and date?

EMERGENCY DESIGN

and the Leicester College of Arts

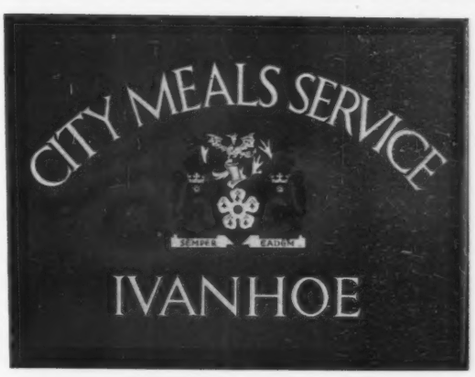


Leicester has for many years been known amongst those interested in art education as the city in Britain in which the closest co-operation exists between municipal College of Art and Crafts, municipal Technical College and local trades. These happy relations were established chiefly at the time when Mr. B. J. Fletcher was principal of the College of Art. They have since been maintained and extended by Mr. Kenneth Holmes. Municipal authorities are exceptionally ready, too, at Leicester to appreciate the help that the College can give them and is anxious to give them. The transport, electricity, publicity and education departments, the fire brigade and the museum and art gallery have occasionally been supplied by the College with suggestions, designs and craftsmen to carry out jobs.

When war broke out, Mr. Holmes was made information officer to the Emergency (Civil Defence) Committee to co-ordinate all printed matter for civil defence for all departments. The appointment was probably due to the fact that the chairman of the Emergency Committee was at the same time chairman of the College Committee, and moreover a man who just then was waiting to move into a house which he had commissioned Raymond McGrath to design for him.

The College since then has been harnessed to war work to an extent far beyond anything attempted in other cities. Hospital furniture (see the illustrations above) is designed and made by the classes of wood and metal for the medical officer and the general hospitals. The designs, of course, are the seniors' work, but the manual work lies in the hands of boys of eleven to sixteen who attend the junior classes. Production is by no means confined to odd pieces. In the course of one year the College made—besides many other articles—12 instrument cupboards, 36 bedside lockers, 144 trays, 12 step-ladders, 12 washing trolleys, 500 crutches, 1,000 wire splints, 144 bedrests, etc. Concurrently the Department of Women's Crafts made decontamination clothes, 3,000 haversacks, etc. Much ingenuity went into diverting materials to these purposes and finding new uses for waste materials. The College is paid for such work the cost of materials, but nothing for labour. One would think that such a policy would rouse ill-feelings with local firms. So far, however, nothing of the kind seems to have been observed—owing probably to war conditions. In fact, firms keep approaching the College for designs, especially where staff designers have been called up.

The School of Drawing and Painting has decorated shelters, canteens and feeding centres with murals. While such jobs, however, have been entrusted to art schools in other cities as well, there cannot be many art schools who have been put in charge to such an extent of all emergency design of signs, notices, etc. A good deal of the actual painting and printing was also done by the College. The results are excellent, and prove that the deplorable chaos of A.R.P. design so vividly described by Mr. Dutton some months ago in THE ARCHITECTURAL REVIEW can easily be replaced by orderliness and seemliness, if only municipal authorities will take advantage of experienced designers and commercial artists such as they will find on the staffs of most art schools.



BOOKS

Furniture for Mass Production

ORGANIC DESIGN IN HOME FURNISHINGS. By Eliot F. Noyes, New York: The Museum of Modern Art, Price $1.00.

TOWARDS the end of last year, the Industrial Design section of the Museum of Modern Art, New York, organised a competition for the design of furniture, fabrics and lamps. The backing of twelve important stores in the major cities throughout the United States ensured that selected designs would eventually be produced, and the book under review is the catalogue to the Museum's exhibition of the winning designs, most of which are already in production. Like many of the "catalogues" published by the Museum of Modern Art, it is something more than the term implies; well illustrated, and carefully produced inside a jacket by McKnight Kauffer, it brings before the public something also of the background and historical development of modern furniture design. The notes in this historical section are brief but to the point; the well-known landmarks are illustrated again—Thonet bentwood, early metal chairs by Breuer and Mies van der Rohe, the Corbusier reclining chair and tubular steel armchair, several Aalto chairs, some Breuer plywood chairs developed in England and a Swedish chair by Bruno Mathsson. Apart from these examples there are notes and illustrations outlining the development of unit furniture.

