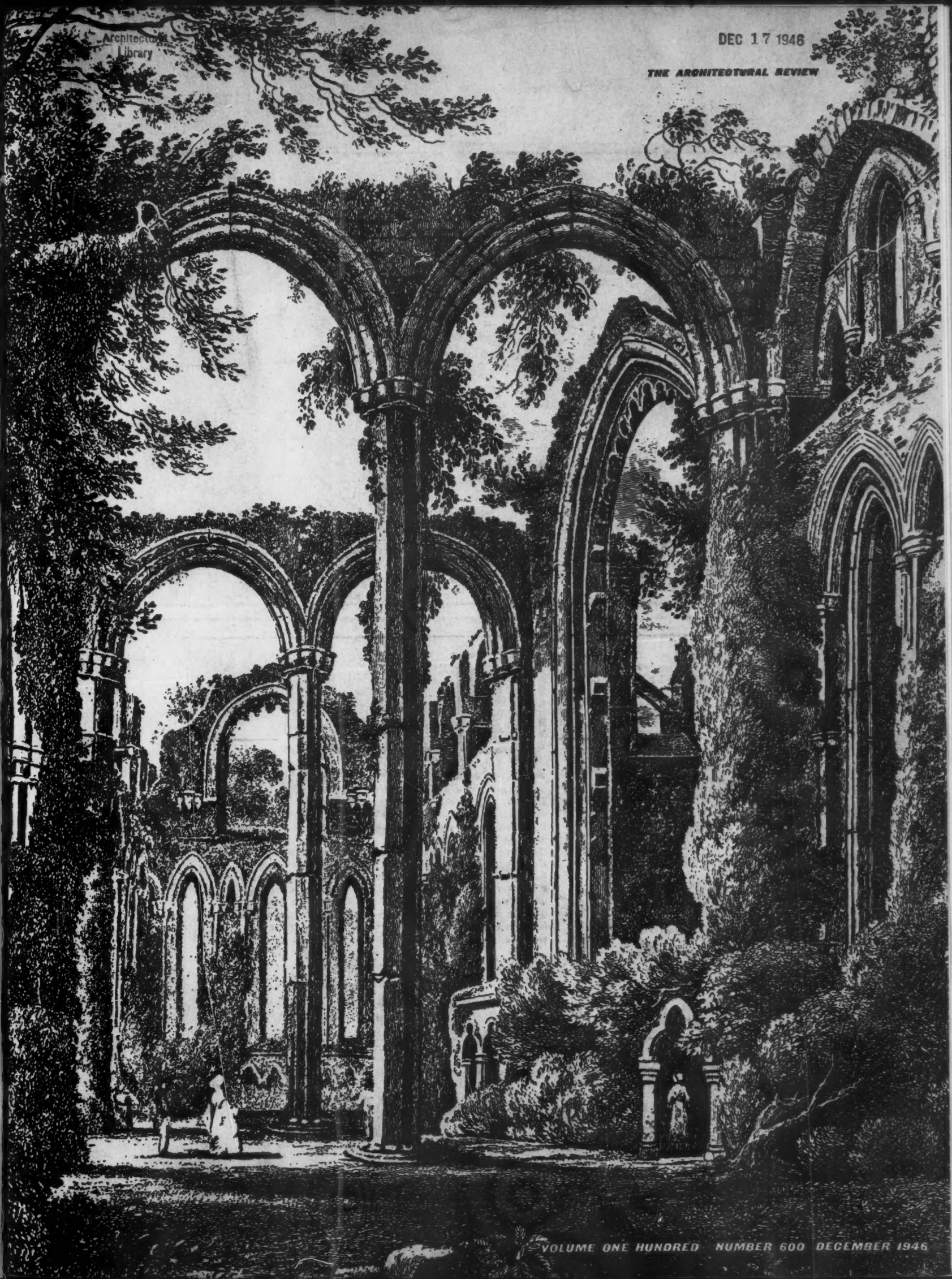




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The Architectural Review

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THREE SHILLINGS AND SIXPENCE

THE COVER. The restoration scheme commented on in October's *Marginalia* has put Fountains Abbey in the news, and this month's cover is an enlarged reproduction of an engraving in Thomas Sopwith's *Eight Views of Fountains Abbey*, etched on copper-plate, from drawings by J. Metcalf and J. W. Carmichael, which was published at Newcastle in 1832. It shows the interior of the Lady Chapel, while the engraving on which the frontispiece is based shows the Chapter House from the quadrangle. The iconography of Fountains is not as extensive as one might expect. The earliest illustrated book to have been entirely devoted to the ruins would seem to have been J. and H. Storer's *Delineations, Graphical and Descriptive, of Fountains Abbey in the West Riding of the County of York*, which appeared in 1820; the standard of its engravings is not high. Cotman's *Architectural Remains* contains, surprisingly enough, only one etching of Fountains—a close-up view of part of the Refectory. There are some impressive coloured lithographs of the Abbey, after drawings by William Richardson, in *The Monastic Ruins of Yorkshire*, by E. Churton (published at York, 1843-56).



The quotation under this engraving of Fountains Abbey comes from the Reverend William Gilpin's *Observations relative chiefly to Picturesque Beauty . . . made in the year 1772*. In the passage of which it forms part (and which is quoted at length in this month's *Anthology*) Gilpin deplors what was done to the ruins of Fountains concurrently with the landscaping of their setting in 1768. This Georgian "restoration" was a negligible matter compared with the rebuilding now contemplated by the group of Roman Catholics who have bought the Abbey. But Gilpin's general remarks on the subject of ruins remain as true today as they ever were, and acquire a fresh urgency in the circumstances which have arisen.



A ruin is a sacred thing. Rooted for ages in the soil; assimilated to it; and become, as it were, a part of it; we consider it as a work of nature, rather than of art.

Another Man's Poison

The suburbs are generally either ignored by students of architecture and taste or dismissed as being unworthy of serious consideration. This is despite the fact that they provide the background against which the lives of the majority of English people are now lived and that the ideals engendered there are, for better or worse, the ideals of the ordinary Englishman to-day. In a new book shortly to be published under the title "The Castles on the Ground," Mr. J. M. Richards gives an account of what a pilgrim to this little-understood territory can expect to find there—not in order to make fun of suburban taste, but by sympathetic understanding to illuminate the whole question of popular taste in relation to everyday life. The following is one chapter from this book. The book is illustrated with lithographs by John Piper, two of the water-colour sketches for which are reproduced here.

J. M. Richards



WE can take the train from any metropolitan terminus, the same train, steam or electric, in which the civil servant, the artisan, the business man and his typist make their daily journey to the busy world and back again. Six return journeys a week they make. On Sunday the trains are empty, for that is the day when the suburb comes into its own. On Sunday the inhabitants remain to worship the suburban gods according to their special ritual, and with all the sights and sounds that accompany it—the sounds especially: the music of lawnmowers, the snip-snip of garden shears, the barking of small dogs straining to be let off the leash at the first turning off the main road, the squeals of a child who is being taught to ride a bicycle down the second quiet turning, the roaring exhaust as a girl friend is whisked off for the day in a sports car and the high-pitched chatter of the group that swings its racquets gaily as it strides in line abreast across the pavement on its way to the tennis club—a group of three only, the observer may notice, but this is because one of their number has hustled on ahead as it is her turn to prepare the teas, to get the urn going and make the cucumber sandwiches. Preoccupation with these and many other private activities, and indeed the very somnolence of shady streets and the shuttered fronts of shops, result in a barrier being erected between suburbia and the outside world which only Monday morning's alarm clock can break down again.

We ourselves begin to penetrate this barrier when our train draws up at the station to which we have taken our ticket. We are at once surrounded by familiar, well-loved objects that give its local colour to the suburban scene; to begin with, the tin-plated advertisements for Mazawattee Tea and Iron Jellies and Stephens' Ink. Passengers must not cross the line except by the bridge, and we shall see the second of these advertisements only when we do so, because it adorns each riser of the stairs up which we have to climb, but the spectacular blot of Stephens' Ink catches our eye almost before the train has stopped moving. Then there are the slot machines, some with five compartments containing exotic products like caramels and throat pastilles as well as the usual chocolate. Perhaps a lad is idly pulling at the trays on the chance that someone has been improvident enough to put in a penny without claiming his prize, though why anyone should do so he would not know if you asked him. There is W. H. Smith's paper stall, open on week-day mornings only, now closed behind a rolling shutter. There is the local photographer's showcase, filled with simpering bridesmaids and petulant children dressed only in a wisp of chiffon they certainly did not bring with them and clutching a teddy-bear they are hoping they will be allowed to take away. There are advertisements of the local nursing home and of a tea-shop that specializes in home-made cakes, the second a hand-painted one

decorated with ladies in crinolines. But we must not dally among the delights of the railway station, except to note in passing how hard it is to draw the line between the period charm of the old-fashioned and the contemporary charm of what is sharply characteristic. It is typical of the suburban scene, in fact, that it is an accumulation of trivialities; the novelties of this year are always being added to the novelties of last year, and these are always fading into insignificance until they are ready to emerge again in the character of the old and familiar things that we wondered at in childhood. All is grist to this mill, as we see when we emerge from the station. Half-way up the station approach is a shabby shed-like building, the coal merchant's office, with a window containing baskets of Best Kitchen Nuts and Derby Brights, and near it the only remaining four-wheeled cab waits for the rare aged passenger. But at the bottom of the approach stands the new Odeon super cinema, glamorous in chromium plate.

If we turn left here we find ourselves walking downhill along a wide stretch of pavement, past a row of shops. These shops are probably called simply The Parade. They are not quite so new as the Odeon, though some of them have had their facades brought up to date with jazz lettering and plate glass windows of the kind where the glass is not framed but butts at right angles, the sheets being joined by a metal clip. There is a dress shop like this, called "Mary's," with a sparsely dressed window, containing only one or two garments draped on aluminium stands, and leaving the interior of the shop visible beyond a low, pleated curtain; also a wireless shop, very untidy by contrast, both inside and out, but one that has gone to the expense of a neon sign over the door. The branch of Boots has also been lately refronted, but it does not look so new because of the curly lettering on the gilt and glass fascia-board and the old-fashioned way the windows are packed with every kind of goods. In contrast to these are one or two shops that have clearly been there a long time, notably a dairy with a window surrounded by yellow, green and white tiles in an *art nouveau* pattern and containing a large polished brass milk-churn, whose flamboyant inscription is worn into illegibility with much rubbing. This churn is flanked by two china statuary groups of milkmaids, farm-boys, jersey cows and well-fed sheep dogs in pastel shades of rose, sea-green and cocoa-brown. The interior of the shop is rather dark but cool looking, its old-fashioned air a little spoiled by an ice-cream counter just within the door that blatantly advertises cornets.

There is no need to describe the other shops in The Parade: the draper's, a thriving business but old-fashioned compared with Mary's—its windows are hung with all sorts of garments

and miscellaneous stuffs—where you could always buy *broderie anglaise* during the time it was too dowdy to be obtainable in the West End, more than one tobacconist and sweetshop, and a branch of the International Stores, in front of which stands a triangular framework in which customers can leave their bicycles.

When the suburb was first built The Parade was its only row of shops. This was long before the days of the municipal "shopping centre" put up in 1928 in connection with the new estate half a mile to the east, the one where shopkeepers kept on going bankrupt because housewives were at first too conservative to patronise them, even though by doing so they could save themselves the long walk to The Parade. It was also, of course, before the days when shops sprang up along the new by-pass road where it crosses the continuation of the High Street at the top of the hill. Old residents, in fact, still do not acknowledge these shops as part of the suburb; they really belong to the world of by-pass roads where motorists only halt for petrol as they chase each other to the sea. If we travel to the suburb by car instead of by train, we do not enter it when we reach these cross-roads, although by then we are officially within its boundaries. We must turn down the hill till we are within sight of the green trees that line the pavement at the bottom, where the road dodges round the church. Then we will feel the difference at once; we are less exposed now—within the suburb and not outside it.

The shops in The Parade, then, for many of its inhabitants—especially the older ones—are a centre of the gregarious week-day life of the suburb. Housewives come almost every morning, visiting them in regular order, exchanging the gossip of the day as they meet and part and meet again further down the hill. To the younger generation they are also an important centre, full of memories and associations: memories of standing in front of the sweetshop window at an age when one's chin barely reached the sill, of the bad luck when, on a hot summer's day, one passed the dairy on the opposite side of the road and had no chance to plead for an ice-cream cornet, of the unendurable boredom of sitting in the gloom of the draper's on one of those tall stools that almost toppled over if one fidgeted, wondering how anyone could take so long to make up their mind, of one's first puncture repair outfit, of the enticing smell that came out of the tobacconist's, and so on for every age and season, until one achieved sufficient independence to spend one's pocket money and leisure entertaining friends to indigestible teas at the Odeon, where the café over the foyer was a favourite rendezvous. This café was an immediate success when it opened. Like the outside of the cinema it displayed plenty of chromium plate and tubular lighting, but there were also wicker chairs and tables painted green, cleverly shaded with gold, and a jazz-pattern carpet and a soda fountain in Spanish Colonial style.

There is thus some part of The Parade that holds memories for everyone and appeals to everyone's taste. This taste, it is true, is partly a matter of memory; that is to say, it is partly based on familiarity. But it also moves with the times, and here we might halt our voyage of discovery for a moment and see what the contrasts we find in The Parade can tell us about that important phenomenon the cycle of taste. "Taste" is a word we have tried to avoid using hitherto, because taste implies the superiority of one thing over another, and we were at pains to point out that relative merit does not arise when we are studying the differences that different ideals naturally produce. We are concerned with what the suburban resident really likes, as distinct from what sophisticated people think he ought to like, and if we can assume that the evolution of his preference is at least partially illustrated by what we find in The Parade, we can say that the most marked contrast is that between the dairy and the Odeon. The latter is absolutely the last word, but when the former was built it was the last word too; so much so that its *art nouveau* tiling shocked nearly everyone when it first intruded itself into this respectable row of red brick and terra-cotta shop fronts, relieved in those days only by soberly painted woodwork and a modest amount of polished brass. Since then, the same dairy, itself unchanged, has no doubt passed through each of the successive stages of public regard and disparagement that together form the so-called cycle of taste.

Perhaps cycle of popularity would be a better term. First the dairy was new-fangled, then fashionable, then merely commonplace, then rather dowdy, then laughably old-fashioned and out of date, then (to the sophisticated) attractively "period," and so on. This last one is probably as advanced a stage as will be reached for a little while, and to the ordinary suburban resident—the non-sophisticate—the dairy is still in the previous stage; it is still merely an old-fashioned type of shop with no romance attached to it. For him the next stage will have arrived when it is generally acknowledged to be romantically old-world. The final stage is, one supposes, its acceptance and veneration as a museum piece.

This last category is by definition a more exclusive one than the others, and entry into it will be dependent on certain conditions. Exactly what these conditions are would be difficult to define at the present time, since we are only just arriving at the unprecedented moment when products of the modern age begin to qualify for the later stages of the cycle of popularity. Hitherto we have only seen the complete cycle in operation as regards the products of the handicraft age, which acquire a rarity value with the lapse of time or have unique qualities of craftsmanship to recommend them. Now that the products of the factory system—which means mass production as well as the more frequent use of synthetic materials—will soon have been in existence long enough to qualify as period pieces, the quantity in which they survive is alone likely to change the view posterity ultimately takes of them. But in any case we are not interested here in their ultimate elevation to the status of a museum piece, because this process will lift them out of the suburban environment and offer them to the judgment of posterity as a whole. In that exalted sphere taste can afford to claim alliance with merit, and the economic and social influences we see at work in the suburb will no longer apply. Sufficient for us is the progress of our *art nouveau* dairy up to the moment when it shows signs of acquiring a new period interest, having survived the doldrums of dowdiness.

The whole cycle of popularity, indeed, is only of interest to us in so far as it suggests the large part played by the mere lapse of time in determining what we find ourselves ready to admire and what to condemn. If the sophisticated world is now almost ready to admire the *art nouveau* dairy again, will it not in due course admire the chromium bedecked Odeon too? Already there are signs that the day is coming when the older suburbs, recently despised, will be commonly admired. After the lapse of the necessary time the charm of their peeping gables and balustraded porches set among varied and intricate greenery will suddenly flash upon us, as full of romance as the manors and dower houses whose styles they emulate. And in due course will not the newer suburbs follow suit: the sham half-timbered villas with their creosoted garages, their crazy paving and the bottle glass in the panes of their front doors, and even the modernistic villas with corner windows, horizontal window panes, angular balconies and green glazed tiles on their roofs? At present, as in raw double lines they crawl up the half-made roads, like so many dolls' houses spilled out of a sack, they may seem to do nothing but brutally scar the surface of downland and meadow, but here too will time not have its way?

However, that is the outsider's viewpoint once again—and the superior outsider at that. The suburban world, less confused by aspirations towards the absolute and less self-conscious about the snobbery of good taste, likes the Odeon now, and the rows of dolls' house villas march across the meadow towards a goal about which no misgivings are felt. Let the people of taste, however, who look at suburbia from the outside and claim that what they admire is in some way "better" than what they do not admire, take note of how much even their discriminating admiration is influenced by the lapse of time. How little reason, therefore, have they to impose their taste on the suburbs as something absolute, let alone as something relevant to the suburb's purposes.

Another thing to be noted—a thing which we find exemplified in The Parade—is that the cycle of popularity exists at all stages simultaneously. It takes all sorts to make the suburban world, and its essential quality lies in a mixture of familiarity

and novelty, glamour and homeliness. The suburb is neither the refuge of dowdiness, tolerated for the sake of old associations, nor the playground of slick modernity, but is something of both and everything in between. The past jostles the present and pigeon-hole conventions are no more often true than untrue. Familiarity breeds no contempt, liberty does not lead to license and the new wine improves in the old bottles into which it is consistently being decanted.

To see this aspect of suburbia clearly we must get closer to its heart than our voyage of discovery has so far taken us; in fact we must penetrate inside the suburban home, for in its home-life the impulses that dominate the suburban environment naturally have their origin. So down the hill that drops steeply from the lower end of The Parade, and round the corner where the road swerves to the left to avoid the church, which occupies a sort of mound, rising behind an old brick wall. It is quite an old church, though over-restored, built of brick and flint with a stumpy lead-covered spire, but we do not see much of it as we pass; it is mostly hidden by the lime trees and shrubby yews that grow in the graveyard, the former making a shady avenue out of the path that climbs up to the church porch from the elaborate tiled and timbered lych-gate which was put up as a memorial after the last war. With the lych-gate at our backs we begin to climb again. On our left, where the road widens somewhat as though it had half a mind to blossom into a village green (there is even an oldish tree, ringed with an iron railing, planted on the edge of the pavement), is the Fire Station. It is a rather ambitious red terra-cotta building, with a clock in a sort of turret. Alongside it is a nondescript bicycle shop and a couple of genuine old houses. These are survivals from the country village which was here before suburbia engulfed it, but they are so covered with creepers that their character is not very plain, and one of them has a large enamel advertisement for cigarettes on its gable end. Across the road—on the right, that is to say, coming away from the church—is a pillared gateway, flanked by posts and chains, leading to a mansion designed by a pupil of Norman Shaw. This has recently been taken over as Council Offices.

If we took any of the turnings on the left, the one with the Fire Station at the corner or one of two or three beyond it, we would find ourselves among select if old-fashioned residential streets, lined with comfortable houses mostly built about the same time as the Fire Station; solidly built, too, standing each embosked in its own shrubbery, with a conservatory attached, with its brick or rough-cast walls covered with creeper, its slate roof crowned by an ornamental ridge, and set about with well-grown trees, the clear green of acacia and sycamore, sombre evergreens, the rich copper foliage of a variegated maple, and occasionally a bushy chestnut or a prunus in delicate flower.

But we have already warned ourselves against imagining that the enticements of these mature suburban vintages comprise the whole charm of suburbia itself. The pilgrim must withstand the lures of luxuriant greenery on the one hand and period nostalgia on the other if he wants to try out his disinterestedness against suburbia unadorned. His consolation, it may be added, if he does not find all he hopes for, is that lavish adornment is an essential part of the ideal that all suburbs are striving after. But for the present the simpler if less finished picture is the more instructive.

So toiling manfully up the hill, while schoolchildren come whizzing down on bicycles, we turn eventually to the right, making for a newer residential area whose streets were only carved after the last war out of the first slopes of the chalk hills in the shelter of which the original village stood. Now there is quite a colony of trim red-roofed houses, mostly semi-detached, spread out between the top of the hill and the new Cottage Hospital.

Our first impression as we penetrate the complicated pattern of curving streets in which these houses are laid out is one of surprising openness. Vegetation seems scanty, and the silhouettes of roofs and chimneys have an uncompromising look because they are not broken by the rotundity and transparency of trees. We notice the extent of the sky and contrast it with the closed-in character of the residential avenues near the

bottom of the hill, up which we took a glimpse when we halted opposite the Fire Station. But if we look closer there are many signs that even in the newest streets time and the cultivator instincts of the inhabitants are doing much to remedy this barrenness. Rock plants are already mottling with green the low walls that separate the pavements from the trim front gardens. Young trees have been planted in circular holes at the edge of the pavement, though some of them are so small they are still tied to poles for support. Inside the gardens, shrubs of the same kinds that have always been used to add colour and texture to uncompromising brick and paintwork line the paths to the front porches and flank the garage doors: *laurustinus* and the American currant, privet, *berberis* and laurel. And creepers are being trained up trellises.

In these and other ways a varied landscape is being made to emerge even from the regular pattern that municipalization has brought to suburban house building; till in due course the pilgrim to this province of suburbia will be confronted with a scene much like the one we have already admired in the earlier suburbs, a scene that is unified in the sense that the whole is greater than the part, yet always seems to be changing as the pilgrim explores the winding thoroughfares.

There are many other differences between the earlier suburbs and the later ones, but mostly they are mere matters of fashion. The name of the street for example—Chestnut Avenue perhaps, or Priory Grove—though still embossed in capitals on an iron plate, now stands by itself on a pair of wooden posts, like the station name on a country railway platform, instead of being fixed to the fence of the corner house. This may be because high wooden fences have largely disappeared. Low walls or hedges have taken their place and the front gardens have thereby been thrown open to the road, an effect which is enhanced by the narrow strip of grass which in these new suburbs separate roadway and pavement, an extension, as it were, of the grass plots in the gardens themselves. Then conservatories are less common, certainly the ornamental kind attached to the house, although somewhere in the garden there may be a small glasshouse, bought ready-made for cultivating tomatoes and early chrysanthemums. Instead of a conservatory there may be a garage, included within the sweep of the gabled front; instead of whitish lace or muslin curtains, coloured curtains of art silk or cretonne or repp, falling straight instead of being looped back in any way; instead of smooth slate roofs, rosy tiles, and instead of arched wire frames for the pergola in the rose garden, rustic woodwork, stickily varnished. There is much less variety in the shapes and colours of chimney pots, and we note the partial disappearance (due, no doubt, to improved draughts in chimneys) of that fantastic assortment of metal cowls, bending, branching and revolving, that used to decorate the suburban skyline. We also note the partial disappearance of geometrical flower beds cut out of garden lawns, which used to be planted with lobelias and calceolarias if there was a gardener with time for bedding out, otherwise with a waving clump of pampas grass, and the complete disappearance of that phenomenon most characteristic of the old-fashioned house-front, the oval back of a dressing-table mirror seeming from the street almost to fill the rectangle of the bedroom window.

Let it be observed once more that it is the furnishings of the suburban scene—the stage properties, if you like, that stand around on the set—which we pick on as giving a clue to the character of the whole. The accumulation of these properties comprises the variegated landscape picture, in which the architecture of individual houses is soon submerged. But our purpose just now is to come to even closer quarters with the suburban home, in order to see how suburbia surrounds itself with the taste of every age at once, how the past is always incorporated in the present. So let us enter any house at random—Deepdene, Grey Gables, Rotorua, The Hollies, Dunvegan, Holmlea, Bowness, The Croft, Greenways or St. Helier—reflecting as we wait for the door-bell to be answered how well these names suit the instincts and aspirations that we have already noted in the suburban resident. In them he asserts his individuality, but he also shows, in common with his next-door neighbour on either side, his leanings

towards rural make-believe, and the strength, as well as the romanticism, of his topographical loyalties (hence the recurring flavour of Sir Walter Scott) which goes with his attachment to the squirearchical tradition.

We shall be shown straight into the drawing-room. This is not the stiff front parlour, seldom sat in, of the superior artisan's house, but the family sitting-room on the garden side of the house, with french windows through which the children come and go while their mothers gossip round the tea-table. The former kind of room—the ceremonial front parlour—is probably to be found in the suburb too; indeed it could be made to serve as another illustration of the suburb's use of architecture as a symbol of social standing which we noted earlier. But it is not peculiar to the suburb. It is more typical of the Victorian formality that survives best in the country town. The middle-class drawing-room into which we have found our way is the essence of suburbia itself. It plays a full part in the family ritual of the fairly prosperous suburban resident. Nevertheless it has a character difficult to take in at a glance, because, as with the suburb generally, its informality represents in fact an elaborate balance of forces, producing a picture in which the relationship of the part to the whole is only apparent after careful analysis.

Although, except in the mornings, it is a centre of family activities—even more so than its country-house prototype, which belongs chiefly to the female members of the family—it is as trim and well-tended as the garden outside its windows. Things are not allowed to be left lying about. Unlike the token piano in the unused parlour, the piano here is played on, if only by children practising "The Merry Peasant," but it is still an upright, not a grand.

The room is furnished for comfort rather than ceremony, and is the one room in the house always adorned with flowers, yet it is also the place where possessions of value—or believed to be of value—are displayed: an original water colour signed by an R.A., in a frame with a gilt mount (probably a wedding present), a piece of Chelsea china, a large brass mantelpiece clock, classical in design with green marble pillars at the corners and an engraved plate telling that it was presented to the owner by his colleagues of twenty years standing as a token of their esteem. There is an elegant cabinet or bureau in Sheraton style, but comfort, on the other hand, has moulded the rather indeterminate shapes of the sofa and the two or three upholstered chairs. These have loose cretonne covers with

pleated skirts. The dog is always being turned off their cushions, but not, for some reason, the cat, except as a gesture of hospitality to visitors. There are a number of small tables about: one by the sofa with current library novels and, on a lower shelf, an accumulating pile of back numbers of *Punch*, which are being kept with the idea of one day getting them bound; one, on which the radio stands, by the wall, and a folding one which is brought out at tea-time to support the Benares brass tray which the maid finds it such a burden to polish.

Paintwork is cream-coloured. So is the wall-paper, but with a silver stripe. Light comes from a veined alabaster bowl hanging on a triple chain from the centre of the ceiling, and from several plated candlesticks or pottery jars converted into reading lamps which stand on the mantelpiece or the top of the piano. The floor has a patterned carpet as well as a hearth rug, and the windows have full-length curtains of a sober floral pattern. These are hung on large brass rings, threaded on a brass pole with a knob at either end, and the peculiar rasping noise they make when they are being drawn is, on a winter afternoon, as clear an indication that Sunday tea is ready as the sounding of the gong in the hall.

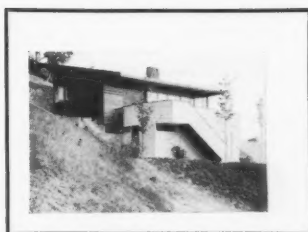
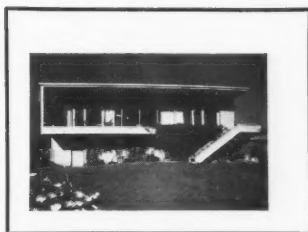
The room is pretty—even elegant in its own way—and sweet smelling, especially when garden scents come floating in through the open windows, but enough has been said about its furnishing to show that its charms bear no relation to the charms purveyed by the interior decorator. They are not the result of conscious discrimination between what is considered good or bad, neither do they represent the taste of any one season, or even of one generation. As in the street outside, the variety of detail determines the character of the room and proves at the same time the heterogeneous nature of suburban taste, founded on the accumulated trivia of years: on the mantelpiece, some pieces of Goss china and a row of ebony elephants in diminishing sizes; on the wall opposite, an Arundel print, a gift from an old friend of the family, and a birdscape by Peter Scott; elsewhere, a small antique table bought at a sale in a moment of extravagance, and other items that may be legacies, or fixtures taken over from the previous tenant or souvenirs of holidays abroad.

These are valued for the reasons implicit in their origin, reasons of sentiment, association, social prestige and family loyalty, and because, by surrounding himself with property of this personal kind, the suburban resident asserts his individuality in a world in which whatever is peculiar to the individual easily becomes submerged. It is sometimes said that in his domestic existence man is a slave to his furniture, that his life seems to be lived according to a ritual laid down by his obligations to his own possessions, the ritual of the tea-table, the radio set, the mowing machine, the smoker's companion and the dog that must be taken for a walk. But in the suburb, he is a willing slave, enjoying the one benefit of slavery, that it spares its victims from being burdened by the uncertainties of other worlds besides the one they know. Moreover this very ritual is inseparable from the suburban environment, of which suburban man is himself the originator.

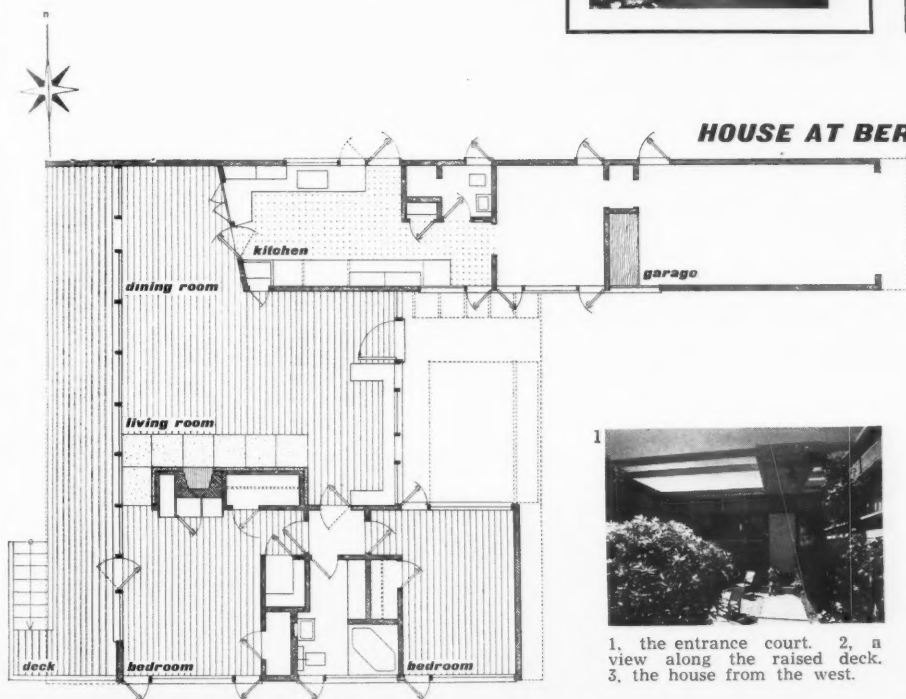
We have followed the suburban resident not only to his very doorstep but into his home, and there, at the focus of all his aspirations, we have found the same characteristics that we noticed on first penetrating into the suburban jungle, the same contrast between careful grooming and an apparently anarchical profusion of detail, and the same submission of each part to the scenic effect of the whole. But it was clear from the beginning that the suburban style is all one, indoors and out.



3 HOUSES IN WESTERN U S A



HOUSE AT BERKELEY. DINWIDDIE AND HILL : ARCHITECTS



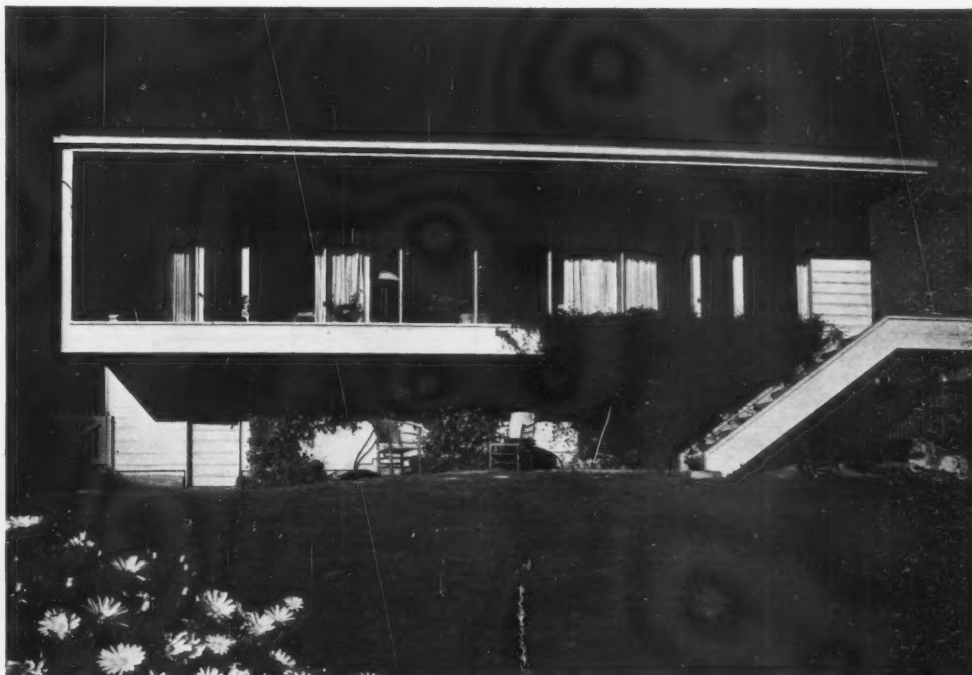
These three houses on the west coast of America afford an interesting comparison with the three Danish houses illustrated on pages 169-72. Apart from differences due to climate—a factor which is to a large extent responsible for the strongly marked regional character of the American houses—there are many national differences which closely reflect the cultures of the two countries.

This first house is built on a narrow site sloping down to the west with a view of San Francisco Bay. The requirements included a principal bedroom, with an extra room for a young child. The small bedroom off the kitchen area is a multi-purpose room; part-time maid, guest room or owner's workroom. The structure is a wood frame, faced with redwood. The living room walls are finished in Philippine mahogany plywood, and the bedroom walls are faced with sheet rock and wall papers. The cabinet work, including the built-in radio and record changer in the study area, was made to the architect's designs by the owner himself. The fireplace division between the living and sleeping areas is of concrete blocks.

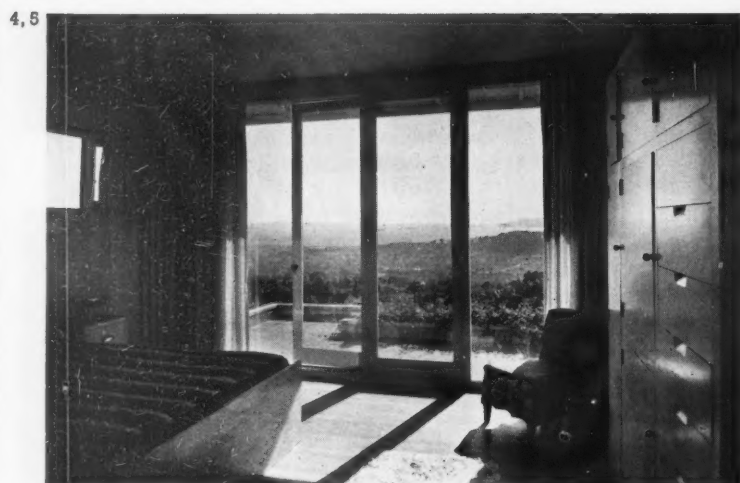


1. the entrance court. 2. a view along the raised deck. 3. the house from the west.

2,3



HOUSE AT BERKELEY



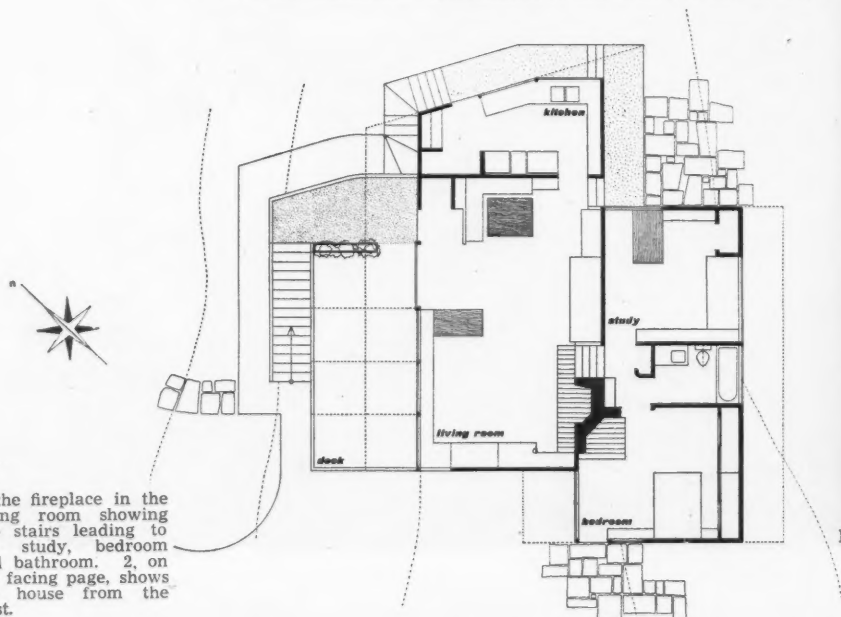
4, the owner's bedroom. 5, the living room.



