

"HANSON'S" CAFE BEAUTIFUL, FOR OMAHA AND THE WEST

TALK about Hector's!" said the young woman, leaning a dimpled elbow on the table.

"Hector's nothing!" asserted her companion, an elderly, heavily bejeweled man, with the faint purplish tinge of complexion which comes from years of gastronomic devotion.

"Don't talk to me of Hector's or the Cafe Martin or any other American restaurant. Why, I have sipped Chianti in a little place on the Via Margia in Florence where they cook spaghetti better than anywhere else in the world; I have dined at Claridge's and Ye Olds Gambirinus in Piccadilly Circus, drunk stein after stein of good Bavarian beer in the Hofbrau in Munich and on the Hohense Terrasse in Berlin; I have seen the sun set on the Matterhorn while I ate al fresco at the Schweizerhof on Lake Lucerne. I have eaten coropne in South Carolina, birds nests in Canton and stuffed truffles at the Cafe de Paris. When it comes to places to eat I am the canniest connoisseur of them all and I am here to remark that this particular cafe can hold its own with anything abroad and make anything in Chicago or New York look like electric asahkin on celluloid collars."

The conversation was taking place at a table on the main floor of Hanson's new cafe on the night of the formal opening, November 11, and the scene looked for all the world like that in a Chicago or New York cafe on New Year's eve, save that the crowd of diners was orderly and no one was falling into the fountain, as has happened at the Pompeian Room, nor were any of the women smoking or resting a casual foot

was ever cultivated, and when, after a score years the flowing time came, the fruition is all the greater for the fact that a long time passed before this happened. For in this score of years, the plan often changing, varying much, differing widely from the earliest conception, finally took on the ultimate form of well nigh ideal perfection, which is realized in the building at 215 South Sixteenth street, Omaha.

There had come, too, during these years the opportunity to travel, to study, to learn what other men had builded in a like line, and this not only in America, but in the most famous cafes and restaurants of England, Germany, France, and Italy, where the art of the chef has been studied continuously for century on century from a time long before the word "chef" had been born, before there was even a French language or a French people to speak it or bestow the Cordon Bleu on noteworthy cooks, in a land where Lucullus once made his name ever after synonymous with elaborate banquets, where Crassus rited 10,000 peacocks of their tongues for a single meal for his friends, from the land of Sybaris and of Capuan luxury.

There are many angles from which the restaurant business must be approached and studied by him who would rise to the highest notch in the ladder. Not alone must the successful man be versed in the details of the chef's art, nor besides in the work of the steward, of the butler, and as well of the head waiter and other heads of de-

The second story front is divided into three divisions, corresponding to the divisions of the first story, with a large five-division window in the central portion and Spanish lunettes in the end divisions.

The front is of cream colored enameled terra cotta, furnished by the Northwestern Terra Cotta company of Chicago, who are recognized by architects as the leaders in their line. It was through F. R. McConnell of Omaha, western representative for this firm, that the purchase was made. All the iron work of the front is treated in a green Tiffany-bronze finish. The woodwork around the entrance is of mahogany.

The art glass of the front, which is a special feature designed for exterior as well as interior effect, is in the Austrian arts and crafts style, and is the first example of this in the city.

The beams of the ceiling, these heads typifying the spirit of the vine and supporting the cornice which again carries out this idea.

The columns in the room, of which there are a minimum, are designed with this harmonious idea embodied, and instead of the conventional cap on these columns, there is a head on each of the four faces, typifying this spirit of the vine, holding up the cross and recrossed timbers of the entire structure upon which the vine is growing. The soft tones are not marred by inharmonious lighting effects, but the pendant crystals give the "shimmer of the dew on the grape," the general lighting effect of the room being obtained from the lamps in the ceiling with globes ground so that the general effect of the lighting in the room is one of soft, brilliant sunlight.

