

SOLVING AMERICA'S BIG BEAUTY PROBLEM



COURT HOUSE AND POST OFFICE, PARIS, TEXAS

A FAMOUS EXAMPLE OF INCONGRUOUS AND INEFFECTIVE GOVERNMENT ARCHITECTURE



A GOOD EXAMPLE OF THE CLASSIC STYLE NOW BEING USED LARGELY FOR PUBLIC BUILDINGS IN AMERICA

WASHINGTON'S NEW MUNICIPAL BUILDING



AN IMPOSING BUT OTHERWISE INEFFECTIVE PILE OF THE TRANSITION PERIOD

THE WASHINGTON POST OFFICE

POST OFFICE, SAGINAW, MICH.

Now that every enterprising American city and town and village has begun either to "spruce up" or to talk about doing it, having come of a sudden to the conclusion that perhaps after all it isn't exactly beautiful, the question has arisen: "What can we do about it?"

This question is coming into the offices of architects and officials of various sorts these days from all parts of the country. And something is being done about it, in fact, a very great deal indeed. Before we of the present generation are all comfortably in our graves we will see vast changes—just as astonishing changes as we have seen since we were children, and one of the most striking will be the great metamorphosis

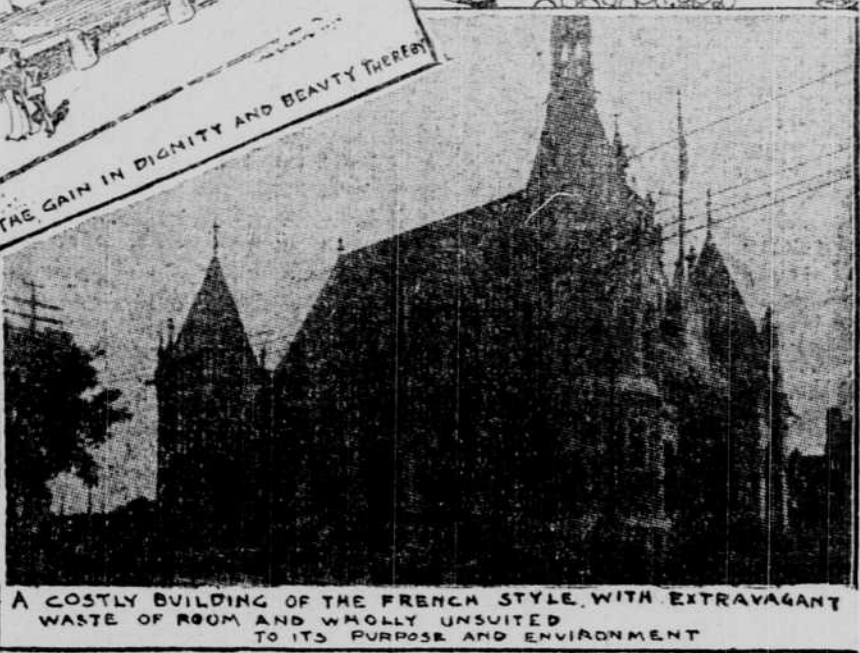


AN EXAMPLE OF COLONIAL ARCHITECTURE SO TRUE TO THE STYLE OF SURROUNDING BUILDINGS, IT IS OFTEN MISTAKEN FOR VERY OLD BUILDING



NEW POST OFFICE AT ANNAPOLIS

U.S. POST OFFICE, MARIETTA, OHIO.



A COSTLY BUILDING OF THE FRENCH STYLE, WITH EXTRAVAGANT WASTE OF ROOM AND WHOLLY UNSUITED TO ITS PURPOSE AND ENVIRONMENT

from ugliness to practical, helpful beauty in our surroundings.

Our big cities, which have the hardest problems of unloveliness and inconvenience (which usually go hand in hand) are employing commissions of learned experts to tell them what they should and can do. The smaller cities are following suit with local art commissions and sometimes they send for an expert. The towns and villages have local improvement associations and art culture clubs and they are all working in the same direction.

"What's all this fuss about our town being not good enough?" asks the hard-headed business man, who prides himself on his scorn for all this art fol-de-rol. "It was good enough for my folks before me and it's good enough for me. I'm making money. Ain't we all pretty prosperous?"

"Yes, but," answers the culture club, "look at our rival down the line. It's got a new postoffice that's a beauty. It's on a square with trees around it and the new town hall opposite and a fine new hotel and three new stores are coming in on the square. The farmers are saying that we haven't any attractions over here and they are going over there to do their buying."

"I wondered why that man Jenkins hadn't been in with an order for three weeks," growls the hard-headed business man, and scratches his head to aid in the percolation of the new idea.