6, the dining recess. 7, looking towards the front door.

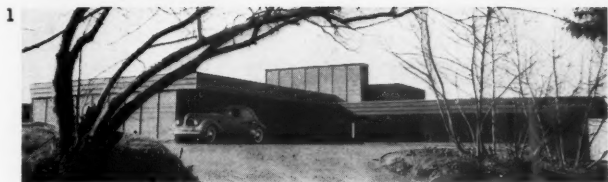
HOUSE IN THE CALIFORNIA HILLS. RICHARD J. NEUTRA : ARCHITECT

The house is situated on a steep slope with a rising background of old gumwood, a mountain view to the north-west and a view over the plains to the sea in the south. The house is planned on three levels. Living quarters extend on to a wide flagstone-paved north-westerly terrace through a large sliding door. A study and bedroom are separated from the rest of the house by a short flight of stairs. The service wing is approached from the north; the service walk thus connecting the two stories. The kitchen widens from service entrance and storage closet to the working space between draining-board, stove and main cupboard. It serves both living quarters and the shaded north-east patio. The lower storey walls are of reinforced concrete, and the upper storey and roof are of redwood; the roof is metal-coated for maximum heat reflection; the windows are of steel.



1, the fireplace in the living room showing the stairs leading to the study, bedroom and bathroom. 2, on the facing page, shows the house from the west.





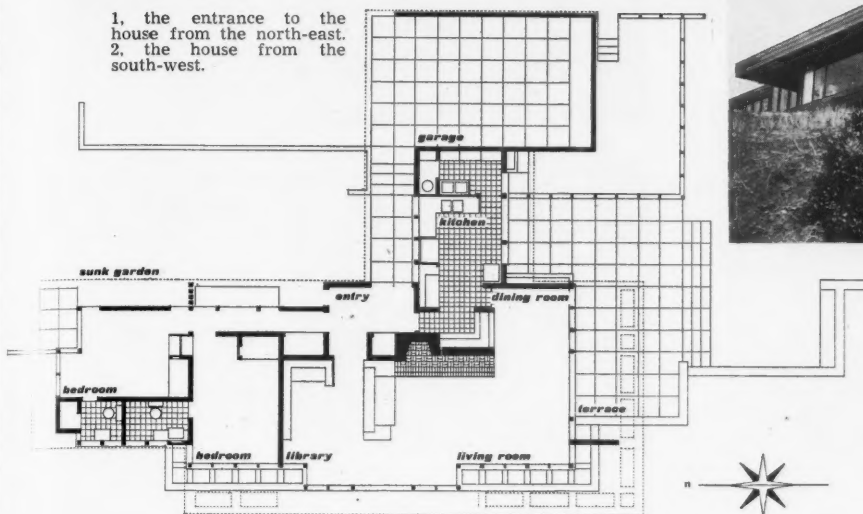
1, the entrance to the house from the north-east.
2, the house from the south-west.

HOUSE AT LOS ANGELES. HARWELL HAMILTON HARRIS : ARCHITECT



The house is situated on a knoll bordered on two sides by deep ravines whose slopes are covered with oak and walnut trees. Wide overhangs on the south and west provide shade; where they are particularly wide they are pierced with deep wells which let in the light while excluding the sun. The plan is based on a three foot module. The structure is a wood

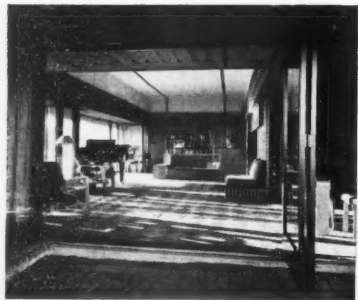
frame, and the walls are finished both inside and outside with 1 in. by 4 in. tongue-and-groove boards of natural finish California Redwood applied horizontally and divided into vertical panels by 1 in. by 2 in. battens which mark the module and cover all end joints and face nailing in the boards. Above the 6 ft. 8 in. line, making the head of all door and window openings, the wall is completed by a band of three lapped boards. A fir wall at the lower corner of the building serves as a buttress in resisting horizontal wind and earthquake forces along the north-south axis.



HOUSE AT LOS ANGELES

3, the living room looking towards the library from the terrace. 4, the fireplace, with the music cabinet in the foreground. 5, the library.

the dining alcove. 7, the breakfast table in the kitchen. 8, the working area of the kitchen. 9, the passage up to the main entrance from the garage and parking space.



3



4



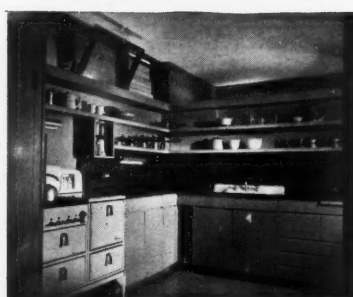
5



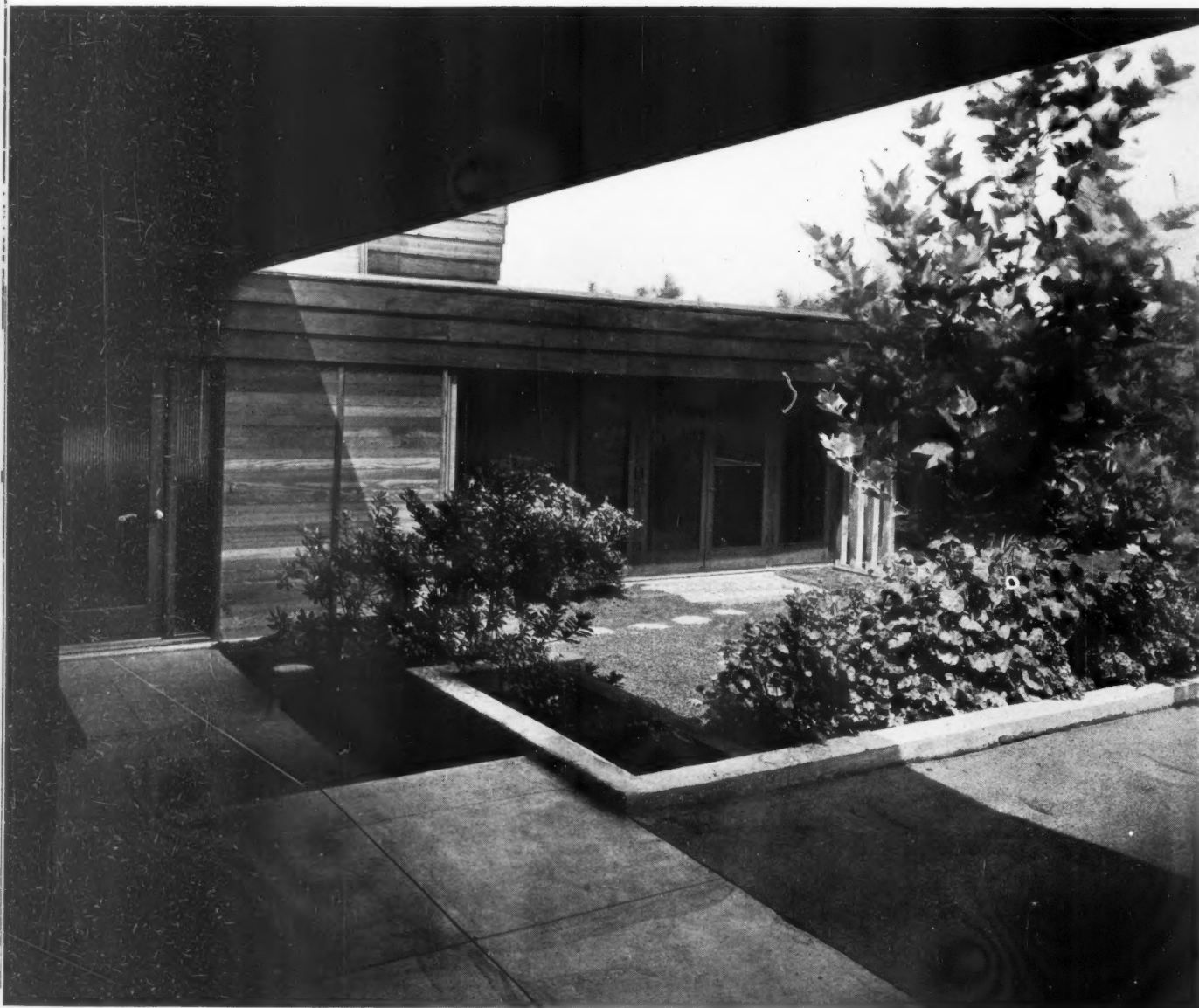
6



7



8



9



THE ROSE & CASTLE



written and illustrated by
BARBARA JONES

Canals are not generally conspicuous things, and the art of the canal boat, although most people are aware of its existence, is not so well known as it might be. Perhaps the strangest thing about this art, as described and illustrated here by Miss Barbara Jones, is that in a changing world it should be completely ruled by tradition, in the narrowest sense. The closest parallel is provided by the art of the circus (see *THE ARCHITECTURAL REVIEW*, February, 1945). But the morphology of canal boat art has really very little in common with the "demountable baroque" of the swings and roundabouts.

If you look at the map in Bradshaw's *Canals and Navigable Rivers of England and Wales*, you will see how the whole country is netted over with canals. They do not show up much on the landscape; they are drawn much like rivers by the Ordnance Survey, and on less efficient maps have probably been left out altogether. Certain sections have fallen quite into decay, and the whole system is said not to pay but to be so deeply imbedded in the life, agriculture and drainage of England that abandonment would be impossible. Nevertheless, a great deal of traffic goes quietly up and down, sometimes visible from a train, more rarely from a car, in and out of most of the great cities in an unobtrusive almost ghost-like way, taking three or four days to carry, say, seventy tons of cargo for 130 miles, up and down hundreds of locks and under hundreds of little hump-backed bridges.

All the different kinds of canal craft are collectively known to most people as "barges," but a barge is very large and comparatively rare, most of the traffic being "narrow-boats," seventy feet long, seven foot beam, flat bottom. They go in pairs, a diesel-engined motor boat and a butty boat towed behind. At a lock, the butty is run up beside the motor, and then they just fit in nicely, only inches to spare all round. It is very expertly done, with hardly a bump or a pause. One of the crew walks or bikes up the tow-path, gets the lock ready, in they glide, up or down they go and out again.

When you watch a boat slide past a gap in the tow-path hedge it seems endless, a low level shape of black wood with a stretch of black tarpaulin above it. At last the tarpaulin ends, and the little cabin goes by in a blaze of glory with the engine chug-chug-chugging softly along at about six miles an hour. Then the butty passes, another long black shape with yet more colour at the end. The boats are built of wood, and even more space than looks humanly possible is given over to the cargo. The fore-ends of both boats are alike (unless the butty has a tiny additional cabin), a rounded and most beautiful shape, low to the water and variously decorated. A little deck covers the tapering bows and has a

hinged lid; many parts of the boat have un-nautical names, but "deck-lid" seems particularly earthly. When the full width of the boat has been reached, 5 ft. 8 in. back, the cratch, a triangular structure of wood, stands on the edge of the deck. From the top of this a series of planks runs almost fifty feet back to the cabin, supported down the centre of the boat by the box-mast and two "stands," decorated with a pattern of diamonds. At intervals between these, "stays" run from the planks to the boat sides, to keep tight the tarpaulin stretched across. This gives the boat its triangular outline head-on. The planks descend via a decorated block to the cabin roof, and then the motor boat has a cabin about 13 ft. 6 in. long, of which 5 ft. 6 in. contains the engine. The butty may have a little more living space, perhaps almost nine feet of it, and no motor. Usually the cabins are just over five feet high.

The cabin of the butty is down into the bottom of the boat as there is no engine shaft to pass underneath it, so the roof does not stand up so high from the boat and there is a deeper descent from the sides of the little deck, first into the cockpit and then through two doors, down some 21 inches on to the floor by way of the top of the coal box. The motor boat, less high at the stern and with a higher floor, needs no cockpit, so you go straight off the deck into the cabin. Each kind of boat has the roof lightly curved across, and the sides of the cabin slope inwards, and rise and taper to the stern. On the vertical aft-end of the cabin a curious shape is painted in scarlet and outlined in yellow. The centre of this opens outwards its whole height in two little doors, and as entrance through them would be an athletic triumph, a square is cut out of the roof above and covered when necessary by a slide on which may be painted some device taken from heraldry, playing-cards or natural history. As the doors swing out, the amazing decoration begins. Each is in three panels. A little square one at the top has a castle on it; then comes a dark green panel outlined in yellow and bearing four roses with their surrounding leaves; at the bottom is a square left plain in case of kicks.

Down inside, the whole cabin is grained light oak and is unbelievably small. You are confined in a raw sienna coloured claustrophobia where you cannot stand up and the always improbable action of swinging a cat becomes for ever hopeless. The whole home is not as large as your bathroom; true, there is a cabin in the other boat as well, but there may equally be a third member of the crew or a large family. It is said that the longer you live in one the larger it gets. Everything is planned, there is hardly a wasted inch and yet no space-and-labour-saving skill has ever come near it. A hundred years ago all was as it is to-day. Any speculator who wishes to make a fortune from even more bijou flatlettes on even less ground should bear the boat cabins well in mind.

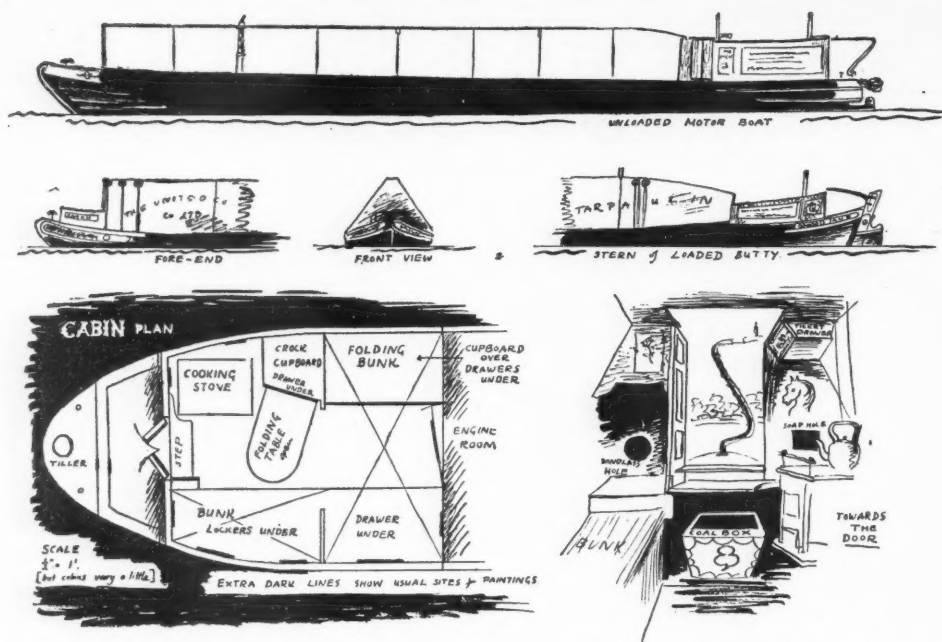
Directly you move away from the hatch space it is necessary to stoop, so the first instinctive act is to sit on the child's bunk on the right. There is about 42 inches of it and then the seat (lockers under) stretches beyond a small partition for another 40 inches. Opposite this far part and at exactly the same height from the floor are hinges on which a flap lets down across the space. The cupboard thus exposed, and the flap itself, and the seat top make a bed at night. By day, the bedding folds into the cupboard and the flap is closed. Its place across the cabin is taken by a seat board on which the clothes box stands.

Facing you is the tiny cooking stove which has a long chimney sticking up through the roof, and then to its right a round-headed door made to drop on hinges at the bottom like the bed. The flap catches horizontally under the lower of the shelves inside to make the cabin table; the crockery goes on the shelves, underneath is the knife drawer, and below that again the boot cupboard.

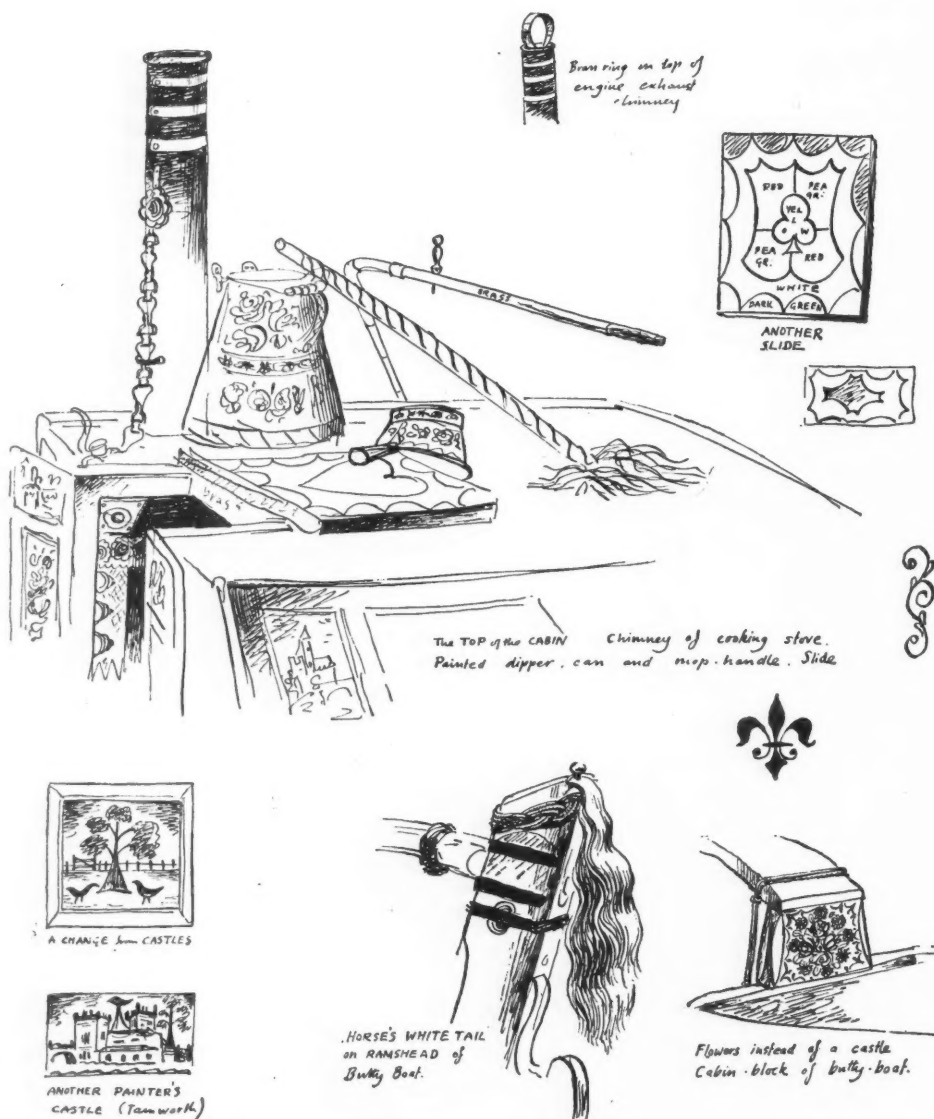
Just inside the door over the range is the ticket drawer, for lock passes, just where it can be easily reached by anyone steering. On the left of the door is another cupboard sloping down the cabin wall, and on each side is a hole, round on the left to take the windlass and square on the right for soap. A steel door at the other end of the cabin leads, in the motor boat, to the engine room (or hole, but this is felt to be vulgar), and on the butty boat to the cargo space.

Everywhere through this interior is decoration,





The full width of the boat is reached about 5ft. 8in. from the bow. The cabin of the motor boat is about 13ft. 6in. long, of which rather more than a third is taken up by the engine.



The painter's greatest efforts are reserved for the motorless butty boat. The drawings above show the general exterior of the cabin and some variations on the usual decorative themes.

brightly painted with the swiftest technique. The table cupboard is the most noticeable thing; in the centre is a recessed panel enclosed in yellow and scarlet moulding, on which is painted a castle, at once English and exotic. Its spreading castellations may suggest Spain, but the bulbous red domes on some of the towers are clearly Russian, while the rich green foliage and the river running by have an echo of the Rhine. The gipsies brought these castles over from Hungary and were the earliest boat people: or they can be traced to India, to Persia, to Scandinavia: or sailors manned the first canal boats and had them painted with their nostalgia for other lands: or they are all derived from Windsor Castle and excessive loyalty.* The origin of one castle may be perfectly obvious, and then another boat will come in which was painted at a different wharf or yard and an entirely new castle will start a fresh wave of thought. No one really has the slightest idea where they come from.

Behind the tall and slightly sinister castle, across the evening light on the river, great blue mountains rise against a sunset, running violently in the interests of composition, into an arch of the most brilliant blue flecked right and left with little white clouds. The building is cream-coloured, the details picked out in brown and black, with the tops of walls and towers darkening against the background. The sky is painted first and then the painter turns to another panel, so that the colours, which are mixed with a good deal of turpentine, may get a little dry before he finishes off.

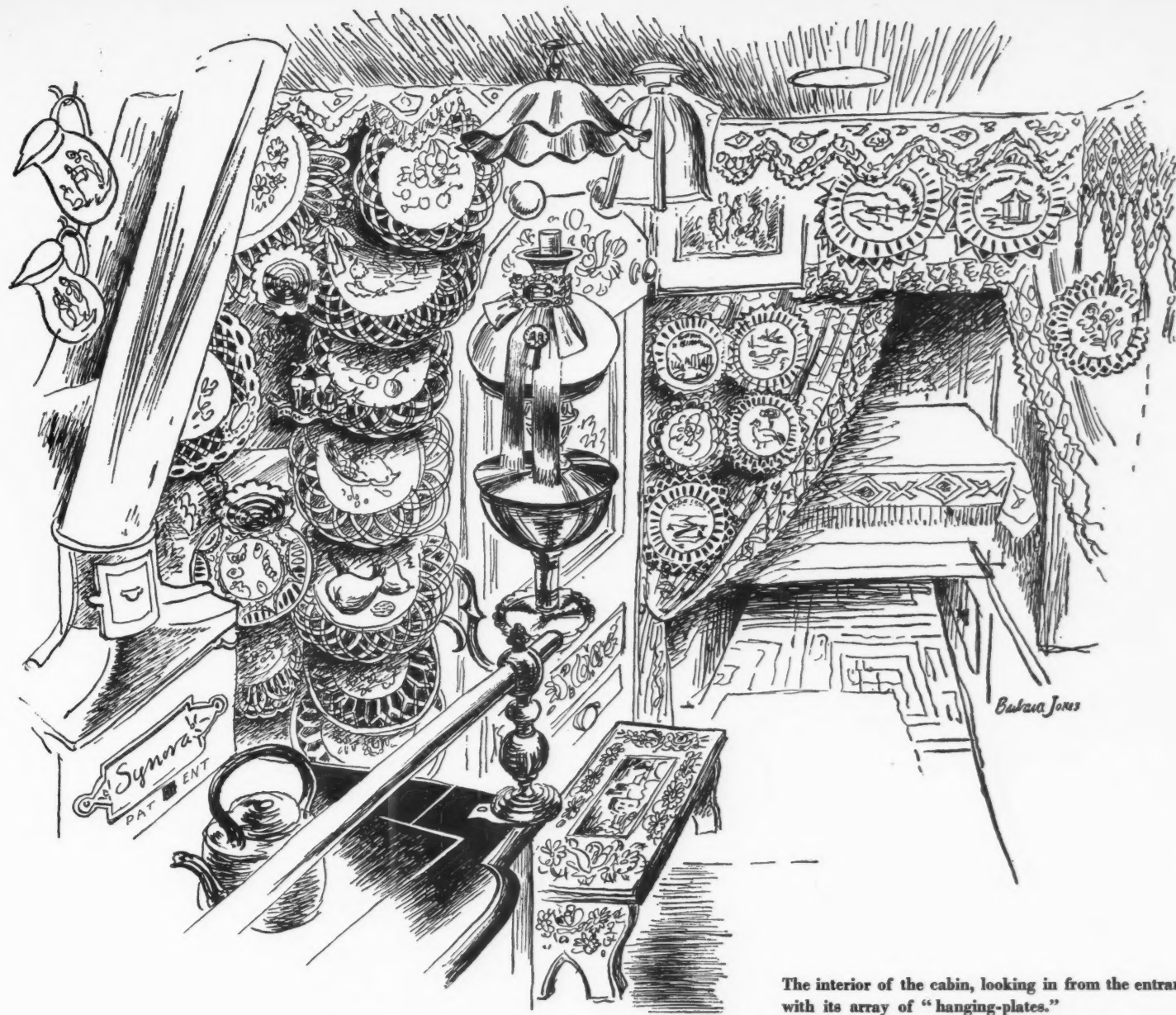
Round this panel run the flowers; daisies up the sides, a spray of roses underneath, and a great cluster to fill the semicircle at the top. Another spray runs along the knife drawer. The background here is dark green set in a moulding of yellow, all of which is quite dry before the flowers are started by painting a coloured disc (placed by eye or a touch of chalk) where each flower is to go; black discs for the red roses, coral for the white, and brown and orange for the yellow, with some dark petal shapes flicked in round them. Green-bice leaves, almost circular and shaded rustily towards the base, are filled in at appropriate spaces round the spray, and daisies tail off the sides. Four roses cross-wise go in the semicircle and the diagonals may be filled with four more, but some painters have a sort of trumpet shaped blue flower which makes it all look less congested.

When the discs are on all the necessary places, the artist goes back to the first spray and puts in the flowers. Each petal is made with one swirl of the brush, and a separate brush is kept for each colour. Two or three spots of yellow make a centre, and then the yellow is used again to vein the leaves and to put some very expert flicks in the empty spaces. (Inside the boat and out, the graining is done with a special raw sienna paint on top of lemon yellow; scarlet has an undercoat of pink, and green goes over grey.)

Another castle in a red moulding is on the engine room door and possibly another above the smaller bunk. When the doors to the deck are closed the square ones at the tops of those show too. The wall by the engine room door and the two panels of the folding bed have long sprays of roses, and other panels or cupboard doors here and there will have a single red rose, leaves and bud painted on the graining. If the man doing the work has the time or the inclination he may pop in something a little different in an odd corner; a horse's head, perhaps, or two birds under a tree, but there is really surprisingly little variation in the two usual themes, as the boat people are very conservative and will endure no innovations and no blank spaces. The floor is painted too, perhaps scarlet, and two roses go on the ticket drawer. Finally, everything is varnished. It is done at amazing speed—an entire cabin is rose-and-castled in a day, and then lasts for about three years.

The lavish decoration seems to be a most

*I am indebted to Mr. C. N. Hadlow for the information that a certain type of Portuguese sailing craft carries remarkably similar decoration—geometrical designs, sprays of flowers, and a pair of goat's horns which may have some connection with the "ram's head."



The interior of the cabin, looking in from the entrance, with its array of "hanging-plates."

practical idea, for with so little space pictures and flower vases would surely be stupidly cumbrous, and here are pictures which have no frames to be dusted and flowers which need never be renewed. But wait. The inhabitants settle back into their newly-painted home and arrange their belongings. Look again. Now every bit of painting has disappeared under a thick deposit of yet further ornament; crochet, brass, curtains and china are superimposed on castle and rose in a traditional arrangement equally rigid.

Fastened to the bottom edge of the ticket drawer is a deep border of crochet. Three or four huge brass bed-knobs project beside the door, and horse-brasses and bells hang on a rail above the range. In a really flash cabin, the rising stove-pipe is covered by a sleeve of brass, jugs hang behind it in slanting rows and an elaborate brass bracket projects from the side of the table-cupboard to take the lamp (brass, of course) over which a fluted shade to match hangs to protect the ceiling. Some cabins are fitted with electric light generated from the engine, but the oil lamp remains.

Between cupboard and stove pipe hang about a dozen plates. These are very special and are never used, being hard to get and the best possible type for such a situation. Each has an edge made of interlocking china hoops, and through this lace-work goes a ribbon which ties the plate to a rail across the corner. On the plate centres are fruit, flowers, birds and views of Blackpool. They are unfortunately growing so much scarcer that a retiring boat-woman is always besieged with offers for her "hanging-plates." Here and there about the display are fastened brasses and regimental badges, with

possibly a couple of the small (brass) models of windlasses which were specially made for this purpose until about 30 years ago; as they are practically indestructible, a number of them survive to add their metallic note when the boats bump against a lock wall and all the plates clash together and all the bells ring.

More bed-knobs and a fine clasp are screwed among the roses at the head of the table-cupboard (now hidden behind the lamp), of which I have drawn an unusually gorgeous specimen. It has a long red bow of silk ribbon round the neck of its shade and a large gilt and ruby brooch is pinned into the knot. A second brooch joining the two streamers, bears portraits of King George and Queen Elizabeth, and a tricolour tag.

The bedroom half of the cabin is partly shut off by a pair of crochet-edged curtains and a valance, with another ten or so plates and a couple of wedding groups hanging on them. A whole technique of existence must have been evolved to avoid breaking them where they hang, in the middle of a living space restricting movement to five feet by eight by four, plus a little head room over the stove. More crochet borders the junction of walls and ceiling; a particularly rich deep frill, tasselled with blue, runs above the small bunk, and there can be a crochet cover over any such dull article as a clothes-box or sewing machine. Patterned linoleum goes over the painted floor. All the boats used to have a stool, and they are still sometimes made, castle in the middle, roses all the way round. Still more roses flower in their slightly aggravating perennial way on the seat board, and hanging among the elaborations under the ticket drawer is the hand-bowl,

roses, roses all the way.

The climax of ornament is in the crockery cupboard behind the table flap. The one in the drawing comes from a cabin splendid with five clocks and four large Staffordshire dogs. The inside of the arch is lined with most beautiful crochet, and another strip runs along the shelf, which supports a pair of china figures with a bow apiece, a clock and a collection of little brass candlesticks. Below is a sugar tin, with roses, and some fine big teacups with Chinamen on them. Once there would have been a teapot with an embossed motto, but these have almost entirely





The obsolescent SUNBONNET.



RED BLUE GREEN YELLOW & WHITE



HORSES NOSE-CAN.



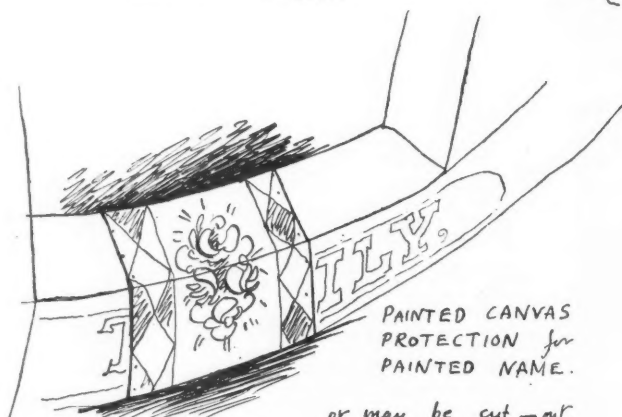
"OARS
KNOTT" (?)
string
plait
hanging
on funnel.



A LAMP for TUNNELS

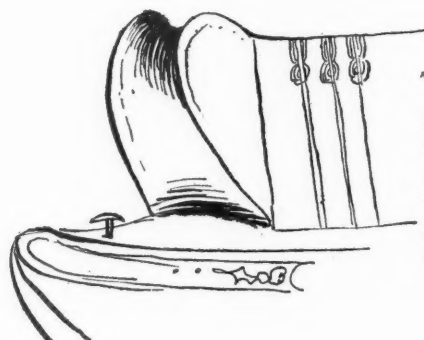


FUEL-TANK.



PAINTED CANVAS
PROTECTION for
PAINTED NAME.

or may be cut-out.



"BULK"-
built out with
canvas over
wooden ribs
to improve
the shape of
the fore-end

The traditional sun bonnet has practically disappeared from the canals, and so has the canvas belt (upper right) worn by the men. The small

untitled sketches show the patterning of the bonnet and a horse brass, used as ornament.



Above, two narrow-boats seen from astern. Left, bold lettering and floral decorations which include daisies as well as roses. Right, the ram's head, as the rudder is always called, of the boat Uttoxeter; the colour scheme is white with scarlet and ultramarine pattern. The plaits of rope above and below the tiller are mysteriously known as the Turk's head. Below, a boat's cabin, resplendent with its roses and ca-tles; the whole cabin is painted within the space of a day and the result lasts about three years.





THE CASTLE The door of the table-cupboard frames the most elaborate of the castle pictures with which every boat is decorated. What is the ancestry of the boat painter's castle?



Clearly there is something of eastern Europe, or even of Russia, about this one; and about the composition of the foreground there is a good deal of the willow - pattern plate. Then why a castle at all? No one knows the answer to either question, but it is possible to make plenty of guesses.



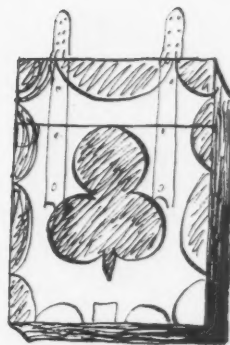
THE ROSE The boat painter's colours are mixed with a good deal of turpentine, and the background of the panels is left to become quite dry before the roses are added. First, coloured discs are painted where the flowers are to come, and then, when these are in position, the artist puts in the detail. Each petal is made with one stroke of the brush, and a separate brush is kept for each colour.



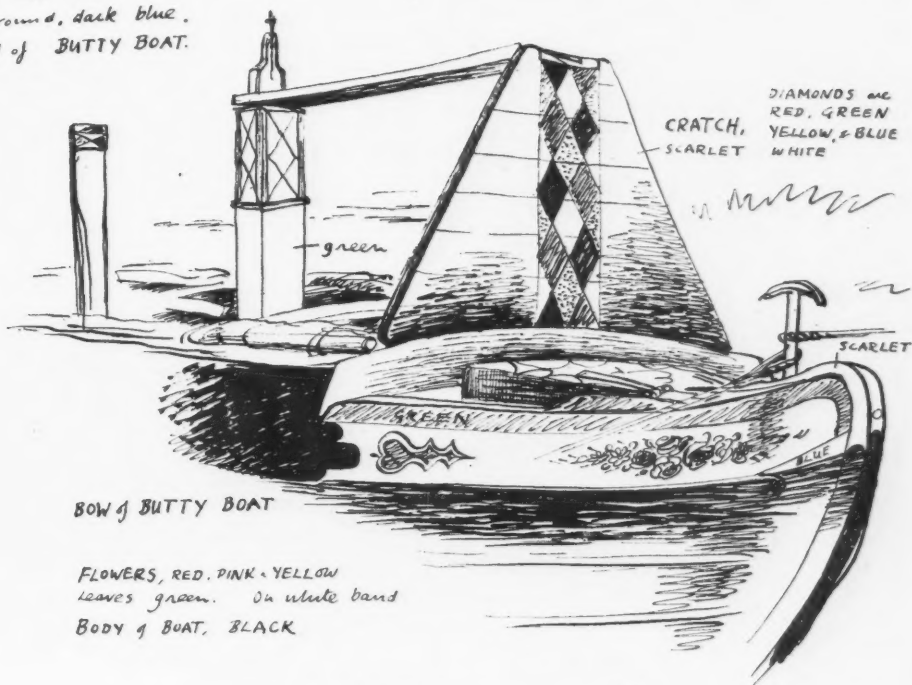
ELIZABE

lettering, orange shaded
yellow and dark brown
background, dark blue.
STERN of BUTTY BOAT.

