

PENCIL  
POINTS

OCTOBER

1937

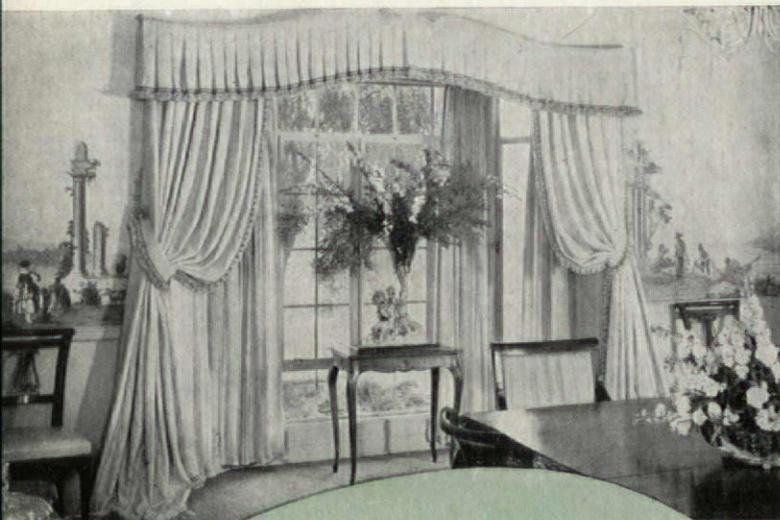
HOMMAGE A  
LALOUX



Harry E. Werner, Architect and Builder, Beverly Hills, Calif.

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YOUNGSTOWN OHIO

# SOME OBSERVATIONS ON BUILDING IN FLORIDA

BY MAURICE FEATHER

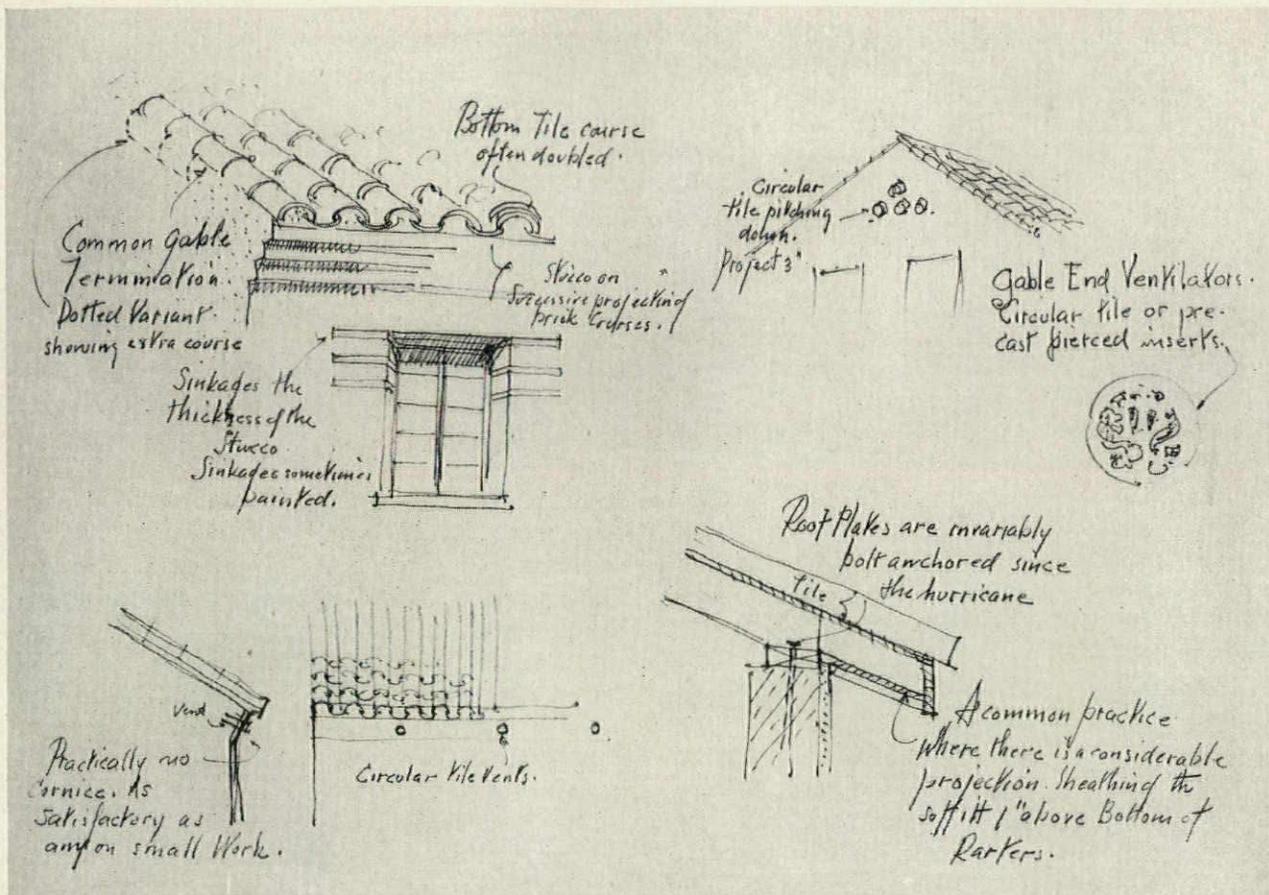
EDITOR'S NOTE:—*Architects frequently travel but not so frequently do they record impressions of their journeying in black and white as interestingly or informatively as did Mr. Feather of Boston in the following piece. The illustrations are a few of the pages from his notebook. Together with the text they give an excellent idea of what an observant and thoughtful architect finds of significance on a trip to the South. In an early issue he will discuss Charleston, Williamsburg, Washington, and New York as they appear to the eye of a peregrinating Bostonian.*

IT IS to be regretted that Florida is so poor in native building materials. Where Nature has been so prodigal in other ways, she has dealt with a niggardly hand in this respect. There are no natural clay beds, hence the scarcity and cost of brick; there are no quarries of limestone, hence the importation of that material, as well as the cement, which might otherwise be made locally.\* Of granite there is none, and even the local coral rock which formerly was used, is, on account of its porosity, unsatisfactory for modern use. Even sand is not easily accessible and has in some cases to be carried a considerable distance. (The coral sand of the shore line generally is useless for building purposes.) In fact, this wholesale importation of building materials would, it seems, long ago have stamped out any individuality which Florida cities possess, had not the existence and continued suitability of the Spanish stucco tradition given them a distinct character of their own. Just as regrettable in its way as this paucity of native materials is the meager use of the one superlative material which exists here, namely the keystone. It is beautiful stone of most pleasing whitish pearl color and has the enduring qualities and much of the beauty of Italian travertine which it strongly resembles in texture. Very contradictory explanations of its non-use are offered. It is variously stated that cost precludes its use, that it is no more expensive

than limestone hauled from another state, that it is porous or leaky, that it is harder and more impervious than limestone. Two outstanding buildings, the Central Post Office in Miami and the Town Office at Coral Gables, are built of it. Both, to my mind, achieve a dignity all too rare in this paradise of the stucco artist. For stucco, in the case of masonry construction, at least, is the prevailing surface covering, and its widespread application has produced craftsmen skilled in its use. There is a bewildering variety of textures (some of them very beautiful) as well as a wide range of colors running all the way from chalk white or cream to a rich burnt sienna. In addition to the usual pinks and bright yellows, I have even seen a very pale jade green, which strangely enough was pleasant in the extreme. But while it seems quite proper to stucco the exterior of a dwelling, store, cinema and the like, its application to even a semi-monumental public building, to the Northern eye, leaves something to be desired and emphasizes the fact that it is after all, a base material.

Floridians are apt stoutly to deny that the hurricanes of a few years ago did any appreciable damage but maintain that it was only flimsy construction which suffered at all. But there seem to be cracks in their consistency, if not in their walls, as they, one and all, in discussing building practice, start with the hurricane period and point out how well Florida buildings have been constructed since that time. And it is undeniably true that the need for hurricane protection has well nigh revolutionized building practice with the result that sound methods are now generally employed. No longer in masonry buildings is any structural dependence placed in ordinary 6- or 8-inch tile or concrete block walls, these materials of the thicknesses mentioned are now used as curtain walls and in that way only. Stability is achieved by a complete system of reinforced concrete posts, spandrels, etc.—a complete skeleton system like an office building in miniature. This applies not only to structures of two or more stories: bungalows, garages, and any permanent free-stand-

\*The above statements are not strictly true. There is clay and brick making in the northern part and the product is largely used as street paving. There are limestone deposits north of Tampa and there is some cement made locally. But the fact remains that Florida is poor in native building materials.



ing masonry building of any kind is done by this method. (In certain special cases as in group garages, etc., I believe an exception may be made, but the principle is almost universally applied.)

An interesting reversal of the sequence of operations usual in the north may be noted here. With us, the erection of the columns and floor beam spandrels precedes the filling in of the curtain walls. Here it is just the reverse: the curtain walls are built first, forming two sides of the columns form; the other two sides are then boxed in with wood, and the column poured. In like manner, the top of the curtain wall forms the bottom of the spandrel form which is then poured directly on the wall. Undoubtedly, this method gives an excellent bond between wall and column. One wonders if pouring the spandrel directly on the curtain wall is as good a procedure, since any deflection on the spandrel would seemingly transmit stresses down through the curtain wall to other members below not designed to receive them.

Where pitched roofs occur with or without overhangs, all plates are anchored to the wall below, a practice which is doubtless another result of the hurricanes. Department store show windows seem to be subdivided into

smaller units and to have heavier muntins than with us. In several of the newer ones, great hinged shields stand out horizontally from the building, sheltering pedestrians when not lowered to protect the show windows from wind pressure.

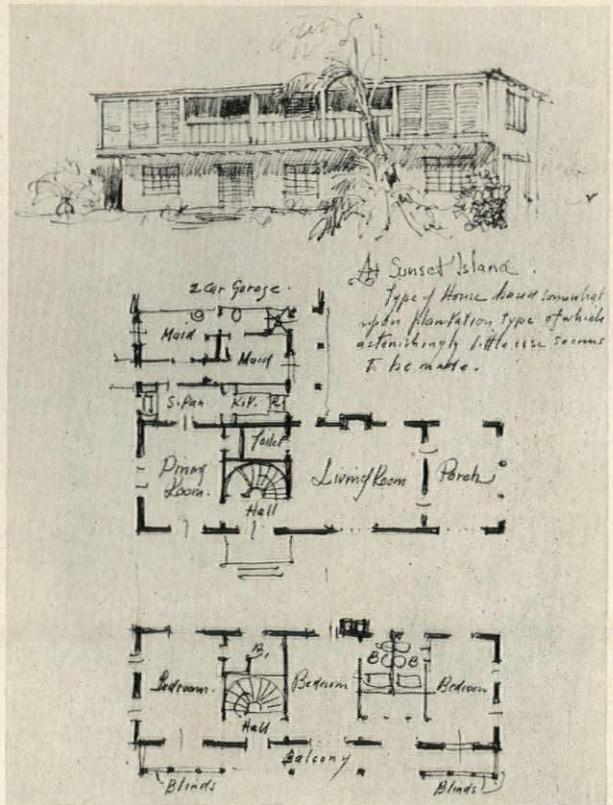
It seems the usual practice here to strap with wood the inside of masonry walls before plastering (no metal furring). In good work the exterior of the wall is waterproofed before applying stucco.

Termites have been a pest for so long that a generally accepted practice is followed—again a reversal of our own—as far as masonry construction is concerned. For while, with us, lighted and ventilated cellars protect the inside and termite shields are most necessary on the outside, here the existence of continuous masonry on the outside with no cellar within makes the inside of the wall the danger point and the metal shield projects and turns down on the inside with the soil at least a foot below. Of course, where tile, etc., on slab is used throughout the first floor, as in good work, there is no termite problem. Where a wood first floor is carried on joists, the entire joist is not just coated with creosote but is completely impregnated throughout its entire length with some penetrative compound which gets en-

tirely through the wood instead of just coating the outside. In this case, no wood sills are used, the joists resting on the termite shield laid directly on masonry. No precautions against termites are taken above the first floor.

Builders and architects in Florida pride themselves on the speed with which their buildings are erected. I have been told that a good sized house, a small school, even a small apartment house can be put up in little over thirty working days. It seems incredible, for—though excavation is invariably easy and rock is never encountered or drilling and blasting resorted to, and heating arrangements are sketchy or non-existent—a little over four weeks seems an astonishingly short time for the completion of even a small structure.

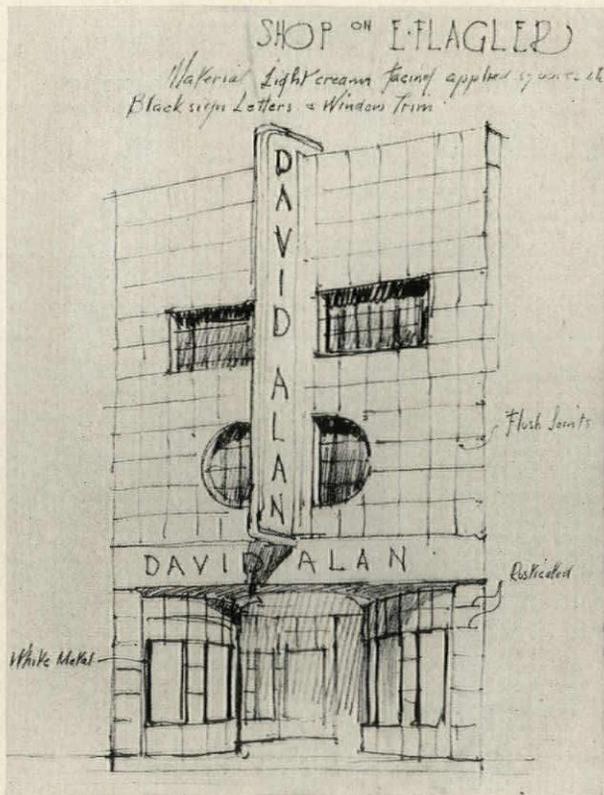
The volume of new building in the places I have visited seems fairly large, though confined for the most part to small structures. I have seen a couple of schools just finished, a number of shops are remodeling, a goodly number of small and medium sized houses are going up, both speculative and otherwise, and a lot of small hotels and apartments particularly at Miami Beach are under way. Large office buildings for the moment seem at a standstill but there is quite a sprinkling of shops with one floor of offices above either just finished or finishing. The speculative house builders seem pretty disgruntled, many of them seem still to be living in the happy

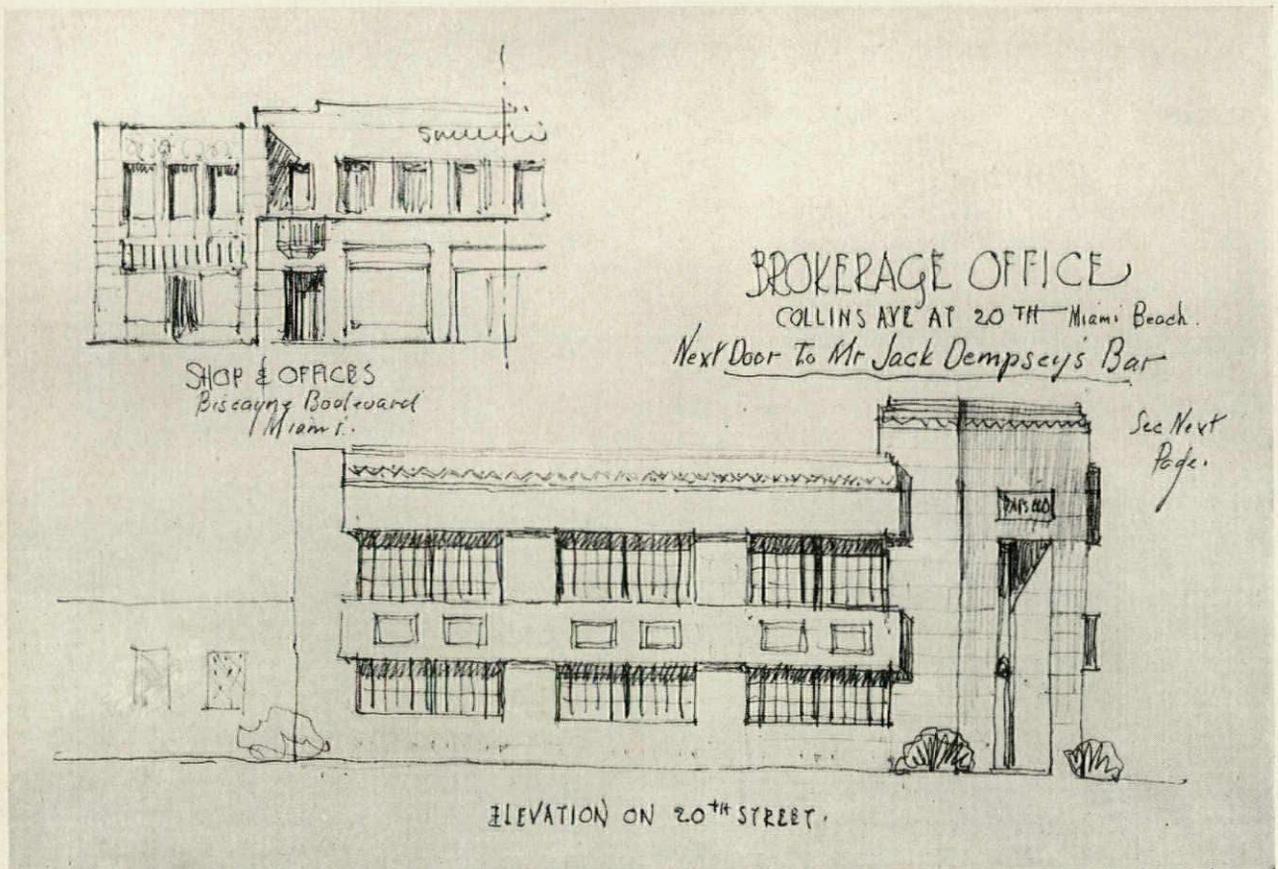


days of eight to ten years ago, when they apparently could build any old kind of a house and unload it at a fancy price. I have talked with several who bitterly complain of their competitors' cheap building methods with one breath and with the next bemoan the fact that the buying public is getting choosy and discriminating and disposed to haggle over a thousand or two. So I imagine the palmy days are over for these gentry and they will have to overhaul the quality of their product and reedit their ideas of what constitutes a fair profit. The banks, I believe, will lend up to 80% on a 100% borrower, but the average mortgage one can get is probably nearer sixty.

But, in spite of the jerry-builder, it must be confessed that the general level of design is good—better, in fact, than the artisan's craftsmanship.

There are some clever stores, some very fetching houses and some good apartment houses with others not quite so good. Certainly, on the whole, the quality of the design seems excellent. I do not quite subscribe to the estimate of it voiced by a young and earnest architect with whom I talked. This young enthusiast explained to me in great detail that the architectural "design center" of the country, having tired of its three-decade sojourn in New York, had trekked west to California for awhile but is now properly and permanently located in Florida!!! If one could take seriously





such a statement as applied to the small or medium-sized work, nevertheless it seems to verge on the absurd as far as the office buildings are concerned. A rather careful appraisal of what Florida has to offer in this direction discloses, in general, nothing very good and nothing very characteristic of Florida. In fact, it is not unjust to describe the bulk of the office buildings as second hand versions of second rate Northern prototypes. Where so much good work has been done in the case of the smaller structures, this creative backwardness is difficult to understand. The best tall buildings are not office buildings but hotels; some few in the Spanish, but many more in the modern manner.

In Florida, one is not sensible of the struggle between the traditional and the modern method of design. Examples of each style seem to exist side by side, if not in complete harmony, at least without the jarring dissonance which such a juxtaposition would produce in the North. After a time, whether stylist or modernist, one acquires a curiously impartial attitude in the matter, explainable perhaps from the fact that whatever the form or style of the exterior covering, the structural core is substantially the same and receives its outer skin in the modern or traditional manner with equal propriety.