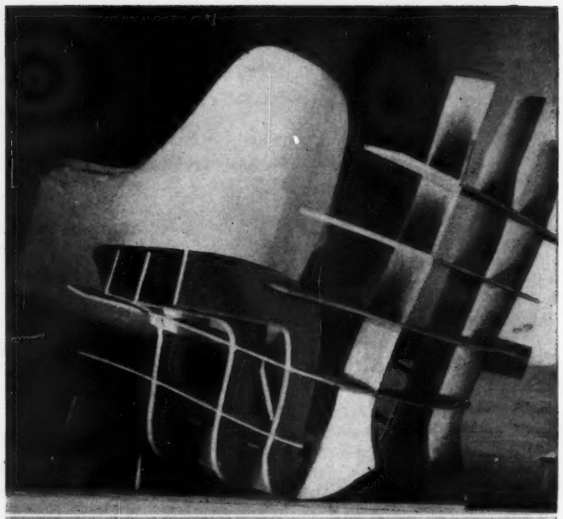
The competition itself covers a wide range of furniture types. At this distance one is prevented from discovering the merits of individual designs by the most sensible of all tests—performance in actual use. Without this evidence, criticism becomes difficult if not dangerous. But judging from the illustrations it is fair to say in general that this exhibition is not remarkable for the new ground which it captures. That does not mean that it is not worth while. If the general standard of furniture design in America is anything like it is in this country then the exhibition performs an outstanding function as an attempt to lift the general level to something more than a good average standard. The unit furniture which forms a section of the exhibition is a typical example. Whilst furniture of this kind is by no means a new idea, the types exhibited sometimes offer an increased flexibility of arrangement well beyond that usually available and are carefully studied, well proportioned and presumably well constructed.

The remaining work in the exhibition varies in quality. Perhaps the most general difficulty in designing any type of furniture is the ease with which it can slip into shape-making, without necessarily providing any new development in method of production or any greater degree of comfort and convenience, which are, in fact, the qualities in which new forms have their origin. The chairs by Saarinen and Eames appear to be the most considerable attempt to advance design in this way. Some serious effort was obviously made to establish the general shapes most likely to give comfort in actual use and this involved a series of experiments with a plaster cast on a special frame. This in turn gave rise to a technique of building up a complicated series of compound curves eventually achieved by means of a wood shell glued up in a cast-iron mould and covered with an upholstered rubber cushioning. The captions are frank about the difficulties encountered, which is as it should be, as it throws light on the collaboration between designer and manufacturer in the designing process.

The finished product may still have defects. The advantage of shaped forms in developing comfort have been apparent ever since the shaped seat of the Windsor chair, but the danger of fixing too rigidly all points of support for the body gives rise to the question—whose body? The easy chair undoubtedly demands the possibility of easy adaptation to meet not only different sizes of human beings but also change of position for the occupant of the chair. Technically the difficulties of fixing fabric neatly to the rubber curves is noticeable and the same finish may give difficulties in cleaning at a later date. On the other hand, the upright or side chair in the same series with its simpler form left in the original bare wood finish of Honduras mahogany seems to eliminate such difficulties.

Amongst the other individual designs one or two examples appear to be convincing, particularly the outdoor furniture by Weese and Baldwin and an adjustable chair from Mexico City in which local

Above, winning designs by Saarinen and Eames in the New York Museum of Modern Art's competition for furniture designs suitable for industrial production. From "Organic Design," published by the Museum to illustrate the results of the competition and reviewed on this page. In the background is an arrangement of unit furniture, veneered in Honduras mahogany. It is based on absolute standardisation on an 18 in. module. In front are two chairs, with wooden legs and plywood frame, covered with rubber and fabric. The right-hand chair has mahogany plywood exposed at the back; the other one (the armchair) has a back of fabric glued direct to the plywood.



Right, the Saarinen and Eames armchair, showing the method of modelling the shape. A plaster model on wire mesh reinforcing was first shaped to the body. A crate was then built up (top picture) out of strips of masonite, following the contours of the model. Finally a cast-iron mould was made, according to the form defined by the crate, and the plywood shell of the actual chair is glued up on this mould, the rubber and fabric finishings being then added.

Winning design for tea-wagon, by Weese and Baldwin, from the garden-furniture section of the Museum of Modern Art's competition. It is of tubular steel with pneumatic tyres and wicker basket.

materials are used. But, in my opinion, the important point raised by this competition is not so much the standard of the actual designs produced as the problem of the relationship of designer to producer. It will be interesting to see how far this relationship can be developed. For it must be admitted that the primary defect in most modern furniture is that the designer, with one or two notable exceptions, has always remained outside the system of production and this is one of the reasons why so much modern furniture has in the long run been a luxury product. So long as the designer fails to take his place as an integral part of the industry, there is little hope of any far-reaching advance, for any other relationship is too casual to have any permanent effect. It is for this reason that perhaps more stress might have been laid in the historical section on the anonymous development of furniture design in the nineteenth century. Apart from the well-known examples of bentwood furniture, the study of such developments as iron bedstead design in England or metal garden furniture in France, would be enlightening. Such examples as these illustrate most clearly the perfect fusion of designer-producer, and they also indicate a task which has yet to be achieved in the production of furniture. We have reached a point at which a change must be made and that change is fortunately already taking place in other fields. It is only necessary to travel by bus or tube to see in their fittings and furnishings a fine tradition of anonymous design already in the making and steadily changing our environment. As for furniture, let us be quite clear. The problem is less and less a question of nice designs—of art that can be made to work, but as Herbert Read has recently put it, we must now discover a more adequate means of transforming work itself into an art.