RED,
blue flowers
BLACK



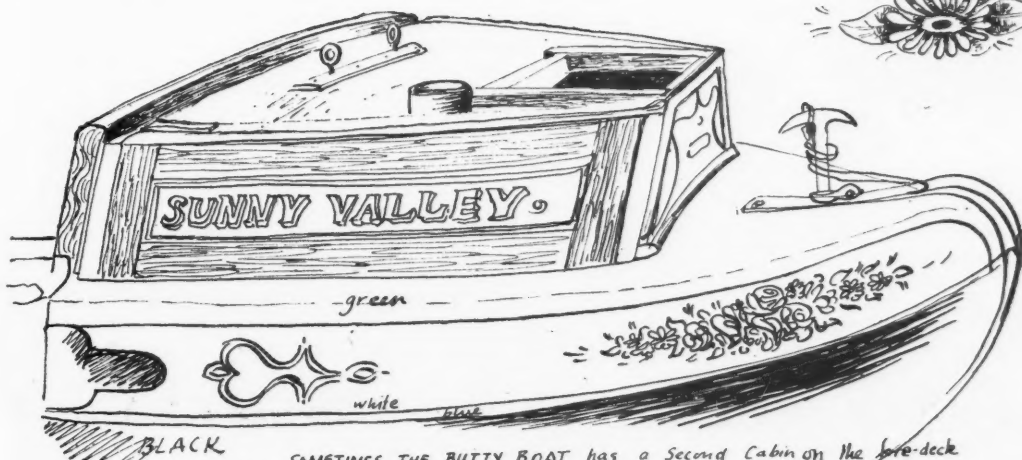
SCARLET ACE
of Clubs,
or Shamrock
leaf, on deck
lid. White, with
dark green
border



DIAMONDS are
RED, GREEN
YELLOW, & BLUE
WHITE

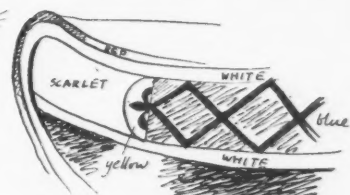
BOW of BUTTY BOAT

FLOWERS, RED, PINK & YELLOW
leaves green. On white band
BODY of BOAT, BLACK

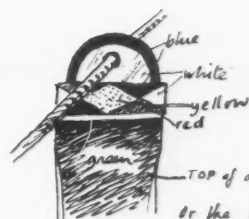


BLACK

SOMETIMES THE BUTTY BOAT has a Second Cabin on the fore-deck
grained light-oak. Name, white-shaded-red-and-pink
on green panel in scarlet moulding
End of cabin, scarlet shape on white in black border



strips of metal painted black
nailed into the wooden side
as an alternative to
the ROSES.



RUNNING-BLOCKS
take the tow rope
of butty.

TOP of a STAND
or the blue band may
be replaced by roses.

The boat-people have a strong sense of what is proper in decoration.
Flowers, castles and playing card motifs are de rigueur, and, in

contrast to the work of the circus people, departures in the direction
of baroque are definitely frowned upon.



vanished. The spiral thing to the left of the cupboard is the brass poker. Every day all the brass is cleaned, every trip the plates are washed, and then there is all the crochet to come down and be washed too.

Life overflows on to the roofs of the cabins, where the steerers eat their meals while keeping a hand on the tiller. The brass-ringed black chimney of the range and the matching exhaust pipe of the engine both rise from the roof. Down the front of the former a brass chain used to hang, but the war has here produced an entirely new tradition, replacing the ordinary chain by one made up of service respirator hooks linked one



within the other. Bigger, brighter and altogether better. Just behind this chimney stands the four gallon can for drinking water, taken on at stops. Water for other purposes is just hooked out of the canal in the handbowl and thrown back again when dirty. The big can is a good place for decoration, and it is smothered in flowers and stripes with perhaps the owner's name or a motto round its waist: "Live and let live—Good luck to all." Another round the roses on a tray:

"This boat swims well and hinders none, It pays its way and carries on."

Beside the can lies a mop, its handle barberspoiled in a bright spiral. The tiller of the motor boat may match this, or be done out with ordinary stripes going simply round, but, in any case,

stripes always follow the rule that no two dark colours come together. Green, white, red, yellow, blue, white is a usual order for a tiller, but mops and cans usually have pink, coral and brown worked in as well. After use the mop is given a very tricky twirl to dry it, and it goes back on the roof, where there may also be a dog, a hen, a brass canary cage, a potted plant or a great bowl of flowers. Or all of them.

Ornament continues into the engine room (and even into the fuel tank). On the port side two more long narrow doors open under a slide and are painted on the inside to match the after doors of the cabin, castles above and roses below. They are usually thrown back during the day against the outside of the cabin, so that the splendour is visible. Aft of the doors, outside, may come a panel with the name of the boat, its number, and more roses, followed by a larger panel running right to the end of the cabin and carrying the thoroughly decorated name of the company. In this case the butty probably has this latter panel forward and a large castle painting aft, for a change, but no two companies have things exactly alike, and some exteriors are very plain indeed, just paint with a string of initials and no castles at all, though when the doors are open, there are, of course, the little ones on view. A boat without any painting, even on the inside, is rare, because should the company refuse to provide a professional job, most of the boatmen are quite capable of doing it pretty competently themselves: a strip of canvas is sometimes nailed where one steps over the boat side into the cockpit of the butty, so that boots do not touch the newly lettered name, and one of these canvases I saw was itself so beautifully decked out with roses on a grass-green ground between diamond borders that it really needed its own protection. The boatman, Mr. Best, had painted it himself and also the castles and the roses on the doors and even, an unusual extra, a large panel of diamonds down the centres of the cabin roof, running all the way from the slide back to the engine room ventilator—"the pigeon box." It would not have been easy to say that the hand of the amateur really showed itself at all, as the technique of the painters naturally varies slightly from one boat yard to the next, and these were hardly less slick than some of the yard jobs.

One is reminded of the way in which showmen can paint anything for themselves, marbling, scrolls, roundabout horses, even a life-size boxer on a fascia board, at a moment's notice, and very, very quickly. But here there is a difference as well as a likeness, for most fairground decoration is pure baroque, with only a little geometry on the most modern rides, while the boatmen have not only no tradition of baroque at all, but actively dislike it, a tentative scroll here and there always meeting with disapproval. The jungles painted round scenic railways and the boat castles have something in common, though the colour of a fairground painting is much more mellow.

The hulls of the boats are painted with tar, which throws up the brightest colour of all, behind the cabin at the stern, where there is also the biggest difference between the two sorts of boats. The motor has a little flat deck running straight back from the cabin doors, and the rounded stern is flat bottomed and straight sided, painted red, white and blue. The tiller is an iron bar bent into a rounded Z and painted as described above. When the boat is moving a hollow brass tube slides over the tiller's end, so that it is long enough to reach the steerer standing in the door of the cabin, where the controls, which run across the ceiling to the slide, are ready to hand. The pin to lock both parts together probably has a bed-knob top.

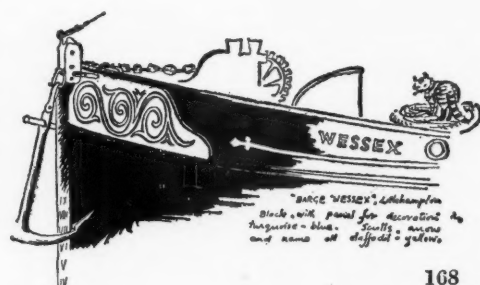
The helm of the butty is much more bedizened.

It remains almost exactly as the boat helms were in the old horse-drawn days. As the motor-boat acts to the butty as the horse once did, no modification has been necessary. The tiller, a lovely coloured curve of wood, turns down to the hand of the steerer when moving, and is reversed in its socket and turned upwards out of the way when the boat is moored. The heavily built rudder, which is always called the Ram's Head, is painted white with scarlet and ultramarine patterns. It is bound with iron above and below the socket, and leans backwards, always with a look of being the prow. Here the final additions of the boatmen are at their best; round the ram's head above and below the tiller are fixed two plaits of rope scrubbed to whiteness—the Turk's Head. Down the front from the top to a specially provided hole is another plait of great complexity, thickened at the top—the Turk's Neck or Swan's Neck. Two plaits bracelet the tiller, and there is a nice little round fender of plaiting to save bumps from the lock gates. There are huge fenders on the motor-boat, but on the butty all is elegant.

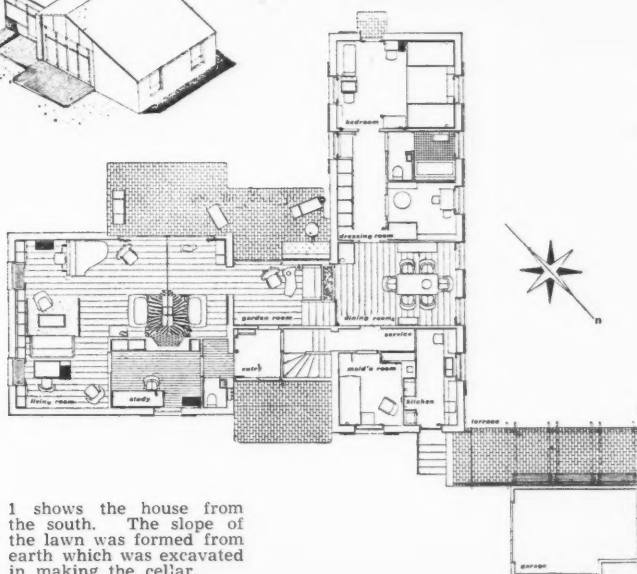
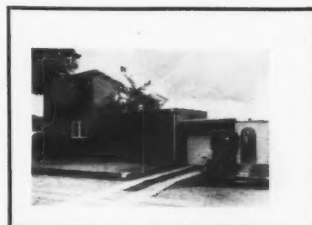
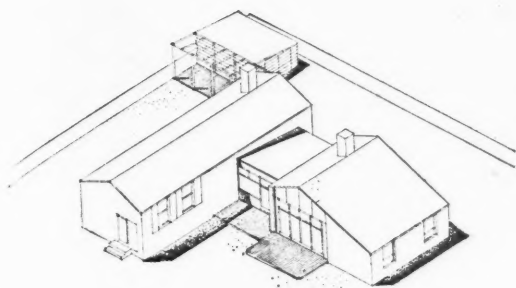
Back from the helm along the side of the butty the name is painted in thick and shadowed lettering. There may be a little black anchor in the corner, or a spray of flowers underneath. The colours of the name panel are divided from the black hull with some geometric shapes, and here one may speculate happily on origins; the diamonds offer little scope but the yellow circles and crescents might well be the sun and moon. I feel myself that they are only the obvious sort of shapes for rounding off one part of the boat into another, but anyone interested in the survival of pre-Christian symbolism can do an amazing amount with them. . . .

The flowers and castles do look as if Eastern Europe were their most likely origin, but where can the names have come from? When? The boat people can only say that Turk's Neck and Turk's Head have "always been called that." Investigation reveals that the top of a certain kind of plaited leather riding whip, very popular with jockeys, is also called a Turk's Head. (Any resemblance one might fancy to a turban is, however, stronger in a differently shaped top called merely "a button.") Could the plaited whips, already so mysteriously named, have been bought by the men driving the canal horses, and then could they have slid the name of one kind of plait on to another? But what has Turkey especially to do with plaited leather?

Until quite recently there was a strong tradition in the clothes of the boat-people, but the long full skirts and sun-bonnets, usually black, of the women and the wide canvas belts covered with bright crochet worn by the men are now practically gone for good, though they do still wear a lot of black. The men like very dark corduroy trousers, black coat, brass-buckled belt and, in the evening or for church, a white silk scarf, so that they are usually easily recognised in a canal-side inn, even without their remarkable silence. Here and there a black-aproned woman has talked to me, but only because pride in an extra fine cabin has led her to give me the history of each plate as I drew it; or she may have bewailed her tanned face as looking too like a gipsy's; but no small talk. It is possible to ask permission to draw, and to sit on a roof in a group of boats moored for the night, working among a dozen people in a silence unbroken by even one account of someone's nephew, or small daughter, who is very gifted at art and does faces like life itself. This is heaven. Then "Thank you very much," you say, and "welcome" is the answer, and that's that.



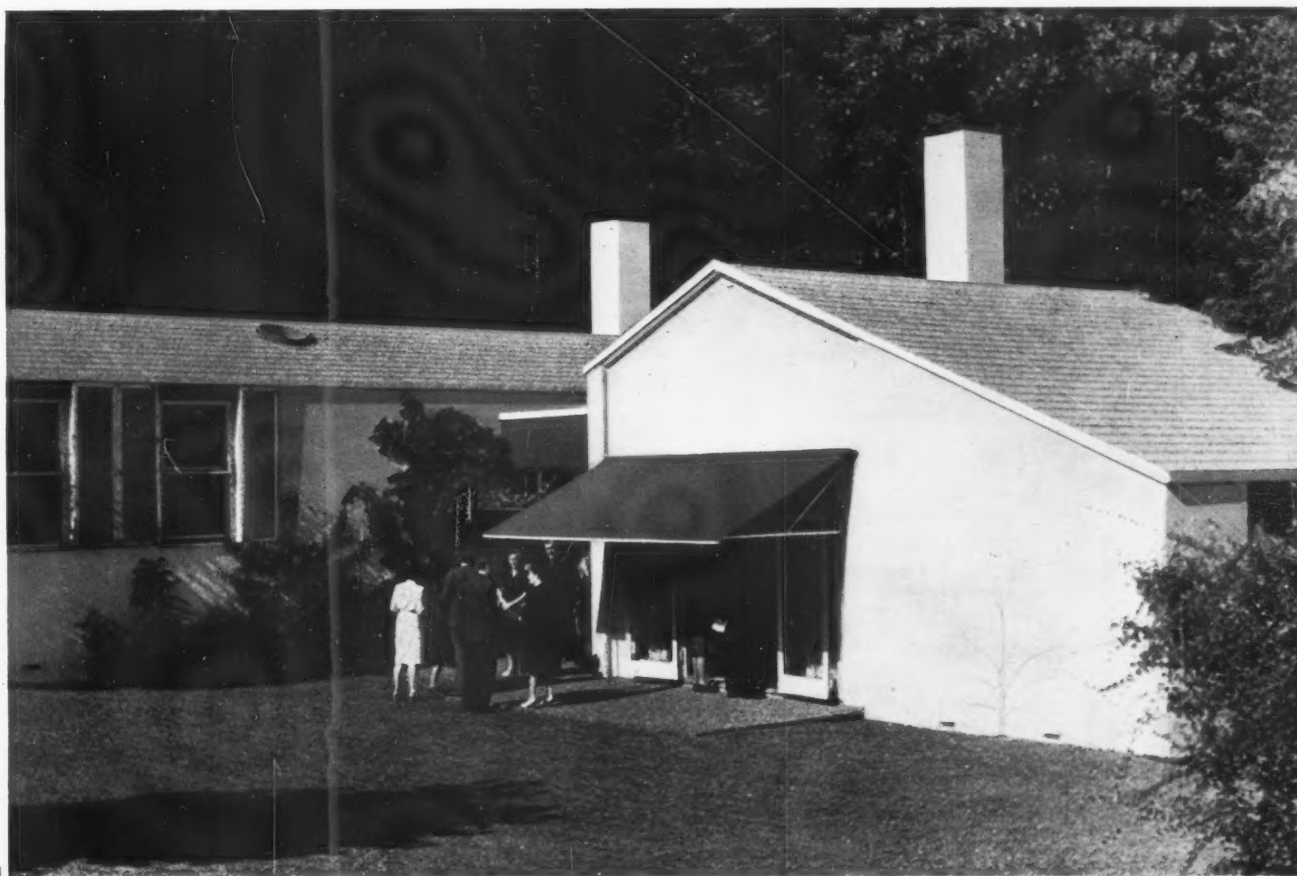
3 HOUSES IN COPENHAGEN



1 shows the house from the south. The slope of the lawn was formed from earth which was excavated in making the cellar.

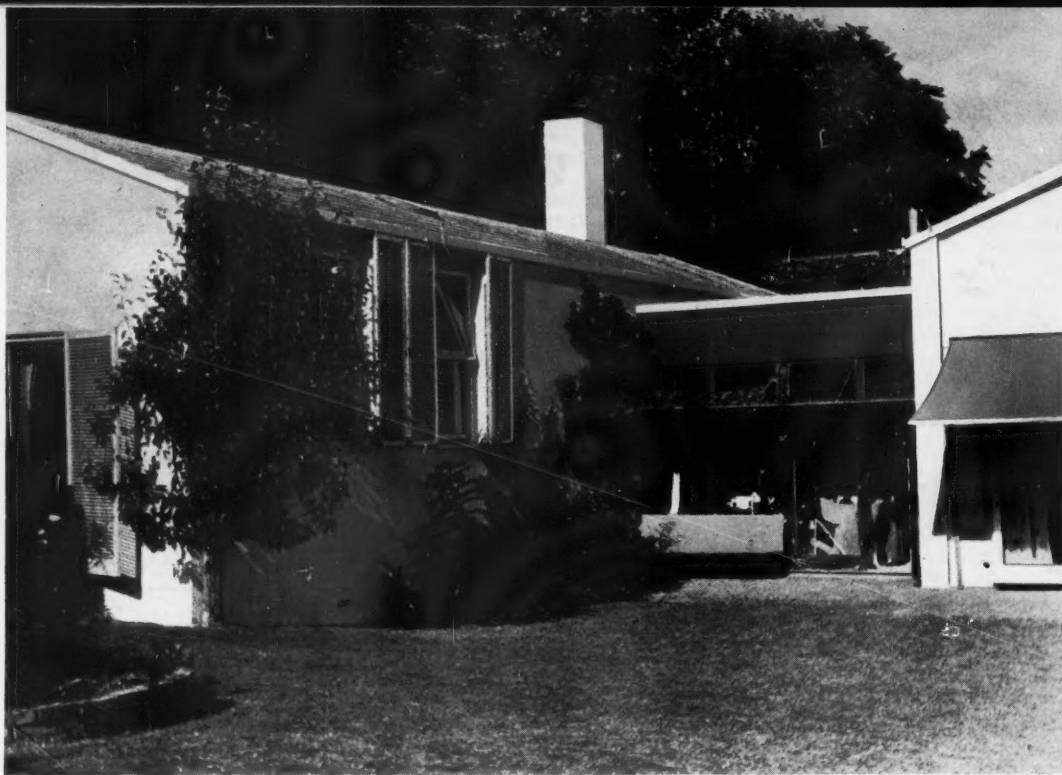
HOUSE AT ORDRUP. FINN JUHL: ARCHITECT

This house was built in 1941-42. The site is at one corner of a deer park just north of Copenhagen. There were no trees on it and the landscape-architect, Troels Erstad, has planted fruit trees, birches and bamboo, amongst other things, all of which were chosen so as not to compete with the big trees on the boundary. The ground was quite flat and earth which was excavated from the cellar was used to form a bowl, with the house at the bottom. The contours of the ground and the form of the house make the garden quite private, and also provide shelter from the prevailing winds. The walls are brick, painted a grey-white, and the roof is covered with asbestos-cement tiles. The ceilings are horizontal except in the living-room, where it slopes a little less than the roof, and is painted a light, pale chrome-yellow. The furniture shown here was only temporary, and now that conditions permit, the house is being refurnished with carpets, chairs and tables designed by the architect.



HOUSE AT ORDRUP

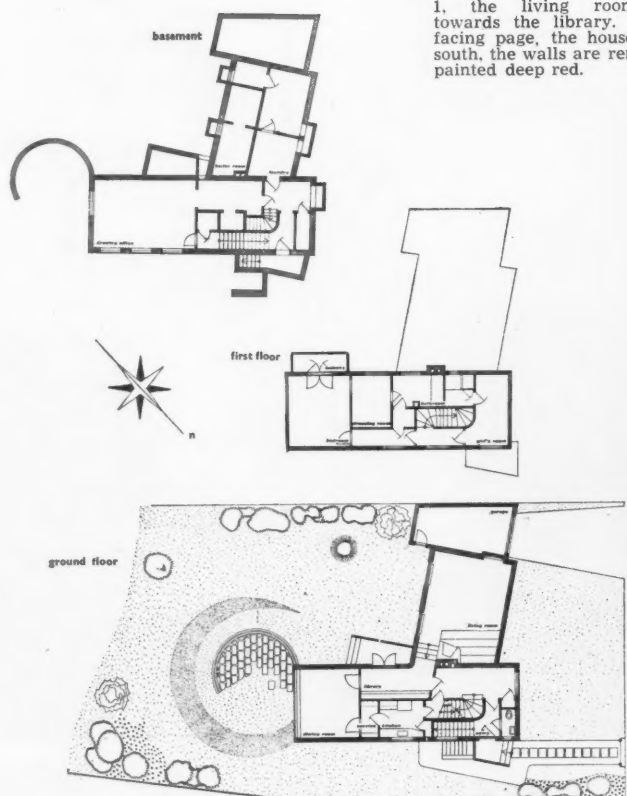
2, looking towards the library end of the living room and 3, the garden room. 4, looking towards the porch and the garden room.



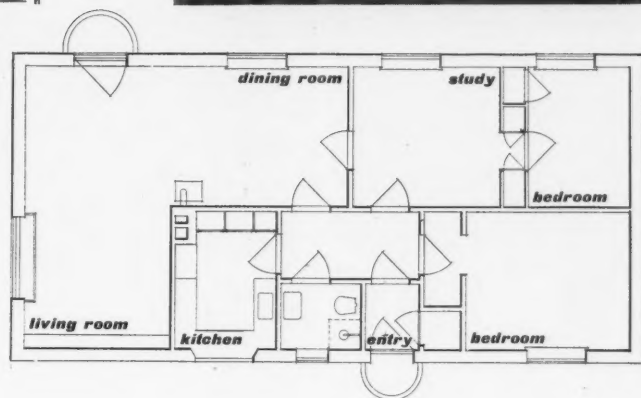
HOUSE AT HELLERUP. TYGE HVAASS: ARCHITECT

This house was built in 1939. It is planned to form an L-shape—a one-storey wing containing the living room and a two-storey wing containing entrance, dining room, kitchen, etc., with bedrooms on the first floor. The architect's office is in the basement, but excavation has made it possible for it to open on to the garden at a lower level with a door to the south. The house was planned to avoid interference between office and private living, though the same front door is used. A staircase leads to the office direct from the entrance. From the kitchen there is a separate staircase to the basement. The house is built of concrete slabs, about 10 in. thick. The exterior walls are rendered and painted deep red. The staircases and floors are concrete, except in the dining room and the bedroom, where they are of white marble. The roof is covered with asphalt. Balcony, windows, etc., are painted white. The dining room ceiling is papered with a map of Denmark.

1, the living room looking towards the library. 2, on the facing page, the house from the south, the walls are rendered and painted deep red.



1, a corner of the L-shaped living room, by the big flower window, which faces south.



HOUSE AT GENTOFTE. KAREN-MARGRETHE AND M. BLACK-PETERSEN : ARCHITECTS

This house was built with a loan on mortgage by the state, and the cost could not exceed £1,000. In these circumstances it was necessary to economise in the planning and construction. The plan is long and narrow, and thus allows small dimensioned beams and rafters. There is an L-shaped living- and dining-room with windows to south and west, a drawing-office, a room for children, bedroom, kitchen and bathroom. The floor is level with the garden. The house is representative of a certain tendency in many small Danish houses built during the last few years. In the rooms the sloping ceilings add to the sense of spaciousness and counteract the effect of the low outer walls. The walls are of brick, painted yellow, and windows and doors are white.





HOUSE AT GENTOFTE

2



2 shows the house from the southwest. 3 is a view from the dining end of the living room, showing, on the right, the door leading to the garden. 4 is the small study leading off the living room.



3,4



Leonard Aloysius Stokes

By H. V. Molesworth Roberts

BY a strange paradox some men of merit, ignored during their lifetime, receive tardy recognition years after their death; others, successful in middle and later life, fade into obscurity shortly after. Leonard Stokes, on the whole, belongs to the second category. Though he carried out few works of major size, he was elected President of the Royal Institute of British Architects in 1910, and awarded the Royal Gold Medal in 1919. More than twenty years before, in 1897, H. H. Statham, in his *Modern Architecture*, had commended and illustrated Stokes's Sefton Park church¹ then built only seven years; and in 1901 Muthesius had mentioned the same church in his *Die Neuere Kirchliche Baukunst in England*, and compared Stokes with Bentley.² But there is no reference to him in Platz, *Die Baukunst der neuesten Zeit*, 1927, or in Pevsner, *Pioneers of the Modern Movement*, 1936. Was he left out because his work seemed not sufficiently "advanced," or because it was not sufficiently known?

Whatever the cause of the neglect, it is time now, twenty years after Stokes's death, to collect and rejudge his work. When one studies his buildings their most conspicuous quality is seen to be their refreshing balance of verticals and horizontals, which must have seemed strange against the aggressive cornices of classical and the aspiring perpendiculars of Gothic traditions. In a fussier way, T. E. Colcutt, Stokes's one time master, had accomplished a similar effect with his semi-octagonal buttresses and delicate terra-cotta strings.³ Closer to Stokes than Colcutt is C. Harrison Townsend (1850-1928),⁴ although on the whole he relied more on broad surfaces and luscious foliage than on the intersection of lines. In spirit, however, none seems nearer to Stokes than his fellow-Catholic John Francis Bentley (1839-1902), nearly twenty years his senior. Bentley's St. John's, Beaumont College, Old Windsor shows the same dignity and stateliness, the same restrained devotional touch, and above all the same balance of outline as Stokes's All Saints Convent at London Colney, Herts.

Leonard Aloysius Scott Stokes was born in 1858 at Southport. His father, Scott Nasmyth Stokes (from whom Leonard derived his third prenominal), was an inspector of schools.⁵ It was a gifted family. The youngest brother Wilfrid (afterwards Sir Wilfrid) became an engineer; the oldest, Adrian, a painter,⁶ survived Leonard by ten years.⁷ "During his boyhood (Leonard) had been anything but robust. With maturity, strength and high spirits seem to have come," wrote his fellow pupil Walter J. N. Millard.⁸ He came to London in 1871⁹ and entered in 1874 the office of S. J. Nicholls (1826-1905), a pupil of Soles.¹⁰ Nicholls was chiefly an architect of churches, and half a dozen or more of them were illustrated in the architectural magazines of the seventies and eighties. They do not look as if they can have inspired Stokes to any appreciable extent. His unfolding came only, when, after he had left Nicholls and spent a year or so with James Gandy "the surveyor," he helped George Edmund Street, first as clerk of works and then in the office, on the restoration of Christ Church, Dublin.¹¹ Later he served under T. E. Colcutt and St. Aubyn and then under no less a man than George Frederick Bodley. What better influence, in the late nineteenth century, could any man enjoy? Under Bodley and Garner he worked on the Liverpool Cathedral design in the first competition (1885-6). In 1880 he won the Pugin Travelling Studentship with drawings of medieval buildings in Lines, Yorks, and part of Northamptonshire and Notts, and the manuscript, his sole attempt at authorship as far as we can discover, is preserved in the Institute's Library; the very complex fourteenth-century arcading in Ely Lady Chapel was among the subjects, and Millard tells how Stokes doggedly pursued his measuring while a colleague relaxed into perspective.¹²

He visited Germany and Italy in 1881-2 and in the latter year his stay at Florence was cut short by a summons to town on his first commission.

Stokes's work ranged over the years 1883 to 1915 and shows a great deal of

development in style. Fortunately an almost complete dated list of executed buildings exists, an appendix to Mr. George Drysdale's paper in the *R.I.B.A. Journal* (1927, Jan. 8, p. 177). The only disadvantage of this list is that only in a few cases are dates of beginning and completion given. As a rule dates refer to starting only, judging by the later date of published references. The outline of dates and facts in the following account, not otherwise marked, are from this source.

The work falls roughly into three periods: (1) that of very poor imitative "Gothic" of 1883-86 which may be called "Late Victorian"; (2) the awakening of a more graceful Gothic—doubtless inspired by his work for Bodley—with windows in the recessed-perpendicular-tracery vogue of the time, purer and more logical ecclesiastical interiors, and original secular works, anticipated in 1888 with Sefton Park and prevailing from c. 1890 to c. 1913; this tallies with the so-called "early modern" movement, documented by N. Pevsner in *Pioneers of the Modern Movement*, 1936;¹³ (3) a period of slight decadence (c. 1914), due probably to his failing health.

The earliest recorded work, 1883, is a Catholic church, the first of many: the chapel of St. Patrick in Portsmouth Road, Woolston, Hants.¹⁴ In the following year came Exeter—the chancel of the church of the Sacred Heart in South Street; like many early efforts, this was done in conjunction with a local man, C. E. Ware, an engineer.¹⁵ Started that same year, but not finished till 1913, was his first published work—Maidenhead, St. Joseph, in Market Street¹⁶—poor work of "Decorated" type. In 1886, having built schools in Westminster Bridge Road, for Pugin's masterpiece, St. George's Cathedral, Southwark, Stokes competed unsuccessfully¹⁷ for St. James, Spanish Place. The next year saw a school at Southampton and his first town-planning essay, a sketch for improving the north side of Piccadilly Circus.¹⁸

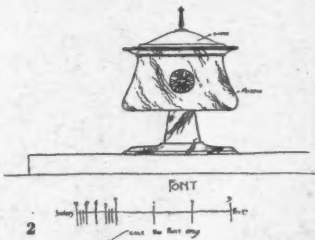
Then, in 1888, his great religious and secular works began. The Church of St. Clare, at Sefton Park, Liverpool,

It is becoming more and more evident that the generation born about 1860 was one of the great generations in the history of English architecture. It is the generation of Voysey, and of Mackmurdo, Prior, Lethaby, Ashbee, Ricardo, Baillie Scott, and also of Leonard Stokes. His importance and the specific character of his work are presented in the following article for the first time—with due stress on his early designs.

1 to 5 (presumably begun 1888, finished 1890), in Arundel Avenue, has captured the imagination of architectural illustrators, even to the extent of being selected as a typical work of modern architecture in the pre-last-war *Encyclopaedia Britannica* (11th ed. ii, p. 438). The logical planning of the nave piers, with diagonal-faced roofing-shafts, the cruciform tracery of the east window, and the general loftiness and proportion place it ahead of nearly all other ecclesiastical work of the time. Equally interesting is the "house for Wilfrid Meynell, Esq., in Palace Court,"⁶—presumably the "47 Palace Court Road" of later record,¹⁹ charmingly broad, simple and balanced, and comparing well with Norman Shaw's contemporary work in the Kensington district.

The next three years saw no work on any design of prime significance; but in 1892 Stokes was busy with the planning of a second church, that for Miles

Of the years 1893 to 1897 only Nazareth House, Bexhill, 10, which received additions not completed until 1909, and the small church of All Souls, Park Road, Peterborough, need here be mentioned. All Souls was built in

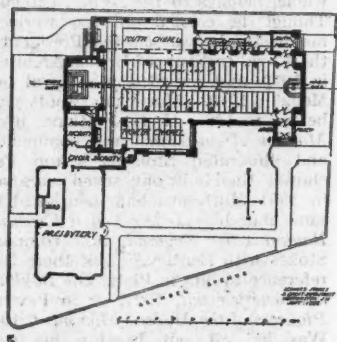


In 1898, at the late age of forty, Stokes married. His wife, Edith N. Gaine,²⁴ was the daughter of the General Manager of the National Telephone Company. This fact is of considerable importance in the light of his chief activities of a few years later.

The years following the beginning of building at London Colney are characterised by the contrast between such conventual and ecclesiastical work as Nazareth House, Southsea, designed ten years earlier³⁰ and St. Philip's church at Begbroke, near Oxford (1896 according to another source),³¹ the latter already possessing the "massiveness of his later work";³² and a plethora of telephone exchanges. The somewhat surprising move from churches to exchanges is paralleled at a later time by Sir Walter Tapper's transition from churches to gas-holders. These exchanges were built for the pioneering organisation, the National Telephone Company, which subsequently (1911) became nationalised as the Post Office Telephone Service.³³ They are "notable as showing how purely utilitarian buildings can be made architecturally interesting."³⁴ Stokes was as well qualified as any to achieve this result with distinction and restraint; it is a thousand pities he was not commissioned to design the Company's headquarters on the Victoria Embankment: the actual building has a heavy-

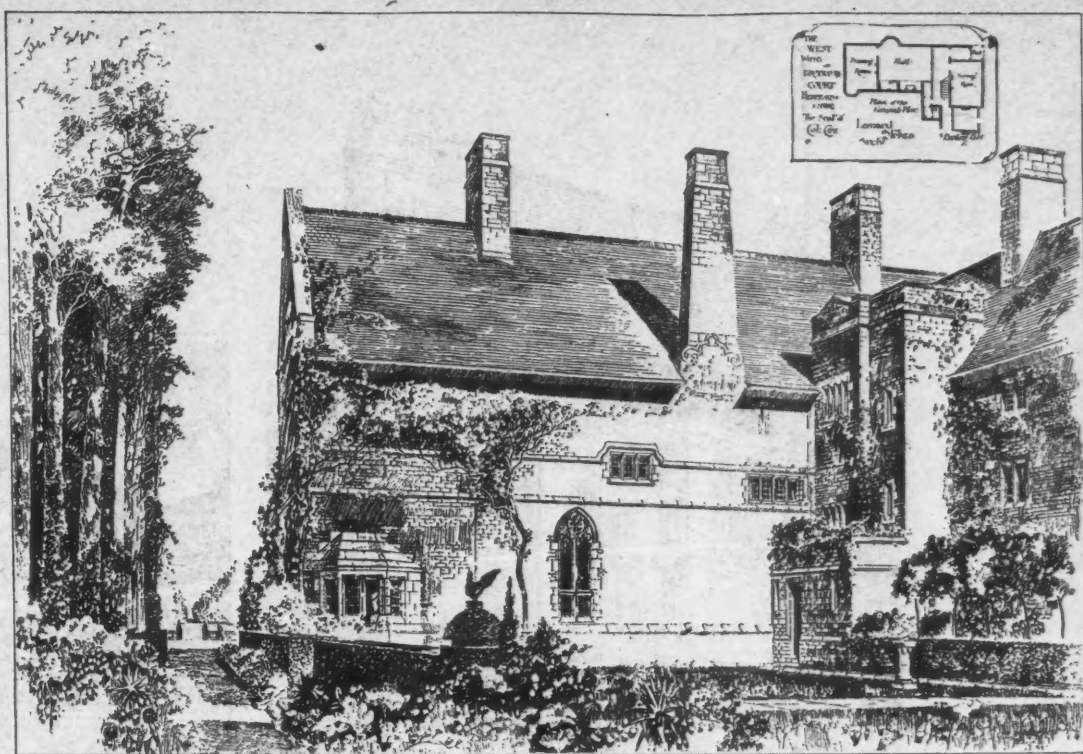
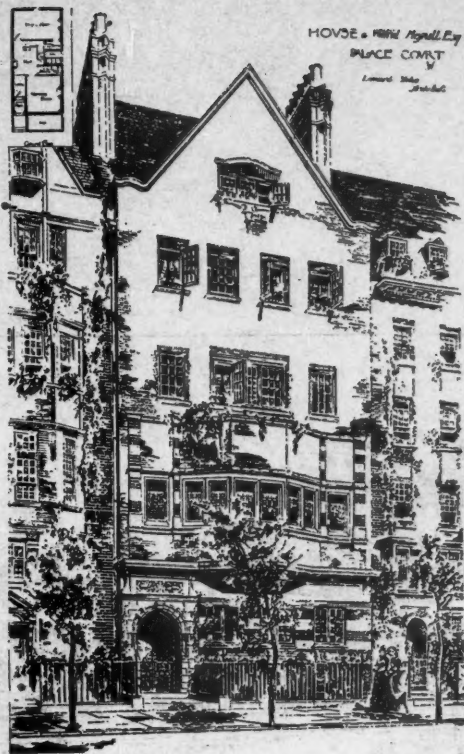
1901-8 were predominantly school years. In 1901 two for the Brompton Oratory,³⁸ and six others; two more followed in 1902, and in 1903 was begun a more ambitious work, the Grammar School at Lincoln, "being built" 1906. A training college, St. Mary's, at Fenharn, Newcastle-on-Tyne, and additions to another nunnery, Ascot Priory,⁴⁰ complete his most scholastic period.

