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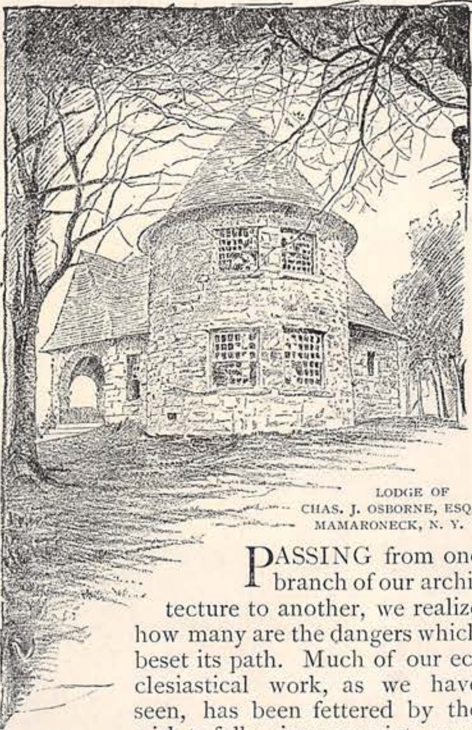
AMERICAN COUNTRY DWELLINGS. I.



LODGE OF CHAS. J. OSBORNE, ESQ., MAMARONECK, N. Y.

PASSING from one branch of our architecture to another, we realize how many are the dangers which beset its path. Much of our ecclesiastical work, as we have seen, has been fettered by the wish to follow inappropriate precedents; very many of our buildings for commercial use have been pauperized by complete indifference; and for long our city dwellings were stereotyped and stunted in dull reiteration of some unintelligent design. And now, in considering the domestic architecture of our smaller towns and our country places, we shall see still another tendency at work for evil — the tendency toward ignorant, reckless "originality." But the same fundamental sin has underlaid all these various superficial sins, and the reformation which now begins to show in each and every branch is due in each and all to the fact that we are repenting of this fundamental sin — are beginning to feel the necessity for basing all our work on *rational* foundations, for taking as our guide intelligent, cultivated thought, not apathy or impulse, not mere vague artistic aspirations nor a merely formal adherence to the examples of some other age.

It is not strange that in building our country homes we should have shown ourselves more original, more "American" than elsewhere. Here most of all have we been forced to meet — or at least to deal with — new and diverse requirements. Our climate and the habits of life it engenders, our social conditions and the variety of needs they create, our sites and surroundings, as well as our main material, wood — all have been most unlike those of other nations. In no other architectural branch have we been thrown so largely upon our own resources; therefore in none was the development of some kind of originality so probable. And thus that native character which gives more general signs of its existence than are commonly perceived — which somewhat tinges all our work, however featureless or however imitative — nowhere else reveals itself so clearly as in our country homes. Nowhere has its accent been so pronounced, and nowhere has its voice been broken by so few wholly alien notes. An inquiry into its various manifestations must begin with our very earliest products.

Every one knows what were the first of all our country dwellings — those old farm-houses, built by Dutch or English settlers, which still survive in many a quiet spot. Nothing could be more simple, more utilitarian, more without thought of architectural effectiveness. And yet such a farm-house is often extremely good in its own humble way — good in its general proportions, and especially in the agreeable

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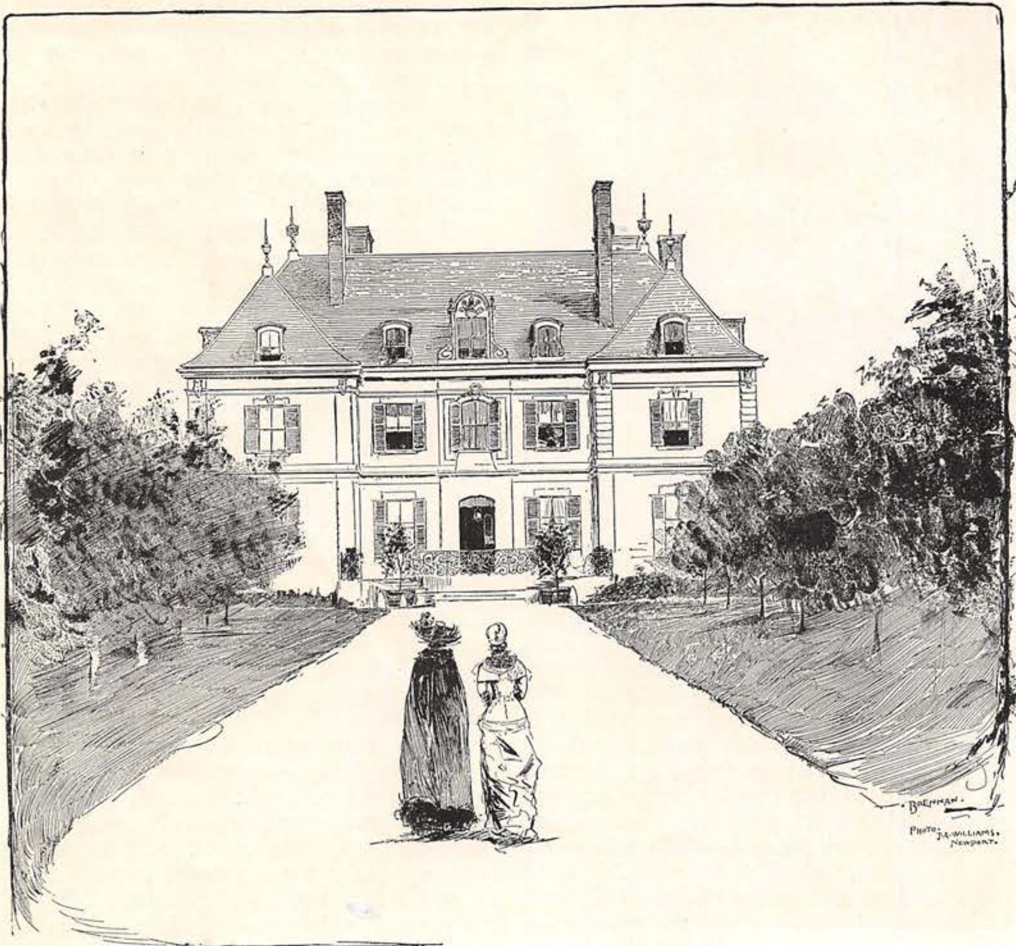
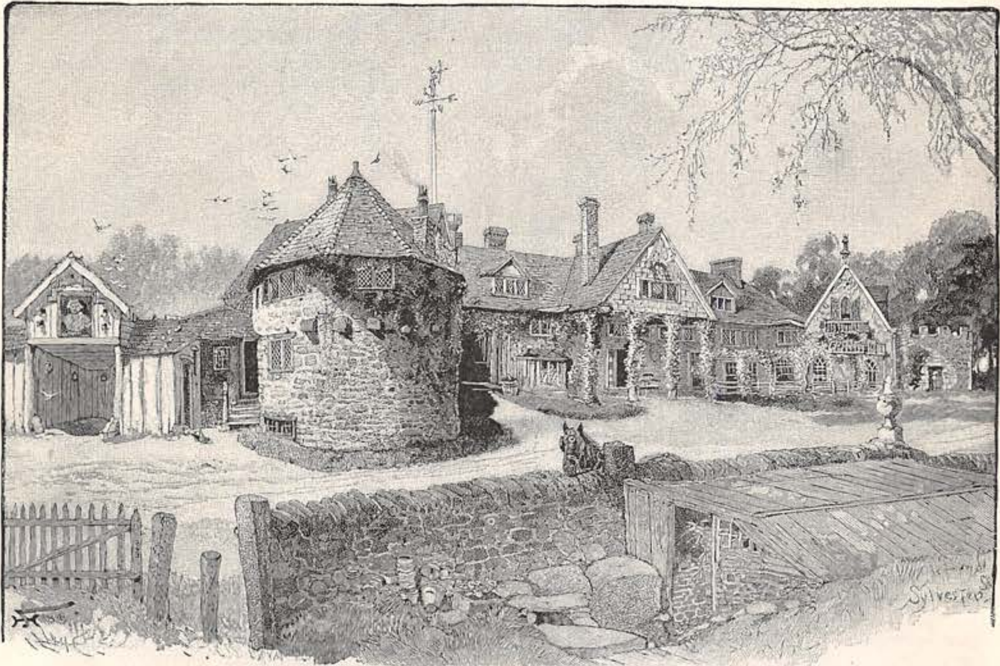
and sometimes picturesque, yet simple and sensible, outlines of its roof.

More decided in character, of course, are those colonial dwellings which soon were built for a higher than the farming class. Whether of Dutch or of English origin, a family likeness marks them all, for the English model itself had been influenced by Dutch ideas. Everywhere the details are "classic," but in their choice and application many variations showed themselves as the years went on. Sometimes a very plain pattern has been followed, sometimes columns and pilasters give a more ambitious air. The openings are now rectangular and now round-arched, with fan-lights in their heads. The porches, and especially the doorways, are often charmingly designed and delicately carved. But here again, as with the farm-house, the roof is apt to be the best and most attractive feature. Truly good and very charming is the "gambrel roof" with its quaint and useful dormers, and the hipped roof, which does not run to a peak but is stopped at a broad balustraded central platform—as, for example, in the oft-illustrated Longfellow house at Cambridge.

Hundreds of these colonial dwellings still stand all through New England and New York State and all along the Atlantic seaboard; and even when they are built of wood their charm is incontestable. Of course we know that many of their features are not intrinsically appropriate to this material. Yet how much of the original excellence survives the unlawful translation from one material into another—how much solidity and simplicity of effect, how much of the truly architectural merit of good outlines and beautiful proportions, how much of that expression of mingled dignity and refinement, which is surely a pleasant expression for any dwelling to put on. In his sparse but intelligently applied detail, moreover, the colonial architect showed a truly artistic perception of the way in which the ornamenta-



HOUSE OF GEORGE R. FEARING, ESQ., NEWPORT, R. I.



HOUSE OF MAJOR BEN: PERLEY POORE, INDIAN HILL, MASS.

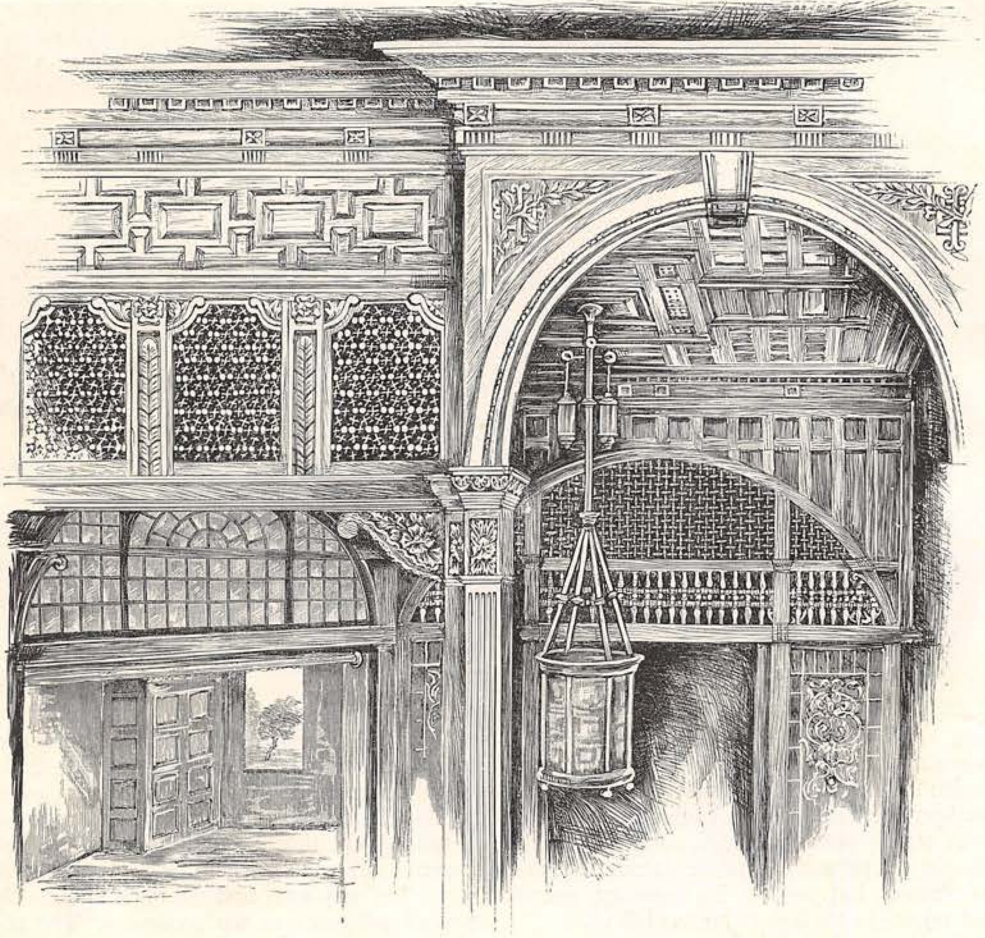
tion appropriate to stone should be altered when it came to be wrought in wood. And inside his structures he built such spacious, well-proportioned rooms, such comfortable or such stately stairways, and, once more, such simple yet pure and artistic decoration, that we cannot but respect his memory, cannot but rejoice in the legacy he has left us.

Greek temples copied in wood and put to domestic uses (an innovation which Thomas Jefferson did very much to foster) were of course much less defensible — were wholly indefensible, in fact, since they showed not merely a translation from one material into another, but a radical and foolish transformation of the structure's very purpose. Yet even for these houses one is tempted to say a good word or two — such a word as I have already tried to say for our public buildings and churches of like fashion. At least they are not vulgar, wild, and frivolous in effect, as have been our products so often since their day.

But there came a time when the traditions of classicizing art died out, when our early forms and ideals were abandoned even by the most conservative, the most provincial. Imitative experiments of various kinds were tried at this time, as they have been tried at all subsequent times; but in general we renounced all outside help, all attempts at "style" of any sort, and fell back upon such native intelligence as we possessed. The resultant product was a mere plain, bald, clapboarded box, surrounded with a wide piazza and arranged inside in the simplest and most obvious fashion, and, inside and out, wholly lacking decoration. The presence of the piazza, however, and of the "Venetian blinds," and the total absence of anything else that possibly could be called a feature, of themselves sufficed to make these houses distinctively American, thoroughly original in effect.*

Beautiful they certainly were not; and yet when they were built the New England village put on the aspect which made its name proverbial for a neat, cheerful, pretty domesticity. This aspect, in truth, was not primarily architectural, but resulted chiefly from the

* The illegitimate employment of the word *piazza* instead of *veranda* hardly deserves to be called, as it so often is called, an Americanism. According to an English glossary, *piazza* is "very frequently and very ignorantly used to denote a walk under an arcade." But not only the ignorant have thus used it even in England; for I know of treatises on architecture, written nearly a century ago, wherein the cloisters of a convent are called *piazzas*. Be its illegitimacy as it may, however, the term has in its present American sense all the warrant any term need have — that of long, consistent, and exclusive use. The common term in the South is "veranda," which is absolutely correct; and in the West, "porch," which, again, is incorrect. But in the Northern and Eastern States one invariably *says* "piazza," and therefore I should feel it to be sheer pedantry did I oblige myself to *write* a different word.



ARCH AND SCREEN ON STAIRWAY IN HOUSE OF HENRY VILLARD, ESQ., DOBBS FERRY, N. Y.

lack of all poverty, squalor, and unthrift, and from the wide spacing of the houses, which turned the village into a succession of green lawns, gay garden-plots, and broad grassy streets, over which the thick-set elms and maples arched their vaults of verdure. And yet the houses themselves did contribute something to the pleasant picture. Their universal white paint, unbroken save by green blinds and gray shingled roofs, increased the air of cheerfulness and purity, and was not discordant with the omnipresent foliage and with the bright blue of our sky. Then, although they had no architecture properly to be so called, though they were bald and bare and unsubstantial-looking when winter stripped off nature's beauty, and were marred by the close, rigid lines of their clapboard covering, they gave a negative sort of satisfaction by their utter modesty and frank simplicity. They looked like the work of a people who could not do anything in the way of art, but who had at least the good sense to recognize the fact and to make no abortive efforts. And finally, the one real feature they did possess — the long and wide piazza — was a most excellent invention, though an invention in a quite rudimentary stage as regarded artistic treatment.

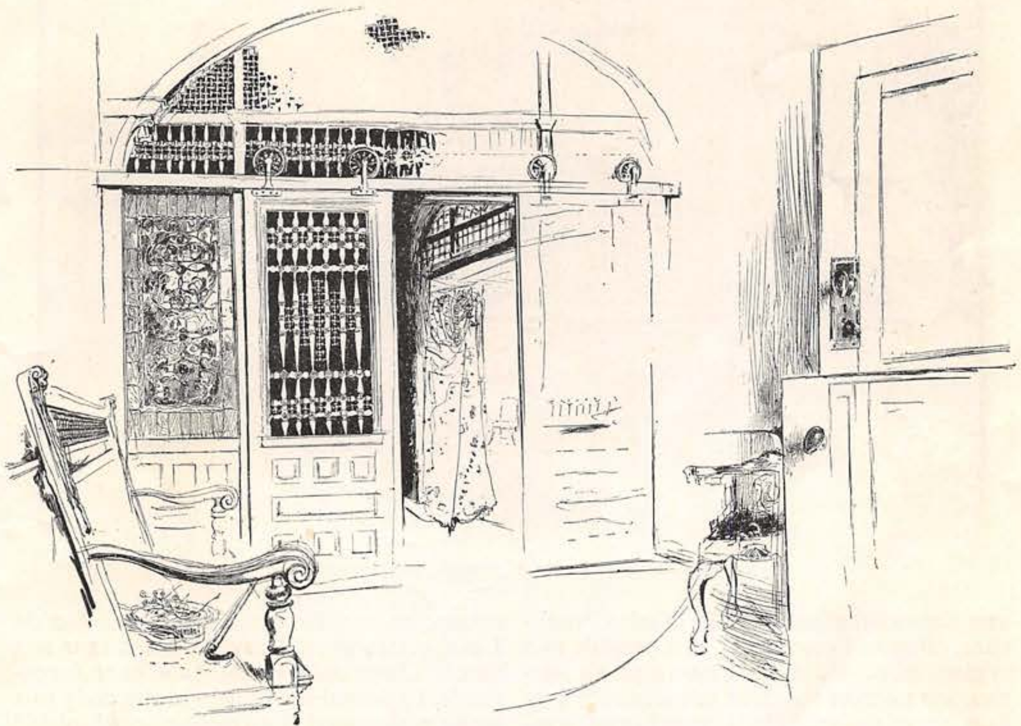
But it was not very long ere we began to be dissatisfied with such negative qualities as these — to ask for something more positive, which, we hoped of course, would be something beautiful to the eye and satisfactory to the mind. And then our "rural vernacular" entered upon its would-be artistic stage.

There have been critics of late years (not only in this country but in England also) to lay all the shortcomings of modern architecture upon the very existence of the "professional architect." They find the root of all evil in his undisputed supremacy, as having disinherited the "naïf artisan"; in his anti-

quarian study, as having led to a soulless eclecticism or a dogged attachment to some bygone style; in his self-conscious cultivation, as having killed all native impulse. In the great architectural ages, they say, architecture was a popular art, of which there were no theorizing, dogmatizing, controlling professors, but to which few men were wholly strange. It was merely a part and parcel of the world's general work, practiced spontaneously and developed unconsciously with the general development of the people. And, as the future must always repeat the past — again an assumption which I quote — never, unless the same state of things can be brought about with us, need we hope to see a living, characteristic, national, and therefore worthy architectural movement.

In view of such theories, it may be instructive to call attention to the fact that our country is the only one which in this age has known a development such as they approve. Our "rural vernacular" developed in ignorance, not in knowledge; instinctively, not self-consciously; and it was wrought by the hand of artisans, and not of an educated architectural profession.

