

The Brochure Series of Architectural Illustration, Volume 01, No. 11, November, 1895 eBook

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Page 1

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The Country Houses of Normandy

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[Illustration: LXXXI. Ferme la Vallauine, Normandy.]

THE BROCHURE SERIES

Of architectural illustration.

Vol. I. November, 1895. No. 11.

THE COUNTRY HOUSES OF NORMANDY.

The houses chosen for illustration in this number are of different types, of different dates, built for men of different stations in life, and are constructed of different materials. They are, however, all in the province of Normandy, in northern France, and they are all situated outside the towns; further than this it may not be well to go in attempting to classify them under one head. Like the subjects chosen for our last issue, they contain many suggestive ideas for treatment of similar problems in our own country, and for this reason they deserve special attention.

The tendency among the French has always been strong to build their houses in compact groups, and detached buildings with free space on all sides are the exception even in the country. Mr. Louis H. Gibson, whose book "Beautiful Houses" we have noticed in another column, says of the French domestic architecture:—

"Excepting the chateaux, the structures of which we have the completest record are almost entirely buildings fronting directly on the street or road. In France it is rare indeed that one sees an isolated building with a free passage around it, as is common in our American towns and cities. It is not at all uncommon for a farm building to be

constructed within a wall; again, the farmer's house may be almost flush with the road. Little farm communities, with the buildings abutting on one another, are very common, because of the companionship which such association brings. This was not alone true in the early history of France, but obtains in the construction of to-day. The small towns, as well as the cities, are almost universally built very compactly. Thus we may expect to see very few examples of isolated structures in France."

In this respect it will be seen the taste of the French house builder differs from ours where open space about a dwelling-house is considered one of its important attractions. Consequently the examples here shown should not be considered as typical of French domestic architecture. The town house is, if anything, the type.

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Most of the examples which we have chosen belong to the sixteenth century or thereabouts. The Manoir d'Ango, of which we gave four views in last month's issue and of which three more are now shown, was built about the middle of the sixteenth century, and the *manoir* at Archelles was also built about the same time. It was also during this century that the best and most interesting of the French half-timber work was done, and although we have no data at hand for determining the matter, we judge that the two examples here illustrated date from about this time. The construction in these buildings is doubtless the same as that commonly used in others of this character—a strong framework of timber filled in with brick masonry and then plastered. Many of the town houses built in this way were very elaborate and were adorned with exquisite carved wood ornament. In Verdier and Cattois' "Architecture Civile et Domestique" may be found numerous examples, and in a future number of *the Brochure series* we shall give place to some of the most attractive.

[Illustration: LXXXII. Manoir at Archelles, Normandy.]

One consideration has influenced the selection of some of the subjects included in the illustrations of this number which has not before been mentioned, and it is not necessary to dwell upon it now. It has been our experience that architectural students are constantly looking about for appropriate subjects for sketching, and some are so fastidious that they find very few satisfactory ones. We commend the views here given, and also those in the last issue, as excellent and appropriate subjects for treatment either in water-color, pen-and-ink, or pencil. Next to working directly from nature, it would be hard to find better practice than can be had by translating these photographic views into drawings.

LXXXI.

Ferme la Vallauine, Normandy.

With the resources at our command we are unable to further identify this house than the above title indicates. In fact, it tells its own story. Judging by analogy, it probably dates from the sixteenth century. Nothing could well be more picturesque.

LXXXII and LXXXIII.

Manoir at Archelles, Normandy.

Archelles is a small village near Arques, and its principal attraction is this beautiful *manoir* with a garden at its back, and surrounded by fine trees. It dates from the sixteenth century and is built of brick decorated in a sort of mosaic inlaid with a light colored stone. The old walls overgrown with vines are especially attractive.

LXXXIV.

Porch of Church at Beuvreil, Normandy.

The form and proportions of this old porch are so good that in spite of the rough and meagre detail it has an irresistible charm.