Stokes's only civic work, the additional King's Road wing (1904-8)⁴² to J. M. Brydson's Chelsea Town Hall, is utterly unlike his other work, assimilated to the point of slavishness to the existing buildings (c. 1885 onward).⁴³ To appreciate this contrast the Town Hall wing should be compared with Stokes's largest country house, Minterne House, Cerne Abbas, Dorset, which seems to have been designed in the same year.⁴⁴ To 1906 belong five more telephone buildings in different parts of the country, to 1907 (or according to another source 1911) the church at Pickering, Yorks.—St. Joseph, on Potter Hill—a pleasant and sturdy group with low square tower.⁴⁵ In the same year⁴⁶ important additions were begun to the school of Downside Abbey. These were opened in 1912⁴⁷ and form perhaps Stokes's best-known scholastic work.⁴⁸ "With its up-to-date accommodation, the details of this fine plan are worth studying; "47 Bath stone was used for the exterior, which features to full effect the extensive mullioned and



Of work belonging to the same years the designs for the Admiralty Arch competition⁸⁸ and for the completion of St. Wilfrid's Hall, belonging to and westward of the Brompton Oratory,⁸⁹ just behind the Cardinal Newman memorial, hold first place. The façade of St. Wilfrid's Hall had to fulfil the difficult triple function of harmonising with the Victoria and Albert Museum immediately to the west, with the existing renaissance memorial by Bodley

Meanwhile there had come in 1913-14 the famous warehouse block for A. Gagnière, Nos. 34-5 on the north side of Golden Square, W., 14, with the old familiar deeply-moulded arches on the ground stage, a kind of ball-flower hollow carried round the first floor, and a peculiar sunk rustication to the nominal pilasters in the upper part—a rather playful and perhaps somewhat worried composition.⁶³ In 1914, his last building was started, and one of his largest though not his greatest—



The coming of the new pioneering spirit in English architecture of the late nineteenth century has always been principally associated with Voysey. Some of the innovations, however, date back to a generation earlier than Voysey's, to Webb and others in domestic, and to Brooks, Sedding and so on in ecclesiastical architecture. Moreover, Voysey was much less solitary in his early style than is generally assumed. Horsley and Ricardo, for instance, should share his fame, and so should Leonard Stokes, as this article and its illustrations will establish beyond doubt. Voysey's earliest houses date from 1888 and 1891. Stokes's Sefton Park Church, 1-5, seems to have been begun in 1888. Its free treatment, especially of the presbytery, needs emphasis; so does the interior, influenced probably by Brooks and Pearson. The furnishings are of a charming lightness which indeed anticipates Voysey. Equally bold is the house for Mr. Meynell of 1889, 6, again with motifs pointing towards



Voysey, and the design for Boxwood Court, Herefordshire, of 1891, 7. The town church, 8, was illustrated in 1893 and is, with its stumpy asymmetrical turrets, of a type dear to Stokes. 1893 ends Stokes's early period. The Meynell House, needless to say, is the one in which Francis Thompson was "the gentle, late, voluble, flushed, dozing visitor of every day."

Georgetown (Catholic) Cathedral in Demerara, British Guiana.⁶⁴ This is one of his few works of which scale drawings were published.⁶⁵ He "remembered every detail till the end;" it was still unfinished in 1927,⁶⁶ and has been continued by Mr. Drysdale. Of 1915 only church fittings are recorded, and of 1916 a hospital for cripples, for Alton, Hants,⁶⁷ apparently never executed.

1919 brought the great day of his life—the bestowal of the coveted Royal Gold Medal. No record of his illness appears in the report,⁶⁸ and no explanation of the long period which had elapsed since his last published work, beyond references by H. T. Hare, then President, to an "old friend" whom he had to "greet after a lapse of some years;" but the knowledge of the position must have helped to prompt the award, made "in recognition of the merit of his executed work."⁶⁹ Hare spoke of his record as "associated with architectural works of the highest excellence and very strongly marked character"—a just and timely tribute. A selection of drawings and photographs of his work was displayed in connection with the ceremony; but unfortunately

there seems no printed record to survive of this exhibition. In the same year, 1919, Stokes was joined in partnership by Mr. George Drysdale.

The partnership went on for another six years, until on Christmas Day in 1925 Stokes passed away in his house, No. 8, Mulberry Walk, Chelsea.⁷⁰

It remains to add a few remarks about his treatment of detail. His mouldings, and especially archivolt sections, were the most original of his time; the tablet flower in a wave moulding in the Folkestone design is interesting as a new use of traditional detail, and his junctions of roofing shaft, arch and pier at Peterborough and Balham at once strike the eye on entering. His mouldings "were bold and vigorous . . . he had a wish always to design new shapes,"⁷¹ though "he rather overdid it at times; he . . . always drew the contours himself."⁷² "He took extraordinary care over the smallest detail" said a Lord Mayor. "His colour sense was not highly developed, nor did carving or sculpture greatly appeal to him;" "the design seemed to be made before it reached the paper stage."⁷³

As to his private life and character,

he had his office in the early days at 31, Spring Gardens, S.W.1,⁷⁴ but at the time of his death at 17, Buckingham Street, Strand.⁷⁵ His clubs were the Arts and Chelsea Arts.⁷⁶ He wrote no books and hardly any publication has appeared under his name.⁷⁷ He "never seemed to feel the necessity for what we call 'hobbies'"⁷⁸ but his part in community affairs is shown by the fact that he was for some years on the Westminster City Council.⁷⁹ In later years he tended to be explosive and irritable.⁸⁰ He "had a kind heart and more than ingenuous tongue and he hated anything in the way of pose or inefficiency and had no use for fools. . . . He was no respecter of persons and seemed to prefer a good carpenter to an indifferent noble Lord. . . ."⁸¹

His published portraits reflect these traits: the first, 1890 or earlier,⁸² shows him a comparatively young and genial man: another, published in 1919 on the presentation of the Gold Medal but evidently earlier,⁸³ is front-facing, and shows him firm and serious, possibly a pose; the presidential portrait by Sir William Orpen, c. 1910,⁸⁴ is also full-faced, a rather scowling figure, standing with clasped hands in a dressing-gown—a circumstance commented on by Hare in 1919.⁸⁵

Whether Stokes, apart from his pupil and partner, Mr. Drysdale, and his son, Mr. David Stokes, had any followers it is hard to say; the process of simplification and insistence on structural honesty known as the Modern Movement, especially in its international and extreme forms, had made headway independent of his work. Nevertheless, he helped to blaze the general trail and his contribution will prove lasting, beyond vogues and verbiage, beyond our day.

notes

¹ Pp. 88, 91, illus. p. 90.

² Pp. 48, 51. Stokes is, however, not mentioned in Muthesius's *Die Englische Baukunst der Gegenwart* of 1900.

³ Cf. his well-known Palace Theatre (formerly Hippodrome) in Charing Cross Road, and City Bank on Ludgate Hill (illus. in Statham, *Mod. Arch.* p. 256;

Muthesius, *Engl. Baukunst* title page; *Encyc. Brit.* 11th ed. ii, p. 440). Succeeding to his mannerism was R. Huntly Gordon, one of whose pleasant fronts graces Parliament Street (see *Arch. & Bldg. News* 1944, June 23). Leonard Martin stands apart as the apostle of prevailing verticality (see *Builder*, 1943, Jan. 29, p. 106), producing at gable level "an effect of joinery" (W. E. Davis).

⁴ Pevsner, *Pioneers*, p. 154.

⁵ *Who was Who*, 1910-1928, 1929, p. 1003.

⁶ *Builder*, 1926.

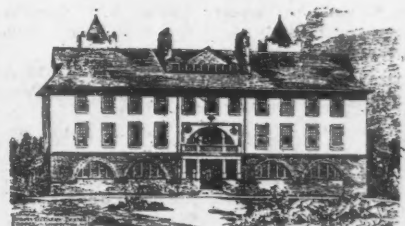
⁷ He died in 1935, *Who was Who*.

⁸ *Journal R.I.B.A.* 1926, Jan. 9, p. 148.

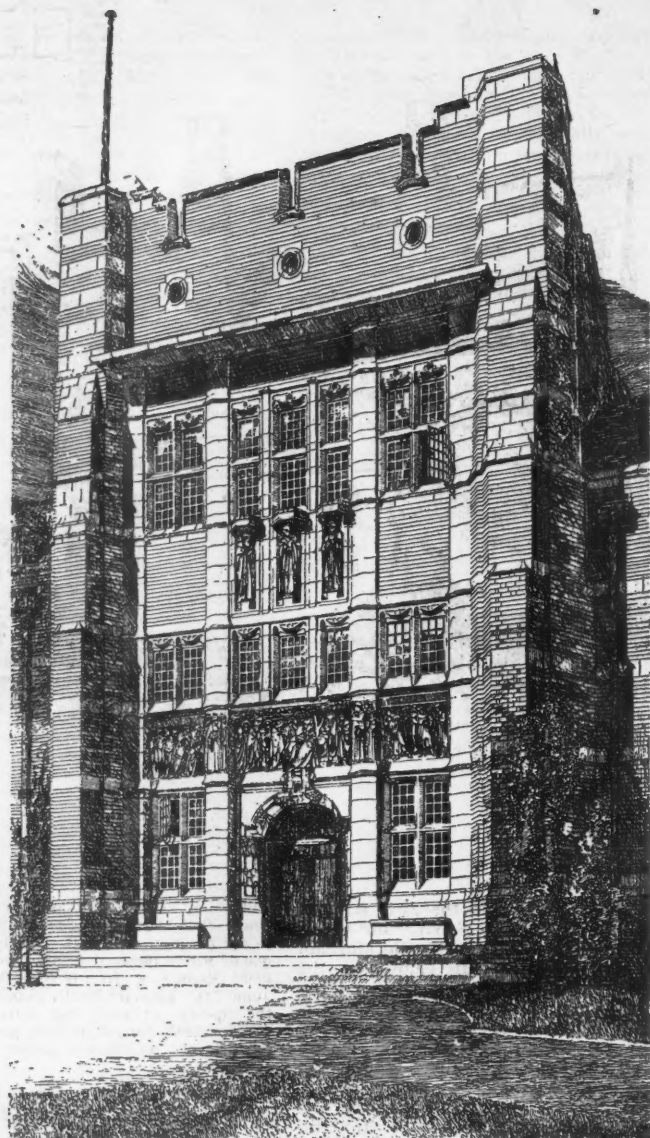
⁹ The main facts printed in this article are from *The Times*, reprinted in *Builder*, Jan. 1, 1926, and *Journal R.I.B.A.* loc. cit.

¹⁰ M. B. Adams, *Archts. Geo. IV-V*, *Journal R.I.B.A.* 1912, p. 651.

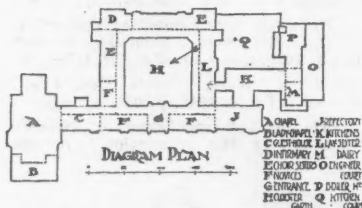
¹¹ He is not mentioned in Street's "account of the restoration" in the



9 and 10. From 1893 onwards Stokes began to take a more determined interest in Georgian domestic traditions. Ernest Newton's immensely popular houses may have had a certain influence on him. This comes out in 2, West Drive, Streatham Park, 9, although the heavy crowning motif of the grouped chimneys is very much Stokes's own. Nazareth House, Bexhill, 10, was designed five years earlier. It dates from 1894. The low ground-floor arches are particularly noteworthy. They became almost a hallmark of Stokes's work.



11



All Saints Convent at London Colney is Stokes's *magnum opus*. It was begun in 1899. The turrets and frieze of the entrance were a motif then especially popular among the moderns (Townsend's Bishopsgate Institute, etc.). It probably came from Sedding. The vigorous originality and at the same time comfort and solidity of the courtyard—again with low ground-floor arches—are exceptional.

published report. (Street, E. Seymour & Sir T. Martin, *Cathedral of the Holy Trinity*, 1882).

¹³ The "Soane Silver Medal," 1882, spoken of in the *B. News* account, 1890, Mar. 21, p. 405, seems an error.

¹⁴ Cf. also *Br.*, 1943, Jan. 29, p. 105, etc.

¹⁵ "A school chapel" in one source.

¹⁶ *B. News*, 1890; C. W. Ware according to another source. Not his "earliest work," by another.

¹⁷ *Br.*, 1884, Oct. 25, p. 570.

¹⁸ *Br.*, 1886, May 22, pl.

¹⁹ *Br.*, 1887, Mar. 26, p. 484.

²⁰ *Br.*, 1897, Sept. 11, p. 203.

²¹ *Br.*, 1892, Oct. 15, plan p. 302, pl. p. 303; *Journal R.I.B.A.*, 1927, p. 166; *Acad. Arch.*, 1892.

²² *Acad. Arch.*, 1895.

²³ *Arch. Rev.*, i, 1897, pp. 52-4, pl. p. 53; dated 1897 by another source.

²⁴ *Acad. Arch.*, 1898, Part 1.

²⁵ *Who was Who*, 1916-28, p. 1003.

²⁶ *Br.*, 1901, May 18.

²⁷ *Br.*, 1902, Jan. 25; *Acad. Arch.*, 1901, Part 1.

²⁸ *Br.*, 1899, Nov. 18, p. 466; "Sud" in Drysdale's list, "Soot" in *Br.* and *Acad. Arch.*, 1899, Part 2.

²⁹ *Br.*, 1900, Feb. 3 and Sept. 15. In partnership with G. T. Hine. Cf. also *Acad. Arch.*, 1899, Part 2, 1900, Part 1, and *Journal R.I.B.A.*, 1927, p. 170.

³⁰ *Br.*, 1943, Jan. 29, p. 105.

³¹ *B. News*, obit.

³² The "Sefton Park, St. Begbroke" of *Who was Who* is a mistake.

³³ Drysdale, p. 168.

³⁴ Information kindly supplied by Mr. M. C. Pink, late Deputy Controller.

³⁵ Hare in *Journal R.I.B.A.*, 1919.

³⁶ *Br.*, 1902, Jan. 25.

³⁷ *Arch. Rev.*, xxiii, 1908, 318-4.

³⁸ *Br.*, 1900, Nov. 17, pls. pseudonymous and unidentifiable; *Acad. Arch.*, 1901, Part 2.

³⁹ Boys' *Journal R.I.B.A.*, 1927, p. 173 (ext.).

⁴⁰ *Br.*, 1906, Feb. 3, p. 120 and pl.; *Acad. Arch.*, 1905, Part 1.

⁴¹ *Acad. Arch.*, 1902, Part 1.

⁴² *Br.*, 1930, Mar. 20.

⁴³ *Arch. Rev.*, xxv, 1909, pp. 150, etc., views 151-2; *Br.*, 1909, Nov. 13; *Acad. Arch.*, 1905, Part 2, 1909, Part 1. Not whole building as implied in *Who was Who*.

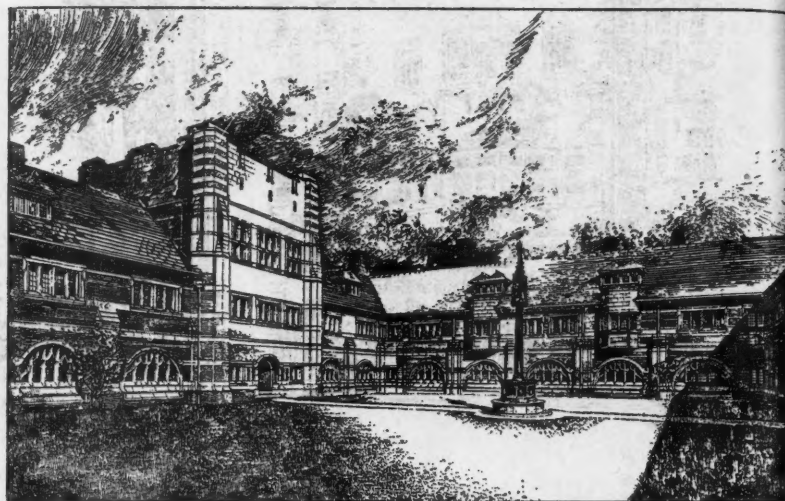
⁴⁴ *Br.*, 1885, May 2, pp. 618, etc.

⁴⁵ *Acad. Arch.*, 1904, Part 2, 1905, Part 1, *Arch. Rev.*, xxv, 1909.

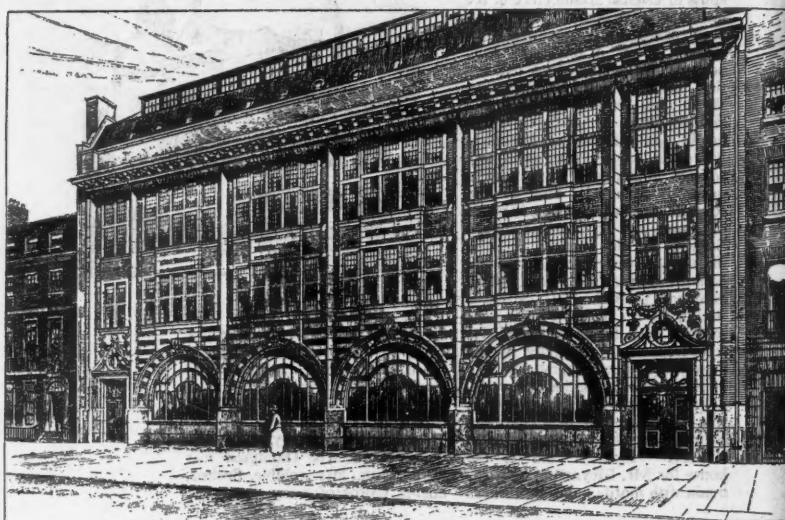
⁴⁶ Illus., *Journal R.I.B.A.*, 1927, p. 167.

⁴⁷ Drysdale list, only date; *Acad. Arch.*, 1911, Part 1.

⁴⁸ Dom Ethelbert Horne in *R.I.B.A.*,



12



13

British Architects' Conference, Bath (guide), 1928, pp. 97-8.

⁴⁹ Illus. *Journal R.I.B.A.*, 1927, ext. p. 163, dormitory int. p. 171.

⁵⁰ J. Willis Clark, *Concise guide to . . . Cambridge*, 10th ed., 1933, p. 92.

⁵¹ Drysdale list.

⁵² Willis Clark, and *R.I.B.A. Handbook of British Architects' Conference*, Cambridge, 1933 (prefixed to Clark), p. 16.

⁵³ *Acad. Arch.*, 1910, Part 1; Drysdale list.

⁵⁴ *Arch. Rev.*, xxxviii, 1915, p. 36.

⁵⁵ *Br.*, 1913, Dec. 19, pl. and plan; *Arch. Rev.*, ante, pp. 36-7 and pl.; *Br.*, 1916, July 28, pls. and plan.

⁵⁶ *Br.*, ditto, p. 54, ext.

⁵⁷ *Who was Who*; R.C.H.M. *Westminster Abbey*, 1924, pp. x-xi.

⁵⁸ *Jnl.*, 1919, p. 202.

⁵⁹ *Br.*, 1910, Oct. 15, p. 414.

⁶⁰ *Br.*, 1910, Dec. 2, 2nd-floor plan and pl.; *Acad. Arch.*, 1911.¹

⁶¹ Muirhead *Blue Guide to London*.

⁶² "14 years before his death," Drysdale, p. 168, i.e., 1911.

⁶³ Letter to the present writer.

⁶⁴ Drysdale, p. 174.

⁶⁵ *Br.*, 1914, Nov. 13, pl., ext. (design), 1915, May 7, pl., int. (design). Dedication unfound. Cf. St. George's (Anglican), *Cty. Life*, 1945, Nov. 10.

⁶⁶ Plan, secn. and ext., *Journal R.I.B.A.*, pp. 168-9.

⁶⁷ Drysdale, p. 173.

⁶⁸ *Br.*, 1916, May 5, aerial view; *Acad. Arch.*, 1916.¹

⁶⁹ *Journal R.I.B.A.*, 1919, July, pp. 201, etc.

⁷⁰ Same, Mar., p. 119.

⁷¹ *Br.*, 1926, Jan. 1, p. 7, etc.; No. of house in *Who was Who*.

⁷² Drysdale, p. 164.

⁷³ Ditto—personal information.

⁷⁴ Drysdale, pp. 160-7.

⁷⁵ *Br.*, 1884, Oct. 25, p. 570.

⁷⁶ *R.I.B.A. Kalendar*, 1924-5.

⁷⁷ *Who was Who*.

⁷⁸ The *British Architect* in 1893, p. 149, cf. pp. 165-6, printed his unfavourable views on the architectural legitimacy of terracotta; the *Builder*, in 1899, May 6, p. 440, a letter of complaint about the architectural limitations of the Royal Academy.

⁷⁹ Drysdale, *Jnl.*, 1927, p. 164.

⁸⁰ Drysdale, *Jnl.*, 1927, p. 174.

⁸¹ Personal information.

⁸² Mr. Drysdale, personal information.

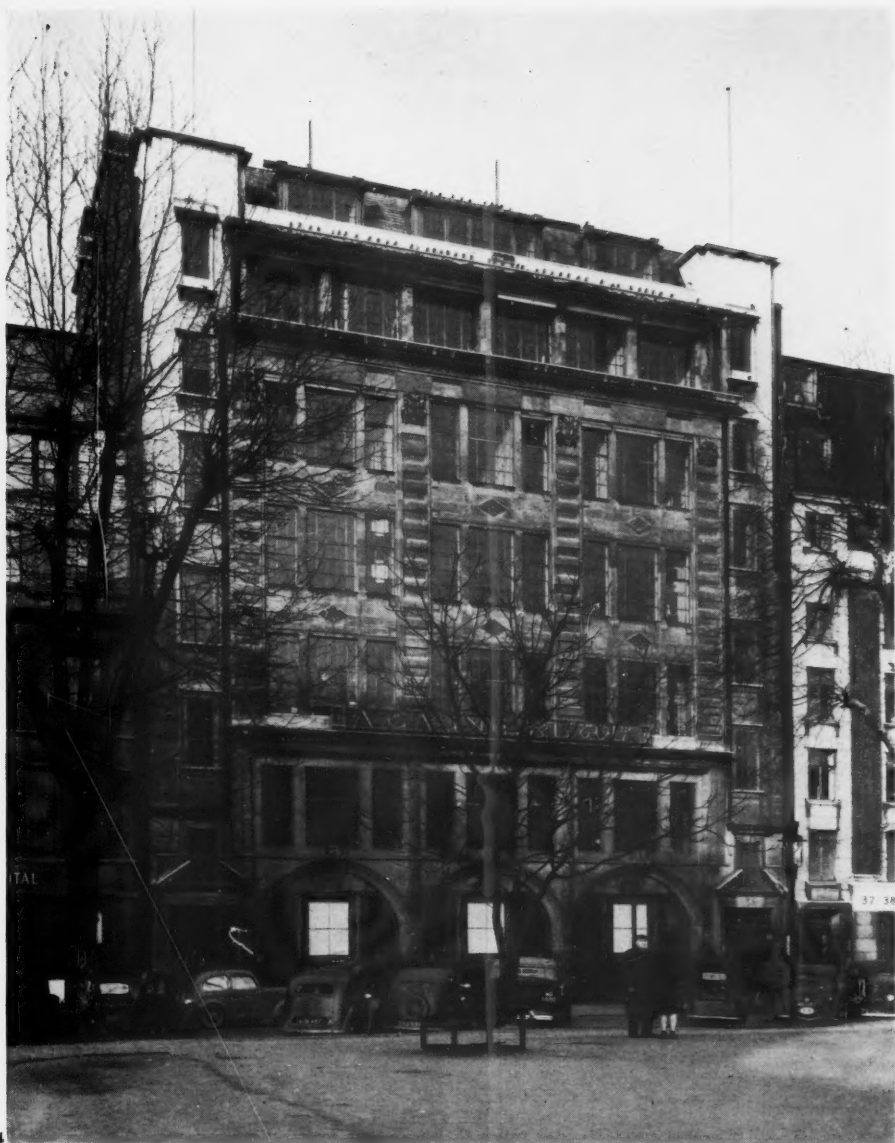
⁸³ *B. News*, 1890, Mar. 21.

⁸⁴ *Journal R.I.B.A.*, 1919, July, opp. 201.

⁸⁵ Oil painting at R.I.B.A.; photographic print in Library.

⁸⁶ *Journal R.I.B.A.*, 1919, p. 208.





14



15

Of Stokes's later work the most characteristic and representative examples are Emmanuel College, Cambridge, 15, an office building in Golden Square, London, 14, and a number of telephone exchanges. Of these the one in Gerrard Street, London, 13, has unfortunately been pulled down. It was very adventurous in design for its date: 1904. The ground-floor arches need now no longer be pointed out specially. But the grid rhythm above and the stress on verticals were most unusual. The office building in Golden Square is a revised edition of this design, broader and more mature, if perhaps less tense. It dates from 1913-14. At Emmanuel College Stokes did a range of lecture-rooms in the Close, and between 1910 and 1915 the whole North Court.



16

Photographs: 15, Marcus Whiffen; 16 and 17, Dell & Wainwright



17

Stokes's early ecclesiastical work also needs a few photographic illustrations to bring out its massive, powerful character. Very little, however, has so far been photographed. The two illustrations, 16 and 17, are of the church of the Holy Ghost, Nightingale Square, Balham. The church was begun in 1896. Its exterior is not completed yet.



1, part of a large descriptive panel which it is interesting to compare with the panel by Portinari for the Chapel of St. Francis shown on page 181, as showing the difference in treatment between the eighteenth century and the modern azuleijos.

Of the three main periods in the history of Portuguese wall tiles the *azuleijos*, called *estampados* (printed) belong to the third and last period. Recently, a group of modern architects affiliated to CIAM have revived the use of these tiles, and several notable buildings including the Ministry of Education in Rio de Janeiro and the Chapel of St. Francis at Pampulha have walls faced with tiles designed by the painter Candido Portinari. In the following article Dr. Joaquim Cardoso traces the development of this art.

rebirth of the

AZULEIJO

IF we are to understand the significance of the use of *azuleijos* (blue glaze tiles) as a wall finish in modern buildings in Brazil, we must remember that tiled walls were an age-old feature of the buildings of the Iberian peninsula. Until well after the seventeenth century, there flourished in Spain two important centres of production for these glazed tiles—a heritage of the artistic activities of those extraordinary ceramists, the Arabs. The workshops of Sevilla and Talavera de la Reyna, founded in good Moorish tradition and enriched by the influence of the Italian Renaissance, sent a new vitality, a new power and a new drive through Portuguese ceramic art, which till then had been less precise and less regular in form. Famous descriptive panels in Portuguese tiles, such as those in the Ducal Palace at Vila Vicosa, at the Seigneurial House of the Marquesses de Fronteira, and at the Quinta de Bacalhôa

—admirable both in colour and craftsmanship—show, without any shadow of doubt, marked characteristics of Spanish and Italian ceramic manufacture.

There are, roughly speaking, three main periods in the history of Portuguese wall tiles. To the first belong the polychromes, either smooth-surfaced or in bas-relief. These were made by a method which follows that laid down by Nicoloso Milano, and were decorated with a repetitive pattern or, in the larger specimens, imitated designs usually employed for carpets. In the second period, the predominating feature is blue on a white background; these tiles are always smooth-surfaced and show characteristics which have already diverged to a great extent from those of their original Moorish models. To this period belong the great wall panels representing, on a large scale, scenes from Genesis and

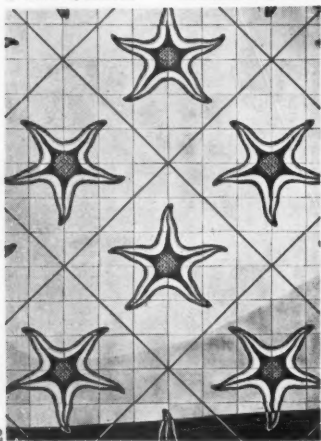
legends of the saints—as well as tiles which are called *single motif*—that is to say that on each tile there is one single and distinct picture—a flower, a fruit, or a bird, etc. In the third and last period, the ceramic industry reached, as so many other industries have done, a commercial phase, and the tiles lost their hand-made quality, being even designed (as well as manufactured) by mechanical processes. These are the *azuleijos* called *estampados* or *estampilhados* (printed, or stamped) and they had a great vogue as wall finishes in church aisles and corridors and in civil buildings as well. In spite of their inferiority, from an artistic point of view, to the painted tiles of the first two periods, they still provide excellent decoration and many of them are precise and well-drawn.

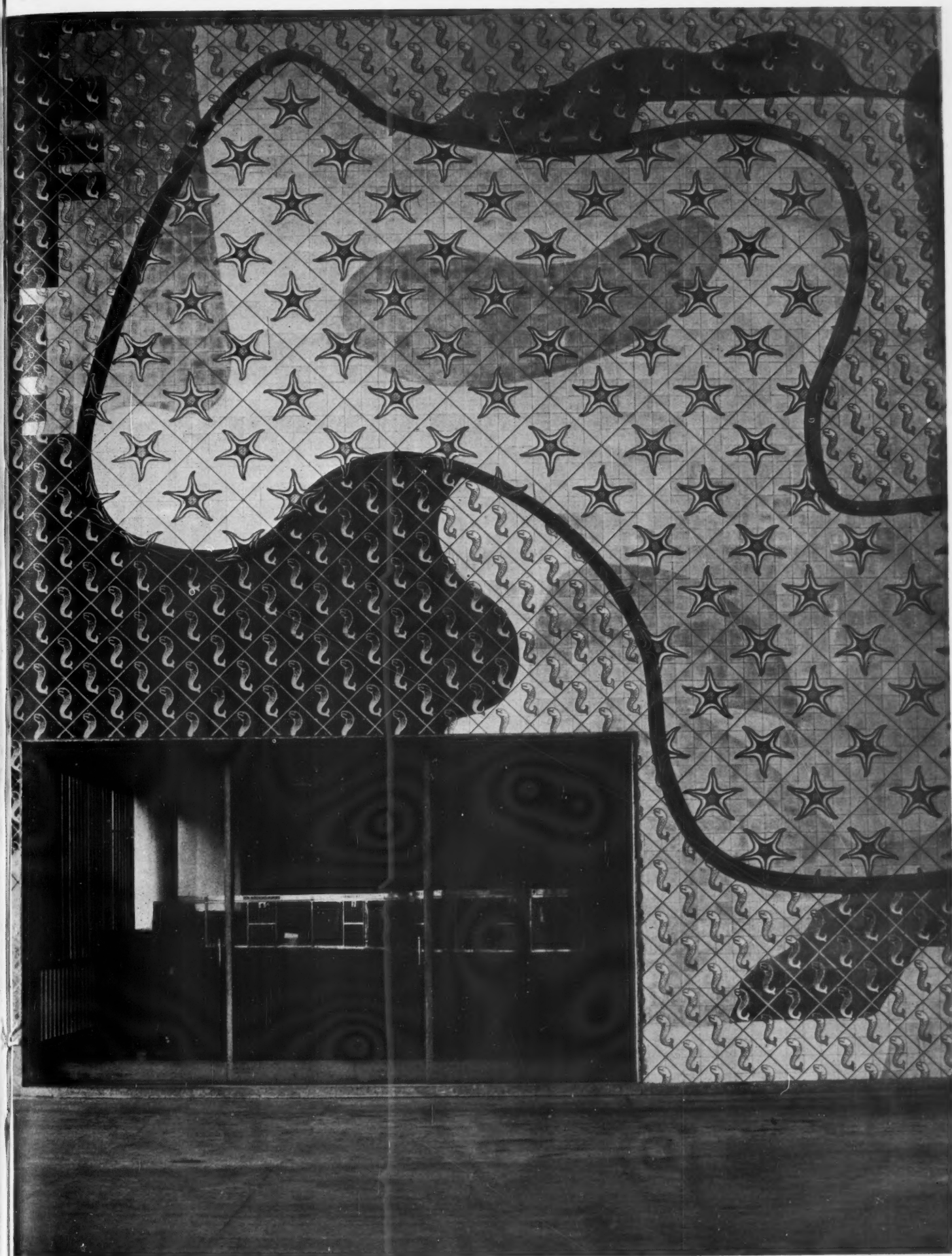
The use of the *azuleijo*, either as a decorative element or as a simple finish to walls in modern buildings, is thus an immediate result of its traditional use in Portuguese architecture—from which, since their very inception, Brazilian methods of construction have never entirely been able to depart. Even to-day when architecture, moulded from reinforced concrete, exhibits profound differences between the constructional tendencies of these two countries, there frequently arise (as the result of imperceptible associations of ideas) unquestionable similarities; and the use of the *azuleijo* is one of these.

Shipped from Portugal, principally to form *lambris* in the cloisters of monasteries or in halls or verandahs of some of the noble houses, the *azuleijo* created, in these half-open architectonic spaces, a very special atmosphere of friendliness and dependence on tropical and unfettered nature. Hence the atmosphere of gentle calm and almost idyllic tranquillity which pervades the interior of the Franciscan monasteries of Bahia, Recife and Rio de Janeiro, all of which possess blue tiles signed by well-known Portuguese potters.

