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**THE ARCHITECTURAL WORK OF CHARLES A. PLATT.**

**A**MERICAN architectural practice has pretty well decided that the safest and most fruitful kind of work which the good American architect can do is that of continuing in this country the great European architectural tradition. American criticism agrees, on the whole, with this practice, because it realizes that in a country, which a generation ago was an example of fearfully perverted popular architectural taste, the educational need and purpose should in the beginning determine the prevailing forms. After the architects have become accustomed to designing, and the public have become accustomed to seeing, good architectural forms, it will be time enough to demand that these forms be modified, with a special view to giving them a higher degree of individual, local and national propriety.

The trouble with the first generation of well-trained American architects was not that they were imitative, but that they were perhaps rather too indiscriminate in their imitation. They tried experiments in too many styles, and did not cleave with sufficient assiduity to the architectural types most appropriate to their work, and to their individual powers of design. Doubtless, they had a sufficient excuse for this eclecticism, in that they could, perhaps, learn only by such experimentation just what architectural forms "took" and served best in the undiscovered country of American architectural achievement; but the experimental character of the work not only condemned it frequently to a lack of propriety, but it confused popular taste and prevented architects from appropriating the promiscuous forms they used. At any rate, there can be no doubt that the next step in the regular improvement of American architectural practice must consist in the more careful selection by the individual designer of his favorite architectural forms, and the persistent endeavor to give to these forms a more individual and local rendering. That at least is the

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step which the well-trained architects of the younger generation are now taking. They are experimenting within much narrower limits than formerly; they are converging upon the selection of a comparatively few of the best architectural types; and they are showing an increasing freedom and an increasing consistency in the treatment of those types. It will be a still farther improvement in architectural practice when the field of selection is made even narrower, and when the few favorite types become by constant repetition so familiar as wholly to lose their novel and experimental character.

It is in the light of this general tendency of American architectural practice that the work of Charles A. Platt can be most profitably considered. He is one of the younger architects who has made his mark in the last few years, and whose designs show plainly the influence of the selective ideal. They are derived from the best sources, but not from all the best sources, the area of choice being restricted by a strong conviction that only certain architectural forms are well adapted to the kind of work with which Mr. Platt is particularly identified. He has not, consequently, gone outside a comparatively few types of designs, all of which have their historical and logical relations one to another. These several types of design he has used so persistently, and has studied so carefully that he is fully acquainted with their possibilities and values.

Thus he has been able to treat them with an ease, a consistency, a propriety and an effect, to which he could not have attained had his principle of choice been more eclectic.

## II.

The department of design with which Mr. Platt is particularly, but by no means exclusively identified, is that of the country house and garden, and it is in this department that his work has been most influential and most original. If Mr. Platt did not actually intro-



GARDEN FURNITURE  
OF "FAULKNER FARM."

duce the Italian formal garden into this country, he most assuredly has given the American version of this very beautiful and complete type of landscape design a new meaning and a higher standing. He had the peculiar advantage of being able to approach landscape design, not as a man whose training was exclusively architectural, but as one whose interest in garden design sprang directly from the observation of nature, and a thorough professional familiarity with landscape values. He was a landscape painter before he was an architect; and he made a special study of Italian gardens before he ever attempted to design them. It may seem surprising to people, who are the victims of the supposed antithesis between "naturalistic" and formal gardens, that a man who had



GARDEN FURNITURE OF "FAULKNER FARM," BROOKLINE, MASS.

achieved high success as a landscape painter, and whose great distinction consists in his appreciation of the proper landscape values, that such a man should be particularly identified with the better establishment of the formal garden in this country; but in truth the antithesis between the formal and the "naturalistic" garden is one which arose only during a recent period, when the "formal" garden, as transplanted to England, became rigid and stiff. The Italian gardens, formal as they were, were designed with an eye strictly to landscape values, and constitute without doubt the supremely happy blending of architectural propriety and out-of-door feeling. They are the original and classic type of garden from which the French and English gardens are descended, and to which we must return for the spirit and principles of the best landscape architecture.

The Italian garden was, however, only one aspect or division of Italian villa architecture, and the historical point of departure

from which Mr. Platt's work is to be considered, is that of the Italian villa of the Renaissance, as a complete residential type. These villas occupy an important and definite place in the history of domestic architecture, because they embody the first great residential style of the modern period, and because they were designed by a people who, in their great time, came nearer than any other modern people, to the classic love of formal beauty, and to the classic sense of propriety in form. This ability to imagine appropriately beautiful forms received one of its most consummate expressions in the villa architecture of the period. We are apt, nowadays, when we think of the consummate country house, to recall instinctively certain memorable English examples; but on the whole the English country houses and estates derive their



THE HOUSE OF GEO. H. PAGE.

Chicoroo, N. H.

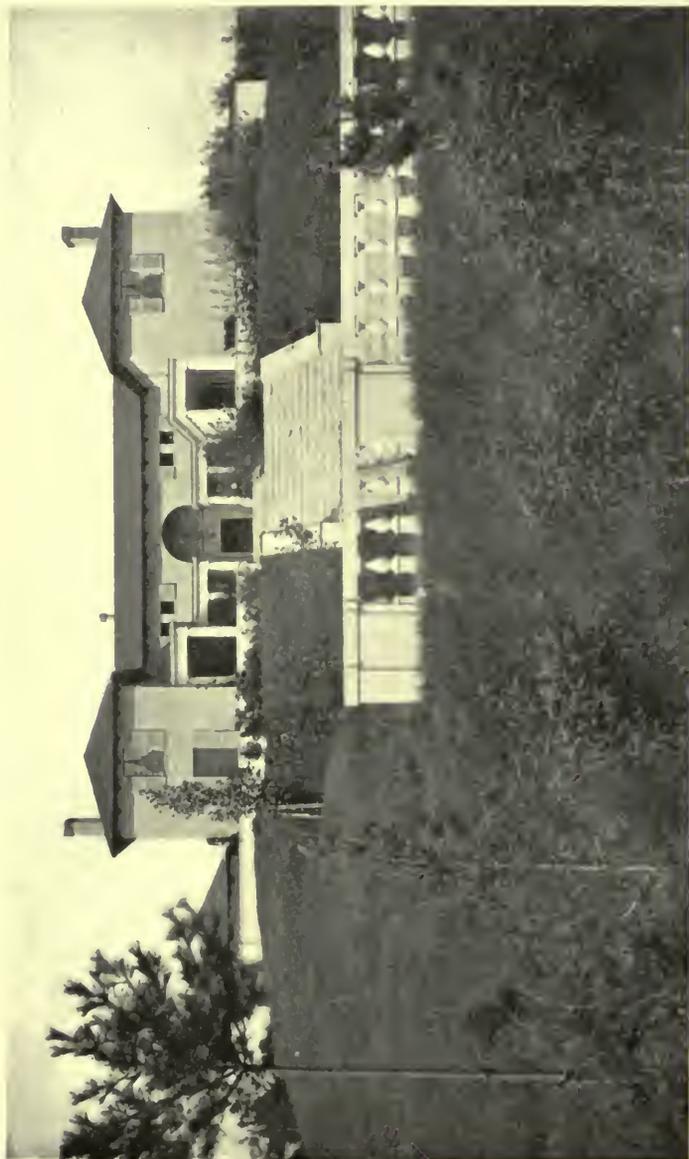
Chas. A. Platt, Architect.

value as models from the evidence they offered of constant and loving attention, from the extent to which their surroundings have been encouraged to grow up around them, than from any especial excellence of design. The English country house is a concrete embodiment of the whole history of English country life. It has been confirmed by time and precious association, rather than by original architectural genius. In the Italian villa, on the other hand, the attempt was consciously and successfully made to design a kind of house which would fit the landscape closely, and to lay out the grounds so that they would enhance the effect of the house. The result is a type of domestic country architecture, which even in its decay, possesses a wholly unique beauty and charm.

It is worth while to pause for a moment and consider this type, not only because of its bearing upon Mr. Platt's work, but because of its peculiar value under contemporary American conditions.

These villas, like the American country house, were not intended for people resident on the soil; they were intended as the occasional country habitations of highly-civilized gentry, who, in income and tastes, were the product of the city life. Now the Italians like the French are candidly and consciously civilized, if civilized at all. When they go to the country they carry with them their civilization, their artificial and artistic demands; they do not go to the country in order to return, so far as decency permits, to a state of nature; and they do not feel any incompatibility, when in the country, between the formal treatment of the immediate surroundings of the house and the informal beauties of the natural landscape. What they ask is that their country residences should give the finest and fullest opportunities to enjoy the various pleasures of country life, and that their houses and grounds should be frankly expressive of this demand. Among these pleasures would be included the pleasure in a beautiful landscape, with which the house would compose, and which could be seen to good advantage from the house and garden; the pleasure in flowers, and in the grouping of plants and shrubs, so as to make a convenient and effective show; the pleasure in various country sports, which in those days consisted mostly in hunting, and in ours mostly in games; the pleasures of a hospitality and of the opportunity to entertain one's friends; and finally the pleasure of leisure, of freedom from insistent pre-occupation with affairs, of the chance for a little quiet reflection and refreshment.

The Italian villas and estates satisfied to a greater or smaller extent all of these demands, because they were built for men of great wealth, of large ideas and of a uniform standard of culture; but in attempting to transfer the type to this country an American architect would be immediately confronted with the fact that his clients included people of large and of small resources, and of high and of low aesthetic demands. Mr. Platt, like his professional associates, has been obliged to meet the difficulties inseparable from the attempt to adapt an elaborate and exacting architectural type to the widely varying resources and tastes of an American *clientele*. He has had during his practice all sorts and conditions of work—including a number of small frame and stucco houses, situated for the most part in the Cornish Hills of New Hampshire; and these smaller places which he has designed, are, as may be seen from the illustrations, peculiarly interesting, because he has evidently bestowed upon them, irrespective of their cost, a great deal of careful consideration. The attempt has obviously been made, for instance, to lay out small estates, which shall possess a certain completeness of effect. The architectural lines of the houses have been carefully designed, so that the structure takes its proper place



"HIGH COURT," FORMERLY THE RESIDENCE OF MRS. HUMPHREYS JOHNSTON.

(Since destroyed by fire.)

Cornish, N. H.

Chas. A. Platt, Architect.

in the landscape; the look of the landscape from the house has been as scrupulously considered as the look of the house from its various lines of approach; and almost every place has its properly situated garden, and its appropriate scheme of landscape treatment. Of course, so much work could not be done at a small outlay, except by the use of cheap materials, such as wooden walls and columns; but the difference in the result is fundamentally a difference in the permanence which this result obtains. The



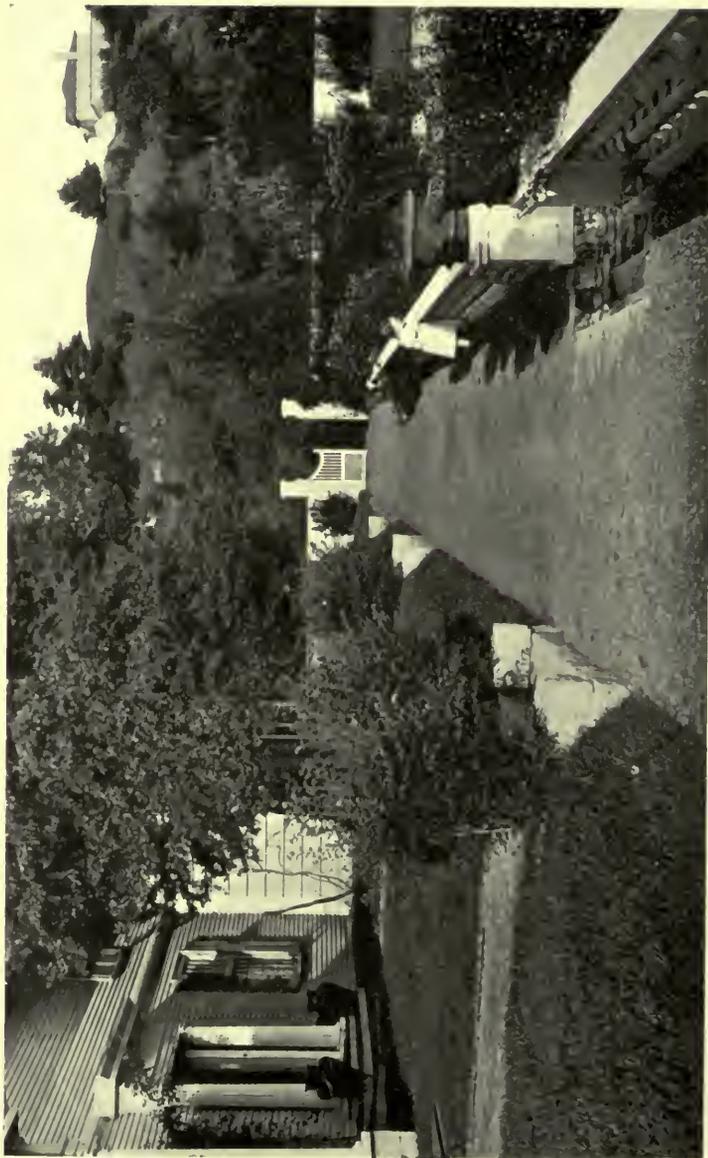
THE RESIDENCE OF CHAS. A. PLATT.

Corrish, N. H.

Chas. A. Platt, Architect.

wooden walls will not last; they will have to be replaced eventually by a wall made of some more durable and structural materials; but in the meantime, like the plaster colonnades of a World's Fair, they have served their purpose. They have enabled the architect to make valuable experiments as to the best means of obtaining certain desired effects; and what is equally important, they have aroused the aesthetic interest and pride of the owner of the estate.

Moreover, the experiments in cheap materials may well have an additional advantage in developing methods, whereby comparatively permanent results can be secured in cheap materials. In spite therefore, of the fact that the demands of a complete design obviously strain the resources at the architect's command when those resources are small, it remains true that these frame houses



THE RESIDENCE OF CHAS. A. PLATT.

Looking towards the hill, which bounds the garden on the east.

Cornish, N. H.

Chas. A. Platt, Architect.

are legitimate examples of formal treatment, quite within the peoples of people of good taste and small incomes, yet not pitched on a scale incongruous with the appropriately modest demeanor of a small country place.

In the case of the majority of American country houses the site upon which the owner decides to build has usually been determined by the "view," and in such cases this fact necessarily has an important effect upon the plan and design of the house and the lay-out of the grounds. Among Mr. Platt's earlier work, the house figured on page 186, and called "High Court," may be taken as a type of a house situated on the top of a hill and overlooking a great expanse of country. In an estate of this kind the land generally falls away very abruptly from the site of the house, so that the formal treatment of the grounds must be somewhat limited, and the design necessarily adapted to the absence of many of the accessory and contributory effects, which might be effective on more level ground. To design a house that fits snug upon its hill-top, to relieve the architectural edges and corners with a framing of trees, and to define the landscape properly from the house by means of the court and its columns—to such results as these the architect has given his chief attention. It will be seen, consequently, from the illustration, that there are practically no intervening gardens, and the house is one which might or might not have gardens connected with it, because the garden is not anything which would count in the appearance of the villa as a whole from the distance. In this particular case, a flower garden was added behind the wall to the left of the house; but this garden has been very fully enclosed, so that its smaller proprieties shall not compete or clash with the great scale and dominant effect of the general view.

In the case of Mr. Platt's own house, on the other hand, the immediate surroundings of the building are more important than the view. The garden, consequently, is situated in front of the house, on a lower level. It intervenes, that is, between the house and the view, and mediates between the two in a way that would be inappropriate in such a place as "High Court." Very little artificial enclosure has been desirable for the garden, because a hill on the one end and a belt of pines on the other, give it natural boundaries which are peculiarly and entirely sufficient. The illustration published on page 187, shows the house as seen from the garden, and across the perennial phlox in full bloom, while the illustration on page 192 shows a view along the axis of the garden parallel to the house, and looking towards the belt of pines mentioned above. There is no illustration of the garden looking in the other direction, but on page 188 is a reproduction of the walk between the house and the garden looking towards the hill, which



STUDIO ADJOINING THE RESIDENCE OF CHAS. A. PLATT.

Cornish, N. H.

Chas. A. Platt, Architect.



VIEW FROM THE STUDIO OF CHAS. A. PLATT.

Cornish, N. H.

Chas. A. Platt, Architect.



THE GARDEN OF CHAS. A. PLATT.

Looking toward the belt of pines bounding the garden on the west.

Cornish, N. H.

Chas. A. Platt, Architect.



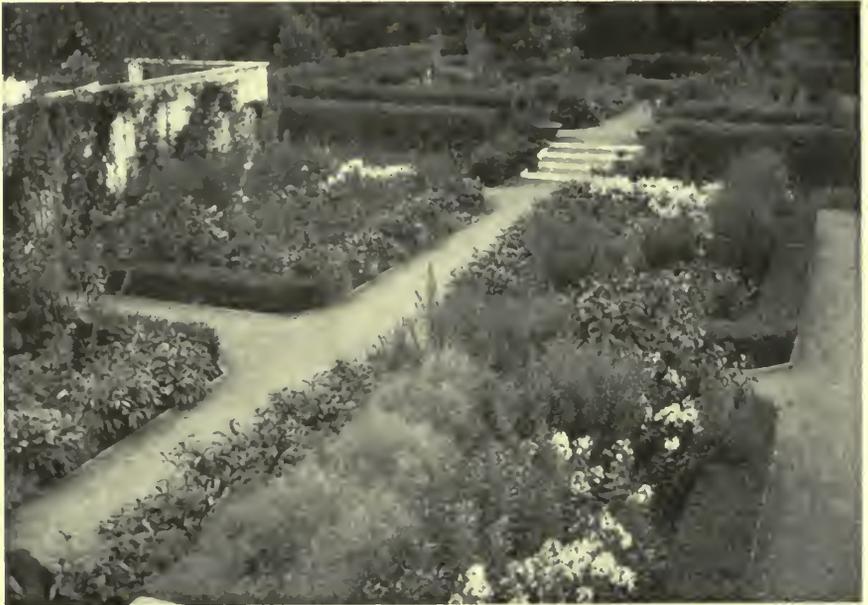
THE GARDEN OF HERBERT CROLY.

Cornish, N. H.

Chas. A. Platt, Architect.

in appearance bounds the garden at its other end. This hill, it may be added, is the one on which "High Court" is situated, and the building on its summit is the studio of "High Court." It has not been possible to illustrate in a satisfactory way the look of the landscape from "High Court," which is one of extreme beauty; but on pages 190-191 will be found a picture of Mr. Platt's studio from the walk, and one of the landscape from the studio, and framed by the columns of its porch.

Mr. Platt's house shows, perhaps, better than any other how much can be accomplished with inexpensive materials, and by



THE GARDEN OF HERBERT CROLY.