Worked into this scheme is the magnificent main staircase from the first to the second floor, the well for this on the second floor taking the form of a large oval. Crowning this is the magnificent dome of art glass, giving a sense of magnitude and elegance which has not been obtained in any restaurant in this country. In submitting the contract for this most beautiful dome, and in fact all the stained glass effects throughout, Omaha Industries again come into competition with eastern manufacturers. The Midland Glass and Paint company successfully carried out some most pleasing effects with their work and proved that Omaha Industries rank with the oldest and largest in the country. This stairway from the main room to the ladies dining room on the second floor is of a sweeping form with newels at the bottom with L'Art Nouveau idea fully retained. These newels break at the top in graceful, curved, wrought iron foliating branches in conventionalized form into a large cluster of grape leaves over the top, formed in such a manner that the electric lights under these umbrella-shaped clusters form the clusters of grapes. Half way up this stair is a large landing for the orchestra, and majestically sweeping from either side of this landing a gracefully curved stair leads to the room above on both sides.

When the problem of designing the cafe was presented to M. J. Sturm of Chicago by Mr. Hanson the former stated that in order to make a project of this character a success something that had not been attempted before, namely, something that neither New York nor Chicago could exceed in its beauty and simplicity, must be the ultimate solution. It was with this in mind that the interior of this building was designed.

All Parts Work in Harmony.

The selection of John Harte, the contractor, to immediately superintend the entire construction, both interior and exterior, of this beautiful cafe was only another move in obtaining the greatest and finest skill that money could buy. No one could have done this work better than John Harte.

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carried in the creams. The ceiling in this room is particularly noticeable, inasmuch as the large oval dome springs from the cornice, which is supported by four classical columns. The ceiling is paneled and ornamented. The ornamentation of these panels is carried out in such a unique and beautiful manner that they are especially worthy of attention.

The lighting of this room is all done from the ceiling in the ground globes covering the Nernst lights and giving the same soft sunlight effect as in the lower room. The striking feature of this ladies' dining room is its coziness. Along two walls are placed small booths which give a semi-privacy and are capable of holding from four to six diners. Standing at one side of this room one is immediately impressed with its freedom from restraint and the absence of all stilted appearances. While this room is not large, it appears so and yet despite this fact it gives a distinctly restful feeling.

Leading directly from this room is the large banquet hall. This is carried out in the old English style, with its subdued mosaic floor and the paneled wainscot in dark color on the woodwork, with the deep browns on the panels between, the general effect obtained is a harmonious blending of the autumnal colors from the deepest browns to the lightest shade of cream. The manner in which this is obtained is decidedly clever. The brown of the panels beneath blends harmoniously into the sepia browns and tans of the frieze which in turn blends into the heavy prima vera or white mahogany beams of the ceiling. The panels between these beautiful wood beams are of light cream. The lighting effect is obtained by placing ceiling lights in these panels.

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Nothing Left to Chance.

The entire building and every detail in this building, even including the furniture, the fixtures in the kitchen and the Matthews' gravity carriers for dishes, were designed for this particular place and for each room or space in which such furniture or fittings are placed. Nothing whatever was left to chance, but everything was specifically designed. This is particularly noticeable throughout the establishment from the basement to the top floor. As an example of this, it may be mentioned that even the cases and all of the fittings in the basement restaurant were designed to obtain this harmonious effect.

J. J. Delight supplied the safe used for storing records and books.

The art glass, the furniture, rails, ornaments and even the metal work of the lighting fixtures were made in exact detail

to their full size and carried out as designed by the architect and no expense was spared to eliminate even the slightest jarring note. For all of the decorative plastic work, full sized models were made from the architect's drawings to obtain the exact harmony. In this manner the cafe has fulfilled the aim of its designer and owner, that it should be "the most beautiful and unique restaurant in America where service is perfect because all that goes to make service perfect, and more, is at hand."

Music at All Times.

Guests enter the cafe through Atchison revolving doors, a mechanism as far ahead of the common variety of circular doors as the motor car of 1900 is above a Roman chariot. A glorious staircase confronts the eye of him who has just entered. In majestic sweep it runs up to a broad and spacious landing, big enough to include the orchestra stand. At the back of this landing is the front of the \$6,000 Wurritzer PianOrchestra, a wonderful automatic orchestra. The Wurritzer company placed a similar instrument on exhibition at the Leipzig fair in Leipzig, Germany, and while there Europe's greatest symphony leader, Arthur Nikisch, pronounced it the most wonderful instrument he had ever heard. It was through the Nebraska Cycle company, the western agents for the PianOrchestra, that Mr. Hanson made the purchase, which supplements the strains of the regular orchestra.