After these more artistic and far more perfectly executed *azuleijos*, the printed tiles held, for a long while, first place as wall finishes,

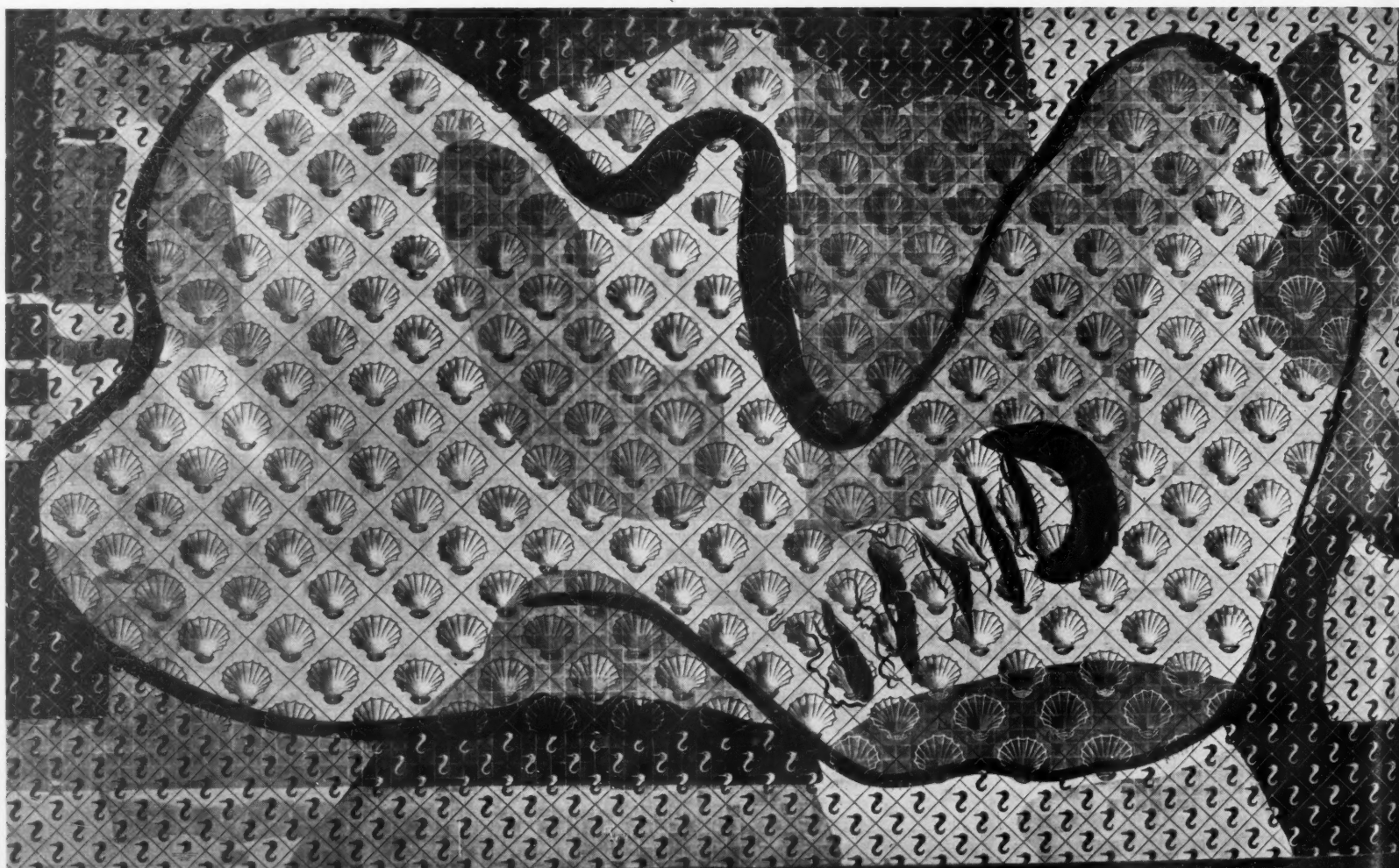
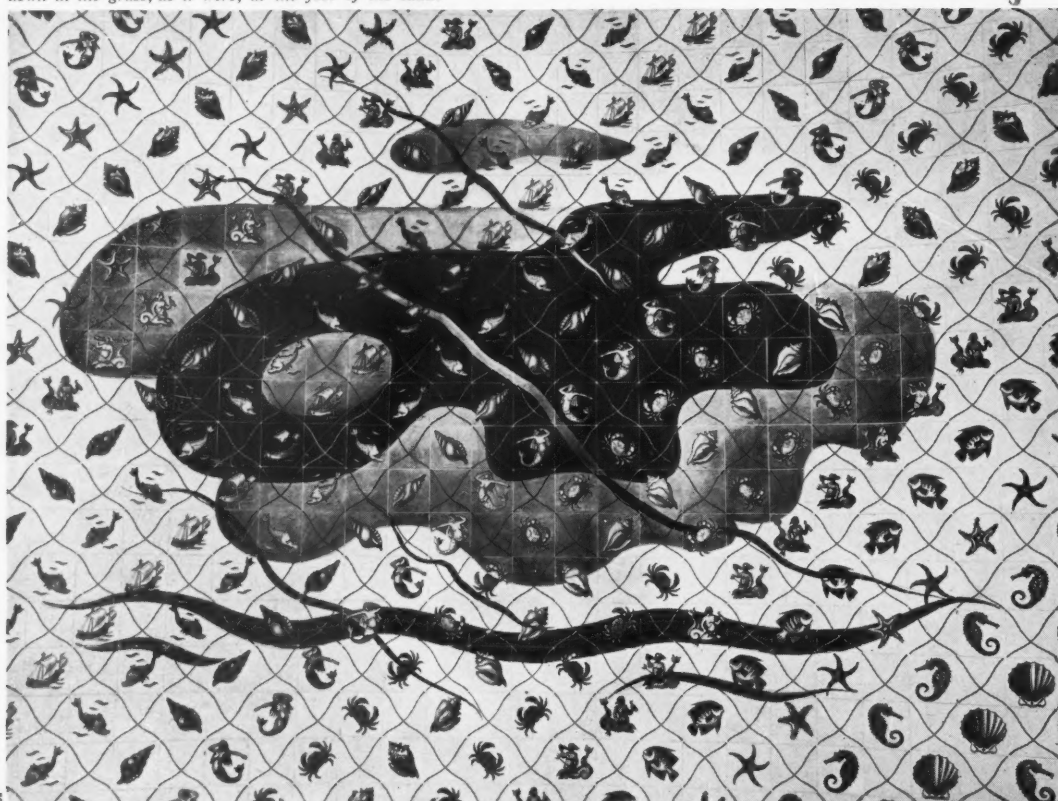
JOAQUIM CARDOSO

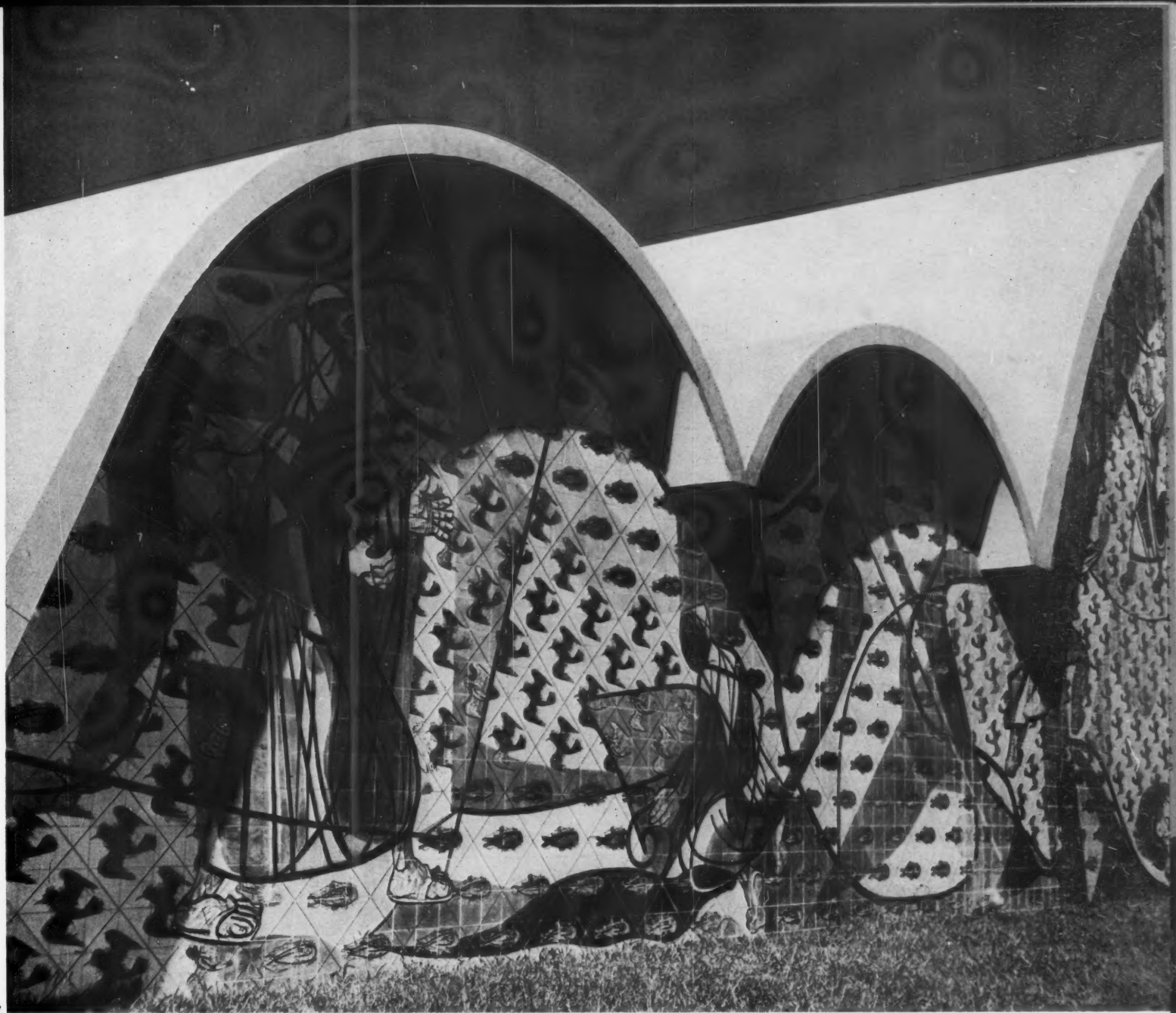




2, a detail and 3, a general view of a part of the large panel of azuleijos, by Portinari, around the entrance to the Ministry of Education and Public Health in Rio de Janeiro, 1944.

4, 5 and 6, the two large panels on the south side of the Ministry of Education building, which each measure about fifty-two by thirty-three feet. They are composed of tiles about six inches square, depicting sea life, with the bold outlines of primitive protoplasmic shapes, and repeating patterns of marine fauna. 7 and 8 on the facing page and 9, on page 182, show the azuleijos on the Chapel of St. Francis at Pampulha, also by Candido Portinari. In 8, the wolf is lying meekly down in the grass, as it were, at the feet of the saint.





7



8

and even nowadays they are outstandingly noticeable on a large number of the façades of ancient buildings.

It was as a result of their familiarity with the already existing glazed tiles in the ancient churches of their country that the modern Brazilian architects took the initiative of reviving this ancient decorative procedure, together with mural paintings, mosaics and marble and granite facings. It is true, of course, that before this some feeble and sketchy attempts had been made in this field, more especially in association with the unsuccessful movement to revive the neo-colonial style. But it is undeniable that the present use of *azulejos* for great expanses of wall space is due to the initiative of a group of modern architects affiliated to CIAM.

It is in the Ministry of Education and Public Health in Rio de Janeiro that the first *azulejos* were used in this revival of a practically abandoned art. All the external walls of the ground floor of this huge building are covered with ceramic. The most outstanding are on the south side—two large panels, each measuring about fifty-two by thirty-three feet. They are composed of tiles about six inches square, and their general motif—clearly expressionistic in composition and character—is the Beginning of Life—of Life rising to the light of day from the midst of the sea. With different tones of ultramarine blue, large expanses of *azulejos* show lines indicating the depth of the water, and over these surfaces, traced in bold, strong outlines, are primitive protoplasmic shapes, while to suggest the clarity and transparency of the sea, there is a general background of marine life—scallop shells and starfish forming a pattern which, in most cases, is made up of sixteen *azulejos*.

On the other walls *single-motif azulejos* have been used, representing elements of a rich marine fauna: scallops, nautili, conch shells, crabs, polyps and coral, all of which give excellent plastic effect; these single-motif tiles cover the external wall surfaces of the amphitheatre and the stairway leading up to the Exhibition Rooms.

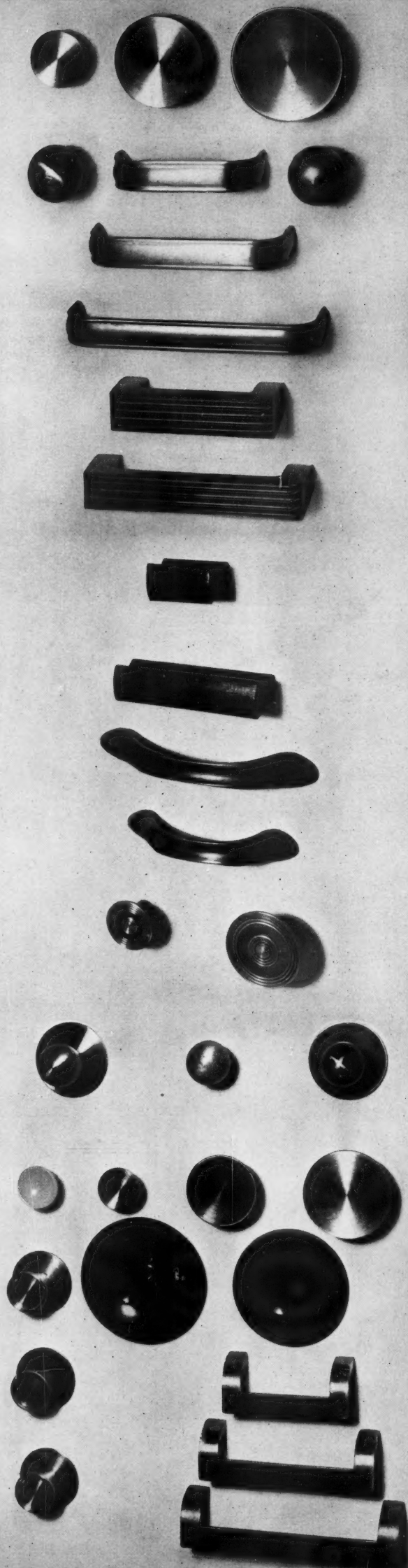
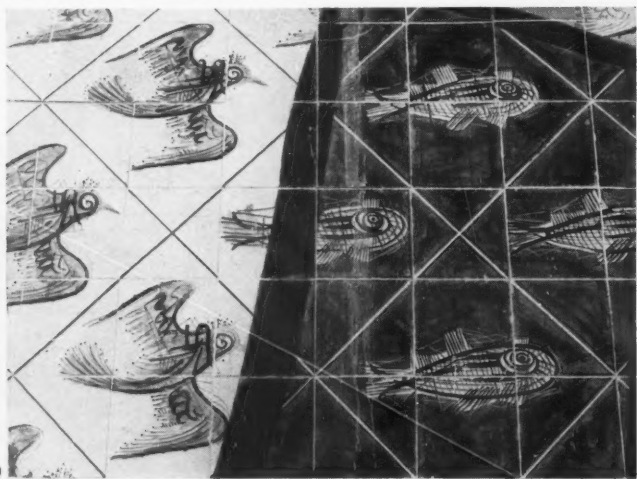
All these glazed tiles were manufactured in Brazil, in the "Osirarte" studio in São Paulo, after cartoons designed by the painter Candido Portinari; though their "pâte" is, perhaps, not as good as it should be, they are excellently painted and their glaze is good. The process used is the old classic one; painting on "biscuit" in blue tones and glazing by means of lead or tin, exposed to a high-temperature furnace (technically, *grande fogo*).

Sometime after the manufacture and use of the *azulejo* on the walls of the Ministry of Education and Health, Niemayer Filho specified a wall facing of *azulejos* for some of the walls in the Yacht Club at Pampulha, Belo Horizonte. Here, however, it was not panels of original design which were used, but only reproductions of stamped tiles which already existed. The pattern chosen was that found in the Church of Our Lady of Carmel at Lapa—both lively and vital in form and design.

Practically of the same period are the *azulejos* which adorn the Chapel of St. Francis, also at Pampulha; they cover a surface of more than eighty square meters and make up the whole rear façade of the small church. The themes chosen are passages from the life of the great Saint of Assisi; the cartoons, also the work of the painter Candido Portinari, are most happy in composition and are in perfect harmony with the varying heights of the circular and parabolic arcs which form the church. The episode of the submission of the Wolf of the City of Agobio is the principal motif represented, and the wolf appears at the feet of the saint at the base of the panel as though he were actually lying in the garden that surrounds the church. In addition, there are other scenes from the life of the "Poverello" depicted with great strength, all of them in a rich and lustrous blue.

All the space surrounding the figures is filled in with fishes and birds designed in the same particular way, with scales and feathers treated as though they were both created from the same substance.

Both the stamped tiles used in the Yacht Club and the panels in the Church of St. Francis were made by the Osirarte Studio, which is run by the Italian painter Paulo Rossi. This studio is also responsible for the little tile paintings, representing Brazilian regional scenes and painted in blue, green, red and yellow, with which many houses in São Paulo and in Rio de Janeiro are decorated.



DESIGN REVIEW

for a discussion of new designs, new materials and new processes, with a view to developing the essential visual qualities of our age: functional soundness, the outcome of science, and free aesthetic fancy, the outcome of imagination.

Advisory Committee

Misha Black	Nikolaus Pevsner
Noel Carrington	Peter Ray
John Gloag	Herbert Read
Milner Gray	Sadie Speight

NATIONAL FURNITURE PRODUCTION:

The story behind the production of utility furniture, told here by Mr. Gordon Russell, is one of early struggles vindicated in a time of emergency, and of new standards established which will permanently affect the level of furniture design in Britain. It is a success story which will hearten all those who have felt concern over the design of everyday things in this country.

ABOUT the middle of 1942 I received a letter from the President of the Board of Trade (Mr. Hugh Dalton) asking me to sit on a Committee to advise him on the introduction of utility furniture. He said that Mr. (now Sir) Charles Tennyson had consented to act as chairman. I had known Sir Charles for some time and respected the work he had done in the cause of industrial design. I was sure he would make a good chairman. At our first meeting the President made it clear that he wanted us to ensure that the furniture should be soundly made of the best available material, and he emphasized that he wanted it to be of pleasant design. He spoke most seriously of the possibility of a furniture famine unless immediate steps were taken to stop it. He left us in no doubt that he considered the job really important war-work, and that he expected us to find a solution quickly. The Committee was well balanced. It included some of the best-known members of the furniture trade, such as Mr. (now Sir) Herman Lebus, Mr. Johnstone and Mr. W. Welsford, Mr. John Gloag, design consultant, Miss Elizabeth Denby, housing consultant, Mr. F. C. Hooper, of a well-known retail firm, Mr. A. G. Tomkins, Furniture Trade Union secretary, Mr. Jenkinson and Mrs. Winborn. We started on the job at once, and we were fortunate in having a most competent and courteous secretary, Miss Eileen Strudwick, of the Board of Trade. We learned quickly enough some of the difficulties that confronted us. We were given a good deal of information, including a long list of materials either unobtainable or in very short supply. It included, of course, most of the things we needed: plywood, block-board, hardwood, steel, cellulose, paint, linoleum, textiles and so on. And it was obvious that any forecast of possible requirements was hazardous, because it was not practicable to make a census of the immense destruction of furniture caused by bombing. Any figures based on pre-war demand were therefore useless. We decided to put out enquiries for designers at once, asking them to submit a few examples of their work as a guide. Some were suggested by the National Register of Designers, some by Trade Federations and some were freelance designers put forward by various people. From this selection of drawings the work of two men was thought suitable. Their designs were simple and workmanlike—much too simple many thought—but they

obviously had a very sound knowledge of the trade. Their names were H. J. Cutler and Edwin Clinch, both of High Wycombe. Our first job was to set down what exactly we felt should be comprised in the first range, bearing in mind all the conditions. This wasn't as easy as it sounds, and, in the early days, there was a very real cleavage of opinion as to whether the designs should be standard, or whether manufacturers should be given any latitude. But it became quite clear, the more we sifted the problem, that nothing less than a standard design and a rigid specification would meet the case.

The acute timber shortage had become apparent early in the war, and steps had been taken already to limit the variety of pieces of furniture that could be made and the amount of timber in each. But this was more a negative policy of damping down anything which bordered on luxury goods, whereas we had to evolve a positive policy of assuring the public a supply of furniture of the best possible quality attainable and at reasonable prices. To do this we were given a great deal of information which could not be made available in wartime to individual manufacturers. Nor would they have been able to digest such a mass of material. As some indication of the work involved it is worth noting that the Utility Furniture Committee has held over forty meetings and its sub-committees have met on many more occasions. It was obvious that the Committee would have to be responsible for finding the best answer it could for each piece of furniture to be included, and there seemed every reason to suppose that such answer, when found, would apply throughout the trade. Besides, any inspection became impossible unless inspectors knew exactly what they had a right to expect, and were able to quote their source of information.

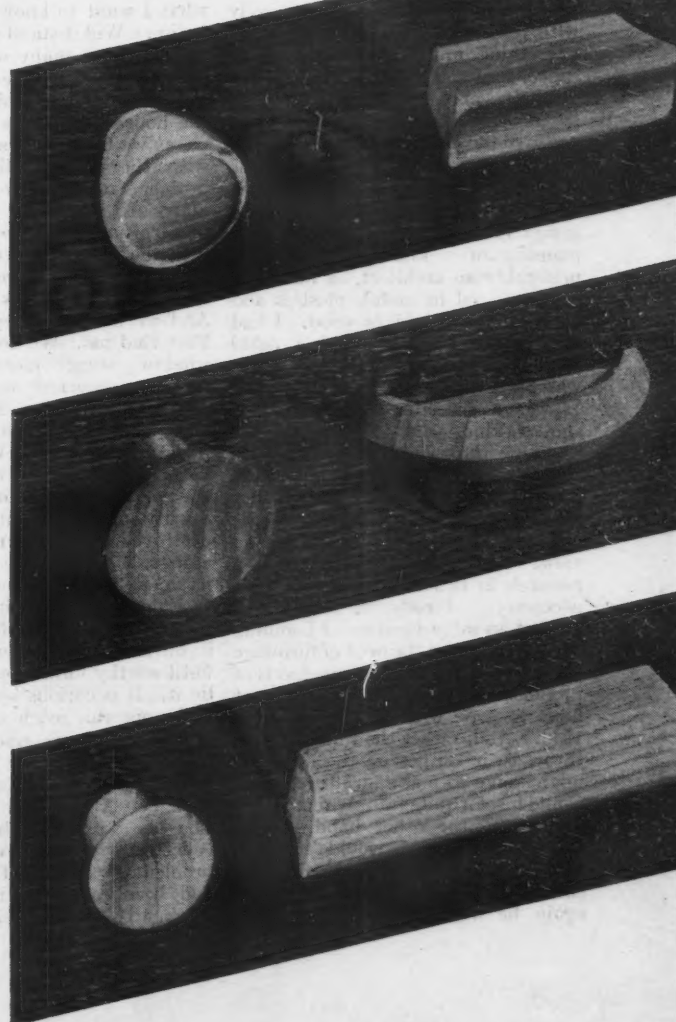
Having agreed this unanimously our next hurdle was that some members felt that what the public bought before the war was well known, that that was what they liked and that was what they should be given. That is, about ninety per cent. imitation Jacobean period furniture and ten per cent. of modern design. It was urged that the President had asked for pleasant furniture, but the word had different meanings to different people. But the basic rightness of contemporary design won the day, for there wasn't enough timber for bulbous legs,

or enough labour for even the cheapest carving. The straightforward commonsense lines were by far the most efficient. It was an acid test, and, naturally, some die-hards only admitted the result reluctantly. Of course, it must have been a bit of a shock that contemporary design which had been pioneered for years by a small minority—while the trade looked on and laughed—should prove its mettle in a national emergency. But so it was, to the amusement of some and to the amazement of others. The trade members of the committee gave their unstinted support, and, in doing so, did much to convert an uneasy, if not actively hostile, trade. Just think for a moment what we were proposing to do. In a trade which was always pretty chaotic, with hundreds of small firms all fiercely competitive and where literally thousands of different patterns existed, we were proposing to reduce the total number of pieces to perhaps thirty, with at the most three designs to each piece of a type that was unfamiliar to many members of the trade, and to prohibit any other furniture whatsoever from being made. Come, come! That's pretty drastic, if you like. But needs must when the devil drives. We pushed along at considerable speed, owing to hard work and harmony in the committee. In Clinch and Cutler we had picked two very sound men. Only those who saw the problem at close quarters can realize the difficulties they were up against. They sincerely wished to see standards in the trade raised. Never

once did they let the committee down, although quite often it meant working through most of the night. The standard they set in working drawings undoubtedly eased the furniture into production, and very few snags appeared later on. They had been anticipated. Early in 1943 utility furniture began to appear in the shops. The prices—which were not subject to purchase tax—looked very reasonable compared with what was being charged. The intelligentsia criticized it as being too conservative: the trade as being too advanced. I was encouraged to find shots coming from both directions: it looked as if we were about right. I am never for forcing the pace. Limited advance, and consolidate, is a sound motto.

I look back on the first range of utility furniture with satisfaction. An immense step was taken in the right direction. To change direction in one firm is not easy, but to change the direction of a whole trade is a considerable task. Bearing in mind the jungle of 1939 it seems rather childish to express peevishness because such a great and uncharted national experiment did not reach the level of an individual firm in Sweden. We were also criticized because it was not designed for mass production. It wasn't meant to be. Owing to extreme transport difficulties it had to be made in the zone in which it was going to be sold. As about half of the furniture trade of Great Britain is centred on London there was naturally a grave shortage

by GORDON RUSSELL



The illustrations on the facing page and those on the right show the standard range of handles for utility furniture, all designed for machine production. In certain pieces of furniture manufacturers may use either knobs or bar handles, at their own discretion.

of production in some other areas. In these almost any firms who had reasonable wood-working experience had to be roped in. Some were quite small. All the largest firms, and many of the most efficient, were working on aircraft or special work of high priority. On the whole the reception accorded to the new furniture by the trade was not as hostile as we had expected. We were not so optimistic as to have imagined it would be enthusiastic. Some of the daily papers seized on the fact that hardboard had been used. "Furniture made of cardboard" was news! But hardboard, veneered on both sides, proved a very useful substitute for plywood. In any case it was the only one available which stood up to test.

So I took a deep breath and sat down to think out whether, from the designers' point of view, we had done all we could. What was the next step? I felt that to raise the whole standard of furniture for the mass of the people was not a bad war job. And it has always seemed sound to me, when in doubt as to people's requirements, to aim at giving them something better than they might be expected to demand. I found so many people in the trade talking of getting back to 1939. I didn't want to go back, and I felt in my bones there was a much greater proportion of the public than of the trade who felt as I did. It seemed to me more than ever that here was a unique opportunity of giving the people much better furniture than they had ever had on such a scale—better in design, in workmanship and in material. And surely it might be possible to use the utility specification as the basis of a quality mark in the post-control period. To this end I felt it was essential to carry on intensively with research into design. To leave everything until new designs were called for, and then take in a few designers and work at the frantic speed of the last few months, could not give the best results.

So I wrote a short report on the subject for the chairman. I suggested that a panel of not more than six designers be set up under the chairmanship of a knowledgeable man, preferably an architect, as he would be interested in metal, plastics and other materials besides wood. I had at the back of my mind a panel such as the team of architects which was responsible for Pithead Baths. It was a specialized problem of a similar kind, and it was essential to know the whole background. I suggested that the chairman should be given a seat on the Utility Furniture Committee, so as to be able to state the designers' point of view. It seemed to me that design research in two directions was most necessary. Firstly, it might well be that an intensification of bombing might mean that the need of furniture was so vast that ordinary methods of production and materials could not hope to cope with it. This was in 1943. And, rather than have people throw their clothes on the floor, we might have to make furniture which would be of a quite frankly temporary kind. On the other hand, we all knew that things would improve some day—plywood, blockboard, cellulose, steel and so on would again be available—and we ought

to have blue-prints ready. Consumer needs should be studied, and I had some interesting talks with Francis Meynell, then in charge of this department at the Board of Trade.

I also went to see Margaret Solomon at the Housing Centre, and she arranged for me to meet a group of housing managers. I was anxious to find out as much as possible about how people lived, what they put in their furniture and so on. I went down to Toynbee Hall to talk to them and to Mrs. Harrison at the Geffrye Museum. I suggested that it might be possible to get a group of residents together at Toynbee Hall and for our Design Panel to act as a sort of Brains Trust, who could learn and perhaps teach. We had a lovely meeting, with Eileen Strudwick in the chair. Such a good humoured, lively and keen audience. I tried to explain some of our problems and the chairman then invited questions. They came thick and fast. One woman said in a blitz a piece of glass had gone through her utility wardrobe. "You can't call that a piece of furniture," she said, but she accepted our explanation. Then a black-eyed, hawk-nosed woman got up and said: "What abaht this utility furniture. Will it stand up to it?" I was asked to reply. "Will it stand up to what," said I. "Well," she repeated, "will it stand up to it? My daughter's just got some—she was blitzed, you see—when 'er 'usband 'eard about it—'e's been in India for four years—'e wrote 'ome and said 'e'd seen some pictures of it in the pipers, some of it looked a bit spidery."

"Spidery," I said, "I wonder what piece of furniture he was thinking of?"

"Well, I dunno. The only piece 'e mentioned was the bed. And that's what I want to know so as to write to 'im. Will it stand up to it?"

There were many other questions, all of them practical, sensible questions about furniture in use in the house. This was very good for us, as we tended to become obsessed with the never ending day-to-day problems of production methods and materials, whilst the major problem of furniture in use was not pushed into the limelight every day. Yes, after all, it is the one that remains long after the others are forgotten. And we learned other things in the East End too. We noticed in a shop window some pieces of utility furniture covered with the most appalling carving. It rivalled the very worst exhibit at any pre-war furniture exhibition. Whilst an extra £5 or £10 had been extracted from the pocket of the customer, the whole quality of the furniture had been destroyed. I could not help being amused a few months later to see a letter in the trade press lamenting the fact that carving was being wasted on utilitarian furniture, when it obviously ought to be saved up until worthy forms could be enriched by it. It is curious by what devious paths one can reach agreement.

And there was research in other directions too. Other materials such as metal and plastics needed thought. At any rate such information as was available should be collected. There was also the problem of textiles. Up till then we had been forced to use textiles in stock. This was a reasonable thing

to do. But the time was coming rapidly when textiles would have to be woven. What designs should we use? Old ones from the trade, or new ones which took account of the severe limitation of types of yarns available, of dyes and looms, etc. Pattern might well be more important than texture. It seemed to me that we could no more go back to some of the dreadful pre-war moquettes than to "drapers' jaco." I felt most deeply that as we had to restrict people's freedom of choice so drastically it was incumbent on us to see that the designs were intrinsically good. Of course the reduction of freedom of choice was not so serious as appeared at first sight. After all, there wasn't much freedom of choice before the war. Then you could have almost anything you liked except good design. The opportunity to choose good, creative, contemporary design—the only thing that is really worth while—that would have been asking too much.

Anyway, the Chairman and then the President considered my report and some time later I was asked to see them. The President invited me to form the Panel and carry on. Strange as it may seem, this took me by surprise. He said he did not feel we should be forced to make purely temporary furniture, and he was very anxious not to do so. But he wished to push ahead with other research. I said that, if I took on the job, I should want to be assured that I should have a say in the constitution of the Panel, that everything in connection with design would be referred to it, and that reasonable funds would be available for making prototypes, when such a course seemed desirable. This was agreed, and I accepted. The first thing I did was to go and see Sir Charles Tennyson and discuss the whole problem with him. I pointed out that, as it was not easy to call the Committee together at very short notice, it was most important to me to have his help and guidance. It became clear very soon that at this stage of the war I should find great difficulty in getting furniture designers of the calibre I needed. I already had Clinch and Cutler earmarked. Brian O'Rourke and Grey Wornum, both architects, attended several meetings, but were too heavily engaged in other directions to carry on. Eden Minns agreed to come, but was called up into the Navy and was later sent to the Pacific. R. D. Russell, also in the Navy, was working at the Admiralty on camouflage. He got permission to attend for discussions occasionally, but before long was sent to India. Things weren't going too well. Ian Henderson, who had had an interesting shop where he sold well-designed furniture and fabrics before the war, was in the Foreign Office. We had some talk about the problem. He thought he might get a three-months release, if the application were made pretty high up. The immense size of the problem, you will see, had not yet fully come home to me. I was thinking in terms of months rather than years. So was the Board of Trade, which was talking of monthly contracts. Ian Henderson was released, and joined us, but his release could not be extended. The size and scope of the job was becoming more apparent every day. And I had to

spend quite a bit of time keeping in touch with all the various departments which impinged on us, and seeing people who brought drawings and bright ideas—some not so bright—for new utility models.

I was in a fix and, like many people before and since in a design fix, I went to talk to Bobby Carter at the R.I.B.A. He was actively interested, as he always was, in any worth-while project. Before long he sent me the name of Jacques Groag, a Czech architect who had been a pupil and later an assistant of Adolf Loos. It was a fortunate suggestion. Groag had an excellent sense of design and had done a good deal of furniture, though most of it was made by hand. He had had an office in Prague and another in Vienna. The modern movement was in his blood and he provided exactly the right counter-irritant to the more prosaic outlook which might so easily have grown up owing to the bludgeoning of difficulties and shortages of every kind. It was so fatally simple to take the easiest solution, and let a great many details go on in the way the trade had always done them. Sometimes they were right, but not always. Groag not only enriched our discussions by his imaginative outlook, but he enriched our vocabulary by words whose rolling cadence delighted us, such as "splendorous." We were now able to push along a bit, and soon the making of prototypes raised many problems. It was fiddling work which no manufacturer really wanted when he was harassed day and night by troubles of his own. I am much indebted to Mr. Sewell, of Ridler's, and to Mr. Barnes, of Gomme's, for the trouble they took, and there were others. But one of our makers, continually sighing for the good old times before the war when what he was pleased to call euphemistically "real furniture" was made, was annoyed at our insistence on mouldings being of the exact contour shown on the drawing. A moulding was just a moulding to him; some cost a fraction of a penny more a foot than others. In exasperation at what he considered sheer waste of time, he blurted out: "We've never had time to worry about little things like that. We're too busy making money here!" It was meant as a stinging rebuke to me. But I changed the maker, not the moulding. In a few words he had, all unconsciously, expressed with perfect and searing clarity the deep-seated disease of the furniture trade. The attitude was pretty general, so that every change was bound to come in for criticism of a destructive kind. But if the wicket was a bit sticky, it was playable. I had the backing of the President and the active sympathy and support of the Chairman and committee. In fact it became increasingly clear that the committee could hardly have functioned without some Design Sub-Committee, such as the Panel was. Much would obviously depend on my political sense. The steering of better designs into production was likely to be far more difficult than making the designs.

We had a very similar problem in the textile trade. After using such furnishing materials as were in stock I was sent up to Lancashire to see Mr. Cartwright, the yarn controller,

as to further patterns. The matter was very urgent, and I had to select three or four patterns for which cards were already cut so as to avoid delay. We could only have one type of yarn and five colours. It was obvious that research was most necessary here, and I suggested that Anthony Hunt, who had been manager of Edinburgh Weavers, would be a most useful man to help us. He was working in the Ministry of Economic Warfare, but we managed to make an arrangement to draw on his experience. Then we appointed Enid Marx as textile designer, and later on I went to see Ethel Mairer to discuss the position with her. As far as cotton was concerned we managed to get quite a number of designs into production, with a very great improvement in the quality of the cloth and colour, and also with standards of fastness, etc. But as far as wool was concerned this proved a much more tricky problem. We had to select from manufacturers' patterns. Among these there were some excellent ones, but, to get production, we were forced to pass many which will not add to our reputation, or that of the trade. And, after the end of the war, an awkward position blew up in cotton. Several million yards of cotton duck and other textiles made for war use were offered by the Ministry of Supply to the Board of Trade. Some of these were good, hard-wearing materials, but they took so much dye that we were unable to get the colours we wanted at the price we could pay. Also the Board was offered immense quantities of yarn which could only be accepted if an immediate decision was given to use a certain running pattern for which it was suitable. Here again we had only nominal control of patterns. In furniture we could demonstrate that control of design was essential to safeguard quality, but in textiles this was only true if quality was accepted in its widest, and proper, sense. This the trade was not prepared to admit, and control was felt to be an unnecessary restriction, instead of a great opportunity for showing a better standard of design.

From the furniture point of view this proved unfortunate, as it is obvious that in a settee, for instance, the quality of design and colour of the covering material is at least as important as the form. We were attempting to interpret to the trade and to the public what was, in effect, a nation-wide drive for better design. Although there was opposition, little of it was active, as we never forced the pace, and I never asked the Committee to accept any design unless I really felt it solved the problem. I tried to keep all our feet firmly on the ground and always towards our goal. I looked for solid, not spectacular, progress. On this score I had to meet a good deal of criticism from those interested in design outside. On the other hand we were very much encouraged by the support given us by the more forward-looking manufacturers and retailers, and by members of the public. I must also mention the Board of Trade. Never before, I believe, had this august body employed industrial designers. The permanent officials, who treated us with tender solicitude, were rather at

a loss as to our function, status, tastes or habits. I was told that the more venerable members, somewhat aghast at such goings-on, were even known to point us out to their friends as among the more peculiar manifestations of a state of total war! Anyway, they spared us the usual Civil Service ceremonial of a desk and carpet according to rank, and we were left to accumulate an astonishing collection of furniture for our use: mostly, discarded prototypes. We clung to this flotsam and jetsam, like sailors to wreckage. From the inception of the Panel we have had a weekly meeting at which the whole of the work in hand is discussed. Often J. Halliday, Chief Production Officer, or his successor, S. T. Johnson, would come along with long lists of points affecting design that had arisen in production. There was a never-ending series of shifting bottle-necks in materials, and a way round had to be found. We were even told, quite seriously, just before D-Day that it might be necessary to go over to softwood for furniture. The Committee naturally was most disturbed at such a prospect. We pointed out that such a step would involve us in a whole crop of fresh difficulties and could only be accepted if there were literally no alternative at all. Fortunately it was not necessary, but some preliminary investigation was done.

As you may well imagine all this was somewhat frustrating to designers, because nothing was coming out the other end. There may well have been times when members of the panel wondered whether I was putting our point of view to the Committee, just as the Committee may well have wondered what the panel was doing. I tried to keep calm and see the whole picture. I hung on to the research we were doing into new types of furniture, for production as soon as plywood and especially blockboard—so as to use flush doors—became available again. These new designs began to sort themselves into three ranges. Firstly, the Committee wished to extend the existing range. There were some obvious gaps in it. It had proved a useful and foolproof range and was being made by about 600 firms of widely different type. The good firms, that is most of the trade, were making an excellent job of it, there were others who would as soon make a good as a bad job, and a small minority who never had made a good job, and had to be graded up. Here too the production officers in the areas played an invaluable part, and it is true to say that their efforts have contributed immensely to the success of the scheme. They encouraged the good manufacturers, helped the ones who had not a great deal of experience, and sat on the tail of the few who were trying to evade their responsibilities. The designing of industrial products is a team job and the team, when one works on a national scale, must be a considerable one. The Committee, especially the technical members, who were always willing to be called on and always gave me helpful and disinterested advice, the manufacturers who did the job as well as they could in spite of the bugs in the machinery, the retailers who were both sympathetic and critical, the production officers who

have helped as I have said, and the other officials of the Board of Trade, the Ministry of Works, the Ministry of Supply, the Ministry of Town and Country Planning, the Ministry of Health, the Ministry of Aircraft Production, and the Ministry of War Transport, all these contributed to the design of Utility furniture, and they have my sincere thanks for the trouble they took to help.

Perhaps no single group is able to keep the whole scheme in the right direction so clearly as the retailers by insisting on the goods delivered to them being up to specification. I know how difficult that is in a sellers' market, but there is a surprisingly large number of retailers who do take a lot of trouble to safeguard their customers' interests, and such people are giving service of real value. Especially is this so at the present time when rapid expansion of production raises many inspection problems. It is clear that much grading up remains to be accomplished. And in the Board of Trade I found the knowledge possessed by Monier Williams, J. G. M. Richards and Eileen Strudwick of what was politically attainable, was invaluable.