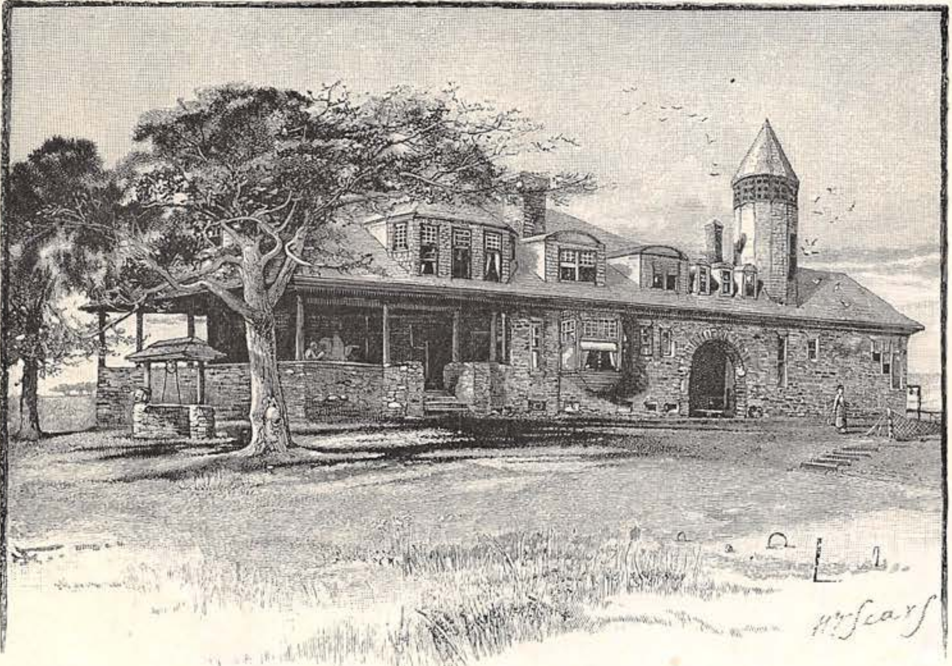
It took nothing from the earlier colonial work; it was based wholly on the wooden box, and sprang from a truly popular desire to give this a beauty it too plainly lacked. There is plenty of literature relating to its development, but literature only of a certain kind, in the shape of curiously illiterate hand-books for the use of client and mechanic, filled with ready-made designs which are prolifically varied, and yet are alike from first to last in their general spirit and effect. The great number of such books — "Every Man his Own Architect" may be given as their generic title — goes far to prove the unprofessional, spontaneously popular nature of the movement; and the entire absence of all other contemporary literature, theoretic or critical, is sufficient to complete the evidence. These copy-books, assisted by the witness of our memory, show how we went to work to give our box "more architecture." Intelligent thought was not the wind that filled our sails, nor was trained skill at the helm. A vague, ignorant wish for something agreeable to the eye, a bold ignorant use of superficial, rapid, showy means toward getting it — these were the moving, guiding powers. Client and mechanic worked harmoniously together, undisturbed by the professional architect with his inherited styles and methods and ideals, and his conscious, definite aims. The "simple artisan,"



VESTIBULE, ARCH, AND SCREEN IN MR. VILLARD'S HOUSE.

whose advent we are told is so desirable, actually had for a time full sway. Nor ought our theorists to cavil at the fact that he was not the master mason but the "boss carpenter"; for should the artisan have been any other than a carpenter when wood was the material we chiefly used?

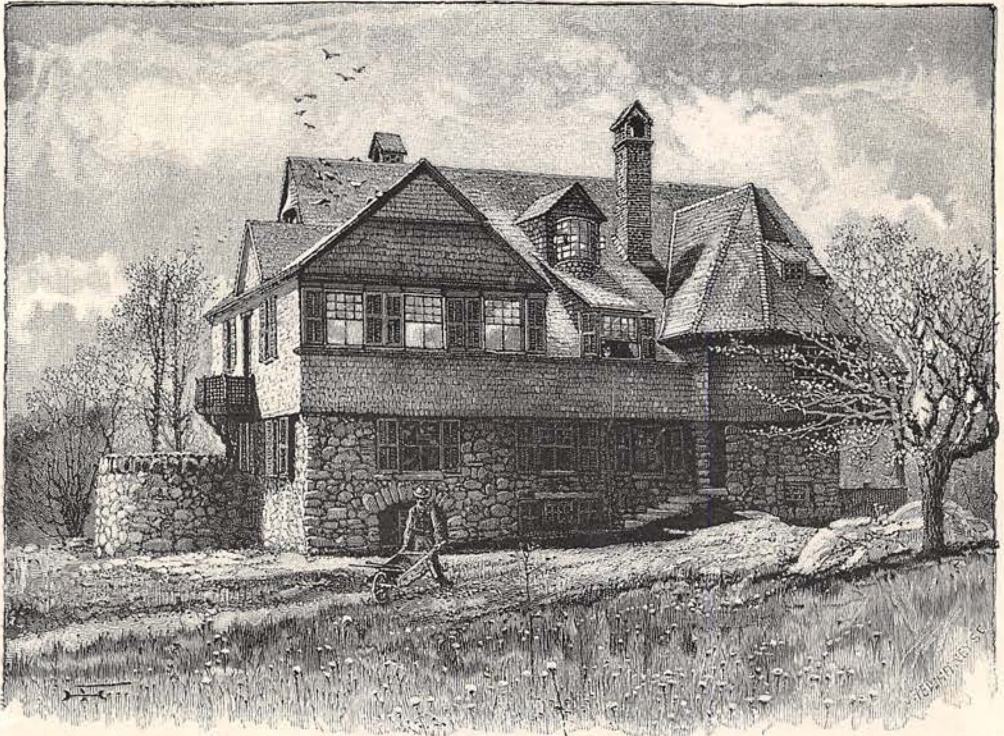
This carpenter, then, worked as spontaneously, as untheoretically, as entirely after his own native lights, as carelessly of school traditions, rules, and precedents, as is possible to a modern man. He did not invent all his features, but no man has done this since the very dawning of the art. He invented some, however, and he borrowed just as his untutored taste saw fit, and adapted just as his untutored hand found most convenient. He twisted his square box into odd card-house shapes in a determined desire for "picturesqueness"; or he left it square and, with a peculiarly bold and naïf movement of appropriation, crowned it with that form of covering which Mansard had applied to the palaces of France. None too pleasing, it seems to me, even in its proper size and station, this so-called "French roof" was ludicrous indeed when set on top of our flimsy little wooden walls in a greatly diminished but still all-too-massive form. It was supremely ludicrous and supremely ugly, yet no feature we have ever made our own has been more universally beloved.



FARM-HOUSE OF LYMAN C. JOSEPHS, ESQ., NEWPORT.

Then our customary white paint was deemed too simple or too "unæsthetic," and all the tints of the diligent but tasteless modern manufacturer were essayed, either one by one or a dozen at a time. Scarlet and canary-yellow were not too bright, malarial greens were not too depressing for the experimental energy of the moment. One house would almost imitate a circus-tent, and the next would look like an emanation from the Dismal Swamp. Nor do I exaggerate when I say "a dozen tints at a time." I have counted often, and once, for example, I counted nine colors in the body of a house, with several more in the "Scotch-plaid" pattern of its roof.

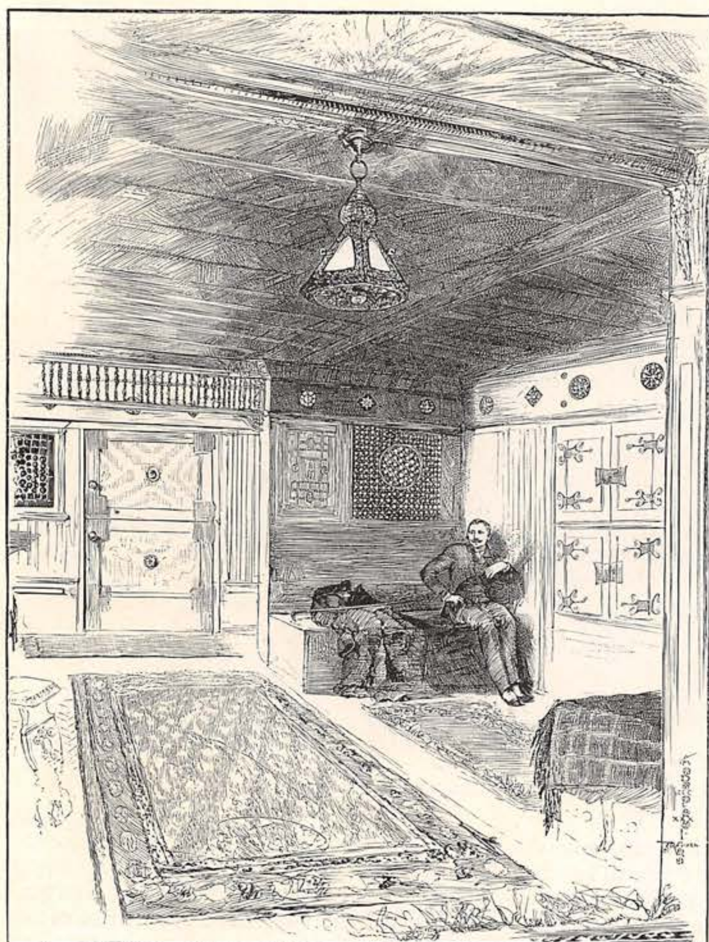
And then we borrowed features here and there and everywhere to give them queer, abortive shapes in our soft pine wood. Cornices, brackets, balustrades, and pediments of Renaissance lineage; turrets, pinnacles, finials, and gables which had once been Gothic — all were now Americanized together, and were adorned with decoration that was chiefly, I should say, American in its first estate. And all the decoration took flat, shallow, mechanical, outline shapes, fitted for execution with the jig-saw and for application with the glue-pot. With these delightful helpers, with the eccentric paint-brush, and with a clumsy turning-lathe and molding-plane — all their colonial skill and grace forgotten — our builder wrought



HOUSE OF MRS. MARY HEMENWAY, MANCHESTER, MASS.

both his borrowed and his invented motives into structures unlike all else on earth besides, but with such a consistent, persistent family likeness among themselves, and such an identity of feeling and effect running through all their varied items, that they reveal indeed a "national style," all the more national since it was accepted with such national satisfaction. The "rural vernacular" was neither local in its birth nor local in the degree of unanimity with which it was adopted. It seems to have developed everywhere almost at once, and for a generation its authority was everywhere supreme. From the tiniest cottage to the most ambitious residence, from the suburban villa to the huge "summer-resort" hotel, from the village street to the Newport avenue, everything for a time spoke the same dialect, though, of course, with diversities in emphasis and elaboration. I do not say there was no dissent. The plain wooden box still survived; occasionally we had a would-be Gothic cottage or a pseudo-Swiss chalet; and when brick or stone was used a simple utilitarian respectability was sometimes preserved, though perhaps the more common tendency was to overlay even these materials with showy decoration wrought in wood. Nor were instances wholly wanting when a much more positive, a distinctly artistic, excellence revealed itself. One such example we see in our illustration of Mr. Fearing's house at Newport, which was built before the recent rise of our "new school" of domestic architecture, yet is still one of the most attractive among all its varied neighbors. But I am sorry to say that a Swiss and not a native artist must be credited with its virtues. If we count up, however, all the dissentient voices of every kind and value, we still find that they hardly weaken to a perceptible extent the unanimity of the vernacular chorus.

Evidently we failed in this attempt to produce architectural art, but not because we lacked for aspiration. The very extravagance of our misdeeds shows the eagerness of the effort we had been making. Why was it so fruitless an effort? Must we conclude that its outcome proves us wholly and hopelessly, then, now, and forever, without artistic aptitude? Or should we lay the whole blame on mere immaturity? Should we argue that failure in this early stage counts for little as proof or prophecy of any kind, having been but a youthful, temporary stumble on what was none the less the right path to follow? Or ought we to decide, on the other hand, that we failed because the path



HALL IN HOUSE OF SAMUEL TILTON, ESQ., NEWPORT.

in order. We are not a primitive people, but the heirs of all the ages; for surely the mere fact that we have crossed an ocean does not disinherit us. It is as utterly foolish to talk of throwing away our legacy of art, and of beginning afresh with the intent to develop "something American," as it would be to hold the same language with regard to science, industry, morals, manners, feelings, tastes — with regard to any other of those civilized necessities or sentiments or requirements which are ours as much as Europe's. All history proves this fact, if proof is needed. Every page and line of that long record which certain critics have so misread (for the mere delight, it would seem, of championing a paradox) proves, when rightly read, that no people ever deliberately threw away its artistic inheritance; and proves also and as a natural consequence, be it noted, that never, save in really primitive periods, was architecture pursued in a thoughtless, untrained, "popular" way. There is no presence more clearly and constantly to be recognized all through the varied story, which begins in the gray Egyptian centuries and carries us over so many lands and ages, than the presence of him whom in the strictest sense of the word we must call the "professional architect." Especially often has it been said that in the middle ages there were "no architects" — nothing but a multitude of artisans who were consummately skilled in practical things, but who applied their skill unreflectingly, instinctively; who labored much as bees labor at their honeycomb; who "builded better than they knew"; who built well, in fact, just because they did not know *how* well, did not see distinctly what they were aiming at, but were guided in some occult way by the "spirit of the age." "Inspired masons" is the queer term that has been invented for them, and that is used as a

we followed was *not* the right one — because the ignorant, naïf, popular way of attempting architecture is intrinsically mistaken, is a way that will kill, not foster, such gifts as we may possess, that will prevent and not insure such progress as we may be capable of making? I think, in spite of the critics I have quoted, that the last explanation is the true one.

Of course there was a period with many nations in the past when their builders were not learned, cultivated, theorizing — when instinctive, untrained effort did such work as was done and conquered such steps as were gained. But these were *primitive* periods, when work of no kind was "professional," when no knowledge was codified, and no effort was theorizing or self-conscious. Art in its earlier stages was then certainly brought out of ignorance, as were all the other treasures of civilized humanity. But we are not in a time or a condition when such births are

counter-term to the "professional architects" of modern days.

How absurd such ideas seem when one knows what the mediæval styles really were — perhaps the very last styles of all that could possibly have been wrought untheoretically by even the most "inspired" of artisans, could possibly have been developed without definite, conscious aim, were a people never so "artistic"; how absurd when one knows that their fundamental power and excellence lie, not in that decorative richness which strikes and holds the popular eye (and which was in truth largely the work of the subordinate artisan), but in their incorporation of the profoundest scientific knowledge, their logical following out of the strictest mathematical formulæ, their realization of the highest and the subtilest artistic theories. And how foolish must seem the attempted elimination of the "professional architect" to those who have even a slight acquaintance with contemporary records. Scanty, mutilated, casual, confused, and superficial though those records are, there has been compiled from them an astonishingly long and unbroken list of men who were widely famous just for their theoretic knowledge of their art, men who were recognized as professional architects, and were never called aught else. And if in other cases the architect *was* something else as well—was prince or monk, bishop, sculptor, master mason — what does it matter? The educated, deliberating, theorizing mind—this is the thing in question. This always directed in all ages, though, of course, with varying degrees of knowledge and of skill, according as the general intellectual standard of one age varied from the general intellectual standard of another. This should have the credit of mediæval no less than of classic triumphs — this, and not that mere blind, passive, multiple human tool, wielded by the "spirit of the age," which certain critics have imagined as a fetich for their worship. Perhaps it may seem, as we look back where all things are blurred in a dim far perspective, as though the spirit of the age had done it all; and in truth it is a potent spirit, one upon which the architect is greatly dependent for help or hindrance, nay, for his own birth and nature and impulsions; and it is often a naïf, unconscious spirit. But all history shows—and nowhere more plainly than in the very chapter which tells of mediæval architecture—that it can never do great and lasting work save through

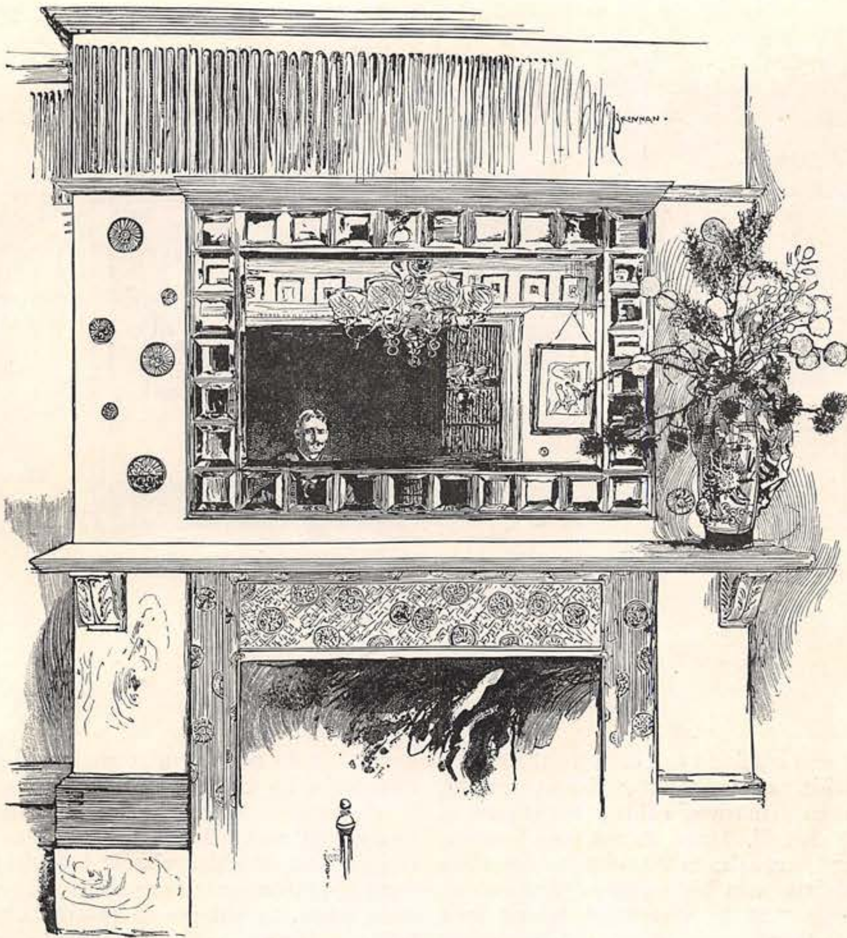
DINING-ROOM IN MR. TILTON'S HOUSE.

STAIRWAY AND WINDOW IN MR. TILTON'S HOUSE.

to a modern man. But this is just the point: no civilized modern man, however ignorant, however self-reliant, however far removed from the sources of transmitted knowledge and the springs of transmitted influence, can ever hold himself quite outside the current, can ever be in a state even approaching to primitive ignorance, absolute simplicity, aboriginal independence, unsophisticated freshness of memory and thought and eye. Untutored effort meant with our artisan what it must always mean with modern men — merely a crude and insufficient, instead of a wise and successful method of inventing; and a haphazard, stupid, tasteless, instead of a skillful, law-abiding, artistic method of adaptation. Dim and fragmentary as was our builder's knowledge of precedent and architectural theory, it was still great enough to preclude the possibility of his beginning at a really independent starting-point and working out a new salvation for himself. Nor could we, his clients, have suppressed our complex, imperious, practical necessities, our vague but strong and sophisticated expressional and artistic aspirations, and have waited while a slow, century-long development from some primitive starting-point went on. He knew too much, we knew and desired too much, for this. But for the other method — for the sensible, scientific, and artistic use of the inherited materials which forced themselves upon us — both he and we knew far too little. This is the truth — the truth that mere common sense might teach, and that all history but illustrates: our *contented ignorance* is the scapegoat which should bear the burden of our failures. All history teaches this, I repeat once more; for if we are to judge the present by the past at all, we surely must be careful that the terms of the comparison correspond. And then it is not with the primitive communities of old, but with the most highly complex and sophisticated communities that have ever been, that we shall compare our own. For what is the superficial fact that we are a new nation on a new soil to the fundamental fact that we are an old *people* with all the characteristics this term implies? And the history of our prototypes proclaims, I say, that instead of blaming our architecture for being "too professional," we should blame it for being not by a thousand degrees professional *enough* — should blame it in that its executives, whatever they have called themselves,

the hands of specially qualified instruments, can never fully express its impulses save through the mouth of accredited high priests. And these instruments, these priests, can never themselves individually be blind, naïf, and ignorant in their efforts. They must know very well what they want to do, and must have learned very thoroughly all that their age can teach them with regard to the best way of doing it.

