

**DOMESTIC
ARCHITECTURE**



BY
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PREFACE

It was my intention, when first contemplating this thesis, to study the domestic architecture of every country of the world, pointing out particularly those features everywhere which, owing to similitude of various conditions, could be introduced in our own land. But the task proved to be too great, so I have chosen only those countries whose domestic work as a whole is most adaptable here—that is, Spain, Italy, the America

of the early days, and, of course, Australia itself. To these I have added two others to show that even in the most unexpected places we often find some adaptable features— Egypt, as typical of the ancient world, and China, as typical of Oriental civilisation.

It may be as well to mention also that in dealing with the American colonial house I have ignored the differences between types found in various parts of the country and have concentrated on that seen in the districts around Maryland, this being the one which is most commonly known as typical of the style.

The Australian colonial section was confined to houses within a day's motor tour of Sydney, in order that

all notes might be made from personal observation. All photographs in these pages were taken by myself or under my direction.

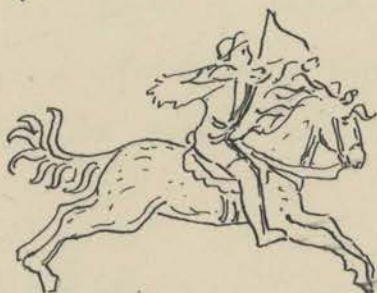
Since the plan of a house depends entirely upon the site and the peculiar requirements of the owner, I have not dealt with planning beyond mentioning the general scheme belonging to each type of architecture. Consequently with the most important feature of a house omitted, the title "Domestic Architecture" may seem a little misleading. Perhaps the true title should be "A Defence of so-called Styles in Architecture, with Special Reference to Domestic Work".

I have tried to show just what circumstances of geography, of climate, of religion, of history, of social

life, influenced each distinctive feature of each house, in order that a comparison might be made before those features are meaninglessly copied for our own use.

With the amended title in mind, the claim of the work to be called a thesis becomes more apparent, since, in parliamentary language, a thesis should speak to a motion.

The motion before the house is—
"That this house is in favour of architects turning to the accumulated experiences of the past to obtain inspiration for solving the problems of the present."



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The nineteenth century in England saw what was known as "The Battle of the Styles", which was a struggle between two schools of artists, one favouring classic tradition, the other Gothic. To-day we have another 'Battle of the Styles', but this time it is the fight of those who would carry on tradition against those who would eschew all styles



and attempt to make an entirely fresh start. In some ways the latter school thinks rightly; the word "style" as it is used to-day is an abomination. To definitely set out to build a house exactly like one from the England of the Georges - to build, that is, in the Georgian style, - is to be merely imitative, and imitation can never produce success.

But to absolutely ignore all the knowledge that has been gained by centuries of experiment and experience is sheer folly. What we can do is to study the conditions governing the lives of other races in other times, finding out exactly what influences produced particular features of their buildings, and striving always to analyse the underlying

principles of a successful design.

As an illustration of the application of principles consider the aeroplane. When first man decided to learn to fly an attempt was made to copy the flight of a bird.

A machine was constructed with a body shaped like that of a bird, and with wings to flap.

This was direct imitation - and the machine never left the ground.

Then another attempt was made, this time by men who attacked the problem scientifically, considering the machine not as one which was to miraculously achieve natural flight, but as a heavy body which had to obey all the laws of physics, and in itself contain the ability to counteract those laws which

chained it to the ground. That machine flew. It was an ugly object; there was neither grace nor beauty in it ~~or~~ its flight. But mechanical improvements were made, and once the possibility of enjoying long flights became an established fact, men sought to make the machines more graceful as well. Then they turned to the birds for inspiration, and to a plan which embodied all requirements of the problem in hand they applied the principles of design which they learnt from the birds — and the result was the sheer beauty of the modern mon-o-plane. Imitation had failed to gain either practical success or beauty; application of principles gained both.

Once we have discovered the principles of an architectural design we are like a schoolboy who has learnt his geometry theorem, and is now prepared to apply it to the solution of any number of exercises depending on that theorem. The houses which we are called upon to build are the geometry exercises, but we must make sure that we find the correct theorem on which they depend. This is where a study of the conditions which brought about the proof of the theorem (or the building of our original example) is essential. It is no use turning to the huts of a savage tribe of Esquimaux in Greenland to find inspiration for the building of a palace of a University-trained Rajah.

of an Indian state.

Every man who is called upon to produce a house must have definite knowledge of the climate of the district in which it is to be built, of the local materials, of the social conditions governing the lives of the people who are to live in it. Then he can turn to other countries or other times where even some points of similarity between the sets of conditions are to be found — and so he discovers the theorem which applies to his particular exercise.

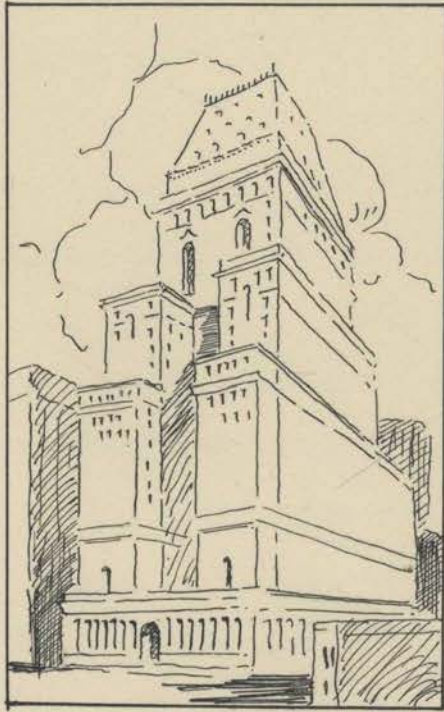
Geometry exercises cannot be solved without the use of theorems; architecture cannot exist without its examples from the past. When a man attempts to break away from tradition,

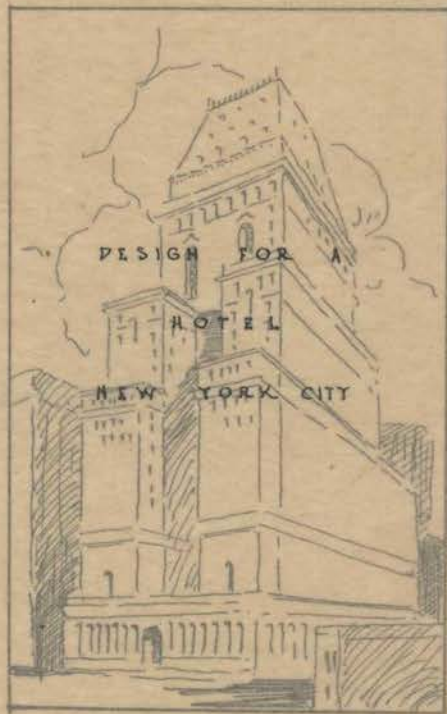
he works at fever heat on his new inspiration until it is finished.

Then he stands back to view it as a whole - and discovers that he has produced something which is very like the masterpiece of some other artist in some other land in some other time, whose conditions happened to approximate in some way to his own.

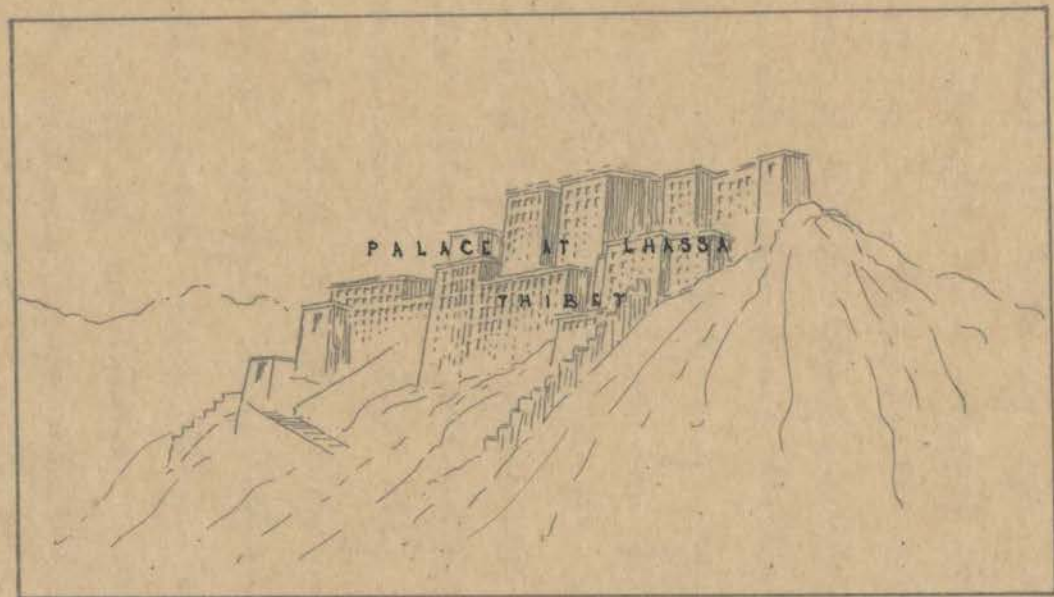
Consider the trend of modern commercial architecture in America. Its underlying principle is that of building up with masses of straight and almost box-like outlines. This is the natural expression of the building material, which is concrete.