Cornish, N. H.

Chas. A. Platt, Architect.

means of a small outlay to build up a fully designed country place—one in which the advantages of the site are cleverly used in order to produce an effect at once thoroughly informed by some architectural treatment, yet at the same time as thoroughly imbued with a correct sense of proper landscape values. It is a better illustration of this type of residence than the house and garden illustrated on pages 193-194, because in this other instance the whole scale of the plan is so small that it would not have been possible to seek any architectural effects on the south side of the house in the direction of the greatest expanse of landscape without designing something which would be too imposing for the other parts of the composition. In this instance, consequently, the design suf-

fers more from insufficiency of means than in the cases of the other houses.

### III.

Turning now to the more expensive and elaborate places which Mr. Platt has designed, there are two gardens which are in a class apart, and which deserve separate consideration—the gardens of “Faulkner Farm” and of “Weld.” In each of these cases the means at the architect’s disposal were sufficient to make a garden, in which the completeness of the type could be fully realized, while



THE RESIDENCE OF HERBERT CROLY.

Cornish, N. H.

Chas. A. Platt, Architect.

at the same time the architect was restricted by the fact that he was designing the grounds around a house already in existence. “Faulkner Farm” was the first of them in point of time, and may be fairly said to have started a new period of garden design in this country. Previous essays in that direction had not gone much beyond the topiary exploits of the Hunnewell place at Wellesley, Mass., in which natural forms are senselessly perverted at the bidding of a supposed necessity for formal horticulture. The Hunnewell garden stuck, however, more closely to the Italian prototype, in that its planting consists largely of evergreens, whereas one most conspicuous division of “Faulkner Farm” is the flower garden, which is



"FAULKNER FARM"—THE TERRACE FROM THE GARDEN.

Estate of Mrs. C. L. Sprague, Brookline, Mass.

Chas. A. Platt, Architect.

as it were, shut down during the winter. In this respect, however, the gardens of the northern part of the United States necessarily take a line of their own, partly because Americans like a great deal of bloom in their gardens, and partly because in our snow-covered country we cannot help shutting down our gardens from December to March.

The plan of Faulkner Farm is particularly worth careful attention, because of the peculiar interest of the site and the success with



ACROSS THE GARDEN OF "FAULKNER FARM."

Estate of Mrs. C. L. Sprague, Brookline, Mass.

Chas. A. Platt, Architect.

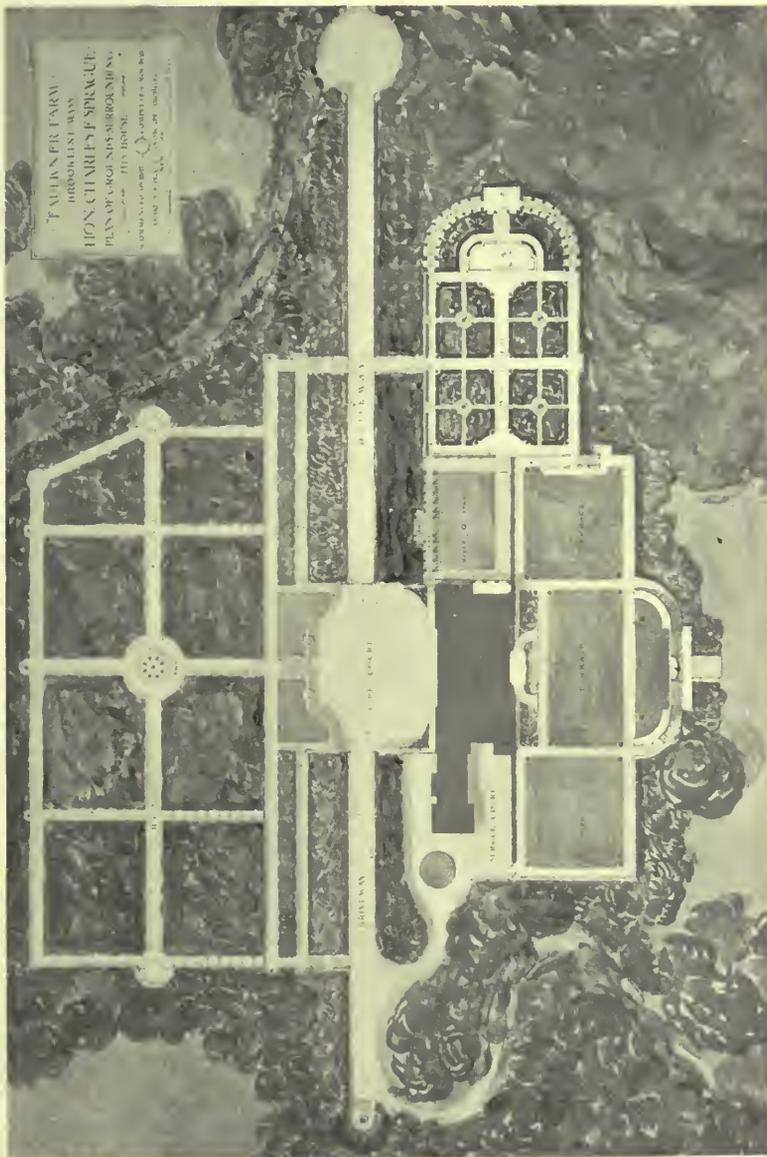
which its advantages have been used. In this place the view only counts on one side—on the side indicated in the plan by the absence of foliage. In every other direction either rising ground or trees, or both cut it off. The space, consequently, between the house and the line at which the land falls sharply off has been left as a terrace, which, since it is intended as a frame or foreground for the view, has been kept absolutely bare and simple. The character



PAVILION OF THE GARDEN OF "FAULKNER FARM."

Estate of Mrs. C. L. Sprague, Brookline, Mass.

Chas. A. Platt, Architect.



THE PLAN OF "FAULKNER FARM."

Estate of Mrs. C. L. Sprague, Brookline, Mass.

Chas. A. Platt, Architect.

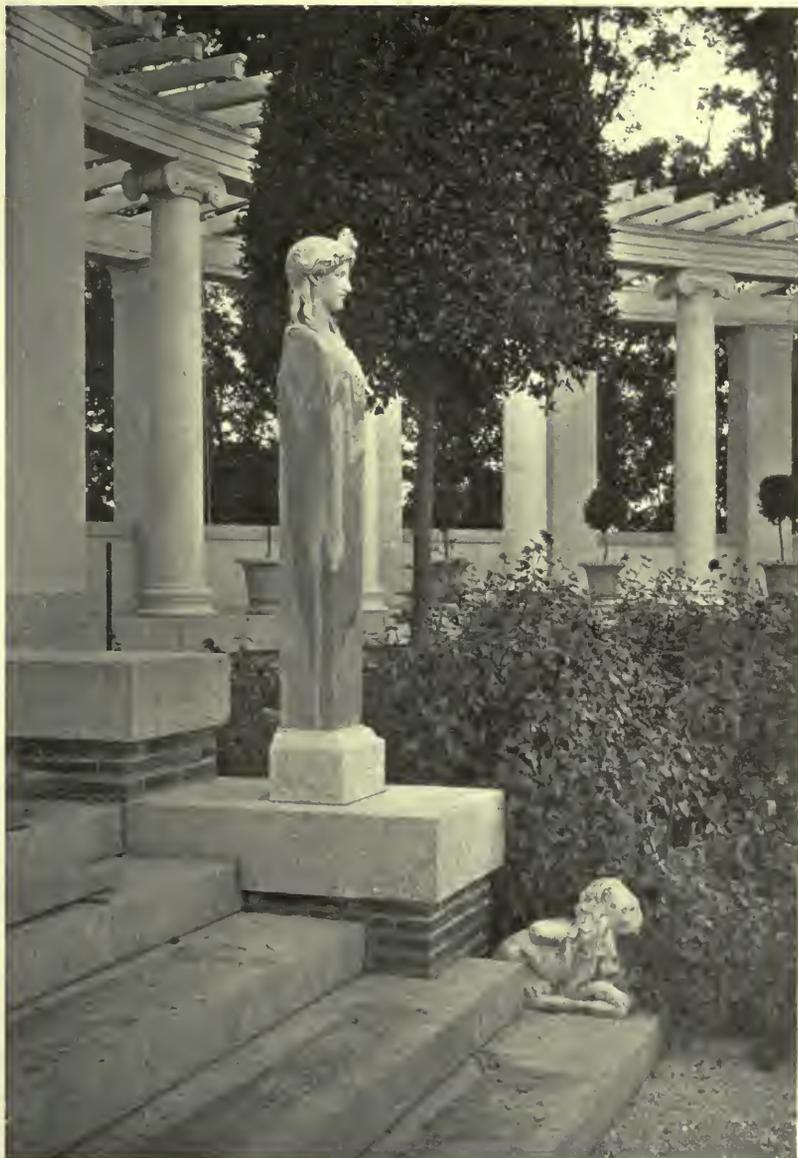


THE GARDEN OF "FAULKNER FARM."

From the Pavilion.

Estate of Mrs. C. L. Sprague, Brookline, Mass.

Chas. A. Platt, Architect.



THE PERGOLA OF THE GARDEN OF "FAULKNER FARM."

Estate of Mrs. C. L. Sprague, Brookline, Mass.

Chas. A. Platt, Architect.



THE DESCENT FROM THE TERRACE OF "FAULKNER FARM."

Estate of Mrs. C. L. Sprague, Brookline, Mass.

Chas. A. Platt, Architect.

of this terrace, and its relations to the house and garden is shown in an illustration on page 196. The flower garden itself was pushed away from the house into a clump of oaks, in order to give the garden a sufficient inclosure on that side, and in order, also, to form a background for the distant view, which otherwise would have introduced a wholly incongruous element into the composition. The effect of this oak background can be gathered from the several illustrations of the pergola. The wooded surface, called the "Grove" in the plan is intended primarily to count as a background for the house, when seen from a sufficient distance; but although such is



INTERIOR OF THE PAVILION OF "FAULKNER FARM."

Estate of Mrs. C. L. Sprague, Brookline, Mass.

Chas. A. Platt, Architect.

its chief purpose, it is situated so near the house that the architect has naturally made it exceedingly attractive and serviceable in a number of minor ways by means of walks, seats, fountains and the like. In this and in other respects the garden has many subordinate features of interest, not the least of them being the quantity of beautiful furniture, which has been collected in Italy and appropriately placed in different parts of the garden and grounds. It is characteristic of Mr. Platt's work, however, that such detail is kept absolutely in its place, and that the design is interesting chiefly because its large dispositions, which, although indicated by the requirements of the site, are combined into a well-composed whole.

In the estate of "Weld" also, the house already existed and the desire of the owner was to have the grounds around his house effectively treated, but the nature of the site was so absolutely different that a wholly different treatment was required. The house was situated on the top of a denuded hill, open to a large view on all sides, except that adjoining the house. The dimensions of the flower garden were determined by the size of the hill, and its character by the fact that the identity of the garden could be maintained only by shutting off the great expanse of landscape from the salient points of view within the garden. At the same time, of



ENTRANCE TO THE GARDEN OF "FAULKNER FARM" FROM THE DRIVEWAY.  
Estate of Mrs. C. L. Sprague, Brookline, Mass. Chas. A. Platt, Architect.

course, since it was this landscape, which itself had determined the site of the existing house, it could not be entirely shut off. These several requirements of a satisfactory design were met by a scheme, which included three levels within the garden, and on the highest level, an architectural enclosure, which was sufficient to shut off the landscape from all of the garden, but left it open to a person standing on the upper walks. The illustration on page 206 gives some idea of these several levels, and of the enclosing parapet on the side of the garden. When on the upper walks in the neighborhood of the gazebos, any elaboration of detail, which would distract the attention from the distant landscape has been purposely omitted, whereas within the garden its sunken position has enabled

the architect to enrich the chief points of view with a great deal of appropriate and beautiful furniture. The actual plan of the garden is almost square; but these not altogether happy dimensions have been cleverly dissembled by a mall along its central line, which serves to give it the appearance of length. Owing to its location and its necessary enclosure, the dominant effect of the garden is



VIEW ALONG THE PARAPET FROM THE END OF THE PERGOLA—  
THE GARDEN OF "FAULKNER FARM."

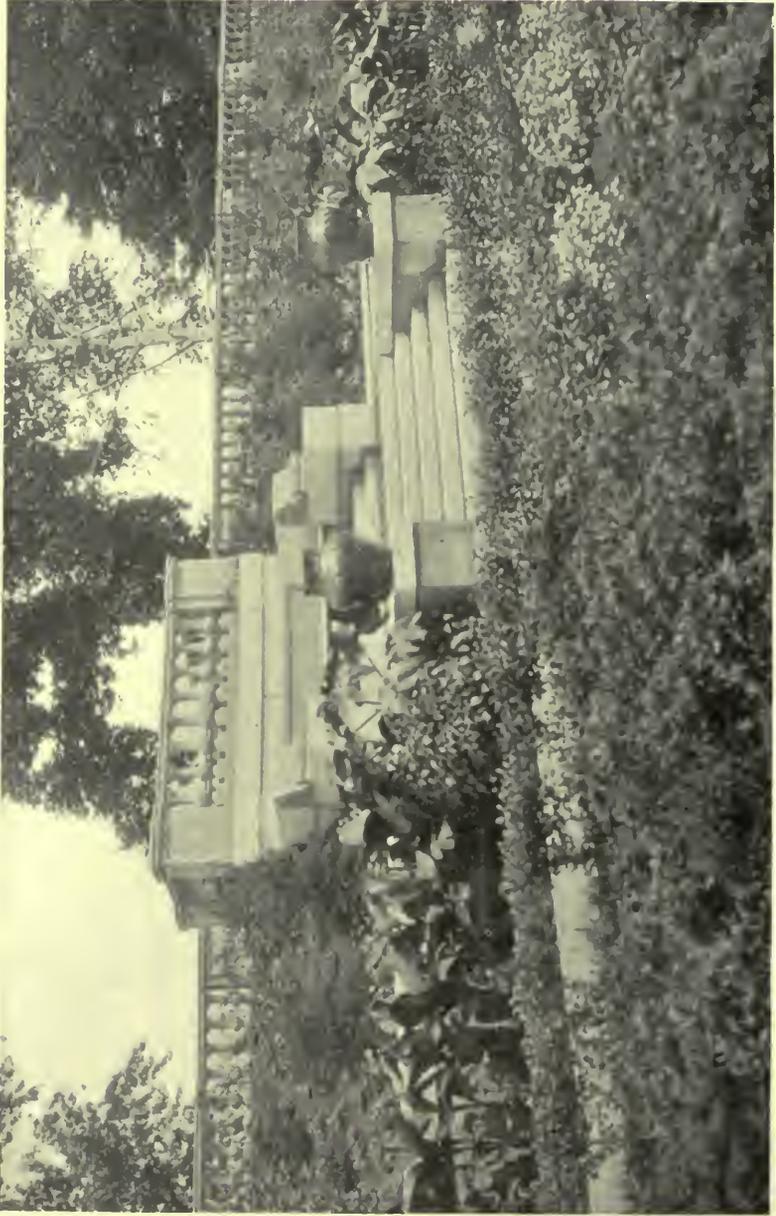
Estate of Mrs. C. L. Sprague, Brookline, Mass.

Chas. A. Platt, Architect.

architectural, but this architectural effect will in the course of time be more and more softened and subdued by the growth of the shrubbery within the garden.

#### IV.

In all the examples of Mr. Platt's work considered hitherto, the houses were built either of wood or stucco, or else were erected before the design of the garden and its surrounding was placed in



RAISED SEAT AT THE SIDE OF THE GARDEN OF "WELD."  
Estate of Larz Anderson, Esq., Brookline, Mass.

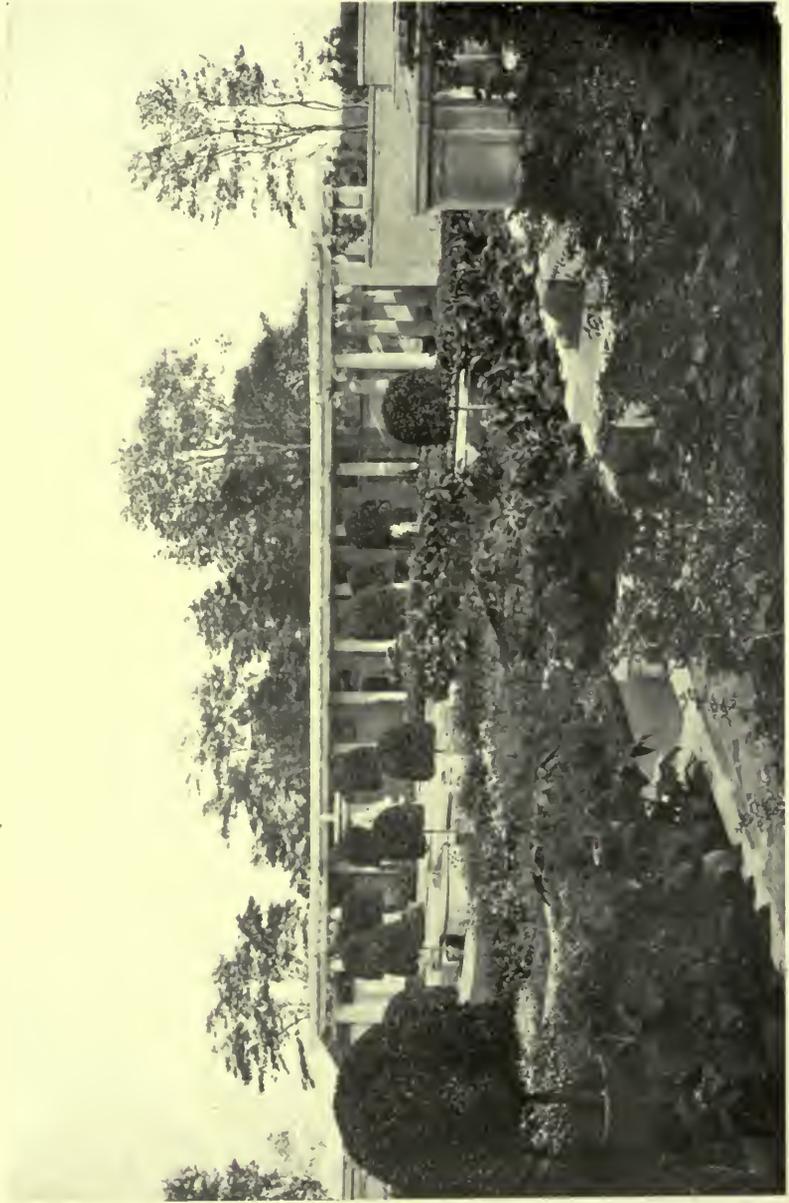
Chas. A. Platt, Architect.