J. L. MARTIN

The American Task

TASK: A magazine for the younger generation in architecture. Published quarterly by the students at Robinson Hall, Harvard University, Cambridge, Mass. Price 50 cents.

THIS new journal gives scope for some interesting comparisons with a similar journal of the 30's published in this country. The editorial policy of *Focus*, like that of *Task*, was definitely informed by sociological and political thinking. Its direction and conclusions were not always as ostensibly labelled as are those of *Task*, perhaps more as a diplomatic concession to the political situation of the time than to the unwillingness of the British student movement to become associated with left politics.

In June, 1939, in an editorial manifesto, *Focus* pointed out that—"our age is characterized by the sharpening contradictions that have brought political thinking into architecture, affecting us, as they do, both as architects and as citizens. It is the knowledge of the way in which they must be resolved, of how the equation must come out, that can project our thinking and our hopes into a legitimate future. But it is a future that is already in our hands, and that we are shaping; it is not a marvellous world of to-morrow just round the corner, into which our dreams can slide. It is not the millennium but a stage forward, a realization of our potentialities. It is concrete and hard, not soft as a Wurlitzer; we have it here now, in our problems and decisions; everything we do brings it nearer or takes it further away. . . . And only the knowledge of the necessity of change, or how we may attain it, and of the technical and human liberation that it can open up for society, can give us the pattern for our action in the future, and the faith and energy to continue." In the summer of 1941, the first number of *Task*, organized and run by the students of Harvard, but presumably speaking for a wider circle of progressive students, appeared as a magazine which—"is to be the expression of students who realize that architects to-day are either unaware of the rapidly changing needs of society or are unable to answer them. We must recognize the paradox of a nation ill-housed in the midst of tremendous technical and professional potentialities." Both statements appeared at a time when their countries of origin balanced on the razor edge of war or appeasement; *Task* appeared just six months before the American declaration of war, at a period not unlike June, 1939, when the last issue of *Focus* appeared in England. America has had the advantage of two years experience watching Europe from the stalls, and a chance of profiting by many of our mistakes. It would be optimistic to believe that this alone has given *Task* the chance to get its political alignment correct. There is evidence to show, however, that in the two years respite, American architecture has to some extent seized the opportunity to organize itself for total war, and is to-day making an important contribution to American defence. At the same time it must be remembered that the American profession has been in a less static condition since the years of the slump and under the impact of the New Deal, than its British counterpart. For although the slump affected building in Great Britain as seriously as all other sections of the national economy, it had little lasting effect on the internal organization of the profession.

It is interesting to note that in the editorial of the first number the main accent is still on the broad architectural conception, although it is modified and reorientated by conditions of imminent war. "We, as planners," said this editorial, "have a job to perform now and in the future—a job involving new technique, new social requirements, new materials and new types of planning—made more difficult and urgent by the impact of war. One important task is to combine the efficiency of emergency housing with long-range vision of peace-time planning. . . . We believe that the architectural schools and the profession do not sufficiently reflect society's needs; nor train the student and the young architect in the principles of collective work." Six months later, in the editorial to the second number, that accent shows clear signs of change: "With the United States at war the younger generation in every profession faces the problem of how it can serve the country best. Our task is to prove that the architectural profession has a place in the war effort; that architects can make a contribution in times of crisis as well as in times of prosperity. If we are to demonstrate that architecture is not merely a luxury, we younger architects must find out what civic and military problems our training has fitted us to solve. We should enter every aspect of civil or military defence work involving building techniques. Besides being of immediate value to the country, such work is vitally necessary for the architects who, with all other planners, will be involved in the task of post-war reconstruction. We will find employment in defence and at the same time will, through collective research, discover where we can best make our technical and social contribution. *Task* believes that for architects this is not a time for meditation and dreaming of a post-war world and its architectural opportunities. The opportunities will be there; will we be able to meet them? *Task* hails the vanishing of the old and the appearance of a new architectural horizon where the architect by working in closer contact with social and economic conditions will be able to change his profession from its former condition of helpless inadequacy and luxurious detachment to one of genuine importance."

This is a new voice speaking, a clearer, realistically up-to-the-minute voice. Clearer and more realistic than the "younger generation" of summer 1939 in England or summer 1941 in America. While remaining loyal to their ideals as architects, the writers of these words wish to become an integral part of the immediate war effort. It is no question of laying aside the new future which we all believe in, or of planning it now to be ready for the peace when it comes. They believe they will be ready by creating it in the solution of immediate problems. That is not to suggest that the post-war world is not an immediate concern as well, but on the principle of priorities by which all total war must be guided, the main effort lies in the present and not in the future.