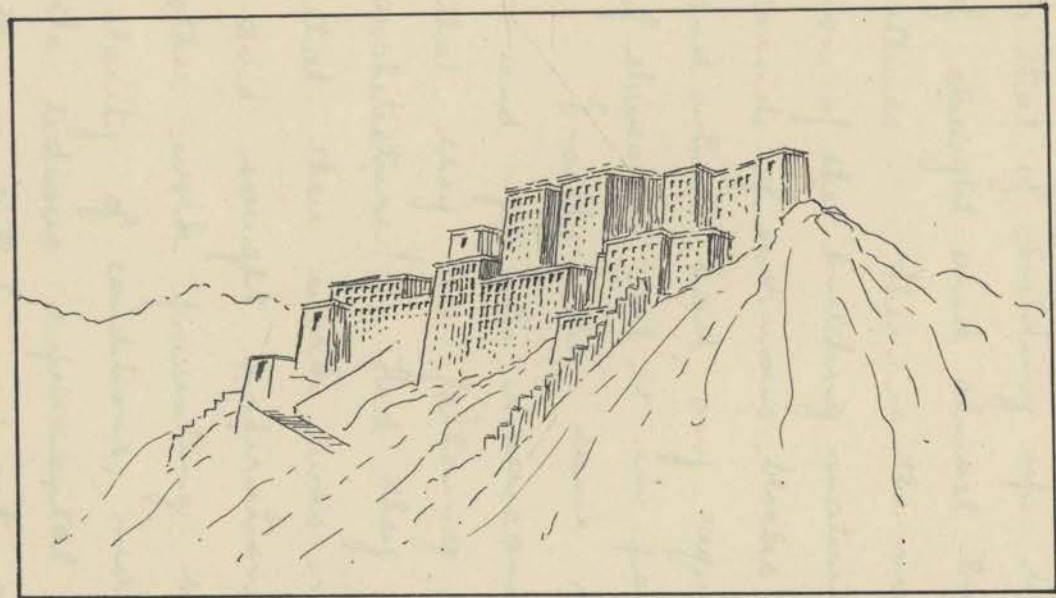
Now look at the example of the Palace at Shassa, in Tibet,





DESIGN FOR A
HOTEL
NEW YORK CITY





belonging to the seventeenth century.

The underlying principle of its design is that of building up with masses of straight and almost box-like outlines. This is the natural expression of the building material, which consists of enormous blocks of stone, and which had any required number of slaves to set it in position.

Exactly the same principle - and yet the Americans state that they are fathering a new architecture! Had they admitted that their work was not new, and sought inspiration from this other work presenting some similarity of conditions, many of the tedious experimental stages of the so-called new art could have been passed over.

Consider too the trend of modern ornament. The Americans again pride themselves on producing new forms, but compare an example of decoration from a modern office block with one from an Egyptian temple dated three thousand years before Christ!

Think of the first principle of design that is taught to students to-day - "composition of a pyramidal form gives the greatest appearance of repose and stability."

Then go back to Egypt again, and examine the tombs which are known as 'The Pyramids'.

Truly there is nothing new under the sun!

The Frenchman, Le Corbusier, is one of the most ardent

exponents of the 'scrap tradition' school, and his opinions as expressed in his book 'Towards a New Architecture' can serve as typical of the movement. Also since the majority of his reasonings apply to matters which are characteristic not of the French nation but of the whole world, his remarks can be discussed as though they dealt with our own country.

He considers that we live in an age of machinery, and that our homes should be simply 'machines in which to live'. To quote his own words, "A chair is in no way a work of art; it can have no soul; it is a machine for sitting in." A new architecture for a new age is the burden of his slogan. But in

reading his book one is forced to think of that romance "Metropolis", in which was prophesied for the human race a terrible future in a world of machines.

Corbusier considers that the efficiency of the modern machine should be carried into the home; that after his days work a man should come home to an atmosphere of ordered existence precisely similar to that of his office, so that his brain may not be fogged by any extraneous emotions. But what of the savouring salt of contrast? What of the need for relaxing the brain in order to send it back to work in the morning refreshed and keener of perception? According to Corbusier work seems to be the be-all and the end-all of life.

If we work in machines and live in machines, as he suggests, there is no contrast, no relaxation, anywhere.

Let us consider Le Corbusier's 'Manual of the Dwelling', which runs as follows —

"Demand a bathroom looking south, (substitute north in this country) one of the largest rooms in the house or flat — the old drawing-room for instance — one wall to be entirely glazed, opening if possible onto a balcony for sunbaths; the most up-to-date fittings with a shower-bath and gymnastic appliances.

An adjoining room is to be a dressing-room where you can dress and undress. Never undress in your bedroom. It is an unclean thing to do and makes the room horribly

untidy. In this room demand fittings for your linen and clothing, not more than five feet in height, with drawers, hangers, etc.

Demand one really large living room instead of a number of small ones.

Demand bare walls in your bedroom, your living room, and your dining room. Built-in fittings to take the place of much of the furniture, which is expensive to buy, takes up too much room and needs looking after.

If you can, put the kitchen at the top of the house to avoid smells.

Demand concealed or diffused lighting.

Demand a vacuum cleaner.

Buy only practical furniture and never buy decorative "pieces." If you want to see bad taste, go into the

"houses of the rich. Put only a few pictures on the walls and none but good ones.

Keep your odds and ends in drawers or cabinets.

The gramophone or the pianola or wireless will give you exact interpretation of first rate music, and you will avoid catching cold in the concert hall, and the frenzy of the virtuoso.

Demand ventilation panes to the windows in every room.

Teach your children that a house is only habitable when it is full of light and air, and when the floors and walls are clear. To keep your floors in order eliminate heavy furniture and thick carpets.

Demand a separate garage to

"your dwelling.

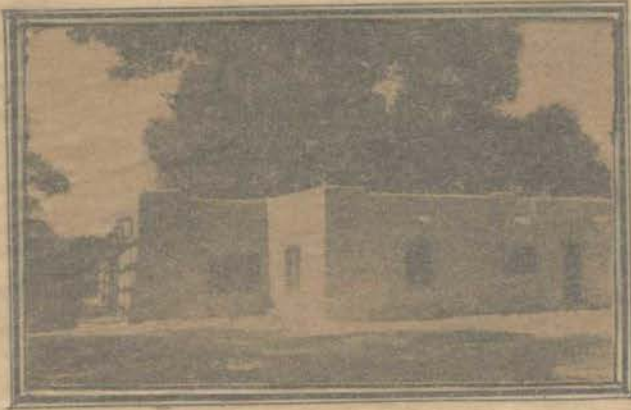
Demand that the maid's room should not be an attic. Do not park your servants under the roof.

Take a flat which is one size smaller than what your parents accustomed you to. Bear in mind economy to your actions, your household management, and in your thoughts."

Much of this manual has to do with the planning of the house, and that part is fairly sound, being an expression of the general modern movement towards neatness and compactness of plan. Remembering too that Le Corbusier belongs to a cold northern climate, his plea for larger windows is quite reasonable.

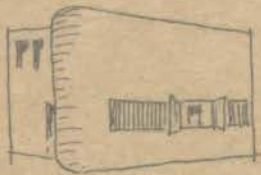
But a house requires more than efficiency to make it a home.