Besides the existing range of models it seemed advisable to branch out on both sides. On the one side it was obvious that the end of the war would enable the mass-production woodworking firms employed on aircraft to turn over to furniture. To use their plant to capacity we should need a new range designed especially for them, and we had been working on the assumption that this might well be slightly smaller and lighter, so coping with the dual problem of small rooms and scarcity of plywood. We set about the designing of this new range in this way. I was anxious to bring the trade into consultation as far as possible, as I felt it might avoid many problems at a later stage. So, in discussing the matter at a Panel meeting we decided to ask three or four of the large firms to submit a sample bedroom each, unpainted and made of the materials and by the methods each would like to use. The look of the finished article, at this stage, was not to enter our discussion. The rooms were duly made and we had long talks with the manufacturers concerned and with the technical members of the Utility Furniture and Furniture Production Committees. In the end we were able to evolve two rooms which met almost all the points raised. For instance, some firms always used the technique of planting their wardrobe door on the face, whilst others set it in. Also we had to think up many ways of using short ends, both of solid wood and veneer. The wardrobes give an example. There is a 9 inches wide panel each side of the door. In one, this is veneered in one piece from top to bottom, so using long veneers: in another it is cross-banded, so using short veneers down to 9 inches and, at the same time, giving a pleasing variety. In designing this range we had the great advantage that it was easier to visualize the type of firm who would make it. There were not very many firms in the country with the right equipment, and only those would be designated. This was a very important point. Think for a moment of what happened before the war.

A furniture designer working for a firm knew their plant and methods intimately, and he designed accordingly. He was closely in touch with the principals, who could make decisions rapidly. The firm would only sell in one market—high, medium or low—and could be certain of obtaining the specified raw materials exactly as required next week, next month, next year. Whereas we were designing for 600 firms who differed widely in every way—in size, location, tradition, equipment, technical ability, outlook and integrity. We advised the Utility Furniture Committee on design and the Committee advised the Board of Trade, not a trading body, so that decisions were sometimes hard to come by in a hurry. And we were not thinking of one market or one locality, but of all markets, in all localities. An M.P. in London, a docker in Liverpool, a fishwife in Aberdeen, a policeman in Birmingham, a solicitor in Penzance, a farmer in Merionethshire—these were our customers, to the tune of many millions a year. And as to materials, as I have said, we could rely on nothing and alterations took place at very short notice. The Services, quite rightly, had absolute priority and the shifting emphasis of the war from Atlantic to Mediterranean, from Mediterranean to English Channel, from English Channel to Pacific might destroy all our plans. And, of course, people who break fresh ground anywhere generally stir up a certain, or uncertain, amount of opposition. The kindly interest of the chairman was a great comfort to me, and it never flagged in spite of intense anxiety and bereavement, on top of his wide business and other activities. Anyway I hung on by my back teeth, and at the other end of the range we worked on new types which would not take appreciably more material, but would absorb more of the skilled labour which we felt would be available. Everything pointed to an after-war position where materials were scarcer than labour.

Just as these prototypes were nearing the final stage the end of the war was followed by the general election. Sir Stafford Cripps came to the Board of Trade, so we were indeed fortunate in having two successive Presidents who considered design important. Sir Stafford has done a good deal of woodworking with his own hands, and one of his first acts was to set up a Directorate of Furniture Production, with A. E. Walsh as Director. I found him very hardworking and easy to get on with, but he certainly landed into a most difficult job. It was generally assumed that the end of the war would bring an easing of the position as far as raw materials were concerned. But this has not happened. In fact, in many ways things have never been more difficult, but nothing rattles Walsh. Not only had production in wood to be pushed up at a steep curve, and to take in school furniture, but production in metal was visualized, and we had been doing experimental work on this for some time. It had horrid difficulties and attractive possibilities—and my design team on it now includes R. D. Russell, Eden Minns and R. Y. Goodden. But that's another story!

BOOKS

A Pioneer of Town-Planning

THE ART OF BUILDING CITIES. By Camillo Sitte. Translated by Charles T. Stewart. Reinhold Publishing Corporation, New York, and Chapman & Hall, London. 33s.

THE title of this book—which the translator should have kept—is *The aesthetic fundamentals of town-planning*. It is a classic of the same calibre as Howard's *Garden Cities*, and it is wholly urban in its outlook. In this, at its date, it is unique. It came out in 1889, and thus belongs to the memorable years of the first revolution against Victorian ideals which we find all over Europe and which I have tried to sum up in a chapter of my book on the *Pioneers of the Modern Movement*. Sitte (1843-1903) was a slightly younger contemporary of Morris (1834), Cézanne (1839) and Otto Wagner (1841), and wrote while van Gogh and Gauguin, Rousseau, Ensor, Munch and Hodler did their epoch-making work.

Sitte teaches something that still needs as much emphasis today as it did in the last century. He teaches visual planning as opposed to drawing-board planning, and the informal as opposed to uniformity and regimentation. His technique in putting across his message on the other hand is still that of the nineteenth century. He goes to the past, to the Middle Ages and the Renaissance, chiefly in Italy, shows how certain principles were successfully developed, and then recommends the adoption of the same principles to his own contemporaries. His analysis of Italian city squares is superb, sensitive and observant of effects lost on most spectators, including architects. His knowledge of European towns is startling too. He uses Brescia, Autun, Stettin and Boolsvert with equal familiarity, and the only deeply regrettable thing is that he evidently never had an opportunity to travel in England. What splendid examples he would have found in Oxford and Cambridge or at Bath.

The outcome of his analyses of fourteenth to sixteenth century squares is the proof that before the Baroque (Sitte uses the word already in our sense) symmetry was the one thing carefully avoided.

It is indeed his *belle noire*. "The notion of symmetry," he writes, "is propagating itself today like the spread of an epidemic. The least cultivated are familiar with it, and each one feels called upon to have his say about the involved artistic matters" (p. 32). In the first half of the book the placing of buildings and monuments in relation to squares (never in their centre), the entry of streets into squares, and the grouping of squares (Piazza della Signoria Florence, Piazza and Piazzetta Venice, etc.) are discussed.

After that conclusions are drawn for our own time. The first of these is that "the vitality of the glorious old models should inspire us to something other than fruitless imitation" (p. 72). There are some other equally important No's following this first: warnings against "forced spontaneity" in irregular, accidental looking layouts (p. 72), and against the assumption that accident on its own will ever lead to aesthetically valuable results (p. 82). Even more surprising in its topicality are the warnings against the replacement of individual creation in planning by "public administration . . . with official discipline" (p. 82), and the plea that before starting to plan a district surveys are needed of future uses, probable population development, historic buildings worth preserving and public buildings required.

The passages so far selected for quotation may sound as if Sitte's book were still as fresh today as it was when it came out. This is, however, not so. There are many paragraphs which can only be appreciated historically now, and one should not grumble at that. What textbook at an age of nearly sixty would not be dated somewhere? Sitte's discussion of traffic problems especially (ignorant yet of roundabouts and traffic lights) is largely out of date. His obsession for squares and monuments also appears Victorian, particularly in conjunction with an ominous sentence on page 59. It is the one where he suggests that technician and creative architect might well work together in the following way: "The artist could accomplish his purpose by designing a few of the principal streets and plazas, willingly ceding the remainder to the necessities of traffic movement and other utilitarian considerations. In work areas of the community, the city would display its working clothes, but the principal streets and plazas could be arrayed in their best for sunshine to the stimulation and pleasure of those who use them. Thus these outstanding streets and plazas could serve to foster civic pride and to fire the ambition of maturing youth."

This is arrant Victorianism—as far as one can gather from a literary style which is, alas, the trans-

lator's and not Sitte's. The translation is unfortunate all round. It was apparently undertaken partly from the French edition and only partly from the original. Hence some obvious mistakes such as this: "If a narrow strip of a few yards is added to a small square the result is quite sensible." That is the French "sensible," meaning "fühlbare" in German and "noticeable" in English, but never "sensible." It is also odd to find Saint Jean in Pisa, the Palais de la Commune in Pistoia and the Bastille in Dresden, signifying that most joyful of buildings, the Zwinger.

Sometimes Mr. Stewart's translation just won't make sense. Take "We can distinguish between two kinds of square, those of depth and those of expanse," or "Location of a church in the middle of a site cannot be defended in the name of the builder's interest," or "It would be a grievous error to assume that unguided circumstance could today result in artful expression." The latter passage incidentally I have tried higher up to interpret as meaning that accident today cannot lead to aesthetically valuable results.

Such sentences—and there are plenty of them—make reading an effort and enjoyment impossible. The presentation also is rather unattractive, with a smart somewhat commercial title-page and the text in an oversized Rockwell, like a manifesto. No, Sitte's book does not call for modernization of this kind. Where it needed modernization, and could easily have received it from the publisher, is in its illustrations. If Sitte's sketch plans of squares were accompanied by photographs showing the visual effects of the planning devices which he so eloquently describes, what an invaluable contribution to town-planning history and town-planning today this belated English publication might have been!

NIKOLAUS PEVSNER

Housing Essentials

HOUSES: PERMANENCE AND PREFABRICATION. By Hugh Anthony. Pleiades Press. 6s.

HOW pleasant it is on opening a book nowadays to find a really good presentation. One gets fed up with the "sixteen pages of gloss" type of production and merely to feel with the fingers the matt off-white texture of these pages is almost worth the six shillings asked.

The authors are putting forward a plea for the rationalisation of our attitude towards the social and technical functions of the house. Historically, they say, the house has been, on the one hand, a tent for the nomad and, on the other, a fixed bastion for the contented, secure population; for the house is the physical symbol of the way of life of its inhabitants. In times of slow social change the house can be built for permanence, but in times of rapid change permanence actually becomes an embarrassment, like the outgrown shell of the crustacean. We are suffering cruelly today for the excessive permanence given to the houses of the past century, large and small alike, which by their very being prevent most of us living the sort of life we want to live, and which has been brought within reach by rapid social and technical change: and yet we continue to build in exactly the same manner for the future.

We are oppressed by a too rigid method of financing building, a method based upon the presumption of longevity and, paradoxically, by the desire of the people themselves, insecure, dissatisfied, tossed about by unpredictable gusts of the social wind, that at any rate their home should be as a rock of refuge. This point has not been sufficiently covered by the authors although it is perhaps the real crux of the situation.

The second half of the book is devoted to a résumé of the technical means we have at our disposal to help us attain the end in view. Essentially these are an increased use of prefabrication and standardisation. Rightly, it is pointed out, that once a building element is well enough designed to fulfil its functions at all adequately it is almost certainly a permanent unit and should be so regarded. The authors have, therefore, some caustic and delicious remarks to make about the cardinal errors embodied in the now defunct temporary housing programme and put forward the alternative idea demonstrated in much prefabricated work in the States—the demountable and standardised panel, itself permanent but which can be used to provide for temporary needs and subsequently demounted or altered to suit changed requirements, the frame or basic core of the house only being built for permanence.

One cannot too highly commend this attitude to prefabrication in place of the sterile foredoomed approach of officialdom and the British building industry, but it carries with it the necessity to devise an adequate apparatus of standardisation so that interchangeability of parts may be achieved, and at this task our legislators have baulked.

Whilst it is too late now to influence the early phases of the post-war housing drive, which we might note

at this juncture is going full-steam ahead with comparable errors to those which frustrated the temporary housing programme, it is more than ever necessary to clarify in the minds of the informed general public what are the main issues involved. Our authors have a happy way of summarising the facts in simple statements and one supposes that the book is meant for the man in the street. There are men in more exalted places than this, not a hundred miles from Whitehall as I believe the saying goes, who might pore with profit for a few moments over these pages.

DEX HARRISON

SHORTER NOTICES

NEW TEACHING FOR A NEW AGE. By A. H. T. Glover. Nelson. 15s.

Architecture and town planning may not be of interest to children, nor are most teachers qualified to teach these "subjects." Yet it is surely essential that citizens having the right of rejection or acceptance of new designs for public buildings should have an interest in the standard of what is provided for them. How are interest and critical awareness to be stimulated?

This book is an outstanding contribution to the solution of that problem. The author and his colleagues in the Junior Department of the Sheffield College of Arts and Crafts set out to explore the contemporary environment with a group of pupils aged 11-14. They started from the daily lives and experience of the children and three "projects" developed: "A History of English Life," "The Development of a City" and "A World of Plenty," in which the children's findings were vividly expressed in model, chart and diagram. This organic approach to the social studies must have been a thrilling revelation to both children and teachers. Here, one feels, is education as opposed to mere instruction. Visual methods are used, not for their own sake, but with a social purpose; their suitability to the education of the 70 per cent. of the school population who are unfitted by intelligence and aptitude for traditional academic studies is tellingly stressed by the author.

Part I is opinion on methods and the function of the teacher in the New Age, Part II a description of the "projects," Part III an outline of schemes of work. One could wish that Part I were a good deal longer and some of the superfluous details in Part II had been omitted: for example, 19 pages are devoted to an enumeration of questions asked by the children about their work. There is a danger that the unimaginative teacher may find here an encouragement to copy the material rather than to develop the spirit of what is described.

Though it is intended primarily for the practising teacher, this book is of interest to all concerned with children. In particular one senses a sympathetic "letting-be" of the child, a real friendship between teachers and pupils and sound training in personal judgment—all essential to the growth of responsible citizenship.

Mr. Glover's style is a trifle pompous, but we are looking forward to another book enlarging upon Part I of this volume.

CIVIC AND MEMORIAL LETTERING. By Percy J. Delf Smith, R.D.I. Adam and Charles Black. 10s. 6d.

This little book has made a most timely appearance, now that schemes for replanning old towns, building new towns, and erecting war memorials are in preparation all over the country. In it a plea is made for good design in the details, and in particular, as the title suggests, in lettering. If these details are not planned, but allowed to develop in a haphazard fashion, then the opportunity has been lost once again, and ugliness and discord will mar the pleasantest town and the noblest building. And so the possibilities of good and varied lettering are suggested. They are not thoroughly explored: that is left to the architect, the planner and the artist-craftsman. There is a very brief description of methods and materials for the painting and the carving of inscriptions, and of the tactful use of colour and gold. Emphasis is laid on the need for consideration of each particular problem in relation to its environment, so that the right materials and technique may produce the most pleasing and fitting result. The text is well illustrated with a few basic alphabets and some excellent photographs of a variety of modern lettering executed to meet some specific need: they range from a painted number plate to part of the wall-panels on the Canadian War Memorial on Vimy Ridge. Although not in colour, the reproductions are carefully described. On the jacket appears a sub-title "A handbook for civic and urban officials, craftsmen and students, and some others." If it claims the attention of the first of these groups, the book will have served a valuable purpose; and it will give craftsmen some ideas on good design in a necessary art.

THE VICTORIA HISTORY OF THE COUNTY OF WARWICK. Volume 3: Barlickway Hundred. Edited by L. F. Salzman and Philip Styles. Oxford University Press, 1945. 2 gns.

The quality of research which under Mr. Salzman's general editorship goes into the volumes of the Victoria County History, as they slowly—alas, how slowly—appear, needs no recommendation. This new volume contains such places of architectural interest as Stratford-on-Avon, Wootton Wawen, Coughton Court, Hampton Lucy and Salford Priors. Emphasis is, on the whole, more on medieval and Tudor than on Stuart and Georgian buildings and illustrations. Of the latter, little known and of considerable interest is Ragley Hall, Arrow, built about 1680-85 to Robert Hooke's design.



ANTHOLOGY

Fountains Abbey

The remains of this pile are very magnificent. Almost the intire skeleton of the abbey-church is left, which is a beautiful piece of Gothic architecture. The tower seems wholly to have escaped the injuries of time. It's mouldering lines only are softened. Near the church stands a double row of cloisters; which are singularly curious from the pointed arches, which do the office of columns, in supporting the roof. At the end of these cloisters stand the abbot's apartments, which open into a court, called the Monks' garden. On one side of this court is the hall, a noble room; which communicates, in the spirit of hospitality, with the kitchen. There are besides a few other detached parts.

When the present proprietor made his purchase, he found his whole mass of ruin, the cloysters, the abbey church, and the hall, choaked with rubbish. His first work, therefore, was to clear and open. And *something* in this way, might have been done with propriety: For we see ruins sometimes so choaked that no view of them can be obtained.

To this business succeeded the great work of *restoring*, and *ornamenting*. This required a very delicate touch. Among the ruins were found scraps of Gothic windows; small, marble columns; tiles of different colours; and a variety of other ornamental fragments. These the proprietor has picked from the rubbish with great care; and with infinite industry is now restoring to their old situation. But in vain; for the friability of the edges of every fracture makes any restoration of parts an awkward patchwork.

Indeed the very idea of giving a finished splendour to a ruin, is absurd. How unnatural, in a place, evidently forlorn and deserted by man, are the *recent* marks of human industry! Besides, every sentiment, which the scene suggests, is destroyed. Instead of that soothing melancholy, on which the mind feeds in contemplating the ruins of time; a sort of jargon is excited by these heterogeneous mixtures: as if, when some grand chorus had taken possession of the soul—when the sounds in all their sublimity, were yet vibrating on the ear—a light jig should strike up.

But the *restoration* of parts is not enough: *ornaments* must be added: and such incongruous ornaments, as disgraced the *scene*, are disgracing also the *ruin*. The Monks' garden is turned into a trim parterre, and planted with flowering shrubs: a view is opened, through the great window, to some ridiculous figure (I know not what; Ann Boleyn, I think they called it) that is placed in the valley, and in the central part of the abbey-church, a circular pedestal is raised out of the fragments of the old pavement; on which is erected—a mutilated heathen statue!!!

It is a difficult matter, at the sight of such monstrous absurdities, to keep resentment within decent bounds. I hope I have not exceeded. A *legal* right the proprietor unquestionably has to deform his ruin, as he pleases. But though he fears no indictment in the King's bench, he must expect a very severe prosecution in the court of taste. The refined code of this court does not consider an elegant ruin as a man's *property*, on which he may exercise the irregular sallies of a wanton imagination: but as a deposit, of which he is only the guardian, for the amusement and admiration of posterity. A ruin is a sacred thing. Rooted for ages in the soil; assimilated to it; and become, as it were, a part of it; we consider it as a work of nature, rather than of art. Art cannot reach it. A Gothic window, a fretted arch, some trivial peculiarity may have been aimed at with success: but the *magnificence* of ruin was never attained by any modern attempt.

What reverence then is due to these sacred relics; which the rough hand of temerity, and caprice dare mangle without remorse? The least error is irretrievable. Let us pause a moment—a Goth may deform: but it exceeds the power of art to amend.

(REV. W. GILPIN, *Observations relative chiefly to Picturesque Beauty, made in the year 1772*).

MARGINALIA

Acknowledgments

Three Houses in Western U.S.A. House at Los Angeles: Maynard L. Parker, photographer, except for 1, page 159, which is by Man Ray. House at Berkeley: Roger Sturtevant, photographer. House in the California Hills: 1, page 158, Julius Shulman, photographer; 2, page 159, Luckhaus Studio, photographers.

Three Houses in Copenhagen. House at Hellerup: Maarbjergs Ateller, photographer. House at Ordrup: K. Douglas, photographer. House at Gentofte: Maarbjergs Ateller, photographer.

Rebirth of the Azuleijos. Translation from the Portuguese by Claude Vincent. Photographers: 1, page 178, Gautherot. 2, page 178; 3, page 179; 4, 5 and 6, page 180, Kazys Vosylius. 7 and 8, page 181; 9, page 182, Gautherot.

The City Churches

Certain passages in the final report of the Bishop of London's Commission on the City Churches make curious reading. Of Christ Church, Greyfriars, for instance, we are told: "The situation of the site, being in Newgate Street, in the neighbourhood of the General Post Office, is excellent, and in suggesting its use for a Youth Institute, we feel that a traditional link with youth would be re-established." One has to think twice before realizing that the traditional link with youth is not, as might be inferred from the Commission's phrasing, due to the proximity of the General Post Office.

Briefly, the Commission recommends that the sites of five blitzed churches—St. Mildred, Bread Street, St. Mary,

Aldermanbury, St. Andrew-by-the-Wardrobe, St. Alban, Wood Street, and St. Swithun, London Stone—should be sold, and that with the proceeds three churches—St. Stephen, Coleman Street, Christ Church, Greyfriars, St. Dunstan-in-the-East—should be rebuilt as Halls or Institutes, and one—St. Augustine, Watling Street—as a Chapter House or Choir School for St. Paul's. ("The architectural problem of designing a worthy building for such purposes, while retaining the tower and replacing the steeple, presents no great difficulty.") Of the remaining blitzed churches, nine, in the opinion of the Commission, should be "restored," while All Hallows, Barking-by-the-Tower, should be rebuilt ("its claim... as the parent church of Toc H seems to us unanswerable") and St. Olave, Hart Street, should be "retained and

rebuilt, incorporating so much of the existing structure as may be possible without detriment to the new design."

Finally, the Commission is "aware that the opinion has been expressed in certain quarters that some, at any rate, of the sites of churches which cannot be rebuilt should be left as open spaces, with or without the retention of such ruins as remain." "But this," the report continues, "could only be done at the expense of our other proposals, to which we attach paramount importance." Surely, though, there is a way out. For could not the sites be offered to the City, at a reasonable price, for preservation as open spaces in perpetuity? No doubt commercial interests could outbid the Corporation in the open market, but if the Church showed a willingness to forgo some of the immediate pecuniary advantages for the sake of less tangible values the scheme would have more well-wishers than it can have in its present form.

Gibberd for Harlow

Frederick Gibberd is to plan the satellite town of Harlow, which will house 60,000 people.

Kensington Square

Following the advice of Thomas Sharp, who is their town-planning consultant, Kensington housing and town-planning committee recommended to the borough council that no alteration be made in the L.C.C.'s zoning of Kensington Square as a "special business" area. The full council, however, have rejected the advice of the committee and, by forty-one votes to eighteen, decided to recommend that the square be re-zoned as "residential."

Open Spaces

To counterbalance the news that Headley Heath, between Leatherhead and Reigate, has been presented to the National Trust, comes the news that the War Office are considering the retention for training purposes of Witley Common, near Frensham—National Trust property requisitioned during the war. The balance is completely upset, however, by the War Office's proposal to retain 22,000 acres in Pembrokeshire—16,000 acres of Prescelly Mountain and 6,000 acres at Castlemartin.

The Prime Minister stated recently that he saw no need for a public inquiry into the policy of the Services departments in acquiring land.

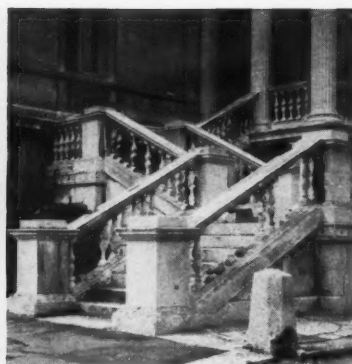
At Dagenham, the Minister of Town and Country Planning has granted permission for the building of houses in the north part of the Borough, planned as a green belt under the Abercrombie scheme.

Charles Despiau

Charles Despiau died in Paris late in October. Born in 1874 at Mont-de-Marsan, in the Landes, Despiau went to Paris at the age of seventeen and studied at the Ecole des Arts Decoratifs and the Ecole des Beaux Arts until, in 1903, his work attracted the attention of Rodin, whose studio he then entered as assistant. In England Despiau's reputation has been overshadowed by that of Maillol, and the only important exhibition of his work held here was that at the Wildenstein Galleries in 1938.

The King's Pictures

As Anthony Blunt reminds us in the introduction to the catalogue, the Burlington House exhibition of paintings from the Royal Palaces is only a shadow of what it might have been had not Charles I's collection been dispersed during the Commonwealth. Nevertheless, it is a pretty substantial shadow, and the proportion of masterpieces is a good deal higher than the rather haphazard interest which most



ARCHITECT IN DISTRESS

When Michael Rysbrack carved the statue of Palladio, on the left, the architect's gesture in gathering up his gown did not possess the apparent meaning it has acquired from the heaps of rubbish with which he is now surrounded. Palladio's plight is rendered the more shocking by the fact that he is standing beside what is in effect a temple raised to him by the high priest of his English cult, Lord Burlington. For this and the other photographs on this page were taken recently in the grounds of Chiswick House. The first on the left above shows part of the entrance staircase with its broken balustrades, which Palladio is compelled, day in, day out, in stony silence to contemplate. The second shows the present state of Wyatt's bridge over the canal—urns missing, balustrades and approach walls largely destroyed. The right-hand photograph is of a headless term, an object sad in itself and even sadder in its symbolism. For there is more, and perhaps worse, than this at Chiswick; the little circular temple, for instance, has an ugly hole in the roof of its portico. Chiswick House belongs to the Middlesex County Council and is leased to the Chiswick Borough Council. The reason given for its neglect is lack of funds; readers of THE ARCHITECTURAL REVIEW will not easily be convinced that it is a sufficient one, or that it should not be someone's business to save such a monument from complete disintegration.

British sovereigns have shown in the arts might lead one to expect.

After a first visit, three sections of the exhibition stand out in the memory as high-spots. First, there are the Dutch paintings in galleries nine and

ten. Most of these were bought by George IV and not one of them would disgrace any gallery in Europe, while some, such as Vermeer's "Lady at the Virginals," De Hooch's "Card Players," and more than one of the Jan Steen's,

are surely to be numbered among their creator's highest achievements. George IV must, indeed, be excepted from any generalization about the Crown and art. For it was he again who commissioned Lawrence to paint the great series of portraits of the victors in the Napoleonic wars, which normally hangs in the Waterloo Chamber at Windsor and which constitutes another of the most memorable sections of the exhibition. The third high-spot is the Canaletto room, containing thirty-nine paintings, of which all but one were acquired by George III from Joseph Smith, English consul at Venice, who formed a large collection of contemporary Venetian painting in the first half of the eighteenth century. Two of the most striking of these, views of Westminster and the City from the gardens of Somerset House,

[continued on page lx

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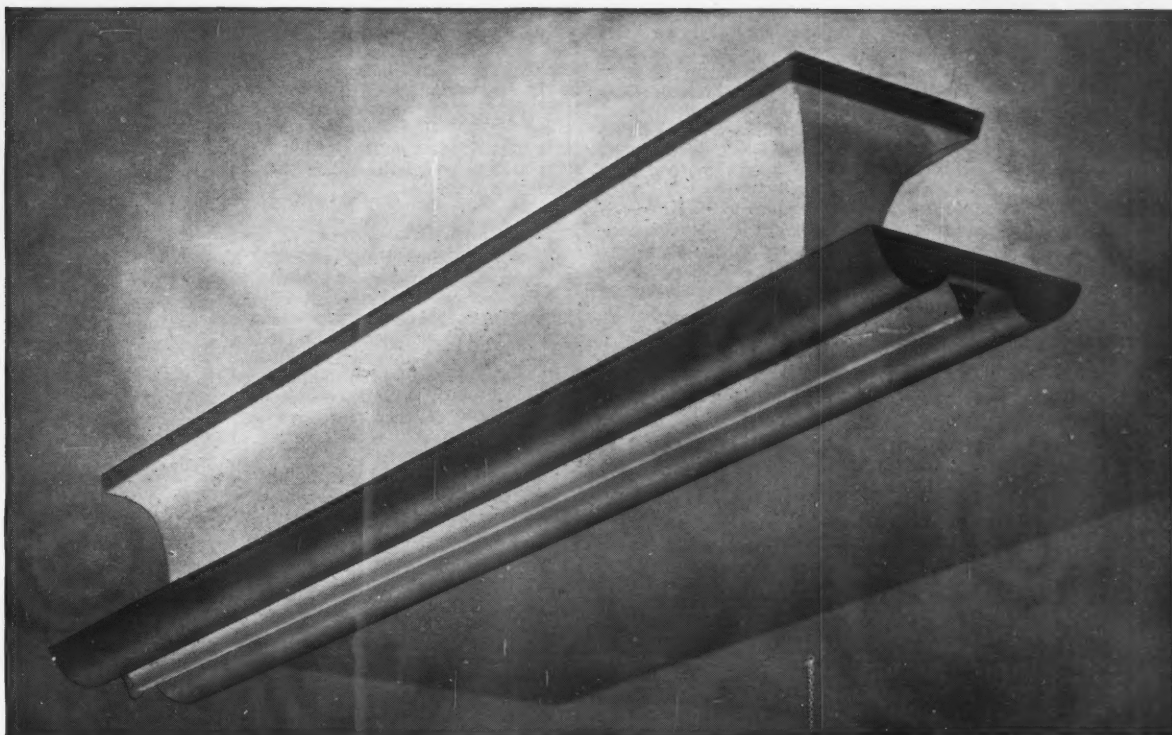
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continued from page [viii]

were reproduced in THE ARCHITECTURAL REVIEW last month. But it is certain of his Venetian pictures of the late seventeenth-thirties that will be a revelation to many people, showing as they do that Canaletto could on occasion paint with all the breadth and luminosity of Guardi.

This is not the place for a detailed critique of the exhibition as a whole. Narrowing the field of view, one may observe that architecture as such is not much in evidence, outside the Canaletto room. However, Visentini's "Burlington House in a Fantastic Landscape," painted as an overdoor for Consul Smith, and Zucarelli's "Triumphal Arch in Honour of George III," the subject of which is based on Inigo Jones's Temple Bar, are both (to rate them no higher) significant documents in the history of taste. A picture which is connected with architecture through its author rather than its subject is "The Battle of Crécy," by William Kent; to this, which is "probably one of the earliest examples of a mediæval subject in post-Renaissance English painting"—and thus the equivalent of Kent's Gothic architecture at Hampton Court and elsewhere—the same remark applies.

Temple Bar

Several correspondents in both London and Hertfordshire papers have expressed concern about the present state of Temple Bar (which now stands in Theobalds Park), and the suggestion has been made that it should be returned to London. The position is summed up in a letter from Mr. Lewis F. R.

Jones to the *Daily Telegraph*. "Whether or not a place can be found in the City for the return of Temple Bar," he writes, "the primary need is for repairs to stop the inevitable decay that is working fast. During the last few months a large hole has appeared in the ceiling, and bees have snatched the opportunity to nest above the ceiling joists. The lodge adjoining, built in 1389, has suffered from blast from a flying bomb which fell in Theobalds Park."

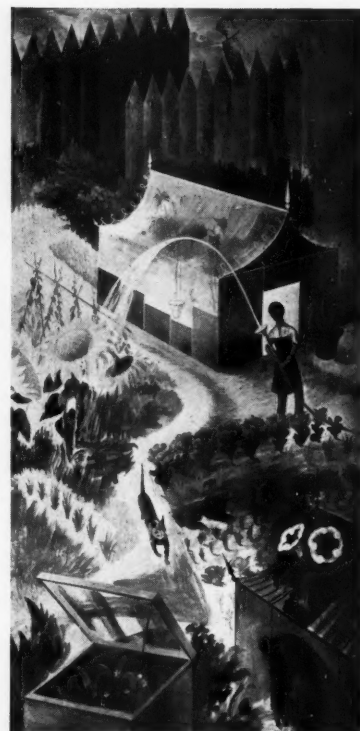
R.I.B.A. News

D. M. Cowin, President-in-Chief, Institute of South African Architects, and H. N. Dallas, President of the Indian Institute of Architects, have been appointed members of Council of the R.I.B.A. for the Session 1946-7. E. Berry Webber has been re-appointed representative in the United Kingdom of the South African Institute and A. J. A. Illingworth representative of the Indian Institute.

The Rev. C. B. Mortlock and E. C. Kemper have been nominated Honorary Associates. Mr. Kemper is Executive Director of the American Institute of Architects. Carlos Contreras (Mexico), Paul Tournon (France), and H. Russell Hitchcock (Connecticut, U.S.A.), have accepted nomination to the Honorary Corresponding Membership.

Correction

H. C. Shepherd & Co., of 14, Soho Square, London, W.1, should have been named as the manufacturers of the tubular stacking table and chairs illustrated in figure 69 (page 97) of the October issue.



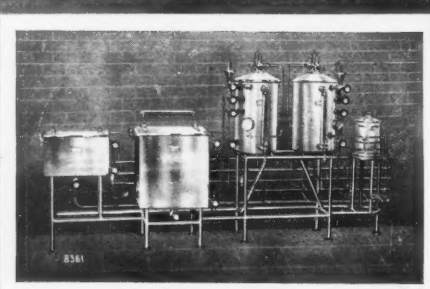
As J. M. Richards writes on another page, "the suburban style is all one, indoors and out." It is also all one, back and front, and one needs no extraordinary powers of intuition to be sure that the vegetable garden seen in this mural by Barbara Jones at the Britain Can Make It exhibition is within twenty-five minutes of Waterloo.