This editorial development in the first two issues of *Task* is the magazine's most striking feature. Unless one has read them it is difficult to convey this impression of the fuller appreciation of urgency which permeates the second number. There is little in the first number that specially deserves comment. Much the same has been done before, sometimes better, and often worse; Gropius, Moholy-Nagy and Prefabrication are all important articles, but somehow too exactly what one expects in the first number of a progressive students' magazine. But in the second number the editors have not been content only to discuss problems usually common to student architectural journalism. This is best seen in an article analysing the work of Le Corbusier and Frank Lloyd Wright, not only as architects but as social philosophers. One may say this is nothing new, nor would it be if the writers had followed the now well-worn path of analysing their technical and æsthetic theories. In his article "Architectural Utopias," Roy Kantorovich (of the University of the Witwatersrand, Union of South Africa), considers the basic political theories on which their work is founded. The article is one of the most stimulating that architectural criticism has produced in recent years. It might perhaps be said that "the author should be ashamed not to have done better having done so well." Here, possibly for the first time, and certainly in an English-language journal, the social and political theories of two of the great leaders of twentieth century architecture are subjected to an analysis the conclusions of which throw a new light on their achievements and failures.*

In the editorial article, "Architecture against Fascism," *Task* defines its political attitude ". . . European and American architects whose naive and trusting support of Fascism in its many forms reveal a political unawareness which whole men do not possess. One of the tragedies of recent history has been the inability of intellectuals and professionals, generally, to see that only by allying themselves with progressive and democratic movements can progress be achieved and their own cherished ideals for a better culture be won. This fundamental truth has been ignored by many so-called 'modern' architects, who seek to have the best of both worlds by propounding a new æsthetic and at the same time clinging to the whims and devotions of private patronage." This is perhaps too broad a generalisation. In the main, they supported and fought for democracy in Spain and all Europe, when the rest of their class was responsible for non-intervention. Their fault lies more in that they remained individualists than that political awareness was lacking.

Task is written with a freshness, sometimes

* Kantorovich writes: "Although there is no direct evidence available (but plenty of hearsay) of his (*Le Corbusier's*) espousal of the Fascist cause" . . . yet photographs in a recent issue of a popular illustrated weekly show him discussing his drawings with leading Vichy officials; the caption claims that Marshal Pétain, the prophet of home and family, had promised Le Corbusier facilities for building his skyscraper city after the war. It is not unjust to wonder what price Le Corbusier will have to pay for the hope that this impossible promise will be kept.

One of Rex Whistler's drawings from "The Last of Uptake," reviewed on this page.

approaching the naive, seldom found in professional journalism. One could make many criticisms of the material published and method of publication; its importance lies in its effort to ally critical and political reasoning with architecture. If it can maintain a similar improvement in each new number it will be worth watching. On the last page we read the warning note of the American declaration of war. "By Spring many of the editors will be at work in military or civil services and will probably be widely scattered." One can only hope that the students at Robinson Hall and their collaborators will be able to overcome these difficulties with greater success than their British contemporaries. A new journal growing from the enthusiasm of its editors and contributors deserves to live even in war conditions; if consciousness of the problems facing American architects, and in fact all Americans, is strong enough, a way can be found to overcome the difficulties of editorship and publication even in war time.

LEO DESYLLAS

Period-Period

THE LAST OF UPTAKE. By Simon Harcourt-Smith. Illustrated by Rex Whistler. London: B. T. Batsford. Price 10s. 6d.

IT would be a fascinating, if not immediately profitable, task to analyse the underlying reasons that prompt those sudden waves of enthusiasm for the day before yesterday that sweep the cultured world from time to time. That craze for the early eighteenth century which so surprisingly made itself manifest in the mid-Victorian era and which gave us "Henry Esmond" and the Queen Anne revival of Norman Shaw; and that passion for dressing themselves up in early Stuart costume which affected so many of Gainsborough's and Reynolds's sitters, are but two examples of this recurrent tendency. To us these attempts to escape into the past are more strongly evocative of the age which made them, more genuinely "period" in character than actual modes of the time. The Regency Greeks of Marcus Stone and Dendy Sadler for all their stocks and knee breeches smell more strongly of the 'eighties in our nostrils than do most contemporary conversation pictures. Nothing dates like the costume-piece.