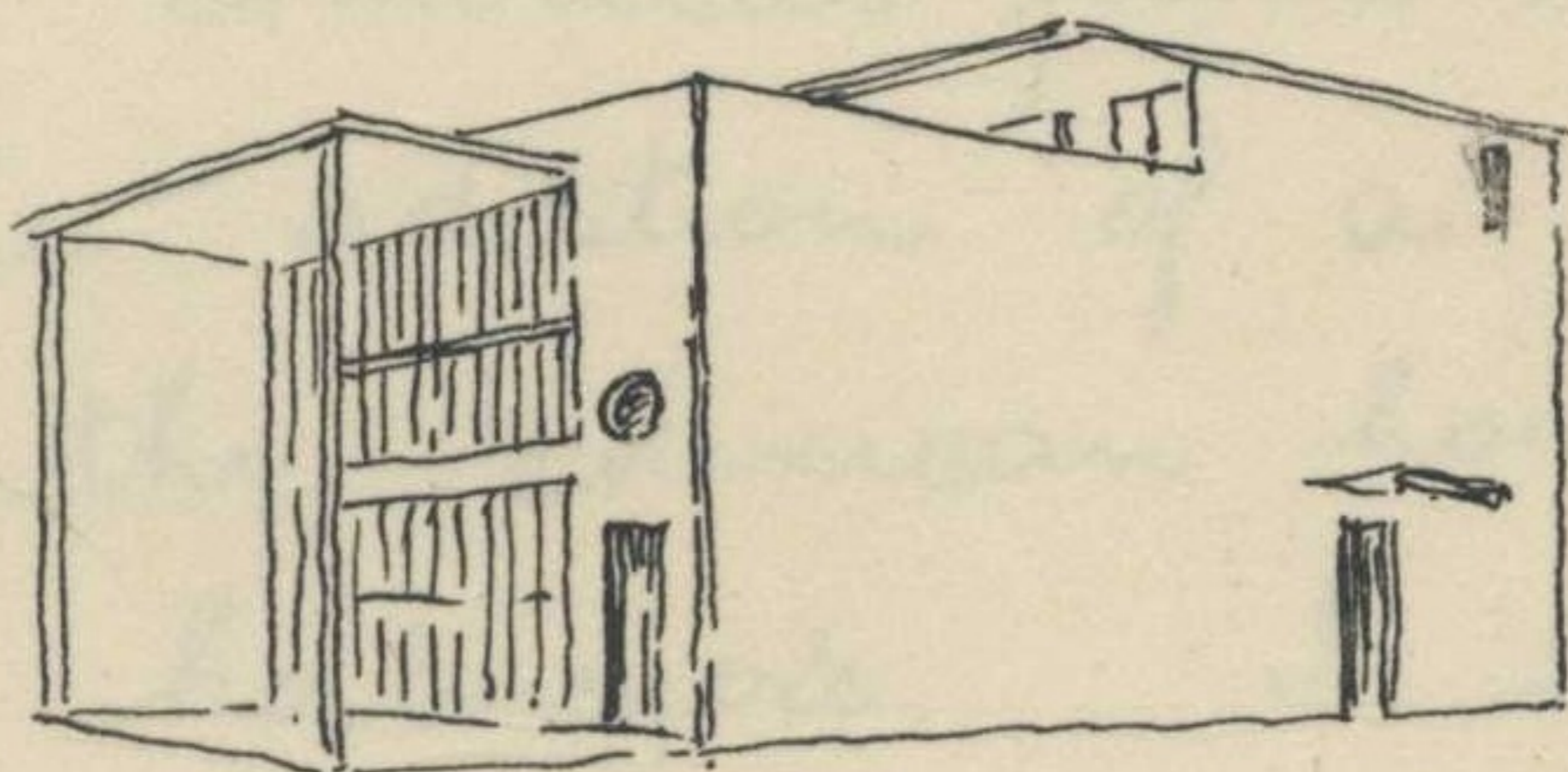
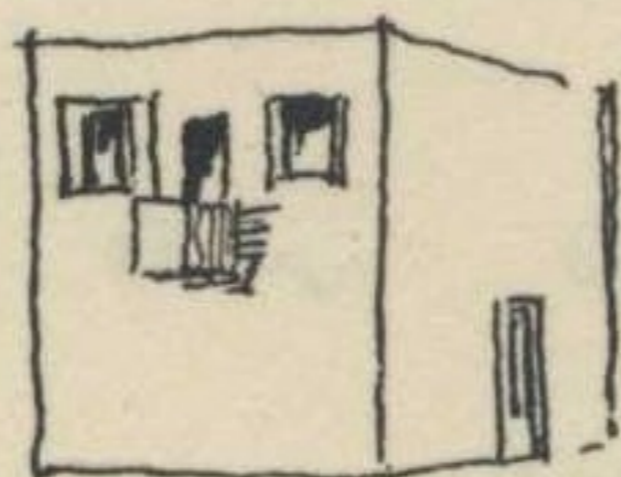
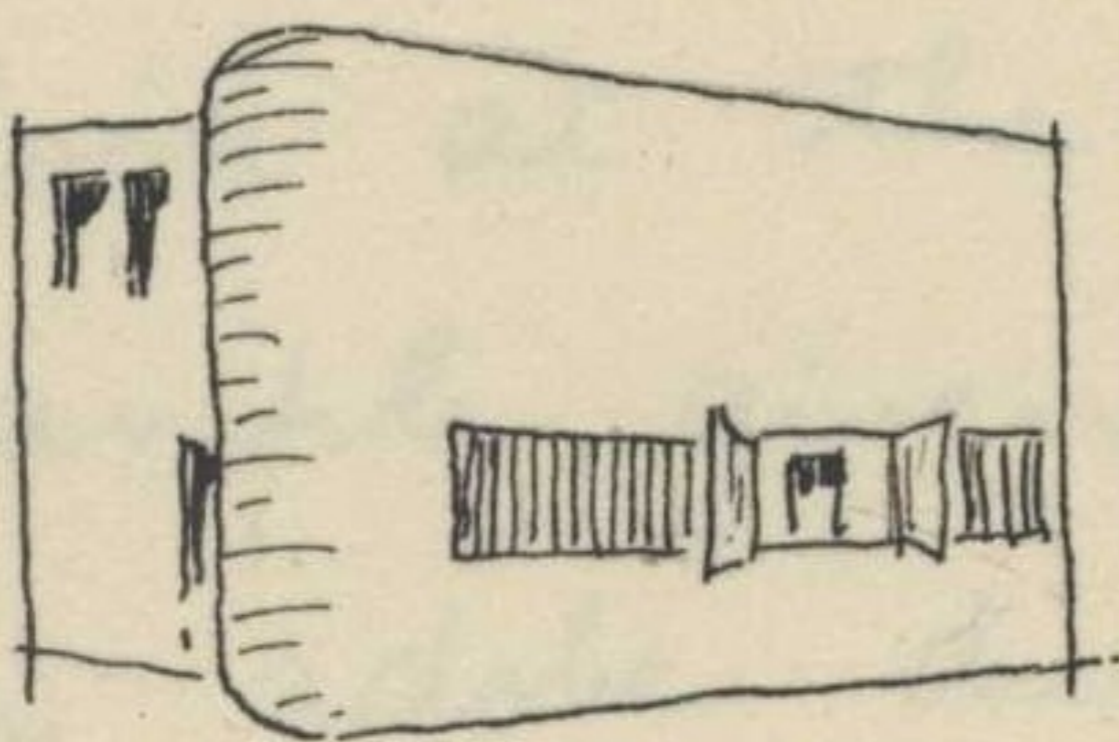
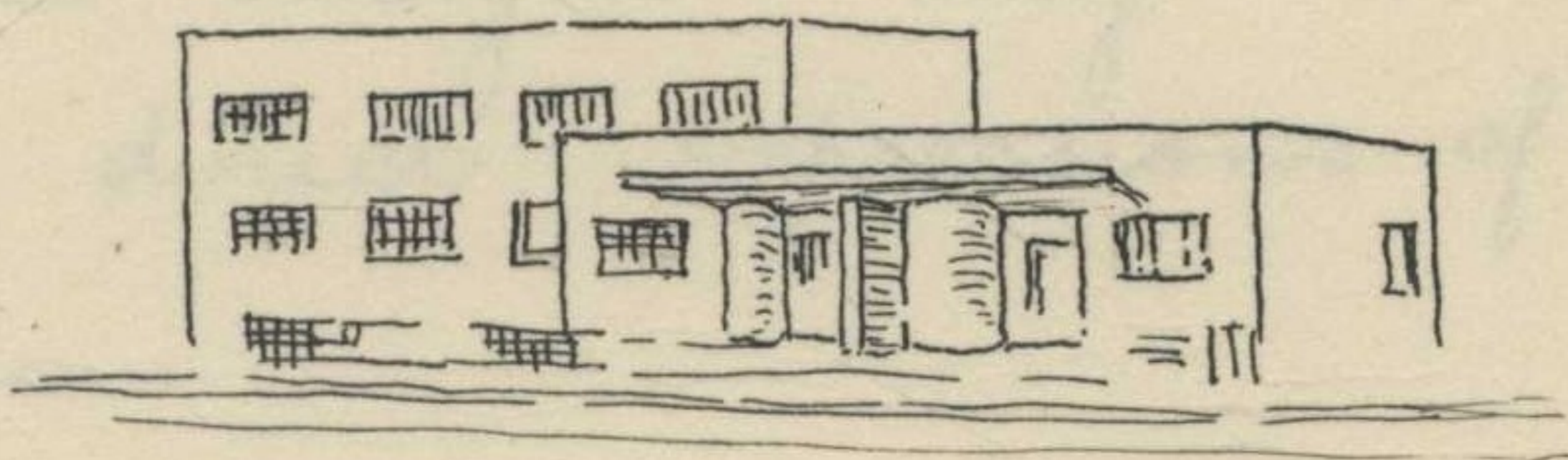
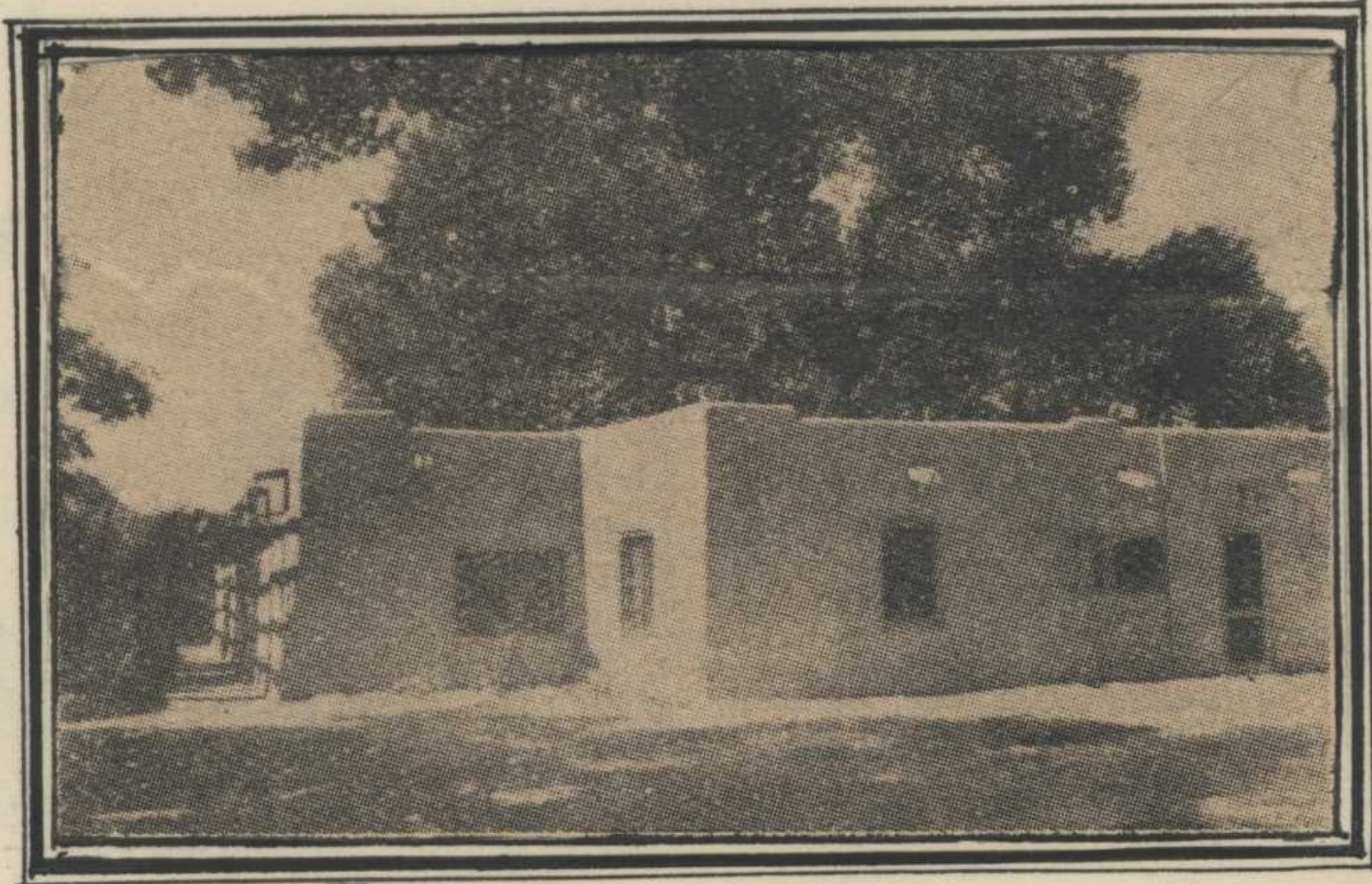
"A chair can have no soul", says Le Corbusier, "it is only a machine for sitting in." His idea seems to be that if something, be it a chair or a house, fulfils its object in the most economical and satisfactory manner, it must of necessity satisfy the eye as well. But a frying-pan and a dun-coloured medicine bottle both fulfil the first condition - yet neither could be said to rest by its very efficiency the eye that gazes on it. Even the most primitive Egyptian cave-dweller tried to obtain a fine curve in the line of his earthenware pot, whose utilitarian purpose was achieved once it was rendered capable of