Nothing sounds more quaint than to hear a couple of Floridians speak of "making an island." Yet that, literally, is what is done. Beginning with Miami Beach itself, which is nothing more than a layer of sand pumped in from the sea onto the roots of a destroyed mangrove swamp, the practice continues in the present day. The perimeter of the proposed island is marked out, bulkheaded up, the surrounding ocean bottom pumped up within the enclosure, the water allowed to drain off, and a few acres of new building sites is the result. The advantages of the method are obvious—instead of taking the real estate Nature provides, one makes it, at will, where one wills it; a whole group of islands is possible like the Sunset Island development on the Bay Shore of Miami Beach, with connecting bridges over arms of the sea, a palm-decked miniature American Venice. At the cost of cribbing and pumping, land is created economically for building—until one comes to build on it. At which time the drawbacks of manufactured real estate promptly become painfully apparent. One has only to scan, in the building code, the tables of allowable safe loads for filled land, to understand at least one reason for the high cost of building in Florida. In spite of the absence of frost and cellars, which permit shallow trench walls, the latter require

such a footing spread as to be no more economical than the walls of our full height northern cellar. A continuous mat with a four-foot spread under the ordinary footing is a consumer of concrete and it is not unusual for an entire carload of cement to go into the building of one very moderate sized house.

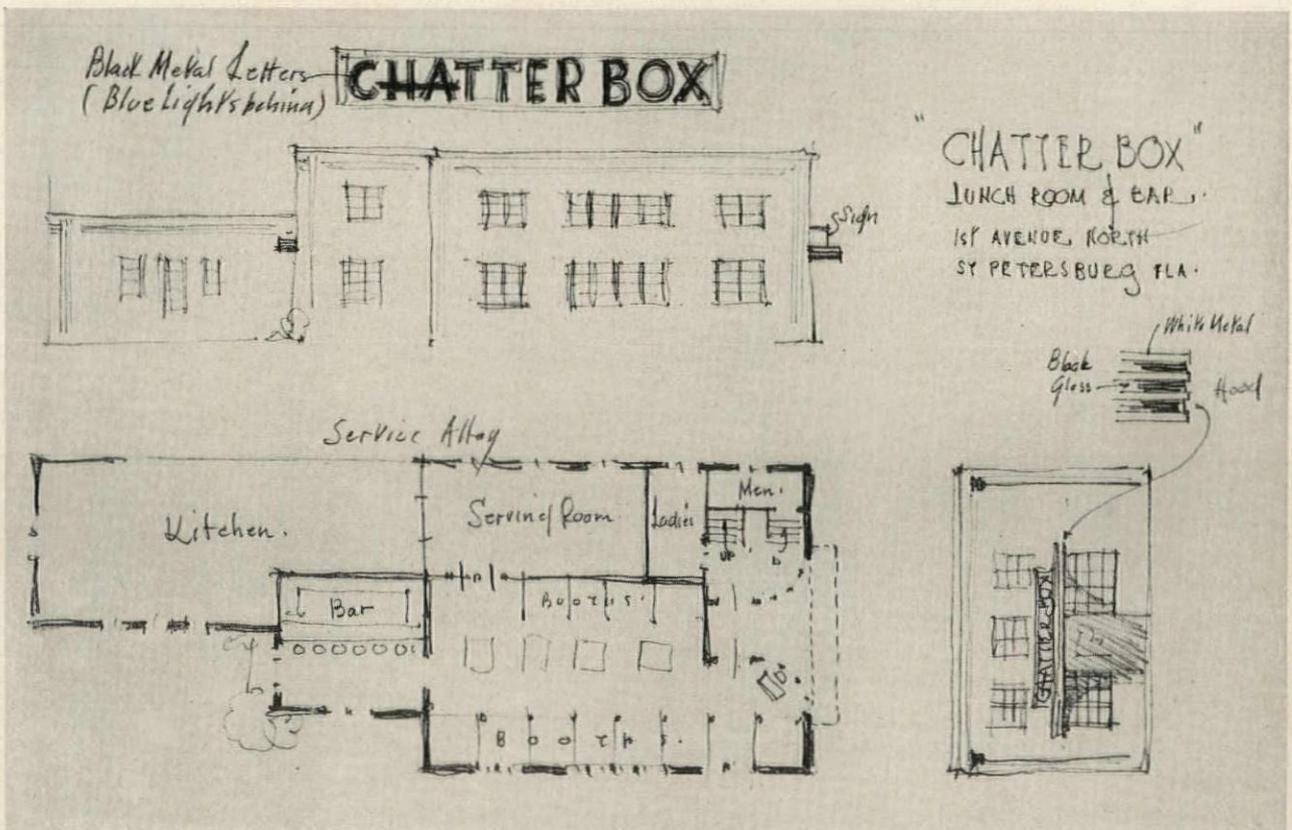
It must be understood that all the foregoing remarks are written with respect to the masonry building. It must not be supposed that the percentage of masonry structure is everywhere as high as in Miami. Up the west coast and in St. Petersburg the wooden house is all too prevalent—and such wooden houses as defy description! Though many are undoubtedly well built and well kept up, they one and all suggest the Northern lumber company's stock plan book, revamped locally with an eye to introducing every last atom of possible ugliness and idiotic vagary. Why the stuccoed masonry and tile roofed domestic work should be so satisfactory and the transplanted northern wood houses so abominable, I cannot explain. The fact that the one seems native and indigenous, so to speak, while the other seems an alien importation, does not quite explain the disparity in the quality of the design. But the fact remains, I saw scarcely a dozen well designed frame houses in the whole of my stay in Florida.

On the other hand, in justice to the wood

frame house, it must be stated that they stood up surprisingly well under hurricane conditions. In fact, I was told by an old resident that in his district (around Fort Myers) the two-story houses of wood construction pliancy stood up quite as well if not better than one-story buildings built in the pre-hurricane manner of concrete blocks without reinforced concrete stiffening.

Florida has some extraordinary legislation on its statute books with regard to real estate. To give only two instances, there is in operation a State Homestead Act by the provisions of which, properties of an assessed valuation of less than \$5000 are tax exempt. Entirely aside from its disregard of the rightness of universal taxation, this law, though conceived with the excellent intention of encouraging the very small home owner, puts a premium upon the very small house under \$5000 with a corresponding penalty on the next higher value classification.

The second bit of well-meant but vicious legislation is the law whereby a property pays less taxation if the owner is domiciled therein; again an attempt to encourage home ownership and occupation. In this instance, the law is so loosely drawn that it does not matter if the entire property is rented with the exception of one coat closet inhabited by the owner, it still pays the preferred rate of taxation!

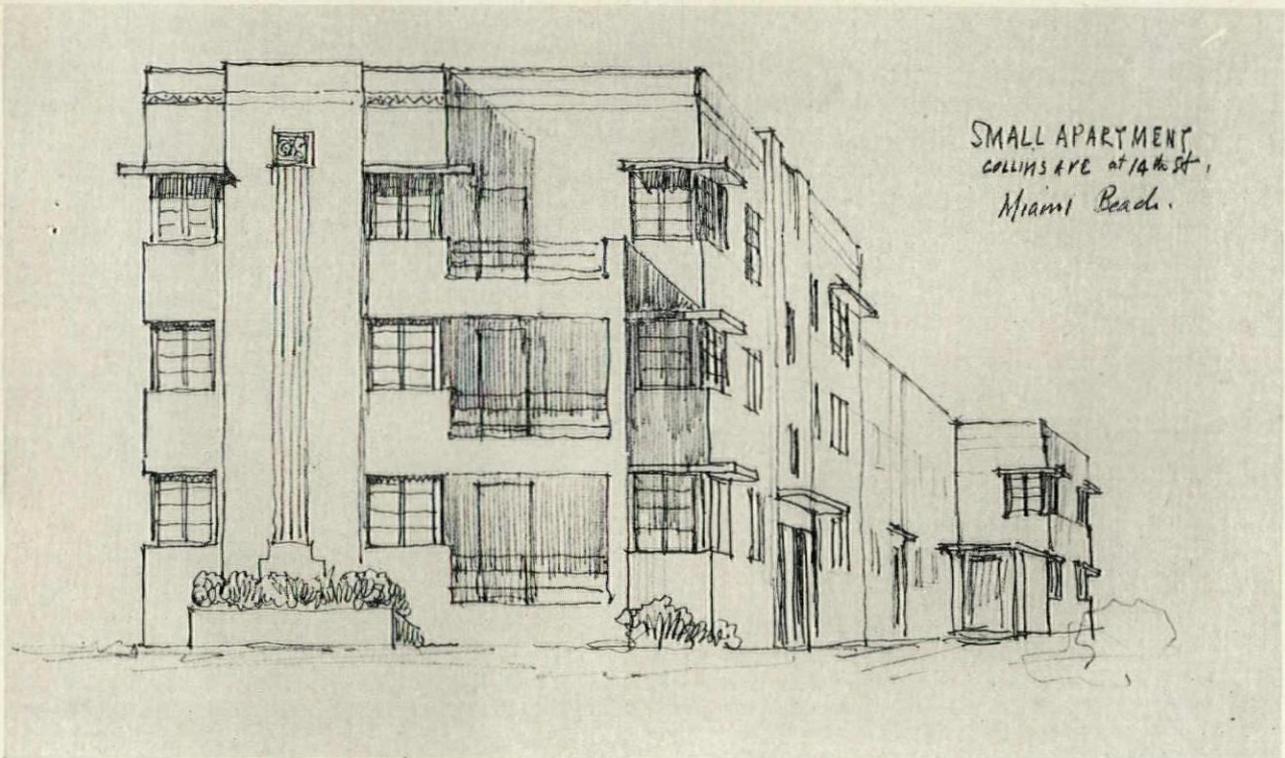


F. D. R. himself could hardly beat this one.

A parenthetical word on Florida Vegetation. If the Spaniards, as I have heard it said, found in Florida only the live oak, the so-called Dade County pine, and the camphor tree, the state would seem to have been as successful in receiving and assimilating imported species of trees as it is in attracting and adopting human beings. If, at the time of the Spaniards' coming, the kinds of trees were few, they now, certainly, are many and varied. Among many new varieties of pine, one in particular, the Australian pine, flourishes practically wherever planted. The rubber tree has come, the bamboo has come, the palms have come, over seventy different kinds of them. And the additions still continue. Two recent importations are the West Indian mahogany tree, an astonishingly vigorous grower, and the "Sausage" tree, an arboreal gem, with dark lustrous leafage, but otherwise suggesting our Northern birch in habit of growth and white bark, which latter is one-half inch thick and yielding to the touch like human flesh. A three-year tree of this species in a favorable location is often 10 to 12 feet high.

One and all, they thrive in Florida's sunshine, precipitation and—sandy soil. It is so ridiculously easy to make things grow, and transplanting is correspondingly easy. In fact, there is something approaching the magical (if not the comical) in the celerity with which a new-made island, for instance, can be covered with rubber trees, bamboos, etc.—transformed almost overnight from a barren sand waste into a glamorous palm-covered islet. Had I been told I should see lawn grass growing on *sand* I should have been skeptical, but such was the case and a certain kind of coarse grass which ultimately makes a thick and satisfactory lawn is sown on sand and, I have been told, cut with a lawn mower four days later.

To mention only three of Florida's array of flowering shrubs, Bermuda itself can show no finer growth of hibiscus; the bougainvillea riots everywhere in more different colors than I ever knew existed; and, finally, the orange flame flower grows in such profusion that whole roofs are smothered in it with not a tile showing. If Florida were to have a floral symbol, it should be the flame flower.



# HOMMAGE A LALOUX

DE SES ELEVES AMERICAINS

WHEN "Père" Victor Laloux, one of the most famous and best loved Patrons of the Ecole des Beaux Arts, died in Paris on July 13 last, we felt that his passing should be marked by something more than the usual obituary notice. Accordingly, we wrote to a number of his former students in the United States, asking them to put into words their personal tributes to his memory. They responded with the letters which are printed hereafter and which form eloquent evidence that Laloux was a rare soul among the architects and teachers of his generation; one who won and held to an extraordinary degree the love and admiration of all who knew him as master and friend.

Of course, letters from the complete list of his former American pupils would require more space than we had available, much as we would have liked to secure and print them. The ones included, however, surely voice the sentiments felt by all and will serve to emphasize the greatness of this man's life of devotion to architecture and education. To the others we offer our sincere regrets that practical considerations denied them opportunity to speak their hearts with the rest.

The first note is from William Adams Delano, who wrote from abroad on July 28 as follows:

"I reached Paris on the 6th of July and had a long talk with my old Patron. He was very feeble. The next day I went to Bruxelles, where I am building a country house. On my return the following week, I was met by a telephone message to say that Laloux had died that morning in his sleep, very peacefully. His funeral followed three days afterwards and I was asked, as a corresponding member of the Academie des Beaux Arts and representing his American pupils, to make a short speech at the Church of Ste. Clotilde where the service took place. I am enclosing the copy of what I said there, which, if you wish, I would be glad to have you publish as my contribution to a man I respected and loved."

*From* WM. ADAMS DELANO

AU nom de tous les Américains (et nous sommes nombreux) qui ont eu le privilège de faire leurs études sous l'égide du Grand Maître que nous fleurons—je tiens à exprimer toute l'admiration et le respect que nous avons pour lui comme élèves, et tout le dévouement que nous lui avons toujours conservé.

Les grands Principes qui étaient l'essence de son enseignement, la grandeur de l'idée et la simplicité dans la composition nous ont toujours inspiré dans notre travail—et ils ont eu une très profonde influence sur le développement de l'architecture en Amérique depuis un demi-siècle.

*From* HOWARD GREENLEY

I CALLED on Laloux in Paris the day after the judgment of the Grand Prix, and was informed by Madame Laloux that he was so fatigued, as a result of his attendance in his capacity as member of the Jury, that she hesitated to disturb him. I said I would be in again in a few days and would hope to see him then and pay my respects to him. Alas there was to be no second visit except to bring a few flowers, stand reverently for a moment beside his bier and express to Madame Laloux such words of sympathy as one might summon forth in the presence of her grief and the universal sorrow of friends upon whom association with the Master had left so indelible an impression.

He cherished an extraordinary affection for his "Elèves Américains" and no one rejoiced more sincerely than he in their respective achievements. In return, their response was one of continual and invariable devotion to him and no journey undertaken abroad was complete without a visit to the Patron. Those of us who were so fortunate and so privileged as to be numbered among his "élèves" will retain to the end of our lives the memory of his bright and gentle spirit and be thankful for the priceless gift of his friendship.

From FREDERIC C. HIRONS

IN the passing of *Le Grand Maître*, Victor Laloux, at Paris on July 13th, the world and France have lost one of the greatest architects of the last century.

Born in France in 1850, the son of a master builder, he followed his studies at *L'Ecole des Beaux-Arts*, Paris, and won the *Grand Prix de Rome* in Architecture in 1878, on which he spent the four following years in Rome as Pensionnaire at The Villa Medici of the Academy of France.

Upon his return to Paris he started his practice and later succeeded his Patron, Pierre André, as Patron of the Atelier André. From that Studio, under his guidance, came such men as Pontremoli, Chaussmiche, Bigot, Lefèvre, Janin, Ferran, Carlu, Haffner, Mirland, Débat-Ponsan, Jean Labatut and several others.

To Victor Laloux, America owes a debt of gratitude, as it was under his guidance and criticism that many of the American architects now prominent in their profession received their early professional training. Among them are such men as Arthur Brown, William Adams Delano, Charles Butler, Howard Greenley, John W. Cross, William E. Parsons, William Emerson, William Van Alen, George Howe, Lawrence G. White, George Applegarth, Hal Erskine, Lawrence S. Butler, William H. Beers, Ethan A. Dennison, Dayton Colie, T. Merrill Prentice, Lloyd Morgan, and many others who profited by the Master's great ability as a teacher and critic.

He was inherently a man of most kindly and sympathetic nature and his attitude to the weakest of any of his élèves was one of great desire to help him to perfect his skill and ability.

He never permitted himself or a student to become involved in any of the small details of a problem until the big essentials had been solved to his satisfaction.

The various types of men who came out of his Atelier are positive proof of his versatility as a critic. Janin, Débat-Ponsan were skillful Decorators — Bigot, Lefèvre, Ferran were sound Planners.

In his Atelier there was the finest *esprit de corps* and real *camaraderie* among all the members, and that was undoubtedly due to the fine spirit emanating from the Master himself, and his own attitude to the ideals and standards of his profession.

Frequently the Atelier would find itself in difficulties with the police authorities through some student prank. The Massier would have

to explain the situation to the Master, who would straighten the matter out with the authorities.

His tribute to Fernand Janin, one of his most talented students, is a touching eulogy and shows the deep and sincere affection he held for the men who studied under his guidance.

The Dark Days of 1914-1918 were probably the most sorrowful time of his life as from the Atelier about one hundred twenty men were mobilized, of whom thirty were never to return.

He had received practically all the honors France could bestow on him as well as being honored by many foreign countries. Among a few of these were: *Grand Officier Legion of Honor, Membre de L'Institut, Grande Medaille D'Or du Salon, Président des Artistes Françaises, Medal of Honor, American Institute of Architects.*

It is certain that all the Americans who were fortunate enough to study under the Master in the Ecole will feel that they have lost one who had been to them one of the finest inspirations they had ever known.

From WILLIAM LAWRENCE BOTTOMLEY

THE death of our beloved Patron, Père Laloux, brings to our minds the memories of our happy association with him in the atelier in Paris. That he was one of the foremost Architects of his time is conceded by all. His work speaks for itself. Beyond this he was a beloved teacher and has exercised an influence and inspiration on the great numbers of students who studied under him.

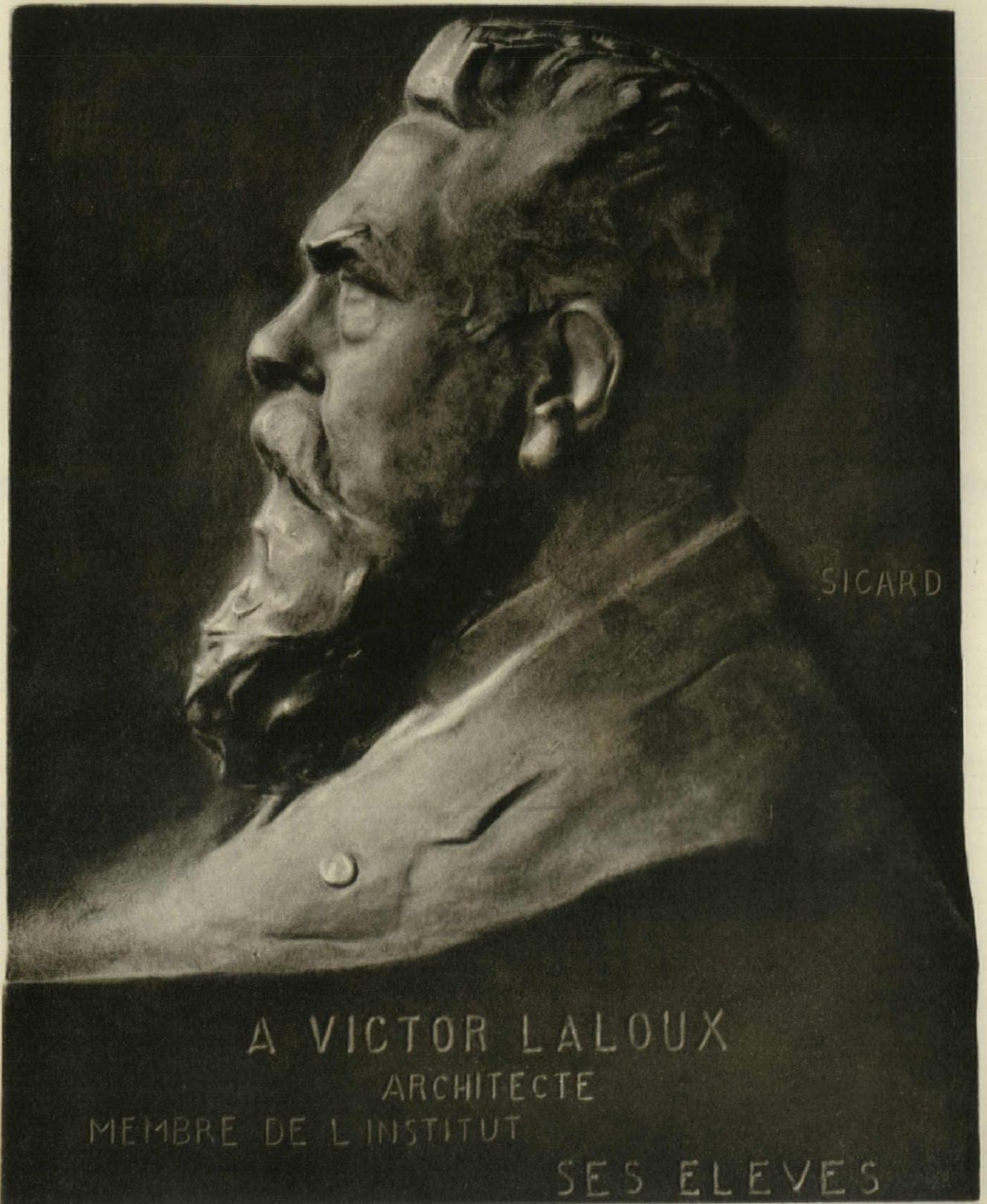
From LLOYD MORGAN

WITH the passing on of Mr. Victor Laloux, we have lost A Great Ideal, "A Great Master."