In our own day the Regency once more attracted the attention of the *cognoscenti*, and throughout the 'thirties its vogue steadily increased. The furniture dealers who had cornered Empire pieces made fortunes, the pattern books of Percier and Fontaine were gutted by eager interior decorators, lives of the Prince Regent fell from the press like the leaves at Vallombrosa, and the "Southern Belle" was packed with well-informed fashionables *en route* for an amusing week-end in sight of the cherished Pavilion. And now there appears this volume which is the concentrated essence of all that enthusiasm. The text, as stylised and as ingenious as one of those elaborate mechanised toys in semi-precious stones which brought fame to Fabergé, is the best possible summary of all the things which the 1930's found attractive about the Romantic era; the grottoes, the landscape gardening, the cultivated eccentricity, the lavishness are all lovingly catalogued and shown forth. To complete this testimony of fashionable whimsy only the illustrations by Rex Whistler were needed, and how admirably they adorn and supplement the text.

At the present moment this work has an almost painfully nostalgic charm. As one turns the pages one is once more back in a vanished world, where the Georgian Group organised costume balls in stately homes and Messrs. Beaton and Messel were dimly visible through clouds of tulle; before Munich had acquired the notoriety of Canossa and was still just a centre of pilgrimage for the enthusiasts for rococo.

In a sterner age we may be grateful for the reminder of a frivolous past, and for our children the fact that it is already slightly out of date will no longer be discernible, and it will have acquired all the importance of a period period-piece.

OSBERT LANCASTER

SHORTER NOTICES

THE OLD CHURCHES OF LONDON. By Gerald Cobb. London: B. T. Batsford. Price 15s.

What is an "old" church? Ten years ago the word would have meant a medieval one and nothing else, and it is an amusing commentary on the change of fashion which the attention paid to Renaissance architecture in recent years has produced, that a book can now be published with such a title that gives three-quarters of its space to the work of Wren and his followers. What is distressing as well as amusing is that this book perpetuates the same antiquarian outlook that has previously been associated especially with the medievalist. The view of architecture as an assemblage of old bits, to be classified, labelled and compared, reappears unchanged after shifting its point of emphasis two centuries.

Mr. Cobb's book, nevertheless, is packed with information and should be useful as a work of reference. It would have been more useful if it had contained fewer of those tedious extracts from contemporary accounts so dear to antiquarians—"ffor ye 4 Pinicles with ye carving £250; ffor Scaffolding in consideration of ye Greate height £30," etc., etc.—there are pages and pages of it, serving no comprehensible purpose. However, the text is made acceptable by a long introduction (comprising a fifth of the whole book) by Mr. Geoffrey Webb, giving an authoritative summary of the whole course of English ecclesiastical architecture, as exemplified in London, and one that is readable as well as informative.

The illustrations are numerous and include many details of interiors and fittings that were lost in last year's air-raids.

IRISH CASTLES. By H. G. Leask. Dundalk: The Dundalgan Press. Price 8s. 6d.

In distinction from the one reviewed above, this book is far from representing the fashion of 1942. In fact no country but Ireland could have produced it to-day, so exactly does it conform to the type of the academic, carefully annotated, study of medieval antiquities which was synonymous with architectural literature half a century ago in this country—even to the marginal sketches taken from Viollet-le-Duc. However, of its kind it is well and conscientiously done, the author speaks with the authority of a President of the Royal Society of Antiquaries of Ireland and an Inspector of National Monuments, and, since such a catalogue *raisonné* of Irish Castles probably does not already exist, there is obviously a place for it. It is thoroughly equipped with plans and drawings, an appendix giving a complete list of castles and castle sites, and a glossary. The dozen or so photographs are not very clearly reproduced.

NEW TOWNS AFTER THE WAR. By F. J. Osborn. London: J. M. Dent and Sons. Price 4s. 6d.

This notice should be headed, "Which War?" This is a revised edition of the book Mr. Osborn published under the same title in 1918, and in his preface he comments on the fact that he feels moved to republish it almost unaltered, as though this could only add to its authority. He does not seem to realize that needs and circumstances change, and that he is only exposing the weakness of his own theories by suggesting that the needs of 1942 can be satisfied by plans laid down in 1918 and themselves, by his own admission, based on ideas worked out in 1903 when Barry Parker and Raymond Unwin built Letchworth Garden City—when the motor-car, for instance, was only in its infancy. In fact this is not a book about new towns at all, in any truly urban sense, but one more repetition of the author's now well-worn plea for scattering an animal as naturally gregarious as man even more than at present. Those who follow current planning controversies will know already how skilfully Mr. Osborn disguises the sentimentalities of Garden City propaganda as rational discussion of the whole planning issue. The fact that he has been doing so in the same terms since 1918 may be a record, but is a double-sided one.

A NEW ENGLAND: planning for the future. By S. D. Adshead. London: Frederick Muller. Price 7s. 6d.

The spate of prophetic books does not seem to dry up, even though the public is now more wide awake to the need for realism in discussing the future than it was at the beginning of the "Reconstruction" boom. It now appreciates better that the future cannot be planned by agreeing on a picture of what it ought to be like; that, instead, the future is being made now. This does not mean that there is no room whatever for discussion of our ideals, as long as such discussion is not made a substitute for action to make them possible. This book is typical in containing some thoughtful practical suggestions about planning legislation and the like, but without much evidence of planning being more closely related to the real human factors from which it should be inseparable. The author's attitude to town-planning is respectably academic. His observations on architectural design are strangely naive.