ABOVE - MEXICAN ADOBE HOUSE

BELOW - SOME CORBUSIER DESIGNS



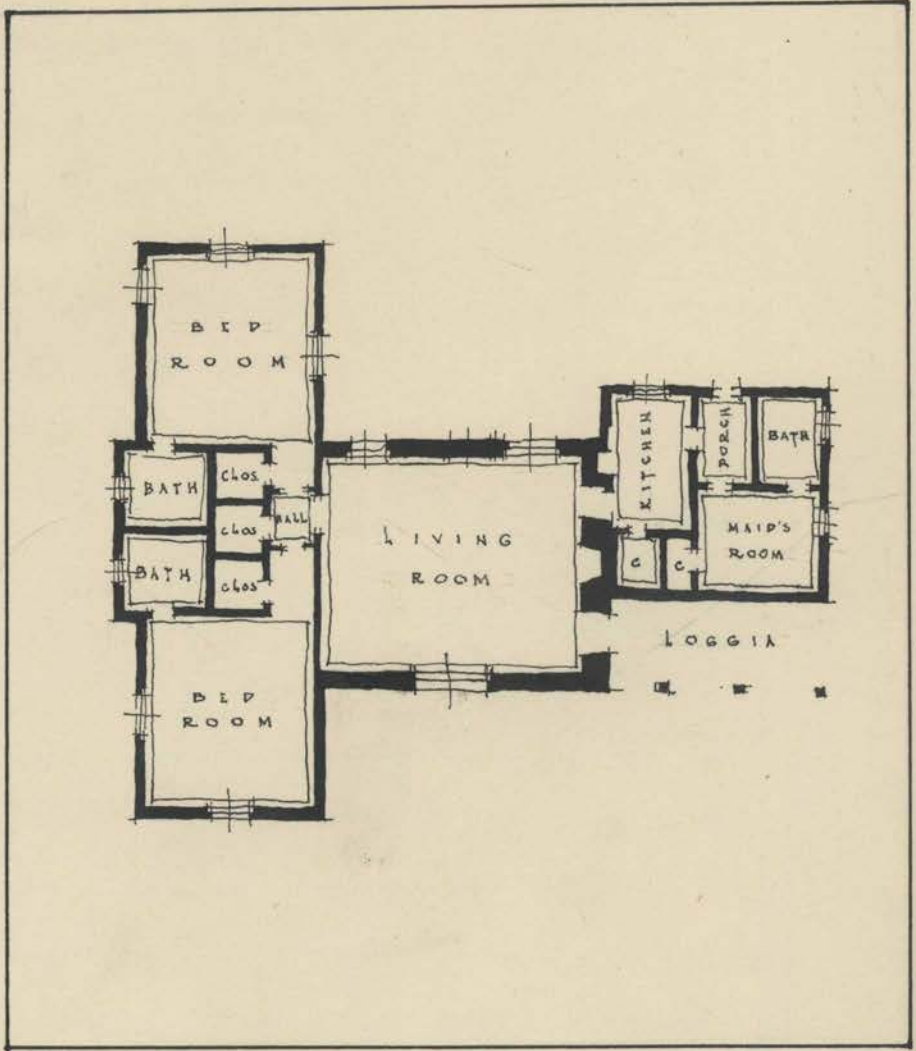


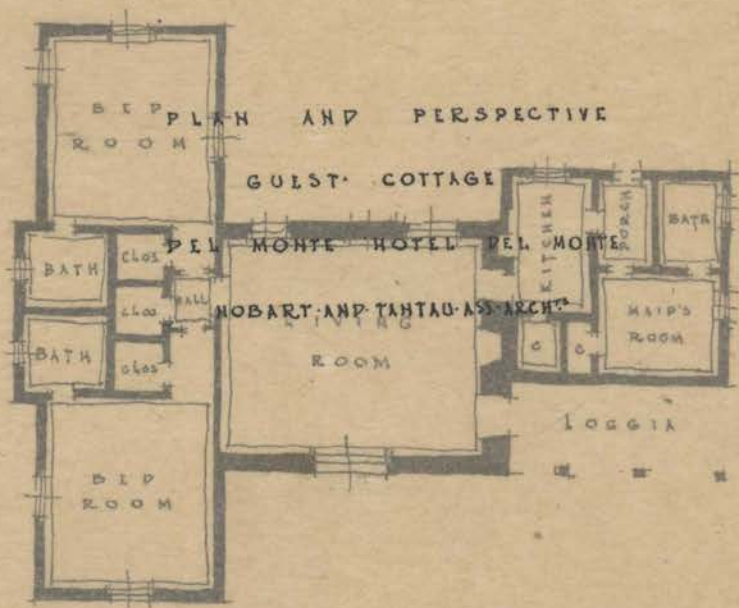
holding water, whether its shape were round, square or oblong.

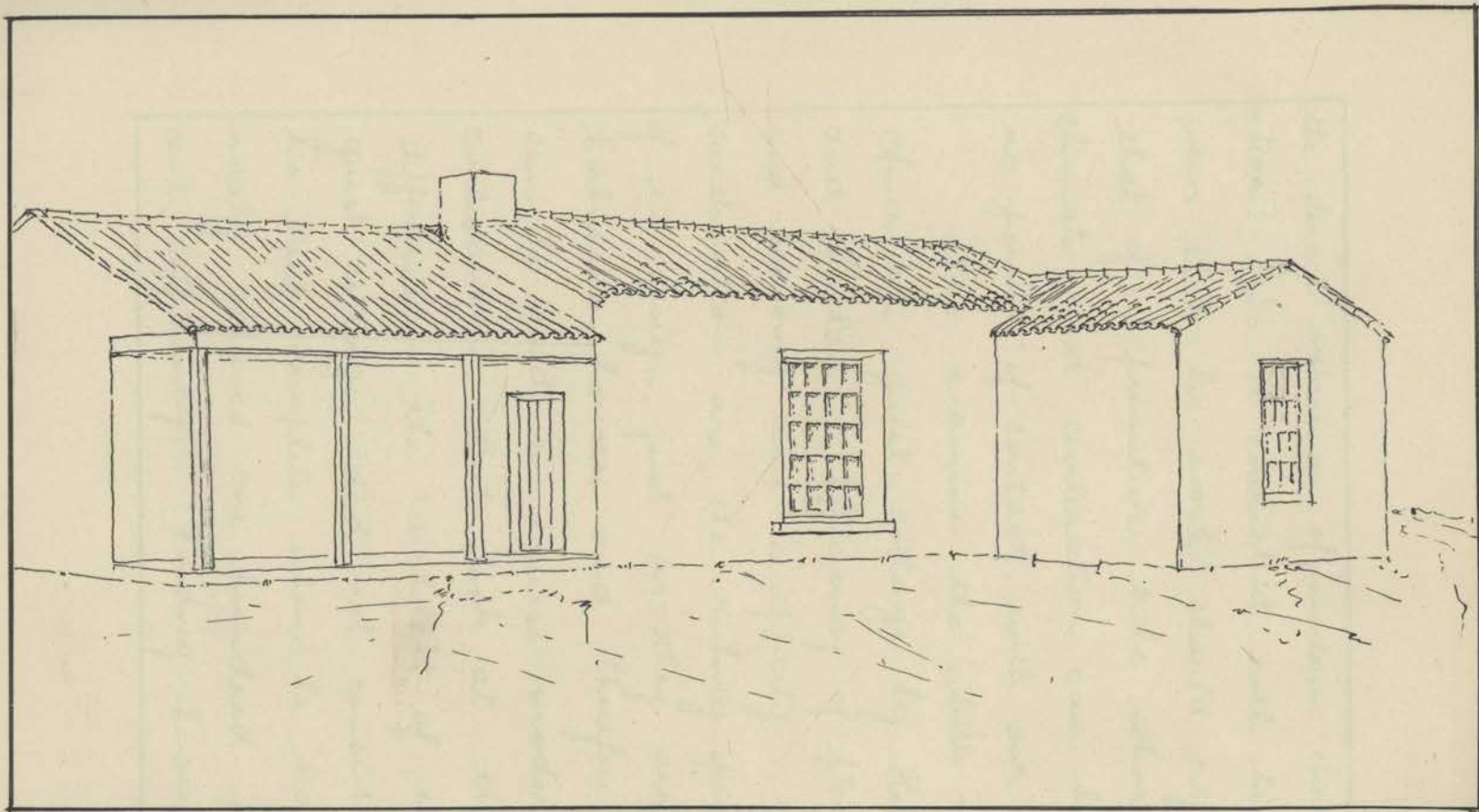
Concrete is the material which Corbusier would see universally used, for walls, floors and roofs; consequently we have our masses of box-like outlines, with flat roofs. Economy and efficiency are his watchwords, his house designs being in his opinion direct expressions of modern civilisation.

Now look at one of his designs - and look at the same time at the example given of an ancient Mexican adobe dwelling, belonging to one of America's primitive tribes.

With the addition of a few more windows the Mexican house would pass for Corbusier's. Is this, then, Corbusier's new form, new architecture,







the direct expression of modern civilisation? Is it consistent with his own views that his work should reflect that of a primitive tribe whose climate and civilisation can have no points of contact with our own?

Now examine the little modern American guest cottage by Hobart and Santau. Efficiency of planning, and economy and simplicity of construction are the ruling principles of its design, just as they are of Le Corbusier's houses, and therefore it can be said to express modern civilisation. But look at the difference - the architect of the guest cottage did not consider his task complete when he had merely achieved one hundred per cent efficiency. Finding himself

designing for a sunny land, he definitely turned to the countries of the Mediterranean for assistance.

And the result certainly creates a sense of beauty, as well as being true to itself and to its civilisation.

There are no new forms to be found in the world. But other things make for beauty as well as fineness of form. And two of these other things have been much neglected of late - namely, texture and colour. Instead of striving to find new forms and then discovering that they are not new after all, let men build simply and naturally in the material they are using, perhaps adapting for their forms the most perfect examples from previous days

which approach their own conditions.

Then let them turn their energies to experimental work with colour and texture in that particular material.

Concrete used as it is to-day is definitely a new material; the Romans certainly employed it, but only for carcasing; it was always covered afterwards with marble or brick.

Economy to-day is driving us to use it for the wall surface itself. We have seen that the

natural forms for concrete are not new, having already been used many centuries ago. But the poss-

ibilities of colour and texture in concrete have never been exploited, since the material has not before been employed where it is visible.

Some decorative treatments have

already been discovered, but there must be many more.

Terra-cotta is another example.

This is not a new material, having been used by the Persians in the third century before Christ. But many new colours have been perfected during the last few years, while new textures are brought into being by design or by an accident in firing with every new building erected in this medium.

Consider brickwork also.

Beautiful bricks have been produced in the past, and although recently many improvements in brickmaking machinery have been effected, all progress has been journeying towards a false goal.

Energies have been directed to evolving a hard, shiny, uniformly

coloured black brick, without texture, without interest. Now let all our improvements, all our latest machinery, be turned to account by concentrating on producing beautiful bricks instead.

There must be many colour and texture ranges which have not yet been explored.