From CHARLES BUTLER

THE news of the death in Paris of Victor Laloux came as a shock to his many former pupils in America. Although he was over 87 it seemed as if he had found the secret of eternal youth and would continue his teaching indefinitely, for he was reported this spring as still criticizing the work of competitors from his atelier for the Prix de Rome.

His death closes an extraordinary achievement as a teacher. The great Professor André had selected him before his death as his successor, but politics intervened and he was not appointed to one of the official government teaching posts. At the request of the majority

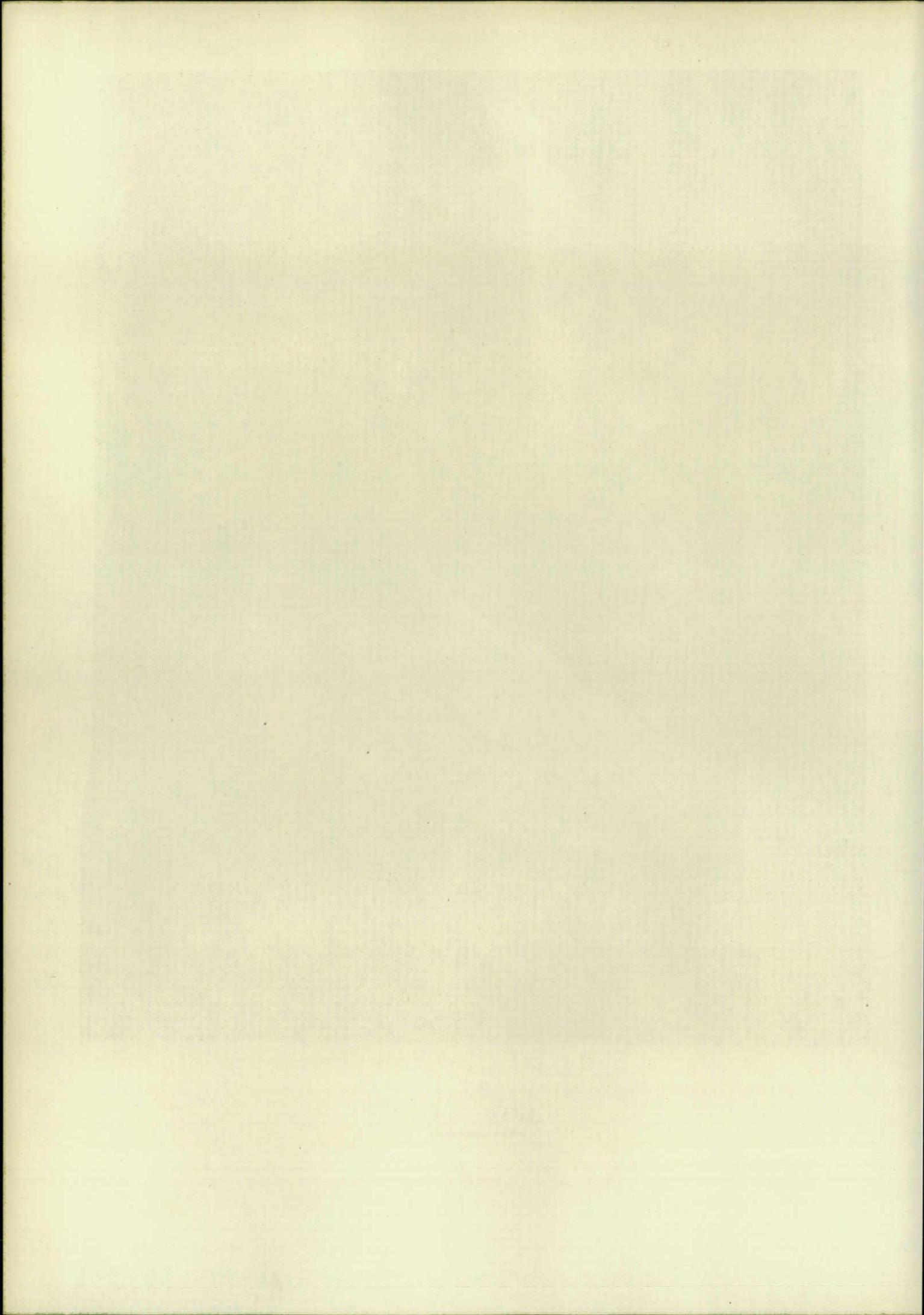


SICARD

A VICTOR LALOUX  
ARCHITECTE  
MEMBRE DE L'INSTITUT  
SES ELEVES

1850-1937

PENCIL  
POINTS





*Ewing Galloway*

*The famous Gare du Quai d'Orsay, Paris, for which Laloux was Architect*

of André's students he founded in 1889 an independent atelier, and at once pupils flocked to him.

Because of the many Americans who studied under him, far more than any of the other Professors, it is interesting to consider his influence on American architecture, notwithstanding his never having set foot on our shores.

He was on the point of coming over seven years ago at the invitation of his former pupils when overtaken by illness, and thereafter he felt he was too old to make the trip. He had been an Honorary Corresponding Member of the American Institute of Architects since 1903, and in 1921 he was awarded the highest architectural honor given in this country, the Medal of Honor of the Institute.

To most laymen and even to many architects, the Ecole des Beaux Arts in Paris is regarded as a place where men go to learn to make clever drawings and chic renderings in water colors.

It is true that they may learn such things there, but these are merely a by-product. The fundamental strength of the School lies in its teaching of the art of composition, primarily in planning. Laloux felt this so strongly that he would often keep us so long on the study of the plan of a project that the elevations and

sections were hurriedly worked out in the last days of the competition and none too well presented. He once explained his viewpoint to the writer by saying: "You can put forty good façades on a good plan, but without a good plan you cannot have a good façade." He felt this more strongly, I believe, than any of his contemporaries among the great architects who taught at the Ecole. What he taught was applicable in any country and in any style. He should, I believe, be given credit for having done more to advance American architecture than any one man in our generation.

As one of those who were privileged to study under him for years and to remain in contact with him till his death, I feel that the name of Victor Laloux should go down in our architectural history as one to whom this nation owes a very deep debt of gratitude.

*From* JEAN LABATUT

WHAT a profound shock to learn our beloved Patron had passed on, so young at 87.

When 85, one of his former students, a man sixty years of age, brought him his latest work. After discussing it, Monsieur Laloux said: "My young man, you are getting old." The young man of sixty had neglected to follow the commanding law of progress and had for-

gotten himself in the past. In this refuge, his old master came to arouse him.

In 1920, an Englishman, also a student of Laloux, wrote these very good words (since they are a good résumé of many of my personal impressions, I quote them): "Monsieur Laloux is no admirer of modern archeological architecture, nor of the designing of buildings in the so-called styles, except for restoration work, or when an historical style is demanded by the client. He believes in the handling of composition in a modern spirit, giving to it a living character and adapting the architecture entirely to the requirements of the program. With reference to the future, he considers that, as the architect is the agent of his client, architecture will find itself as the natural expression of the times."\*

The author of these lines was from one of the many foreign nations represented at the Atelier Laloux. In 1923 not less than eleven nations were represented, and how happy we were to find so many Americans.

In this day of sorrow, after twenty years of personal contact with my Patron as master, paternal adviser, and friend, too many impressions and examples come to my mind to be expressed in this brief tribute.

For that great teacher, organization was the main thing. Expression and form were only the natural consequences and a matter of personal choice and sensibility. That is the synthesis of what he gave me from the time of my preparation for the "*concours d'Admission*" in 1917 up to his last letter received February 1937.

When logiste for the Grand Prix de Rome in 1924, he let me express my buildings as I felt they should be, and for the first time in a Rome competition concrete was expressed without restrictions. "Since you have a good composition it's all right with me." This he repeated to me very often.

What a privilege to have been logiste five times for the Grand Prix de Rome under such a master; permitting me fifteen months of everyday contact with his constructive and inspiring criticisms in addition to those received during the ordinary school work. Often he came in the loge at seven o'clock in the morning, almost excusing himself, unable to wait until afternoon to discuss the project over and over again.

That same year, looking at some preparatory work done by a "*dernier nouveau*" for the 4 Z'Arts Ball, he asked him the date, and mischievously expressed his regret that he was

unable to attend. He was then seventy-four.

His door was always open. What an opportunity for one seeking advice! I never missed that opportunity. When I received a call from Havana in 1926 and Princeton in 1928, he gave me the best and most paternal advice. Because of his broad understanding, 1926 and 1928 remain two of my happiest years.

I always found him filled with the same profound and progressive interest in world architectural affairs, ever blessed with the same scintillating wit which so endeared him to us as Patron, lending an ever sympathetic ear to students and colleagues alike. A visit with him was like recharging an architectural battery.

In addition to his great simplicity and affability, at the Atelier and at home, he radiated majestic dignity when he appeared under the "*coupole de l'Institut de France*," particularly when he occupied the presidential chair of the "*Académie des Beaux-Arts*."

The patron and his ever charming and vivacious wife never tired of receiving old friends. Every Sunday afternoon their salon was the meeting place of many. Last year one of their guests, the oldest one present, also a member of the Institut, stated while toasting the Patron, "After all, what would become of us without Monsieur and Madame Laloux on Sunday afternoon."

At the Marjolaine, at Montigny sur Loing, oftentimes it was necessary to locate him in the woods or on water because of his fondness for hunting and fishing. He was "*l'Homme des Bois*" as Whitney Warren once said. At 78 he decided to build in his dear Touraine, and an old farm house became his charming summer home, "*L'Épine Fleurie*." He smiled to himself when he showed me the columns (made of concrete without bases or capitals) which supported the trellis vividly colored, and the ensemble already covered with roses. He enjoyed his new home for nine years.

His great optimism was shared by Madame Laloux, his tender and devoted companion, who told me, before planting this new garden that she wanted only roses and *cypresses*.

Theirs was a tender and beautiful companionship, knowing but one separation of forty-eight hours during their married life. Our heart goes out to Madame Laloux with deep sympathy in this first long absence—from her, from us all.

But he lives. The architectural talents he so painstakingly and enthusiastically developed, inspire in his students who so loved him, a lasting veneration.

We rise up and call his name blessed.

\*The author of these lines was H. Bartle Cox, A.R.I.B.A.



*Laloux, Membre de l'Institut de France,  
from a portrait by Henri Royer, reproduced  
here through the courtesy of Jean Labatut*

From ETHAN ALLEN DENNISON

IT is quite true that our beloved Patron is deserving of more than a "simple obituary notice." I would I could do justice to a worthy tribute to a man for whom I had so much affection and profound respect.

The great privilege fell to me of initiating the Laloux prize in the Ecole de Beaux Arts, and the splendid response of over sixty-five anciens of Laloux was in itself a marked tribute. My colleagues contributed close to 200,000 francs which, at the suggestion of our Patron, were used for a yearly prize for a special competition in the school.

The presentation of this fund to our Cher Maître was a grand occasion, attended by several old Laloux men, among them Charlie Butler, Bill Delano, Admiral, and others whose names I cannot remember. There was also the Director of Education, and the Director of the School; as well as other celebrities. I well remember with what emotion Laloux received this tribute. He held his American students in high esteem, for when those of us who were arranging this affair talked it over with our French colleagues, they also wanted to contribute and there were large numbers of outstanding American architects who had not studied with Laloux who also wished to contribute, among them Cass Gilbert. Laloux, however, would have none of it. He said the idea was originated among his American students, and he would have the fund used as a prize of the American students of Atelier Laloux.

I regret that I cannot tell you more of the charming memories I have of this great man; of the wonderful banquets I attended at his villa near Fontainebleau (where at times there were six or eight Grand Prix men and many charming ladies), and of the student days which I will never forget, when we looked upon him as a god. However, when the time was opportune he was our comrade—full of fun and good fellowship. I thought as a student that one should never dare even speak to him, and one day as I stood on the seat in the dark station in Fontainebleau with an arm extended to light a cigarette in the gas light, I was slapped on the back with the words, "*Voici des allumettes.*" On turning, here was the man and friend now lost to us.

As I am sailing for Europe, time does not permit me to record further recollections. However, one has only to realize the character and personality of the Patron to fancy what a great influence he had on his students and, through them, on architecture in this country.

From T. MERRILL PRENTICE

I WILL never forget calling on the Patron to pay my respects before leaving France to start practice in this country. Père Laloux received me in his study with the cordial dignity which is impossible to describe but which always existed between the Patron and his élèves. As I was about to leave he said, "Remember this my friend, 'Ne faites jamais des à peu pres. Soyez toujours une artiste. Soyez une être.'"

I think those fine words of encouragement, which I shall always remember, are worth recording.

From LOUIS E. JALLADE

YOU have asked me for a word of expression on Victor Laloux. You said that you felt that he should have something more than a simple obituary. The word "simple" has brought the thought that the old Master would be perfectly satisfied with a simple obituary because he was the embodiment of simplicity and nothing that one can say in an obituary to Victor Laloux can mean anything to anybody unless that person has had contact with him. His greatness might be written about, but his influence on a man's soul is beyond description.

Victor Laloux in life, as in death, has his greatness in the way in which he lived and in the simplicity in which he died. That which I remember of him is something of a nebulous feeling crowned by a gigantic stature with strong virile features and a complete absence of noise. One might say that he was like a powerful generator seemingly standing idle, but having a potential power that one did not know about until he touched it. No noise, no heat, no friction. I have never heard him have anything but kind words.

I remember my first day in the Atelier. There was one American who from birth had been a deaf mute. Although he had never heard his own voice, he had been trained to speak, and it was only with difficulty that an American could understand him; and so I was delegated to take this American's questions, translate them in French to the Patron, who in turn talked to me in French, and this I translated to the American without making any noise, because he used lip reading. This performance went on indefinitely. The Patron never laughed, never lost his patience.

He understood men. He was an American in his ways, and had a great fondness and understanding for our men. He has had more influence in the life of our American architects, both directly and indirectly, than any other person has ever had. Through this influence,



*A photo of Laloux, the sportsman, with his favorite bounds. Reproduced by courtesy of Jean Labatut*

he has done much to change the character of American planning. He was an exponent of planning. He continually said that it was only the plan that counted.

Of course, like most Frenchmen, he did a great deal of right thinking. Victor Laloux would have been a man easily assimilated in any progressive pioneer community. Had he been brought to America in his early youth, he would have made a great American. He has left a mark on his pupils that will carry through our American architecture for many generations to come.

From W. E. PARSONS

NO pupil of Laloux will forget the breadth and depth of his criticisms; his analysis of the program and approach to a direct solution of the problem in hand; the balancing and precise proportioning of each element of the plan; the arrangement of each minor part to contribute to the composition as a whole; his intense and friendly interest in each of his pupils. For a pupil to learn *how to study* for himself was the real purpose and result of his teaching.

His parting words to me when I left the Ecole were "Do not forget that every work of architecture, however small or unimportant, must be a composition."

Laloux may be best remembered as a great teacher of architecture. Some have doubted that he built as well as he taught; perhaps not, but to me his Gare du Quai d'Orsay, sweeping along the Seine, has great power, scale, and dignity and is a permanent contribution to the splendor of that river. The exuberance of its architecture may be said to have been an expression of the times, reflecting the taste of the period at the close of the 19th century. Laloux seems to have desired the full symphonic orchestration in developing simple architectural themes. Not many years ago he said to me that the richness of 19th century architecture reflected the material prosperity of that century but that the new century with less prosperous times would naturally lead to an architectural expression of bare essentials.

From ARTHUR BROWN, JR.

THE death of the revered Maître, Victor Laloux, has caused great sorrow to his numerous pupils and admirers in this country, who found in him a pillar of strength as guide, philosopher, and friend. One had come to think of him as immortal in body as well as in soul.

To some of us, his powerful creative genius

was his predominant quality. Others saw in him a teacher of amazing influence and success. He was completely imbued with the Classic tradition and his whole career was devoted to expanding that influence and handing on the torch to others, as it had been handed on to him, with the added glow of his own inspiration. He believed in rational change and progress in harmony with the needs of the epoch, but stood sturdily for his profound convictions as to the essence of architectural design. He, himself, was a brilliant example of the soundness of those convictions. He saw simply and clearly and in the grand manner. In keeping with his temperament, he expressed himself with exuberance controlled by a fine sense of measure and taste, and an extraordinary eye for proportion. He delighted in noble forms.

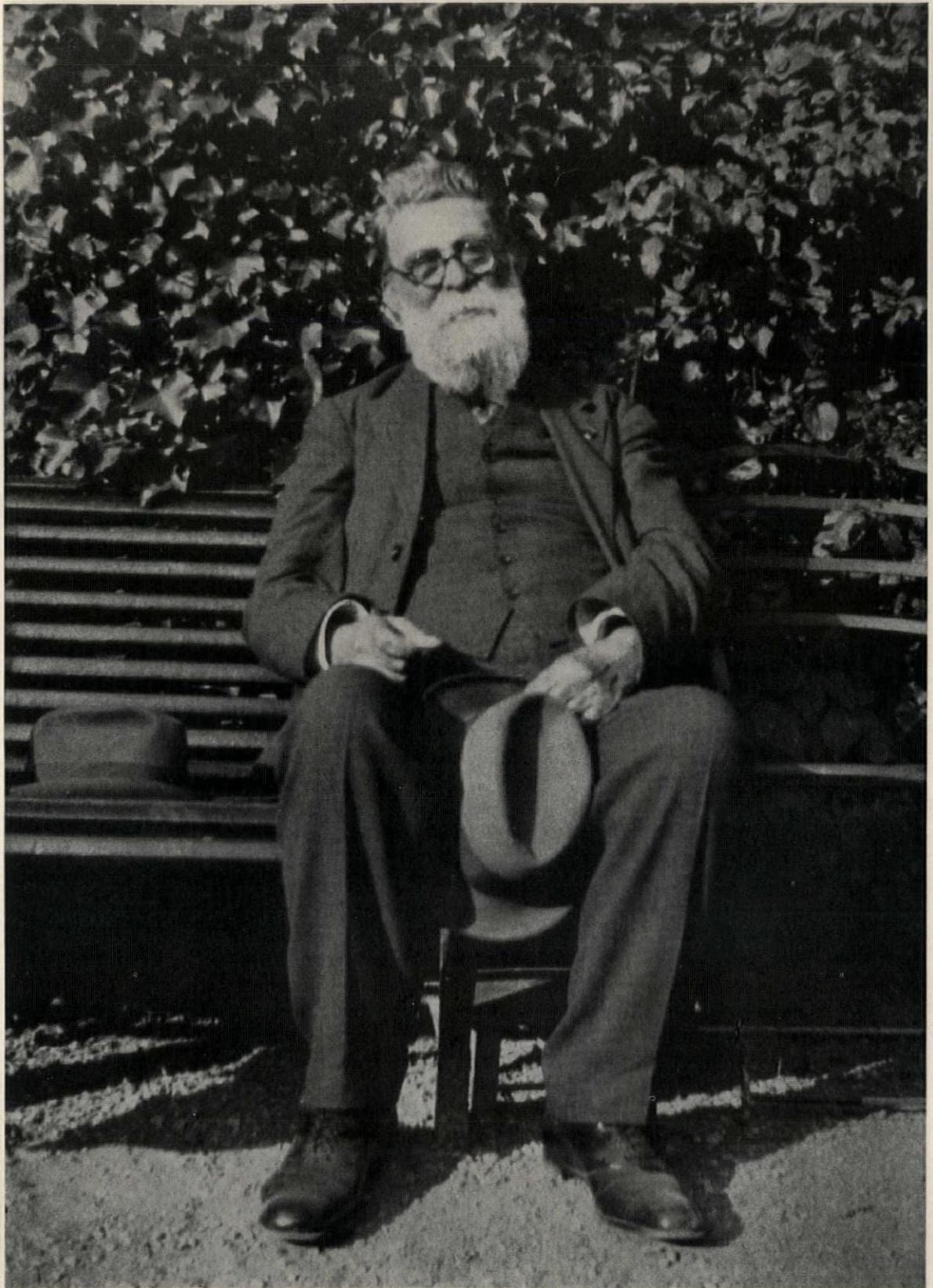
But it was his intensely human quality and his superb personality that made him so generally loved. At the same time he was an unusually able man of affairs—a giant among his fellow men. His place will never be filled in the hearts of his followers. A unique personality has passed on.