ANTHOLOGY

An Architect among the Wits

" How d'ye do, gentlemen ? " said the architect, as he came up to the group—he was a formal, good kind of man.—" How d'ye do, Mister Garrick!—O, and the Reverend Mister Sterne, too !—Sir Joshua Reynolds, your most obedient humble servant.—How do you do, Mister Gainsborough?"—bowing to the others, whom he did not know. " What, gentlemen, viewing our fine scenery this fine evening ?—Aye, Mister Gainsborough, this must be just to your satisfaction,—I—I envy you gentlemen your powers of the painting-brush.—Yes, indeed ! you must enjoy this scenery superior to us, who know nothing of these matters. A very pretty picture this, indeed—very pretty. What do you think of my church, Mister Gainsborough, as viewed in perspective from Primrose Hill ? I'm assured it makes a notable object from that point of view."

" Gainsborough thinks it a better object a great way off, King Harry," said Foote, always enjoying a little mischief.

" Then where would you view it from, Mister Gainsborough ? " said the architect, not at all seeing the joke.

" Why, from Shooter's Hill," said Garrick, laughing.

" Shooter's Hill ! " exclaimed Flitcroft.—" Why then, Sir, Mister Gainsborough must look at it through a spying-glass."

" No, Sir," said Gainsborough, who would not willingly give offence—" these wags make me say more than I ever thought."—Gainsborough wished them all at Nova Scotia, and would have put an end to the question ; but the architect would drive on the discourse—" How would you wish to see it, then, Mister Gainsborough ?—Pray favour me with your observations ? "

" Why, by twilight, or moonlight," said Gainsborough.

" And why so, Sir, may I beg to know ? "

" Because then I should see the structure all in one mass."

" Aye, I thought so," replied Flitcroft ; " you gentlemen have always great notions of art. Yes, I'm told it makes a good fine mass, sure enough !—Dear me ! I should like to see a picture of it from your notable genius, Mister Gainsborough—it would be very rural—very picturesque!"

This was pushing the matter rather too far.—" Picturesque ! " echoed the painter, losing his patience.—" What the devil have you builders to do with the picturesque ? "

" But I would have you know that I am not a builder, Mister Gainsborough ; I am an architect, and have studied in the Burlington school," returned Flitcroft, piqued at the observation.

" Be it so," retorted Gainsborough. " Then, Mister Architect, who art no builder, why not conjure up a Gothic building ? By the powers, were I King of England, and potent as Harry the Eighth, I would proclaim, that he who built a church, should erect it in the old English architecture, and fail not, or lose his ears. Why did you not make a Gothic church—and why did you not build it of stone ? "

" For two good reasons, Mister Gainsborough—first, because we had not money enough—and, secondly, Mister Gainsborough, because—because—because I have no opinion of Gothic."

" Ha—ha—ha—ha ! Well," said Gainsborough, " that is a fiat ! Ha—ha—ha—ha ! No—my Lord Burlington had a contempt for Gothic ; *ergo*, the Burlington school have a contempt for Gothic."

" And *ergo*," added Flitcroft, " I suppose Mister Gainsborough has a contempt for the whole *tote* of them."

" You have saved me the trouble of saying so, by Jupiter ! " said Gainsborough. " Ha—ha—ha—ha ! "

Flitcroft was nettled, but not to be laughed from the field.—" Well, Mister Gainsborough," said he, " were you a sovereign, you would have other despotic laws to punish every good farmer that filled up deep cart-ruts, or new thatched a crazy barn, or put up a new paling to keep out the swine—of course."

" Yes, by the Lord, you are right !—I hate your rich farmers, as I hate the Burlingtonians (laughing all the while)—the landscape-spoiling rogues ! "

" Yes," said Foote, taking up the cudgels for his old friend Flitcroft—" and Mister Gainsborough would command every sheep-shearer to be clean sheared of his ears, for shearing the fleece—they look so picturesque with their shaggy coats."

" Certainly," added Garrick, to give the worthy old builder a lift.—" Gainsborough had rather go without a coat than rob the innocents of their wool."

" That I would, by Jupiter ! " said Gainsborough.

" Mercy on a landscape-painter's tenants," said Sterne (for all entered into the humour of the dialogue, and all generously took part with Flitcroft)—" Aye, mercy on them—their farms must be stocked with Pharaoh's lean kine, broken-down carts, ragged harness, lame wheelbarrows, creaking gates, rag-stuffed casements, broken tiles, broken-kneed horses——."

" And broken bankrupt tenantry, or the devil's in't," added Foote, " with such Gainsborough-like tattered and torn homesteads."