Another material whose use becomes possible with modern steel-framing is metal. Sheet-metal seems very adaptable for use in curtain walls, and since insulation is required against extremes of heat and cold, experiment with various materials can be carried out in this direction.

And coming down to a material which should be extensively used for domestic work, surely all

possible textures and colours for cement rendering walls have not yet been discovered? We have already many more methods of texturing than were known in Italy and Spain, where the material was most commonly used, and there are many colours which have not yet even been tried for tinting the wall surface.

Every age should add its quota towards evolving a perfect civilisation; let our contribution towards a perfect architecture be valuable knowledge on the possibilities of colour and texture. Perfection or any approach to it can never be achieved if each generation breaks the thread of tradition and turns in a different direction. A new architecture

cannot spring fully developed from the old like Minerva from the head of Zeus. And the plan and general arrangements of a Greek temple had been the same for exactly one hundred years before the Parthenon was built. Patience and Progress go hand in hand.

The top of the Hill of Perfection is ever kept before our eyes, and ever drawn a little farther away as we press towards it, for the joy of battle is always greater than the joy of attainment. And when we cast aside the staff of tradition which has been guiding our footsteps, and attempt to turn onto a different track without it, we slip back into the valley again, and the top of

the hill is farther off than ever.

Some idea of the backsliding caused by a disregard of former successes can be obtained by studying the domestic architecture of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries.

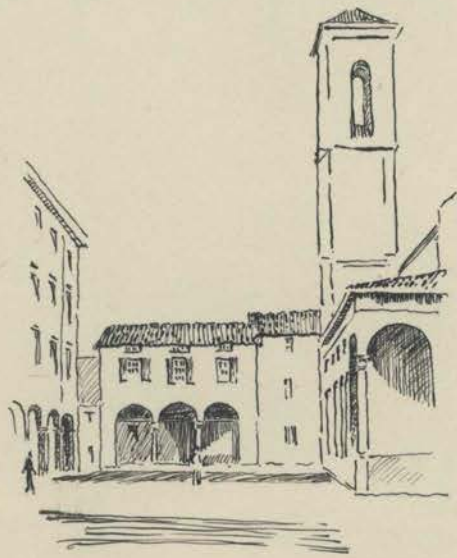
Homes were never built by an architect; comfort and convenience were disregarded; it was not worth while making any studies of other examples in order to produce successful elevations.

Plans and elevations were both untidy. Then came a reaction, due in the first place to the advent of the domestic service problem, for when wives began to do their own housekeeping homes had at once to become smaller and more compact. Gradually too the

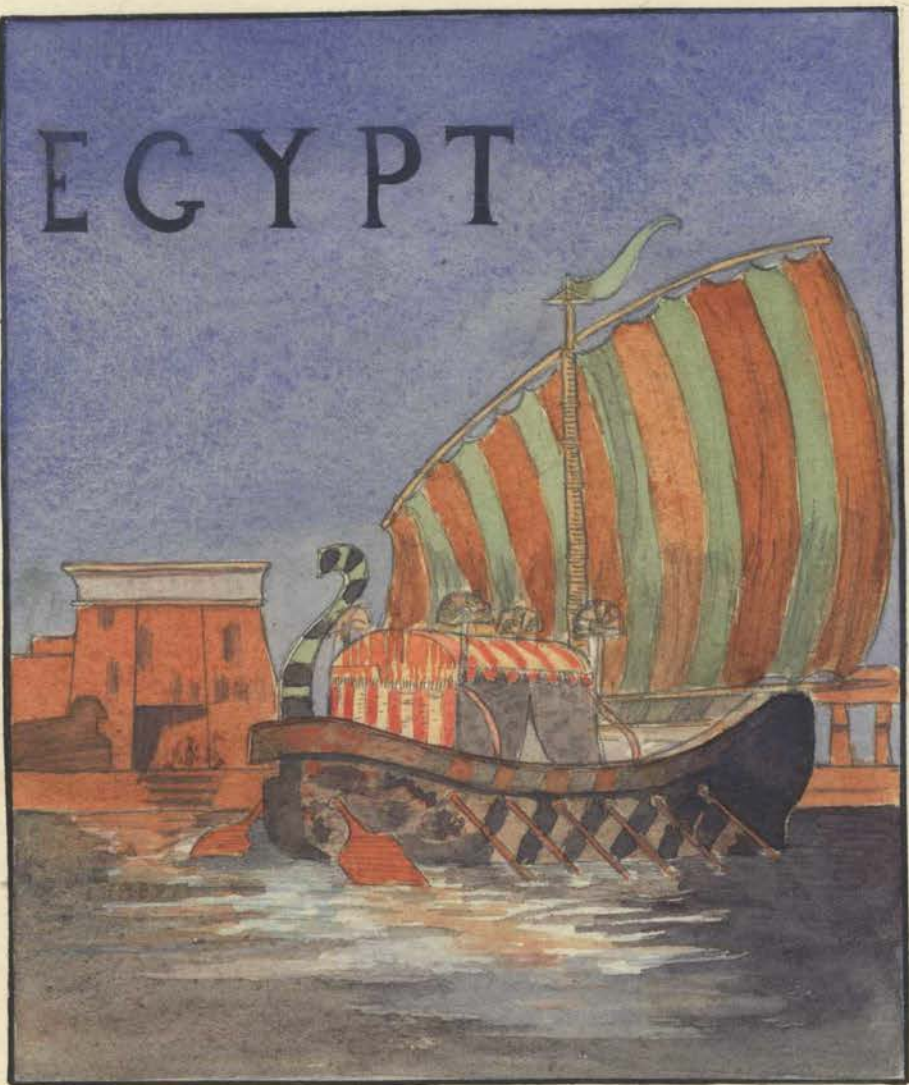
architect began to be recognised as a specialist in homes as well as in larger buildings - though even to-day this movement is by no means complete. Still, people are discovering that the action of going to an architect brings to bear on the plan a great amount of careful study.

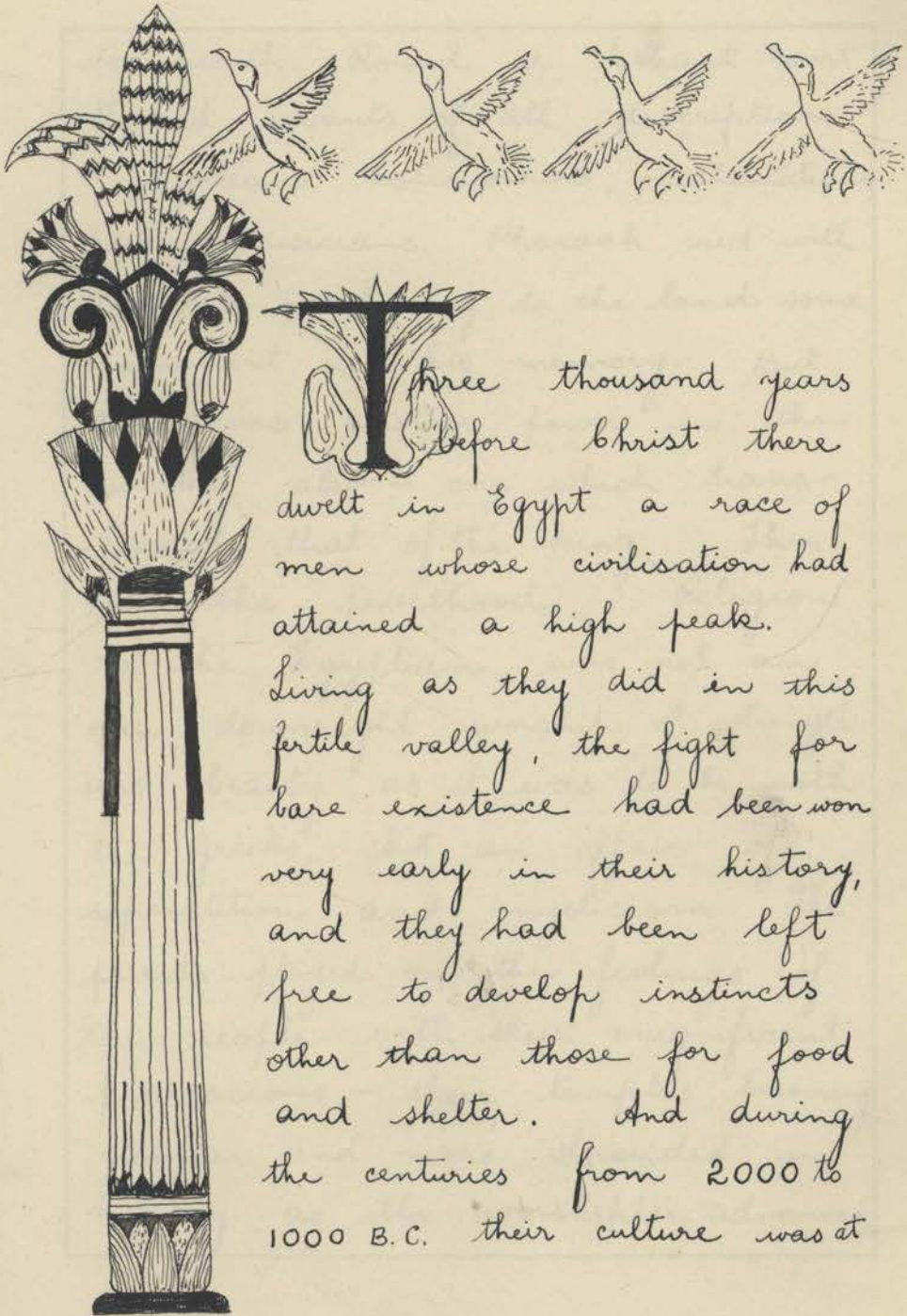
And while the leading architects of to-day, - men who do give great thought to the evolution of a perfect plan, - are satisfied that they can do their plans most justice in the resultant elevations by turning to the past for inspiration, while they prove their beliefs by the buildings which they design, it is not for a small minority to stand