And so a new convert is made to the belief that good looks pay, whether it is the good looks of the stock or of the package and label or of the seller or the store, the building, the street or the town. A pleasant view gives pleasure just as surely as does a pleasant face, whether the view be of canned goods or dress goods or factories or mountains.

And the fact must be admitted that with the American people as a whole looks have been considered less in the past than almost anything else. So true is this that we even forgot what we did once know about beauty, about building farmhouses that were pleasant and attractive and public buildings that were dignified and really handsome. We may have thought we did but now we are being taught how little we really understood.

Our forefathers knew, though, and they set us an example, the excellence of which we are just beginning to appreciate.

The founders of the republic, the men of Washington's time, brought with them from the old world fine traditions of the beautiful and an inherited instinct for the value of simplicity. They built courthouses still standing in many little towns in the old south and of New England that later generations despised but which today have become the models for much of our best new architecture. These old courthouses, set in the midst of fine old trees, are genuinely beautiful, but it has taken us a hundred years to find it out and profit by it because we lost the traditions of the forefathers and didn't have time to go back to the old world for a new stock. So, we built queer, ungainly things that didn't fit and now we are finding out what is the matter with us that foreigners should laugh at our buildings and go home and call us barbarians.

The same is true of the homes. All through the south and New England the traveler finds charming old resi-

dences, built from 50 to 100 years ago. He says they are beautiful specimens of pure old Colonial architecture, the one style that is really American. We may agree that they are pleasing. We don't, perhaps, know why, but we think it is just because they are old. It has never occurred to us that they were not far inferior to our modern, turreted and otherwise highly embellished residences with the corners all sliced off and bay windows bulging from every vantage point. Perhaps we liked to look at the old house best as it shone white and stately through the trees, but we supposed it was just a little remnant of sentiment, and as such, of course, not to be encouraged.

But the fact remains that it has taken the American people nearly a hundred years to grow up to the point where they could intelligently appreciate the architectural worth of their own inheritance. The awakening is not yet complete, but we are learning very fast, indeed.

An interesting example of how we are returning to the standard our forefathers set and are doing what we can to preserve the fine traditions that were theirs is the Annapolis postoffice. Annapolis, where the United States naval academy is, is an old Colonial town. Almost every building is in that style. Two or three years ago congress made an appropriation for a new postoffice there. The matter was referred to the office of the supervising architect of the treasury, which designs and builds all Uncle Sam's mail depots.

Now the supervising architect, Mr. John Knox Taylor, happens to be a man of discernment, culture and good taste. He soon saw that the only kind of a postoffice that would be harmonious, pleasing and creditable among all those Colonial houses would be one of the Colonial style. At first Annapolis was inclined to be disappointed.

"We are tired of Colonial," they said. "Why can't you give us something up-to-date in Queen Anne?"

So Mr. Taylor explained and discussed and went on with his Colonial plans and built the charming postoffice, a photograph of which is shown on this page. Quite recently a government official who was interested in the work of the supervising architect's office and heard that there was a new postoffice in Annapolis, returned to Washington from a visit there. He at once hunted up Mr. Taylor and in a grievous tone remarked: "Say, Taylor, I thought you had just put up a new postoffice in Annapolis. I couldn't find it."

"We have," said Mr. Taylor, and it is— (naming the locality).

"Nonsense!" answered the official. "I searched that neighborhood thoroughly for one whole hour and I'll take my oath there is not a building in it less than 75 years old."

"Did you notice that?" said the architect, pointing to a photograph on the wall of his office.

"Certainly, that was one of them," was the answer. Mr. Taylor laughed.

"That is the highest compliment I have received in the ten years I have been in this office," he said.

And now Annapolis, which, by the way, has become more than reconciled to its Colonial postoffice since it has heard the enthusiastic comments of its many promi-

nent visitors, is to have an example of the other thing. Recently congress appropriated \$14,000,000 for a new naval academy. With this, under the government's unsystematic and ridiculous way of looking after its building operations, the supervising architect had nothing to do. It was therefore perhaps natural that the winning designs, passed on by laymen evidently lacking in either discernment or taste, should be for buildings altogether un-American in style and entirely incongruous with either the purpose for which they are intended, the character of the town and location or the traditions of the country. The new naval academy is in the French style, very fine of its kind, and done by an architect of note (and French training), but it has the one fatal fault of being wholly unsuitable. And suitability is the first principle of good architecture just as it is the first principle of a successful career or almost anything else in life.