" That's the farming for the philanthropic Tom," said Garrick ; " and he were rich, they would be happy—for whip me if I do not think he would pay his tenants for doing of nothing—save and except keeping every thing *carefully out of repair* ! "

" A pretty picture this," said Sir Joshua, " of our worthy friend Gainsborough's RURAL ECONOMY."

EPHRAIM HARDCASTLE (*Wine and Walnuts*, 1823.)

MARGINALIA

Tim Bennett

It is with very great regret that we record the death of Tim Bennett (Lieutenant S. B. Bennett, R.N.V.R.), who has been killed in action while serving in the Navy. He had only recently left the A.A. School of Architecture when he joined the Navy at the outbreak of war, but he had already shown himself one of the most promising of the younger generation of architects, with a lively intelligence and an unsparingly critical curiosity about every subject allied to architecture. He first made his mark as a critic as one of the three editors responsible for that epoch-making students' magazine, *Focus*, and had already become a contributor to THE ARCHITECTURAL REVIEW.

The loss of intelligences like Tim Bennett's is one this country can ill afford ; it is counting on them when rebuilding begins after the war.

This Month's Anthology

The source of the extract printed as this month's " Anthology " is sufficiently little known for a bibliographical note to be possibly of interest. The real author of *Wine and Walnuts* was W. H. Pyne, the water-colourist. Pyne was born in 1769, and exhibited landscapes, notable for their figures of a humorous character, at the Royal Academy from 1790 onwards. He was one of the original members of the Water-colour Society, founded in 1804. He made his reputation, however, when he compiled and illustrated a work entitled *Microcosm, or a Picturesque Delineation of the Arts, Agriculture and Manufactures of Great Britain.* It was published in parts, beginning in 1803, and had a great success, starting a fashion for this kind of study of the contemporary scene. He was also connected with Ackermann, to many of whose publications he contributed text or illustrations.

Pyne's other and more obscure rôle was that of gossip-writer to the theatrical and artistic world of the late eighteenth century. He had marked talent as a literary *raconteur*, which talent found its principal outlet in a series of narratives published first in the *Literary Gazette* and subsequently (in 1823) in book form under the title, *Wine and Walnuts, an after-dinner chit-chat.* For this kind of work he adopted the pseudonym of Ephraim Hardcastle, described on the title-page of the book as " citizen and drysalter." Under the same pseudonym he published (in 1825) one work of fiction : *The Twenty-ninth of May, or Rare Doings at the Restoration.* He died in poverty and obscurity in 1843.

Wine and Walnuts pretends to be authentic reminiscence of the doings and sayings of the great, most of the stories being put into the mouth of an old gentleman referred to as " my uncle Zachary," but it is clear enough that it is all a fantasy on biographical history rather than history itself. The great men introduced—Garrick, Foote, Sterne, Reynolds, and even Hogarth and Swift—lived too long before Pyne's time for personal reminiscence—let alone actual acquaintance. And the glittering constellations of great names, though affording a gossip-writer's para-

WAR-TIME STANDARD DESIGNS

Two more examples of the straightforward kind of design that has emerged from war-time conditions and now occupies quite a prominent place in the every-day scene. A number of such designs—especially those found in A.R.P. equipment—were illustrated in the December, 1941, number. Above are a reinforced concrete static water dam, and a pressed steel street-island post with shaded lighting. Photographs are by Peter Ray.

dise, are too obviously hand-picked to be true. But his gossip is not without value as well as being entertaining, for Pyne lived near enough to the time to acquire a lot of local colour at no more than second hand and was a shrewd student of character and social behaviour.

An instance of the book's value is afforded by the passage quoted here. Henry Flitcroft (incidentally the only architect mentioned) has always been supposed to have been the architect of Hampstead church, without there being any documentary proof. But this passage, whether the incidents described are authentic or not, can almost be taken as proof, since Pyne could hardly have made a mistake about such familiar and topical matters. The character of Flitcroft as here depicted —with the self-made man's usual mixture of assertiveness and obsequiousness —accords exactly with what little we know about him.

C.I.S.P.H.

These initials stand for a new organisation that has recently been launched for the provision of better housing. Although its actual title, the Committee for the Industrial and Scientific Provision of Housing, does not commit it to such a programme, its object is to study prefabricated housing methods and their application to post-war housing needs. It was explained at its inaugural meeting that the word prefabrication has been omitted from its designation because of its associations in the public mind with temporary buildings like army huts and with an inflexible, unimaginative kind of standardisation.

What the Committee regards as the logical result of the prefabrication trend in building design, is that houses, like motor cars, should come to be regarded by the public as consumer goods, not as security for a long-term investment, and the Committee is investigating house-building finance from this point of view.