out against them and say that
'style is dead.'



EGYPT





Three thousand years before Christ there dwelt in Egypt a race of men whose civilisation had attained a high peak. Living as they did in this fertile valley, the fight for bare existence had been won very early in their history, and they had been left free to develop instincts other than those for food and shelter. And during the centuries from 2000 to 1000 B.C. their culture was at

its zenith. Round a brilliant court
flocked savants of all descriptions
- physicians, astronomers, mathematicians,
poets, musicians. Pharoah vied with
Pharoah in leaving to the land some
monument in his memory. But
there was another power in the
country also - one which trans-
cended that of the king. This
was the priesthood. Religion
to the Egyptian was not an
open, downright worship of strength
and beauty, as it was to be with
the Greeks, but an affair of
superstition and mysticism. The
priests played on the feelings of
the people with their magnificent
processions, - their temples, becoming
gloomier and more shrouded in
mystery as the worshipper advanced

towards the Sanctuary of Sanctuaries. The main teaching of this religion was that death was the most important event in life - in fact, all life must be spent in preparation for it. Immediately the breath had left its body, the Egyptian soul must stand in judgment before Ra, the Sun-god, ruler of the gods; the dead man's heart was weighed in the balance, and if he had led an upright and righteous life, the soul was free to return to the body, which, with all its worldly belongings, passed across the Lily Lake to dwell in happiness in the Other World beyond the Sky.

But only those things could it take which were beside it

in the grave; the master could have no servants if their images were not buried with him; he could not hunt unless his spear lay by his mummied hand. And that mummy's body must remain un mutilated if the soul were not to limp in its new home.

For this reason, then, the Egyptian's tomb was to him far more important than his house, which was only a temporary resting-place; while the tomb had forever - to guard his mummy and its trappings from desecration.

Consequently we find the tombs built of everlasting granite and limestone, while the houses were of perishable sun-dried bricks. None of them remain to-day, even

in ruins, and what knowledge we have is pieced out from the illustrations on tombs and temples.

There were few large cities, apparently, the Egyptian preferring to live in small towns along the river-bank.

The crudest form of house was that of the peasant, consisting of palm branches or reeds woven together and covered with clay; the more pretentious houses were of brick, made of clay and chopped straw and dried in the sun.

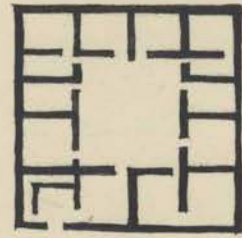
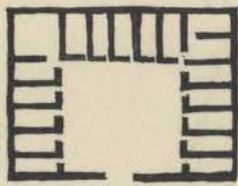
Wood was used, but very occasionally — large trees were scarce in Egypt, while the clay and the labour for brickmaking abounded.

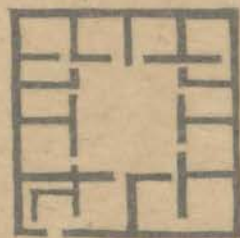
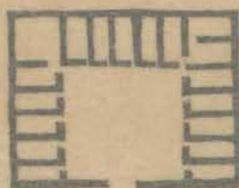
In addition to the instability of the material itself, the very climate which had helped the

Egyptian in the beginning now led to the ruin of his handiwork.

Egypt is a sunny land, where storms are unknown, and the only element from which man had to be protected was the sunshine. As a result, houses were built with very poor foundations, the ground often being merely levelled roughly under the walls, which were sixteen inches thick for the ordinary house, three feet or four feet for houses of several stories.

Poorer houses opened directly off the street, being often only on twelve or sixteen feet frontages. Those of the better classes, however, showed to the





TYPES
OF
EGYPTIAN PLANS

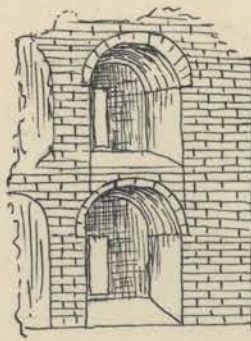
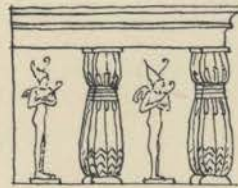


street a blank wall with a single opening, giving onto a shady court. Sometimes the house was on the far side of the court, with rooms opening off a long corridor; sometimes it was round three sides of the court.

Often, too, the court was entirely internal; the rooms along the street facade then had as few windows as possible onto the street, for the Egyptian prized privacy in domestic affairs.

Rooms were often lit only from the door, the few windows being small, high, and covered with a lattice of wooden bars.

Houses were generally two storied, an outdoor stair





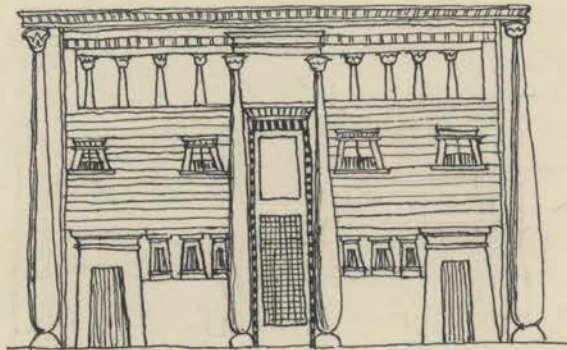
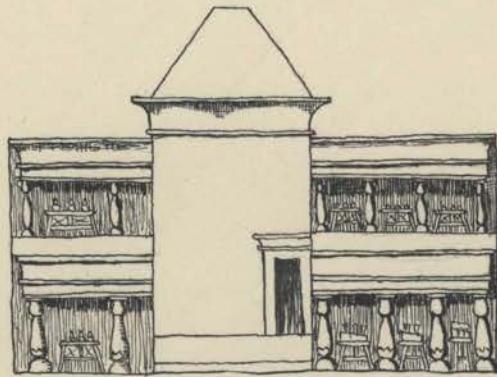
EGYPTIAN
PORCHES



VAULTING
SOMETIMES USED TO SUPPORT
SECOND FLOOR

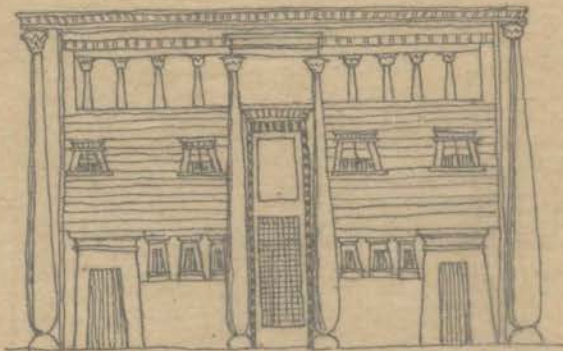
leading to the upper storey and thence to the roof, where a terrace garden offered a cool retreat on hot nights. Floors were of brick, or rammed earth; interior walls were colour washed in panels bordered with polychrome bands, while the ceilings were often enriched with intricate geometric patternings.