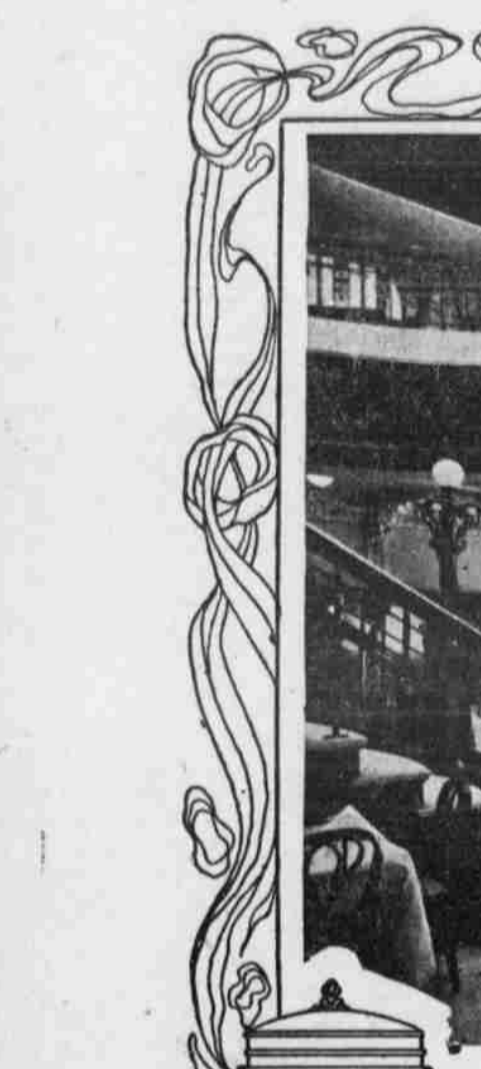
Making a gentle curve, the steps descend from the landing, and a double flight thus leads to either side of the center, carrying guests to the second floor. The stairs are but one of many distinctive features in the building, but they make a deep impression. For the effect on one is not unlike that which a noble flight of steps does in an old English country house. Mahogany, marble and Tiffany bronze railings and balustrades are used in the construction. The marble is of Italian Carrara marble installed by the Nelson Manufacturing company of St. Louis, who did all the marble work around the building. The treatment of the basement lunch room is something entirely new. The walls are composed of ceramic vitreous tile worked in an original and pleasing design. The ceiling is of what is known as 6x3 anchor back filings, so constructed that it is impossible for them to fall from the cement. The floors of the two restaurants and lunch room are of one-inch vitreous, hexagon in design.

The base in the first floor restaurant, including the fountain, is of Nashville, (Tenn.) marble. The base in the second floor dining room is of Alps Green. The marble in the toilet rooms throughout is of Knoxville.

Banquet Hall a Feature.

On the novel posts of the grand staircase above mentioned stand genuine life size statues surmounted by six electric light. This statuary was made to order in a rope last spring for Mr. Hanson through Wilber Burgess of the Burgess-Granden Gas and Electric Fixture company.

Beside the basement lunch room the first and second main floors are what the ordinary visitor will probably see in the cafe. The grill room occupies half the first floor save for the office rooms beneath the grand staircase. On the second floor is the woman's cafe, with its numerous recessed alcoves. This division of the restaurant gives onto the banquet



FIRST FLOOR OF HANSON'S CAFE BEAUTIFUL—VIEW TOWARD FRONT.

on the table, as has been seen in Chicago when the new year is two hours old.

Otherwise the scene was a replica. Scores of modishly garbed women and men, groomed to the last detail, were sitting at tables eating, drinking, laughing, talking or listening to the orchestra or orchestra, which ever happened to be playing.