Believe me, to manage rightly our inheritance of art, we must have as our executives those who really know and understand it. And we *must* manage it rightly, for we could not get rid of it if we would. It would not only be a folly to throw it away—it would be an actual impossibility. If it does not remain to help, it will remain to hinder; if not for inspiration, then for contamination. For look once more at our own unfortunate essay in independence. I have said that the artisan who developed our "vernacular" wrought as spontaneously, as instinctively, *as is possible*

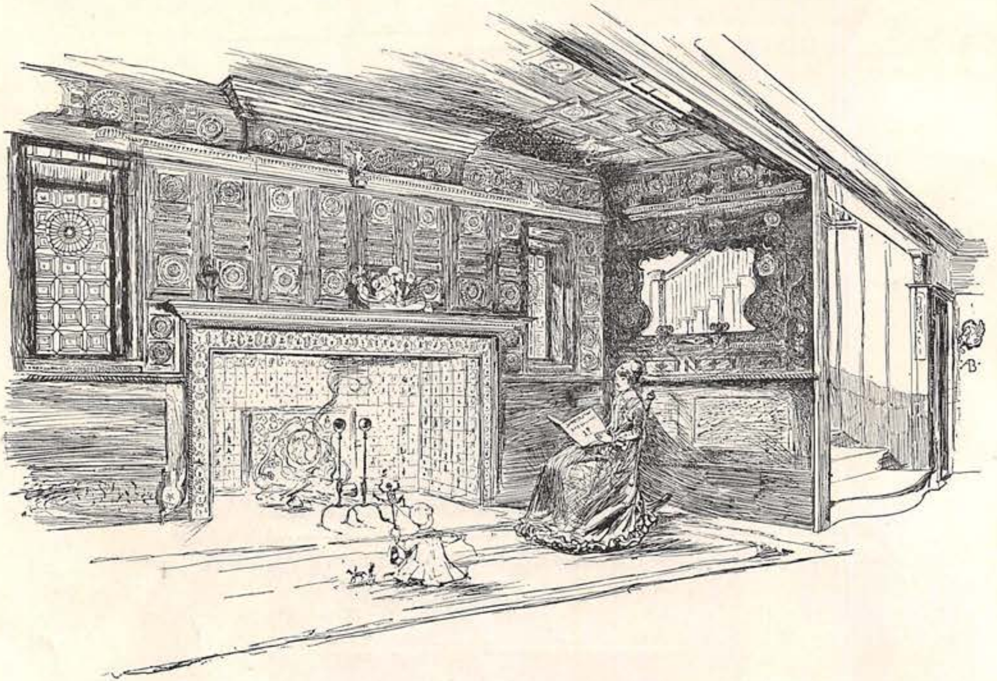


FIREPLACE IN HOUSE OF HORACE WHITE, ESQ., ELBERON, N. J.

have too commonly lacked the knowledge, the training, the cultivated taste, and the educated, refined common sense which in every great building age have been the corner-stones of effort and the inspiration of success.*

It is possible that, even though we long follow the best path and strive in the best way, we may never have a really great building age in America; for its advent will depend in great part, of course, upon whether or no we are gifted with artistic aptitude. I wish only to insist that our results need not be taken as decisive upon this last point until we *do* follow the best path and strive in the best way; until we go to work, and long persist in working, as we confess we ought to work in every other department of human effort — building intelligently on a wide knowledge of what has been done before, not thinking a bastard modern primitiveness a desirable foundation; systematizing our efforts, not wasting ourselves in crude experiments; keeping definite aims and ideals in view, not waiting lazily for "the spirit of the age" to speak through empty minds and untrained hands. If hitherto we have seemed to show little enough of artistic aptitude, let us take comfort from the confession that we have been very ignorant, and that we have had a very childish trust in the capabilities of ignorance. For, be it noted, not only in the branch which I have dwelt upon as the most conspicuous example, but in every other branch as well, the name of American architecture has been disgraced by a multitude of works in which no architect ever had a hand. What should have been

* The architecture of the rural Swiss is sometimes cited as an example of an appropriate and artistic product which must have been developed "unprofessionally," and, therefore, as an example for our following. But there is no real analogy between the two cases — nothing more than the very shadowy analogy which lies in the use of the same materials under totally different social and temporal conditions.



FIREPLACE IN HOUSE OF ISAAC BELL, ESQ., NEWPORT.

his task was confided too often to those who claimed his name without sufficient warrant, and as often to those who did not even dream of claiming it at all. Have we not seen how the "builder" wrought in our city homes when the speculator was his partner? Are we not well aware that he was often joined in a similar partnership with a very different client from the speculator — with the most lavish and ambitious of owners? Do we not all know in our own home neighborhoods the builder's factories and warehouses, his town halls and his public schools, his railway stations, even his churches? And can we say that their species is not still prolific? Now at last it has come into active competition with another and a better species. But that the "fittest" shall survive in this one special struggle for existence, depends almost entirely on you to whom I speak — on the wide general public of future clients, on the patrons who in this art are so immensely potent a power. Certainly, as compared with even a very recent period, this public has to-day a better appreciation of the importance of trained professional skill in building. But such appreciation is still not distinct or strong enough; and it is by no means *thorough* enough. That is looked upon as a luxury for great occasions which is, in truth, a necessity for all occasions great and small, and which, under the right conditions, is an economy instead of an indulgence. I do not say that we could always have acted up to this belief, even had we held it very firmly. When the local builder bore undisputed sway there certainly was not a trained and skillful architect languishing for want of patronage in every little village. Nor even when, in village or in city, one who believed himself to be such was given the helm, was he always able to steer a triumphant or so much as a safe and sensible course. Nor would I insinuate that builder and architect were always themselves to blame for not better deserving the higher title — except in so far as they were contented with the lower. But I *do* say that their condition and ours was a great misfortune, a hopelessly hampering misfortune; not a necessary stage in progress, nor, still less, a fortunate chance which, had we only been a "more artistic" nation, we should have utilized toward the best possible results. And I do insist that it is the duty of our public as well as of our architects themselves to try to make our art ever more and more "professional."

But enough and more than enough of generalities. It is quite time that I should prove my own arguments by the evidence of our most recent work in the branch with which at the moment we are specially concerned. For such proof can, I think, here be found.

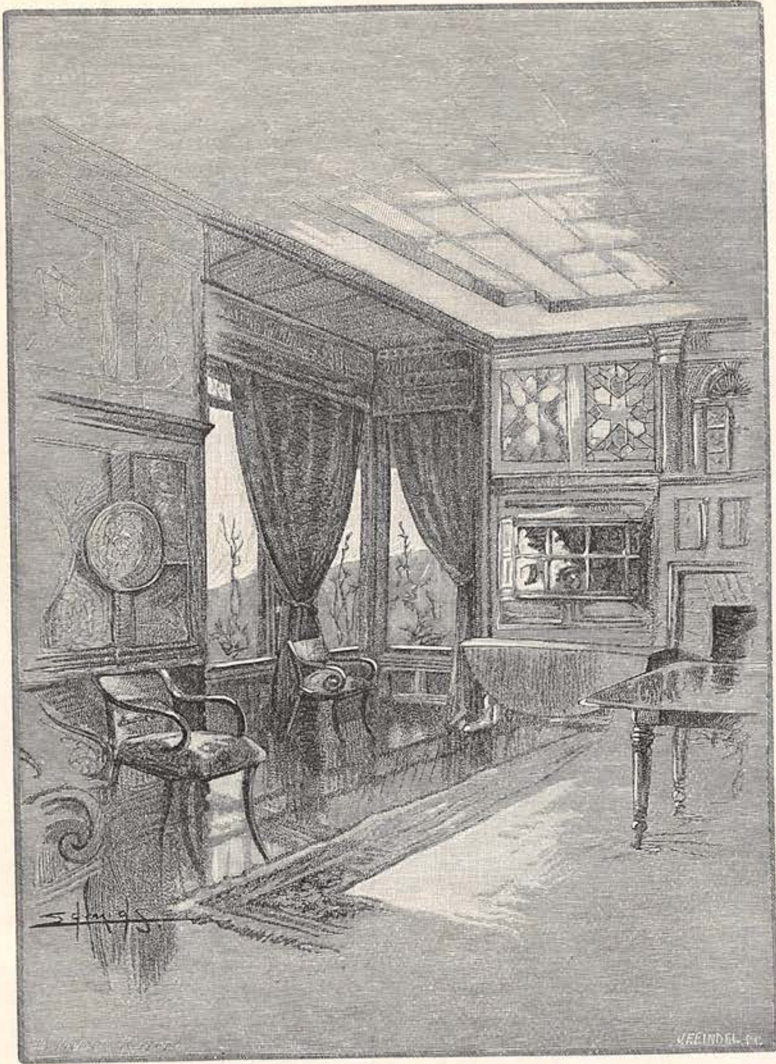
It is certainly not open to question that our best country homes and our average coun-

try homes of to-day are infinitely better than the best and the average of twenty or even of ten years ago. But it is just as little open to question that the "professional architect" now plays a much more important part in their construction; or, again, that this architect is becoming year by year more professional himself—that is, more widely differentiated from the mere artisan in quantity of knowledge, in thoroughness and quality of training, in refinement of intelligence, in width of artistic horizon, in processes and theories and ideals.

One name, I think, deserves to be mentioned here with especial honor. It would be difficult to overestimate the good influence Mr. Richard Hunt has had both upon the profession itself and upon its status with the public. When he began to practice such an education and equipment as his were almost anomalous with us, while to-day (of course not by any means solely, but yet, I think, partly through his example) they are getting to be thought essential and getting to *be* not quite exceptional. He was so industrious a worker, moreover, that the sum of his results formed a very large lump of leaven — a remarkably large lump, seeing that they were not all, like the results of too many others, patterned upon one shallow, monotonous scheme. He was so full of ideas that he experimented very widely and diversely. Not all of his experiments, we may grant, were successful. But as they were based on knowledge, not ignorance, all were useful as systematizing future efforts and marking out future paths, and most especially those which dealt with the new necessities of iron. He was so enthusiastic and versatile that every branch of the art appealed to him — even the then despised branch which includes country homes. All this did good, I repeat, not only as influencing other workers, but as raising the generally received opinion with regard to the utility of an architect in architecture. But in this last respect we are most of all indebted, perhaps, to the force of character and witchingness of tongue that enabled Mr. Hunt to

LIBRARY IN HOUSE OF SAMUEL GRAY WARD, ESQ., LENOX, MASS.

lay hold of the stolid, indifferent, obstinate, or timid client, and lead him whither he would have him go. I do not feel that in saying this I overstep the line which divides legitimate impersonal from illegitimate personal commentary; for, let it be in the other arts as it may, in the architect's art personal force and persuasiveness are essentially part and parcel of the required endowment. As I have said so often, this art depends upon direct, special, reiterated acts of patronage to a degree quite peculiar to itself; and as every new commission differs from every other, an artist's past record is not always taken — indeed, cannot always be taken — as a guarantee of future success. Therefore he who has not a modicum of personal persuasive power runs a great risk of being obliged to follow those whom he ought to lead. I do not say how it might be in an ideally artistic community; *there*, perhaps, all excellence would be self-evident to all in anticipation as in fact, and no discussion or persuasion necessary. But as communities

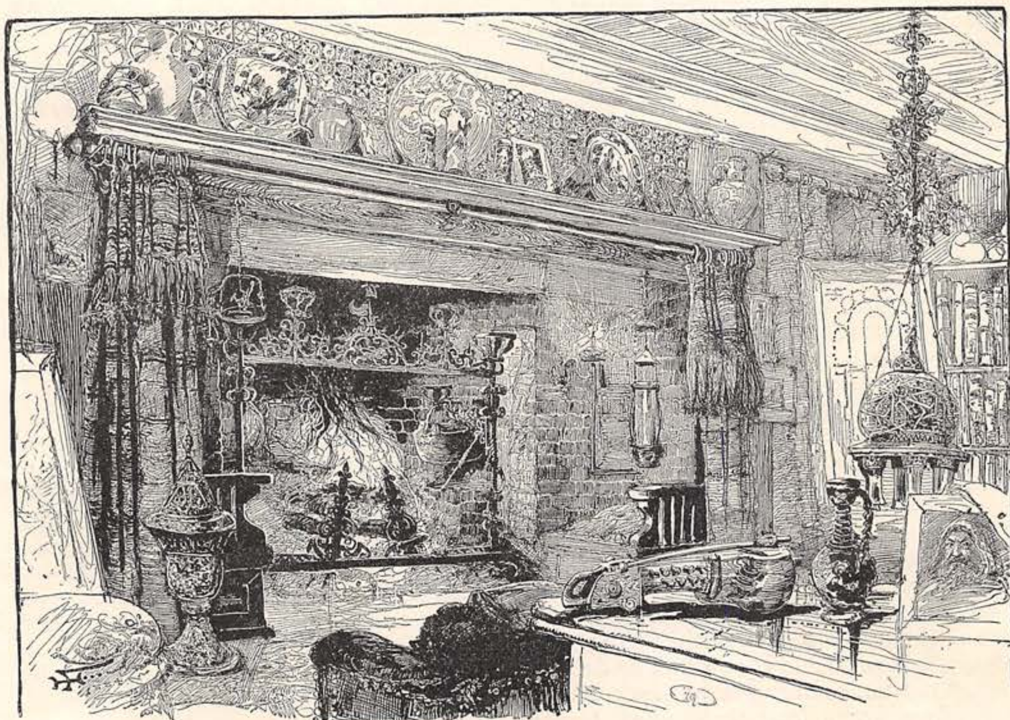


DINING-ROOM IN MR. WARD'S HOUSE.

stand to-day, that architect will be most serviceable to his clients, as well as to his art and to himself, who (other things being equal, I mean, of course) can persuade them most convincingly *that he knows best*. When Mr. Hunt began to practice this seemed a very strange proposition to the ears of the free and independent American citizen — especially when he was intent upon the structure of his own home. The fact that it now carries with it a sound much less of novelty and offense is largely due just to this one champion.*

Of course Mr. Hunt was not the first to try to improve upon the "vernacular" type of country dwelling — to try to put architectural coherence and something which might truthfully be called design in the place of the fantastic and yet mechanical medley which prevailed. Doubtless he was not even the first to do this with real ability and radically right ideas to

* How often do we still hear some "house-father" of the elder generation proclaim with child-like pride: "I had no architect; the builder and I did it all" — or, more likely, "*I* and the builder." And how invariably does the fact reveal itself in a very different way from that which he supposes! Perhaps this is as good a time as any to acknowledge the personal debt of gratitude I feel to Mr. Howells for having set before my readers so delicately trenchant a dramatic picture of the difference between the old *régime* and the new in matters architectural. Silas Lapham and his new house and his architect will, I am very sure, advocate my conclusions far more persuasively than all my own theoretic preachments.



FIREPLACE IN STUDIO OF H. H. RICHARDSON, ESQ., BROOKLINE, MASS.

back the effort. But so far as I know he *was* the first who perceptibly stemmed the popular current, who started any conspicuous and permanent stream of improvement. His work differs in many ways from that which is most characteristic of to-day. And yet he should be ranked as the forerunner — as what the Germans call the "road-breaker" — of the younger band who are doing such good service now. In the matter of interior treatment — both as regards the nice provision for complicated practical needs, and as regards variety and beauty of architectural effect as well — his innovations were especially remarkable and salutary. When speaking in a former chapter of the gradual growth in beauty our domestic interiors have undergone, I remarked that it showed at first in the shape of mere extrinsic charm — of upholsterer's decoration, so to say — and that we were satisfied for a time with this ere we bethought ourselves that intrinsic architectural charm might be still better worth the having. But Mr. Hunt's houses should be noted as exceptions. His efforts after architectural beauty began long before the decorative movement declared itself. For a long time the homes he built were much better in their main constructive features than in their decoration or their furniture, though at a much later day the rule was the reverse of this.

Coming now to speak of our current work in this department, I find the task extremely difficult. In no other branch do controlling needs, desires, and opportunities vary so widely and perpetually; nowhere else are possibilities of excellence or failure so manifold in themselves or so dependent upon the differing characters of different sites. And this makes it peculiarly hard, of course, to select examples — these being necessarily few in number — so that they shall be in any sense *typical* examples. That is to say, a town hall which is successful in one small town might have been just as successful in a hundred others; the plan and façade which are good for a narrow city lot might be just as good in Chicago or St. Louis as in New York or Boston; but a country home that is admirable at Newport, for example, could hardly be repeated at Mt. Desert or in the Catskills, not even to meet the same owner's needs — often could not be repeated on any other Newport site. It is peculiarly difficult, moreover, to describe even the individual excellence of any country home, for this excellence is not only individual to so exceptional a degree, but in this country is also, in the majority of cases, of a comparatively modest, unaccented kind; lies in the harmony of minor, detailed virtues; is not to be explained by the citation of con-

spicuous features, or characterized by reference to anything very pronounced in the way of "style." The architectural virtues of a palace or a mansion are emphatic and describable, but the architectural virtues of a cottage are retiring and elusive — are very apt to evaporate entirely from the words in which one tries to write them down. I must therefore make it my chief aim to point out certain factors which, in spite of the endless diversity of our problems, nevertheless enter into almost all of them; and to note certain tendencies which, in spite of the varied character of our efforts, nevertheless may be said to characterize those efforts as a whole. The examples I shall briefly note in illustration must not be accepted as being better than all others, but merely as being most familiar to my eyes. Indeed, their illustrative value depends to no small degree just upon the fact that I can say they are *not* better than all others.

I have already hinted that when the American architect labors in this branch he can get an unusually small amount of help from his foreign brethren. Continental excellence cannot be very useful to him, for the fundamental ideas which prevail in continental lands with regard to what country homes should be are radically different from those which prevail with us. The fundamental ideas which prevail in England, on the other hand, do strongly resemble ours. But our social conditions are so peculiar to ourselves, and our climate also, and our consequent habits of life, that even English teachings must be vastly modified in the application. Of course I do not mean to contradict everything I have written above — to say that we do not need to use all possible learning, to incorporate many transmitted ideas and many borrowed motives, here as elsewhere in our art. I merely mean that here even more than elsewhere we should not, cannot *copy* — should study the results of other lands and ages "only as one studies literature, not as one studies grammar."

This fact has clearly proved itself within the last few years. An effort has been made to copy the domestic style which now rules in England,— that so-called "Queen Anne," which our grandchildren will call "Queen Victoria,"— and it has proved the impossibility of direct imitation as distinctly as the "vernacular" had already proved the futility of thoughtless, ignorant originality. Fortunately we have not been as long in learning the second lesson as we were in learning the first. It is true that we cannot just yet say that it is thoroughly learned — cannot say that our imitative Queen Anne is yet extinct. But it is dying fast, I think, and to-day it does not include those which we deem our most characteristic, much less those which we deem our most successful efforts.

But why is not the Queen Anne cottage, which in its best state at home has charmed the eye of many an American and thoroughly fulfilled his conception of what a country home should be — why is it not able, if transplanted to our own soil, to meet at least a certain class of needs? Try to live in one, and you will see. In the winter season you will have snow where the Englishman has rain, and will find his picturesquely complex roof a snow-trap, not a snow-shed. You will have far greater cold than he, and will need a plan that does not put too many difficulties in the way of warming from a common center. Winter and summer you will have sunshine of a strength he knows only in his dreams, and his house will very likely give you more windows than you want. And in summer you will have heat of a potency he would hate to know even in his dreams, and his house will most certainly *not* give you the thing you want most of all — a piazza. And, again, you will very often wish to make a much more extensive use of wood than he ever makes in these modern days. Of course you may use your wood in place of his brick; you may modify his roofs, change his plan, alter his openings, and add your own piazza. If, however, you do this with the intent to copy the effect of his house as nearly as you can, you will utterly spoil his creation and produce a bastard thing which will neither satisfy your eye nor wholly meet your needs. And this is just what has been done in a very great many cases. If, on the other hand, you make the necessary changes with intelligent thought and artistic feeling as your helpers, instead of with imitative effort as your fetter, the result will not be the Englishman's house at all, but something essentially different, essentially your own. And this too, let us rejoice to note, is done more often and more successfully year by year.

From current English fashions we have certainly learned a great deal besides the mere fact that we cannot copy them; and we should be peculiarly grateful that our interest in them has led us to take an interest in genuine Queen Anne and Georgian work — that is, in the work so many examples of which are to be found upon our own soil. Our colonial homes have of late been the objects of much earnest attention, and the fact is very fortunate.

It would have been unfortunate, however, had not our architects approached them in a more sensible spirit than that which has swayed some of the critics already quoted. For, after saying much in a vague way with regard to what ought *not* to be done in Amer-

ica, these advisers have given at least one bit of decided counsel with regard to what *ought* to be done—have declared that we ought to look back at our colonial examples and to "reproduce" them as faithfully as we can. These examples, they assert, are the only examples at once "American" and good; and they are so very good—so charming, so characteristic, and so appropriate to our wants—that we need not try to improve on them. If, however, we throw aside a very natural sentimentality which clings about the subject, and if we then compare our colonial homes not merely with their later rivals, the clapboarded box and the "vernacular" villa, but with a sensible ideal of what the homes of to-day might be and should be—if we do this, we find that our critics' assertions hardly sustain themselves.