This case of the Annapolis naval academy is being much cited these days as a typical and flagrant example of what President Roosevelt sought to prevent when he appointed the much-discussed council of fine arts and gave it power over all executive building and park operations recently. He incurred the wrath of congress by doing it, for congress is as jealous as a spoiled child in the matter of its petty powers, but he also voiced the sentiment of a vast majority of the people. For it is very evident that there has been a great popular awakening to the value of the art side of life and to the pressing need for federal reform and the establishment of standards and methods that will help the individual communities to help themselves. So great, in fact, is the sentiment that both the house and senate are being forced to consider bills intended to do by law what the president did by executive order; turn the supervising architect's office of the treasury into a bureau of fine arts with supervision over the buildings and parks of all departments and add an advisory council composed of leading architects, painters and sculptors.

It is even possible that congress will be forced by the public demand to pass such a measure, though there is little doubt that they will avoid doing so if they can at least until after President Roosevelt goes out of office, which means till the next session.

Instances of the need of such a bureau are especially numerous at the seat of the national government, in Washington, and here again the wisdom of our forefathers is apparent. Those buildings that were built in the early part of the last century are in the main dignified monuments to the sincerity, the intelligence and the good taste of that time. More than that, they were placed according to a definite and all embracing group plan, that of Maj. l'Enfant, which has not been improved upon to this day. In later years not only was this great and noble plan lost sight of entirely but such architectural and monumental monstrosities were produced for the uses of the government or the honor of national heroes as will be one of the great American jokes for generations to come.

There is reason to fear that the danger of further such blunders is not past, for congress is not inclined to be dictated to. It swallowed the "Burton Idea" measure making expert advice on contemplated rivers and harbors improvements compulsory, but it did so with a wry face.

However, the president's council of fine arts is an accomplished fact and for several years we have been getting beautiful postoffices at the rate of a hundred or more a year. The new department buildings are also so far ahead of what has gone before, and with all this growing sentiment and the widespread educational movement working towards more beautiful surroundings for the next generation hope begins that we will not only have beautiful architecture but architecture distinctly American.

In this regard a study of the new postoffices, the new department buildings at Washington and most of the best new monumental buildings in the larger cities, shows that architects have gone back for their models to the original source of the Colonial—to what is known as the classic style. In old Greece and Rome are found the simplest and most majestic monumental buildings ever erected. They are the purest source of architectural inspiration that man has. Their spirit, too, is in a large measure the spirit of our democracy—dignity and strength with simplicity—and it seems to have been some such idea as this that created the Colonial style.

Without forgetting the beauty and inspiration of our Colonial architecture, we have at last found time to go back to the old world to renew our nearly lost traditions. The result is a widespread revival of the classic style, modified to suit changed conditions and a new and distinct nationality, but so fundamentally true to the American spirit that we may feel at least that we are on the road to an expression of ourselves that will picture us truly to posterity.

Sure Cure For Pirates

"A picture recently published in Munich shows that the peculiar vanity which manifests itself in a desire to be photographed often kills the sense of decency," says a writer in a Berlin paper. "The picture shows five uniformed men standing on the smoking ruins of a building. In front of them, propped up against the debris, are eight mutilated corpses. Under the picture is this legend: 'The Indian coast has been infested for hundreds of years by Malaga pirates. Recently a body of Europeans, conducted by natives, pursued and captured one of these robber bands, whom they bound and cast into a pagoda, which they then blew up with dynamite.' The men who posed for a picture, in which they seemed to gloat over the deed, the fruit of which forms the gruesome foreground, were all Europeans."

Uncle Jerry Sees Through Them. "I see," remarked Uncle Jerry Peables, "the life insurance companies have laid down a set of rules for making people live 15 years longer. I ain't going to pay any attention to 'em. The life insurance companies have got a good enough thing as it is."

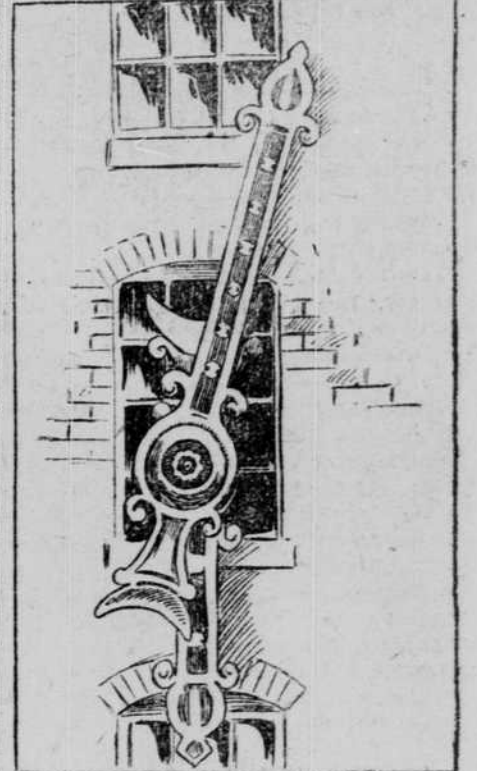
An Indestructible Color. The indestructible floral color is yellow. You cannot even with sulphuric acid fumes, destroy it. Take a heartease and try. You will consume the purple tint easily enough, but the yellow will be in permanence for all your filthy fumes.