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LXXXV.

Manoir de Vitanval, Ste. Andresse, Normandy.

Ste. Andresse is a small community on the coast of Normandy a few miles north-west of Havre.

LXXXVI to LXXXVIII.

Manoir D'ANGO, Normandy.

This *manoir* has already been referred to in the preceding number, where four other views are given.

Architectural Schools.

Columbia college.

In the series of articles in which we have undertaken to give an idea of the scope of the courses of architectural study offered by the various schools of the country, we can hardly do better, in referring to Columbia College, than quote from a paper in which Professor William R. Ware describes the methods used for the teaching of the history of architecture at Columbia. Our extracts are made from a portion of the paper printed in *The American Architect* for November 30, 1895.

These four exercises, the Lectures on History and Ornament, with the study of English, French, and German text-books, the Historical Research, the Historical Drawing, and the Historical Design, occupy a chief part of the student's time during the first three years of the course. At the end of the third year the stated instruction by recitations and the lectures is virtually finished, the fourth year being, by an arrangement which is perhaps a novelty in places of learning, quite free from lectures or recitations. The men give their whole time by day to problems in design, to what may be called "*atelier* work," without interruption. Their evenings, throughout the whole year, are devoted to historical study. As the college library, including the Avery library, as well as the books and photographs belonging to the Department of Architecture, is accessible every evening until eleven o'clock, and the Metropolitan Museum is open twice a week until ten, every facility is afforded for the prosecution of this work. In order to make the most of these appliances, every student of the Fourth-year class and all the special students (who are of similar grade, being received only in advanced standing) prepares once a month, under the name of Advanced Architectural History, an original paper. This he illustrates by drawings and reads to the class. All this affords an almost unexampled opportunity for serious work.

We exhibit to the students the architecture of the past as a series of problems just as it appeared to the builders of its own day, and we hope thus not only to give them a clearer insight into the real spirit and character of the masterpieces that have come down to us, by bringing to view the ideas and considerations which really influenced their designers, but at the same time to exercise our own young men in the practical application of those same ideas. We hope thus to develop in them the same good sense and good taste, the same readiness of invention and happy ingenuity, to which these masterpieces are due.

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[Illustration: LXXXIII. Manoir at Archelles, Normandy.]

The exercises themselves may be described as a species of design by description or by dictation. The attempt is made, by indicating the conditions under which a given piece of work was executed, to present to the student the same problem that the workman of old was called upon to solve. The student can then compare his own solution of it with the one that has come down to him, thus receiving correction and guidance in his work from the hand of the master. It is plain that the special excellencies of the original monument are likely to reveal themselves with fresh distinctness, and to find special sympathy and appreciation in the mind of one who has striven, however unsuccessfully, to solve the same problem.

An example or two taken from widely different fields will suffice to illustrate this. In studying vaulting, we once got so far as to understand how oblong vaults were thrown across a nave, while square vaults covered the aisles. A class of fifteen or twenty students were then asked to find out how a semi-circular or polygonal apse could be added to a choir roofed on this system. In the course of a couple of hours' figuring I found that they had worked out among them all the five solutions of this problem, which in the Middle Ages it took one or two hundred years to develop. This was very encouraging. At another time they were given a somewhat minute description of four pilaster capitals from Blois or Chambord, and they made thumb-nail sketches on the spot, according to their interpretation of the description. The next day photographs and drawings of a dozen or twenty other such capitals were given them, so that they might understand the fashion of the time, and they were told to draw out their sketches on a larger scale. The result was fifteen or twenty sets of capitals, all showing the same four motives, but differing in a most interesting way, according to the personal differences of taste and skill on the part of the designers.

On another occasion the First-year class, after their studies in Egyptian and Assyrian architecture, made a dozen or twenty restorations of Solomon's Temple, according to the description in the Book of Kings. The drawings they produced showed considerable fertility of invention, especially in the designs for Jachin and Boaz, and the whole series together seemed to be quite as creditable and as reasonable as most of those which have from time to time been put forth by the learned.