*On the occasion of Laloux's elevation to the grade of Grand Officier de la Légion d'Honneur, at the Cercle Interallié in Paris on December 17, 1935, M. Paul Léon, Membre de l'Institut, dedicated to him the following lines (for a copy of which we are indebted to Arthur Brown, Jr.):*

CHER Maître, Cher Confrère:—Vos élèves, vos amis, vos admirateurs, réunis pour vous fêter, ont signé ce livre d'or. Ils viennent à vous des Deux Mondes et vous apportent l'hommage de nombreuses générations. Leurs noms vous sont familiers. Ne forment-ils pas les assises de votre plus beaux monument? Car vous avez su bâtir non seulement en pierres mais en hommes. Maître d'oeuvres, vous êtes aussi Maître d'âmes. Architecte et professeur, vous avez, d'une empreinte, marqué l'art et l'enseignement.

Si diverses qu'aient été vos créations successives: l'Eglise Saint-Martin; Hôtels de Ville de Tours, de Roubaix; Gares de Tours et de Paris; elles ont ce commun caractère d'associer à la fois l'érudition et l'invention. Se pénétrer des grands maîtres sans pourtant s'asservir à eux, faire passer en soi l'âme des siècles en sachant demeurer du sien, allier la tradition à l'esprit le plus moderne, innover en ajoutant: telles sont les fortes leçons que nous avons reçues de vous.

Un pèlerinage de jeunesse aux Sanctuaires



*Another informal snapshot of Laloux which has caught, as well as the camera can, something of his simplicity and loveliness*

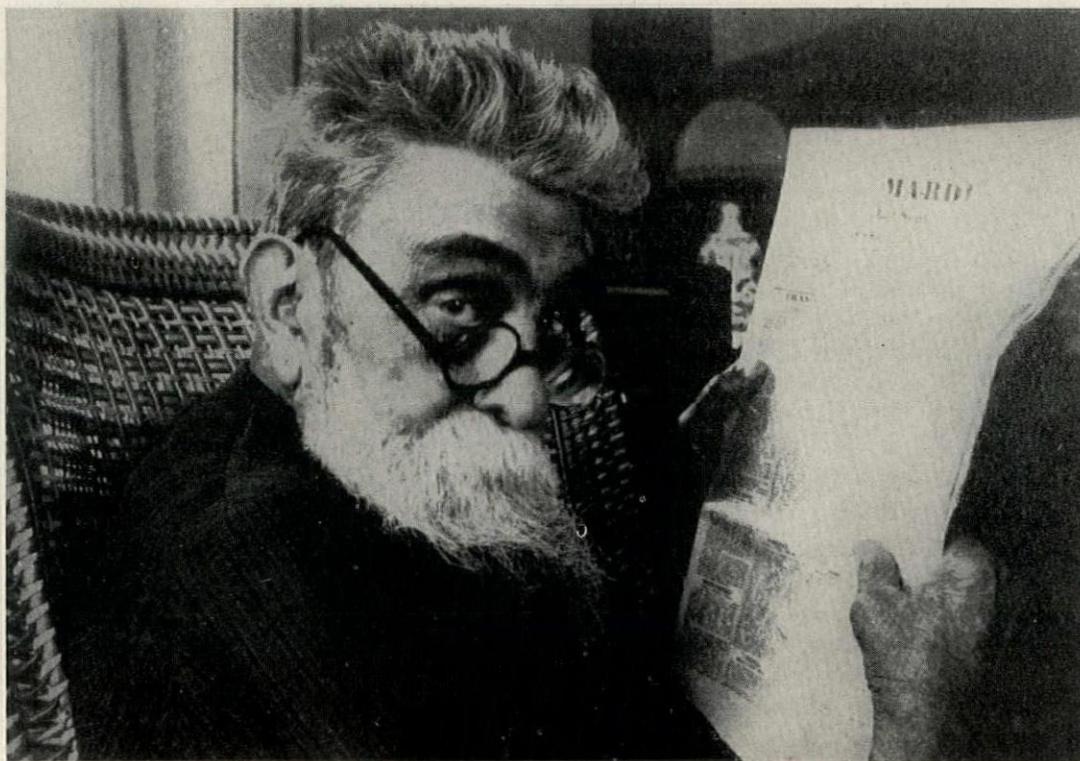
d'Olympie vous a pour toujours initié au sentiment de la grandeur. Voir grand, voir juste; cette maxime peut s'inscrire au seuil de votre atelier d'ou sont issus tant de Grand Prix, devenus tous de grands artistes, non par la vertu de formules ou de règles dogmatiques, mais par cette liberté de la véritable maîtrise qui, devant en chacun le tempérament et les dons, les révèle et les fait éclore en une riche floraison.

Votre autorité, sans conteste, se fonde sur l'amour profond que vous portez à la jeunesse. C'est elle qui vous a gardé des lassitudes de la vie et qui vous a protégé contre la neige des ans. C'est elle qui vous a fait cortège autour des disciples d'hier devenus des maîtres d'aujourd'hui. Accueillez donc la dignité à laquelle vous êtes élevé, non comme le fragile honneur d'une vanité passagère, mais avec la fière conscience d'une vie noblement remplie.

\* \* \* \*

Some of the prominent American architects, other than those whose letters are

printed, who were always proud to be known as "Laloux men" are: Lewis G. Adams, Raymond F. Almirall, H. L. Beadel, William Harmon Beers, Walter D. Blair, Albert I. Brady, Frederick H. Brooke, Lawrence Smith Butler, Edward P. Casey, E. F. Champney, George S. Chappell, Henry Ives Cobb, Jr., Dayton Colie, Knight C. Cowles, John W. Cross, Henry Davenport, Alfred V. DuPont, Douglas D. Ellington, William Emerson, Harold P. Erskine, Otto Faelton, Alfred L. Fechheimer, Edward L. Frick, Albert S. Gottlieb, Carl F. Gould, George H. Gray, William C. Hays, Lansing C. Holden, Jr., William d'O. Iselin, F. C. Lee, Thomas Machen, Clinton Mackenzie, Alexander P. Morgan, J. Harleston Parker, Lawrence F. Peck, Frank E. Perkins, Kenneth G. Reynolds, Henry R. Shepley, Clarence S. Stein, William G. Tachau, William Van Alen, Richard L. Watmough, Lawrence Grant White, and Eric Fisher Wood. We are sure that, in spirit, they join in the tribute as given in the foregoing pages.



*"Laloux, soi-même"—at his home  
in his dear Touraine, at Montlouis*

# R. HARMER SMITH

## A FEW NOTES ON A TALENTED, YOUNG PENCIL-PUSHER

BY FRED H. SCHERFF

RIGHT HERE, at the beginning, is the proper place to state that young R. Harmer Smith is one of those who considers himself fortunate in his work. For nearly a decade now, conditions have made it tough going for any neophyte launching himself into the architectural profession. If I may be pardoned for bringing up the subject, there has been, and still is, a depression; a depression which slammed down hardest on the building field and presented to any youth turning his eyes in that direction a row of high and thorny barriers. In consequence a cry was raised to heaven. Shouts of injustices being done, catcalls, and weeping could be heard. But none came from Smith. Somehow or other, he has managed to keep himself employed; good going or bad, architecture is his game and, what's more, the deeper he becomes immersed in it the happier he is.

R. Harmer Smith was pointed toward architecture almost from the cradle. His father, now a retired printer, is an inveterate sketcher who has spent many a vacation sailing around on oyster sloops drawing marine panoramas. This habit naturally subjected young Smith to the lure of a crisp, delicate pencil line at a very tender age. Of course he might have chosen other paths, but it is not surprising to find him enrolled in the architectural school at Pratt Institute from 1923 through 1926, or attending Yale School of Fine Arts in 1928 where he won the Del Grella Prize in Design and submitted to the expert teaching of Edwin Avery Parks, water colorist. A question put to two of his former instructors, Arthur Guptill (Pratt Institute) and Ernest Watson (Friday Night Sketch Club) disclosed Smith as a serious student; observant, capable, and, to use their words, "a thinker." The only general observation on our educational system I ever heard Smith make was a wish that it could be arranged so the teacher could get to know the student as well as the student came to know the teacher.

It is now, however, at the age of 31 with schools and formal education behind him,

that pencil-pusher Smith is undergoing his most intense period of learning. Nearly any evening will find him mastering some problem he knows will come before him on the morrow. You can pop any kind of an odd task at him and he won't shy off. Instead he methodically sets about digesting whatever material he can get pertaining to it, and before much time passes your problem is being intelligently handled.

Somewhat by chance, of course, but largely through premeditation, Smith's architectural jobs have been so arranged as to provide expert instruction in some particular field or phase of architectural work in each case, his object being to develop in himself a well rounded background and a well balanced attitude toward the architectural practice in general. That he has achieved these points, especially the latter, will be seen later on.

Smith always tries to select as his employer a man who is outstanding in his field, and has seen to it that, once he has the job, it has provided an opportunity for a new stage of responsibility and development. A partial list of the positions he has held is a good demonstration. At Wilfred E. Anthony's office he worked on ecclesiastical buildings, at Marcel Villaneuva's he became acquainted with residential structures, and in his present job with Graham and Painter he is engaged in store work. He also worked with several other firms on schools, and recalls with particular relish his experience at one office where, in the midst of a flood of work, he was given a school to design and then left pretty much to his own devices.

A well rounded, general architectural experience is not, however, Smith's ultimate goal. He firmly believes in the necessity of being thoroughly experienced in one or two specialized subjects. Thus he has turned toward public housing and school design as selected fields of endeavor, and has applied a great deal of study to them, intently absorbing the results of the exhaustive research being carried on by professional groups related

to these activities. He feels that public housing and school design are fields which are closely allied with each other as well as with his past experience. This belief adds even more momentum to that already supplied by his natural inclinations. Also important to Smith is the fact that these two fields spring from a third, and broader, one — municipal planning. Like many other young architectural men, he senses the importance and proportions it may someday take.

That our young friend has a full realization of the dangers presented when a delicate balance between theory and practicability is not maintained is significant of the solidity with which he has his feet on the ground. His talented pencil plus the very nature of the subjects he has chosen to study have added greatly to the dimensions of this pitfall. He frankly admits that there are times when the temptations to drift into the merely pictorial aspects of architecture are hard ones for him to overcome. But a sound working knowledge of architecture is another of his goals, and he refuses to lose sight of it. As a means toward this end, Smith limits his indulgence in pictorial architecture to delineation of the design.

The word "reasonableness" to the full extent of its meaning is the key that discloses his attitude toward architectural practice. Smith's personal taste in architecture is a spontaneous modernism springing from a straight-forward expression of the problem and not based on

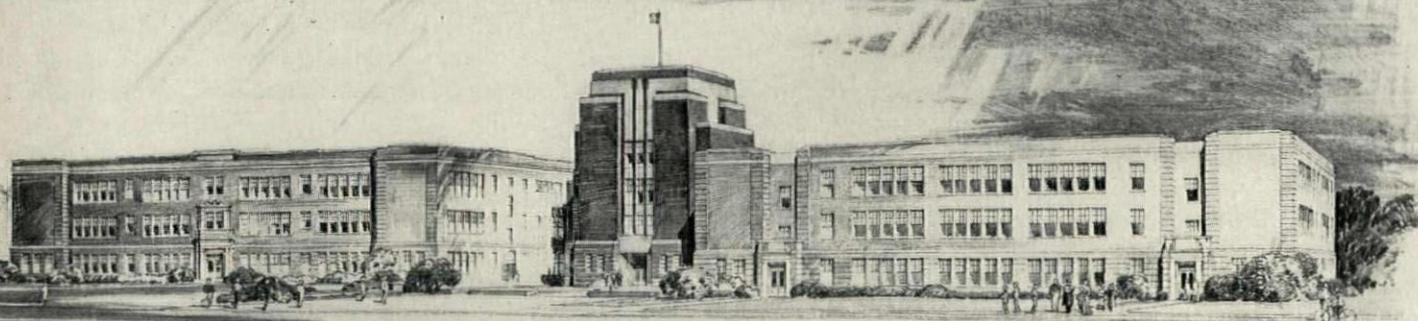
*A pencil rendering by R. Harmer Smith of a proposed addition to the Maxson School in Plainfield, N. J., as designed by Architect Ernest T. Brown. The tower and portion to the right were the new parts, the portion to the left the existing plant. Clever arrangement and use of values bring the new section to the fore, as it should be, but the drawing in its entirety still shows the true relations of the old section and the new addition*

the vernacular of architectural detail. He is aware, of course, that clients are quite apt not to care for this form and want some other style. But being faced by such a client and, as a consequence, working on a type of design other than that which he likes most is not construed by Harmer to be ample cause for a serious gripe. He is not like a good many of his young colleagues; he does not feel that he is lowering his standards or throwing his ideals into the mud simply because the building on his board happens to be Colonial or Romanesque instead of modern. He is too sensitive to the horizon of architecture, past, present, and future, ever to feel smug about it and try to wrap it up in one small, clearly labeled bundle.

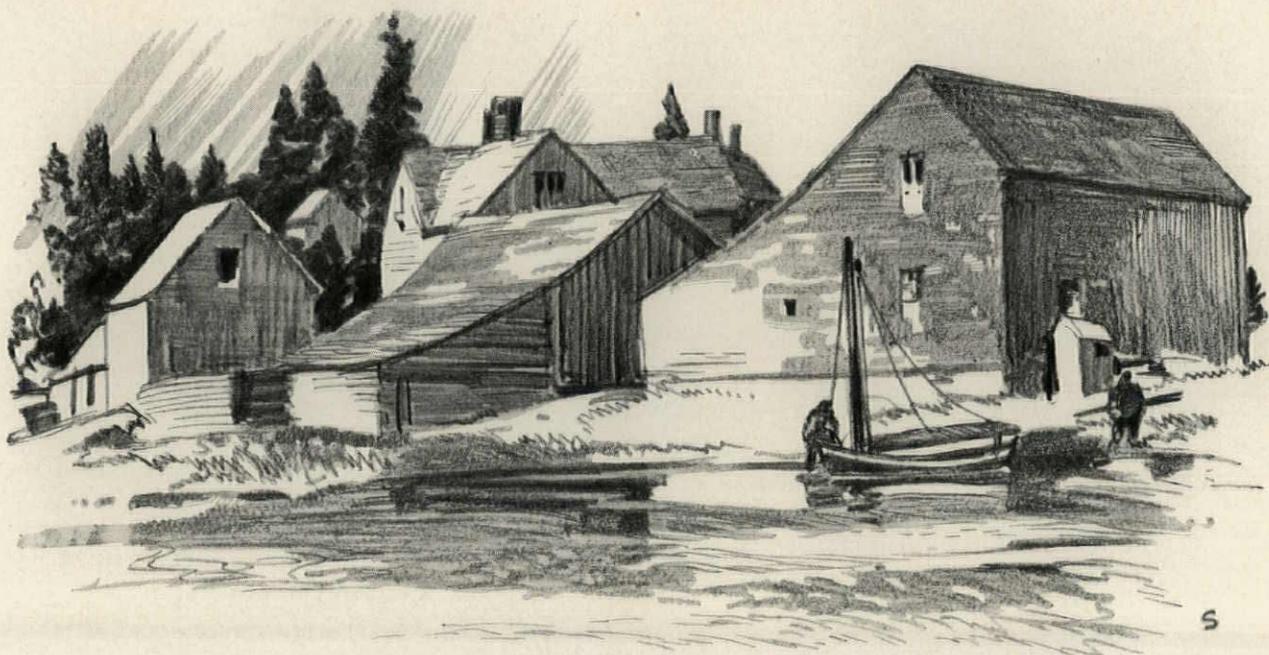
No article on Smith would be complete if it did not include reference to sketching, for this and painting are his major avocations. In fact, sketching is even more than just a pleasant hobby to him. He considers it as part of the reward for belonging to the architectural profession and (I quote him) for profiting by "One of the world's two happiest coincidences—the ability of an author to read and of an architect to draw."

Harmer's pencil sketches have fallen into several well defined groups:—the pre-Watson drawing; the post-Watson drawing with the interpretation of photographs and picturesque subjects; the group published in *PENCIL POINTS* in 1928; some summer sketches made in connection with the Yale Architectural School course; sketch books made while on bicycle camping trips to Lexington and Concord and down the Delaware Valley; and last, but undoubtedly the most important, those made in Nova Scotia in the summer of 1936, many of which are reproduced on these pages.