The Man's Argument. It is argued that woman remains inferior because man keeps her so, but if he can keep her so it proves his

BIG HANDS FOR TOWER CLOCK

Minute Indicator 20 Feet Long and Pair Weighs 1,700 Pounds.

New York.—One of the buildings of the Self-Winding Clock Company, at Grand and Willoughby avenues, Brooklyn, just now are to be seen the largest hands that have ever been made for a clock. They are destined for the tower of the Metropolitan Life building. They are now being tested. Fourteen feet from the center pin to the tip is the length of the minute hand, and there is six feet of counterpoise, making a hand 20 feet over all.



Hands for Clock on New York Tower.

The hour hand is 11 feet long. In making a sweep around the circle the minute hand passes three stories of the building.

These hands are made of manganese bronze and are of bridge truss construction. They weigh more than 1,700 pounds. Over the hands there is a covering of wire glass which will allow of illumination. Through each hand there are 24 inch electrical tubes, in pairs. When the hands are illuminated it is estimated that it will be possible on a clear night to tell the time they mark at a distance of 24 miles. They will be about 400 feet above ground level.

There is to be a clock on each of the four sides of the tower. There will be a 7,000-pound bell, with a hammer weighing 170 pounds and four smaller bells to strike the Westminster chimes. Three months have been spent in the construction of hands, and four sets are necessary. The clocks will be operated by electricity.

"THE POLISH PINERO."

Gabriella Zapolska, Playwright, Attracting Attention in Europe.

Although her name is unknown in the United States, Gabriella Zapolska, "the Polish Pinero," is just now attracting wide attention in Russia, Austria and Germany because of her ability as a playwright.

She has the happy faculty of drawing with unerring pen the characters



MME. GABRIELLA ZAPOLSKA

one is constantly meeting in the streets—one's friends and neighbors and chance acquaintances.

This remarkable woman is 45, has dark hair and eyes and a short nose, the nostrils of which are too wide for comeliness; a somewhat tired face and a slight figure. In her plays she lays bare the weakness and the strength of human nature with wonderful truth and detail. All her characters are crossed and all her plots dotted. She married young and was divorced in a short time. After that she began to write.

"I never write about people I do not know and never draw a scene that is not, except for the dramatic element brought out by the plot, quite commonplace," she said in telling of her methods. "I always choose an every-day subject from middle- or lower-middle class life, and strive to keep my imagination subservient to reason, for it is in our ordinary life that real tragedy and comedy are to be found."

Apprehension.

"Do you think you will like the new administration better than its predecessor?"

"Well," answered the man who takes everything with terrible earnestness, "I don't know just how much importance to attach to these stories about Taft banquets. I'd rather play tennis and ride a horse than eat alligator steaks."

Used to It.

"I suppose you are glad to have your husband at home with you again."

"Yes—I suppose so, but he has been living in sleeping cars for so long that new he is home he can't sleep anywhere but under the bed."

A GREAT AMERICAN INDUSTRY

Business of Educating the Nation's Children is a Big One.

One of the greatest of all American industries is the business of educating the boys and girls. The conduct of this business costs as much as \$442,300,000 a year. It takes \$240,000,000 to pay the teachers and \$80,000,000 each year to provide buildings. Over one-fifth of the entire population of

the United States are enrolled as pupils in the schools. The number of teachers employed in the common schools in the school year ended June, 1907, was 475,000. Of these 370,000 were women. The average school year is now much longer than in former times, now being 150 days. When we consider the volume of books, of stationery, of school supplies for all this army of 19,000,000 school children we

are impressed with the enormous economical and commercial importance of the school system. In a speech to normal school students in Georgia the other day, Judge Taft said: "There is no higher profession in which self-sacrifice is manifested more clearly and in which more good can be done than that of the teacher, and I hope you will continue it through life." And one of the reasons why self-sacrifice is so clearly manifested is that teaching is the worst paid profession in which a person can engage. There is

scarcely a city in the land in which the most menial employment does not pay far better than the average salary received by the teacher in the public schools.

What Does It Mean? Here is a dreadful looking puzzle: FFAHCHTIWTHGU A C T O N E R A S D R I B D L O

But it is so easy when you know the answer. Just read backward and you will see at once.