THE MALL OF THE GARDEN OF "WELD."

Estate of Larz Anderson, Esq., Brookline, Mass.

Chas. A. Platt, Architect.



VIEW DIAGONALLY ACROSS THE GARDEN OF "WELD."

Estate of Larz Anderson, Esq., Brookline, Mass.

Chas. A. Platt, Architect.



THE UPPER END OF THE GARDEN OF "WELD."

Estate of Larz Anderson, Esq., Brookline, Mass. Chas. A. Platt, Architect.

his hands. When he proposed, however, to design a brick dwelling, which occurred, of course, early in his professional career, he was unable to refer so immediately to Italian precedents as he had done in the foregoing examples. The Italians themselves had built mostly in stone or stucco, and their domestic architecture did not offer any original suggestions as to the treatment of such a material as brick. It was natural consequently that he should under such circumstances look for his models to the adaptations which had been made of the Italian forms by the brick building peoples of Northern Europe. The English in particular have liked to build their country residences of brick, and the design of these residences



"GLEN ELSINORE," THE GARDEN OF MRS. R. M. CLARK.

Pomfret, Conn.

Chas. A. Platt, Architect.

ever since the end of the 16th century has been profoundly modified if not entirely determined by the Italian Renaissance villa, so that it was in the English brick version of the Renaissance that he sought the forms of his brick dwellings.

Among the different phases of English brick domestic architecture, Mr. Platt has preferred those of the best period of the English Renaissance. The Jacobean house was mediæval in its plan, its most important members, and in the spirit of its composition. It borrowed from the Italian Renaissance only certain decorative details of its exterior and interior. Not until the end of the 17th century were the great English houses designed in the classic forms, and with something of the classic spirit, and even



"GLEN ELSINORE," THE GARDEN OF MRS. R. M. CLARK.

Pomfret, Conn.

Chas. A. Platt, Architect.



"GLEN ELSINORE," THE GARDEN OF MRS. R. M. CLARK.

Pomfret, Conn.

Chas. A. Platt, Architect.



"HARLAKENDEN HALL," THE RESIDENCE OF WINSTON CHURCHILL.  
Chas. A. Platt, Architect.

Cornish, N. H.

then the plan of these houses showed little of the Italian influence—of the Italian preference for “bland vistas” throughout the different rooms. It is on the earliest and best of these English Renaissance houses, such as the newer portions of Hampton Court, that Mr. Platt has apparently depended for the tradition of brick architecture, which he has adopted; and the suggestions which he has derived from these buildings should be distinguished from the later Georgian dwelling and its American Colonial prototype. The Georgian and Colonial dwellings were frequently bourgeois in their atmosphere. They were built more often in small towns



LOGGIA OF "HARLAKENDEN HALL."

Residence of Winston Churchill, Cornish, N. H.

Chas. A. Platt, Architect.

and in the suburbs than actually in the country; they were generally of modest dimensions, and particularly in this country were seldom enhanced by any architectural treatment of the site. What we chiefly mean by the Colonial dwelling, consequently, was a stiff unpretentious style, whose greatest merit consisted in its excellent proportions, but whose highest effect did not go beyond a certain correct respectability of demeanor. Only in certain details did they obtain any elegance and distinction, and such details were only sparingly used, because their owners were generally well-to-do, middle-class merchants—too conscious of their position ever to compete with the gentry.

As the earlier English houses showed, however, there was nothing necessarily either prim or bourgeois about the characteristic forms of the English Renaissance. These forms, when used for large buildings, were, perhaps, more frequently embodied in stone than in brick, and there has been a tendency for the brick dwelling, particularly in the detail, to become timid and wear an excessively modest and reticent appearance. Nevertheless, there is no reason



DOORWAY OPENING ON THE TERRACE OF "HARLAKENDEN HALL."  
Residence of Winston Churchill, Cornish, N. H. Chas. A. Platt, Architect.

why the Renaissance forms, characteristic of the style, should not, even in brick, become as frankly and boldly expressive of a high and cultivated manner of living as they did during the Renaissance. They were used in the 18th century by people with a considerable sense of form, social and architectural, but without much freedom and flexibility of imagination, and it is capable of assuming very different merits, whenever these Renaissance houses are

built for people of wider social horizon, and are designed by architects who can make their style both positive and discreet. There is certainly no lack either of freedom or discretion about Mr. Platt's adaptation of English brickwork. The five examples of brick dwellings illustrated in this number differ considerably both from each other and from the originals, and these differences, while due in one case to the scale of the house, have been also brought about by flexibly adapting the house to the site, by the free use of additional members such as the loggias, nicely subordinated to the general design, by the careful study of the proportions and the



THE COURT OF "HARLAKENDEN HALL" AND ITS APPROACH.

This court is to be completed by the erection of iron gates.

Residence of Winston Churchill, Cornish, N. H.

Chas. A. Platt, Architect.

detail, and wherever possible by an elaborate architectural treatment of the surroundings.

While the grounds around all of these brick houses have received attention from their architect, flower gardens are in several instances lacking; and in at least one of these instances, it is lacking because the site of the house restricted the opportunities of placing a garden in any proper relation to the building. The residences both of Dr. A. C. Cabot and Mr. Winston Churchill are situated in the woods, so that the views therefrom, looking toward the chief points of interest in the landscape, have had to be cut through the trees. In the case of the Churchill place, there is in addition, no level ground upon which a garden could be placed, while the garden of Dr. Cabot is limited to some beds on each side of a mall, forming a foreground for a long vista through the woods. North Farm, on the other hand, is situated in a compara-



THE HALL OF "HARLAKENDEN HALL."

Residence of Winston Churchill, Cornish, N. H.

Chas. A. Platt, Architect.



Cherry Hill, Canton, Mass.

RESIDENCE OF DR. A. C. CABOT.

Chas. A. Platt, Architect.

tively flat country with a view of Narragansett Bay on one side, and an extremely interesting plantation on the other. The problem of putting this plantation into shape was largely one of elimination and grading; but advantage has been taken of rows of trees to get them on axe with the principal vista of the house, so that the house might appear to have been there when the trees were planted.

Of all the estates which Mr. Platt has designed, the place in which the conditions appear to have been most favorable is Maxwell Court, and the result is correspondingly complete and happy—implying that the architect could dispose of abundant resources, and had the opportunity of designing the layout of the



THE LIVING ROOM IN THE RESIDENCE OF DR. A. C. CABOT.

Cherry Hill, Canton, Mass.

Chas. A. Platt, Architect.

whole estate, including the architecture of the house and the disposition of the garden. The building itself is the most imposing residence, which has issued from Mr. Platt's office and the whole architectural treatment is nicely adapted to the ampler dimensions and the more impressive scale of the estate. Stone, for instance, is used much more freely in the trimmings of the house; and such features as the loggia and the terrace suggest rather the frank and brave display of certain Italian houses than the somewhat timorous under-statement of the majority of Georgian dwellings. The whole place is both eminently domestic in its atmosphere, and yet eminently effective in a high, fine, firm style.

Maxwell Court is situated on an abrupt hillside, with a distant landscape counting as an essential condition of the planning both



THE ENTRANCE TO THE RESIDENCE OF DR. A. C. CABOT.

Cherry Hill, Canton, Mass.

Chas. A. Platt, Architect.

of the house and garden. On the side of the terrace the problem is similar to that of Faulkner Farm, and the terrace has been designed chiefly as the place, from which the view is to be seen; but on the side of the garden the conditions are necessarily the reverse. The garden of Faulkner Farm was, as stated above, pushed into a grove of oaks, which constituted the background of the architectural boundary of the garden at that end. At Maxwell Court, on the other hand, the pergola is disengaged from any background of foliage, and a beautiful and extensive landscape is visible from it, and in a modified way from the rest of the garden. The pergola, however, has been designed particularly to frame the view, and to



DINING-ROOM, RESIDENCE OF DR. A. C. CABOT.

Cherry Hill, Canton, Mass.

Chas. A. Platt, Architect.

reduce it to a scale commensurate with that of the garden. Consequently, the columns have been left open at the back, instead of being closed as at Faulkner Farm, and at the same time this end of the garden has been purposely made less attractive in detail so that there shall be no features of subordinate interest to distract the attention from the major interest of the landscape. While the effect of this treatment might be said to hurt the appearance of the landscape from the house, because the pergola is situated in the direct line of vision, yet the disposition is really one which enhances the value of the view as one of the beauties of the estate, just because this view cannot be seen at its best except from the pergola. The consciousness that the landscape is there tempts one to the



"MAXWELL COURT," RESIDENCE OF ROBERT MAXWELL.

Rockville, Conn.

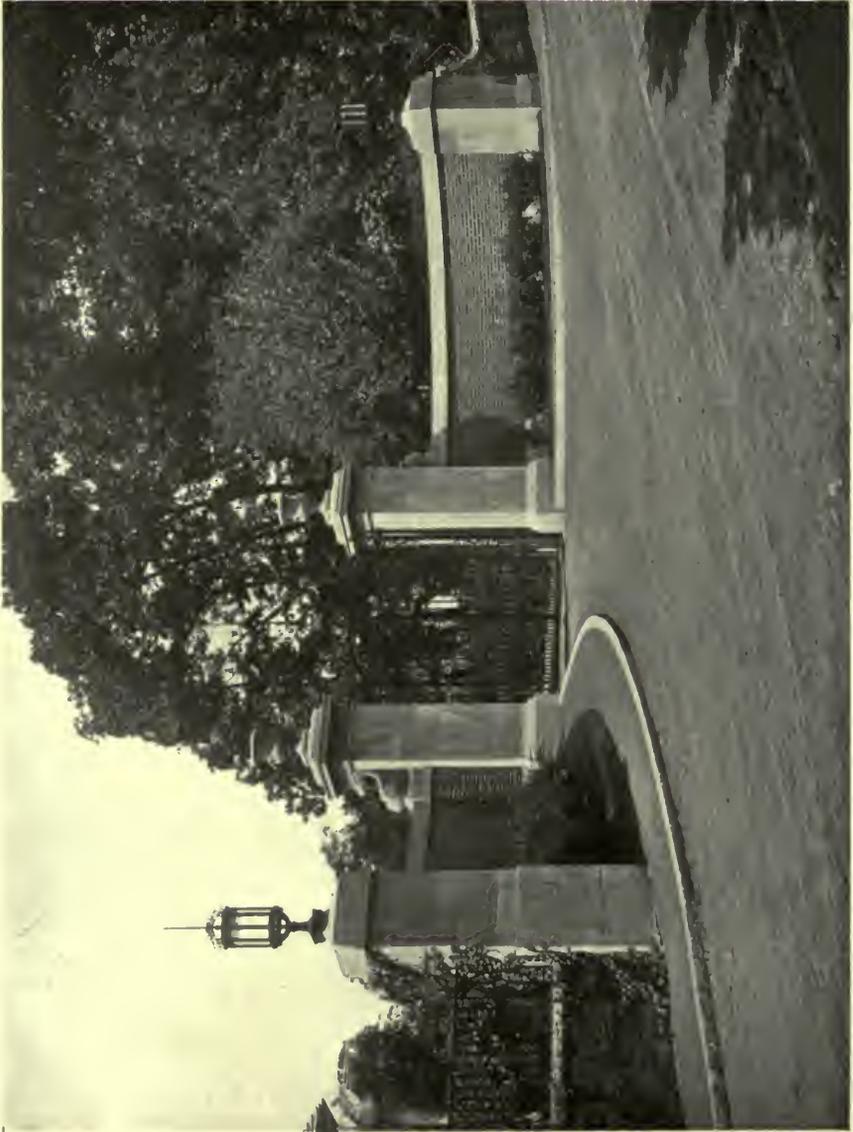
Chas. A. Platt, Architect.



HALLWAY OF "MAXWELL COURT."

Residence of Robert Maxwell, Rockville, Conn.

Chas. A. Platt, Architect.



THE ENTRANCE GATES OF "MAXWELL COURT."

Residence of Robert Maxwell, Rockville, Conn.

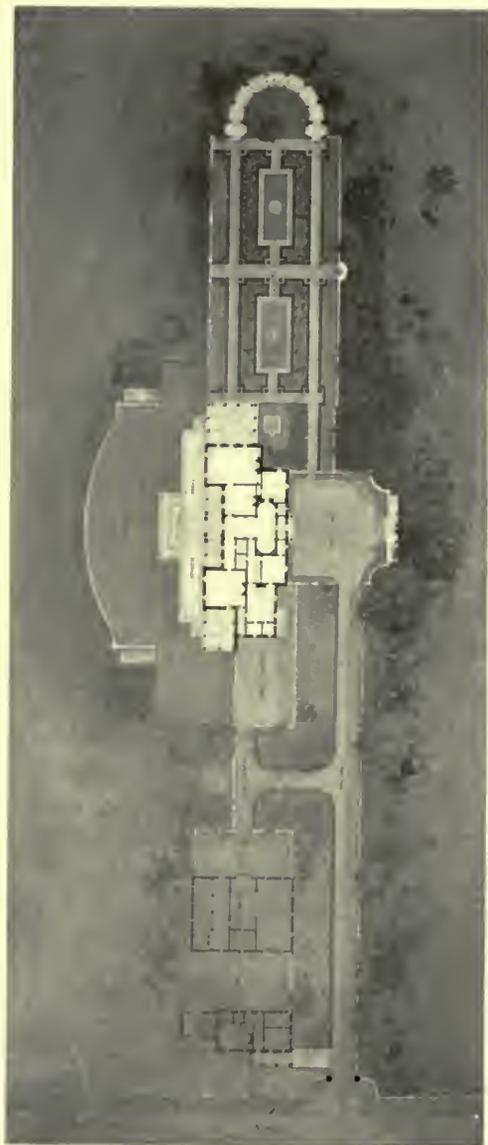
Chas. A. Platt, Architect.



THE HOUSE FROM THE GARDEN, "MAXWELL COURT."

Residence of Robert Maxwell, Rockville, Conn.

Chas. A. Platt, Architect.



THE PLAN OF "MAXWELL COURT."

Residence of Robert Maxwell, Rockville, Conn.

Chas. A. Platt, Architect.

end of the garden, so as to see it the better; and when the garden is crossed for this purpose the view as framed by the pergola is a sufficient reward for the trouble.

## V.

Before passing to a consideration of the general quality of Mr. Platt's work there are two other buildings illustrated herewith, which deserve individual mention. The special interest of these buildings consists in the fact that they are, neither of them, private dwellings and consequently show the issue of Mr. Platt's methods



THE GARDEN OF "MAXWELL COURT."

Residence of Robert Maxwell, Rockville, Conn.

Chas. A. Platt, Architect.

and power of design in other classes of buildings. Of these the more important is the dining and bathing pavilions erected for Mr. Charles M. Schwab at Richmond Beach Park, Staten Island. As is well known Mr. Schwab purchased some years ago a very available stretch of beach on Staten Island, with many acres of park land back of it, in order to make a marine playground for the poor children of New York during the summer months. For the purpose of carrying out this plan a building was needed, in which a thousand children could be fed, and which would also supply office and living accommodations for the staff of permanent employees required for the administration of the charity; and the

structure which Mr. Platt has designed for these requirements is one of the most original and brilliant, as well as one of the most beautiful of his achievements. It consists of a long colonnade, open both on the sea and the land side, and finished at the end by two pavilions. The pavilion to the left is used for offices and living rooms; the pavilion to the right for the pantry, kitchen and the like. The tables for the luncheon to be served to the children will be placed in the space enclosed by the colonnade. This arrangement is not only as convenient as any other, and gives the children a cool and spacious place in which to eat, but it has the great ad-



THE LIVING ROOM OF "MAXWELL COURT."

Residence of Robert Maxwell, Rockville, Conn.

Chas. A. Platt, Architect.

vantage of affording a platform from which all the beauties of the situation and all the amusements, which the beach and the playground afford, are centered and composed. The outlook toward the sea is entirely free and unembarrassed, as is the outlook on the land side—a fine stretch of green grass, the waters of a lake and beyond the trees and sky. The children can see everything while eating their lunch, and can run off thereafter, wheresoever they please, without unnecessary confusion, impediment or delay. The composition of the building itself is compact, without being in the least stiff. The impression it produces is of a dignity corresponding with the almost institutional nature of the charity, yet

it is also gracious, and within the colonnade, the effect is even gay and exhilarating. Its gracious and hospitable aspect will of course, be very much enhanced, as soon as the shrubs, vines and trees, which are an important part of the plan, have been planted and have reached a sufficient growth.

The other special building to which attention should be particularly directed is the Rockville Public Library. The small American public libraries have tended to assume, unfortunately, something of the character of sarcophagi, and have been about as far as possible from presenting an inviting appearance to prospective



DINING-ROOM OF "MAXWELL COURT."

Residence of Robert Maxwell, Rockville, Conn.

Chas. A. Platt, Architect.

readers. The architects of these buildings have habitually overlooked the partly domestic character which a small building devoted to the storing, distribution and reading of books should assume, and have designed little school pieces of institutional architecture. In the case of the Rockville Library the design conforms strictly, too strictly, to the institutional type. It is a classic, marble building, situated high above the street, and approached by a broad flight of steps. But while there might have been more propriety in a more modest material and style, the building is none the less a peculiarly successful, and in its way appropriate essay in classic



Richmond Beach Park, Staten Island.

THE DINING PAVILION.

Chas. A. Platt, Architect.



THE DINING PAVILION.

Richmond Beach Park, Staten Island.

Chas. A. Platt, Architect.



THE DINING PAVILION.

Richmond Beach Park, Staten Island.

Chas. A. Platt, Architect.



THE DINING PAVILION, FROM ACROSS THE LAKE.  
Richmond Beach Park, Staten Island.

Chas. A. Platt, Architect.

design. The marble possesses fortunately an exceptionally warm and lively grain and color; the scale of the detail is admirably bold and telling; and the design itself, while as tight as a classic design must and should be, is still opened up and relieved by the large, round-arched windows and the small panes of glass. These windows help to give the building something of the inviting aspect, which, as we have said, is the dominant effect, which a small library building should possess. At the same time, they suggest an arrangement of the interior which, for a library building of this size, constitutes a desirable innovation—viz., the use of the available space in order to obtain one spacious, well-lighted reading-room. The usual plan has been to make the doorway enter upon a lobby, with a small reading-room on each side; but in the Maxwell library



THE BATHING PAVILION.

Richmond Beach Park, Staten Island.

Chas. A. Platt, Architect.

one enters immediately into a handsome domed room, of sufficient dimensions to render possible an effective architectural and color treatment. The necessary division between the general reading-room and that intended for children is obtained by the placing of a screen at one end, after the manner of the old English halls.