At the inaugural meeting the chairman of the Committee, Mr. Harry Weston (who is also chairman of the City of Coventry Housing Committee), described the general objects of the Committee, and Mr. Denis Clarke Hall, who has made a wide study of prefabrication technique here and in America, discussed the research programme. He emphasised particularly the need for a preliminary standardisation of dimensions and of points of junction between one material or unit of equipment and another.

Acknowledgement

Acknowledgement is due to the National Buildings Record, and their photographers, James Nelson and Victor Turl, for the majority of the photographs of bomb damage in Bristol and Clifton, published in this issue. Other photographs are by *The Times* and the Associated Press.

CORRESPONDENCE

The Garden City Movement

Sir,—Your report of our Cambridge Conference on "Industry and Rural Life" conveys one or two wrong impressions which I hope you will permit me to correct.

First, the Association has an aim exactly opposite to that of "suburbanising the whole country." It believes, and has always believed, in moderate-sized planned towns with limited

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boundaries, beyond which there should be an unbuilt-on belt of agricultural country. For years we were almost alone, and disregarded, in opposing suburban sprawl and scattered building (see, for example, my little book of 1918, recently re-issued by Messrs. Dent, and recall Sir Raymond Unwin's infinite reiterations of the idea of planning towns as compact units on a "background" of unspoiled country).

Second, the purpose of the Cambridge Conference, clearly explained in the invitation, was to discuss how the recommendations of the Barlow Report, for decentralisation of some industry and people from overgrown and overcrowded cities, necessary for the sake of the people to remain in these cities, could be carried out with the minimum dislocation and maximum advantage of the rural countryside. A memorandum of the Association (sent to all the speakers, and since published as the booklet "Planning and the Countryside"), definitely discouraged a wide scattering of new or removed industries in villages and open country, and gave reasons why they should mainly be grouped in the existing small towns and in new towns on the garden city principle. Several of the addresses at the conference dealt (most usefully) with aspects of the problem of industrial settlement in relation to small towns, villages and the countryside. My own contribution touched on the less recognised reasons for decentralisation and grouping as well as on the administrative and financial problems of the type of town-building which it implies. You may disagree with us and with the Barlow Commission, but that does not make what we say irrelevant to countryside planning.

Third, Mr. Sharp (no doubt honestly) misunderstood me when he said that I had "jibed at beauty." I never have. On the contrary, I have for many years fought alongside architects for better design. I "jibe" (if that is the word) at the architectural writers who seek to build up a philosophy of town planning on externals and to derive a sham sociology from their specialist interest in the symmetry of a street. But even in "jibing" I sympathise with a passion much needed in a world still mainly blind to architecture as such—though by no means insensitive to "beauty" in a wider sense. A long experience of the home-seeking public has taught me that the architecture (and the planning) battle is lost if its strategy places architectural interest first and common human desires second. I have no doubt we are really in agreement on this. We shall resolve our genuine differences all the better if we are careful not to misrepresent each other.

F. J. OSBORN
(Hon. Secretary, Town and Country Planning Association).

Our correspondent writes: "The aims of the Town and Country Planning Association may be 'exactly opposite to that of suburbanising the whole country,' nevertheless, the creation of the two Garden Cities has resulted in making two suburb-like agglomerations, which lack even the advantage of being near their urban nucleus, and this latter is indisputably the advantage of an ordinary suburb. A second point is that the changed conditions created by the war will probably prove the findings of the Barlow Commission completely out of date by the time the conclusion of hostilities is reached. The war has also proved that dispersal (as suggested by some) for defence reasons, is a fallacy. Finally, as to the question of urban beauty, the point is that (regrettable as it may be) this cannot be attained by the loose development advocated by the Garden City movement. I am very pleased to note that Mr. Osborn thinks that beauty is not to be jibed at, but I do not think that the attainment of urban beauty consists merely in a fight 'for better designs.' What he means by 'a sham sociology derived from their (the architectural writers) specialist interest in the symmetry of a street,' is beyond my comprehension."

Correction

We regret that on page xliv of the June issue Messrs. Dolby & Wilkinson, consulting engineers, were described as a limited company. They are, in fact, a partnership and not a trading concern. It should also have been mentioned that the ground floor heating was carried out by Messrs. Comyn Ching & Co., Ltd.

The Buildings Illustrated

Information Centre, Islington

Architects: Matthews and Son

The general contractors were H. Fairweather and Co. Principal subcontractors are as follows: Hope's Heating and Lighting Ltd., heating and ventilating; T. H. Smerdon Ltd., electrical work; British Reinforced Concrete Co. Ltd., reinforced concrete; Lenscrete Ltd., reinforced concrete lights; Grant and West Ltd., roof covering; Mander Bros., decorative materials; and T. R. Roberts Ltd., black-out curtains and linoleum.

The fact that goods made of raw materials in short supply owing to war conditions are advertised in THE ARCHITECTURAL REVIEW should not be taken as an indication that they are necessarily available for export.