We need not quarrel over the question whether the colonial house is "American" or not. In any strict sense, of course, it does not deserve the name; nothing does save the wigwam of the North and the pueblo of the South. Of course its patterns were all imported, and sometimes their treatment was very strictly imitative—more strictly imitative, I should say, than the treatment of any of our later products whatsoever. But certain frequent features—as, for instance, one or two sensible and charming modes of roofing—may fairly be called original; and when the translation into wood occurred, that was certainly American enough. Then our colonial work has stood longer than any other, and is identified with whatever historic associations we can call our own; and it is all so analogous as to offer an instance of the flourishing on our soil of something that may be called a coherent, comprehensible, all-pervading "style." All these facts, together with its undeniable charm, certainly give it a strong hold upon our affections, and a priority of claim among the proper objects of our study. But the main question is not as to its Americanism, and is not as to its charm; the main question is, does it indeed wholly meet the needs of to-day, practically, expressionally, and artistically?

Practically it does not. Its air is indeed as of a delightfully complete domesticity, but it by no means fulfills to the modern American mind the promise it holds out to the eye. In relation to the habits we have acquired during more than a century of rapidly changing existence, it is not one-half so "livable" as it looks. It provides only for the simplest, most unvaried and homogeneous domestic and social customs, and only for housekeeping of what now seems a very primitive pattern. Whatever the *paterfamilias* might feel about it, neither the *mater* nor her executives could live at their ease to-day or work at their best in an unmodified colonial interior. If they happen to dwell in an old one, there are sentimental compensations which perhaps suffice. But when a new home is in question the case seems wholly different. And the alterations in plan and arrangement which are necessary to meet the change in main requirements, and to provide for a hundred subordinate new requirements, must be of such a character that the old exterior pattern cannot often be retained. For this pattern is certainly not flexible, elastic, given to indefinite extension and the indefinite multiplication of minor constructive features. The effect of quiet dignity which is its greatest charm depends very largely just upon its simple, unbroken outlines, and its broad, unbroken masses.

And in thus deciding with regard to its practical sufficiency, have we not also decided with regard to the expressional and artistic sufficiency of the colonial home? Our more freely social, more lavish, more varied and complex ways of living cannot find full and truthful expression in any colonial pattern, nor our growing love of art full and lawful satisfaction. We still want to be dignified in our architectural voice, still to be refined, still to be quiet; but the dignity, the refinement, and the repose must be of a different character from those which appropriately marked the dwellings of our ancestors. The simpler types among these are extremely puritanical; and I do not think the adjective fits ourselves. And the ornater types, even if they had not also much of the same accent, are the least well fitted for reproduction in our most usual material; for, excusable though the practice was a hundred years ago, it would be inexcusable to-day to build Doric porticoes or to frame Ionic pilasters out of pine boards painted.

In short, we may say of our colonial homes what we may say of the contemporary homes of England: our architects should study them, but cannot copy them. When to a certain degree their features and their general effect have been reproduced, the result seems peculiarly pleasing and most appropriately "American." (At least this is true of the Eastern States. It would not be so true, I think, of the Western—which may be taken as proof in passing of how desirabilities vary in this department of our art.) But many extraneous features and many variations of old features and old modes of working must be introduced if the result is to be sensible and satisfactory. And for some of these the point of departure must be found in the "vernacular." Incapable of self-development into anything good, it yet cannot be cut down root and branch; it must

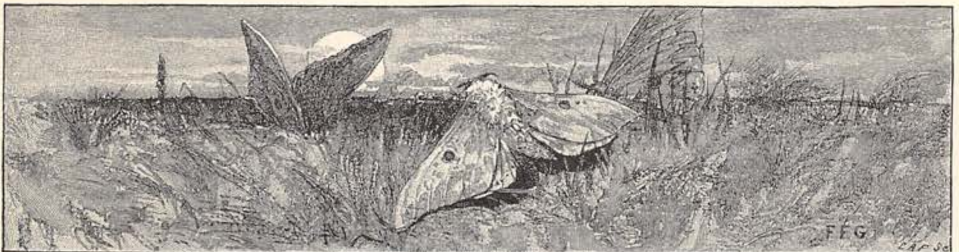
LODGE OF FREDERICK L. AMES, ESQ., NORTH EASTON, MASS.

yield us certain buds of excellence for development along with other grafts. Its piazza, for example, absolutely imposes itself upon the conscience of every American architect. To develop it into a beautiful and constructive instead of an ugly, make-shift, superadded feature, and to bring it into perfect harmony with all his other features, many of which will have come from very different sources — this is one of the most vital problems with which he has to deal; and also one of the most difficult, and the one of all others which most emphatically forbids him to imitate any previous product, most emphatically prescribes that if he builds good country houses for the Americans of to-day, they will be essentially unlike all others.

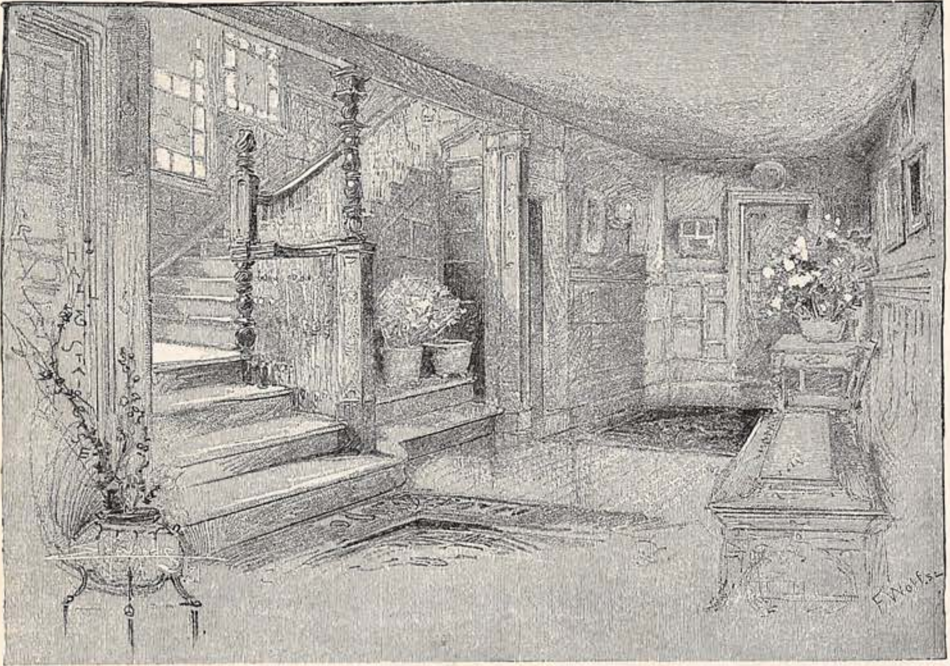
But I have come to the utmost limits of a long chapter, and must postpone all further comment to another. The illustrations herewith given reveal something in the mean while with regard to our current efforts. I would only say once more that the revelation is of necessity imperfect; that no such illustrations can tell the whole truth as to form and proportion, much truth as to detail, or any truth as to color; and, especially, cannot speak distinctly as to that perfect adaptation of a house to its surroundings which is one of the most vital of all virtues. As our conditions run, it is sometimes a virtue very difficult of attainment. Nevertheless it is one which we are earnestly striving to attain, and already with a degree of success that goes far to prove there lie within us some latent sparks of true artistic aptitude.

M. G. van Rensselaer.

The lodge on Mr. Osborne's place at Mamaroneck, Major Poore's house, and all the interiors except the studio were designed by Messrs. McKim, Mead & White; the studio and the lodge at North Easton by Mr. Richardson; Mrs. Hemenway's house by Mr. Emerson, and the Newport farm-house by Mr. C. S. Luce.



AMERICAN COUNTRY DWELLINGS. II.



HALL AND STAIRWAY IN HOUSE OF SAMUEL GRAY WARD, ESQ., LENOX, MASS.

IN a former chapter I tried to point out some of the special difficulties and dangers which have always met us in this department of our architecture — to show some of the reasons why here even more than elsewhere it has been impossible to depend on formula and precedent for direct guidance, or to take current foreign practice as lawful text and binding rule. I tried to explain why our rural domestic work was forced to be peculiarly "American," and also why it happened to be peculiarly bad. I ventured to say that the two qualities had not yet been proved of necessity identical; to believe that we failed in our novel task simply because we went about it in the wrong way, because when cast loose from our anchorage we had no compass and no pilot and no well-trained crew, but drifted on the wind of lawless impulse — let thoughtless minds and unskilled hands and crude artistic aspirations sway us.

To-day, as I have also said, our results are very different — not because difficulty has decreased, and not because we ourselves have suddenly grown "more artistic," but because we have grown more intelligent in applying whatever natural faculties we possess to the meeting of all difficulties and the avoiding of all dangers. Our best new country homes are still the most "American" of any of our products; good or bad, I say, they hardly could be otherwise. But their individuality is now a thing we can contemplate with satisfaction, and in which we can read the signs of a greater satisfaction yet to come.

We must not look to them for examples of that almost palatial dignity and richness which we conceive, for instance, when we speak of the best country homes of England. We are not essentially a country-loving but a city-loving people; and our country homes are thus allotted, in the great majority of cases, but a secondary station. Our most frequent, most characteristic, most typical product is not the country residence in the old world acceptation of the term, but the mere *summer residence* built for those whose longer days are passed in a city home. Moreover, our gregarious tendencies are so strong that most (of course not by any means all) of our summer homes are more or less closely grouped together in colonies which have no exact parallel abroad. There is nothing abroad which really represents such a place as Newport, for

HALLWAY, LOOKING SOUTH, IN MR. WARD'S HOUSE.

example, or as Mt. Desert or Lenox, or any of those resorts which line the northern Massachusetts shore. The most "select" of English watering-places is a mere congeries of lodging-houses, intermixed with villas whose indwellers' thought is but for repose or recuperation. In the most modest of American watering-places, on the other hand, social ends have largely been considered.

The fact may seem unimportant, but it is vital enough to decree a wholly different architectural problem. Though in the majority of cases the owner's chief home is not his summer "cottage" (the term has survived its literal truth), yet this is none the less a *true* home, wherein he wishes not only to gain new life but to *live* — wishes to have his most private and personal needs as completely provided for as in town, and often to have his social needs quite as completely met. And this last point is not unapt to mean that his "cottage" must be big enough to house many guests as well as to provide for those transient demands which occur in cities.

Does not all this indeed imply that for other reasons, as well as for those which lie in difference of climate, our most frequent and most characteristic summer homes cannot be patterned on any foreign scheme? And does it not also imply that the task of building them is extremely difficult? In truth, it is not easy to build on a restricted site, and amid clearly visible rivals, a house which shall be but a warm-weather home (and look like one), and yet in size and beauty, in comfort and in elegance, shall keep pace with the city home itself — nay, in size, at least, shall often far surpass it. Much that is elaborate, much that is ambitious and costly, must often be wrought within the house and expressed without; yet neither within nor without, neither in plan nor in form nor in decoration, must its merely summer purpose ever be denied, nor, of course, its non-independent station. It must not have a "citified" look, and neither may it have just such a look as is appropriate to a country home of the same pretensions when it stands in dignified solitude. Nor, once more, may it be too modest, too simple, too rustic of aspect, for thus it would sin against expressional truth and fitness in another way.

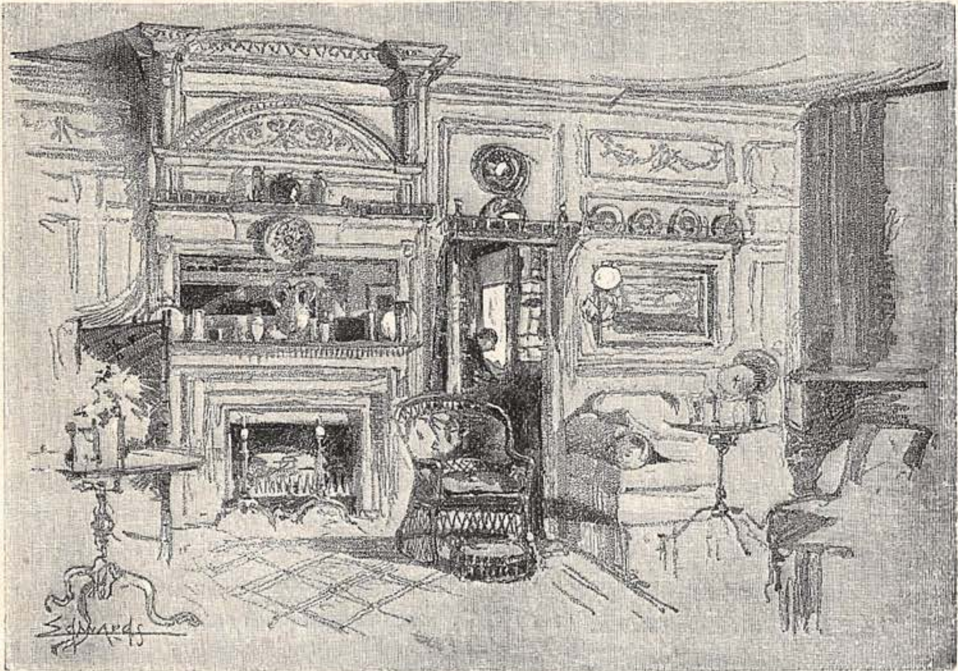
And even when these summer colonies are less ambitious, more modest and rural in their character, even when their units are small and simple and inexpensive, the difficulties are hardly less. The personality, so to say, of each house must be preserved; no common pattern can serve for all, as we are not building lodging-houses, but individual homes. And in each a certain amount of dignity, of refinement, even of elegance must be expressed; although the cottage in name is now a cottage in size, still it must not look like a cottager's cottage. It must look like a gentleman's home if it is meant to be one.

The problem, I say, is always difficult, and its difficulty constantly changes character. But it varies sensibly in degree as well according as one colony differs from another in the closeness of its grouping and the natural felicity of its site.

At Lenox, for example, in the beautiful

Berkshire country, there are many summer homes which are practically isolated — which have wide lands about them and are screened into privacy by the rise of the hills and the sweep of the forests. Deluded by these facts, some of them have taken upon themselves far too self-asserting, far too independently dignified an air; forgetting that though their relation to their neighbors is more a matter of imaginative than of ocular concern, it should nevertheless not have been ignored, not have remained unexpressed. They are not content to look just what they are — mere units, though outlying ones, in a summer colony of many such; and the discrepancy between look and fact is, I think, distressing to many an eye which perhaps does not clearly feel the cause of its distress.

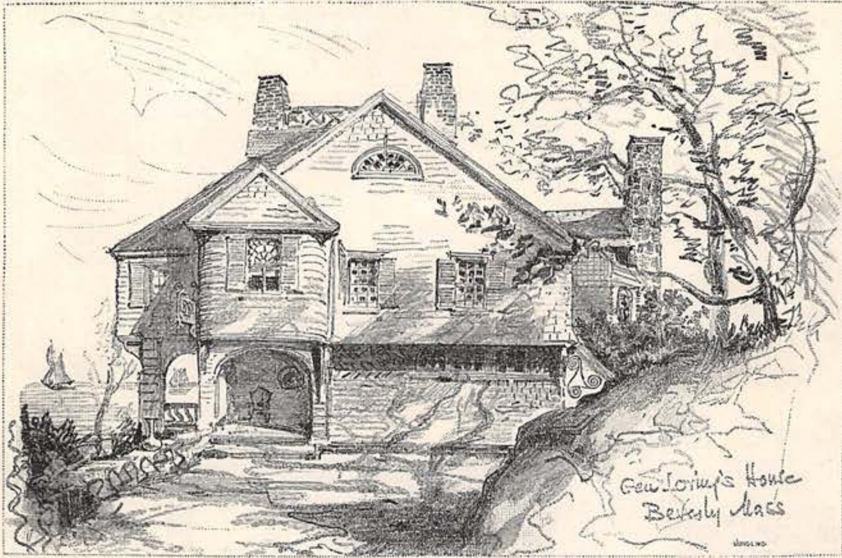
For an example of a different kind, an example of a large and luxurious home in which the general expression is of just the proper sort,— neither so rural as to be affected and untruthful nor so ambitious as to be pretentious and, again, untruthful,— I may point to the house which Messrs. McKim, Mead & White have built for Mr. Ward. It is set on the side of a hill, so that the front, which looks out on the steep wooded slopes above, has but two stories, while the rear, which looks down over the broad and beautiful valley, has a basement story in addition. The design is not only one of extent as opposed to height, but also one of breadth as opposed to depth or to our former rectangular pattern. The nature of the site almost prescribed this; but an unintelligent designer either would not have ventured to choose such a site or would not have made a virtue of its necessities. (That is to say, an architectural necessity becomes a virtue when, as here, it is hidden from the eye by charm in the result and patent only to the analyzing thought.) The long hall has its length skillfully masked by diversities of trend, and by diversities of level too. Nor is there any monotony in the long succession of rooms which open out of it all on the same side; we merely think how fortunate it is that they all are placed so as to command the lovely valley landscape.



DRAWING-ROOM IN MR. WARD'S HOUSE.

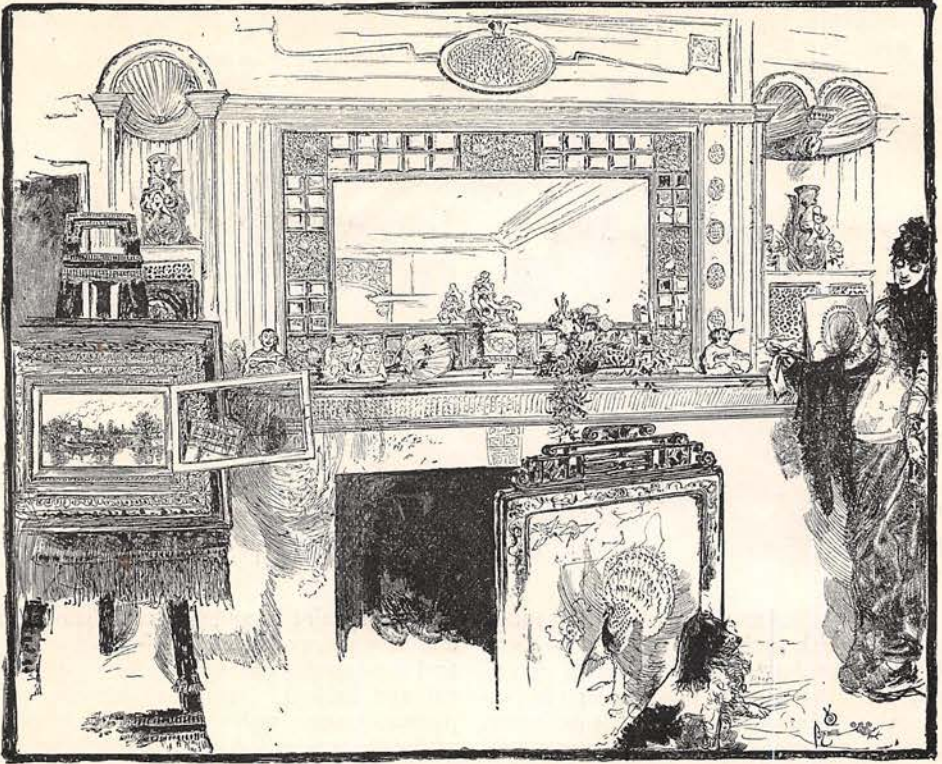
No interior could be better fitted for comfortable, refined, hospitable country living; and the exterior is perfectly in keeping. It tells plainly of the inside, and its quaint rusticity — suggested doubtless by a certain type of English farm-house — is not a thought too rustic. The model has been altered into greater refinement and dignity of expression, and has also been adapted in all its features to our new climatic needs.

All about Boston, and all along the beautiful rocky forest-fringed shore to the northward (near those early towns where so many of our



best colonial relics may be seen), lie summer colonies in thick succession;—some of them rich in the revelation of architectural eccentricity, but others yearly growing rich in better wealth. Here Mr. Emerson is at home, and here are many of his most successful essays in the branch of work to which he has almost exclusively devoted himself. One—a house for Mrs. Hemenway, near Manchester—was pictured in a former chapter. And herewith is given a quite insufficient sketch of another, which from the nature of its site could not be more adequately portrayed.