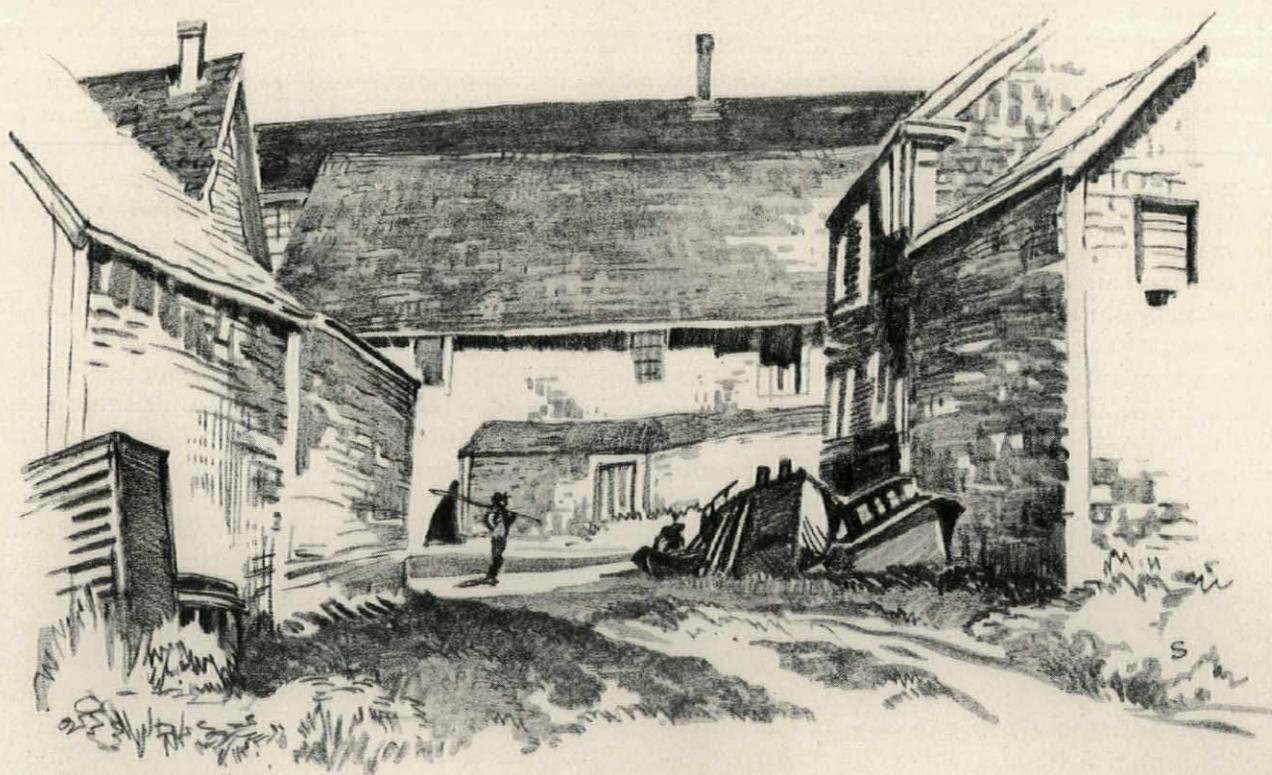
Smith's water colors may be placed in four groups:—those consisting of scenes of the Hackensack Meadow painted after 1928;



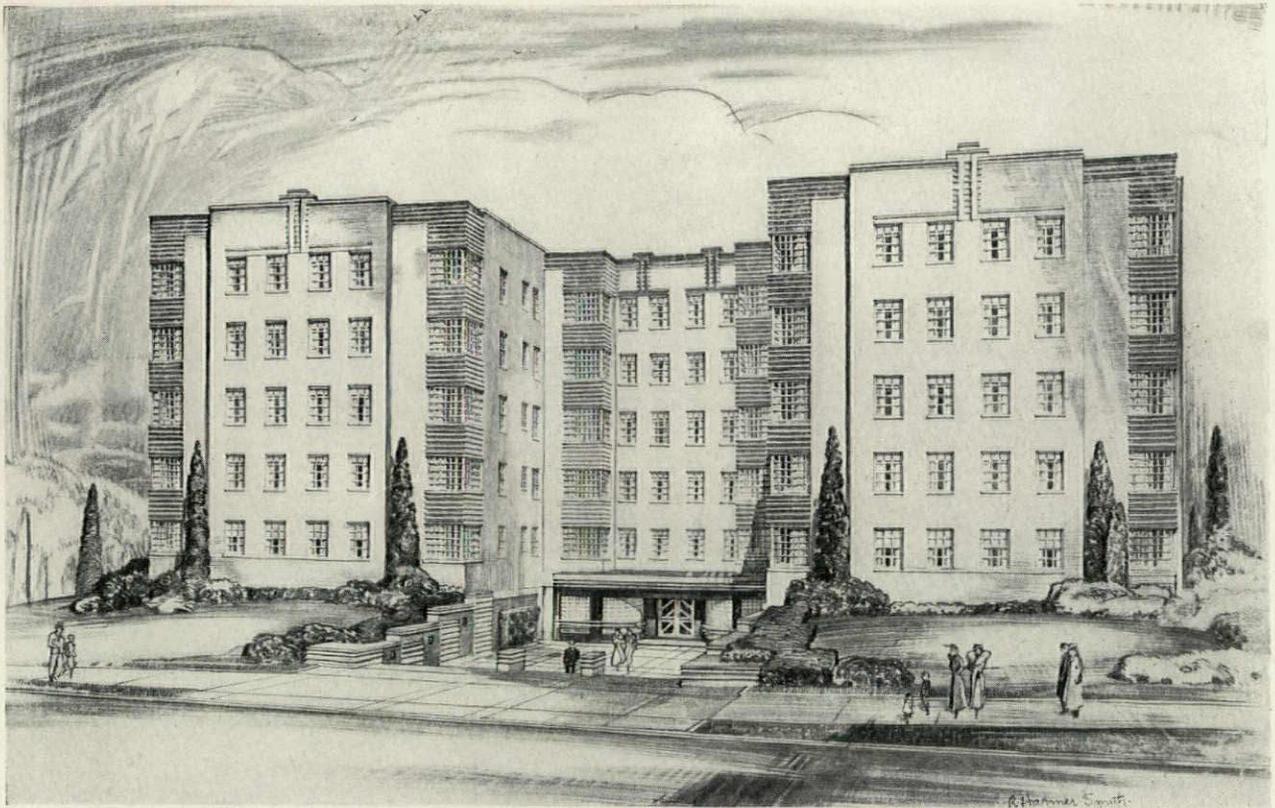
ERNEST THORNELL BROWN  
ARCHITECT  
Plainfield, New Jersey.



*R. Harmer Smith had heard much of Arcadia, so when he was at Nova Scotia's Yarmouth during the summer of 1936, he walked inland three miles to the town and found this scene. The men and the boat are his inventions, placed there for effect*



*A sketch of a typical Yarmouth waterfront scene which Smith made about the same time as the drawing on top of this page. Although these weathered warehouses are practically unused today, the old signs bearing words such as "Sail Loft" and "Ship Chandler" appealed to the young pencil-pusher's imagination*



*This is one of a dozen presentation drawings executed in pencil by R. Harmer Smith for Isadore Naftali, Architect. Here, as in all renderings of this type, Harmer strives for, and succeeds in getting, whatever intrinsic good there is in a design. He is thus able to avoid producing the "Hollywood" type of dramatic rendering*

paintings of the scenery around Stamford, Connecticut; a series made in Maine in company with classmate Charles A. Bradbury and his wife; and a group painted in Nova Scotia. It is regrettable that there was not enough time to include a color reproduction of at least one of the latter in this article but if you watch the future numbers of PENCIL POINTS, you will find several there. The black and white reproduction on page 642, however, shows his fine control of values in this medium.

This last group of pencil sketches and water colors made in Nova Scotia while a guest of the artist, Mary Ross Kelley, profited from discussion and criticism to such an extent that the water colors proved acceptable to two large water color shows held in New York last season, the New York Water Color Club Exhibit and the American Water Color Society Exhibit. Besides these, he has participated in a two man show with his father, Robert Brooks Smith, and many other smaller exhibits too numerous to mention here.

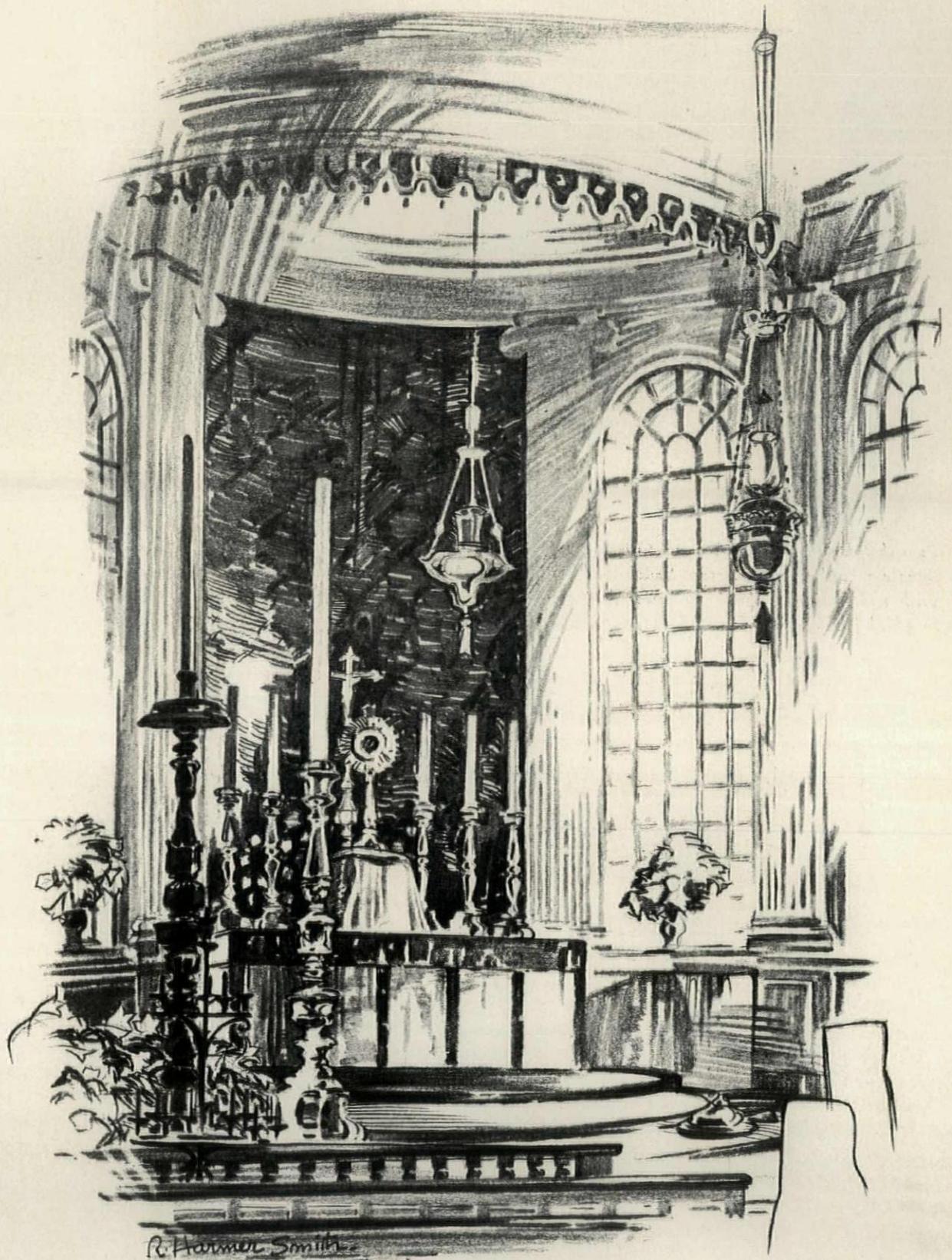
Smith terms himself a "Sunday sketcher," and says that a good deal of Sunday's work

finds its way into Monday's fireplace. He enjoys constructive criticism of his work by others and likes to look at his drawings several days after they have been completed for the purpose of self-analysis. Bicycles are his usual means of transportation when on a sketching tour and he has probably ridden several thousand miles on them by this time. Their operating expenses are low and their progress is so slow that the chance of missing a good sketching subject is negligible.

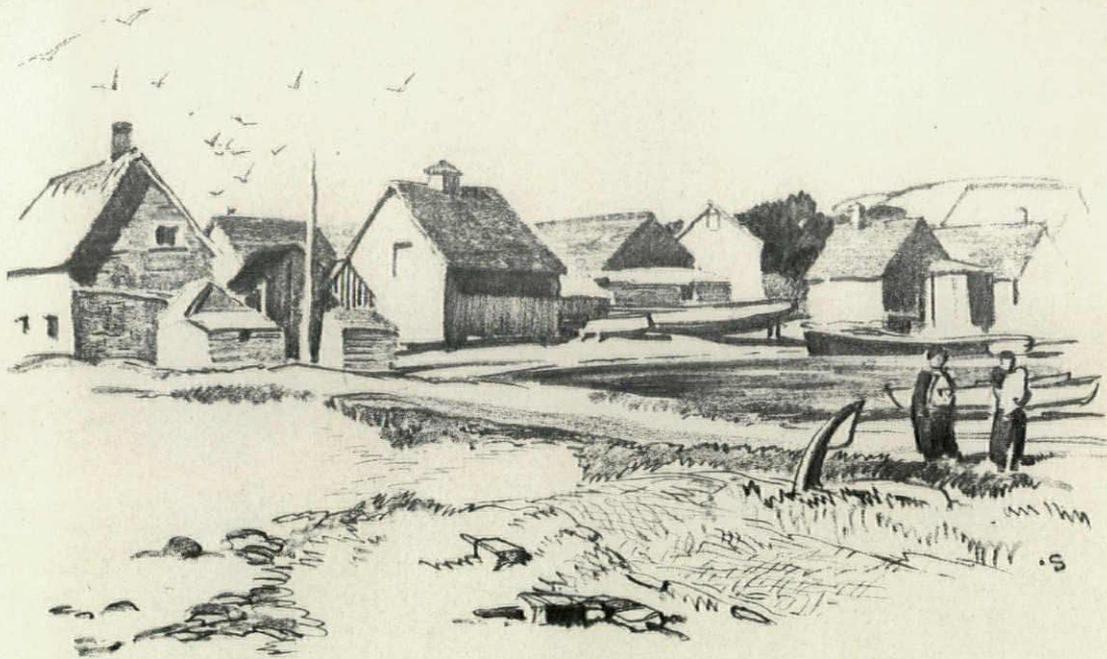
When he is working on a water color, Harmer likes to have a pencil sketch going at the same time. This keeps him busy while the paint is drying and avoids any casualties to be caused by impatience. And, in sketching as in architecture, Smith is not one of those youths who think it is his inalienable right to be creative without real effort; to him this is a right reserved for those who work, and work hard, to learn their craft. Harmer works.

Before closing it is important to divulge Smith's choice of a professional title. Seeking to find his own status in architecture, he first examines the "Architect" as a basis upon which to set an evaluation. Then with his usual frankness Harmer turns to examine himself—and therein he finds a "technician." And he may be right, for the present, in his opinion of himself.

But you just wait until he finally hits his stride.



*The glitter of fine old silver bathed in a flood of light has been caught with extraordinary subtlety in this remarkable presentation drawing that is made as though it were sketched on the spot instead of from the plans of Wilfred E. Anthony, Architect, for whom Smith once worked. The subject is the Altar of the Corpus Christi Church in New York City which has been completed since this pencil sketch was made. Note the nuns*



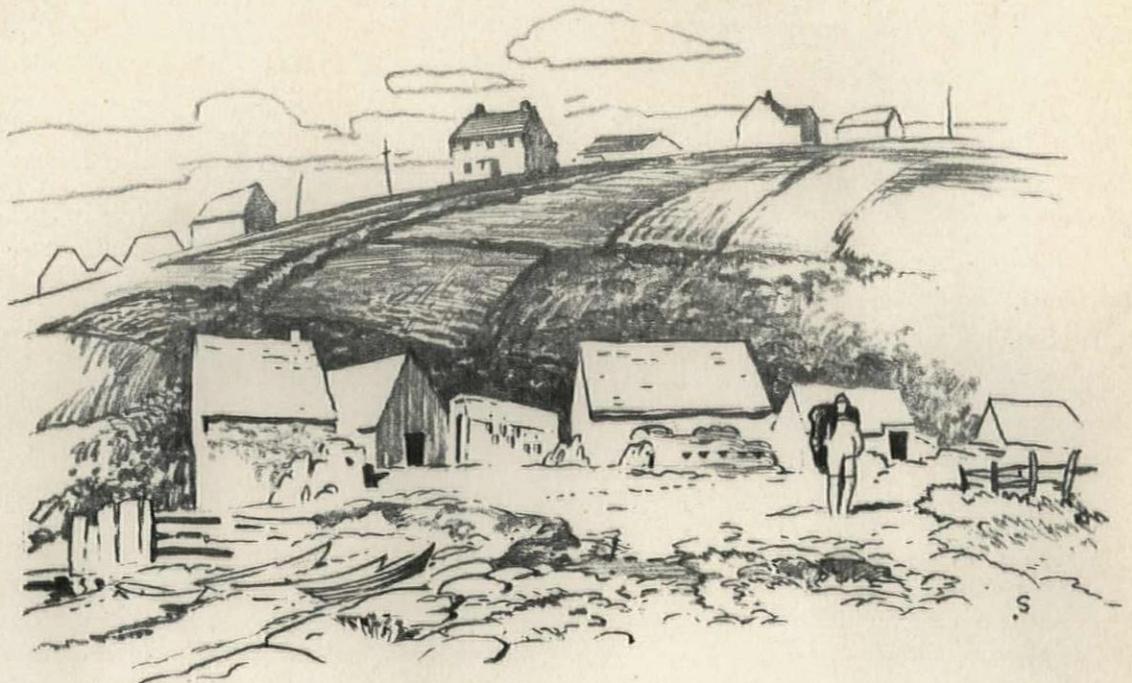
*Two sketches inspired by Yarmouth Bar, a picturesque Nova Scotian fishing village held in affectionate regard by R. Harmer Smith and situated on a strip of land not more than a hundred yards wide and over which seas break in the winter. The drawing above was made on damp paper to which blown sand had adhered, thus giving the finished work a slightly coarse, pleasant texture*



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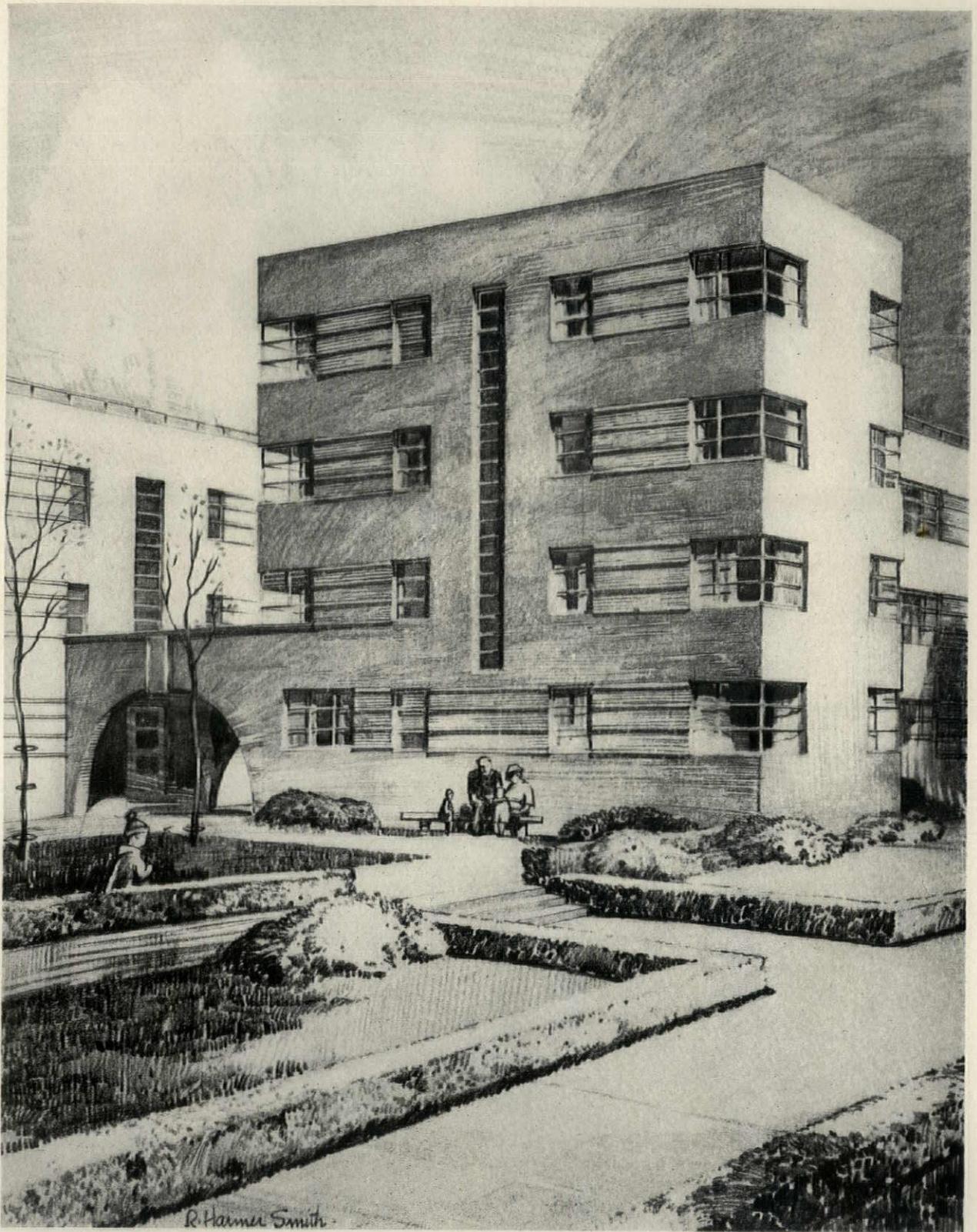


*All who may someday consider a bicycle trip from Yarmouth to Kelley's Cove are hereby warned by Smith that the going is rough. It is well worth it, however, as proven by the two pencil sketches on this page, each made from the same spot but facing opposite directions. The little village houses are clad in gray shingles, a fact that is especially notable in tone of the drawing above. The one below received what sun there was and still reminds Harmer of the silvery-gray silhouette of the sheds against the sage green of the hill—a scene which he someday hopes to paint*





*A subsistence homestead type as rendered by Smith and designed by Ian Horne for the Housing Authority of the State of New Jersey. The drawings on this page and the next were worked up from material prepared by the Statistical and Planning Division under the direction of Valdemar H. Paulsen. Smith likes plausible landscapes*



*Another pencil rendering by R. Harmer Smith made for the Housing Authority of the State of New Jersey to form part of a traveling exhibition. In this, as well as other of his drawings presented on these pages, you will probably notice how he likes to put in colorful little spots containing people going through various antics*



R. Harmer Smith.

*A view of the Cathedral of St. John the Divine and its model drawn in pencil by R. Harmer Smith. He terms this an unpremeditated sketch suggested to him when he saw the members of a large sketching class ignoring it as a subject*



One dismal day when everything around Pembroke, Nova Scotia, was gray and dull excepting the water of the harbor, Smith was pedaling through the village on his bicycle and came upon this scene. Here he has succeeded to a remarkable degree in mirroring the weather



*A water color by R. Harmer Smith of Cheboggin Church made in the late afternoon with the sun setting and the Bay of Fundy in the distance. Smith's main interest while doing this was in the unusual formation of the ground and the rich colors. This black and white reproduction is reduced to one-third the original size*

# CHRONICLES OF A EUPEPTIC—I

BY HUBERT RIPLEY

As a boy, I was afraid of bumblebees.