This practice in historical design we believe to be founded on sound theoretical principles. To regard a work of art as far as possible from the point-of-view of the artist is, indeed, the first principle of fair and intelligent criticism. To foster the individuality and personal initiative of a pupil by bringing authority to bear upon him in a way of correction at the end of his task, and guidance and suggestion at the beginning,

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rather than control during the course of the work, is the first principle of intelligent teaching. Moreover, the results, so far as we have gone, have justified the method. We have, indeed, employed it hitherto mainly as a matter of experiment when favorable circumstances have suggested it. But every year we use it to a greater and greater extent, and it is gradually acquiring a recognized place as an integral portion of our work.

(To be continued.)

Personal.

Of the many fortunate ones who have come back to a winter of work after a summer abroad are Messrs. Claude F. Bragdon, Charles M. Sutton, and Howard Hatton, of Rochester. Messrs. Sutton and Hatton are now with J. Foster Warner. Mr. Bragdon has temporarily opened an office at 60 Trust Building, but will have offices in the new Cutler Building when completed.

Mr. Wilson Eyre, Jr., of Philadelphia, has just finished designing a second formal garden, which is said to be delightfully un-American; and Mr. Frank Miles Day's Horticultural Hall is nearly ready to receive the mural coloring and allegorical painting which Mr. Joseph Lindon Smith is to execute. The latter will be a conspicuous departure from ordinarily accepted models.

[Illustration: LXXXIV. Porch of Church at Beuvreil, Normandy.]

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SPECIAL NOTICE.

Back numbers of *the Brochure series* are *not* kept in stock. All subscriptions will be dated from the time received and subscribers who wish for the current numbers must place their subscriptions at once.

A hundred photographs are published in twelve issues of *the Brochure series*. You may get some duplicates, but the new ones will be well worth a subscription at fifty cents. *This is addressed to non-subscribers.*

* * * * *

We have repeatedly called attention in this column to the question of perennial importance to us—that of subscriptions. We have no apology to offer for this insistence upon the publisher's business, for it concerns every one who has any interest in the undertaking, in so far as the support received in this quarter will make it either possible or impossible, as the case maybe, to add to the attractions of the magazine as conducted at present.

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We have every reason to feel satisfied with the support thus far accorded us, for our subscription list is now much larger than we expected it would be at this time, but this is only a beginning. In the advertising pages of this number will be found an announcement which, we trust, will appeal to a large number of our present subscribers who already know our work. In most cases it is only necessary to show the magazine and state the price to at once secure a subscriber. Try it and see; enter the prize competition, and help yourself by helping us.

In the September issue we took occasion to notice the mural decoration and color treatment of the staircase hall of the new Public Library Building in Boston. Those who would judge for themselves of the merits of our conclusions must see the building; but it is not necessary to go to Boston in order to realize that here we have a remarkably beautiful structure, and many of its features can be fully enjoyed and appreciated in photographic views. In another column will be found a notice of a very attractive and unusually satisfactory handbook of the library, with numerous illustrations from the photographs of Mr. E.E. Soderholtz. Further than this, we wish to call particular attention to the set of photographs which is advertised on the front cover of this number. As a photographer of architectural subjects Mr. Soderholtz certainly has no superior in this country, and in this collection the subjects and manner of presentation are equally worthy of the highest praise.

Wanted Draughtsmen's Addresses.

We intend issuing, the coming year, a number of interestingly illustrated announcements of new architectural publications and importations. We want to send these to every architectural student and draughtsman in the United States and Canada. If you are not on our subscription list, send us your *residence* address for our circular mailing list. Address a postal card as below, putting simply your address on the back. If you are in an office, have the other fellows put their residence addresses on the same card. We prefer to address mail matter to your residence, as there is less danger of miscarriage. Do not get the idea that by sending your address you are ordering something you will be asked to pay for. All the expense, except the postal card, is on our side. If we can't get out announcements interesting enough to attract your attention and occasionally secure an order, it will be our loss. Address:—

Bates & Guild,
6 Beacon Street,
Boston, Mass.