## VI.

Early in this paper I mentioned the consistency of Mr. Platt's work, as one of its marked characteristics—a consistency that has been brought about both by the careful personal study, which he has bestowed upon his designs, and by an insistent temperamental demand for a quality in style which may be best described as the classic quality. The use of this phrase in relation to Mr. Platt's work is, however, open to misinterpretation, because the classic

quality means a very different quality to different people; and to remove this ambiguity, the sense in which Mr. Platt's designs may be said to possess the classic quality must be carefully defined.

As applied to modern work the word "classic" has practically come to mean one or all of several methods of sacrificing architectural propriety and individuality to some kind of rigid and irrelevant formality of design. This use of the word has its justification in the character of most of the neo-classic buildings erected during the last century. The adoption by the architect, particularly the American architect, of the classic forms, has generally placed upon his imagination a charge which distinctly he could not afford to pay; and while this charge has not always left him bankrupt, it



THE MAXWELL MEMORIAL LIBRARY.

Rockville, Conn.

Chas. A. Platt, Architect.

has frequently left him artistically very poverty-stricken. Some architects have used the classic forms in order to obtain at any cost a grandiose and stately effect. Others have tried with much assiduity and care to avoid this pretentious and florid inconsequence, but have succeeded only in imparting a cold reticence to their buildings, and an inconspicuous refinement to the detail. It has seemed at times that the attempt, not merely to use the classic forms, but to obtain the classic quality, could not result at its best in anything better than an impersonal impeccability of design.

The consequence naturally is that in the minds of many people an antagonism has been created between any suggestion of classicism in architecture and the use of those styles which lend themselves more easily to free personal expression. The classical is



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Rockville, Conn.

Chas. A. Platt, Architect.



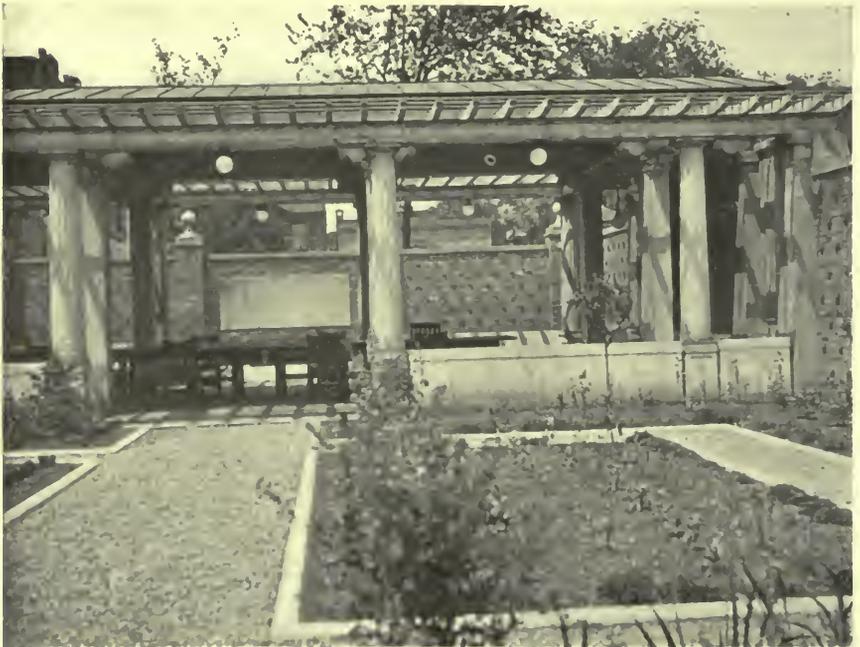
PERGOLA OF A CITY GARDEN.

Yondotega Club, Detroit, Mich.

Chas. A. Platt, Architect.

identified with the unnatural and the inappropriate, while other styles which break freely into picturesque forms are supposed to possess the original personal and vernacular quality. The architect who purveys the classical thing is considered to have sacrificed his chances of individual expression to a lifeless architectural convention, which even if sincerely and intelligently adopted, condemns him to a mere frigid correctness of design.

It may be said in favor of this statement of the antagonism between the classical and the personal quality in architecture, that it is assuredly much easier to imprint a personal stamp upon the so-

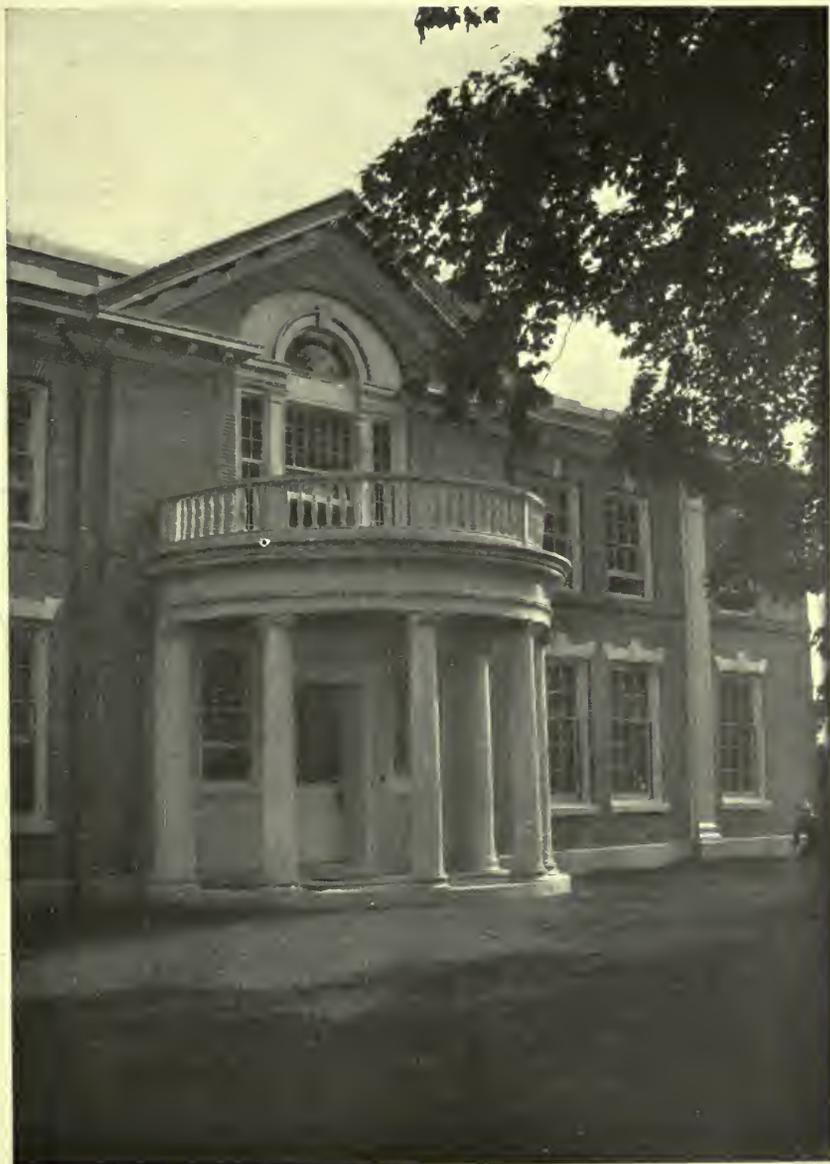


GARDEN OF THE YONDOTEGA CLUB.

Detroit, Mich.

Chas. A. Platt, Architect.

called freer architectural forms than upon those forms which have been derived directly or indirectly from classical antiquity; but although it is easier to handle the more fluid forms and although a smaller talent can use them without incurring the same heavier penalties in case of failure, it is absurd to identify the free use of these fluid forms exclusively with the personal quality in architectural design. If the personal quality is more conspicuous, when embodied in such forms, it is only because this quality is obtained under such conditions at a smaller cost. To give a personal note to a classical composition requires more careful study and a more



RESIDENCE OF FRANK CHENEY, JR.

South Manchester, Conn.

Chas. A. Platt, Architect.

strictly architectural imagination, and, when achieved, the result, as we shall see, is of higher value.

Disregarding for the moment the relation between structure and design, the classic quality in design is, so far as appearance goes, the strictly architectural quality—the quality which makes for completeness of form. It is an utterly different thing from the impersonal impeccability of design, with which it is frequently identified. Every architect who has been thoroughly trained should understand the value of the different elements which make up an architectural composition—the value of mass, of proportion, of scale,



MANTELPIECE IN THE LIVING ROOM,

Residence of Frank Cheney, Jr. South Manchester, Conn.

Chas. A. Platt, Architect.

and of light and shade. Such understanding goes to the making of the classic quality in style; but an additional gift is needed which is nevertheless the whole thing. This additional gift may be defined as the ability completely to compose these elements—to give measure and balance to the whole design, so that every part of the building, every condition of its use and site will contribute to a single, consistent and appropriate effect. This quality is in a sense independent of the models from which the actual forms are borrowed. It may be as present in a Jacobean manor house as in an Italian palace. While an architect may and should have his well-founded preferences, the most important point is not that certain special forms should be used, but that the strictly architectural merit of

complete form should be resident in the building and should be the constructive influence—dominating expression, materials, proportions and style.

Of course, this classic quality in design is not the whole thing. It is the quality, which rather helps an architect to work out an idea than helps him to originate one; but it is no paradox to say that at the present stage of American architectural development the man, who can work out good architectural ideas with success plays a more useful part than the man, who has more originality but less power of patiently achieving the full effect of his conception. Every successful solution of an architectural problem must be the result of some power of original vision, because every architectural problem



RESIDENCE OF FRANK CHENEY, JR.

South Manchester, Conn.

Chas. A. Platt, Architect.

has to satisfy peculiar conditions; but as long as an American architect is sufficiently flexible in his working ideas to meet a new problem with a new solution, he need not bother himself about any other kind of originality. His effort and purpose should rather be to develop most conscientiously the ideas of which he is possessed and the forms which he has mastered, so that his buildings will possess the quality of technical completeness—of formal perfection.

Mr. Platt's work embodies this ideal of technical completeness and formal perfection to a very unusual extent. The exhaustive personal consideration which every problem submitted to him receives, and his distinct gift for the proprieties of form stamp his designs with a certain individual elegance of style. That Mr. Platt's work should have assumed this character is all the more remark-

able, because Mr. Platt started his work as a painter of landscapes, and would naturally, it might be supposed, have had a leaning towards picturesque as compared to formal design. But just as he was too well-informed a painter to seek for picturesque landscapes, so he is too well-informed an architect not to discern the artificiality of merely picturesque houses. The picturesque idea is not pictorial; it is not architectural; it is literary. In its own way it pro-



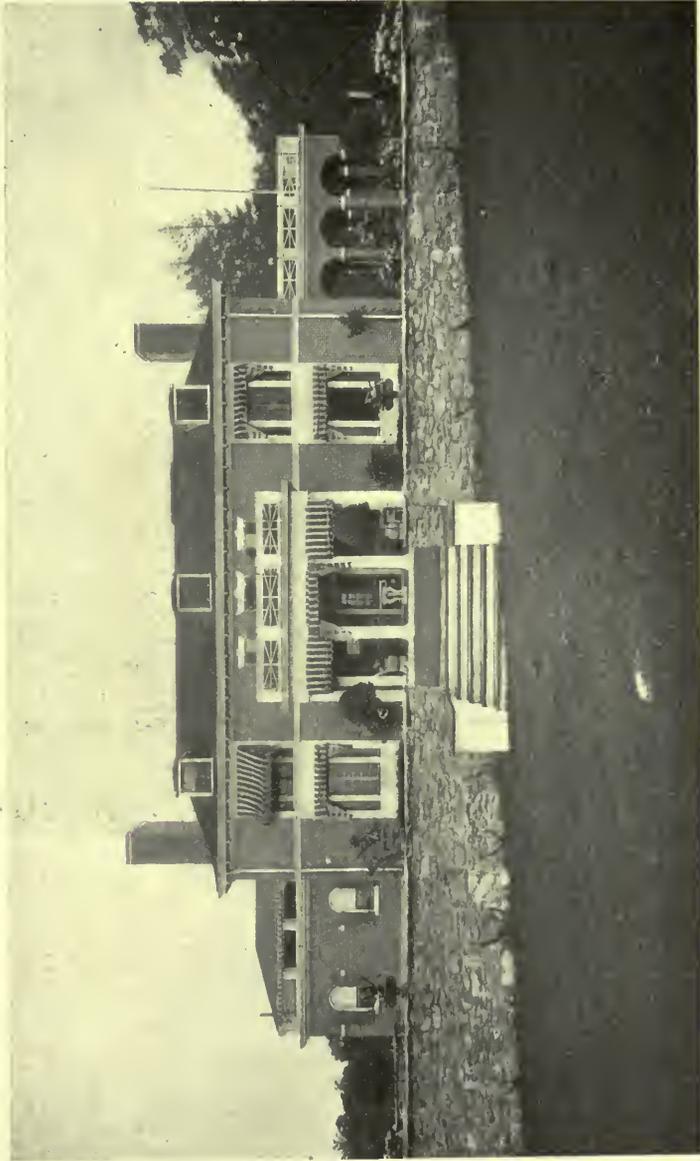
STAIRWAY IN THE RESIDENCE OF FRANK CHENEY, JR.

South Manchester, Conn.

Chas. A. Platt, Architect.

duces as much architectural impropriety as does the most frigid classicism. There can be no propriety of form, and not very much real individuality of style without the formal completeness and consistency, which I have described as the classic quality in design.

The peculiar value then of Mr. Platt's work consists of this union of completeness of form with propriety of effect. At a time when much conscientious architectural designing is spoiled by irrelevant



"NORTH FARM," THE RESIDENCE OF HOWARD L. CLARK.

Bristol, R. I.

Chas. A. Platt, Architect.

ideas and an erroneous point of departure, he stands for the thoroughgoing and successful application of pertinent ideas. The great need of American architecture is not individuality but style—the style that comes from the sympathetic use of the most appropriate historic models. For without this general sense of style, it will be impossible to establish a good tradition of form; and in the absence of such a tradition of form architectural design cannot escape from an anarchy of invention and imitation, which does and will sterilize so much well-intentioned effort. This general sense of style



"NORTH FARM," THE RESIDENCE OF HOWARD L. CLARK.

Bristol, R. I.

Chas. A. Platt, Architect

is both communicable and constructive. It constitutes good types with which people can become familiar, and which become established as standards in the popular mind. The more familiar, and consequently, the less numerous these types are, the better; and the individual architect should voluntarily submit to the limitation of such established types, so that both he and his clients may have the guidance of a local architectural tradition. Since the best work in architecture cannot be accomplished, unless such types can be taken for granted, an architect, who, like Mr. Platt, persistently and successfully endeavors to domesticate a thoroughly good type is making a valuable contribution to American architectural progress.

*Herbert Croly.*

## THE PARIS HOTEL DE VILLE.

**T**HE history of the Hotel de Ville is the history of Paris. Its origin and the first feeble attempts at municipal organization are lost in the stormy, illiterate days of the Middle Ages, in so far as written records are concerned; for little more than remote traditions of the infancy of ancient Lutetia can now be found in the old chronicles. Still, at the time of Roman supremacy, when the Thermes of Julian flourished, of which some traces remain at the Musée de Cluny, when Roman Lutetia was covered with temples and statues of the gods of Mythology, a municipal building existed for the assemblies of those ancient councillors; but the exact spot where it stood has long been forgotten. Under the Frankish kings such an edifice also existed for the meetings of the Ediles. Ages ago Germain de Brice wrote as follows: "The Hotel de Ville of Paris stood at a remote period in the Isle du Palais beside the river; some remains of this ancient structure were formerly visible in the Rue d'Enfer (long since disappeared) near to the Church of Notre Dame, which shows that it was not important; so another site had to be found."

It is also unknown at what exact date this first "Parloir des Bourgeois" was replaced by another house that was selected in the St. Jaques quarter near to the monastery of the Jacobins, which was formerly situated there. But as the tide of civic and commercial life flowed to the right bank of the Seine, the "Parloir des Bourgeois" was compelled to be "in the movement," as the French say. The old home of the burgesses in the Rue des Grès was abandoned, and a new place of assembly was established in the Valée de Misère, near to the Great Châtelet, and close to the whilom little church dedicated to St. Leuffroi. At last, in the year 1357, the "Prévôt des Marchands," Etienne Marcel, acquired a building in the name of the city, situated on the Place de Grève. It was known as the "Maison des Piliers." This house was transformed into the new "Parloir des Bourgeois." Nevertheless, it became, ere long, insufficient for the requirements of the civic dignitaries of that period, for less than two centuries afterwards—in 1529—the municipal corporation obtained leave from Francis I. to buy several neighboring houses in order to enlarge the city hall.

On July 15th, 1553, the first stone was laid of the building that was henceforth to be called the Hotel de Ville, and which has survived until recently, notwithstanding many additions and enlargements. Operations of reconstruction were carried on from 1837 to 1846, but still the principal façade and the two-pavilions were preserved.

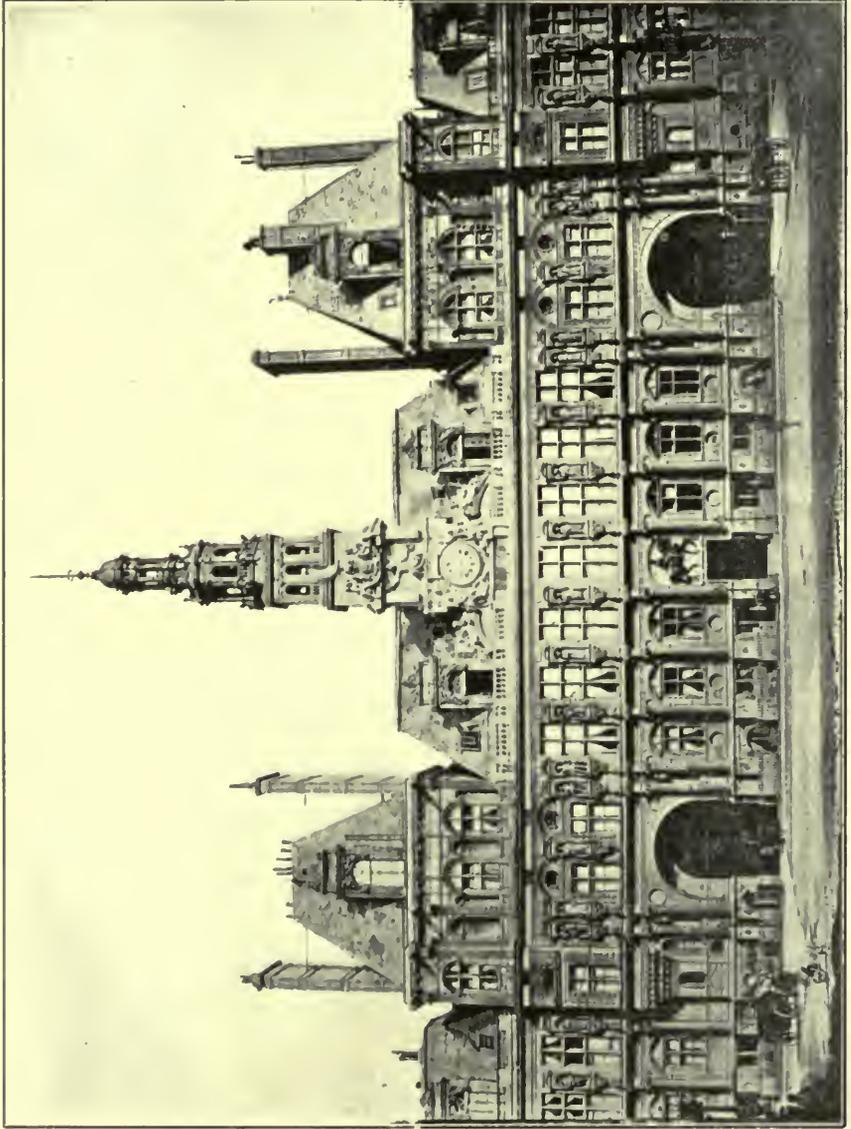


THE OLD HOTEL DE VILLE, PARIS.  
(From an old print.)