When Lydia Mendum called at our house one morning in September and led me by the hand half a mile or more to attend kindergarten, the world seemed strange and big. My mother was unable, on account of rheumatism, to take me herself, and Lydia, a neighbor and lifelong friend, was teaching the tiny tots in the village school.

The little red schoolhouse we attended was painted white and situated in Green Street. It was a bleak two-story structure, one room on a floor, an ample front hall with two staircases, and a playroom in the basement. The heating system consisted of large airtight stoves set in sand boxes in the middle of each classroom. The stove pipes ran up near the ceiling across the room to a chimney in the back wall. The ventilating system consisted of a window pole to open and close the sash. The older boys operated the ventilating system under the direction of the teachers. The plumbing system was simplicity itself, a large double back-house with a high board fence separating the girls' privy from that of the boys. Two six-holders as I remember, the orifices nicely graduated in sizes to accommodate boys and girls whose ages varied from five to twelve years. The boys' side of the board fence was decorated with works of primitive art, both graphic and sculptural. The back-house smelled to high heaven, and when the breeze was from the East, the aroma floated in the open windows of the school.

After an hour or so, teacher sent the kindergarten class out in the school-yard to play. The day was fine and the warm Autumn air teemed with insect life. Pretty soon I came bursting into the upper classroom all excited, rushed up to Lydia, interrupting her recitation, crying at the top of my voice, "Oh Miss Mendum! Miss Mendum! There's a bumblebee out in the yard!" The scholars shouted and Lydia laughed heartily. It was my first public utterance, a *succès fou*.

The name of the town where I was born was Melrose, in the Commonwealth of Massachusetts. It was, during the quarter century that sheltered my formative period, a rock-

ribbed, hard-bitten, Puritanical community, with all the virtues, and maybe all the faults that proper adjective implies. Melrose is a dulcet name—romantic, ambrosial, suggestive of Scottish chivalry mingled with the mysticism of Hafiz and a dash of Hérédia. Father was born in Boston, but he had the heritage of Cape Cod's sand dunes and infralapsarianisms behind him. Being a romanticist, he picked out Melrose to live in because the name appealed to him as an anodyne for the interminable Calvinistic sermons of his boyhood. As a matter of fact, except for the landscape, there wasn't really much difference in those days between the "spiritual" life of Barnstable County and that of Middlesex.

However, Father and Mother, like good agnostics, sent me to the Unitarian Sunday School where I got on very well for a while with the group of pleasant boys and girls I found there. Often I'd steal away from services up into the organ loft and watch Frank Ingersoll pump the organ, the while studying his Latin lesson for Monday. Sometimes Frank, a picturesque soul, would forget to pump during the touching farewells of Anaeus and Dido, and let the organ die away in a flat asthmatic wheeze in the middle of a joyous agnostic hymn. Mother's rheumatism prevented her from attending church services, and Father figured that probably he had, as a boy, done all the attending necessary for the rest of his life. I liked the people in the Unitarian Church because their outlook on life seemed more cheerful, somehow, than others with whom I came in contact. After marriage I became a regular attendant at the Episcopal Church for several years, admiring the dignity and beauty of the ceremonial, enjoying the readings from the Old and New Testaments and the glorious old Hymns. Still to me, an outsider, it all seemed more or less artificial. Hesiod and Homer, Ikhnaton and sublime Empedocles, Socrates and Plato, seem fully as compelling and of deep spiritual significance. All of which probably means that I'm just a Pagan like Father.

Lydia Mendum had a sister Harriet who taught drawing and painting. She was a pupil

of Enneking, a Boston artist of the 80's and 90's. I liked to draw and Father encouraged me to study "Art." Beginning in charcoal, the class worked two evenings a week drawing objects in plaster—cubes, cylinders, cones, pyramids, spheres; "significant form," as it's now called. Then we attempted still life in oils, and later, landscape from Nature herself. The first lesson in oils was apple blossoms. The second, pansies, then nasturtiums, finally goldenrod and aster in October. The second year, tulips and roses, and after that we went painting outdoors, apple orchards in the spring and autumn foliage in the fall.

In those days we didn't have much homework to do outside school hours, and nights and Saturdays and Sundays were free. We learned things by absorption, which, by the way, is a darn fine way to learn. I used to study Virgil and Latin composition while another class in the same room was reciting from Homer of the Anabasis. In that way I got a smattering of all four without knowing much about any of them. Only the other day, Ed Blanchard recalled a bit of early Latin composition I once achieved. It was an epitaph on the premature decease of a couple of pets:

"Hic jacet 2 chickens"

I'd forgotten that one, but I still recall one or two bawdy Latin phrases the boys used to write on the blackboard before class assembled, divagations on passages in the Satires of Horace represented by a series of dotted lines . . .

Anyhow, I must have made an impression on my parents by my "Art" work, so when I said I wanted to go to "Tech" and study Architecture after leaving High School, there was no opposition. The only barrier was passing the entrance examinations. These were pretty tough, especially the examination in mathematics. This was where I was weak (and parenthetically still am; if I ever had to take the examinations of the National Council of Architectural Registration Boards I'd have to qualify under the "Grandfather clause"). Curiously enough, I passed all the entrance exams except Geography—of all things! Now I'm awfully good in Geography. I know where the Coromandel Coast is and the Bosphorus, and Zanadu and Zanzibar, and the Ural Mountains. I even know, vaguely, where El Dorado is. But, when it comes to the binomial theorem and equations involving unknown quantities and the Diophantium or indeterminate analysis, I fall down. Besides, the Greeks knew nothing of algebra, got along fine without it, so why shouldn't I? Willie Mansfield, my chum and classmate, was a shark at algebra and a weakling in geography.

He doesn't even know where the Rutabagas are! (where the "Bouncing Betty" was lost with all hands on board in the great storm of '67). Willie flunked in algebra and I was plucked in geography. Our papers must have become mixed, and it was lucky for us they did, for it was easy for each of us to make up our deficiencies before the fall term began.

The first days at Tech were the beginning of a new era. Everything was different, and I liked it hugely. Course IV (Architecture) was separate and distinct from the Engineering school, at least as far as the special students were concerned, and the "Specials" outnumbered the "Regulars" about ten to one. Roughly, the membership of the course was as follows: Beginning with the youngsters, the fledglings fresh from High School, 50%; draftsmen and skilled artisans whose ages varied from 25 to 40 years, 25%; college graduates, 10%; oldsters, middle-aged men who for one reason or another wanted to learn something of a creative art, 5%; regular students taking the four-year course, 10%. All except the latter were special students in the two-year course. There were two women in our class, Lois Lilley Howe, a Special, and Sophia Gregoria Hayden, a Regular. All told, a half hundred or so students doing the thing that most appealed to them. All sections of the country were represented in the Department, for there were only three or four schools where architecture was taught fifty years ago. (Frank Sullivan said, only the other day, he knew a man who, whenever he addressed an audience, was particularly fond of employing the orotund phrase, "A quarter of a century ago." It sounded far more impressive than, simply, "For the last twenty-five years." That's why I said there were a "Half Hundred" in Course IV instead of, "about fifty.")

It was a unique and stimulating experience for a callow youth, barely turned eighteen, hitherto reared in an austere community that looked askance at "Art," and frowned severely on "dancing and light wines," to be closely associated for three years with a group of students of varying ages, all inspired by a common purpose. For the first time I began to sense a faint glimmer of the shining wings of the Pierides.

An instructor named Burrison taught mechanical drawing. All beginners had to follow his directions meticulously. We got off to a sticky start when the class attempted to glue an imperial size sheet of Whatman's on an "imperial" drawing board. I'd had a little practice in this, so did fairly well. The use and care of drawing instruments was explained,

the sharpening of ruling pens, the grinding of India ink, and the 6H pencils, one sharpened to a wedge-shaped point, another to a pin-point, or finer. Burrison was awfully fussy about all this, especially the exactitude of all the measurements we were told to follow. "Are those border lines  $\frac{3}{16}$ ths and an eighth?" "Yes, sir." If they varied more than a one hundred and thirty-second part of an inch, we had to rub 'em out and start again. This was probably good for the soul, but when we came to a sheet 10" x 14", divided into  $\frac{1}{4}$ -inch squares, and had to draw the diagonals so that each angle was a perfect intersection of four lines, most of us thought it was Hell. E. V. Seeler of Philadelphia was the only one in the class who was able to satisfy Burrison on that sheet. He was, much to our petulance, held up as a shining example. Edgar was good at everything. He took most of the first mentions, excelled in water-color, pen-and-ink, charcoal, mathematics, architectural history, graphical statics, and stereotomy. He conversed in French with Professor Létang, enjoyed good food and good ale, told amusing stories, was modest in demeanor and well liked by all. He only stayed with us one year, then went to the Beaux Arts, returned to Philadelphia and became a distinguished architect. In later years I used to see him in Nantucket where he spent his summers. A fine chap.

During my first year, T. M. Clark was the uninspiring head of the department. He was not one who could be called a leader in his profession, though he was a gentleman of considerable poise and an astonishing degree of aplomb. Nothing ruffled him. He lectured on construction and building superintendence. One day, a couple of the bad boys removed all the chairs from his lecture room, passed the word around to the others, and when Professor Clark came in to deliver his talk, he found the class all quietly seated cross-legged on the floor. This didn't upset T. M. in the least. He apparently failed to notice anything unusual, and calmly went on with his lecture. The only uncomfortable ones were the members of the class, for, long before the lecturer finished, they became numb around the hips.

Eugene Létang was professor of design and a brilliant architect. Had it not been for the Franco-Prussian war—in which he was severely wounded—he would have undoubtedly won the Grand Prix de Rome, and we would not have had him in Boston for "a quarter of a century."

He and Clark were as opposite as the poles, probably detested one another, and consequently entirely out of rapport. This was not

good for the school, a change in the personnel was imminent, and Clark resigned at the end of my first year. We were most fortunate in his successor, Frank W. Chandler, just about the finest man imaginable for the place. One of the leaders of his profession in Boston, beloved by all, his executive ability and rare personal charm soon brought the department of architecture to the high standard of excellence that has since become the emulation of other schools.

Létang thenceforth seemed to take on an enthusiasm, a force, a vitality that developed alike that which was in his students and in himself. He became an Educator. These two made a great team. Everybody was happy basking in the sunshine of Frankie's genial smile and the friendly odor of Cognac and Caporal that always accompanied Létang.

For instruction in water-color and pen drawing, we had Ross Turner and D. A. Gregg, two of the sweetest men that ever touched brush and penholder. Our life in the Walker building was idyllic, except on occasions when the chemistry students on the fourth floor experimented in sulphuretted hydrogen, inducing a resorgimento of vivid memories of the old Green Street schoolhouse. We worked long and late and earnestly. Our efforts seem amateurish now, compared with the theses of John Taylor Arms and Sam Chamberlain's magic touch at a later period. We had to do, in the space of two years, work that later students did more exhaustively and far more expertly in five. Our projets were done—often hurriedly—in a month's time, but we did not have the multiplicity of tasks that are required of the present-day students. It was the simple life, comparatively, and it did turn out, or help to turn out, some good men.

One of the first architectural books I owned was an old, second hand, two-volume edition of Vitruvius, translated by W. Newton, London, 1791. I still own it and treasure it highly. From it I learned just what the fundamental principles of architecture are. "Architecture depends on Order, which the Greeks call 'taxis,' Diathesis" (which Morris Hicky Morgan translates "Arrangement," and the O.E.D., "constitutional predisposition"), "Eurythmy, beautified rhythm, Symmetry, Propriety, and Economy, which the Greeks call 'oikonomia.'"

While Eugene Létang did not use these exact words in his talks to us as he bent over our drawing boards, searching for the divine spark—seldom found—in our esquisses, there was complete rapport with his teachings and those

of Marcus Vitruvius Pollio. Once, C. Howard Walker, who lectured on the history of ornament, said he did not care much for the Arch of Constantine. "The engaged columns aren't structural. That's basically bad," he said. "The reason I like the Arch of Constantine," said Létang, "is that you could lift off the engaged columns and the entablature and a fine structure remains. The Corinthian order is merely used for decoration." We were doing a monthly problem at the time, a triumphal arch. Henry Pennell's was a great block of masonry with an arched opening, and Sophie Hayden's was a modest version of the Arch of Constantine with engaged columns. Both received mentions.

At the end of the first year, we were all eager to get a job in an architect's office during the summer vacation period. Taking the list of Boston Architects, I began with the most convenient address, which happened to be that of J. Merrill Brown. Mr. Brown, a pleasant spoken middle-aged man with a portwine nose, looked me over, heard my story, and said he'd pay \$4.00 a week. This seemed good to me, four dollars more than I'd ever earned, and I entered his office for the summer. I did all sorts of things. Ground ink, traced full-size details, ran errands and made a detail of a wooden register grille, a geometric pattern of squares with diagonal intersections (shades of H. K. Burrison!). It was a small office, but I got a smattering of how houses of moderate cost were put together and a few nifty ideas on shingles cut in lambrequin patterns.

The second summer, Arthur Rice and I worked in Wheelwright and Haven's office, and I liked that vastly better. Dwight Perkins, an oldster who was in Tech with us during the first year, was one of Wheelwright's best men. A beautiful draftsman was Dwight, almost as good in pen drawing as Dick Powers, only he couldn't touch Dick when it came to trees. Nobody can. Dick's unique, a paragon. He can and does draw trees so beautiful that had Joyce Kilmer seen them, he might have revised his famous (sic) poem.

Arthur Rice became, in later years, a member of a distinguished firm of Boston Architects—Parker, Thomas, and Rice, designers of many important structures in New England and Maryland. I shall always be grateful to Arthur for making me acquainted with the amenities of the festival board. There was in Course IV, a group known as the "M.I.T. Architectural Society." We had a sketch class and an Annual Dinner. Arthur and I were on the Committee of Arrangements, one year,

and we selected the old Revere House in Bowdoin Square.

This famous caravansary had an imposing Greek Corinthian Portico and a Royal Suite. Albert Edward (Prince of Wales), Daniel Webster, James Knox Polk and other important people made the hotel their headquarters when in Boston. A handsome Bar with Monreale mosaiques lent refinement to the men's café; the hierophants who stood behind it were Masters in Art. It was at this dinner I first tasted Rum Punch. It had an agreeably pleasant aftertang, a smoothness to the palate like Genoese velvet. A noble beverage when skillfully prepared and used circumspectly. Alcoholic beverages were a new experience; I'd never even attended "Chapel," as the Brunswick bar was called on account of its austere 12th century doorway (Peabody and Stearns, Architects).

I wanted greatly to spend another year at "Tech," have a go at the big problems the 4th year men were doing; a *Palais* for the Minister of Fine Arts, a Metropolitan Railway Terminus, a State Capitol, an Island Villa for a multi-millionaire of Exotic Tastes. Father agreed to this and so, with a few other specials, we started off the third year with a projet for a Grand Hotel in an Exclusive Watering Place. Most of our time was spent in drawing dreams, and I'm afraid we neglected other "required" studies. There was a life class at Cowles' Art School with a large attendance, classes in the French and Spanish languages, water-color, sketching from nature, all delightful. The Regulars had to do tough problems in Applied Mechanics and were always stopping in the midst of their Art work to rush off to a lecture on Political Economy, or a rehearsal for the Glee Club concert. This was Létang's sabbatical year and Howdy Walker pinch-hitted for him. It was a difficult task to fill Létang's shoes and Howdy was a young man, but we all got along quite well, considering.

I took for a thesis a vast Public Baths, beside which the Baths of Diocletian and Caracalla seemed like pigmies; a plan so ambitious that I never was able to finish it. The principal elevation was eight or ten feet long, and it was only partly inked in when school closed. I have a certificate stating I'd completed the two years Special Course; but partly because I'd never had Integral Calculus or Applied Mechanics and a few other studies, and partly for other reasons we won't go into now, I was ineligible for a degree (except, possibly, an honorary degree, though it's been so long in coming I've practically given up hope).

Nevertheless, dear old Howdy gave me a "passing" mark on my thesis, which I misdoubt created much of a stir at the Faculty meeting, or that the Corporation ever heard of it. So my school days were over and I was thrown on the world.