He to whom a beautiful cafe crowded with well dressed men and women does not appeal must be of the most severely ascetic temperament, a dyspeptic or a misanthrope. There are finer things in life possible, but the ensemble in this case has a broad variety of appeal. Fine linen and silver, elfin strains of music, the tinkle of ice in glasses of fairy form and prismatic hue, the scent of delicate perfume, the merry laughter of pretty women, who have dressed with the knowledge or the hope that many eyes will view them, the deft, respectful attention of the well

parments; he must be also a sagacious business man, a diplomat, and a dozen other things, or his business will go to ruin in little time. A man might go as far as this—and only a hint of the distance has been suggested—and when the time came might justifiably turn over to architect and contractor most or all the task of planning and carrying out the erection and furnishing of his new building. One would hardly expect him to do more than make a few practical suggestions.

But in the case of the new Hanson cafe, the proprietor was also the creator. Ideas had not been germinating and developing inside his head for over a score of years without finally coming into play. Not for merely passing interest had he studied restaurants all over the civilized world.

And through the building and furnishing, to the smallest detail, may and should justly be called his creation, yet he did

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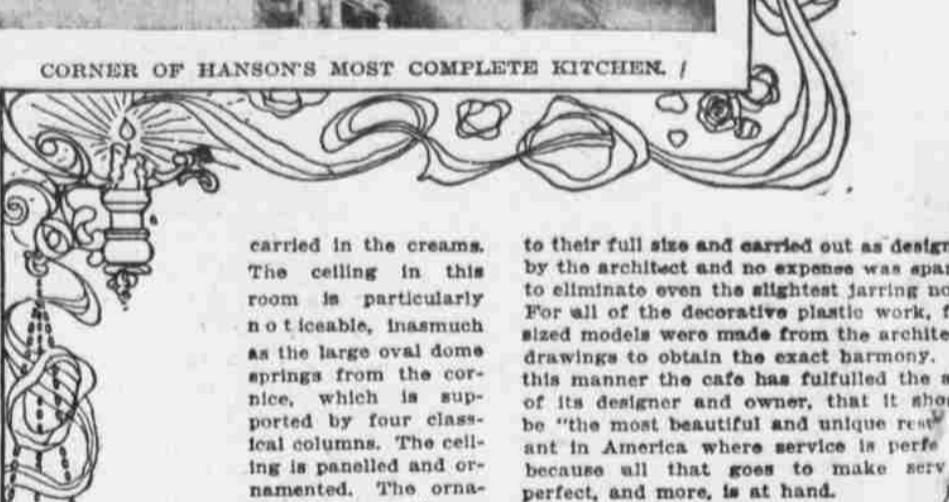
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Its Beauty an Innovation.

On the first floor as one enters the first feature which is strikingly noticeable is the unique and monumental manner in which the stairway is arranged from the first to the second floor. This broad, marble stairway, with verde antique wrought iron rails and newel posts, is in itself an innovation. This first floor is designed in what might be designated a German adaptation of L'Art Nouveau. What immediately attracts one's attention on entering this room is the peculiarly homelike and restful appearance which pervades the place. This is due to several details which have been carefully studied with the view of obtaining exactly this feeling.

The floor of mosaic in its subdued colors and the base of brown marble blend harmoniously into the high wainscot of mahogany. This wainscot is made up of perfectly plain matched panels, the division between being a gradually tapering pilaster taking on a form of stem as it reaches the top, and breaking into a large curved grape leaf with a cluster of grapes breaking out on either side, and forming a cap. The base is formed as a conventionalized root of branches of a grape vine. The panels are curved on the top to carry out the arbor effect, and over all is the graceful sweeping curve of the cornice or plate rail enhancing the effect of bending vines going over the top of an arbor. Above this wainscot are the brackets in plastic, which support the main cornice of the room and



CORNER OF HANSON'S MOST COMPLETE KITCHEN.



FINEST BUSINESS MEN'S LUNCH ROOM IN THE WEST—BASEMENT 215 S. 16TH.

trained, silent waiter, bearing game of woodland fawn or red or golden wines, more aged than any diner—all these factors unite in an irresistible appeal to the normal red-blooded man or woman, delighting alike savant and sybarite, grave digger, grain broker, race track tout and college teacher. But one might serve the rarest old Canary or the choicest bit of Buffalo hump in environment unattractive, for any reason, and the diner might be unsatisfied; would be, if he demanded a perfect ensemble. Gems of the culinary art demand as perfect a setting in their way as the jewels which flash at throat or ear of opera star or fashionable grand dame.