It stands near Pride's Crossing, on one of the narrowest and ruggedest of those high wooded promontories which, alternating with little valleys (also filled with forest to the very beach-edge), make the Beverly shore so uniquely lovely—on such a rocky and broken and limited site, indeed, that many thought it folly to talk of building there at all. It is hard to explain the charm of this house, for it is impossible to explain either the beauty or the difficulty of the site, or the way in which the structure adapts itself to the difficulty and harmonizes with the beauty. It was wisely felt that the natural features which made the spot so seductive in spite of all practical obstacles, should be preserved in their general effect and as far as possible in their details too. Not a rock or a tree or a shrub was injured save when no ingenuity could save it; and this, to Mr. Emerson's skill, meant singularly little alteration. In part the house seems a vital growth from the rocks themselves; in part it rests on the connecting brickwork which alone made the rocks an available foundation. Quaint irregularities of arrangement and diversities of level therefore show within, and the exterior outline is quite unsymmetrical and broken. The result charms by its picturesqueness rather than by architectural virtue of a stricter sort; yet the picturesqueness not only attracts but satisfies us because practical needs compelled it, because the aspect of the site makes it thoroughly appropriate, and because unity and harmony are preserved in its despite; and each of the varied interior features is delightful because each was dictated either by a material necessity or by the laudable desire to make the most of all contrasted points of outlook. Of course much of the picturesqueness had been wrought by Nature, and wrought in one of her most rarely artistic moods. But her gifts were hedged about with hindrances that from a practical point of view seemed all but prohibitory, or seemed to necessitate for their overcoming a great mutilation of her charm. Yet the house has been built and well built, and her charm is but increased by it. The spot could never have seemed so lovely while it lacked this house, which nestles on the one hand in the very heart of the woods and on the other sees the sky and the close-lying ocean over a foreground of rugged rocks and through a crowding tracery of pine-branches — its wide, low windows framing pictures such as we had only known before in some drawing from Japan. Even had the practical conditions been less difficult, it would still be great praise to say that while Mr. Emerson's house is thoroughly good *as* a house,— as a dwelling-place for its own especial owner,— it also seems



PARLOR FIRE-PLACE IN HOUSE OF H. VICTOR NEWCOMB, ESQ., SUNNY SANDS, ELBERON, N. J.

almost as much a part of nature's first intentions as do the rocks and trees themselves; to say that while it has material fitness it has also such artistic fitness that its site and its surroundings seem to have been designed for its sole sake and service.

In these two cases (which I cite as types of many more) nature gave rich gifts, but the designer had to mold them carefully to his purpose. But even when her aid is still more freely given, even when it is hampered by no patent difficulties, even then there is no smallest cause to underrate the designer's share in any ultimate success. For if a good chance always meant a good result, then Nature only would deserve the name of architect. When eyes are unintelligent and hands unskillful, a good chance merely means a chance for doubly sinful failure.

But, on the other hand, there are many times when even the intelligent, even the skillful and artistic designer is thrown back wholly on his own resources. Sometimes nature works directly against him. For example, in those summer colonies which fringe the northern New Jersey shore the sea has been the sole attraction; and this natural fact has brought with it, as a necessary consequence, an excessive contraction of site, such as is not compelled where the land as well as the water offers beauty to the eye.

And even were there no excessive crowding towards the water's edge, how difficult still would be the designer's task! For how shall he bring his work into harmony with nature's; how make it look as though it were an unforced growth, and not a forced bit of manufacture; how let it bear witness to man's community with all terrestrial things, and not merely to his casual presence on the earth — how, when nature herself is but sea and flat land, with no suggestive, helpful irregularities of surface, with no leafy backgrounds, with no "features" whatsoever that can be worked into an artist's scheme?

If we look at the cottages in and about Long Branch, we are only too glad to remember that their builders' task was difficult; for I doubt whether there is anywhere else on earth a panorama of such ugliness produced at such an outlay of inventive effort. Of course there are better units among the very bad; but their comparative excellence lies almost smothered in the mass of fantastic sin. We grow from astonishment to laughter and from laughter to despair. Is it possible that the thing can ever be well done when it has been tried so many times already, hope-

fully, eagerly, persistently, inventively, yet always with some degree of failure and most often with ludicrous defeat?

But that it is not an impossible thing to do well, that we cannot lay the whole burden of Long Branch on nature's shoulders, we may convince ourselves by a glance at one of the newer colonies near by—at Elberon, for instance, where the conditions are the same but the effect is very different. The hotel is neither a great bald barrack nor a flimsy gingerbread agglomerate, but a long, low, rural-looking inn,—a little too scattered and restless in design, perhaps, but yet refined, not vulgar, homelike, not barnlike, sensible, not stupid or fantastic. And its interior shows even more plainly than its exterior how great an architectural revolution is in progress—how we have improved both in the nature of our intentions and in the expedients with which we try to work them out. Almost all the private houses at Elberon are at least respectably good, too good to excite the scorn and laughter which move us at Long Branch. And some of them are quite as good as we have any right to ask, seeing that we cannot ask for that complete beauty which comes when Nature and the artist labor hand in hand.

Especially successful are some of those built by Messrs. McKim, Mead & White—the "Francklyn Cottage" (known by name at least to all the nation since the day when General Garfield died there), Mr. Horace White's house, and Mr. Victor Newcomb's. The last is perhaps the best of all, though as it is the largest and most ambitious it was doubtless the most embarrassing to design. A very just medium has been struck, I think, between that dignity which would have been too dignified for the environment and that utter simplicity which would have been out of character with the interior. And the house looks, moreover, as thoroughly as any house can which lies between a broadly magnificent ocean on the one side and a broadly monotonous stretch of flat land on the other, as though it belonged on the site it holds. It looks as though it stood firmly on its feet, as though it were rooted and grounded, as though it had *grown*, while too many of our seaside houses look as though they had not even been built in place, rather, as though they had been dropped down ready-made by accident, and might move off somewhere else with the first breath of a stormy wind.

But to the student of domestic architecture Newport is the most interesting of all our summer colonies. Its history is the longest, and the problems which it sets are the most widely varied among themselves. Colonial houses are abundant, both on outlying estates and farms and in the old closely built portions of the town itself. Its newer portions show a characteristic instance of that way

MAIN HALL IN MR. NEWCOMB'S HOUSE.

of village-planning which I have already spoken of as peculiarly American — wide streets of detached houses, each with its own small lawn and garden, and all overshadowed by thickset and lofty trees. Here the architecture includes every post-colonial type: the plain, square, piazzaed box; the "vernacular" villa with "French roof" and jig-saw fringing and abnormal hues of paint; the pseudo "Queen Anne" cottage; and that still later product which is again thoroughly American, but in a new and better way.

EXTERIOR OF MR. NEWCOMB'S COTTAGE.

Then, as we leave the town proper, and seek Bellevue Avenue and the adjacent roads which skirt or lead towards the sea, we find a long succession of more purely summer homes, standing now well screened by trees and well isolated in grounds that are sometimes of considerable extent, but now on treeless sites and in far closer contiguity. And here the architectural types are again of many kinds, while each kind shows more conspicuously and speaks with a more emphatic accent. Certain houses are built of substantial materials, and are very simple in form and finish; are unbeautiful, inartistic, if you will, but quiet, sensible, respectable, and occasionally even dignified in a prosaic sort of way. Certain others show the "vernacular" in its most riotous mood—as, for instance, a large wooden house well out on the west side of Bellevue Avenue, which may be identified by its curiously ugly gateways—the lich-gates of the burying-grounds of Wales translated into our local dialect and put to singular noservice. Here, too, the "Queen Anne" fashion shows its most emphatic, its most erratic face. In short, no place reveals so clearly as does Newport the extreme of each direction that our would-be art has taken; except, perhaps, the very best extreme of the most recent kind of effort.

In its summer garments it is a pretty place indeed. But its prettiness is due chiefly to nature, to nature and her ministrant, the gardener. Newport with bare trees and leafless vines and withered lawns and flower-beds, Newport when its architectural lines and colors stand simply on their own merits

and show clearly in their every detail,— Newport in winter,— is by no means a source of unmixed pride and joy. Of course, winter is not the time to see it, is not the time when it was meant to be seen and *is* seen. And of course the architect must think of nature when he builds, and may reckon largely on her charms when he is building summer homes; but he should depend on them only to assist the general beauty of his work, not to hide its shortcomings or overshroud its sins.

VESTIBULE IN MR. NEWCOMB'S COTTAGE.

In many parts of the town and of its outskirts we have failed to build well simply and solely because we have been stupid; there were no hindrances to the easy conquering of excellence. But in other parts there have been great difficulties to contend with. Far out on Bellevue Avenue, for instance, and all along the border of the Cliff, where there are no trees, and where the sites are comparatively small or are actually cramped and crowded, it is no easy thing even to imagine just what sort of work would be both appropriate and beautiful. The task is harder here, indeed, than in any other spot I know.

Compare the Newport Cliff with Elberon, for instance, and we find that as a rule the house must be still larger and more ambitious, and must have a still more strongly accented dignity of expression, if it is to interpret local life and its own interior. And we find, too, that while nature again offers the artist no help in the way of details or backgrounds, she does not efface herself so completely. Instead of a mere wide monotony of sandy ground, she now supplies a line of broken cliff, lovely alike in form and color. But its loveliness being of a quiet, subtile, gentle sort, is easily marred by the touch of man. There are some cliffs where man might do his worst and not do much to injure nature; but here anything that is not entirely harmonious is a striking and distressing discord. Nowhere does nature tempt man more irresistibly to build; nowhere does she leave his result more conspicuous, and nowhere does she so imperatively demand that it shall have an impeccable artistic title to exist. Thus it is that when houses in this part of Newport are not very good they seem so very bad; thus it is that a degree of excellence, which would almost satisfy us elsewhere, here seems scarcely excellent at all.

It is instructive to compare two recent and very ambitious houses which stand near together on Ochre Point. One design would not be very good under any conditions; but its multitude of diverse features, its effect as of unmotived variety, its evident effort after superficial picturesqueness, and the flimsy look of certain of its features, are doubly distressing,

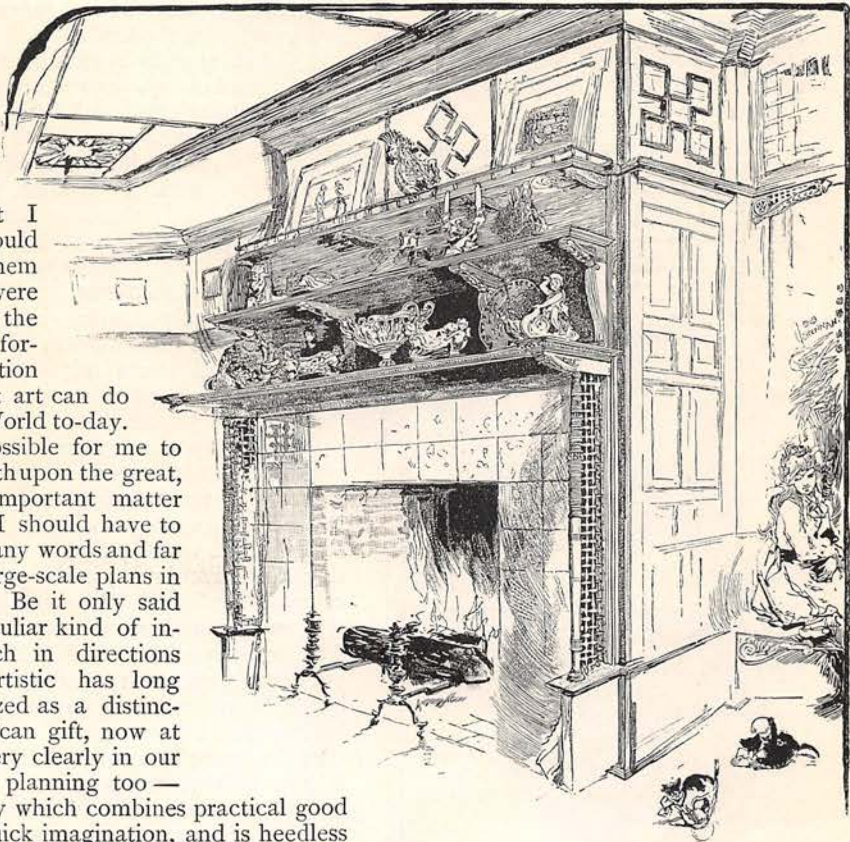
DINING-ROOM IN MR. NEWCOMB'S COTTAGE.

since they are executed on so large a scale and set on such a site as this. The other house is in many ways a very good one, or might be if transported somewhere else. Dignity, stateliness has now been the aim, and has been clearly expressed in its stone-built solidity and its monumental-looking features. But this aim — of course a good one, abstractly considered — has been followed too blindly, in too uncompromising a way, for the result to be "in character" as a mere summer home closely set about with alien neighbors. The house, in short, looks so out of place that its good qualities hardly please us more than do those which are less good. Both these houses transgress, we may say, by lack of discretion, of modesty, though the sinning of the one has been done in a wholly different fashion from the sinning of the other.

As we might expect, the best among the recent Newport houses do not stand on quite such exacting sites or deal with problems quite so ambitious. Some of the smaller homes built by Mr. Luce, by Mr. Emerson, by Messrs. Rotch & Tilden, and by Messrs. McKim, Mead & White are extremely sensible, attractive, and appropriate in design. The one which the last-named artists have built for Mr. Samuel Coleman, on Red Cross Lane, seems to me particularly happy in expression — dignified yet rural, simple yet refined, almost picturesque yet quiet, and wholly devoid of that affectation, that attitudinizing (so to say) which too often accompanies picturesqueness. The colonial roof has been cleverly adapted on the one hand and the "vernacular" piazza on the other. These points may be guessed from our illustration; but I am sorry to say it does not reveal the best qualities of the design, its pleasing outlines, its harmonious general effect, or the way in which a commonplace situation has been given individuality and dignity by a terrace which unites the house with the lawn below. It fails to show that it is a *good house*, and not merely a house with certain good features. But it is, I think, one of the very best in Newport, in spite of the fact that we can take exception to a few minor features here and there — as to the details of the piazza in the foreground of our print; and it is also one of those which are most distinctly "American" in effect.

It is time, however, that I should speak a little of the interior of our country homes. As a rule they are more entirely satisfactory than the exterior. Even some of those houses which most painfully affect the eye as features in the Newport landscape, are models within of intelligent design and artistic decoration. In truth, the interiors of

our country homes are getting to be so good, not only in exceptional but also in average examples, that I think I should point to them first of all, were I asked by the "intelligent foreigner" of fiction to show what art can do in the New World to-day.



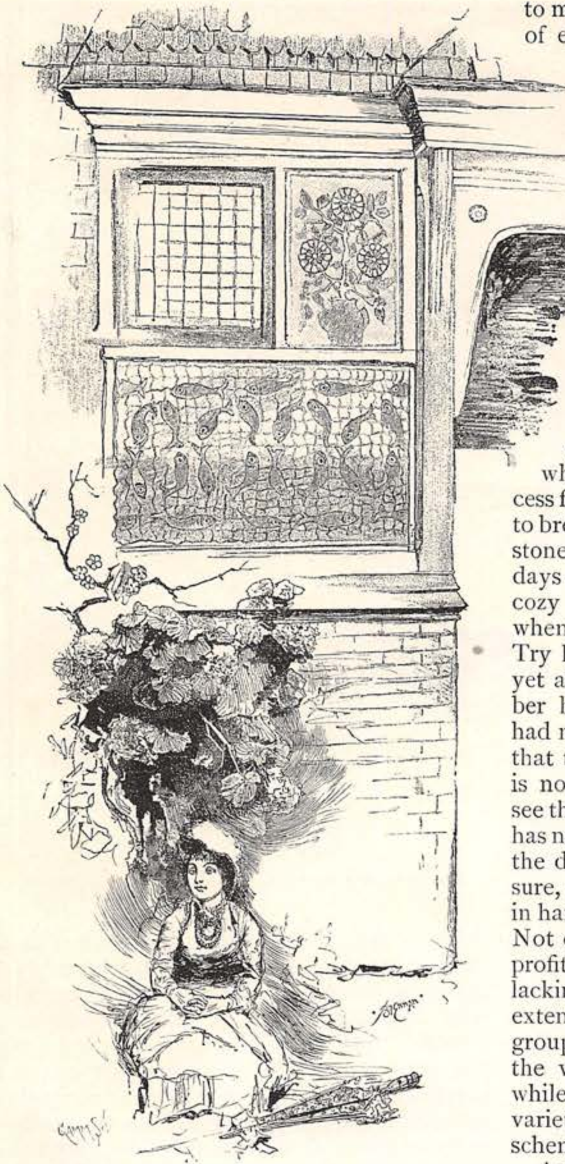
DINING-ROOM FIRE-PLACE IN MR. NEWCOMB'S COTTAGE.

It is impossible for me to dwell at length upon the great, the vitally important matter of planning. I should have to use far too many words and far too many large-scale plans in illustration. Be it only said that that peculiar kind of ingenuity which in directions other than artistic has long been recognized as a distinctively American gift, now at last shows very clearly in our architectural planning too — that ingenuity which combines practical good sense with quick imagination, and is heedless of conventions while not in love with needless novelty.

I said in my last chapter that our general ideas with regard to what a country home should be are similar to those which prevail in England, dissimilar to those which rule in continental countries. But by *similar* I did not mean *identical*. I merely meant that we believe domestic comfort should be first considered and first expressed; that, therefore, a flexible variety in plan and in exterior form is preferred by us to that internal and external symmetry to which the French, for example, adhere in their love for the harmonious, the monumental, and the "grammatical" in art. When it comes to putting this general belief into practice, our specialized demands are apt to have a very un-English character of their own. In fact, it is with our planning as with our exterior design: we may learn much from English precedents, but we cannot copy them.

For a long time the most usual pattern followed in our country homes was symmetrical enough — not because we really cared for symmetry or even knew it by that name, but simply because we were too unintelligent to do more than build a rectangular box with a straight "entry" through the middle and two square rooms on each hand. If greater size was desirable, we added other rooms and "entries" on this side and on that, but gave the plan no center, no coherence, and no nicety of convenience or charm of architectural effect. Now, however, we go very differently to work. Our smallest cottages show an ever-varying irregularity of plan which might seem "unarchitectural" to a classically-minded, symmetry-loving French architect, unaccustomed to our different ideals, but which has, in truth, the great architectual virtue of perfect fitness to definite, highly specialized needs, and offers at least the beauty of evident comfort and a pretty pictorial effectiveness; and our larger homes are planned in a way which secures these qualities in higher potency, and adds to them a dignity, a stateliness amply expressive of our most luxurious and hospitable modes of living.

The chief point to be noted is the great importance now given to the hall. Colonial



EXTERIOR DECORATIONS OF THE COTTAGE OF CHARLES G. FRANCKLYN, ESQ., ELBERON, N. J.

architects made it very important and very charming, though not often in just the way which would be most desirable now. But in our transition period it fell into a condition which was not more deplorable than it was utterly inexcusable outside of city limitations. Even in the country, as I have just remarked, it was most often nothing more than a narrow "entry," an ugly, contracted passageway, which occupied valuable space and gave us nothing in return but the mere means of access to the various apartments. Mr. Hunt, so far as I know, was the first to make this innovation. But now in homes of every size the tendency is to make the hall at once beautiful and useful, the most conspicuous feature in the architectural effect and the most delightful living-room of all; not a living-room like the others, but one with a distinct purpose and therefore a distinct expression of its own. In our climate and with our social ways of summer-living, we absolutely require just what it can give us — a room which in its uses shall stand midway between the piazzas on the one hand and the drawing-rooms and libraries on the other; perfectly comfortable to live in when the hour means idleness, easy of access from all points outside and in, largely open to breeze and view, yet with a generous hearthstone where we may find a rallying-point in days of cold and rain; in short, a spacious yet cozy and informal lounging-place for times when we cannot lounge on our beloved piazzas. Try living in a house with a hall of the new yet already customary kind, and then remember how you used to live in a house which had nothing but an "entry," and do not forget that the space once wasted on that "entry" is now utilized in every inch; and you will see that the change in our methods of planning has not been prompted by caprice or even by the desire for beauty. Yet, as we might feel sure, a great gain in beauty has come hand in hand with the great gain in practical fitness. Not only the hall itself but the whole house profits by its alteration. It supplies what was lacking before, a logical center to the most extended and complicated design. It makes grouping possible; it divides and yet connects the various apartments; it unifies the plan while permitting it a far greater degree of variety than was possible with the old box-like scheme.