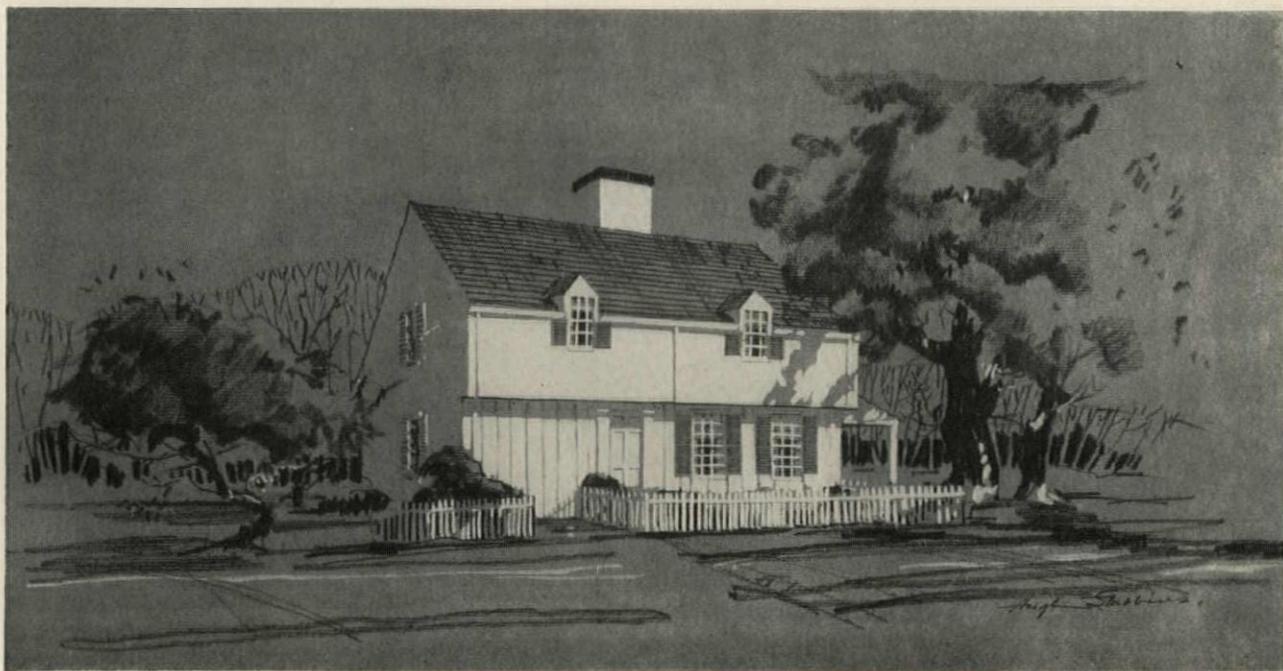
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*Semi-Archeological Note: Copley Square in the '90's*

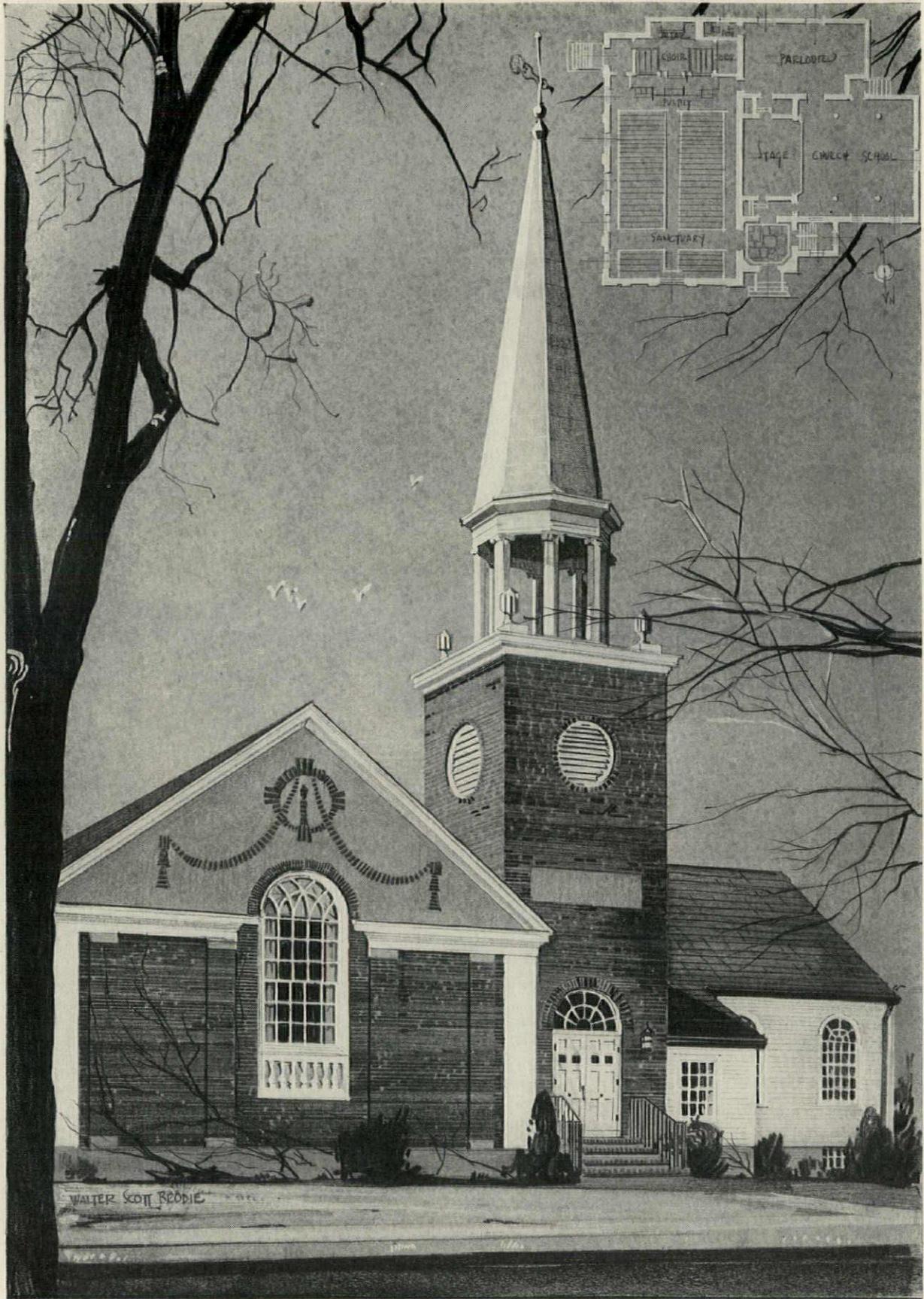
During my three years at Tech, Copley Square was in process of transformation. At the close of the war between the States its terrain was partially drained marsh land, firm enough however, to erect thereon a temporary auditorium for the celebration of the cessation of hostilities—"The Peace Jubilee." The city was expanding and the location seemed a suitable one for a cultural center. The building of Trinity Church, the new Old South Church, Chauncy Hall School, the first Museum of Fine Arts — all on the square itself — and slightly renewed, the Brunswick Hotel, Rogers Building, and the Museum of Natural History—gave character and distinction to the locality. When it was found desirable to relocate the Boston Public Library from the Boylston Street site opposite the Common to Copley Square, the distinguished architects whose work was in evidence there were naturally in a receptive mood. They were all ignored and a political appointee got the award, but his design was so utterly futile that even his sponsors could not withstand the storm of biting criticism and virulent invective aroused by its

publication. This happened around 1887 and the final award was made to McKim, Mead, and White.

So, during my three years at Tech, the students had a unique opportunity to watch a splendid great structure arise from a hole in the ground and assume its proud position among the notable buildings of the world. In lists of "The Ten Best Buildings" you'll usually find the Boston Public Library and Trinity Church up near the top. Almost every day at one time or another, there'd be a group of Course IV men watching the setting of granite blocks on wooden piling, the gradual rise of the outer walls, and the great full-size model of the main cornice which was set in position for study and correction before the stonework was executed. Most fascinating of all, from a structural standpoint, was the laying of the Guastavino vaulting. This was the first important job, as far as I know, where this system was employed. Architects and engineers came from distant parts to scoff and ridicule and remained to marvel. It seemed as if the arches rested on thin air while being laid, so fragile was the centering employed. The rare marbles and choice mosaics from famous quarries of Italy and the Isles of Greece were a never-failing source of delight to the eye. We were amazed. Anthemius of Tralles and Isidorus of Miletus, instead of being mere names, became vivid personalities. If this was Architecture, what a happy profession we had chosen!



*Sketch by Hugh Stubbins, Jr., of a house by Royal Barry Wills, Architect*



*A Unitarian Church in Melrose, Massachusetts,  
by Kilham, Hopkins, and Greeley, Architects, as  
rendered on tinted board by Walter Scott Brodie*

# ROAD TO THE FUTURE

BY ROBERT L. ANDERSON

EDITOR'S NOTE:—*This article begins an extended series of connected discussions by Mr. Anderson designed to make clear the changes that have taken place in the ideology of the world outside architecture and their impact on contemporary architectural thinking.*

## I

FROM many quarters the young men in architecture have been assured that architectural education of a generation, or even of a decade ago, was sadly deficient. Likewise we have been encouraged to believe that unless things change, and change quickly, nothing but disaster is to be expected.

Very probably all this is true. Very probably we should slam and bolt the door on the past in order to enter at once into the future. For, even by the shortest reckoning, a full half-century must elapse before today's students become infirm, while obsolescence of the younger instructors will not occur for almost forty years. It behooves us, therefore, to contemplate the decade stretching before us rather than those which trail behind.

But in contemplating the years which must intervene before infirmity sends me from the classroom to the hearth, I am not so sure I want to slam the door on the past. Nor am I entirely convinced that architectural education has been as blind an alley as has been claimed. As a matter of fact, if I must make my choice I would set my course for the future in terms of the past rather than in terms of the contemporary injunction to ignore that past.

I would do it, in the first place, as a matter of principle. For as Walter Lippmann pointed out in his address at the dedication of the Marshall-Wythe School of Government and Citizenship at the College of William and Mary, it is in the schools that "the generations collaborate with one another . . . and men stretch out their own experience beyond the allotted span of life." It is the only possible foundation principle for a school, this "collaboration of the generations." For if the generations are not to work together, why bother

to found, why seek to perpetuate the schools? Better to sack the professors, board up the classrooms, and let each generation beget its civilization by itself.

Very probably the moderns would not go so far as this: they would throw away only the past. But they forget, I think, the appalling rapidity with which the present becomes the past. They forget how rapidly the generations appear. I am just turned thirty-four, but the sophomores I teach were only two years old the year I entered college. And many of those who refer to themselves as the "younger architects" are, unfortunately, already middle-aged to me. So there we stand: the future, the present and the middle-aged. But in ten short years the sophomores will be the present, I the middle-aged. And ten years after that it is the sophomores who will be the middle-aged. What profit can there be for anyone unless the generations collaborate?

Specifically, what profit can there be for me, or for the generation immediately preceding me—that generation whose program and philosophy was formulated in the exotic post-War period of the 'twenties and still flowers in the 'thirties. For I have been forced to recognize that, like the post-Napoleonic generations, they have been "forever blowing the trumpets of freedom"; using for trumpets what look to me like asses' ears. Without some knowledge of the past to guide and warn, what is to restrain me from indicting them as mentally incompetent instead of recognizing them for what they are: sincere and honest men unduly victimized by circumstance; victimized as I myself shall probably be victimized. Their inheritance was different from mine. Without the past to whisper of that inheritance how am I to understand the forces driving them; or the generations yet unborn to comprehend the forces driving me?

Before me stretch the years. But for enlightenment I shall take with me the past. I shall try to blow the trumpets of both freedom and the future. But at the same time I shall listen carefully for the echo from the rear.

## THE MESSIANIC PRESENT

In the second place, I would set my course for the future in terms of the past rather than in terms of the immediate present for the reason that I find little of substance, and practically nothing of profit, in contemporary notions respecting architecture. I speak here not of the physical forms of architecture, but of the fundamental conceptions now current respecting education, architecture, and the universe. For, being founded on a legitimate system of construction, contemporary form is incontrovertible. But contemporary concepts, whatever we may incline to think, have no such unshakable foundation. On the contrary, being the product of a series of romantic generalizations stretching backwards for over a hundred years, they not only are highly debatable, they are eminently untrustworthy as well.

None of us, to be sure, likes to think that those notions which we hold most dear are susceptible to error. But how much do any of us know of the history of even our most cherished notions: how, and why, and when they originated; how they were transmitted; whether they were altered in transmission; whether or not hasty and unconsidered graftings of alien concepts have invalidated an originally legitimate conception? Yet if our notions are to be of profit for the future as well as for the present, these are the questions we must ask and answer.

For man's mind is a storehouse in which is collected all the speculations of a long and varied past. As individuals we open the door and pull out a conviction. If we are romantically inclined, or are born into a romantic or excitable world, we pull it out with gusto and a flourish. For then it matters not so much what we pull out so long as we do it, Cyrano-like, crying "*quel geste*" and "*bravo*." But if we are cautious souls, or if we inherit a world grown weary of hysterics and revolution, we first inspect it well to see if the fabric be rotted, or if there be traces of moths and mildew. To my mind at least, the fabric of contemporary notions respecting architecture is rotted: what isn't rotted is mildewed or riddled by moths.

Consider, if you will, the contemporary thesis that the architect, as architect, is the messiah who will reconstruct the world. It can be found in a wide variety of forms in almost any architectural magazine during the last half-decade. Diluted, it can be found in

Joseph Hudnut's declaration that "the young architect must leave our halls . . . resolute to use his technology for the reconstruction of our human environment." Full strength, it can be found in Lewis Mumford's statement that the duty of the architect is to "organize the forces of society, discipline them for humane ends" as well as "express them in plastic-utilitarian building." Wallace Harrison echoes it in his statement that "as a builder [the architect] must take his place as the originator of both better buildings and a better society to control those buildings." It can be found in the statement of a man whose name escapes me that "the architects must gain from their college course . . . a sense of the tremendous possibilities and breadth of influence for rebuilding society their training is capable of producing." It can be found in the thesis implicit in *Rameses to Rockefeller* that politico-economic disorder has been our common heritage because the philosophy of the "craftsmen builders" was "overwhelmed by that of the money changers." It can be found in more revolutionary form in R. L. Duffus's desire to see the architects "someday rising in rebellion" because the architect "if he is true to his name, will be a rebel when he has to be": bankers, real estate developers, industrialists and politicians presumably all being on the opposing side. In more or less acute form it can be found in a hundred different places.

Lovely, isn't it, this notion that the architects suddenly are to rise and reconstruct the world along more Utopian lines in spite of the bankers, the industrialists, and the politicians; even staging a revolution if necessary. And one eminently suitable for promulgation to the adolescent mind of students. Revolution and the universe to reconstruct!—no wonder they catch fire.

But if there is nothing wrong with the inflammability of youth's imagination, what are we to say concerning the intelligence of their mentors? Writing on the Youth Movement a year ago, Dorothy Thompson wondered whence came that naïve demand on the part of youth for the "creative life"; not, as has been the case in the past, as a reward of unremitting labor on the part of the creator, but as an inalienable right. Were Miss Thompson to turn the pages of the architectural magazines for the past few years she might cease to wonder.

I should like to see the fireworks were that caustic intelligence turned loose among the architects. They would need more equanimity than even Senator Ashurst can command.

# THE FUTURE OF AMERICAN DESIGN

BY THEODORE CRANE\*

BY VIRTUE of its inherent objectives architecture presents a duality; the practical and the æsthetic. The first is represented by the requirements of utility, structure, and reasonable economy; the second, irrespective of its origin or precise definition, implies a consideration for the psychological impression which the building will convey to those who view or occupy it. The solution of these two requirements, involving a nice adjustment between them, delimits the province of architectural design. The first part of our problem has been clearly defined, conditioned, and largely dictated by our present-day technical, social, and economic demands. We are faced now with the necessity of determining a group of directives which shall point toward the solution of our second and much more difficult requirement, the æsthetic. As in the case of the purely practical considerations, this more immaterial but equally imperative aspect of our work, if it is to be accepted as of national significance, must present a solution in accord with the ideology of today.

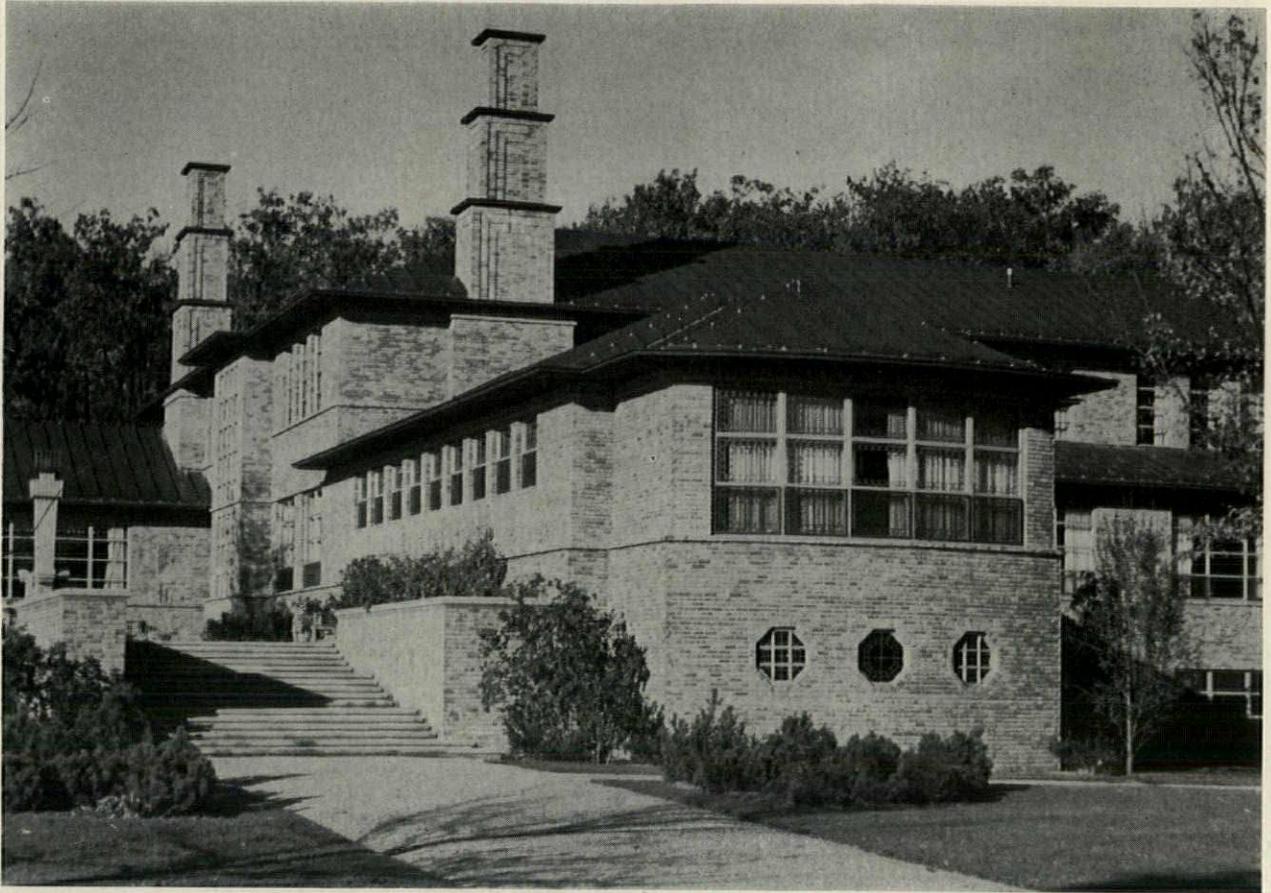
Our Colonial architecture was, on the whole, a logical development from European tradition, influenced by the available materials, climate, social and domestic needs of our ancestors. New surroundings and the spirit of a new civilization found its just expression in the buildings of that period but, during the following generations, there was no direct impact between architecture and the dynamic of our national life. Our creative energy was devoted to material accomplishment; the exploitation of natural resources, scientific achievement throughout the vast ramifications of technology and, more recently, our social and economic problems. As a people we concentrated our attention upon materialistic objectives with a disregard approaching, at times, an actually blatant contempt for any activity which was not considered to be of practical value. There are fairly well defined sequences in the historical development of all nations, succeeding periods in which the dominant interest is concentrated upon varying objectives,

and this was a perfectly natural reaction for a scientifically minded people concerned primarily in establishing and retaining an American standard of living.

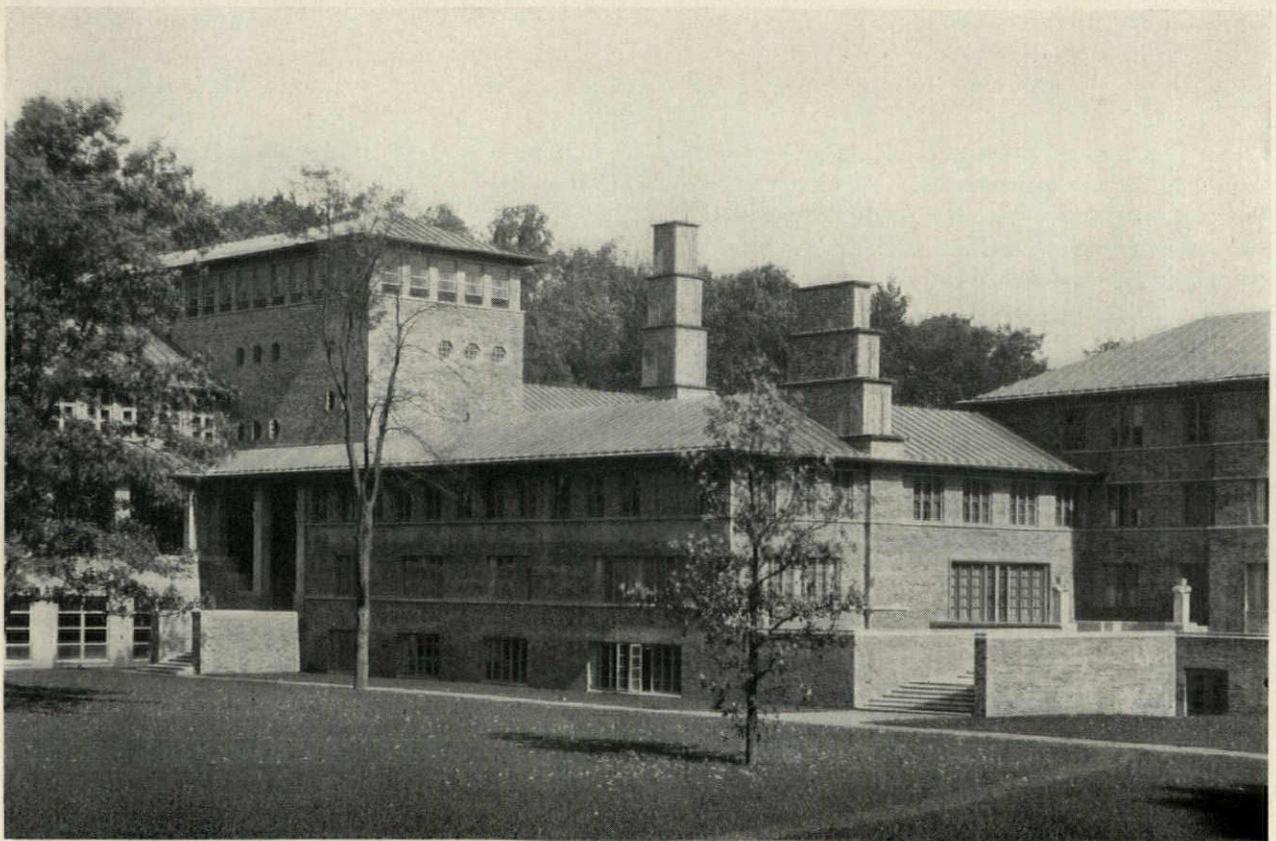
The eclecticism of the time expressed our taste, but not our creative genius. Demanding impressiveness and a sense of civic or financial stability in our public buildings or banks, we resorted largely to adaptations of the classic. With equal logic, most of our church architecture was rendered in Romanesque, French or English Gothic. So it was throughout all the categories comprising the more ambitious buildings. From the viewpoint of the designer, much of the work done in this period portrays ability in adapting past vocabularies to the demands of the time. Except where the traditional styles were obviously unsuited to our utilitarian needs, there was no inherent incongruity as long as we worked with practically the same structural and ornamental materials as had been used in ancient, mediæval, and Renaissance construction. This was the situation until about the turn of the century, when new factors appeared in the field.