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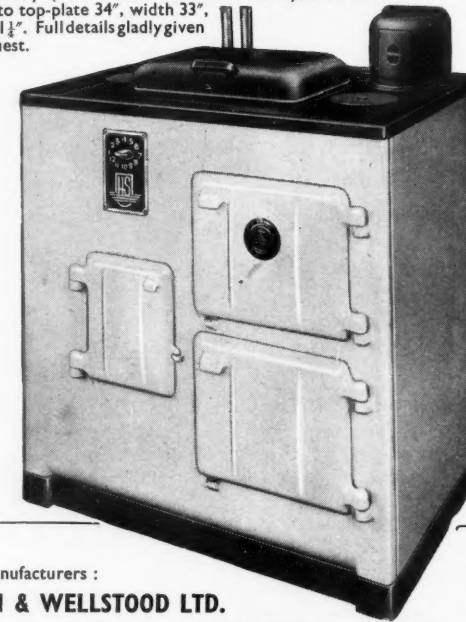
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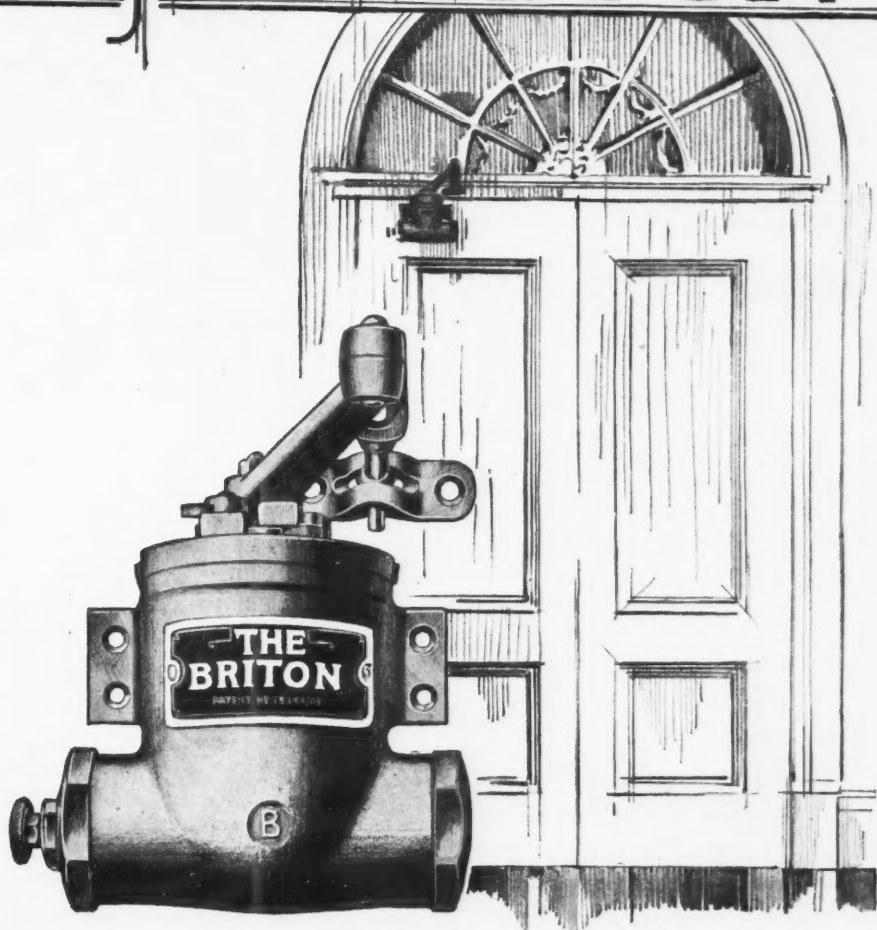
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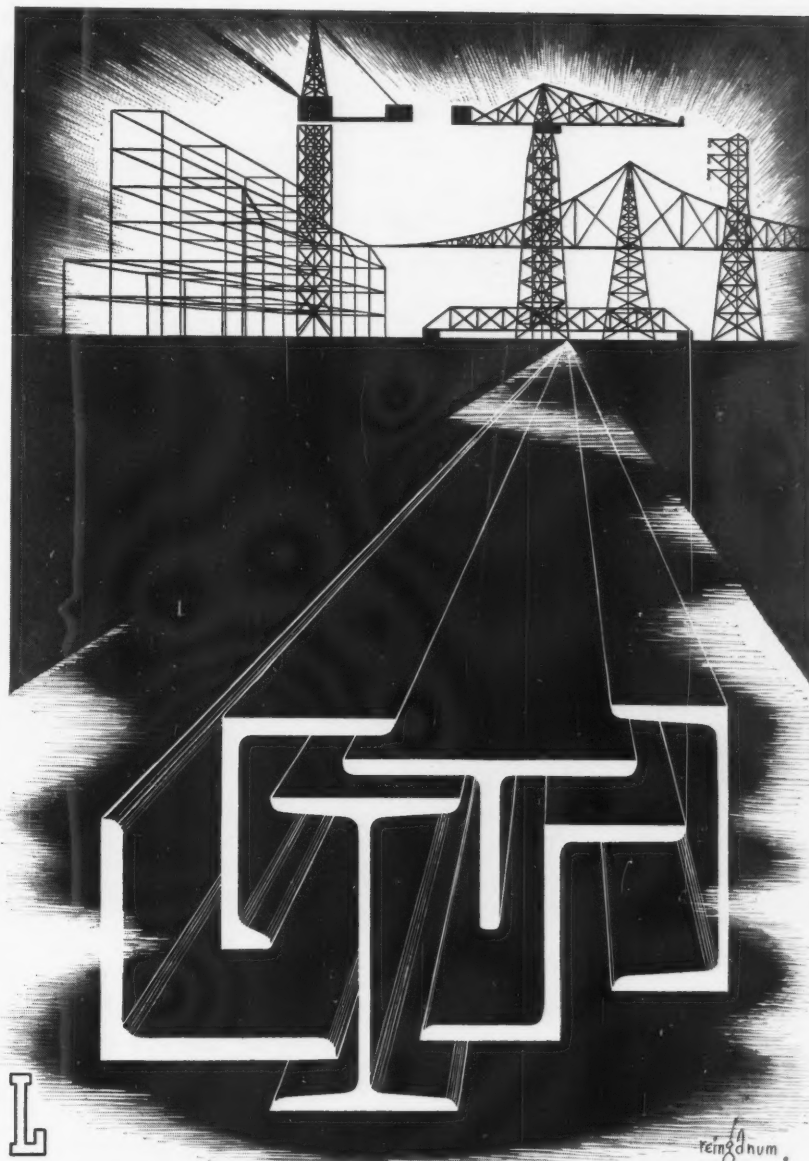
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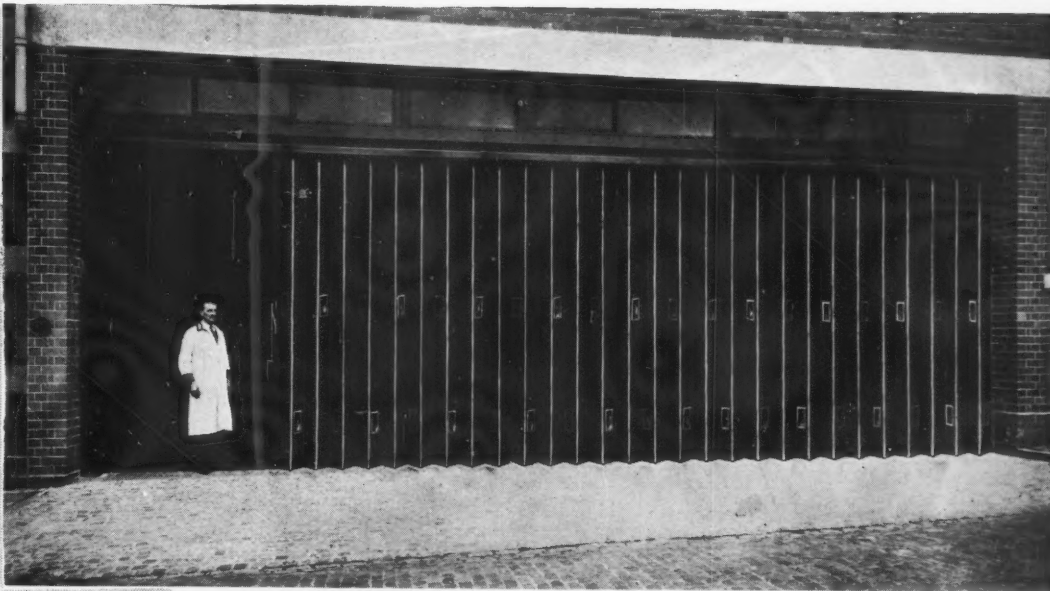


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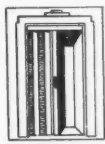
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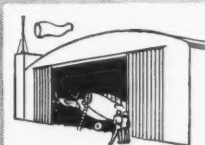
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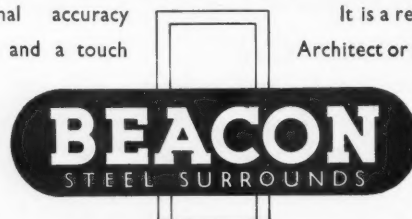
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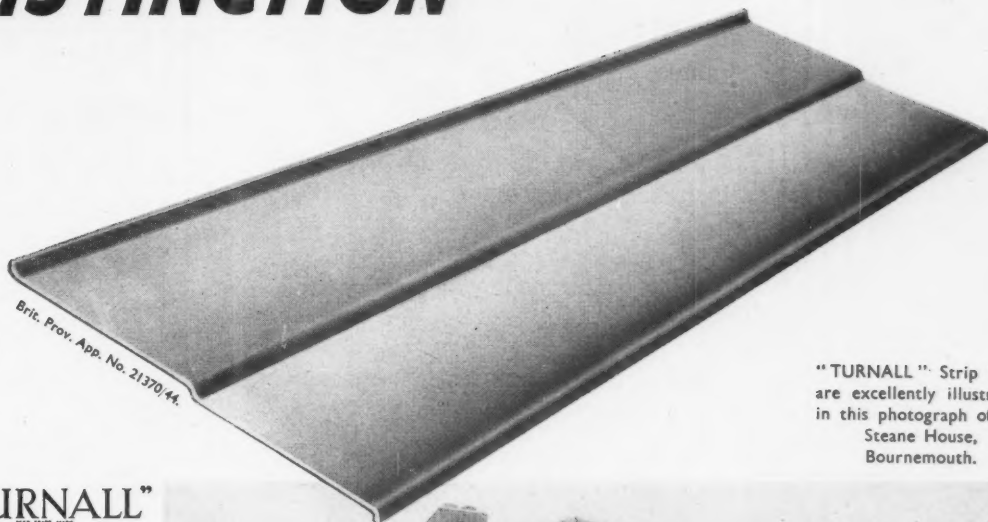
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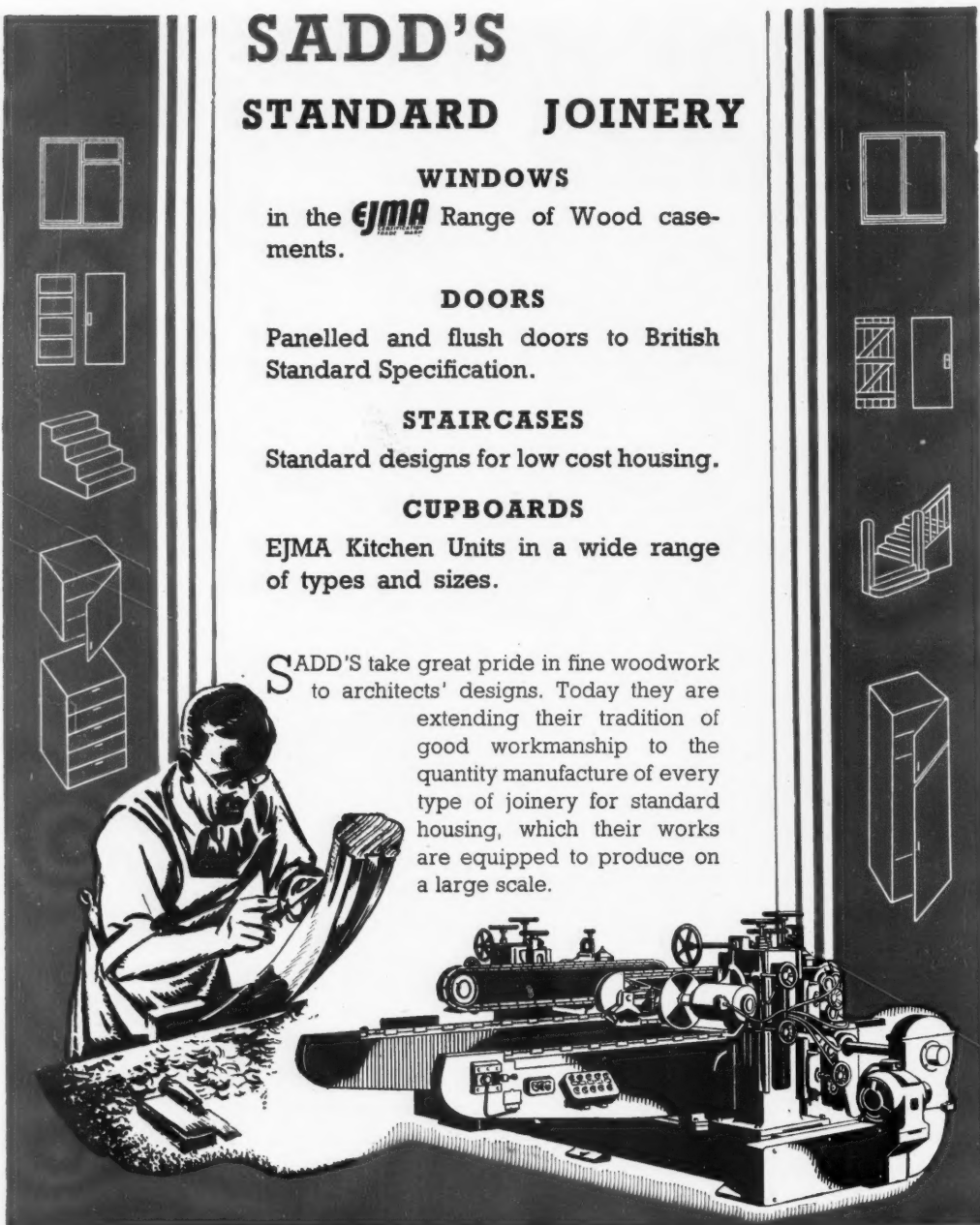
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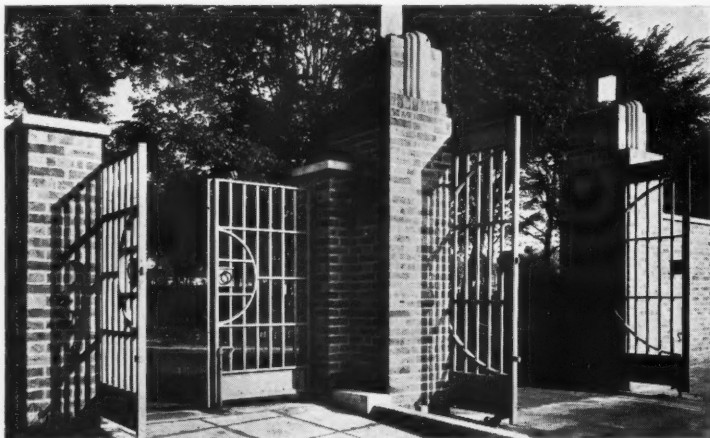
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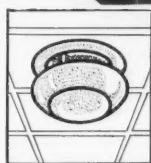
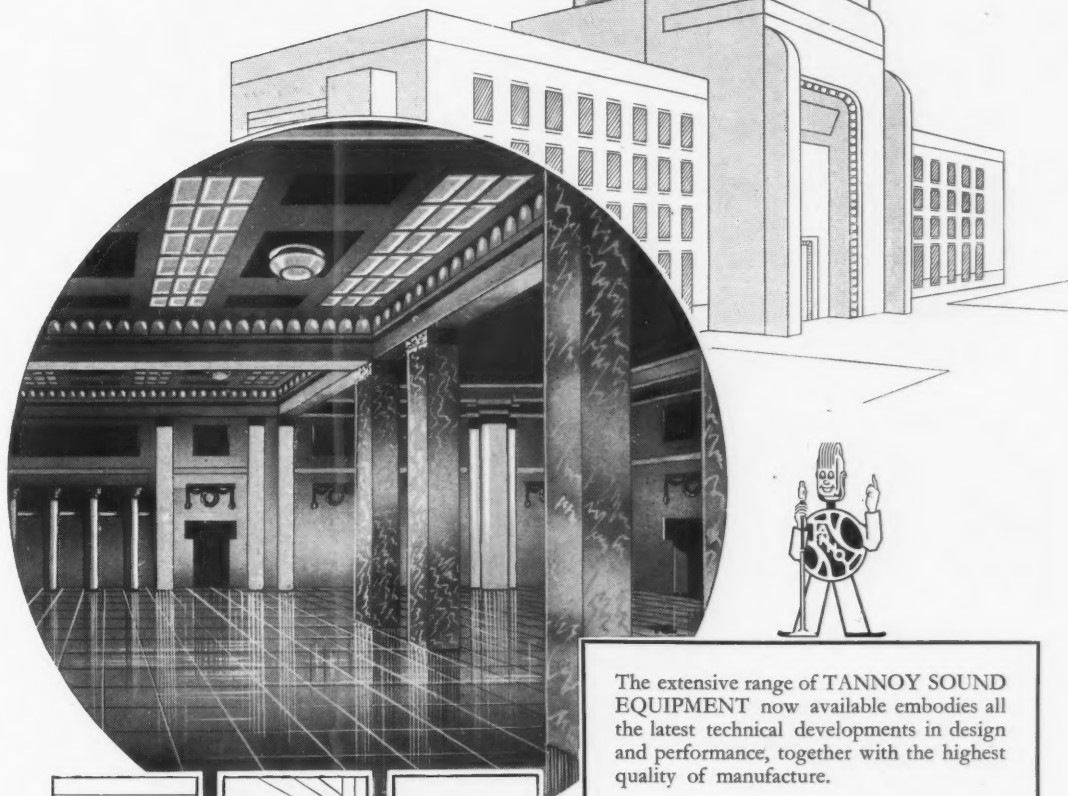
Telegrams

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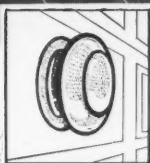
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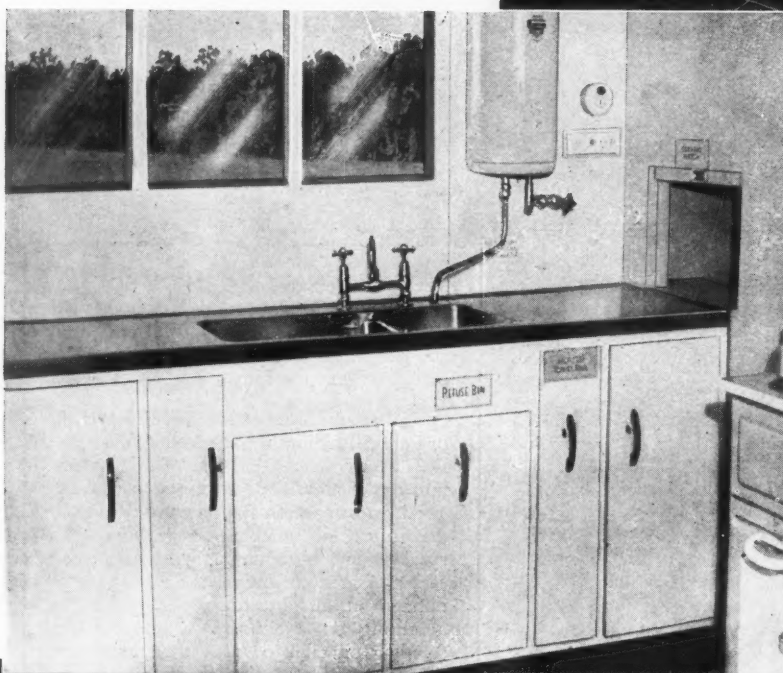
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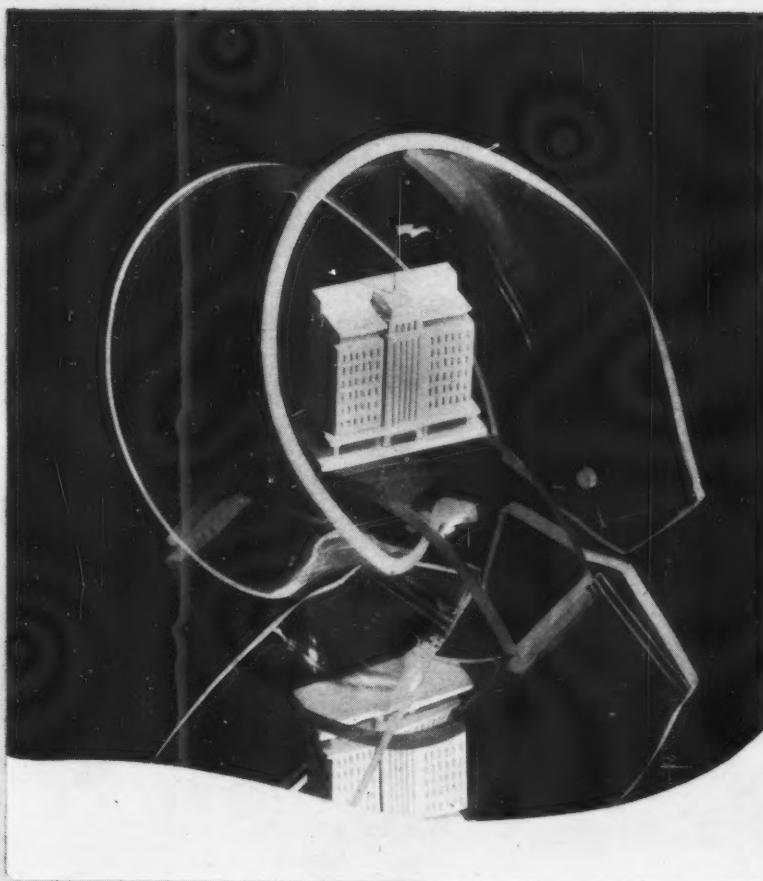


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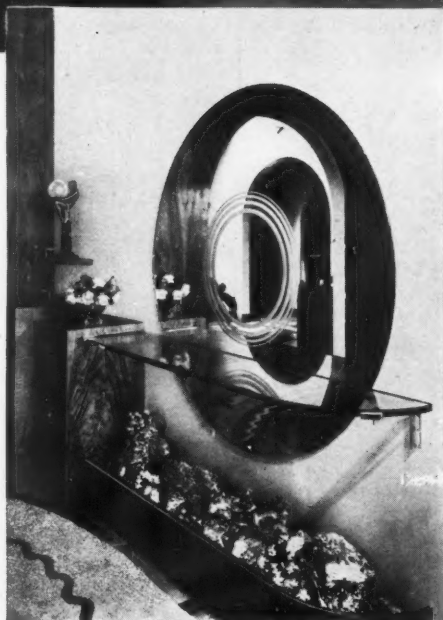
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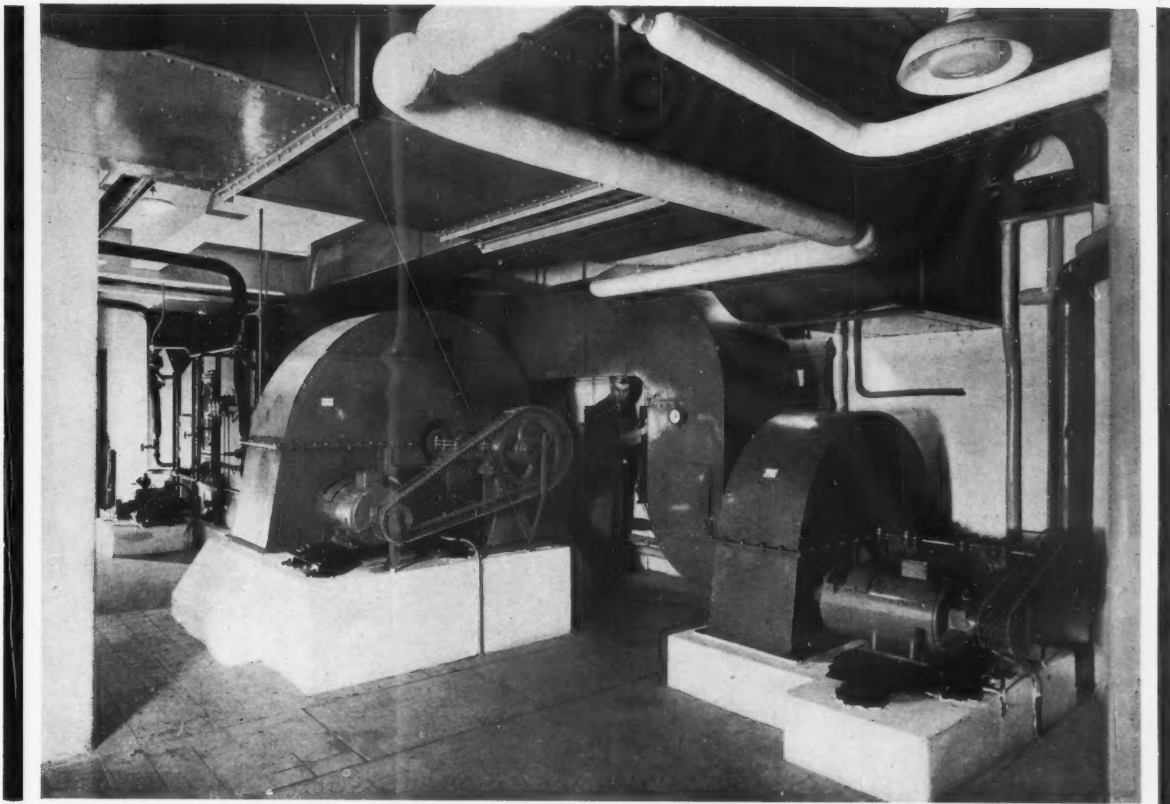
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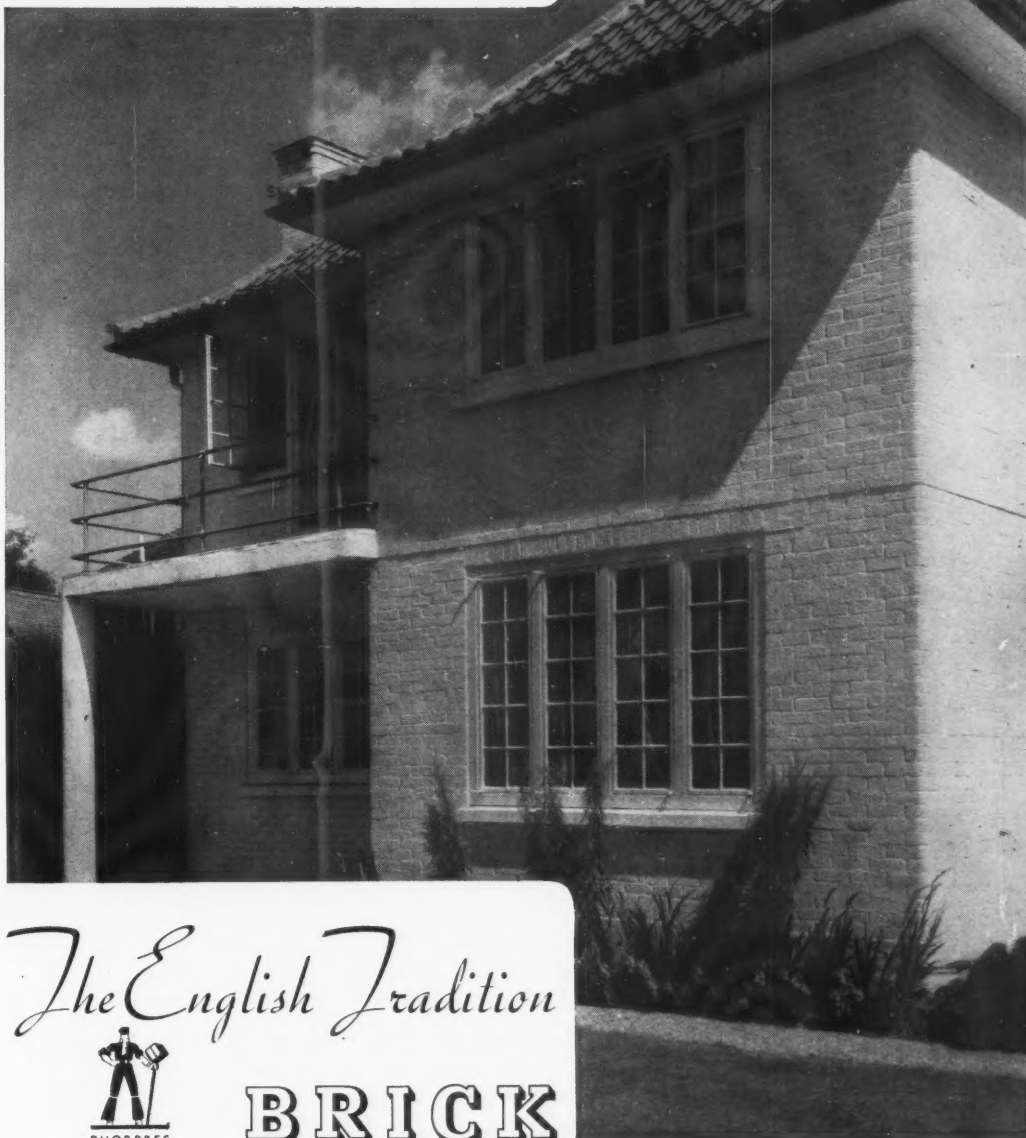
177

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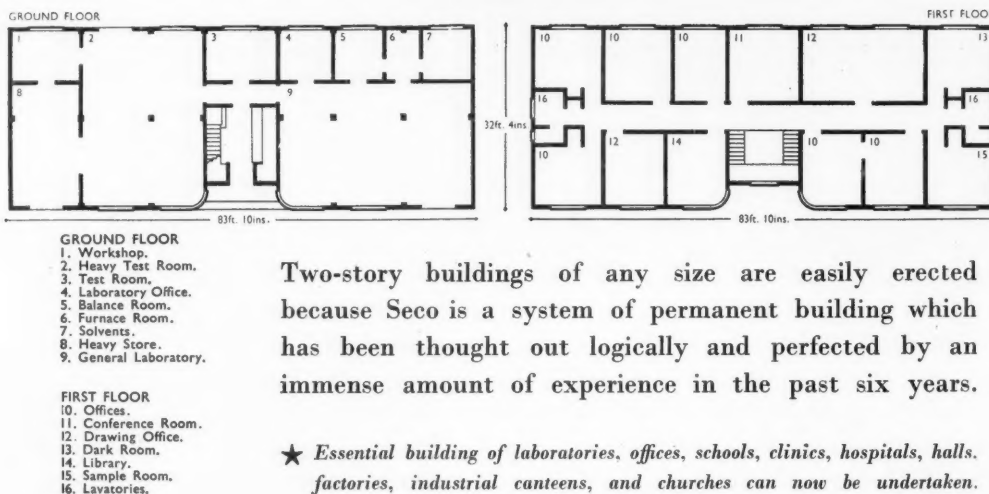
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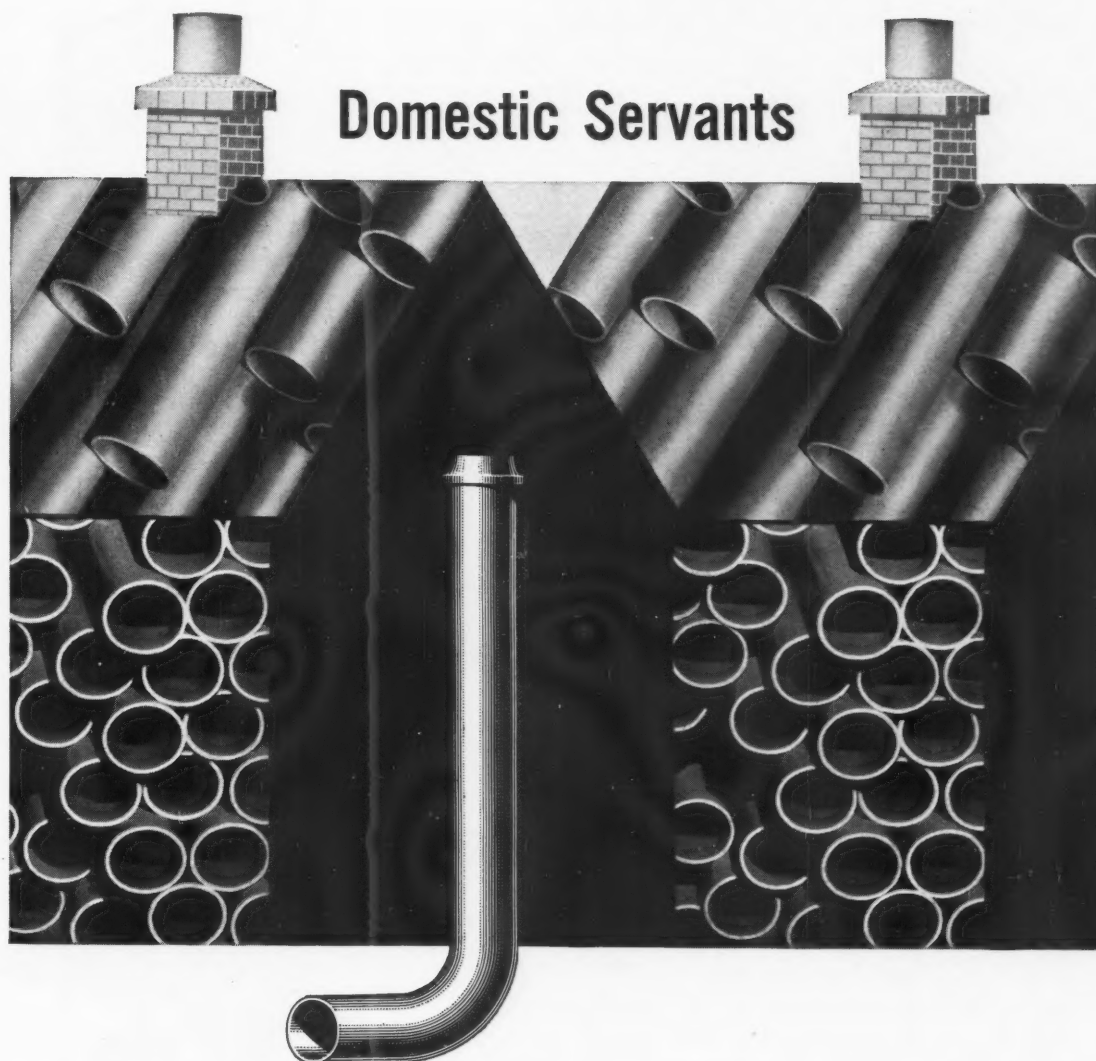
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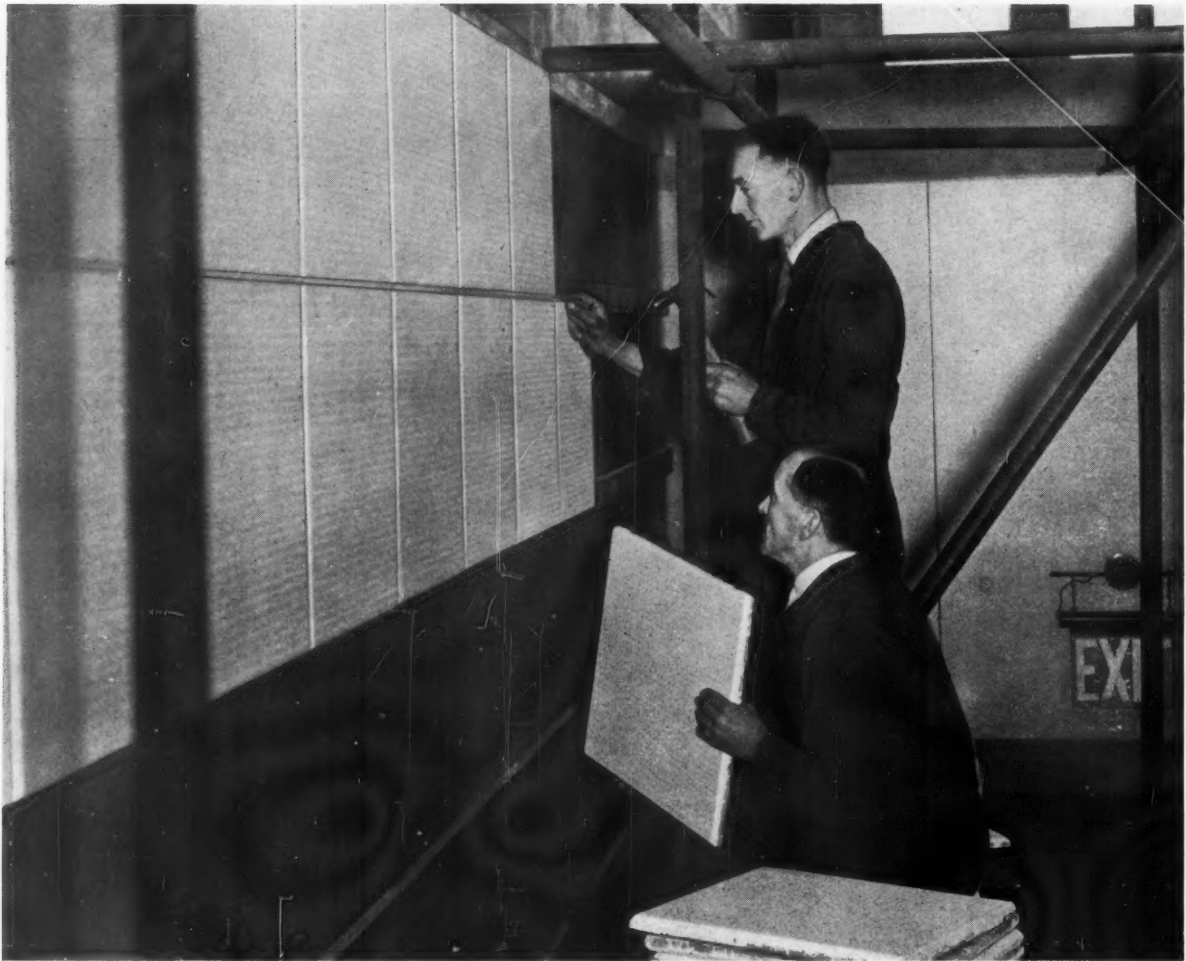
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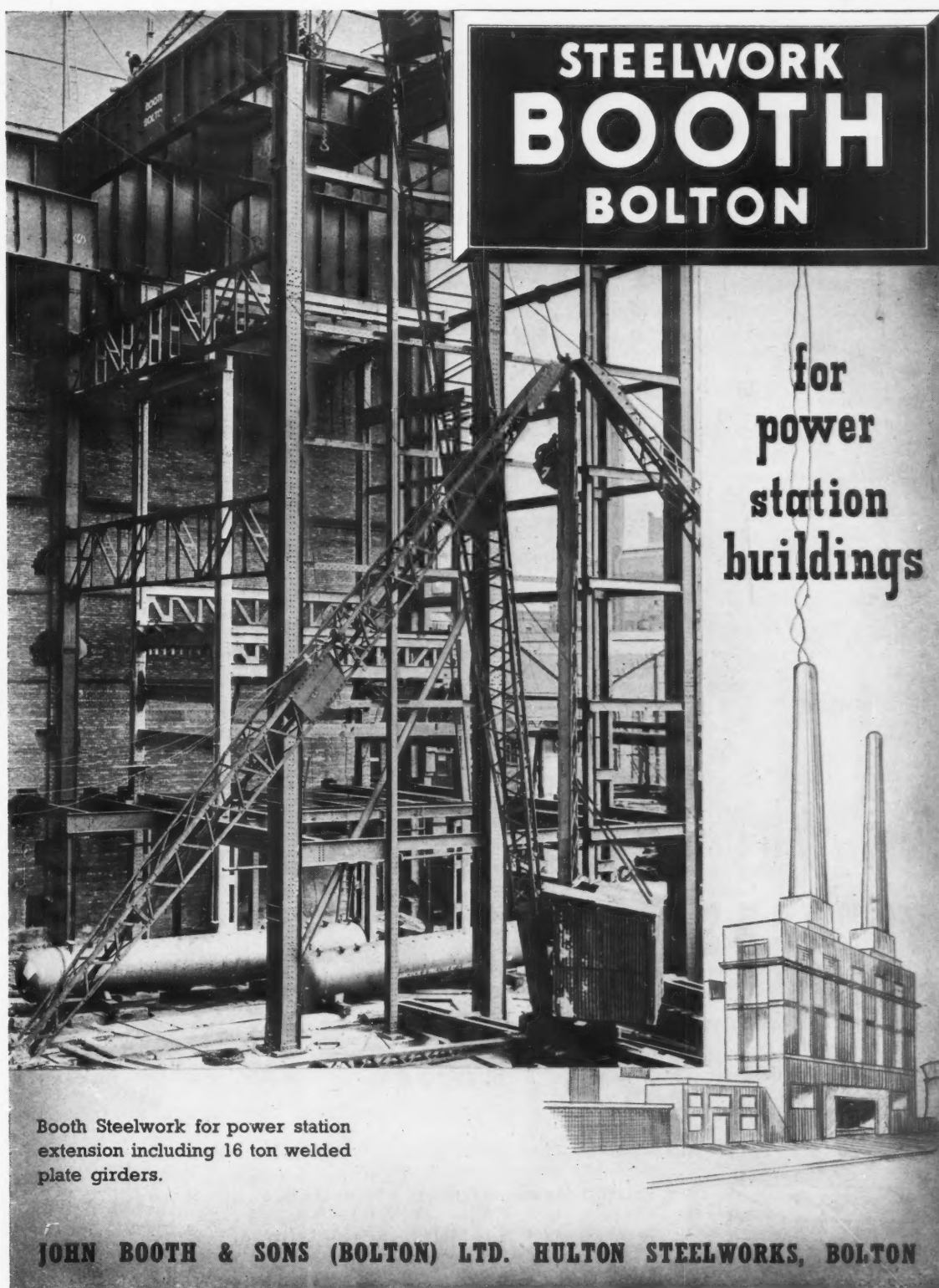