Proprietor Fills All Positions.

It was with a full knowledge of this fact the Hanson's new cafe was planned and the planning, it may be remarked in passing, was not a matter of a month or even of a year. It has been the thought and dream of a lifetime given to the restaurantier's life—an ideal hastily born when a young man, engaging in this line of business. The mental seed then sown in the cranium of a struggling youth

not attempt a task which would have been beyond his or any other man's power. He did engage as good an architect as this country afforded, and he did rely on the technical genius and creative skill of Mr. Meyer J. Sturm of Chicago. The professional craft of the architect and the ideas of the long-time student of restauranting were harmoniously united to bring about the desired—and achieved result.

Designed to Attract Attention.

A description of the Hanson restaurant might begin with that feature of the building which naturally first strikes the eye and arrests the attention of the pedestrian on Sixteenth street. The facade was designed by the architectural firm of Fisher & Lawrie of Omaha, and is an adaptation of the Spanish renaissance style with Flemish Gothic mouldings.

The front is two stories in height, separated by a strong band course. At the level of the band course an ornamental marquee projects about seven feet from the building.

The main entrance is in the center of the front and is flanked by projecting bays,

that the service of such a restaurant would be practically perfect in order to make the restaurant itself a success, for however attractive a restaurant might be, if the kitchen and the working parts were not perfectly arranged to make the service perfect eventually the beauty of the place would not be sufficient to attract patrons.

With this in mind the kitchen was planned, and by kitchen is meant the entire working department, including the store-rooms, etc. In the basement, therefore, were placed the large refrigerators for the storage of quantities of provisions and meats and the large wine boxes necessary, beside the refrigerating apparatus and the power plant for adequately caring for the entire building.

On the first floor directly back of the main cafe was placed the main kitchen, which is in every way a model, with every modern appliance known for this department installed perfectly. In passing it might be remarked that Mr. Hanson patronized home industry wherever possible, and often has gone to considerable extra expense to carry out this resolve. The firm of Milton Rogers & Sons equipped the culinary department throughout, and their ex-

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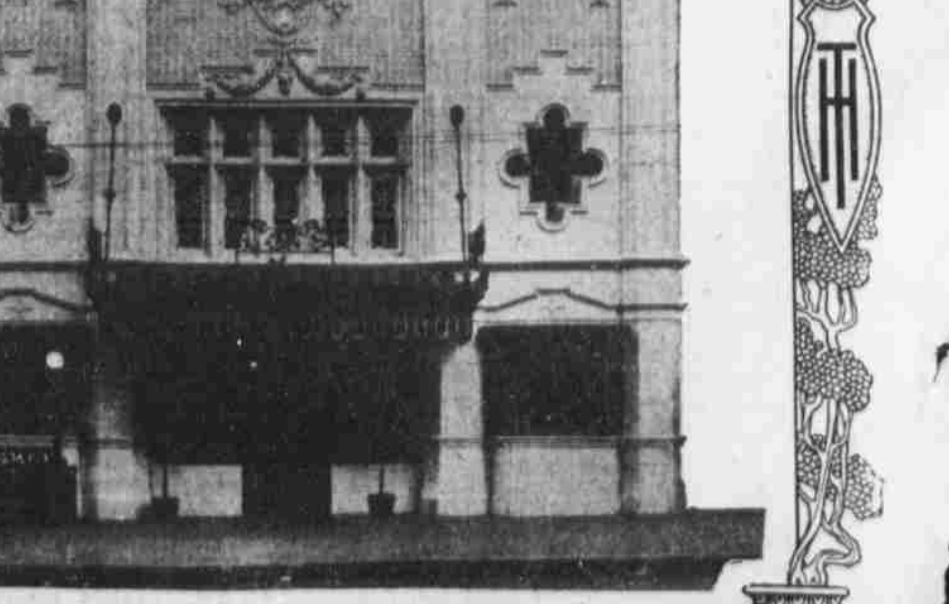
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