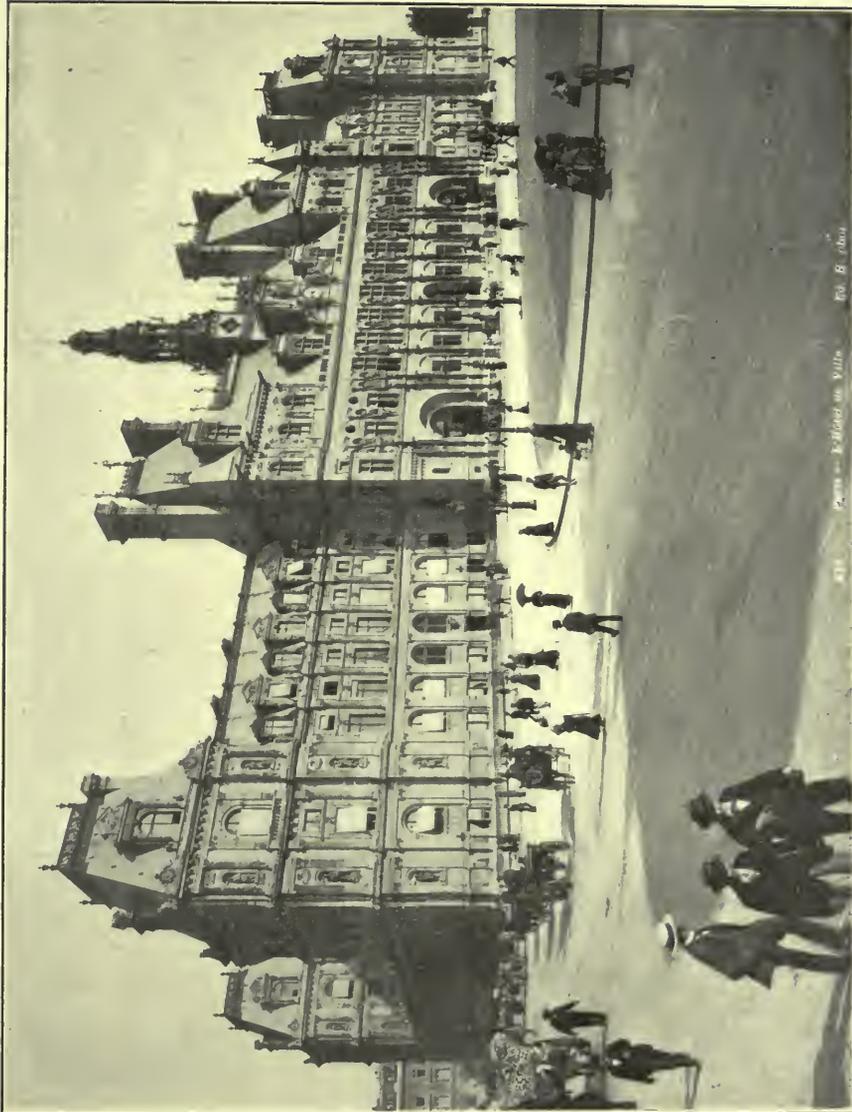


*Vue de l'Hôtel de Ville de Paris, prise de l'Église de la Vierge, le 20 mai 1834.*

THE OLD HOTEL DE VILLE, PARIS.  
(From an old print.)



HOTEL DE VILLE, PARIS.  
(As it was before its destruction by fire in 1871.)



THE PRESENT HOTEL DE VILLE, PARIS.

The Place de Grève was the forum of the Parisians, for here Marcel, the famous "Prévôt des Marchands," harrassed the people, and Charles the Bad and the Regent, later Charles V., came at times to excite the passions of the populace. In those early days there stood an old stone cross on the Quai Pelletier, bordering the Place de Grève. Before this cross prisoners who had been condemned to death, knelt and said their prayers before being executed. Heretics, Huguenots, supposed sorcerers and sorceresses, and criminals—among them the famous Cartouche—suffered death there in hundreds. During the Revolution the guillotine daily claimed victims.

The law of the 28th Pluviose, An. VIII. (1799), brought into the hands of the Prefect of the Seine the administration of the Department of the City of Paris, with an exceptional organization made complete by a general council and municipal council. In proposing the amount required for the reconstruction of the Hotel de Ville after the war of 1870-71, a writer remarked: "This great organization for the government of Paris should be reflected in the magnificence and grandeur of the edifice."

It would be impossible in the space at my disposal to enter fully into the details of the architecture and decoration of the seat of the government of Paris before its destruction during those terrible days in May, 1871—the closing hours of the Commune. I can remember, though a mere child at that time, the death struggle in the streets of Paris between the remnants of the insurgents fighting at bay behind their barricades against the overflowing tide of the columns of the Versailles troops. I can hear once more the roll of the drums and at times a bugle call as the soldiers pressed on from street to boulevard. Now and then the patter of musketry told that the "Fédérés" were still holding out in some of the central parts of old Paris, and when night fell a ghastly glimmer lighted the shroud of darkness that hung like a pall, mingled with the smoke of battle, over the dead strewing the thoroughfares of the fated city. It was their funeral pyre. The light grew in intensity until the majestic capital stood forth clearly in the glare of the conflagration like an unearthly vision. Petroleum, like "Greek fire" of old, had done its terrible work of destruction. The flames rolled onwards before the night breeze like the waves of the ocean, and leaping fitfully upwards in angry tongues of fire scattered cascades of sparks and embers. The waters of the Seine seemed turned by the reflection of the appalling scene into molten gold, and the greatest edifices of Paris burnt on throughout that night like torches. When all was over, nothing remained of many of these structures but their skeletons, while others lay in heaps of ruins. Of the Hotel de Ville there survived

only the outside walls, scathed and calcined by fire, but too massive in their solid masonry to fall. Such was the fate of the Hotel de Ville, the embodiment of the history and traditions of the city.

It would evidently be beyond the scope of a magazine article to write a full description of the art-treasures, the mural decorations, statues, and frescoes and other ornamentations of the former home of the ediles of the city before 1871. The richness of the interior was very remarkable; and a passing notice may be given of the allegorical ceilings by Ingres, the frescoes of Vaucheter, and the masterly work of Delacroix. This magnificent



HOTEL DE VILLE, PARIS.

(Staircase leading to the Prefect's departments.)

ceiling—in the painter's best style—represented Peace—a female figure reclining upon clouds, and watching the return of Plenty, accompanied by a procession of the Muses. The "Salon de l'Empereur" was a sumptuous hall richly decorated and devoted to the glorification of the Empire with, among others, a celebrated mural painting showing the Great Napoleon, figuratively, leaving St. Helena, and rising above the clouds to immortality. Of the numerous statues by noted masters to perpetuate the memory of distinguished citizens of Paris, only a few can be recalled. There is a long list, beginning with the great tribune of the people, Etienne Marcel, and descending almost to the present time: Jean Goujon,



THE GRAND STAIRCASE. HOTEL DE VILLE, PARIS.

the sixteenth century sculptor, the disciple of Michael Angelo; Boileau, Molière, La Reynie, the lieutenant of Louis XIV.; Voltaire, Condorcet, the Abbé de l'Épée, and Levoisier, such are a few of the names selected from many. A number of these statues were restored, others replaced on the rebuilding of the edifice after the Commune. The work began about 1873, after several plans had been discussed, and the new Hotel de Ville was completed on a scale of greater magnificence than ever, for the ceremony of inauguration took place only in 1882. It is constructed in the style of the Renaissance, and the architecture is very rich and ornamental. This palatial structure is rectangular in form, with four



HOTEL DE VILLE, PARIS—MUNICIPAL COUNCIL CHAMBER.

façades facing respectively the Place de l'Hotel de Ville, the Rue de Rivoli, the Place Lobau, and the quay on the Seine. In the gardens opposite the apartments of M. de Selves, the Prefect of the Seine, there stands an interesting bronze statue of Etienne Marcel; while the three courts, ornamented with the statues of Parisian celebrities present a striking and beautiful appearance.

Note the admirable entrance and staircase with equestrian statue leading to the official apartments of that high state functionary; then the Cabinet of the Prefect, with its paintings, its crystal candelabrum and carved ceiling. The Salle des Séances or the Assembly Room, with the President's raised seat, the orators' tribune, and the



HOTEL DE VILLE, PARIS—SALLE HENRI IV.

This apartment contains a ceiling by Bonnat, and ceilings by Besnard and Jules Lefevre; also numerous panels on the wall by Buland, Berton, Layrand, Robert Fleury, Francals Pierre Vauthier, etc.

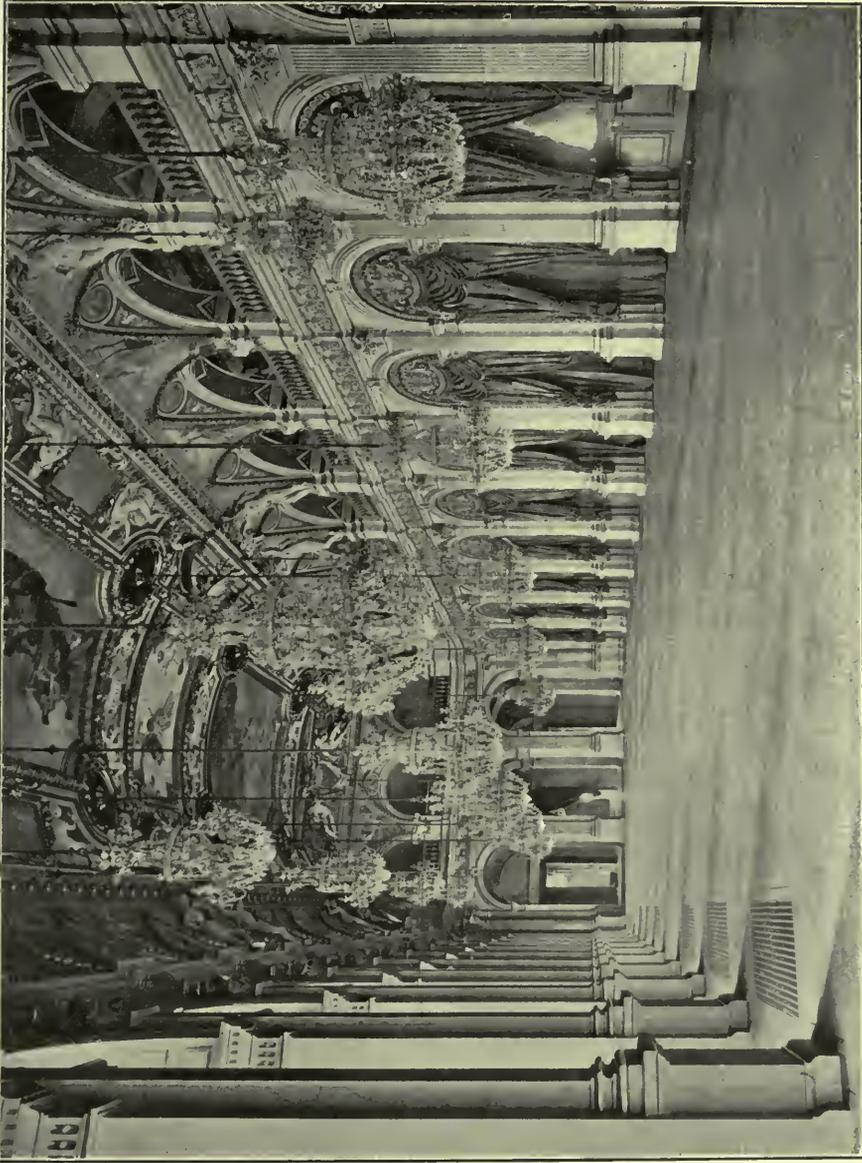


MANTELPIECE IN THE SALON DES SCIENCES, HOTEL DE VILLE.



HOTEL DE VILLE, PARIS—SALLE JEAN PAUL LAURENS.

The frescoes shown are by Jean Paul Laurens. The fresco to the left represents Louis VI. granting to the Parisians their first charter in 1108; the center fresco, Etienne Marcel saving the life of the Regent, January, 1558; the fresco to the right, the beheading of Jean Darc and eleven nobles in 1384.



HOTEL DE VILLE, PARIS—THE "SALLE DES FETES."

richly carved ceiling will interest the visitor, for here the councillors of Paris assemble with their President, the meetings often being lively and the discussions stormy. The library is more austere in decoration; but the Cabinet of the President of the Council General, with pictures and draperies and the handsome Empire writing-table, is certainly an elegant and comfortable retreat for that dignitary. The top of the staircase leading to the apartment of the Prefect, the marble steps, the finely ornamental balustrade, the pillars, carvings and statues, ensconced in niches, are most rich in ornament



HOTEL DE VILLE, PARIS—THE VESTIBULE.

and very imposing. The Salle des Prévôts with its rows of colonnades might be thought almost oriental in inspiration with its arabesques, the delicate tracery of Moorish architecture, such as may be seen at the Alhambra at Grenada, with its light, airy aspect. But, perhaps, the Hotel de Ville at night is the most effective, nay wonderful sight; when one of those brilliant and gorgeous balls are given in the magnificent Salle des Fêtes, on the first floor, facing the Place Lobau. On these occasions (a reception or a ball) many of the notabilities of the city are present with their families, for these entertainments are on a vast scale, sometimes several thousand persons being invited. To witness the procession of carriages drive up to the main entrance; and the spectacle of the

toilettes, the decorations, the uniforms, the staircase covered by the moving throng, the brilliant illumination of the entire building is a sight long to be remembered.

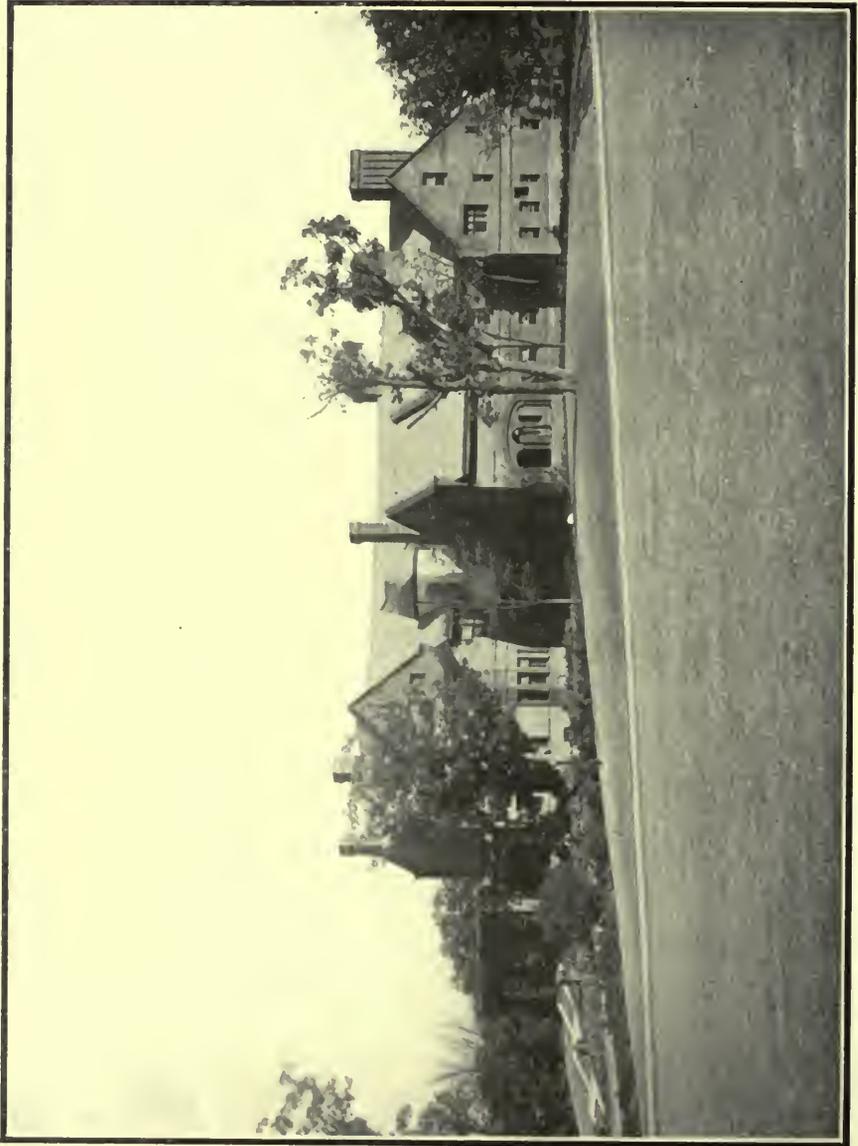
A few words in conclusion. When the Roman Catholic Church, representing the Royalists of France, decided to build on the heights of Montmartre, a magnificent cathedral, and poured its millions (out of the pockets of the poor, for the most part) into the fund for the erection of the Sacre-Coeur, now towering over the city like a menace to the New Republic the Republicans of Paris



HOTEL DE VILLE—THE LIBRARY.

built their fine city hall. Situated on the spot where the most revolutionary events took place, it is, in a manner, a rival building to the colossal structure on Montmartre. The Republicans of Paris in having their seat of Government decorated by such artists as Detaille and Willette and Cheret intend to make the Hotel de Ville to Parisians what Versailles was to the Royalists.

*J. D'Arcy Morrell.*



The estate of J. H. Moore, at Lake Geneva, Wisconsin.  
EXTERIOR OF "LORAMOOR."

Jarvis Hunt, Architect.