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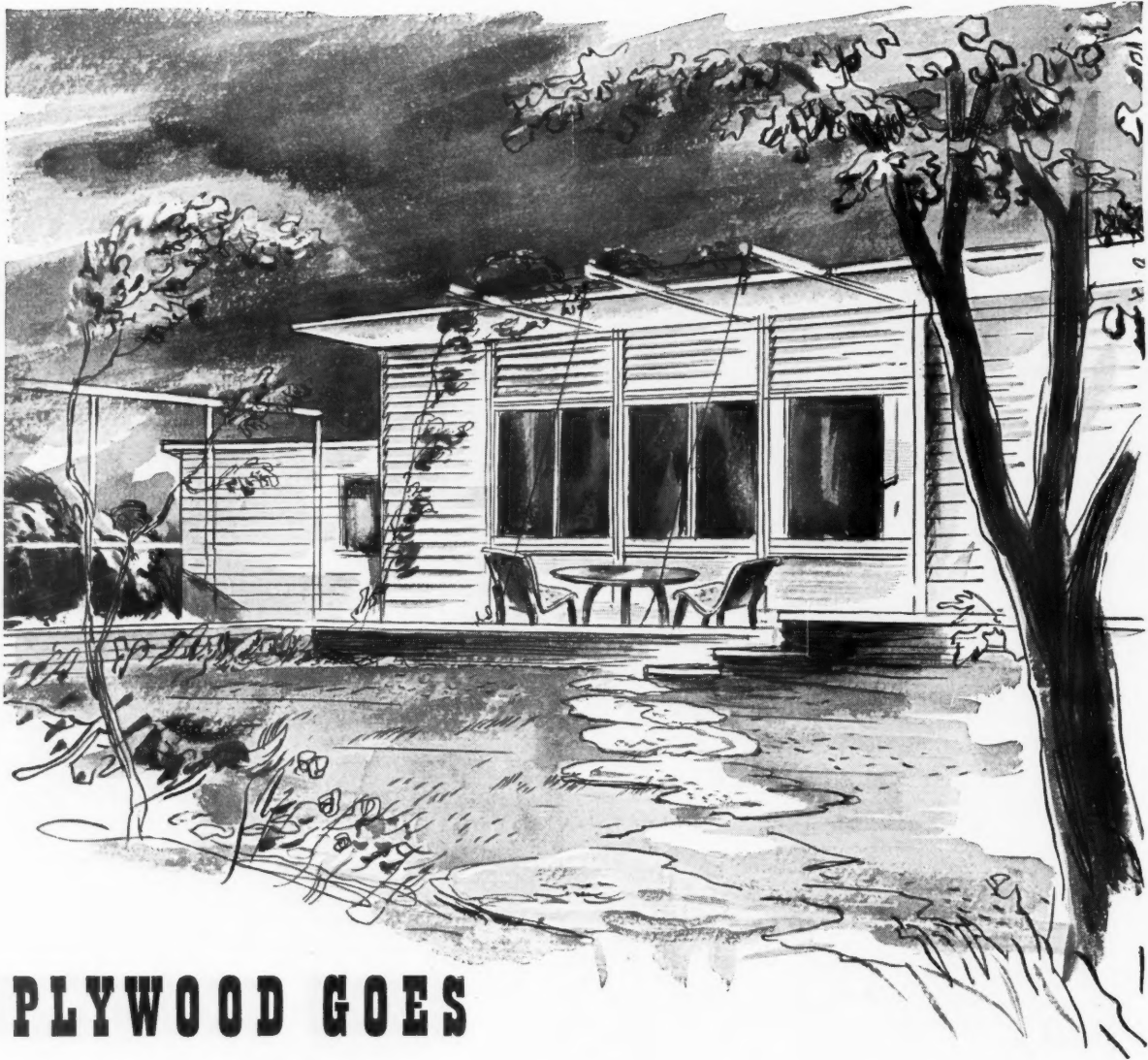


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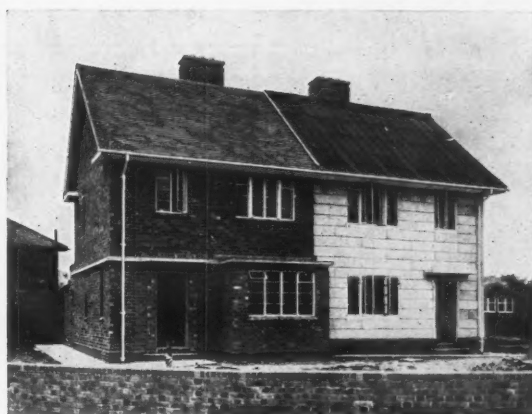
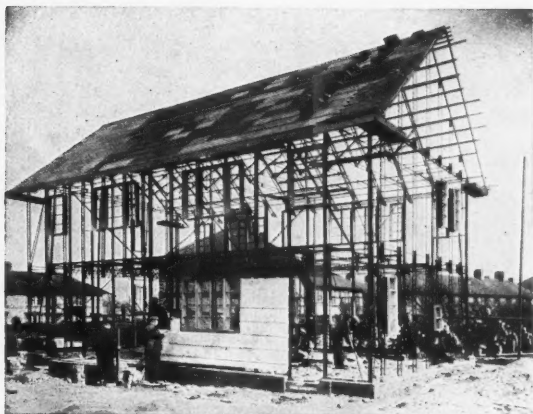


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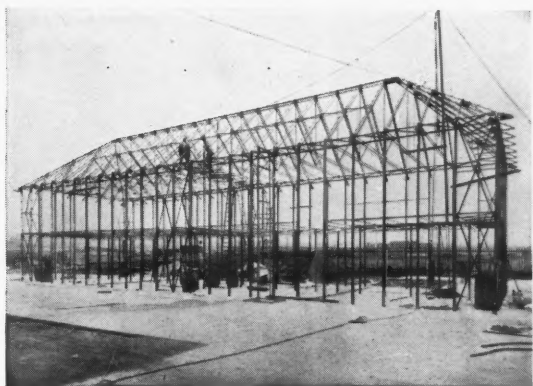


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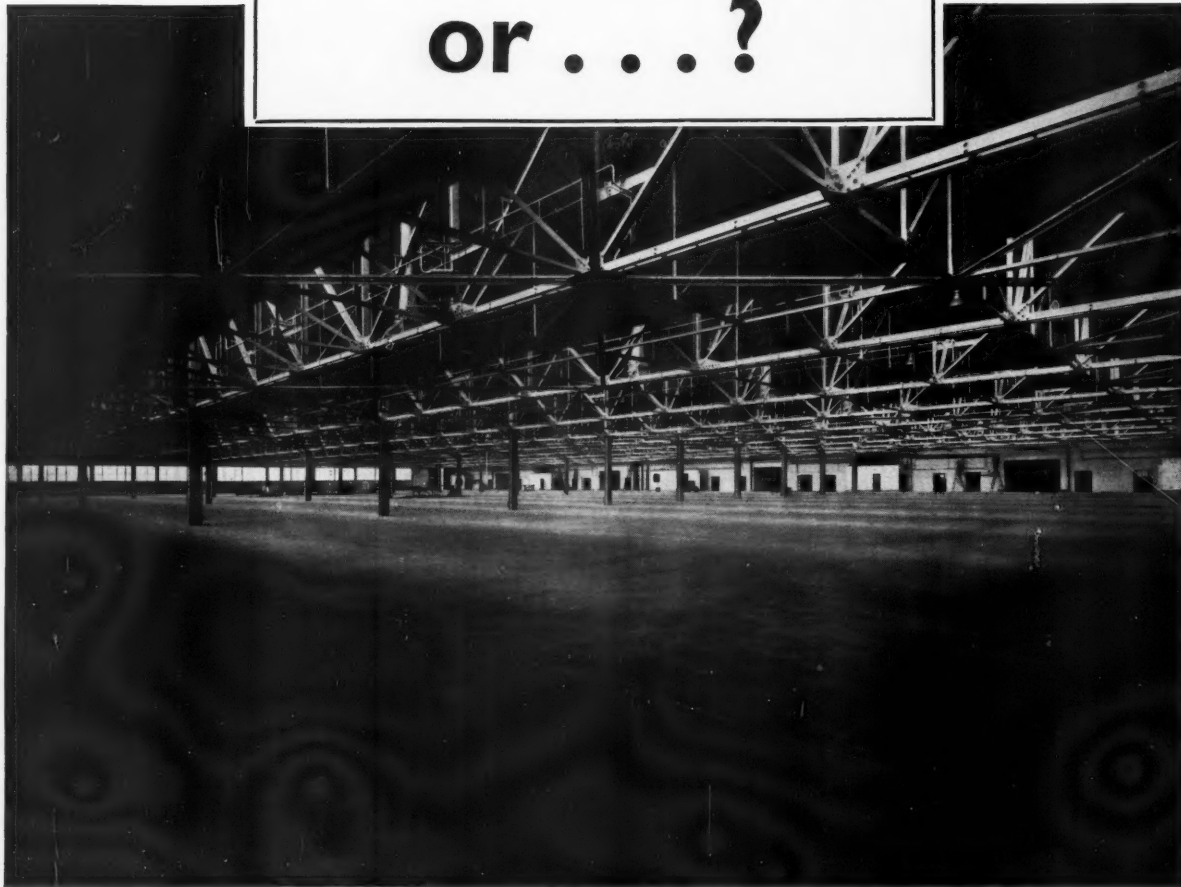
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M-W.63

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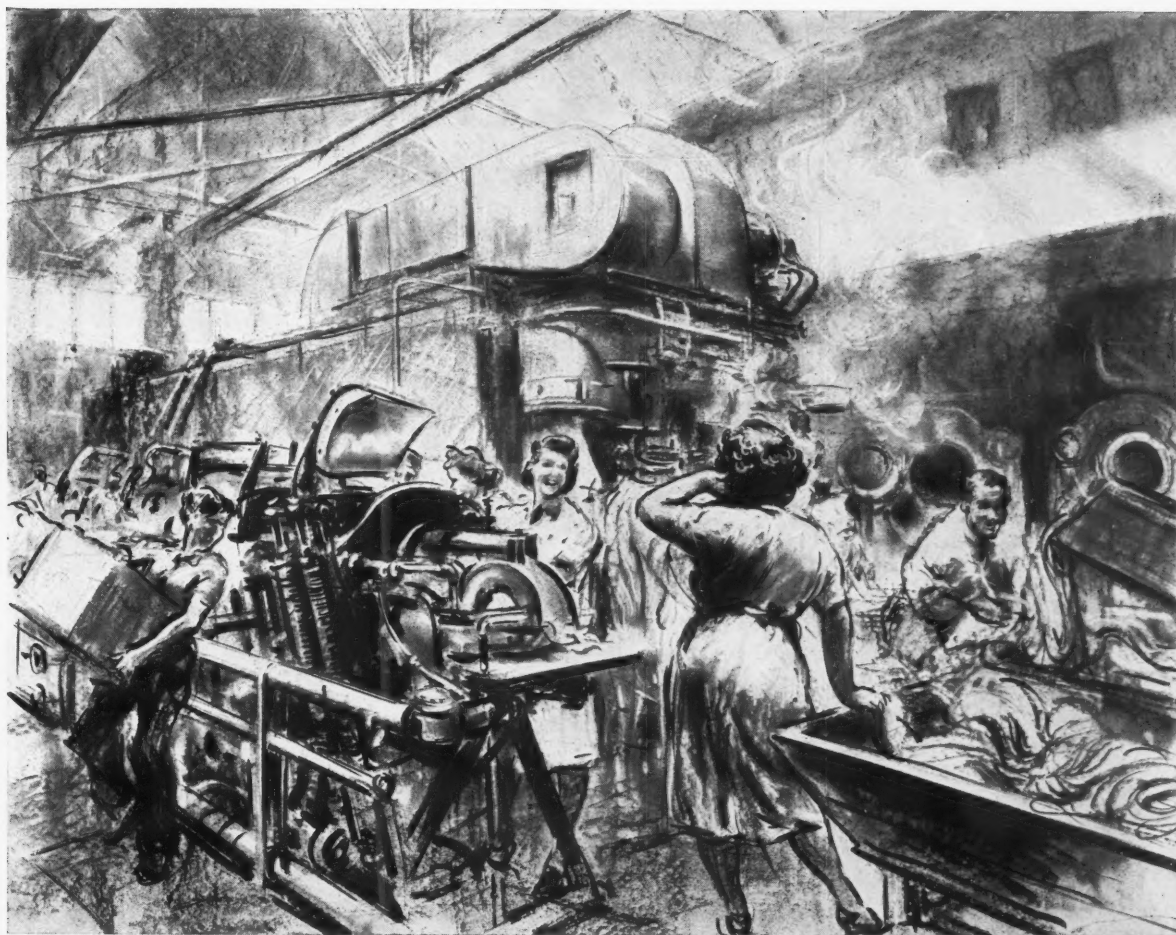
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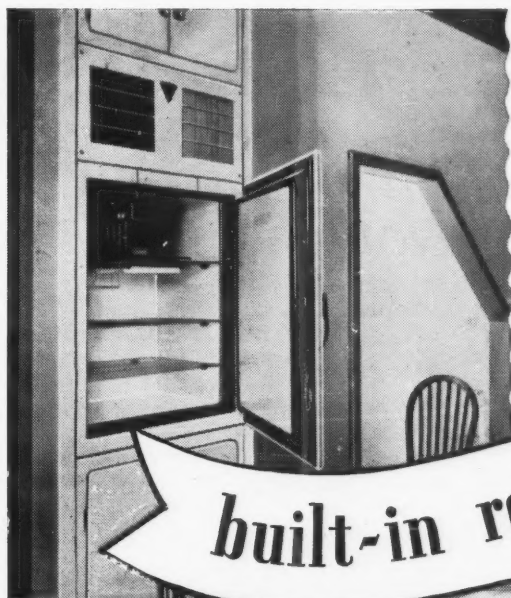
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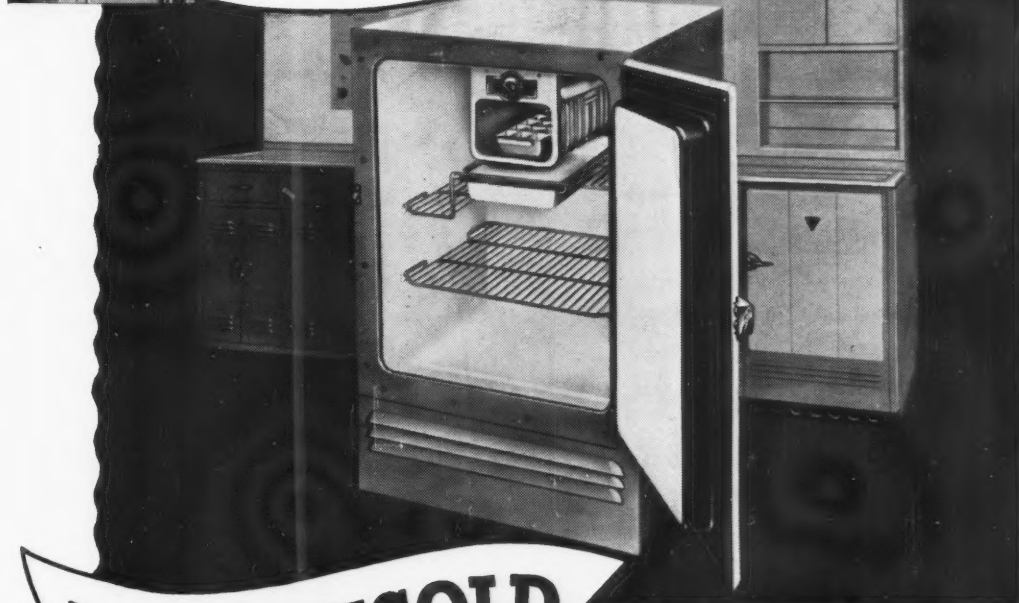
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built-in refrigerators



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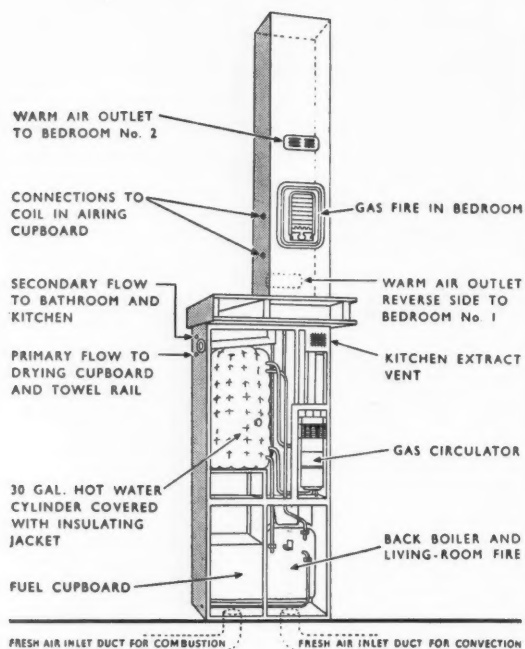


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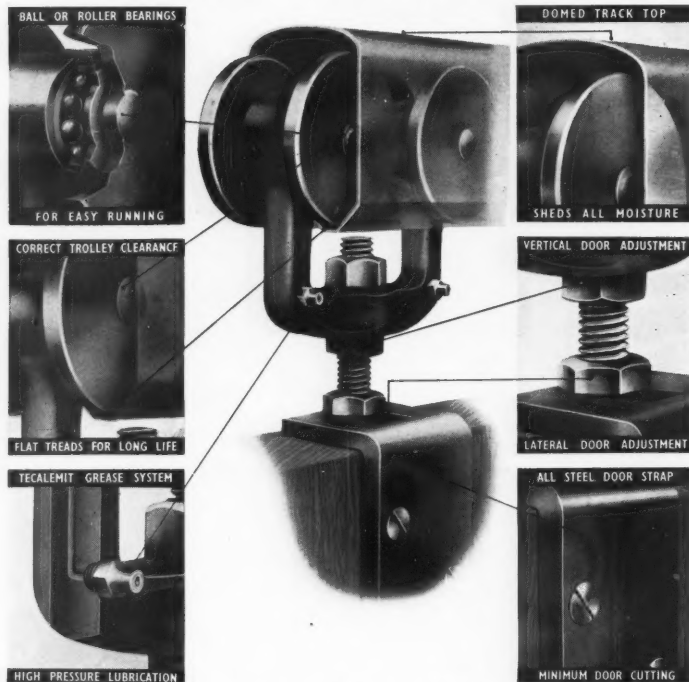
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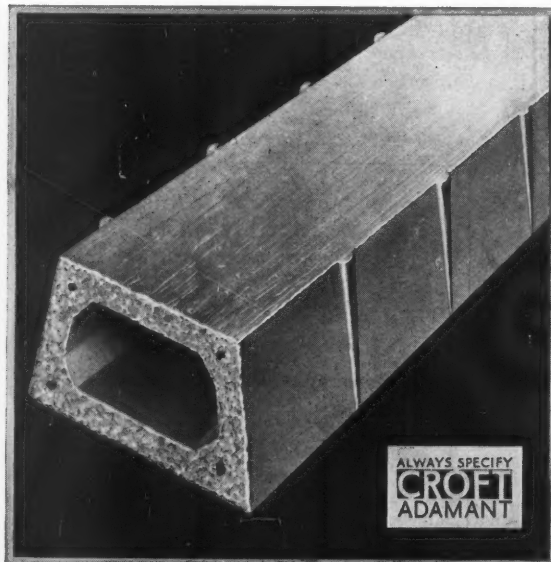
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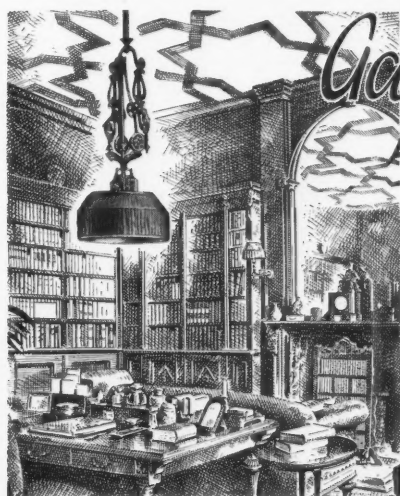
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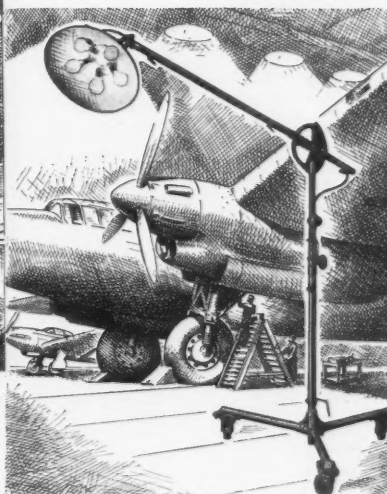
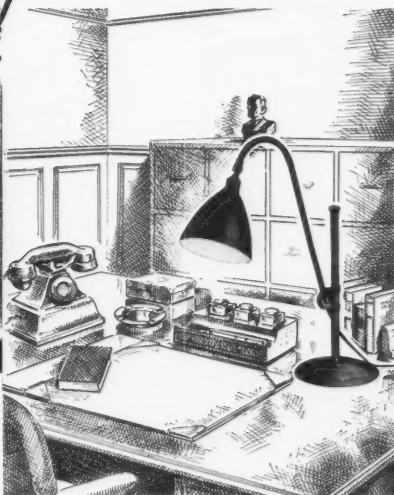
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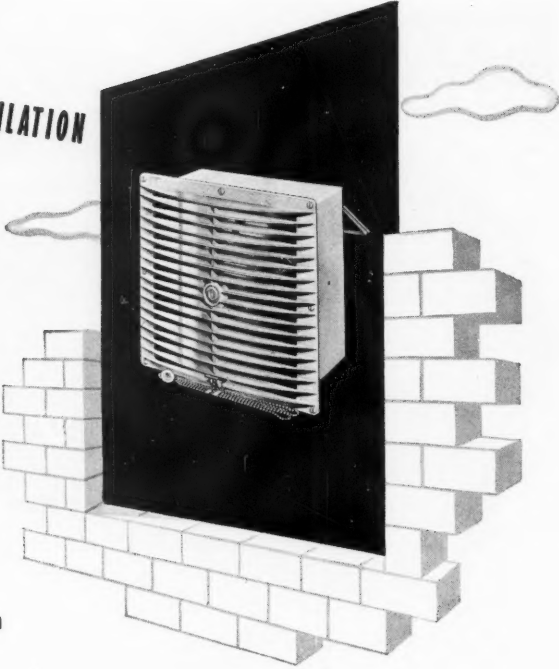
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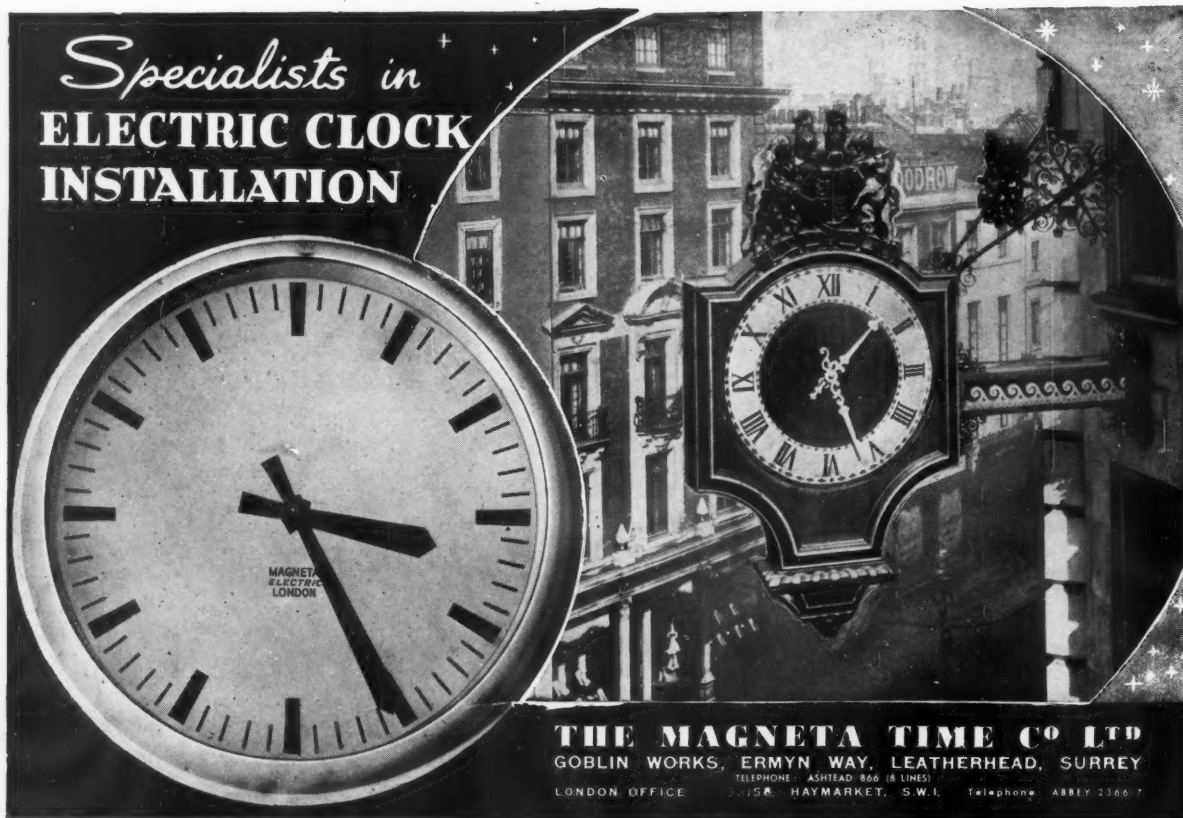
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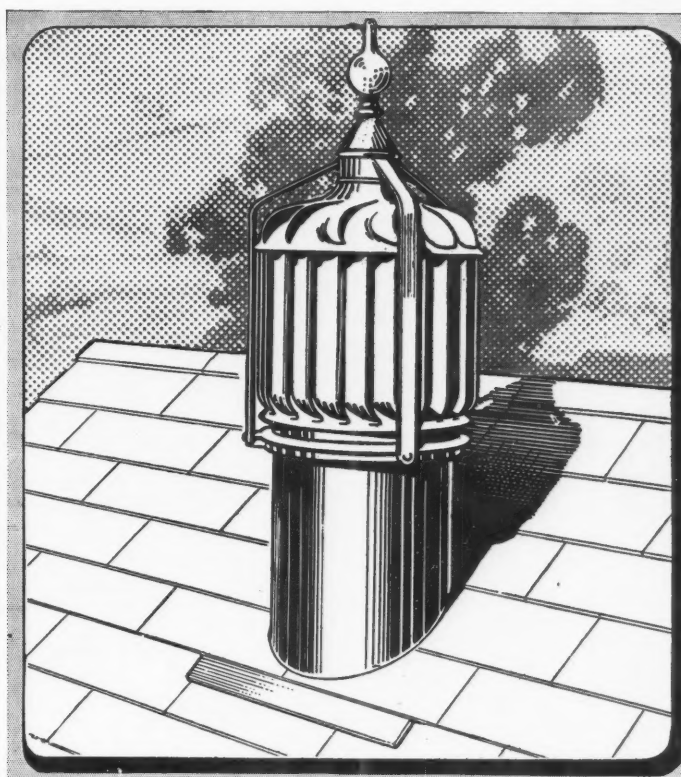
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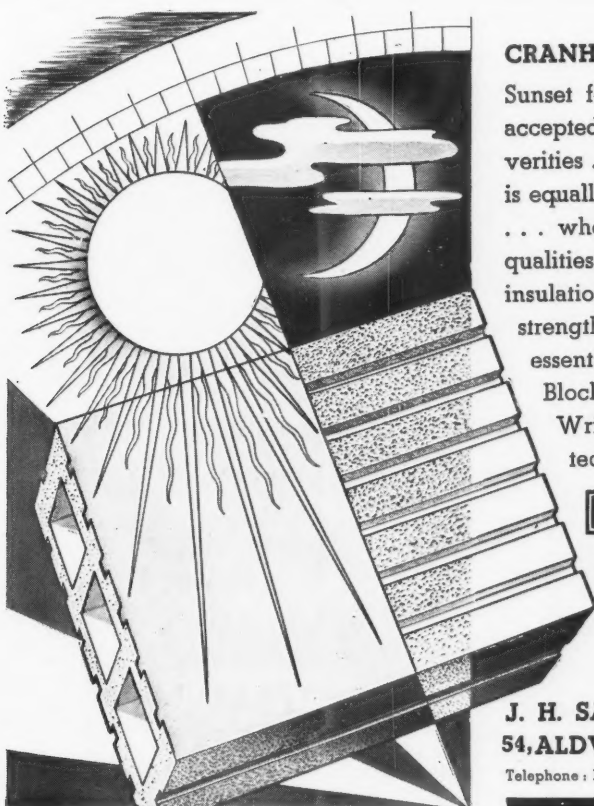
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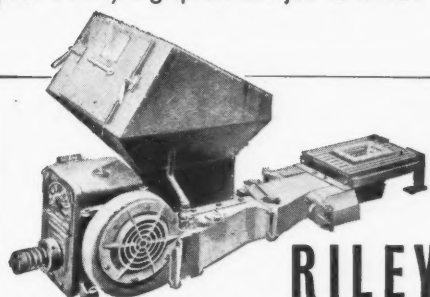
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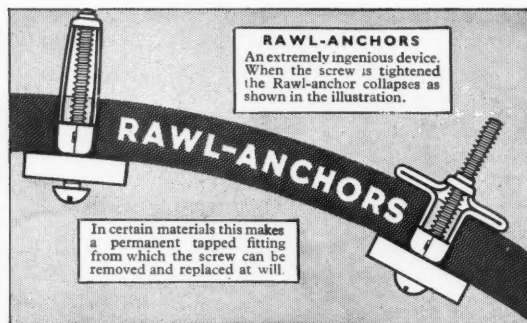
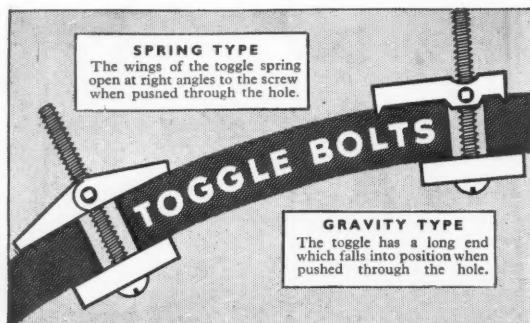
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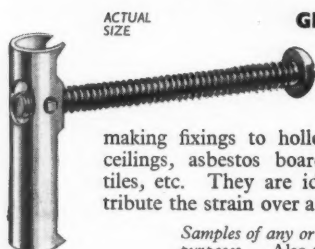
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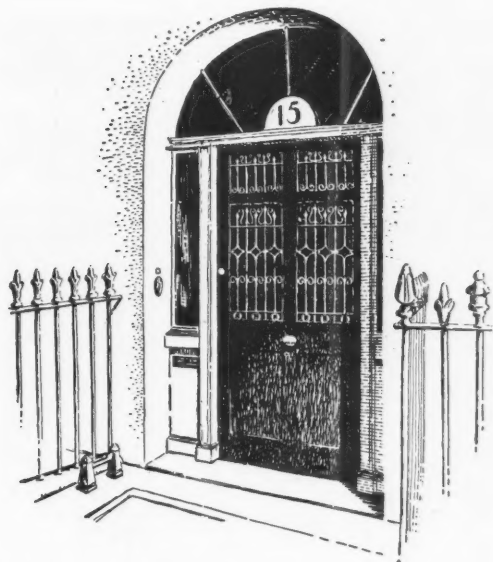
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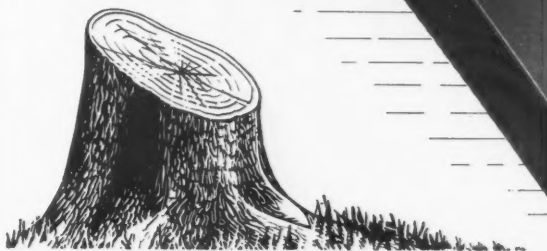
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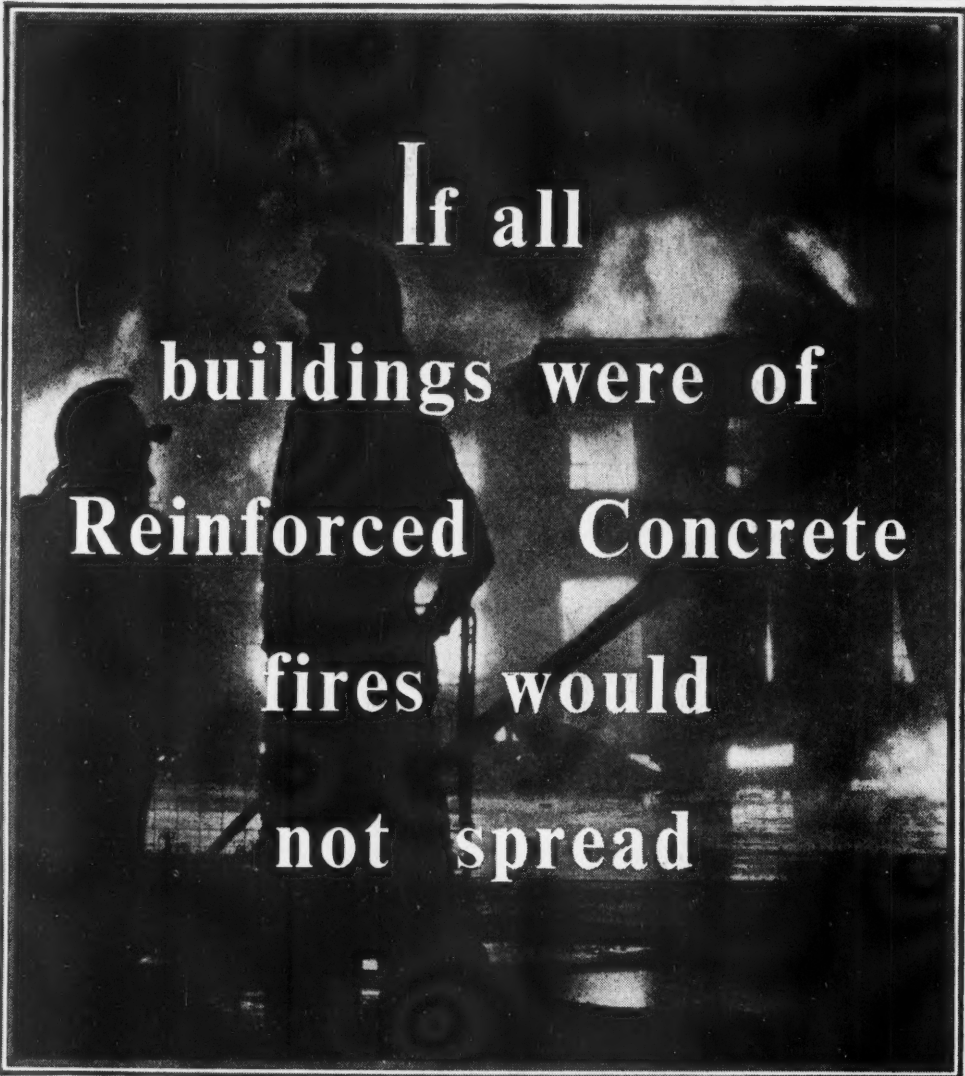
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