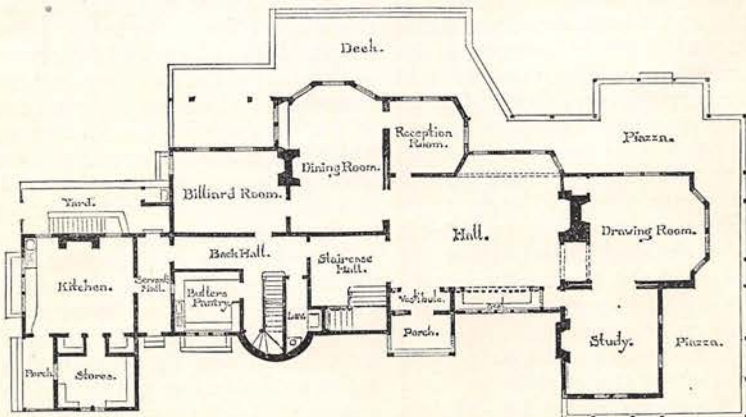
And with the rehabilitation of the hall has come the rehabilitation of that staircase which also our forefathers once treated so charmingly, and which also we long maltreated so abominably and inexcusably. Even in the tiniest cottage the staircase must now be seductive to the foot and pleasing to the eye; and in some of our larger homes it is a very splendid feature.

Of course the possibilities of treatment offered by hall and staircase are infinite in variety. In a hundred different ways the staircase may be made the chief feature, or a more subordinate feature, of the hall itself; in a hundred different ways it may be set a little apart from this and yet be sufficiently connected with it for architectural coherence and

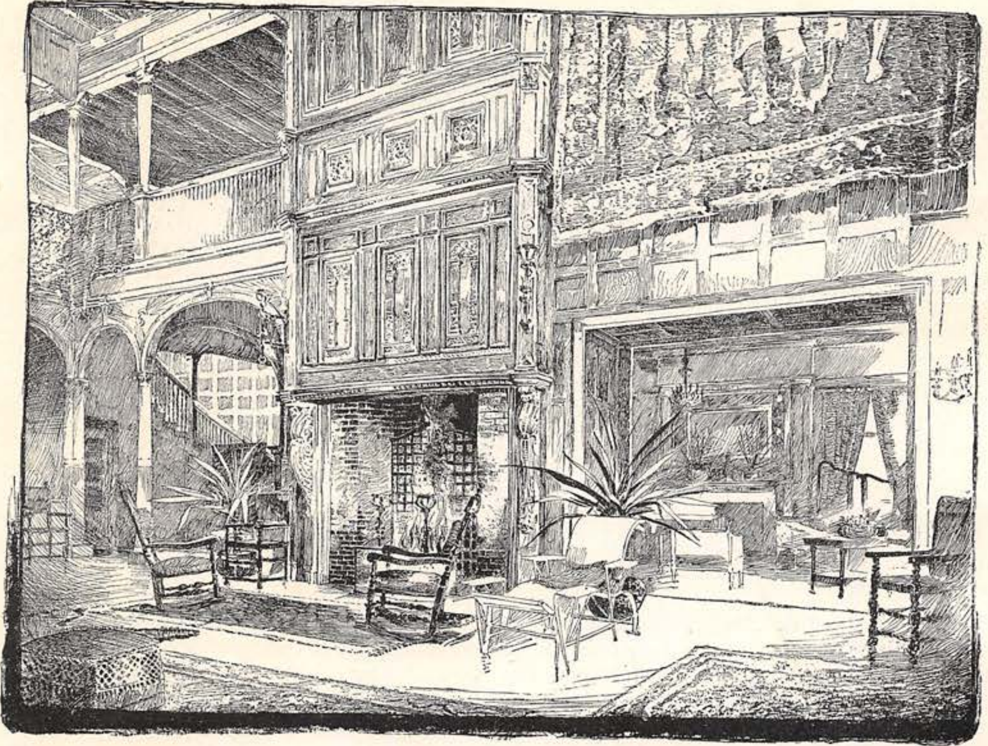
VIEW FROM THE HALL IN MR. FRANCKLYN'S COTTAGE.

for perfect comfort. And the expression secured may be merely snug and cheerful, or be of any degree of stateliness leading up to the very highest, and yet the effect as of a true hall and not a mere room still be preserved. If I could describe, for instance, those halls which may be seen in the houses which Messrs. McKim, Mead & White have built for Mr. Tilton and for Mr. Bell at Newport; in their Francklyn cottage and their Newcomb house at Elberon; in General Loring's smaller home, built by Mr. Emerson, at Pride's Crossing, and in a larger one built for Mrs. Bowler at Mt. Desert by Messrs. Rotch & Tilden (I cite but a few examples out of many just as worthy of citation), I should describe designs utterly different each from the other in conception and effect, each perfectly in keeping with the general character of the structure, each a delightful and most comfortable living-room, yet each very plainly to the eye a hall and *not* a room, its own due and proper purpose well preserved in plan, in features, and in decoration.

One of the finest halls we have yet to show is in the large house Messrs. McKim, Mead & White have built for Mr. Robert Goelet on the Cliff at Newport. It runs the whole depth of the house, with the entrance door at one end and wide windows looking on the ocean at the other, yet is wide in due proportion; and it runs up to the roof as well, and the beautiful curved staircase near the entrance leads to encircling galleries. Above the great fire-place rises a carved chimney-piece of oak



PLAN OF MR. NEWCOMB'S HOUSE.



HALL IN HOUSE OF ROBERT GOELET, ESQ., NEWPORT, R. I.

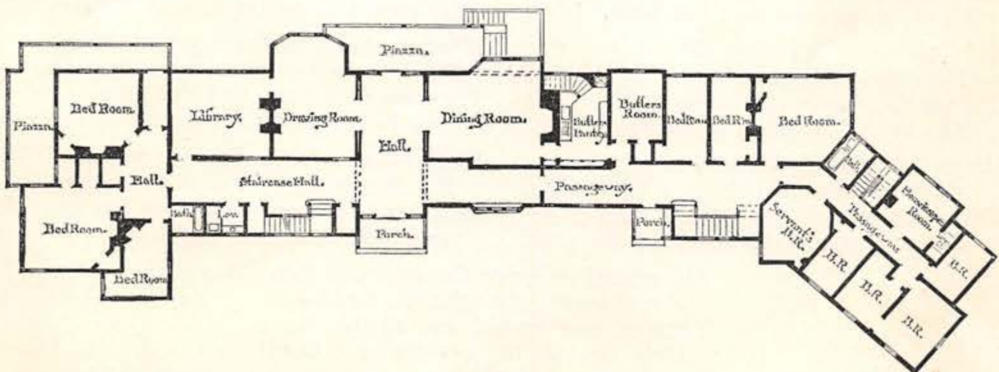
which once held its place in a French château. But its origin is not unduly apparent; it has not been left as an isolated, alien trophy, but is used as the key-note for the whole decorative scheme, the entire hall being paneled with oak to match and roofed with oaken beams. When I say *to match*, moreover, I am quite conscious of the force of the term; for the new carving strikes no note of discord with the old either in motive or in execution.

The decoration all through this house is very charming; and it is all conceived architecturally and carried out in harmony of design. And something similar may be said (although, of course, with very different degrees of emphasis and very different grades of praise) with regard to our new houses as a rule. The architect is now called upon to finish his task of house-building, not merely to begin it; to complete his interior, not merely to block it out. There is a change, indeed, since the days when we tried for no interior beauty whatsoever; as great a change since the days when we left the carpenter to work his will in machine-cut black-walnut monstrosities; and almost as great since those when we tried very hard for something better, but tried in the wrong way; when instead of a beautiful room we got merely a room full of pretty furnishings and ornaments and hangings. Then our one thought was to cover up the interior of our home as completely as we could; then all its charm would vanish with the exit of its owner. Now this charm *is built in*, is integrally part and parcel of the fabric. It is the architect's hand which has fashioned the richly screened or balustraded staircase; which has placed the cozy window-seats with an artist's eye for every item of loveliness the landscape offers; which has built the great hospitable fire-places and the graceful mantels —now part of the wall itself and not mere excrescences; which has designed every portion of the wood-work from kitchen up to attic; which has colored the walls and ceilings, and often has prescribed the colors and the forms and the materials of the furnishings which are to complete his scheme.

Nor when our new interiors are most simple are they by any means least interesting, least excellent. Indeed, there is no task more imperative, and none which some of our architects have taken up more intelligently and enthusiastically, than the task of showing that almost utter simplicity need not mean barrenness, that economy need not be synonymous

with poverty of effect or artistic dearth. Some of our new country homes (I cannot mention their creators' names; I should have to cite too many) are very admirable in the way they give just this valuable sort of evidence. They are chiefly dependent for their charm on good arrangement and good proportions, and the good placing and shaping of their necessary features. Yet they have been skillfully perfected by simple yet harmonious coloring, by a little delicate molding of inexpensive wood, a little graceful decoration — usually in adaptation of colonial motives — applied to chimney-piece and staircase. Such rooms demand no covering-up to make them livable, no mass of *bric-à-brac*, no crowd of furnishings and shroud of hangings to make them lovely. In truth, one of their greatest virtues is that, to the eye of any intelligent owner, they absolutely prescribe that their contents shall be simple — so distinct and so distinctly simple is their own architectural expression. Nor is this merely a negative virtue, saving the owner's pocket. It is a very positive virtue, preserving to his summer home that effect of air and space and unencumbered lightness which is the artistic voicing of the very purpose of its existence. Unfortunately it must be noted that not every owner *is* intelligent; not every one who is given a simply charming home to live in is wise enough to let it retain the accent a wise architect's hand has given. Too often its modest architectural charm is covered up with the upholsterer's devices, or with the motley trophies of foreign travel, or the plunderings of some antiquary-shop at home; with things beautiful in themselves, perhaps, but inartistic in effect, as any beauty must be which is out of place — and, especially, which hides and kills some other beauty that has a better right to show itself.

There seems even a wish, sometimes, to protest against the architectural completion of a home's interior; to say that architectural decoration means the adopting of some one definite "style," and that this means the proscribing of that variety, that contrast, that unlikeness of one room to another which the uneducated eye delights in almost as much as it delights in the accumulation of heterogeneous stores of artistic (and very inartistic) trifles. Not always, however, in these eclectic, catholic days of art need any one style be strictly adhered to in each and every apartment of a house. Yet when no pronounced variety is attempted, when the same style, the same spirit, the same motives, the same fundamental ideas prevail throughout, when there is architectural and decorative unity, with only that harmonious amount of variation which *any* style admits of, then the result is certainly best from an artistic point of view. And surely the degree of variety then permitted will seem quite sufficient to any eye which cares for beauty and appropriateness, and not for mere diversity as such; which cares to be charmed and satisfied, and not merely to be surprised and tickled. Look, for example, at the great oak-lined hall in Mr. Goelet's house which has already been referred to, and then at the exquisite drawing-room in ivory and gold. The same beautiful Renaissance style prevails throughout, but the contrast in color and material and in application of forms and details, and consequently in general effect, is as entire as it is harmonious. Nor need we fear to place in such an interior any *good* object of any period. All we need fear is so to crowd it with many objects — good or bad — that its own expression will be lost, or to intrude into its beauty things that are not things of art at all, but are merely showy, fashionable, costly, new. Shall I be believed when I say that in another white-and-gold drawing-room of a modified colonial pattern I once saw a chandelier formed of a hanging basket — gilded straw and artificial roses? For *such* things there is certainly no



PLAN OF MR. WARD'S HOUSE.

HOUSE OF SAMUEL COLEMAN, ESQ., NEWPORT, R. I.

home nor haven in our new architectural creations. Blessed be the fact, and soon may it impress itself more clearly than it does to-day upon that somewhat ungrateful beneficiary whom we call the client. Soon may he learn more thoroughly than he yet has learned that when a work of art is given into his keeping he has no right to ruin it — no, not even when it is the interior of his own home.

I have not half said all I wished to say and began to say about the exteriors of our newest houses, but the rest must now stand over to a final chapter.

M. G. van Rensselaer.

THE QUEEN'S BEAD.

FROM some old desert tomb they bring
  A bead, the bauble of a queen
Long flown to the four winds, sole thing
  Of all a splendor that has been.

Sole witness of an elder eld
  Than thrice-blown ashes; with this bead
Between a thumb and finger held,
  The heart halts shaking like a reed.

Deep in the dusk it has escaped;
  Vague phantasms only may we mark,
Search as we will, and dimly shaped
  Our own shade shadowed on the dark.

Here history falters, and a gap
  Yawns black and full of nothingness.
What crowns, what kings, what empires wrap
  Its gloom about them, who shall guess?

What mysteries in these gulfs belong,
  What fierce ambitions, what despairs,
The dust of beauty, and the song
  That lulled asleep a conqueror's cares.

Here, once by little fingers crushed,
  The flower that fed a mother's grief,
Here blushes some sweet bride has blushed,
  And here the hero's laurel leaf.

Ah, wherefore waste the sunshine then
  For glamour of a glorious weed —
You fail, you vanish, and again
  Only remains the queen's poor bead!

Harriet Prescott Spofford.

SYMPATHY.

AS out into the night we stepped,
And turned our faces toward the town,
The stars (that hitherto had slept
Unseen) looked gayly down;

And the pale moon threw off the cloud
Within whose folds her light was lost,
Awakened by the whisperings loud
That thrilled the starry host.

For they their sister, she her child,
Beheld in thee, O radiant maid,
Than whom a fairer star ne'er smiled
In heaven, then earthward strayed!

But when I mark the deep unrest
That lurks within thy lustrous eyes,
I question if that choice was best
Which led thee from the skies;

For there thy steadfast sisters dwell,
Forever bright and strong and free,
Unmoved though tempests rise and swell,
Calm as eternity;

Whilst thou — who chose another part,
And all that glittering state resigned
To wear on earth a woman's heart
And sympathetic mind—

Must suffer not those ills alone
That even selfish natures bear:
Thou mak'st the widow's loss thy own,
And dost her sorrow share;

Thy neighbor's grief is thine no less
Than hers; the sufferer turns to thee,
And solace in his deep distress
Draws from thy sympathy.

Thus others' burdens lighter grow
Whilst thine are doubled. Ay, but he
Who set the stars in heaven doth know
What thy reward shall be!

J. B. G.

AMERICAN COUNTRY DWELLINGS. III.

THE exteriors of our new country homes are so various that it is easier to characterize their general virtues by negative than by positive description. We may most clearly note their divergence from "vernacular" results by noting what "vernacular" expedients and features have been abandoned or greatly modified in their creating. The "French roof," for example, has disappeared. I do not mean altogether: there is still no quarter of the land where it does not often recur in work produced by the rural builder. But this builder and his devices are no longer typical of our best temper, and doubtless will gradually die out before the spreading of that new influence which naturally shows as yet most strongly in the neighborhood of our larger towns. When an *architect*, as we may fairly interpret the name to-day, has been set to work, then it is certain the French roof will not show itself. Truly it is, as the children say, a very "good riddance."

We may rejoice almost as heartily that our adherence to the clapboard is no longer so single-minded as it was. The old-time shingle, long despised as the humble expedient of unskilled, primitive hands, has very generally been adopted in its stead, and is a better thing, its small size and irregular shape being far more helpful as regards possibilities of good tone and color. In place of a succession of straight, close-drawn, mathematically parallel long lines, it supplies an infinitude of short, broken, varied lines, which of themselves give tone to the surface. And this surface is no longer mechanically smoothed, but is pleasantly roughish to the eye, and may be stained instead of painted, or left to the "weathering" of its natural hue. Thus its color may have gradation and vitality, and the resultant tone may be as soft and broken as we will. We have already experimented widely in this direction; indeed, a little too widely. We have sometimes tried for too much variety of color, and have lost simplicity, even temperance and unity, in the result. We have sometimes tried for too much mellowness, and ended by being weak and vague and over-subtile in our tone. And we have often shown a desire, which cannot but savor of affectation, to antedate those effects which only the hand of time can legitimately give. But all this has been, perhaps, a not unnatural reaction from the old hardness and

monotony of our clapboard days. Doubtless we shall soon see and respect the limits of the really good possibilities in the way of tone and color which the shingle offers.

Except in very small houses, we ought not, I think, to use it quite alone; for it is palpably a mere sheath and covering, expresses nothing of the true structure, and if used by itself in a large building can hardly give sufficient evidence of solidity. But we do not very often thus employ it. Much more often there is at least a visible foundation of more solid aspect — another improvement on our "vernacular" practices; and the best effect results, solidity is still more apparent, and the design gains in both coherence and variety, when the stone or brick is not strictly confined to the foundations or to a low basement-story, but is carried up in certain places, as in outside chimneys or possibly in the staircase wall. A very good example of such treatment may be seen in the illustration, given with my last chapter, of Messrs. McKim, Mead & White's house for Mr. Newcomb at Elberon, and in a Newport house built by Messrs. Rotch & Tilden for Mr. Augustus Jay. Here bricks were the most natural and therefore the best resource; but in many places, especially in those New England regions where half the surface of mother-earth is not soil but rocks, a stone substructure, not too carefully "finished," commends itself alike to common sense and to the eye. And in a cottage for Mrs. F. R. Jones built at Mt. Desert by the architects last named, the lower story is of smoothed logs,— a simple enough expedient, but pretty, and appropriate to the thickly wooded site and the modesty of the structure, while expressive of much greater solidity than would have been the unmixed use of shingles.

But there are certainly cases when, however it may be blent with other factors, the shingle seems a mistake — displeases both eye and mind by being out of keeping either with the character of the exterior design itself or with the size and character of the rooms within. For example, I think it is out of keeping both with the design and with the interior in Mr. Goelet's house on the Newport Cliff, the interior of which has already been referred to. Such an interior, so large, so dignified, so sumptuous and refined in decoration, is not fittingly to be sheathed in shingles. And while the design, already too heavy, too massive in effect for the place it holds, would have looked still heavier had it been executed in sterner materials, yet nevertheless as a design judged in the abstract (judged intrinsically, without reference to site and purpose and surroundings) it would, I think, have greatly been the gainer. It is an idle speculation, of course, but I should be glad to know just how the same artists would do the same piece of work if they might do it over now. There is so much that is good about the house, and the aim which it expresses seems to have been so nearly right, that we feel a second and somewhat different expression might be something wholly admirable. For even now it is very dignified while very simple; it shows great feeling for breadth and mass, for the beauty of repose, and is a valuable protest against that heterogeneous accumulation of "features" for which we have too great a fondness still. As it stands it is not a beautiful house outside, though within it has that high kind of beauty we call architectural *style*. But even outside it seems to me, despite its patent faults, an interesting and a promising conception.

Neither clapboard nor shingle is always, I repeat, a very good resource. Yet it is not true to say — as so often has been said — that wood is in itself a poor resource, is essentially but a primitive, makeshift material; that our work must suffer, must be condemned to pettiness in treatment and to poverty or at least rusticity in effect, just in so far as we insist upon its use. We should rather rejoice that we have it to use, since it gives us one more factor than is possessed by any other civilized land toward the production of variety in effect, which means toward the true expression of varied needs and purposes. If we look at current work abroad, we shall see how hard it is to build small and pretty country houses when it is wholly denied the builder. Even if it gave us nothing but the shingle, it would be richly worth the having. But the shingle by no means exhausts its possibilities of excellence. There is a solid way of using it in logs for which we may find happy hints in the architecture of the Scandinavian lands. And, best of all, there is the "half-timbered" method of construction,— with great interlacing beams and a filling-in of brick or of rougher units plastered over,— which may be studied almost anywhere in Europe.

If we have been at Warwick, for instance, and Stratford-on-Avon, and the neighboring Shottery, we have seen it used in a variety of ways that are simple and more or less humble, yet charming in expression; and we had not to go far afield to find it, in some old manor-house, expressing with equal felicity a more dignified estate. In Chester we may learn that it is just as well adapted to the street as to the country; and in many a French and German town, that it may take on a truly rich and stately aspect. It is a method which looks delightfully stable, and which, if rightly used and not superficially imitated, is just as stable as it

looks. The beams may be smoothed and painted, or may be carved (as they are in the continental street-fronts I have cited) with any degree of richness up to the most lace-like elaboration; and in color, too, one may do pretty much as he wills with it.