**“LORAMOOR,” ESTATE OF JAS. HOBART MOORE, ESQ.,  
LAKE GENEVA, WISCONSIN.**

**I**N discussing country houses and measuring their merits, a special attitude must be assumed in judging them. It is special because in criticizing other types of building, we do not find so prominent the one element which enters largely into the problem of the country house. There are, of course, buildings of a very different nature from the domestic of which we are speaking, that press very similar points for solution, but the methods pursued in solving them differ widely, which leaves them out of our present argument. Broadly considering the matter and arriving at the main point directly, it is plain that unlike other buildings, a country house demands of the architect the consideration of something more than strictly architectural conditions.

The architect is shown a plot of ground in the country whereon his client desires a dwelling erected for the purpose of living during the summer months, and of having at all times a place to retreat for rest and recreation. This primary reason of his client's desire to build a house, the desire to get away from the restrictions of city life, should be the guiding note of the architect's efforts. That there should be few reminders of city conditions embodied in the establishments built in the country is only the fulfillment of the very important law of fitness, as fundamental in architecture as it is in everything else. Of all things, the particular question of propriety in design relative to existing and proposed environment, applies here with doubled force. The right-minded architect will readily recognize this supreme necessity, because he himself feels it. It is a thing characteristic of the problem connected with the building of country establishments, in that it offers the architect an unusual latitude for expression. It does not confine him strictly to architectural considerations, but in addition it gives him a chance to show his appreciation of the picturesque. This opportunity thrills him, perhaps, to an extent that may be paralleled in the emotions of a painter upon viewing a beautiful subject for a landscape composition. He should not allow his architectural lore to emasculate his original picturesqueness of conception. If he does so it may be because he is insensible to the true motive of all art, or perhaps, because he has been over-educated. Excessive knowledge of architectural history may be responsible for the great number of stereotyped buildings that are built now-a-days. There is too much "Academy" architecture; too much so-called "Classic" that is in-

discriminately stuck everywhere regardless of conditions; too much school and too little individualism; too much tradition and not enough originality; too much of the profession and not enough of the man. If the poetical spirit is driven out of architecture by commercialism in the city, there is still, happily, enough of it possible in this interesting subject of building country houses; and the architect of a constitution susceptible to the impressions, which the very nature of such problems must give and necessarily impel him to regard in his work, is certainly to be congratulated, for he is then an artist.

To be less speculative let us turn to a comparison. An object



THE PIAZZA OF "LORAMOOR."

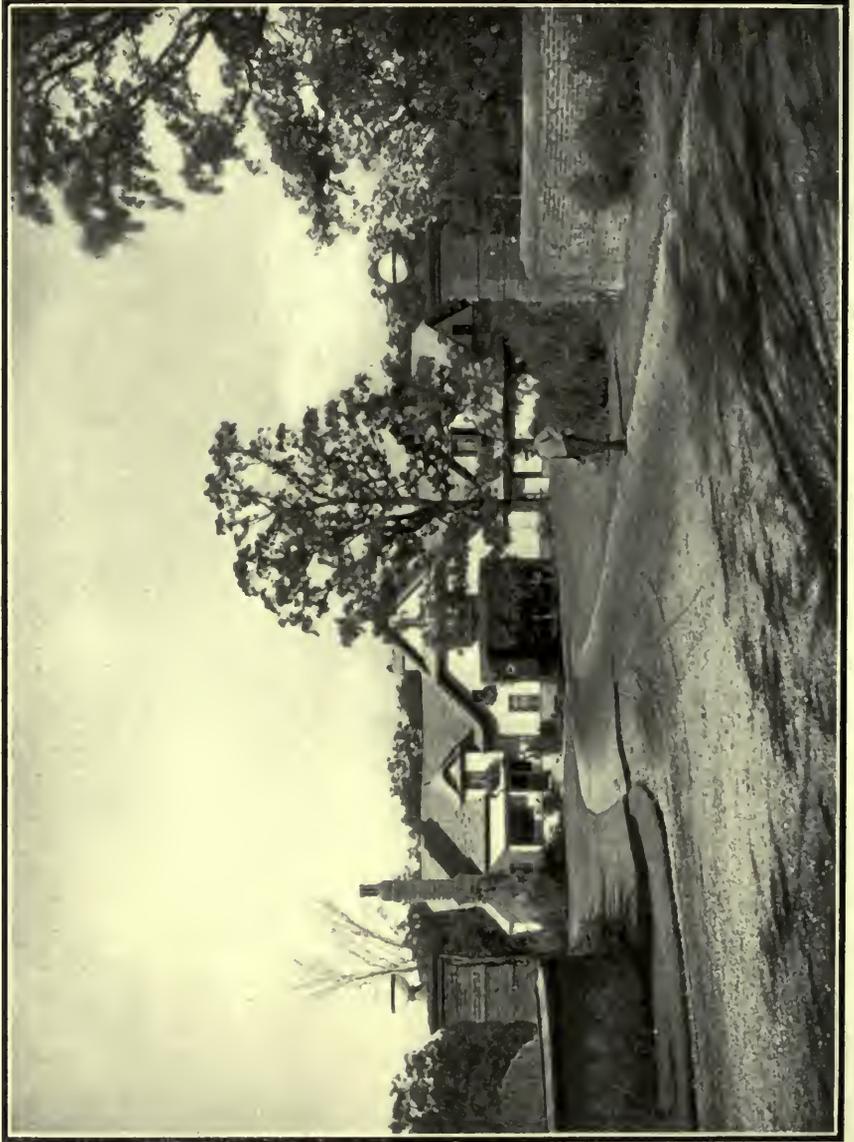
The estate of J. H. Moore, at Lake Geneva, Wisconsin.

Jarvis Hunt, Architect.

lesson of unusual force on the question of right attitude towards the problem was afforded the writer in a recent visit to Lake Geneva in Wisconsin. One of the houses, figuring in the issue is "Loramoor" which we are presently to describe, and the other is a conspicuous classic dwelling in the same neighborhood. Strangely enough these two houses are alone among the many in this district in their pretensions to architectural merit. The two drawn into comparison cannot fail to impress the beholder that Mr. Hunt, the architect of "Loramoor," designed his building with a spirit much more appropriate than that displayed in the other extremely formal and academic house. We can note immediately how the one architect

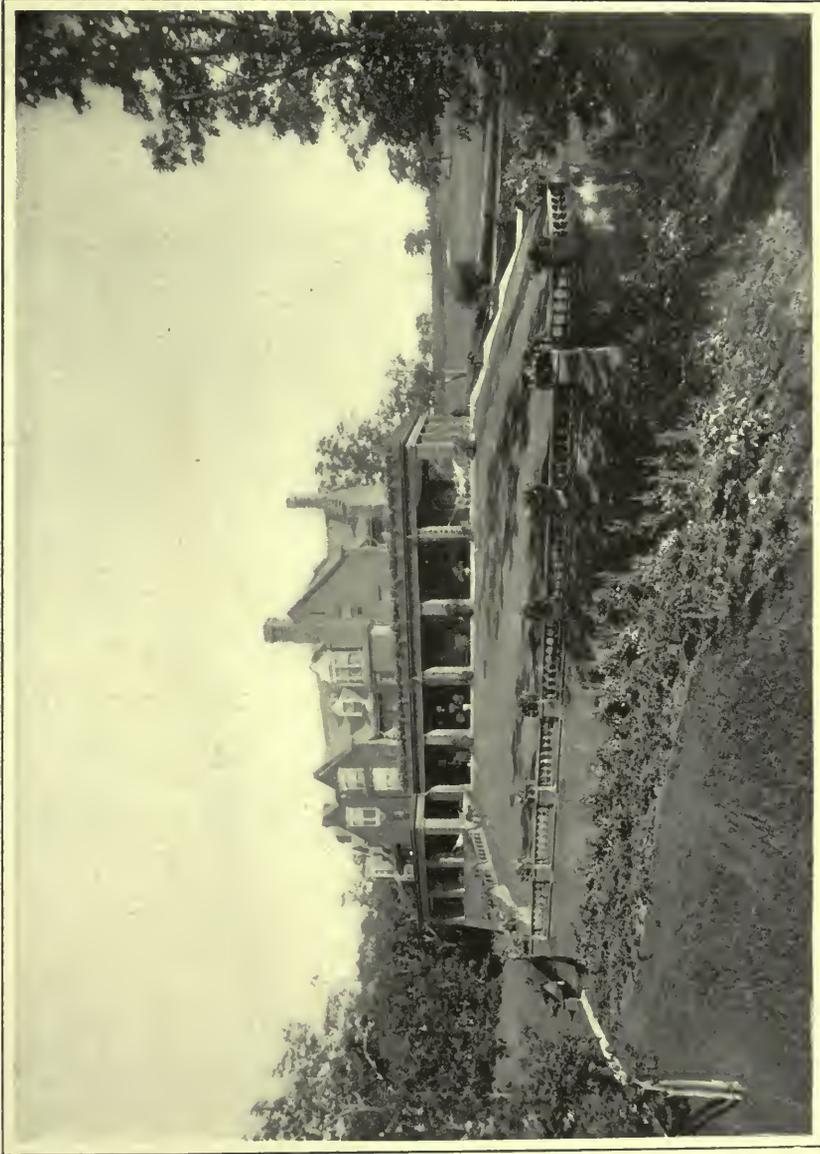
carefully considered what his trust meant and how accurately he surveyed the whole situation, while the other seems to have set at naught all regard for the site of his building, with the result that we find a cold-looking, severely uncongenial design staring out from the east shore, like a figure of pride disdaining the sympathy which it cannot get. Credit may be due to the architect, for a clean-cut piece of interesting stone work, but none is certainly due him for the manner in which he handled the problem intrusted to him. If the house stood upon some level tract of country, with a broad expanse of green on all sides, affording a ground for formal gardens and broad terraces, the house would appear to better advantage. The lines of the house, contemplated alone, are not bad; its size is generous, perhaps impressive, but it is totally out of harmony with the natural wealth of the country, on the shores of this beautiful lake. This law of fitness, which involves the relationship of buildings with their environment, will not bear violations, except they be tempered with the subtle art, like the Italian palaces.

"At Loramoor" we see how frankly and earnestly the architect set to work to add telling strokes, as it were, to an already interesting picture, making it virile and human; and should it be asked, if a man can be a poet with bricks, mortar and tile; if he can express his regard for the beautiful fully as deeply through the medium of his workers in these materials as a man can through the offices of verse and music; if he can in wielding these bulky mediums tell a story as effectively as a painter with his brush, a response strongly to the affirmative will come from the collection of buildings, comprising the estate of Mr. Jas. Hobert Moore on the south shore. Arriving at the gate lodge, which is most picturesque, with a quaint and appropriate symbolism of wide open arms, suggested by its peculiar shape and plan; the view of the whole grounds produces a sensation in the beholder that would scarcely be felt if the buildings had not so much of earnest sympathy with their surroundings. They are one with each other, and all together one with the whole spirit of the lake. These buildings form a unique family, and the term "family" is easily appropriate, since their consistency is very striking. All three are more or less alike, the same materials entering into the composition of them all, and there are solid reasons for their being designed as they are, particularly the house and the stable. If time and space permitted, the writer would be tempted (for the purpose of convincing our radical contemporaries) to give certain views on the subject of originality in design, and its true meaning, but as a limit is set, the pictures alone must show how much stronger is the conservatism of the buildings at "Loramoor," contrasted with those architectural contortions of that school of radical reform, whose aim appears rather to be eccen-



The estate of J. H. Moore, at Lake Geneva, Wisconsin.  
THE LODGE AT "LORAMOOR."

Jarvis Hunt, Architect.



THE EXTERIOR OF "LORAMOOR."

The estate of J. H. Moore, at Lake Geneva, Wisconsin.

Jarvis Hunt, Architect.

tricity than beauty. "Loramoor" is a work representing uncommonly a sane originality of thought; a work that is permeated through with the individuality of its architect; and although he drew his inspiration from that period in England when her architecture was undergoing a transition from the old or Gothic to the new or Renaissance, it is impossible to deprive him of his title to originality. Though candidly reflecting the Elizabethan spirit, almost to a degree that would lead one to think it bodily transplanted from England, it will always remain the result of brilliant original thought. The form of the building, its carefully studied color



STAIRWAY AT "LORAMOOR."

The estate of J. H. Moore, at Lake Geneva, Wisconsin.

Jarvis Hunt, Architect.

values, its cleverly conceived roof lines, all testify admirably to original effort.

Specific description of the house seems scarcely necessary in view of the photographs reproduced with this article, but a few points about it may be interesting to know, and will aid the reader in understanding the whys and wherefores of certain peculiarities in the design, among which the most notable and the first perhaps to attract attention is the form of the plan. The V-shape was adopted, because it met the conditions of the problem best. Located on the south shore of the lake, the house, to face the water, would naturally obtain an undesirable exposure to the north; so that, as a compromise between giving the best, if not all the rooms,

a prospect out onto the lake; the benefit of the sun for as many hours of the day as possible, and the advantage of the best direction for breezes, the V-form of plan, very obtuse in its angle, was found available. As the house has been located to assist the plan in obtaining these advantages, the result is that every room in the house, from the living room in the first story to the servants' rooms in the third, is afforded a view of the lake. The sun cheers the living room, which is in the west wing, all day long, and the dining-room, which is in the east wing, secures it at breakfast time and again at dinner; and as for the rooms upstairs, they all get a sunny



THE BILLIARD ROOM OF "LORAMOOR."

The estate of J. H. Moore, at Lake Geneva, Wisconsin.

Jarvis Hunt, Architect.

exposure, especially those over the living room. The arrangements in the plan for securing every available breeze for each room have also met with great success. Such a plan, too, afforded opportunities for a design of unusual interest, as the photographs amply show; and let the reader supplement them by picturing to himself the pleasing color values that exist in the brick surfaces and the white plaster bays against them; and the quaint dormers against a background of a soft, variegating gray green shingle tile, and these together, in their quiet harmony, with the tones of the natural foliage around the house. The architect availed himself of the fine quality of texture and color in the rainwashed brick, and laid them



THE DINING-ROOM OF "LORAMOOR."

The estate of J. H. Moore, at Lake Geneva, Wisconsin.

Jarvis Hunt, Architect.



"THE LIVING-ROOM OF "LORAMOOR."

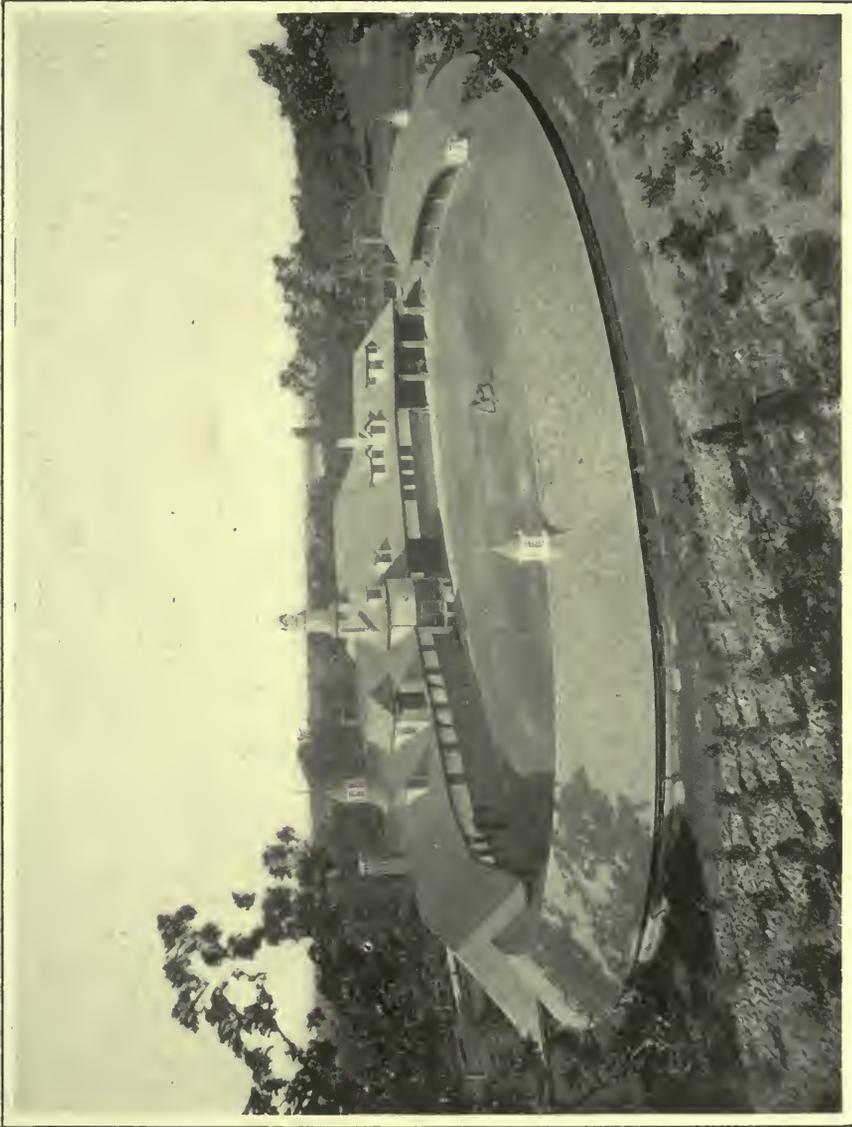
The estate of J. H. Moore, at Lake Geneva, Wisconsin.

Jarvis Hunt, Architect.



MANTELPiece IN THE LIVING-ROOM AT "LORAMoor."  
The estate of J. H. Moore, at Lake Geneva, Wisconsin.

Jarvis Hunt, Architect.



THE STABLE AT "LORAMOOR."

Estate of J. H. Moore, at Lake Geneva, Wisconsin.

Jarvis Hunt, Architect.

up in thick and deeply raked out mortar joints, making a surface presenting a beautiful tone between the variegations of soft grays, quiet blues and dull reds. The effect is extremely picturesque; and not a small part of this pleasant effect is due to the soft lines everywhere apparent in the composition. A novel and quaint feature, perhaps more evident in the Gate lodge than here in the house, is the careful study made of the roof. All ridges, gable ends, hips and valleys are tempered with a curve so that the dormers and gables appear to grow naturally out of the roof. Ordinarily, the roof of a house is thought of no more than that it is a lid, but at "Loramoor" the architect perceived the necessity of careful study of this feature, owing to the fact that the main road leading to the estate is on a high ridge, and that upon approaching, the roofs of the buildings are the first to appear in sight. This fact can be seen in the photograph of the stable, which is taken from this road and which gives almost a bird's-eye view of the arena.