For Circular List.

[Illustration: LXXXV. Manoir de Vitanval, Ste. Andresse, Normandy.]

Brochure Series Competition No. 2.

The first lot of drawings in the competition for a design for the advertising page of The Boynton Furnace Co., in *the Brochure series*, was due on December 10, and eleven designs were received.

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The judges have awarded the prize to Mr. Edwin R. Clark of Lowell, Mass., and his design appears in this issue as the advertisement of the Boynton Furnace Co., on page xi. The reasons for the award may be a guide to others engaged in similar work, and consequently we reproduce several of the other designs for comparison with Mr. Clark's.

It must be remembered that the first consideration in this problem is the effectiveness as advertising matter of the design submitted—its artistic merits, although important, are distinctly secondary to this quality. The medium in which it is to be used and the clientage to which it is intended to appeal must also be constantly borne in mind.

[Illustration: Design by Edwin R. Clark.]

Mr. Clark submitted three drawings, a second one of which is given herewith. The first is superior in giving a more positive effect to the page and in being a more unusual treatment than the second. Although both are drawn with skill and are admirable in technique, the type of design and ornament used in the second have come into such common use that if for no other reason than this the first would be preferable.

[Illustration: Design by W.B. Olmsted.]

As decorative treatment Mr. Olmsted's design is in many respects the most masterly of the lot, and if the personal choice of the judges had been the only consideration upon which the award was to be made, this would have been placed first, for it is remarkable for careful and intelligent arrangement, subtle balancing and proportion of parts, and especially for what may be called the decorative sense by which just the right relation of black to white is preserved. It is seldom that any but the most accomplished designers succeed in obtaining this just proportion, which gives a sparkle to the design such as is seen in the best of the Japanese stencil patterns used on printed stuffs. The clever use of motives connected with the business advertised and the idea of presenting the Boynton apparatus in attractive form and other heaters thrown about in confusion is commendable. The only reason for passing over this design in the award is the advertising value of the attractive appearance of some of the more ornate designs.

[Illustration: LXXXVI. Manoir d'Ango, Normandy.]

One other drawing, that of Mr. Brown, deserves particular notice for its intrinsic excellence. It is especially praiseworthy for its grace of line and general arrangement. The figure is well placed and, although faulty in drawing, is particularly effective in treatment. It is essentially a poster design, but none the less appropriate for the present purpose on this account. It lacks only in those qualities of draughtsmanship which come with practice and experience.

[Illustration: Design by F. Chouteau Brown.]

The remaining drawing which we illustrate is a very interesting although not especially forcible treatment of the class of ornament adopted by Mr. Louis H. Sullivan, and in his hands having a wonderful charm, but seldom used with entire success by others.

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The result in this first series of designs is especially satisfactory in the intelligence shown in grasping the essentials of the problem. All of the remaining six drawings have points of excellence to commend them, and if we had space to reproduce them would prove instructive in showing the diversity of treatment possible while fully meeting the conditions imposed.

Reviews.

Beautiful Houses. A study in house building.

By Louis H. Gibson. Illustrated. Boston T.Y. Crowell & Co. 1895.
pp. 346. \$3.

This book is in many respects very attractive, and will be found useful to architectural readers as well as to the general public.

It is divided into two parts, the first under the heading "The World's Houses" and the second, "Some House Plans" and "Materials and Details."

The first part is that which will be of most value to the architectural reader. In it are described the principal types of domestic architecture, giving most prominence to the work of France. The illustrations of this portion of the work are well chosen and very well printed. In fact, to the architect they form the most valuable part of the book. The second part is devoted mainly to Mr. Gibson's own designs. These are mostly good, straightforward work, although we can hardly agree with all of his opinions. His use of language is not always discriminating and is sometimes misleading.