Truly it is a sensible, flexible, and attractive way of building; and it is one which to a non-professional eye seems as though it ought not to be expensive. Not nearly so often as we might guess has it yet been used in this country, but we find occasional examples, as, for instance, in Messrs. Rotch & Tilden's large house built at Mt. Desert for Mrs. Bowler. Good use has here been made of its possibilities in the way of color. The high substructure is of gray trimmed with red granite; the tower, and the terrace, and the piazza walls are of red; and the same tones are repeated in the wood-and-plaster work above: the wood is painted of the darkest possible red, and the gray slap-dash is filled with red granite pebbles. Surely so effective and variable a process ought to prove popular, especially in houses of just this kind—houses which are so large and dignified that the shingle is too naïf and rustic-looking a device, yet which by reason of their placing and their merely summer purpose would appear too massive and ambitious if wholly built of brick or stone. Moreover, while the conspicuous use of stone was here very sensible, since both the red and the gray granite were obtained from ledges on the place, yet it is by no means always necessary, for, as I have said, half-timbering is in itself satisfactorily sturdy-looking; and many a large and charming country home in older countries was built with it alone in those older days when they too had free command of wood.

I cannot but pause a little over the virtues of this method as regards the good use it allows us to make, not only of wood, but of plaster too. Unaccustomed as we are to the thought, plaster is yet a very admirable material for many of our purposes. Not in the shape of thin coats of stucco, painted in futile imitation of some other substance, but solid and straightforward, frankly confessing itself for what it is, plaster may be given qualities unattainable in any other material; a surface, for example, that is neither too rough nor too smooth, but exactly suited to the production of those effects of *tone* which we have learned to recognize as most desirable. And for color, especially for color at once light and strong,—which is to say, for color peculiarly well in keeping with our atmospheric conditions,—there is nothing like it. What pinks and yellows, what golden browns and lovely grays and tender greens one sees in the plastered walls of Italy and South Germany, and even of the southern English counties; and what dullards we shall show ourselves if we fail to take the hints they offer! Moreover, there is nothing but plaster (save only that marble which is all but out of the question as concerns summer houses) with which we can well get *white*.

The way in which we used white in our clapboard days — in unbroken stretches of oil-paint applied to a hard, smooth, mechanically ruled-off surface, and contrasted with grass-green blinds — was certainly not an artistic way. But when we became convinced of this fact, we were rather stupid to fall into the opposite extreme — to condemn white as such, *in toto*, without appeal. Surely it is not a bad color for our use. Who can say so if he knows its effect in those southern lands abroad the physical condition of which resembles ours, and where the use of white has been constant in every age? Who can say so if with an unprejudiced eye he judges its effect even from one of our old-fashioned home-examples, when this is seen at such a distance that only the white and not its quality is perceptible? As yet, I think, we use our eyes too little in such matters—depend too much upon theories and sentiments drawn from that north of Europe whence we came, which from an intellectual point of view may be our proper teacher, but which from an artistic point of view has much less than we have fancied in common with ourselves and our environment. When we *do* learn to use our eyes, then I believe we shall often ask for white again, and for other light and bright and cheerful hues; and perhaps decide that in wood and plaster we have one of the very best ways — if not *the* very best way — of getting them.

A word now as to the development of that piazza which was the one good feature of the "vernacular" period. Two tasks were laid upon us with regard to it. On the one hand, we had to make it more architectural in itself—less fragile and shed-like and trumpery-looking; and on the other, we had to bring it into more vital architectural relation with the main body of the structure. From the illustrations in this and the two foregoing chapters some idea may be gained of a few of the fashions in which we have tried to deal with it; but it would take a far longer list of pictures to typify our general advance or to suggest all our best experiments.

Fortunate is it, indeed, that we *have* advanced in our efforts to bring it within the domain of art; for, as I said long ago, it is the one thing which no one who builds a country house in America can escape from,—the one thing more essential than all others

to the comfort, dearer than all others to the affection, of every American client. Better do without even that "livable" hall which we now enjoy so greatly than without that piazza which went far to compensate us for the lack of so much else in our "vernacular" homes. It is more necessary to our well-being than is his *loggia* to the Italian, or his paved terrace to the Frenchman, or his vine-clad arbor to the German. As far as comfort and variety of service go, it is a better thing than any of them; and it remains for us to prove that it may be made, from the point of view of art, as good a thing as even the first named of the three.

In "vernacular" days it was so beloved (perhaps because there was so little else about a house that could be loved) that we thought we could not have too much of it. Now we are a little more chary of its use, as indeed could not but be the case with the different ground-plans we have adopted. Yet niggardly in using it we are not; or if we have thought good so to be upon occasion, our mistake is forced upon us very quickly. I know one or two houses (but only one or two), built with English models in mind, which try to make shift with a mere upper bay or so, and an abundance of broad windows and bays to the main apartments below. It was supposed that they could do without piazzas, as they would be "all piazzas" themselves. But the analogy is not very vital, and I think even their builders and owners only try to believe in it.

Many, I repeat, are the variations in our treatment of the real thing itself, and many are the outside hints which have been utilized in its improvement. Not always is it now covered along its whole length, though always, of course, it ought to be to a very considerable extent. Sometimes it is combined with an open terrace, whose flights of steps unite it pleasantly with the lawn below—the influence of French fashions being clearly manifest. Sometimes, in addition to the main projecting piazza, there are others of a recessed sort, prettily adapted from the *loggias* of Italy. As for the roof, it is now flat and balustraded, forming an uncovered piazza to the upper story, now steeply sloping, and now a prolongation of the slope of the house-roof itself. Stone or brick is often used for the foundations, and even for the parapets and roof-supports; while if these last are of wood, they are given forms of a more sturdy kind than those they took in our old jig-saw days. It is interesting to see here and there wooden pillars with corbeled-out capitals, such as are common in the far East and the oriental South, and to see how well—being sensible straightforward shapes, truly characteristic of the nature of the material—they fit in with elements drawn from very different sources. But it would take much more space than is here at command really to describe our piazzas in their present state, I will not say of perfection, but of steady and varied approach toward excellence and beauty. I can only add that it is a distinct disappointment nowadays to find one which looks as they all looked but a few years ago—like an excrescence, an afterthought, a mere disconnected shed, and not a vital portion of the house-fabric proper.

If it is difficult to describe our piazzas, it would be still more hopeless to try to describe the houses of which they form a part. Sometimes they are adapted from current English types, and have a modified flavor of "Queen Anne" about them; sometimes they are glorifications of the humble, early, shingled New England farm-house with its gambrel-roof and dormers; sometimes they are intelligent modifications of the later, more stately, "classic" colonial type; and sometimes they can be called by no other name than late-nineteenth-century-rural-American only. For modest dwellings in really rural situations, the farm-house pattern is peculiarly well suited; while the colonial is better fitted for use in less distinctly rustic localities. Two of the most charming small colonial designs I have seen show houses built at Mt. Desert by Messrs. Rotch & Tilden; but I doubt whether they look quite so well on this rocky coast as they would, for instance, at Newport or in the neighborhood of Boston. Here, of course, colonial reproductions are perfectly at home, alike to the eye and to the memory when it seeks their genesis; and here they are very frequent and very charming. In feature and detail they are now more modest than they sometimes were of old—a true sense being preserved of the nature of wood, and its unfitness to a "monumental" classic design. Yet the classic flavor is preserved, and gives a charming air of dignity and refinement. The irregularly shaped and applied shingle would strike a note of discord in such a design, and we accordingly find it giving way either to the clapboard itself or to shingles cut square and arranged in parallel lines. Nor would broken tones and irregularly varied colors be appropriate, symmetry and regularity being essentially part and parcel of the idea. The usual device is to paint the body of the house a red that is not too dark and is not too strong, or a yellow that is pale and clear, and the trimmings white. If the tints are well chosen, the effect is not crude or staring, while cheerful and bright enough to be thoroughly in keeping with the strong blue of our skies and the clearness which our atmosphere gives to all the hues of nature.

HOUSE AT BRAINTREE, MASSACHUSETTS.

Among our illustrations are a few which typify our recent endeavors to bring the colonial type into accord with those interior arrangements which do not readily submit themselves to the old rectangular outline. The house at Braintree was built by Messrs. Chamberlin & Whidder, and the Newport houses for Mr. Taylor and Mr. Edgar by Messrs. McKim, Mead & White. Of the three, the last named seems to me the most successful, the old idea being developed with at once the most of freedom and the most of unity. In smaller structures with less exacting interiors, the old-time shape may often be preserved without detriment to comfort. The piazza, as will be noted, is likely to bear a discreet and far-away resemblance to the classic portico.*

Mr. Alden's house at Cornwall, Pennsylvania, is pictured here chiefly for the sake of its great window. As a house it does not seem to me very successful, bearing too close a resemblance to a studio or something of that kind. But the window, I think, is very interesting, showing how it is possible to build such a one—whether for the lighting of a studio or, as is here the case, of a large three-storied hall—in a truly *constructive* way, so that it will look solid and architectural, and not like a mere screen of glass suggesting a photographer's atelier within.

Many more things occur to me which might be said with reference to our domestic architecture, and many more names which might be cited with reference to its good results. To omit to speak of the country homes built by Mr. Bruce Price, for instance, by Messrs. Rossiter & Wright, by Messrs. Cabot & Chandler, Messrs. Andrews & Jacques, and more than a few other artists, is to omit many things that would be pleasant in the saying. But I dare not suppose either an editor's or a reader's patience indefinitely elastic.

AND, in truth, I have said quite enough if only I have said it rightly. For I did not set out to give a complete summary of the state, the needs, and the possibilities of American

* Need I say that if piazzas do not appear in all our illustrations, it is simply because only one side of each house has been represented?

architecture, or a *catalogue raisonné* of the best among its products. I merely meant to show in a general way, and to illustrate by a few examples, that there has been a recent movement in our art which may fairly be called revolutionary; to indicate the main ideas and impulses which have prompted it; and to explain why and how these seem to be prophetic of further excellence to come. I ought to have said enough for this, I repeat; yet there are still a few words I must add in order that the last-named point may be made as clear as possible.

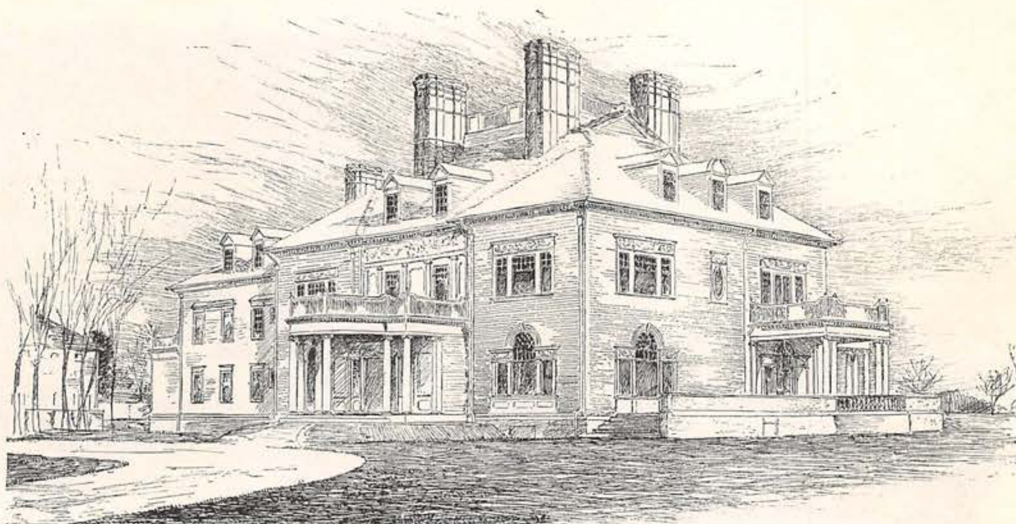
I know the danger of letting one's self be tempted into prophecy about a matter one has near at heart, but it is a danger I cannot quite escape from here. In fact, if from the first I had not meant to incur it,— if from the first I had not meant to express the strong hope I feel in the future of our art,— these pages would not have been written at all. For, good and interesting as are, intrinsically considered, many of our new results, I hardly think I should have been justified in speaking of them at such length and to so large and so mixed an audience if they had seemed to me to have intrinsic worth and interest *only*; if I had looked upon them as casual, sporadic, merely individual examples of success — uncharacteristic of any growing, widening, spreading stream of effort, unprophetic of any broad and common excellence to follow. No; the chief importance of our best results seems to me to lie in the fact that they are but the most successful outcome of aims which have much more often been followed; their chief value to consist in their hopefully prophetic character.

This character I identify with the fact — I think it *is* a fact — that in them all, beneath their manifold degrees of excellence and diversities of aspect, we can discern as a common foundation *the desire to do rational work and to prepare for it in a rational way.* We can discern that their creators have felt that the main question was the manner in which their own particular problems might best be resolved, not the manner in which some other problem had been resolved by some other hand; and that, while feeling this, they have felt none the less that they could not approach the main question intelligently or answer it artistically unless they had made a preparatory study of the history which tells and the monuments which show how an infinite number of other problems had been resolved by a long line of other hands. In short, I think we are getting to desire, not that we should be independent merely, and not that we should be scholarly and nothing else, but that we should be *independent in a scholarly way*,— unconventional, yet law-abiding; spontaneous, yet cultivated; free to do new things, yet bound not to do them in crude and blundering and illiterate fashions. I am sure this is the right, the only right, ideal. But I know, of course, how lofty an ideal it is — so lofty that no modern people can dare to boast of its full realization. Far be it from me to boast thus of ourselves, even in remote anticipation! I only think that we are beginning to *perceive* the right ideal, and to strive toward its realization in a vigorous and not unintelligent or inartistic manner. Yet this belief is surely enough to warrant the cherishing of a hope that there may be a future in store for American architecture,— not a future of immediate general excellence, certainly not a future of quick-coming perfection, very likely not of perfection at all as we use the word when thinking of the great old times of art; but still a future of growing, spreading, developing excellence, and perchance even of an ultimate degree of accomplishment which will be an expression of national characteristics through a truly national and artistic form of speech.

If a foreign critic should read these words and test them only by the evidence of the illustrations it has been possible to print with nine brief chapters, he might perhaps think them too confident. Even if he should come here and look about for himself, he might still not see the full grounds of my faith. He would view as an undecipherable, undated mass the whole of the work we have so rapidly built during our century of national life, and would see the bad results outnumbering the good, the senseless results the sensible, the ugly results the beautiful, in the proportion of hundreds to one. But I can see what he could not — the date when each was built, the circumstances under which each arose. I can see, as in a panorama by themselves, the products of the last ten or fifteen years, and can contrast them with the aggregate of those of earlier days. I can see how young our art is in its best estate, and how young are many of the artists who have wrought it; and thus can speak with confidence of advance and promise.

Moreover, I could cite for his convincing many items of evidence besides those which stand revealed in our new work itself. For example, there has lately been an immense improvement in the equipment, the standards, and the frequentation of our architectural schools. There is a strong and waxing belief in the desirableness of foreign study, the necessity of foreign travel. We have recently seen established such student-clubs as the "Architectural League" of New York, which prove

the serious and enthusiastic way in which the young profession now approaches its life's work. And such facts encourage us to believe that the days are fairly over when a man could open an office and call himself an architect, pretty much as he might open a shop and call himself a grocer,— indeed, with far less sense of responsibility, and with far less time and thought and money spent in the laying-in of a stock-in-trade.



HOUSE OF H. A. C. TAYLOR, ESQ., NEWPORT, R. I.

We have more than one architectural journal, unborn ten years ago, which is now well established and well entitled to respect. And another good sign, another good influence, deserves citation,— and, be it said, should excite to imitation on a generous scale. Those who founded the "Rotch Traveling Scholarship" for architectural students of the State of Massachusetts have done much more than the mere good work of promising to send every year for a two-years' stay in Europe a properly prepared and capable young artist. They have offered an incentive to earnest study which will yearly profit many more than the one who wins the prize; and they have proclaimed, distinctly enough to impress the most indifferent ear, that our architecture should be fostered, and that private generosity must play the part which our governments are not yet in a mental condition to assume.

AND now, in conclusion, there are certain interesting questions we may ask ourselves. If there is indeed a possible future for our art, what is likely to be the character of its development? Will it have a very marked or only a very slight degree of originality? Shall we have a new style, an "American style"? If so, what is it likely to be? If not, what historic style are we likely to embrace? Or shall we embrace no one more closely than another, but always have, as we have had thus far, many men of many minds, only each one touched to a finer issue? Or these questionings may take a different turn: instead of asking what we are likely to have, we may ask what we *ought* to have. Indeed, we not only may but must ask ourselves all these questions in both these ways, if we really take an interest in the matter. But to answer them — even to think of answering them — is quite another thing!

As regards, for instance, what we *ought* to have, certain of our architects are convinced in theory and pretty consistent in practice. But they are not in agreement among themselves, while many of their brethren seem to have no very marked convictions — try one road with one kind of problem and another road with another kind; often, indeed, now one road and now a different, although the problems are analogous. When the doctors thus not only disagree but fail to arrive at individual conclusions, how shall a layman hold even the shyest theory?

Yet there is just one oft-propounded query which I think even a layman is justified in answering with decision. If our art is to be good — practically, expressionally, and æsthetically — must it be radically *novel?* Must we pray, as for our sole salvation, for the dawning of an "American style"? Its advent, its perfectioning would be agreeable, of course: it is always pleasant to create, to originate, to found, and not to follow. But

a *necessary* advent it is not. We want an American architecture which shall be perfectly fitted to our needs, perfectly expressive of ourselves, and perfectly satisfying to our eyes. But we might have it, I am sure, with but few new forms or features or details of decoration. The general effect would at times be new — as we see in our country homes which are as "American" in their late and good as they were in their old and evil state. But this is not all that is meant by those who have raised the foolish clamor for an "American style"; and it is no more imperative that we should have such a novel architectural language as they desire, than that we should write something else than English ere we can have a literature essentially our own.

And it is idle even to discuss the question; for even if both the possibility and the desirability of a "new style" could be clearly proved, such proof would not help us toward it. It could not be formulated in advance. It ought never to be held up as a definite goal. The mere effort to foretell it and work up to it would be a negation of the true principles of progress. For that intimate coherence of forms and features and details which constitutes a *style* has never been, can never be, the starting-point even in idea. It always has been and always must be the final flowering of a long and gradual development. If an "American style" is to come, it will come step by step and inevitably — not suddenly and by an effort of will.

HOUSE OF WILLIAM EDGAR, ESQ., NEWPORT, R. I.

But we have no more need, I say, to pin our hopes upon its advent than has any other people. In truth, we have less need than any other, for we are peculiarly entitled to make free with all earlier inventions of every age and clime. We are more at liberty than is any other civilized nation to choose what and how and where we will from the world's great museum of precedents and ideas. No style, no scheme, no motive, feature, or manner of expression has with us an ancient local root. No venerable monuments excite a fear lest what is erected now shall strike a clashing discord. No existing or once existing form of architectural speech can show a really valid title to our allegiance. The little parallel I just drew with regard to literature was not quite correctly drawn, for in architecture we have a score of languages to choose among for the expression of our ideas, and are not bound to the artistic tongue of England only. Not the north more than the south, not the west of Europe more than farthest Asia, need be accepted as our magazine of forms and details; and not any one alone, but all together, may be drawn upon for the notes of a possible future harmony. To some this limitless freedom of choice seems but an added difficulty in our path. To my mind, on the contrary, it seems a vast advantage, of which the good

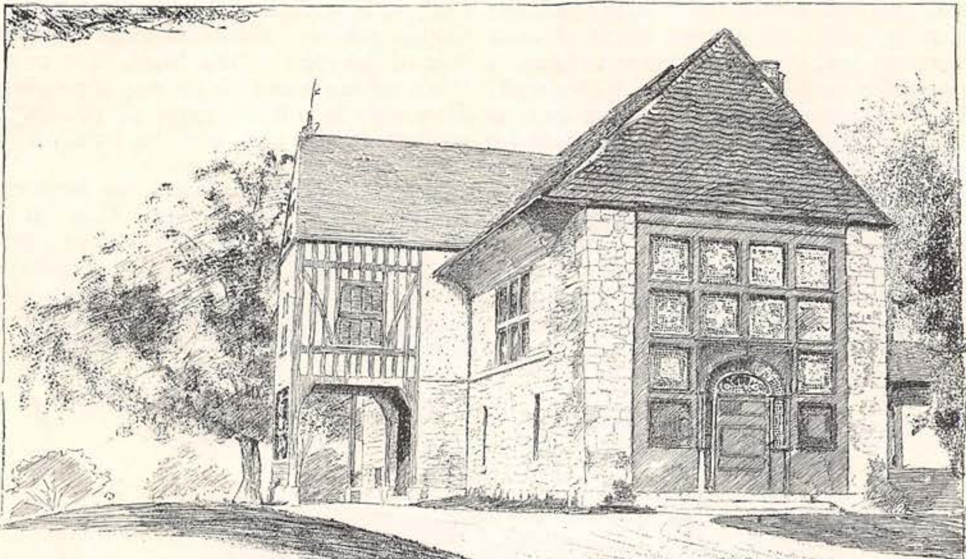
results may already be traced with much distinctness, while the current efforts of most European countries do not seem to force an envy of the conditions amid which *they* work. But from either point of view that logic is equally at fault which would deduce from *our* condition an especial need for some absolute novelty of our own invention.