It would require more space than the editor can allot to describe adequately the interior of this interesting house, which is treated in Mr. Hunt's characteristic style. Here, again, is that individuality as prominent as it is where we first view it, upon entering the grounds. Perhaps there are more carvings and mouldings in this house than Mr. Hunt usually likes, but they are used with quiet restraint, subdued in all places by his happy faculty for making things simple. Color, texture, grain, the inherent beauty of the material, are first in his respect. In the hall, however, we find him using Gothic quite freely. This hall is large and of grand proportions, done in quarter-sawed oak and stained black; the walls are of rough plaster, stained in an ox-blood color, which funereal ground is amply enlivened by treating the heavy stair balusters in white enamel. This contrast, as strong as can be made between two colors, may strike one as jarring, but this is a mistake that would be fully realized if one should see the hall itself. At any rate, this study in black and white did not frighten the architect, for we notice that this same idea is introduced in the living room, but with less success, and again in the dining-room where, however, the light and shade are concentrated, as shall be described. Its use in the living room, one feels, is not quite as appropriate as in the hall, and although very much unlike Mr. Hunt, it appears more like an architectural whim. But there are so few of these light spots, that they do not detract from—if they do not add to—the attractiveness of the room, which is also done in oak and stained a mouse gray. The walls are hung with a pale red tapestry. The whole room, in fact the whole interior, is characterized by an exceedingly attractive simplicity. The mantel-piece in the nook of this room, simple as it is, is worth considering because its treatment is typical

of the Hunt idea. The breast is ten feet wide, and only consists of a plain shelf with brackets supporting it, but the claim to a high credit is found in the handsome piece of wood above, the surface of which is unbroken except for a shield carved in the center. Not only is this a skillful piece of cabinet work, but one of considerable artistic merit, since the grain is so matched as to make it appear like one beautiful piece of oak.

Returning through the hall, from the living room, a peep to the left shows the billiard room and the den, interesting rooms and highly panelled; but a greater attraction draws one to the dining-room. Fortunately, our photograph shows the room as Mr. Hunt had originally decorated it. Note the simplicity. It is square and panelled in a unique fashion about a third way up; above this is hung, leather of iridescent green, and then above that is a cove losing itself in the ceiling. The panelling is of oak, of beautiful grain; was stained a quiet green originally and the carving of a floral motive was still further relieved by a slight illumination, producing a delightfully original effect; but through a sacrilege, instigated by a supposed necessity, the whole of the woodwork was covered with a white enamel paint, destroying what was the most interesting room in the house. There is a serving room which contains the serving table and cupboards arranged as a feature of the dining-room, that was white enamel, in contrast with the dark of the original scheme in the dining-room proper, but now this pleasant contrast is reduced to a monotony which all white enamel rooms exhibit unless they are rich in ornamentation or refinement of some kind. The photographs of the bed chambers are typical of the purpose of the entire second story. They are all simple, white in finish and decorated in cool colors and interestingly furnished with good old-fashioned furniture.

It is needless to say that no expense has been spared to make a good house, which has been done, both in respect to its construction and its artistic treatment. The house is built of steel and masonry and is fireproof. In this light it is interesting to speculate on the fact that what history the place will have ten or so generations from now will only add to the spirit of romance it even now seems to reveal.

*Charles Bohasseck.*



THE SINGER BUILDING AS COMPLETED.

Nos. 561-563 Broadway, New York City. Ernest Flagg, Architect.

## A RATIONAL SKYSCRAPER.

**I**N the December number of this magazine, the designers of the new Blair Building, recently completed in New York City, on the northwest corner of Broad street and Exchange place, were praised for an act of deliberate abstention from irrelevancy. In designing their facade they adopted the novel scheme of a palpable decorative screen in place of adhering to the usual semblance of a strictly masonry front. The design itself, no doubt, was managed with skill, even with consummate skill, but then, notable as the building might be from that point of view, excellence of that kind alone would hardly be sufficient to give it pre-eminence among all skyscrapers recently erected, for no one will say skill of composition, ability to put together on Bristol board tasteful and harmonious arrangements of time-honored architectural forms is so rare with us as it was a few years ago. In literature, the "diffusion of penmanship" has been bewailed by Henry James, but in architecture no one complains because draughtsmanship and "good taste"—the negative discipline—have become general commodities. No! The great deficiency does not lie in that direction! The difficulty is not to get speakers, but to find somebody who has something of import to say.

Many designers, among the number possibly the designers themselves of the very clever Blair Building, will disagree with this philosophy, and with its implication that there is anything finer than good design, always meaning by that phrase, design at the surface, the putting of architectural things together—columns, arcades, mouldings and what not—"a string of epithets that improve the sound without carrying on the sense"—in an essentially pictorial way, to please the eye without reference to the reason. That, at any rate, has been the method that has ruled in the past, almost without exception, in the making of the skyscraper, and it is, in the judgment of a few, the very persistent adherence to that method by the entire profession that has vitiated all attempts to deal fundamentally (and in essence that means artistically) with the problem presented by the high building.

The "problem of the skyscraper" indeed! Who is there among our architects that has had courage, we will not say to squarely face it and strive with it, but even to seriously think about it? Is there any wonder that whenever the subject comes uppermost, at convention, or meeting, or elsewhere, among two or among a hundred, there is inevitably in a short time a shrugging of shoulders and finally a dismissal of the matter as one of the impossibilities of life—or shall we say the impertinencies of the client? Throw it out of window! That ends it! And possibly by and by it will

be placed in the list of subjects tabooed in good professional society, like ventilation and acoustics and government architecture, Perhaps our architects think as Sancho Panza did, "Recommend the matter to Providence; 'twill be sure to give what is most expedient for thee."

A few have protested, not, indeed, believing that the skyscraper, with its bald utilitarian purposes and its fixed 5% "projet" affords the artistic soul the highest empyeran for flight, but nevertheless convinced that Art cannot fail before any problem that may properly be assigned to its beneficence without at the same time losing its ultimate authority in human affairs, and preferring, therefore, to believe that, in the case of the skyscraper, the artist, rather than the Art, is at fault—at least believing so until the architect has applied himself to the problem with great veracity than the scene-painter's, and with more seriousness than the modiste's.

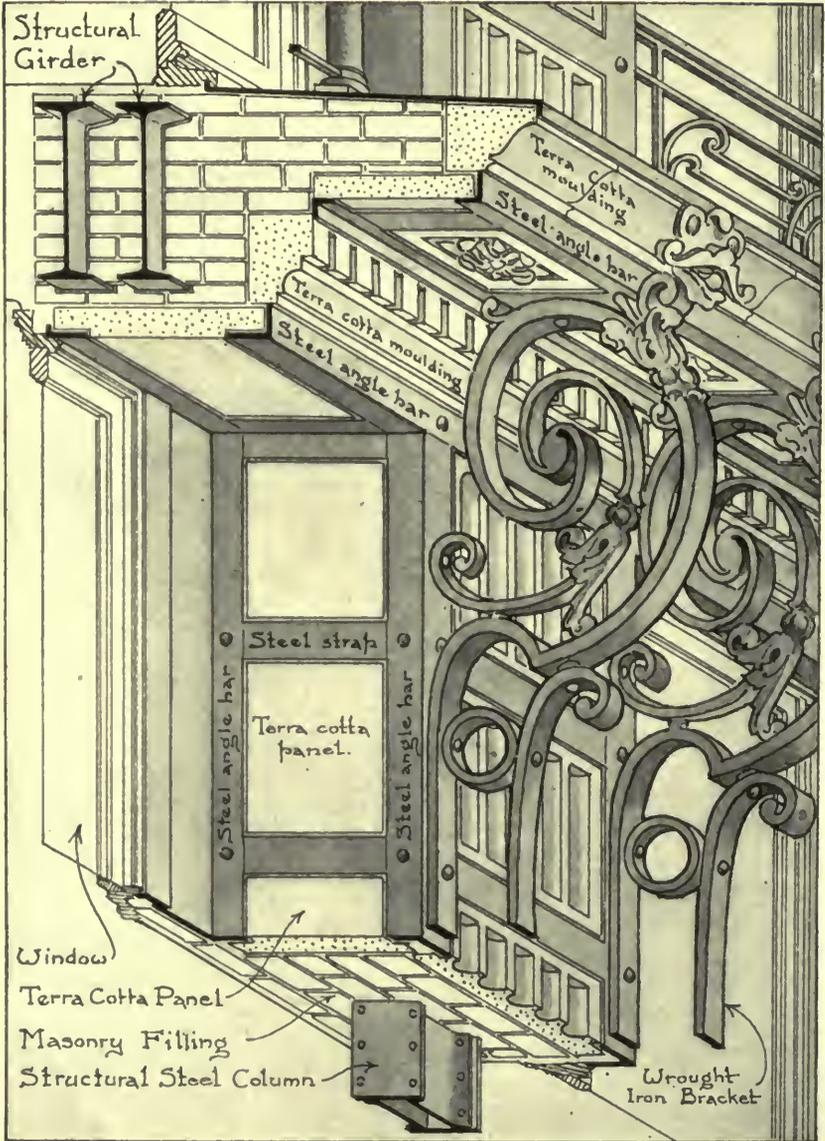
But these were the critics! They preached of function and logic, of reason, veracity and thought. What have these to do with architecture? Why! has not the aim of the architect for four hundred years been to get rid of these incubi, to cleanse the Art of its heavier particles, and make it, as it were, fit for the emasculated energy of the dilettante, or the quick purposes of the architectural shop?

And if the critics, the protestants, have been few, how much smaller, alas! is the band of those who have labored at the high building problem with any sincerity of soul, sad or otherwise? So far as the skeleton building is concerned, Louis Sullivan is perhaps the only architect of marked ability who has addressed himself deliberately and sincerely to the discovery of an adequate expression in architectural terms for the metallic frame. The Prudential Building in Buffalo, N. Y., the Wainwright Building in St. Louis, and the Bayard Building on Bleecker street, New York City, are the most conspicuous results of his highly personal and thoroughly intelligent effort. If we are restrained by a sense of prose from the poetics of one of Mr. Sullivan's ardent admirers regarding the Bayard Building: "Rising thus cream-white, maidenlike and slender, luxuriant in life and joyous as the dawn of wistful spring, this poem of the modern world will ever daily hail the sun on high and the plodder below with its ceaseless song of hope, of joy, of the noble labor of man's hands, of the vast dignity and power of men's souls—a song of true democracy and its goal"; we are sure the judgment of the judicious is that Mr. Sullivan's work is very much superior in originality and force to any other productions of the same class. If the lyrics of his admirer are slightly too perfervid for the case, we trust they will at least faintly indicate the celebration that attends the successful solver of the problem of the skyscraper.

It may well be understood, therefore, that it is not the mere superficial design of the Blair Building, referred to at the outset of these remarks, extremely skilful though that design is, that called primarily for attention. The greater significance of that building lies in the fact that it announces, or at any rate, seems to announce, that one of our highest authorities in architectural practice, a firm particularly addicted to the "school!" and the "traditions" have either by a deliberate concession to architectural veracity or from an effort to reduce architecture to a more direct expression—a "lower term," as the mathematicians say—of "pure design," contributed an important step to the task of bringing the tall building back to reason, to the logic of its own facts and functions. For, so long as the steel skeleton building simulates masonry, imitates a construction of strongly differentiated structural parts, progress beyond the limits of draughtsmanship and the copy-books is a sheer impossibility. It is, therefore, a great gain, as in the Blair Building, to get rid, and, moreover, to get rid with conspicuous success, of the masonry fiction. We may be confident that so notable a piece of work so generally acclaimed is bound to be a hint to others, and bring forth imitators, traducers even, and, may be, improvers. And once let us get set up in front of our skyscrapers frank facades, mere decorative front walls that neither express nor conceal the facts of structure, simulate nothing (but a real Art!) and what more natural and easy further step can be taken than to turn up one's artistic shirt-sleeves at last and buckle down to the hard work of making our tall buildings really say, or as Montgomery Schuyler said, sing something veracious about themselves?

And curiously, more than curiously, fortunately, as though to remove this anticipation of ours from the reproach of prophesy, the Blair Building was scarcely finished before the outer walls of a far more revolutionary structure arose to attract attention and, as it were, fulfill the promise of its predecessor, almost its contemporary.

We refer to the Singer Building, situated at Nos. 561 and 563 Broadway, New York City, with a front adjacent on Prince street. Ernest Flagg, the architect of the New Naval Academy at Annapolis, is the designer; and here, again, we are called upon to note the curious and possibly significant fact that it is out of Nazareth that good cometh. Mr. Flagg is one of our notable "Beaux Artists." His activity and indubitable ability have been centered in the effort to import into this country the forms and ideas of current French architecture. Of importers of French modes, we perhaps have enough; but Mr. Flagg's distinction is that he has a clear insight into and a real appreciation of the French mental process of deal-



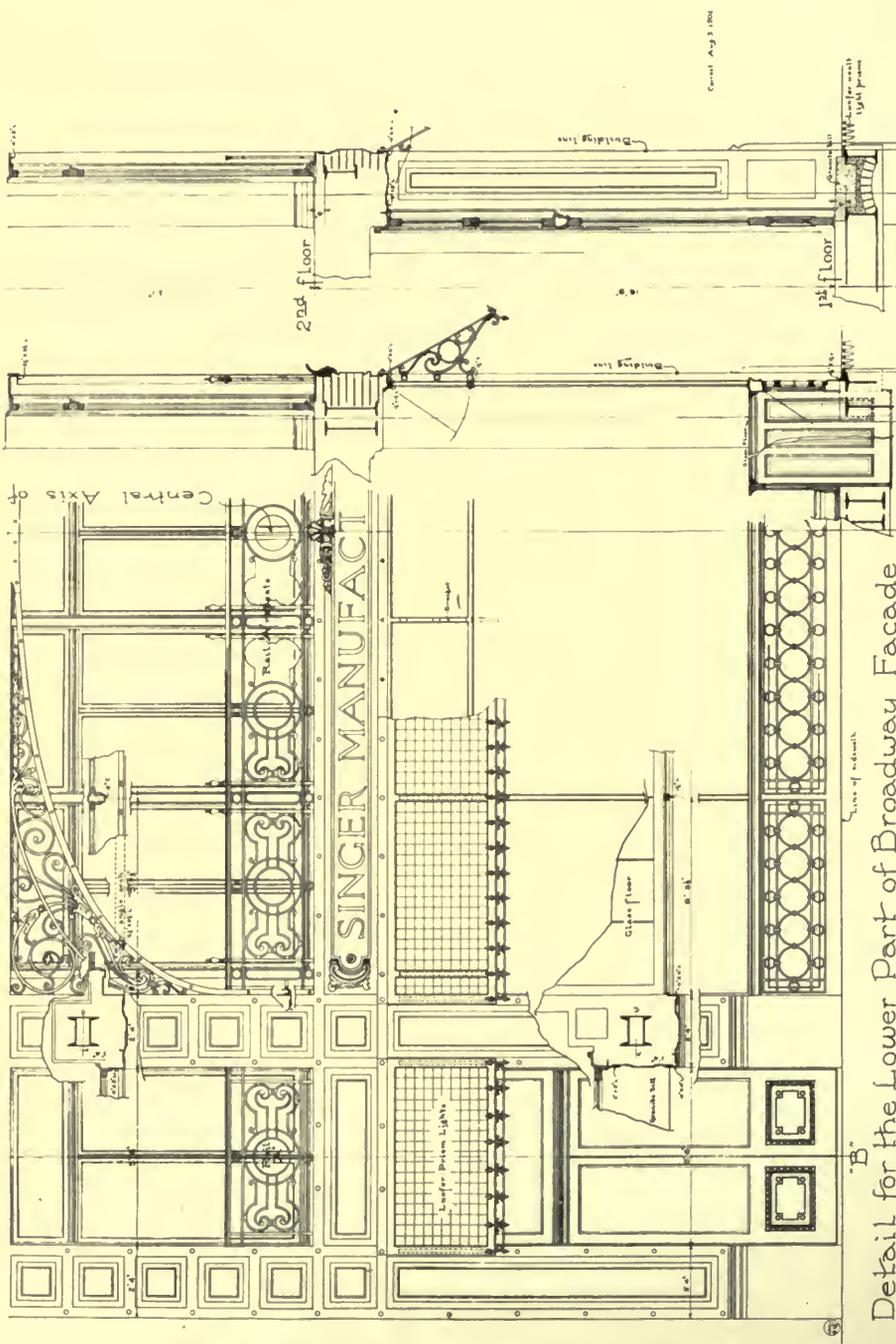
ISOMETRIC DRAWING SHOWING DETAILS OF CONSTRUCTION.

Singer Building, Nos. 561-563 Broadway, New York City.

Ernest Flagg, Architect.

ing with things architectural, its lucidity and directness. The French forms to which he has hitherto been addicted may perhaps be regarded more as an accident of his French training than as the choice of a reasoned and thoroughly worked-out preference; at any rate, once the problem of the skyscraper was placed before him, he sought its solution directly on logical instead of traditional lines, relying rather upon the "principles" inculcated at the Ecole than upon any established set of patterns. For, in a sense, this Singer Building is Mr. Flagg's first skyscraper. The other Singer Building, lower down on Broadway, for which also he is responsible, is only ten stories high, and, moreover, it is, we believe, of real masonry construction. A story, we remember, was circulated at the time when this building was planned, to the effect that Mr. Flagg was under the bond of a vow, registered somewhere, that he would never "commit" a real skyscraper. Ten stories were his limit. Possibly he regarded the crime of designing a tall office building as one impossible to commit with artistic impunity. Certainly he was able to figure out to his own satisfaction that buildings higher than ten stories did not pay financially—they required protection as to light and air by the purchase of abutting property—that is, they became unremunerative as soon as every other pirate of air and sunlight committed similar excesses. It is true, the Bourne Building followed the Singer Building, adjacent to it, and this was carried up many stories beyond the limit of ten. But who can be consistent in a world composed of clients? The skyscraper problem would not "down" even in Mr. Flagg's office. We are afraid it will not be disposed of anywhere until it has either been solved artistically by the architect, or until its very existence has been legally banished by a more sensitive public sense of civic decency.