The first skeleton construction was erected in Chicago in 1885. The columns of this building, originally ten stories in height, were of cast iron. The beams supporting the first six floors were of wrought iron but steel beams, the first supplied for such a purpose, were employed for the upper four floors. During the following decade the use of structural steel as a supporting frame for the higher buildings spread throughout the United States and by 1900 it had become a generally accepted practice. About this time reinforced concrete, first used for building construction in this country in 1875, was rapidly becoming an important element in building design. These two materials, particularly structural steel, enabling us to build to unprecedented heights, completely altered the character of our structures. Science had produced something which economic considerations demanded be used in building con-

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*Two views of the Kingswood School at Cranbrook illustrate Eliel Saarinen's interpretation of an architecture in brick, related, of course, to its site, its purpose, and to our times*





struction. Architecture had at last felt the impact of American industry.

It is always a slow process to develop an appropriate functional shape for a new invention. Many of us can look back over the forty years, more or less, which mark the development of the present stream-lined automobile from the horseless carriage. It is particularly difficult when we seek not only a functional form for a new invention, but require also an element of beauty in its composition. Our homes are still equipped with lighting fixtures which might well be mistaken by our grandmothers for the wax candles or oil lamps which they so closely simulate. In the case of architecture, it was not difficult to meet the purely utilitarian and economic requirements with steel, concrete, or the sheet metals, but to produce a satisfying æsthetic effect without recourse to the historical styles demanded creative work of the highest order.

There were then two broad alternatives presented to the architect. The extremes of the two positions may be identified, on the one hand, by a continued acceptance of historical precedent as the only appropriate means of interpreting æsthetic values and, on the other hand, by an attempt to obtain a satisfactory appearance solely through a logical expression of utilitarian requirements and the function of structure. Unfortunately, perhaps, from the viewpoint of architectural development, our engineers made it entirely practical to mask the architectural significance of steel or concrete frames so that the architect could still satisfy his traditionally minded client and refuse to acknowledge the implications of the

*This Post Office Building for Salem, Oregon, is typical of many public structures designed by the Office of the Supervising Architect, Treasury Department. Neither the functionalism of plan nor the economy of construction has been sacrificed by an attempt to adapt ancient temple architecture to our modern postal requirements*

new materials that formed the real structure.

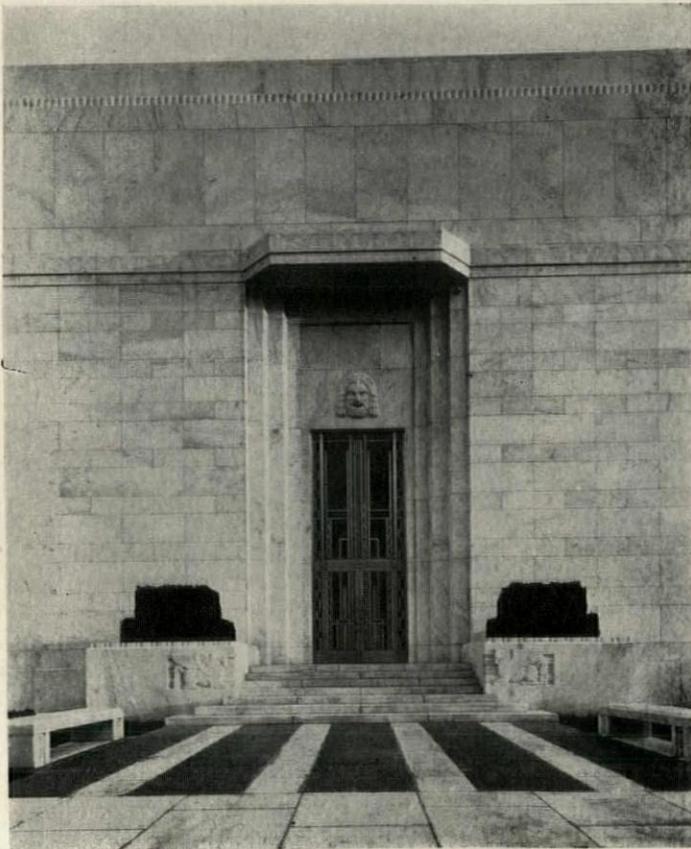
We are all familiar with recently constructed buildings, having the appearance of wall-bearing structures, in which steel frames are employed for the purpose of economy. Some of these, executed in the later mediæval styles, have been jokingly referred to as a modern development of "girder Gothic." Designs of this type, although the real structural elements are concealed, convey a sense of structure by false buttresses or other means appropriate to the historical precedent. But we cannot accuse the architect of prevarication. He has provided an adequate structural system which meets its own standards of engineering; he has provided an adequate visual expression which meets its own standards of æsthetic value. Some of us might desire a closer relationship between the two, but there is no reason why we should demand it. It is no more logical to require that the character of the structural support of a building be explicit in the architectural design than that the exterior express features of the mechanical equipment unless such factors influence the visual aspect of the building by controlling the elements of plan or elevation.

In the case of our great concrete monoliths and steel skyscrapers, however, present-day



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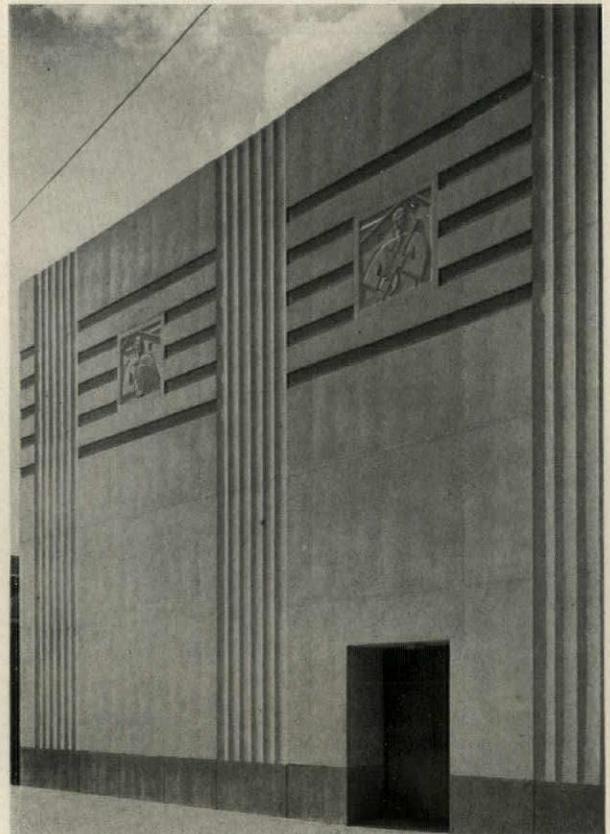


*Paul P. Cret, in his Folger Library, expressed a modern style which attains the beauty, simplicity, and dignity of true classicism—and this without the use of Greek or Roman orders, so prevalent in official Washington*



George D. Haight

Fred G. Korth



*The exteriors of both the California Fruit Growers' Exchange (by Walker and Eisen) and the Will Rogers Theatre in Chicago (by C. W. and Geo. L. Rapp) illustrate modern types of ornament executed in concrete as an integral part of the wall construction*

spacial requirements, and particularly their structural forms which, owing to their height, must be largely dictated by engineering standards, have vitally affected the appearance of our buildings and have thereby conditioned, to an important degree, the character of the æsthetic treatment. The result has been to require a redetermination of the appropriate means by which the principles of visual æsthetics may be applied to the new form and bulk of buildings for which there is no traditional precedent.

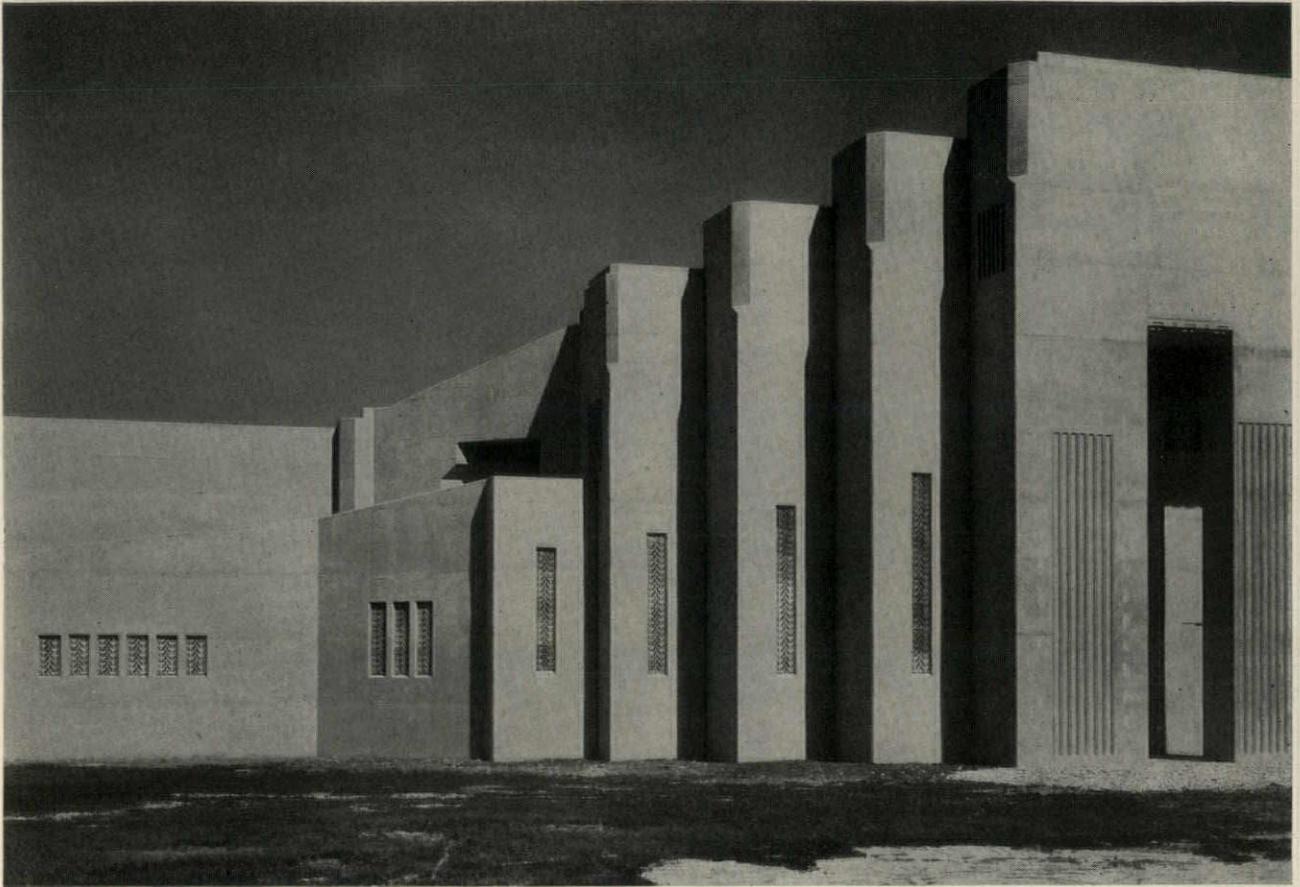
Influenced by the almost miraculous scientific development of the present age, it is only natural that we should apotheosize and attempt to base an æsthetic upon utility and functionalism alone. Furthermore, we have an excellent background for this viewpoint in the fact that although our æsthetic standards are certainly not based upon the necessities of today, they are very closely related to the necessities of the past. It does not require a knowledge of construction to identify the principles of functionalism in both plan and structure of many classic and mediæval buildings. But few of us would wish to establish a purely mechanistic criterion for criticism. We all appreciate the beauty of well designed engineering structures such, for example, as a suspension bridge which attains through engineering functionalism a high æsthetic appeal. But such structures are not human habita-

tions. The problem of the bridge engineer is one involving primarily the resolution of natural forces and providing for their various components with structural elements each designed for its respective purpose. There are no human problems involved other than those of circulation and transportation.

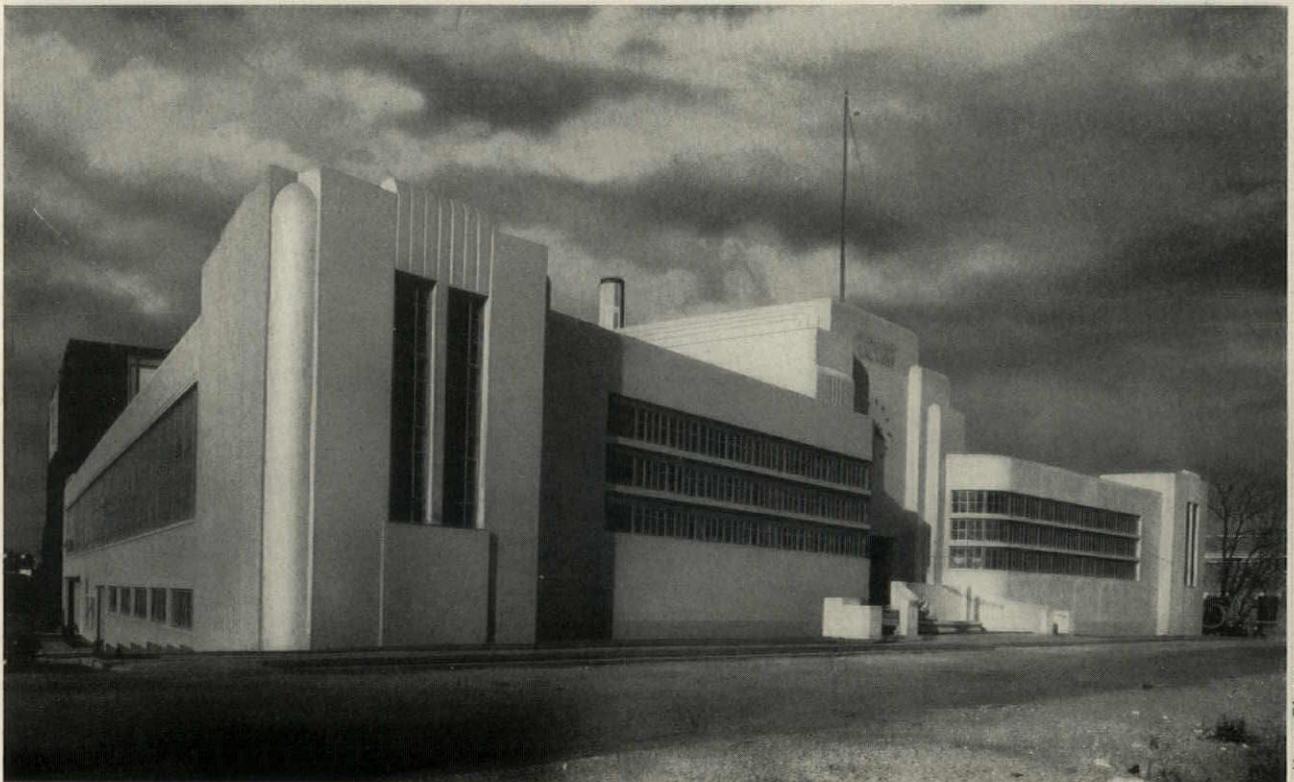
In building construction, on the other hand, we are concerned not only with strength and economy in design, and the practical matters of interior arrangement, but with the visual satisfaction which our work should convey to those who are to occupy or view the building. To borrow a phrase from engineering, the architect's solution is "indeterminate" without this additional equation representing the building's relationship to its human setting. Structural systems and materials should be used in a manner consistent with their physical characteristics, and we should not be timid in our acceptance of the resulting forms. To rely, however, upon their functional expression alone for the satisfaction of visual impressions, would result in limiting architectural design to the scope of engineering. This position

*The design of the United States Mint in San Francisco is primarily functional, but by its proportions, symmetry, and simple rhythm produces a strong æsthetic impression expressive of the structure's purpose. Gilbert S. Underwood, Consulting Architect for the Treasury*





*A view of part of the Beloit Stadium (by Allen & Webster, Architects) shows the possibilities inherent in concrete of using intersecting planes to achieve architectural interest. Irving M. Fenichel, Architect of the Knickerbocker Laundry Company's building in Long Island City, has here used concrete successfully in a design which expresses the function of the building in both plan and structure in a manner that is attractive architecturally*



*Aaron Photos*

would imply a denial of any standard for æsthetic evaluation other than that of satisfaction, visual or intellectual, derived directly or indirectly from an appreciation of the purely utilitarian or structural.

These features do not constitute architecture. They are, however, the basis from which we can develop a logical school of design which will be characteristic of our age and justly portray its worship of science, its desire for utility, hygiene, convenience, and economy. Many of our modern buildings constructed a decade ago illustrate a high degree of adaptation to our material needs. During the last few years, we have initiated what should be the final stage; a definite approach to an appropriate æsthetic. It is derived from but not limited by the purely utilitarian. It is identified by refinements in spacial conceptions, simplicity, restraint, and a degree of abstraction or impersonality which connotes the effect of power production in contrast to the handicraft of earlier periods. Can we not accept the practical requirements, based upon purpose and structure, and interpret them by means which have æsthetic as well as mechanical significance? It is surely possible to apply the fundamental principles of composition such as unity, harmony and balance without

resorting to any special style of the past. We can obtain the values of true classicism without employing Greek or Roman orders, and the spirit of the Gothic does not depend upon mediæval form or detail.

There is an opportunity for developing an American school of design, a style which shall be derived from and therefore a logical expression of our scientific and social progress. We have already felt the impact of standardization and mass production, the period of craftsmanship has given place to a more mature phase of our economic life. These factors cannot be disregarded but standardization in manufacture and construction does not necessarily imply undesirable restrictions in design. We must accept the implications of the machine: we have no other alternative. If we are to evolve a truly creative architecture we must obtain our æsthetic values by the use of those means which utility and functionalism demand. Our problem is to evaluate their potentialities and to produce æsthetic effects by virtue of the very characteristics which, at first sight, appear to be mechanical limitations. The ambition to transcend a purely mechanistic conception in our approach to a new architecture is as necessary as freedom from the limitations of historical precedent.



*A rendering by John MacGilchrist of the Memorial to Father Duffy recently placed in Times Square, New York, under the direction of the New York City Department of Parks. The monument was a conspicuous center of interest during the American Legion Convention when appropriate ceremonies accompanied the placing of wreaths*