[Illustration: Design by Chas. F. Hogeboom, Jr.]

To the general reader there will be much of interest in all portions of the book, especially if he contemplates building a house. And in this case we sincerely trust that its perusal will result in another commission for some fortunate architect.

[Illustration: LXXXVII. Manoir d'Ango, Normandy.]

Handbook of the New Public Library in Boston. Compiled by
Herbert Small. Fully illustrated. Boston, 1895. Curtis & Co.
78 pp. 16c.

The unusual interest which has been aroused in architectural circles by the new building for the Boston Public Library is the reason for devoting special attention to this little book in these columns. Although intended for general readers, it has a very instructive article by Mr. C. Howard Walker considering the building architecturally, which will interest architectural readers. The illustrations, made from photographs by E.E. Soderholtz, are excellent and numerous, and the cover, printed in green and black, from the design of B.G. Goodhue, is an additional attraction. On the whole, even after so

much in the way of illustration of this building has been already published, it is worth the while of any architect or draughtsman to send for this little pamphlet.

Club Notes.

The Chicago Architectural Club is keeping its members guessing to know what scheme of work or entertainment will come next on its programme.

The annual meeting for election of officers was held October 7. Several of the regular monthly competitions and an informal exhibition have already come and gone, and a "Bohemian Night" with all its accompaniments comes every fortnight.

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The following classes have been arranged for some time ago: Water Color, under Hugh M.G. Garden; Architecture, under George R. Dean; Pen and Ink, under Charles E. Birge; Modeling, under Richard W. Bock.

A talk on "The Impecunious Draughtsman Abroad" was given by Mr. Myron H. Hunt, and Mr. George R. Dean has given a lantern-slide exhibition, illustrating the Chateau de Blois.

The club also held a joint meeting with the Chicago Society of Artists, when Mr. N.S. Patton discussed the question of "The Architectural and Artistic Possibilities of the Lake Front."

The annual banquet and meeting of the Cleveland Architectural Club was held at the Hollenden Hotel Thursday evening, November 14, with about forty present. Dinner was served at six o'clock, followed by toasts from Messrs. John L. Culley, F.A. Coburn, and Charles W. Hopkinson, with President Hubbell as toastmaster.

After the speaking the annual meeting was held, with an address by the president, reports by the secretary, treasurer, librarian, chairman of the Current Work Committee, and the chairman of the Entertainment and House Committee.

The club has grown from a charter membership one year ago of fourteen to a total membership of forty-five.

The newly elected officers are: President, Benjamin S. Hubbell; Vice-President, Frederick Baird; Secretary, Herbert B. Briggs; Treasurer, Albert E. Skeel; Librarian, G.B. Bohm; Directors, M. James Bowman and C.S. Schneider.

A joint exhibition of the Cleveland Architectural Club and the Cleveland Art Association will be held in the Garfield Building, from January 20 to February 5, 1896. Works will be received until Monday, January 6. The exhibition will include: Architectural sketches, perspectives, and elevations in all renderings; photographs of executed work; landscape architecture; interior architecture and decoration; interior furnishings (samples and sketches); architectural and decorative metal work (wrought iron, bronze, and brass); sculpture (architectural and ornamental).

An illustrated catalogue will be issued.

All drawings must be framed or mounted.

A Good Endorsement.

The following letter from the office of Richard M. Hunt is of interest to all users of shingle stains:—

Dexter Bros., Boston:

Gentlemen,—The shingle stains we have used on some of the buildings of Biltmore Village, N.C., furnished by you, have given absolute satisfaction as to quality and color. We consider your stains the best we have used so far.

Yours respectfully,
(Signed) R.H. HUNT.

[Illustration: LXXXVII. Manoir d'Ango. Normandy.]