But if the architect cannot dispense with the skyscraper, the next best thing for him to do is really to grapple with it. Mr. Sullivan pursued that course with success, although he failed, as we see it, to strictly adhere to his own principle that form should follow function. The functionless arch crept into some of his designs, and some of the members of some of his buildings are only to be accounted for by a reference to "pure architecture." Mr. Flagg has perhaps been more thoroughgoing than Mr. Sullivan, for his design is a much more uncompromising attack upon the structuresque problem of the skyscraper. Traditional forms in the latest Singer Building have given way almost everywhere to structural expression. The architect clearly has endeavored to permit the structure to design itself, confining his own role as much as possible to making the structural features as good looking as lay within his power. His problem, as he understood it, was



Detail for the Lower Part of Broadway Facade  
 of an Office and Loft Building for the  
 Singer Manufacturing Company  
 Broadway and Prince Street New York City

Scale 3/4" = 10'

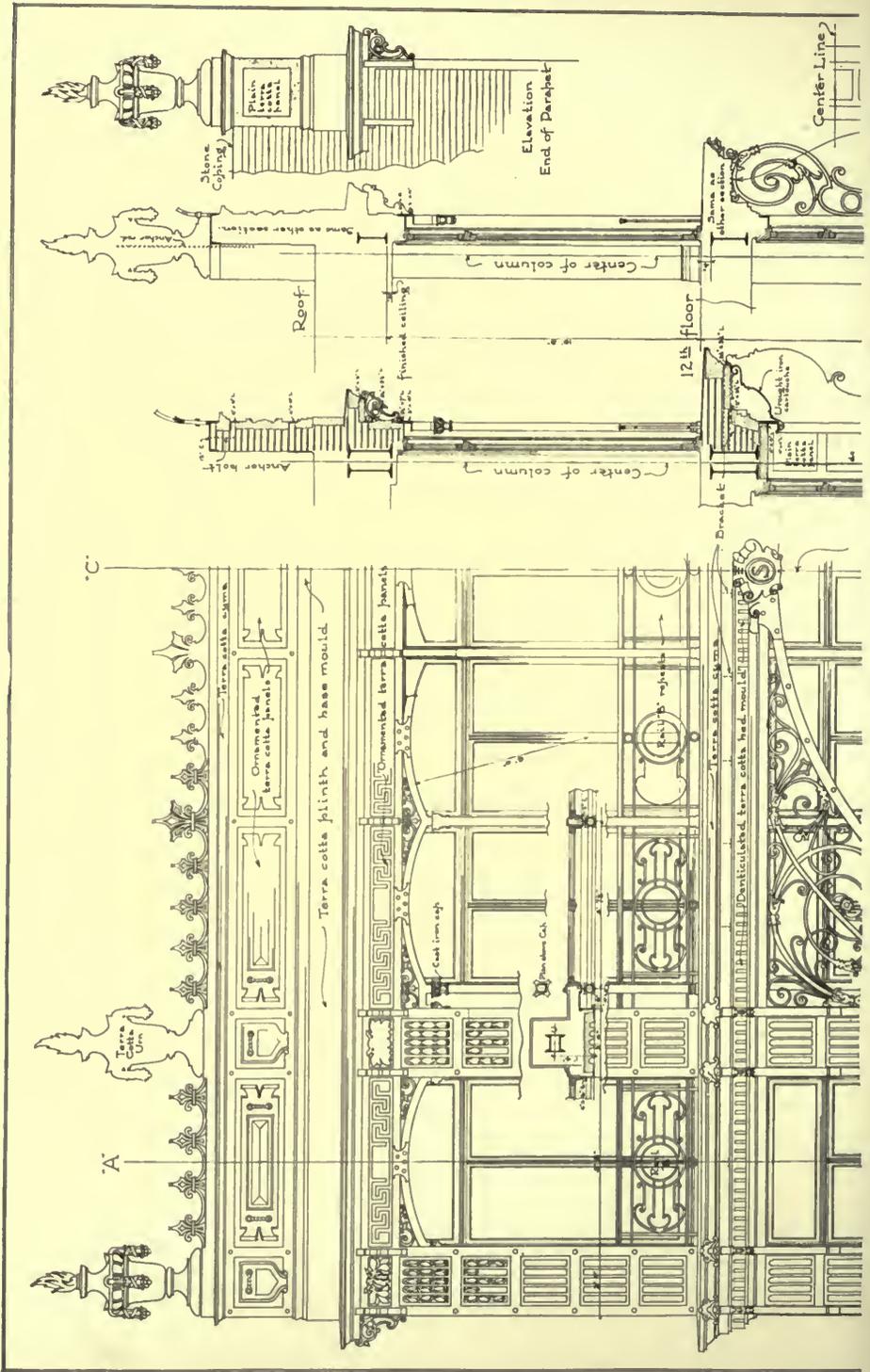
Section 'A-B'  
 Ernest Flagg  
 Architect  
 35 Wall Street  
 N.Y.C.

Section 'C-D'

Drawing No 6170.

SINGER BUILDING, NOS. 561-563 BROADWAY, NEW YORK CITY  
 Detail of lower part of facade. There is no exposed terra cotta on the lower stories, all exposed work being of iron.  
 Ernest Flagg, Architect.

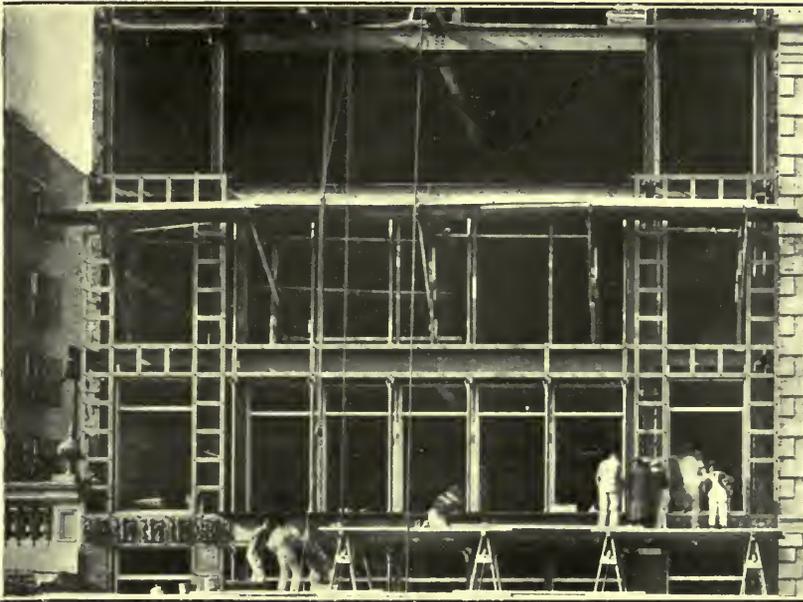




SINGER BUILDING, NOS. 501-563 BROADWAY, NEW YORK CITY  
 Ernest Flagg, Architect.  
 Detail of upper part of facade: Exposed angles and facias of angle bars; plates covering upper surface of cornices and cornices of cast iron; cresting, strips, rails, consoles, scroll work of spandrels, wrought iron; urns, panels, bed mouldings, chab and scut of crown of terra cotta.

to protect a steel frame, provide all the light necessary in a building devoted to strictly commercial purposes, and to let the building tell its own story as agreeably as it might.

Our illustrations show clearly the details of how the task was actually performed. The steel frame, it will be seen, is covered with fire-resisting material, held in place by metal bands and straps; the steel columns do not masquerade as stone piers; the steel beams do not conceal themselves behind stone architraves; there are no classic columns, and Renaissance arcades, nor even does the metal itself, where visible, simulate in its proportions or profiles another material. The open spaces are filled with glass where glass is re-



PORTION OF BUILDING, SHOWING METHOD OF CONSTRUCTION.

Singer Building, No. 561-563 Broadway.

Ernest Flagg, Architect.

quired, and for the rest, the encasement consists of small terra cotta panels that reveal themselves between the metal framing or straps. Ornamentation is confined entirely to such expression as rightfully can be imparted to terra cotta and iron. The reader's attention is particularly directed to the isometric drawing, wherein is set forth very plainly the method adopted of filling in the panels of the iron lattice-work which protects the angles with terra cotta slabs; also the plan used for constructing the cornices with angle irons for the angles of the corona, and for the slabs of enriched terra cotta for its soffits. The drawing also indicates the use of the terra cotta blocks for the cyma and for the bed mouldings, the brick

work which protects the columns and girders, the way in which the upper surfaces of the cornices and balconies are protected with iron plates, and also the nature of the wrought iron consoles which support the main cornice.

All this is very novel, very ingenious, highly thoughtful. Surely, no other architect has ever so frankly accepted the situation which the skyscraper presents and submitted it to so much real brain work. So much we must all acknowledge. So much is a great gain. So much is immensely creditable to the designer. Apart from Mr. Sullivan's experiments, here we have for the first time, a skyscraper on which a man may ponder, about which he may talk seriously, analyze and judge with the same respect that he may accord to a structure of the days when architecture was not a mere "mode" like the milliner's.

It is not to be expected that a building, the first attempt along such novel lines, should be entirely successful. It is enough for us and for the profession, and it should be immensely gratifying to the designer that his bold attempt must be acclaimed a pronounced success—an innovation which cannot possibly be disregarded in the future by his confreres. Even Roman architecture was not built in a day, and it had no intractable problem to handle like the skyscraper. Experimentation is necessary. Logic may deliver its conclusions in a day, but not so Art. Grace of line and justness of proportion are the result of a long-continued revelation, and of an inspiration persisting with and working through generations. But, one or the other, the revelation or the inspiration cannot be of substantial value unless derived from the actual structure; indeed, neither is a reality so long as its source is merely an academy or a set of copy-books. And this consideration brings us back again to our building and to the value of Mr. Flagg's notable achievement.

*H. W. Desmond.*



## TECHNICAL DEPARTMENT.

### A NEW FRENCH INFLUENCE—HARDWARE.

**A**T the exhibition of the Architectural League in the Fine Arts Building on Fifty-seventh Street there stands a glass case containing some specimens of hardware, which the Art Department of Russell & Erwin Mfg. Co., of Three Hundred and Seven Fifth Avenue, New York City, placed there at the special request of those intrusted with the management of the exhibition.

The public interested in these annual exhibitions managed by our architects have come to regard them as being, in the main, professional displays, limited, in practice at least, to architects' designs or to pictures of those designs, supplemented incidentally—but only incidentally—by a few decorative schemes and by still fewer exhibits of perhaps a little plaster work or a little bit of mosaic, or still rarer, an occasional example of wrought metal work. This common idea of these exhibitions is in the main correct, and consequently, standing before this glass case containing the hardware, one can hardly avoid the question—"What significance is to be attached to this departure?"

Several answers suggest themselves immediately. It might be said: "This hardware exhibition is here on account of its extraordinary artistic excellence; or it might be said (particularly as this exhibit is French in origin) that our architects, deploring the existing insufficiencies of American hardware in the matter of design and finish, invited the Russell & Erwin Mfg. Company to make this display—"Pour encourager les autres," or the matter might be put in this way—our architects recognize the immense improvement that has been made in the design and manufacture of hardware during the last fifteen or twenty years, and seeing that it has now reached the full dignity of an artistic craft, wish to signalize the fact by associating with their own exhibits an exhibit of the very finest hardware that is now available for their use; or, finally, it



ESPAGNOLETTE.

might be said that this exhibition of hardware is due to the fact that the profession, satisfied with American hardware upon every point but that of design and finish, wish from an educational point of view to set forth the highest standard of work that exists to-day, and, as the highest standards in these matters prevail in France, the profession deemed it wise to call upon the Russell & Erwin Company for examples of the work of the great modern French craftsmen, which that company to-day controls so far as the United States is concerned.

There is probably some truth in each of these views. France to-day is far in advance of other nations in the decorative arts, and French hardware, in the matter of design and finish, is incomparably finer than any domestic product obtainable in the United States or in any other country but France. This statement does not in any sense discount the immense progress that has been made in American hardware during the last twenty years or depreciate the high character of the product to-day. Indeed, if any man wants to realize how great the progress has been he has only to turn to the crude, inappropriate metal fittings that were the best at the disposal of an American citizen of taste anywhere in the "seventies." Prior to 1870 hardware had about the same value artistically that a



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cast-iron stove had, and in our costly houses of that time, hinges and doorknobs and escutcheons were perforce usually perfectly plain. The first faint dawn of the better thing occurred in 1870, when the Russell & Erwin Manufacturing Company commenced to employ trained designers possessing some ideas of function, material and process and some training in the art of design. The Centennial Exposition of 1876 forwarded this move towards artistic craftsmanship, and a few years later all the great hardware concerns of the United States were working to bring their product into some conformity with the standards of taste and the standards of design that prevailed in the offices of the best architects.

It was quite natural that at first the co-operation of the hardware manufacturer with the architect should be on the most general lines only; that is, if the architectural profession was at any moment chiefly interested in the Gothic Style, then the hardware would conform to that style, or, at any rate, attempt to conform to it. This general co-operation once started extended through all the many experiments that our architects made with the Queen Anne Style of architecture, the Romanesque Style, Classic Style, etc., and during the course of these experiments the co-operation became closer, until, finally, in recent years it ceased to move solely upon general lines, but extended to the point that the architect was offered something better than "stock patterns." "Style 684" in the catalogue of a hardware house might indeed be an escutcheon or doorknob or hinge design of good design, but so long as the catalogue was inevitably associated with standardized hardware, clearly the artistic possibilities of the product were seriously limited. An improvement, no doubt, was made when the big hardware manufacturers announced their willingness to undertake the special manufacture of articles to suit the particular requirements of architects, but the product, nevertheless, remained the product of the factory, and was vitiated by the principles and methods of the shop. Standardization with its catalogues, its order numbers, its subordination to the scheme of multiplication, has, of course, its advantages, but these advantages are not and cannot be those that are most sought for and desired by the artistic spirit. It is not under the domination of these principles that the great French artists work—men (for instance like Charpentier) who do not regard it as beneath their dignity to turn from the manipulation of a great piece of decorative sculpture to model a doorknob or to design with exquisite detail a hinge or an escutcheon. But then, work of this latter kind is not for the catalogue, and it is exactly work of this character, thoroughly artistic in spirit and purpose, that our American architects are now demanding in the case of hardware for the finer buildings they are called upon to design. Factory hardware,



## LOCKS.

Designer, Charpentier.

Made by Maison Fontaine, Paris.

Russell &amp; Erwin Mfg. Co.

(Art Department.)

Concessionnaires pour Maison Fontaine.



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despite its undoubted excellencies, is out of place, especially in the great residences that are now being reared for our merchant princes. When the wood carving is all specially designed and specially worked by hand, when furniture, pianos, carpets, wall paper even and china are all made to conform to the general effect designed by the architect, it is something of a solecism to equip the doors and windows with factory-made hardware, some of which possibly may be found in duplicate by the owner of the house himself in his neighbor's mansion. The work of the artist—not the mere technical designer—is a necessity. The pieces should be as unique as the frescoes on the walls. For work of this kind the greatest artists that can be employed are none too good craftsmen. Men of this artistic standing, capable of work of this character and willing to do it are not numerous in the United States. They are, indeed, at the present moment almost entirely lacking. We have no one to compare with the great French artists of the present day and moreover, even had we the artists, we lack the craftsmen to execute their designs, and even the skill to finish them to the degree of perfection that pertains in France. The exhibit at the Architectural League establishes this point beyond peradventure. The articles displayed were designed by Charpentier and executed by the great French bronze house—Maison Fontaine. The exhibitors—the Russell & Erwin Mfg. Company—have secured the services of artists like Charpentier, and have become the sole agents in the United States of the Maison Fontaine; and in taking this step they have undoubtedly contributed enormously to the artistic development of hardware in the United States. The recognition of this fact by the Architectural League was well merited, and the discussion that took place at a recent dinner of the Architectural League, when the subject of hardware was the topic for the evening's discussion, showed clearly how welcome the innovation is to our architects, who feel now the need of the co-operation of the highest craftsmanship in all the departments of decoration. The speech on that occasion of Mr. F. G. Draper, manager of the Art Department of the Russell & Erwin Company, which we quote below, stated the position of the subject in terms that were heartily welcomed and cannot well be improved upon.

Mr. President and Gentlemen :

Your President, Mr. Brunner, has evidently called me out in the hope that though connected with a kindred branch of the business with which you gentlemen are identified, something might be said from my standpoint of interest to you.

It is not unusual, I believe, for commanders to summon to their cabins ordinary gunners and subordinates for consultation, and in

the development of Art hardware in this country the architect must be the "captain" and the manufacturer "the man behind the gun."

Architecture embraces a knowledge of *all* the arts, and I must confess to a hesitation in addressing a league of gentlemen composed of the ablest and most distinguished artists in America.

What information I have on the subject has been gathered by over thirty years experience as a hardware man, and I have had the keenest pleasure in witnessing, during that time, the growing demand, year by year, for better and more artistic hardware.

Our country is young. We can almost say that we have seen the soiled and primitive "latch string" replaced by carved metal knobs, hinges and escutcheons—the creation of genius.

To France we undoubtedly owe the development of ornamental and artistic house hardware. The crude and ancient hinges and locks which you find in the ruins of Pompeii and the museum at Naples, are not very much improved upon in the buildings generally throughout Italy, not in the stocks carried by the dealers which I had the opportunity to examine. This same lack of development is apparent in Germany and England to a large extent. The best class of villas and public buildings throughout Europe which I found trimmed with ornamental hardware, was invariably of French importation, excepting, of course, in Belgium, where the workmen are famous for their creations in hammered iron and bronze, and which, I think, is conceded to be due to the French influence.

I think, gentlemen, it can be said without fear of contradiction that America is to-day producing the best hardware of any country in the world, and the most artistic hardware of any country in the world with the exception of France.

From the beginning of the Renaissance down to the present day the artists of France have been steadily at work, developing not only the designs, but the methods of handling and treating the models and castings.

France exerts a paternal influence in developing art, taste and skill. She furnishes free tuition in art to all the children in her schools, and you can almost, any day see in the galleries of Paris young boys being instructed in the rudiments of art by tutors paid by the government. This system produces a nation where every individual is more or less versed on the subject, which, in this country, is left to a great extent to the leisure class, and it is not surprising, with this population to draw from, that the French manufacturers should be able to employ artists and artisans who have from childhood shown ability and skill in this work.

The manufacturer, inspired by the high regard which the nation itself shows for art, treats the modeler and chaser and even the foundryman with the consideration due to an artist.

In the factories which I visited in Paris I was surprised to learn that the making of the castings is a separate industry, because the manufacturers claim that the art of making an intricate mould, from which a reproduction in metal is made to bring out clearly the lines and delicate ornament as expressed in the artist's model, makes it necessary that such work be executed by those who are especially gifted in this handicraft and often by those who

have inherited through generations the knowledge of the "art of casting."

I also found that the modeling and chasing are done by artists in their own homes or studios—who work by inspiration and not by the "whistle." Is it surprising, when you consider the fostering of this industry by the government, the large body of capable artists to draw from, and the great care and strict attention to the slightest detail, that there should be produced the beautiful and artistic specimens of French hardware which you see before you to-night?

Now, gentlemen, the demand for this high class ornamental and artistic work has been created by you, and the artistic tastes of the people in the future is also in your hands, and I think I can say on behalf of the manufacturers of this country that they are thoroughly awake to the importance to this branch of your profession—and that you can rely upon their hearty co-operation.