I might easily let myself be tempted quite beyond the bounds of discretion, and try a little definite prophesying with regard to what the future holds in store for us. But the attempt would be as profitless as indiscreet unless I could put my readers actually in face of all the evidence which has worked on my own mind.

WILLIAMS COTTAGES, GERMANTOWN, PA.

So I will only say that it seems as though the architecture of the South (broadly speaking), and not the architecture of the North, would furnish us with our main devices. Theoretical examination — based not on mere facts of descent in blood, but on climate and atmosphere, and on our actual tastes and habits and minds and tempers — would lead us to such a belief, and the aspect of the majority of our best results seems to confirm it. I think that of all the constructive and decorative schemes which have been born in elder times, and are now struggling together for readoption in the Europe of to-day, the ones least likely to be acclimatized in America are those Gothic schemes which are most characteristic of the spirit of the North. But to say this is not to say much in the way of prophecy. How wide is still the range of possibilities with the round arch and the lintel of the South as our resources!

The round arch, we know, has been very conspicuously used of late. Alike in its Romanesque and in its Renaissance phases (both essentially creations of the South) it has many devoted adherents and many skillful adapters. Mr. Richardson has been perhaps its most energetic champion, and has preferred not only its Romanesque development, but the most pronouncedly Southern type of this. His work is always seductive and impressive; and if sometimes it seems exotic in its charm,—individual, willful, rather than purely natural and exactly *right*,— very often it has an accent which could hardly be imagined more appropriate, truthful, sensible. In marking this difference I do not mean that he sometimes seeks charm at the expense of usefulness; that his wish to reproduce the beauty of ancient examples sometimes works to the detriment of practical fitness. I only mean that sometimes, in the features and the decorations of those buildings which he plans so wisely, he reproduces the almost barbaric

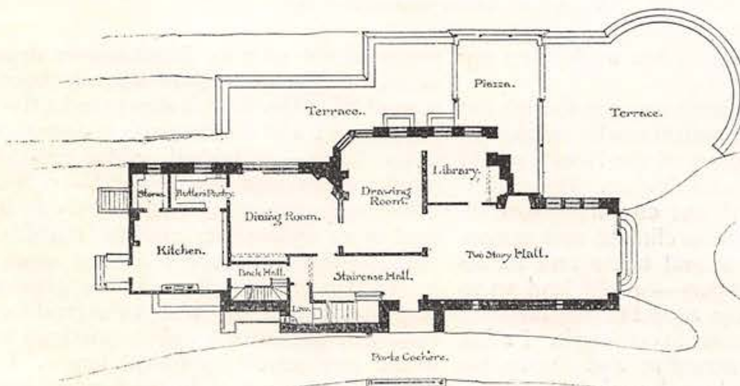


MILLWOOD.—HOUSE OF R. PERCY ALDEN, ESQ., CORNWALL, PA.

strength and exuberance of Romanesque days without due remembrance that those days were unlike our own, and that the unlikeness springs from our greater intellectual refinement, and from the greater feeling this gives us for *artistic* refinement as distinguished from artistic vigor and luxuriance. We, who know so well the art as well as the thought of classic Greece, cannot but exact from modern art a fuller measure of repose and reticence and balance and grace and purity than satisfied the mediæval nations.

It is not to be wondered at that many of those who recognize this fact should have but small faith in the wisdom of attempting to draw at all from mediæval precedents; should say that a better quarry is to be found in that Renaissance art wherein mediæval ideas have already been modified by the reborn influence of Greece; wherein we have the language of a time whose civilization is the true parent of our own. Yet there are arguments which plead the other way, or, at least, which plead that we need not base our efforts wholly on Renaissance suggestions.

All the various Renaissance schemes save one or two of the very earliest came, alike in construction and in decoration, to be pretty definitely and completely worked out. It is hard, therefore, to treat them now with freedom without incurring the reproach of unscholarliness. Nay, it is hard to treat them with freedom even if we are content to incur such reproach;

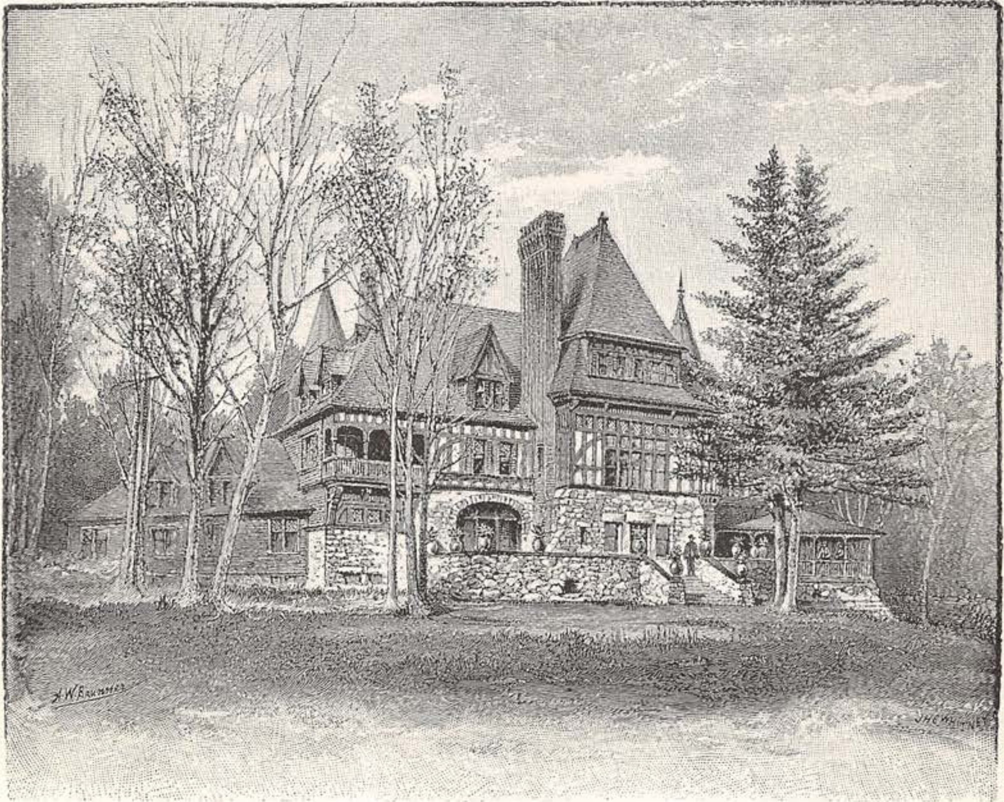


PLAN OF MILLWOOD.

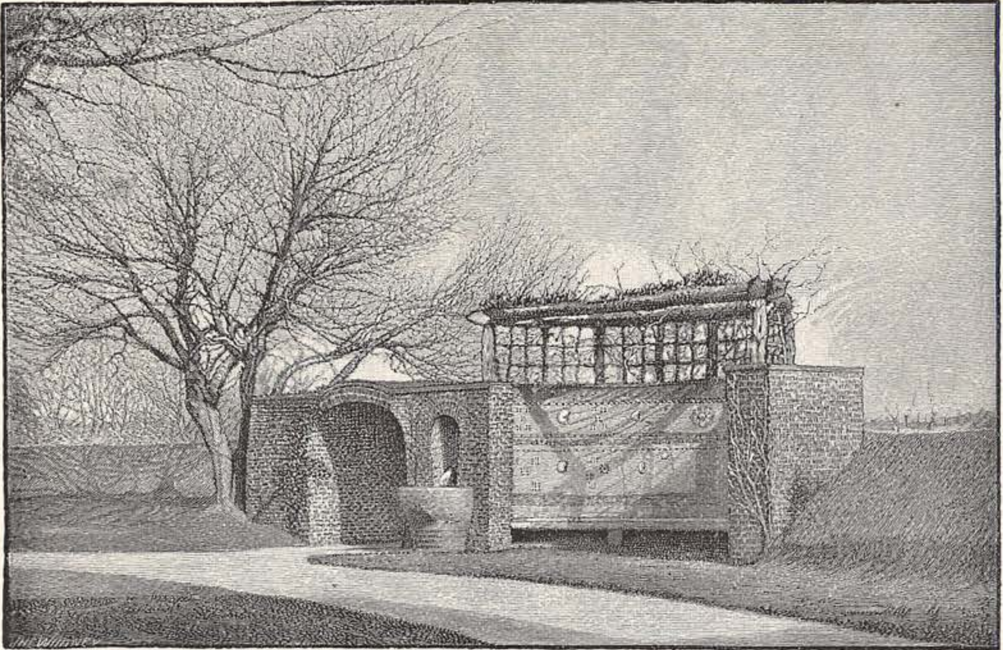
for there seems to be a singular analogy between architectural and human life. When a style has really run its course, has developed gradually and naturally up to the highest imaginable perfection, and then gradually and naturally fallen into decay, it seems impossible that it should be resuscitated and made the basis of new developments. For example, we have seen the experiment tried in England with that Pointed art which there lived a long life of many phases and died at last of inanition. We have seen it tried very faithfully and earnestly and cleverly, but are growing every year more conscious that the trial has been a failure.

Of course the styles we call by the general name of Later Renaissance have not died out in the same hopeless way. They are certainly vital still in France, which is the only modern land that can boast of a living and national form of architectural speech. But it would be useless for us to try to take them up as employed by France to-day. For they are *fully developed*, and French wants, French tastes, French ideas, are so singularly unlike our own that French expedients would but poorly serve our turn even if we could make ourselves content to copy them.

What we need is some scheme or schemes able to meet all demands, however lofty, however modest; fitted for use with many different materials; possible of modification into new expressions; and (should we ever work these out) capable of receiving new decorative motives. That is to say, we want some scheme or schemes more susceptible of *fresh development* than is any which has already once run a complete and perfect course. Those are undoubtedly right who think that such a scheme is offered to us by the earlier Renaissance fashions of the northern parts of Italy — by those which used the round arch and the lintel very straightforwardly without much reliance upon the column; for in the first place they are very sensible and very flexible, and in the second place they never lived out their life and came to a death of natural exhaustion: they were replaced, while they seem to us to have been still instinct with latent capabilities, by those columnar fashions known as "Roman" or "Later Renaissance."

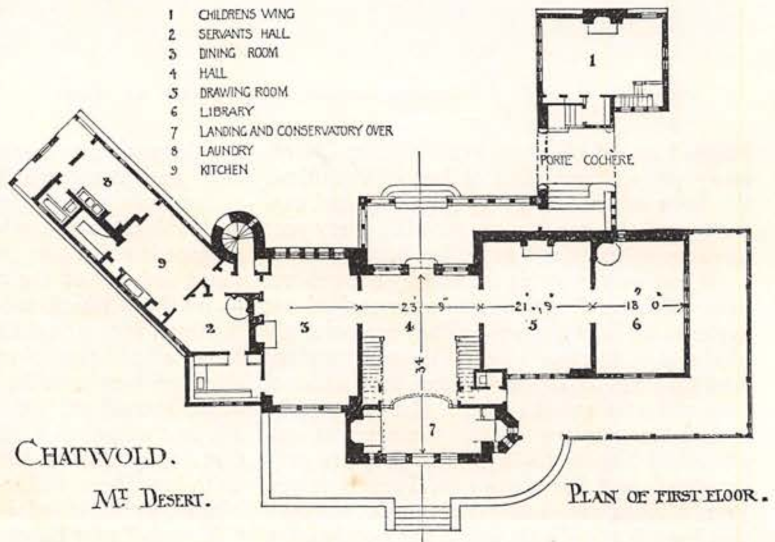


CHATWOLD.—HOUSE OF MRS. BOWLER, MT. DESERT.



ARCHWAY AND SEAT AT DR. R. H. DERBY'S, LLOYD'S NECK, LONG ISLAND.

But these early Renaissance styles are close akin in spirit, though not always in superficial effect, to the Romanesque fashions of a still earlier day. Both sprang from the same primal root; both incorporated the same general ideas and used the same main features. See, for example, how hard it is for an unskilled eye to tell in Venice which are the true "Byzantine" house-fronts, and which are those that were built in the first flush of the classic revival — although the long interval that lay between included all the Pointed work that Venice ever wrought. And the Romanesque of the South is another scheme which never lived out its life to natural expiration. The true Byzantine style of the East flowered very early into the most splendid blossoms, but then ceased from effort and neither developed nor declined. And its foster-children in the West — alike in Auvergne, in Tuscany, in Lombardy, and in the upper Rhine lands — were superseded, while still very vital, by Pointed fashions imported bodily from those more northern countries where they had had their birth. It is important to note that their typical ecclesiastical structures offer us, in the rectangular ground-plan, something far more appropriate to our modern needs than do the Gothic churches of the North; and quite as important to remember that in every other class of buildings we may take up their somewhat primitive elements



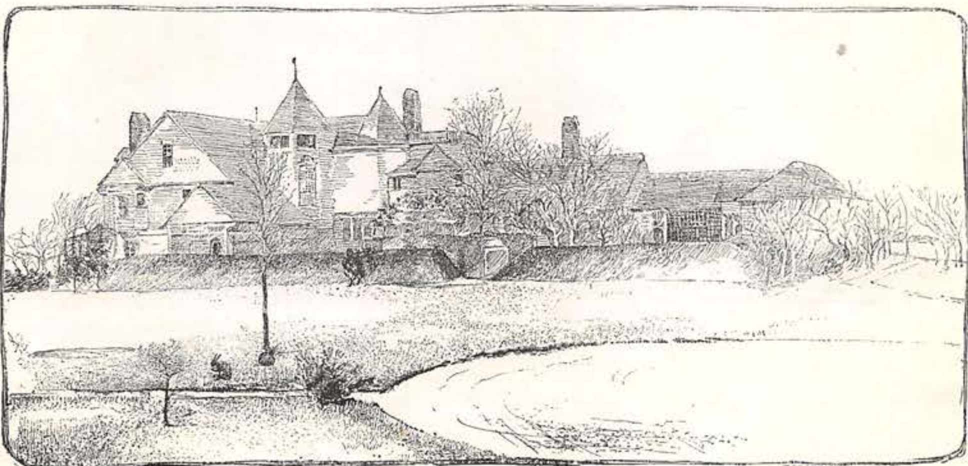
HOUSE OF WILLIAM WALTER PHELPS, ESQ., ENGLEWOOD, N. J.

and develop them as we will without any very stringent fetters in the way of precedents which it would be "unscholarly" to ignore. Their decoration, as I have said, if literally reproduced from western prototypes, seems too emphatic, too luxuriant, too barbaric for the expression of modern sentiment; yet it offers us—and especially in its eastern, Byzantine examples — types and motives and manifold lovely suggestions capable of development into a most appropriate form of artistic speech.

Nothing, for example, could be fresher, more unhackneyed, newer to modern western eyes, than the decoration based on Byzantine motives which Mr. Richardson has wrought in many of his interiors—as, for instance, in the exquisite wood carvings which line the Quincy Library; yet nothing could be more refined, more modern in feeling, more entirely appropriate and satisfactory.

Of course it will be understood that I have not said all this with the foolish idea of "giving advice," with the least wish to point out any road which our art "ought" to follow. I have only been trying to explain that the impulses which already have so strongly led our artists in these two directions are both sensible, both promising; and that they are *kindred* impulses, and therefore perhaps prophetic of some still closer accord to follow in the future.

Mr. Richardson's example seems already to have had a very strong influence upon the younger rank of the profession. But if it proves to be a *lasting* influence, the reason will be found, not in his mere personal force and accomplishment, but in the fact that



HOUSE OF DR. R. H. DERBY, LLOYD'S NECK, LONG ISLAND.

through these he gave the first outspoken voice to tastes and sympathies latent in his countrymen at large. If our architecture ever really develops upon the basis of the round arch into anything that may be called a *style* proper to ourselves, it will be because such a style is really what would suit us best, and because our artists will have felt the fact in their own souls and not believed it upon the mere evidence of one single man among them.

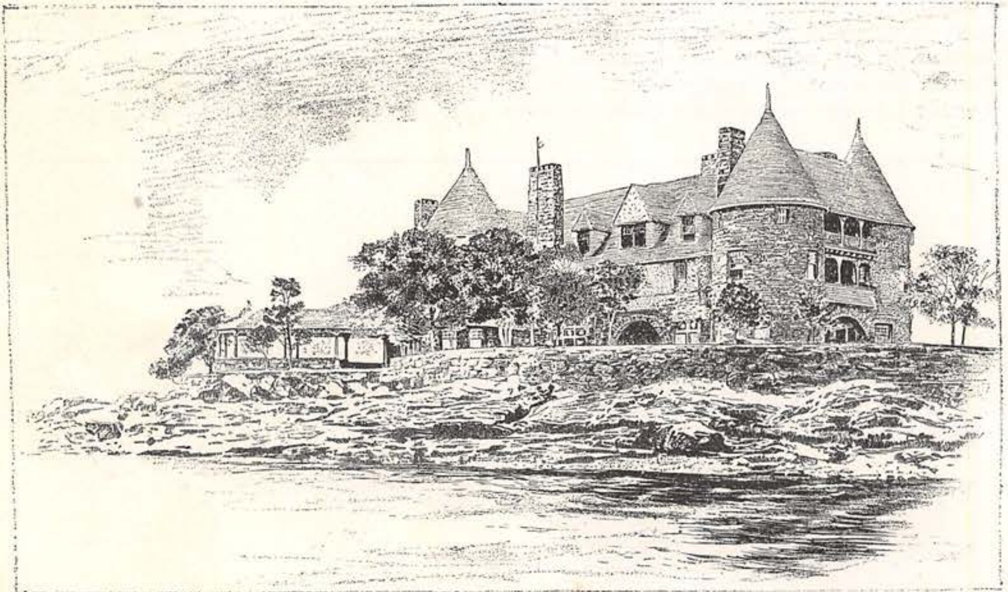
But (I must remind myself, I see, as well as you) speculation is quite idle. We cannot even pretend to guess whether we shall grow into architectural concord of any sort whatever. But here, you may protest, we can surely say what *ought* to be our course. Yes, surely, if this is a point where the course of past developments must be accepted as illustrating a natural, unescapable law. Success in the past has certainly meant concord in style. But can we be sure that success in the future *must* come in the same manner? Can we be quite sure that individuality, personality, which to-day in so many directions is so much more potent a force than it ever was in days gone by, may not be destined to play a greater rôle in architecture than it has ever played before? Of course I am not desirous of predicting that such will be the case; I only think that no one should too dogmatically say that the case is in itself impossible.

Time alone can give the answer to this as to all questions of the sort. Our task is not to theorize or prophesy, certainly not to guide, dictate, or dogmatize; but first *to help in the education of the artist and then to give him liberty to work in his own way and opportunity to work his best.*

And if almost always we yet find something in our architects' results to criticise, and sometimes much to condemn, much to deplore, let us remember how difficult are many of their tasks, and how often we make their difficulty greater. Let us remember how ignorant we are ourselves, and how our ignorance reacts on them. Let us remember what our condition was but a few short years ago—how young, as I have said, is our good work, how young are most of our good workers. Let us remember all this, and then, not their sins and stumbles, but their virtues and successes will seem to us remarkable. We shall then pause from condemnation, hesitate to criticise, and cultivate a grateful mood;—at the same time frankly confessing with the French philosopher that the liveliest source of gratitude is the expectation of greater benefits to come.*

* The Germantown cottages and Dr. Derby's and Mr. Alden's houses were built by Messrs. McKim, Mead & White. Mr. Phelps's is an old house altered and enlarged by Messrs. Babb, Cook & Willard.

M. G. van Rensselaer.



HOUSE OF CHARLES J. OSBORNE, ESQ., MAMARONECK, N. Y.