The exteriors were treated very simply, the street wall being finished with a roll and gorge, and the whole colour-washed, often in bright colours. This treatment again is a result of climate - in brilliant sunshine broad masses of simple colour are very effective, whereas in dull,





F A C A D E S



SHOWING ATTEMPT AT
ARCHITECTURAL TREATMENT
BY DIVISION INTO PARTS

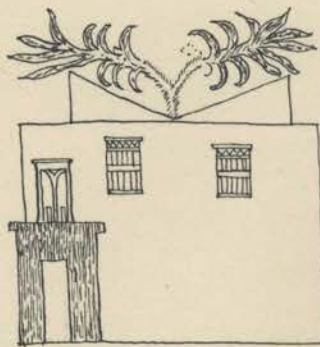
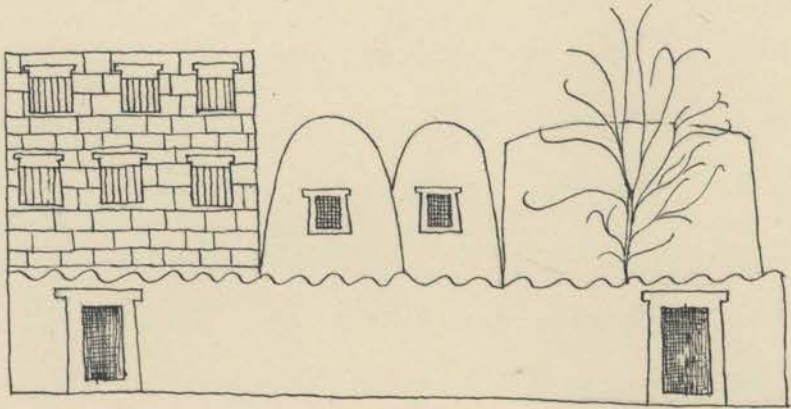
foggy lands they become garish. Sometimes the façades, particularly those of the houses of the wealthy, were enriched with slender colonnades of painted wood. These houses were generally set in extensive walled gardens, which irrigation raised to the pitch of perfection. Their façades were also made more elaborate by some effort to resolve the composition into parts, as in the illustration opposite. But the rooms were always small and dark, and the arrangement very similar to that of the smaller houses.

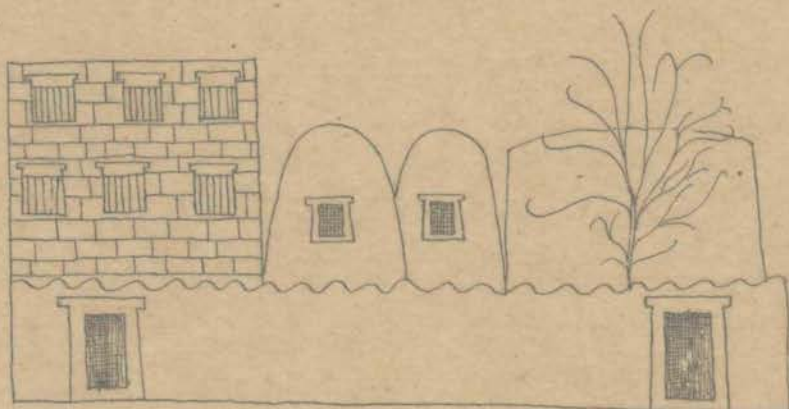
The chief thing of interest about the Egyptian house is the use of the courtyard. This

is essentially a feature of the national house in all hot climates; it is to be found later in the houses of Greece, Rome, Italy and Spain, and is correspondingly lacking in the small houses of the colder climates of England, France and Germany.

Egypt was a sunny land free from strong winds, and her courtyards afforded shelter from the sun only; in our own country they would afford shelter from sun and wind as well.

In Egypt also the value of shutting domestic quarters off from the street was realised; invariably a high wall sheltered the garden from the





FACAPES



ILLUSTRATING SMALL LATTICED
WINDOWS AND UNBROKEN WALLS
TO STREETS

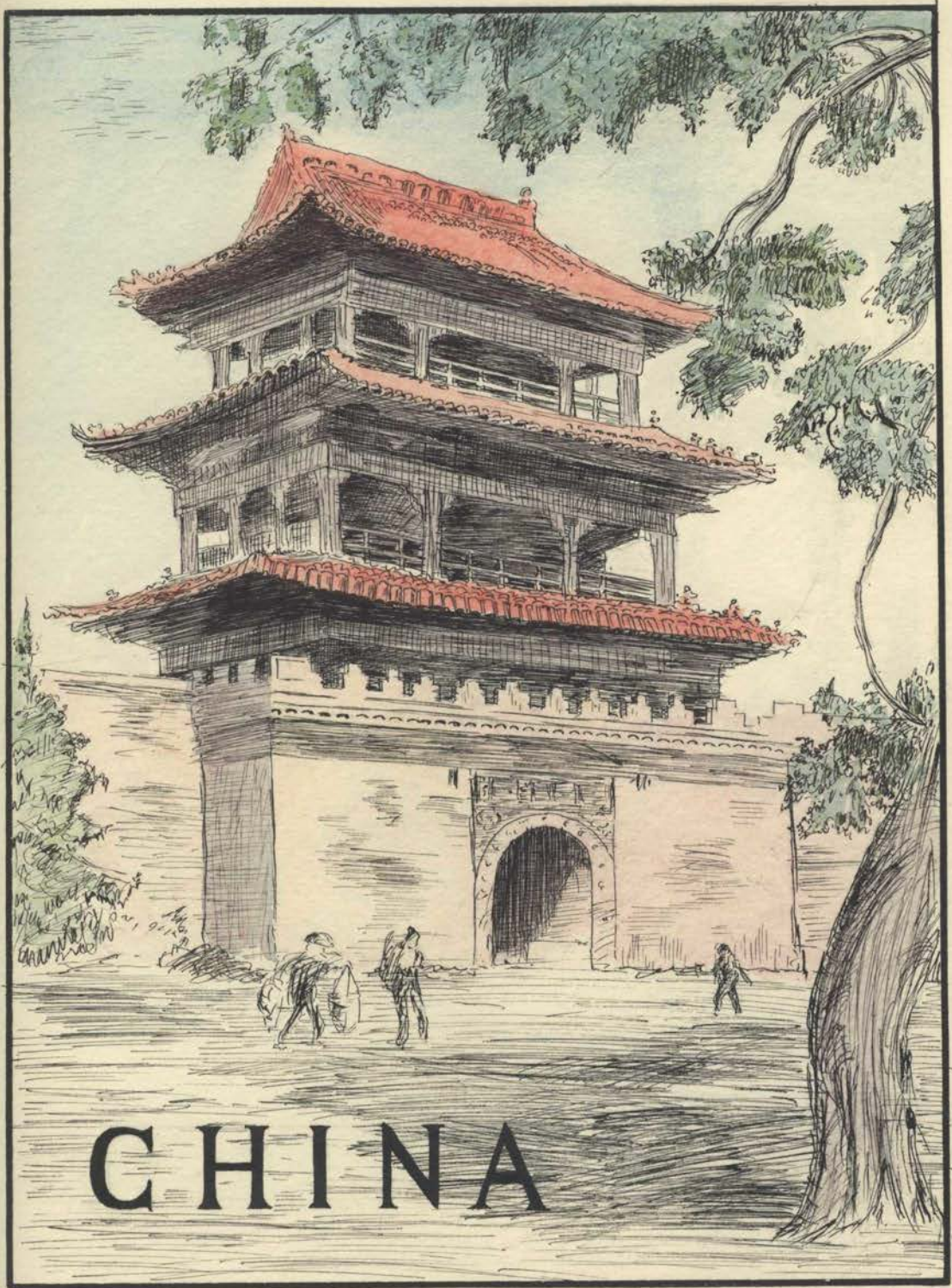
gaze of passers-by - this feature again we might adopt.

Apart from these two things, we have little to learn from Egyptian houses. The standards of living of that race were entirely different from our own - no-one to-day could breathe in the rooms in which they entertained, ate and slept.

It would be useless to-day to attempt to build an "Egyptian" house. To mention one point only, the whole character of the typical Egyptian elevation depends on its massiveness and paucity of openings. Our modern house could not be built without windows, consequently the Egyptian feeling is at once lost.

The lives and works of this ancient race are fascinating from an archaeological point of view, but they contribute practically nothing towards the solution of our modern problems.

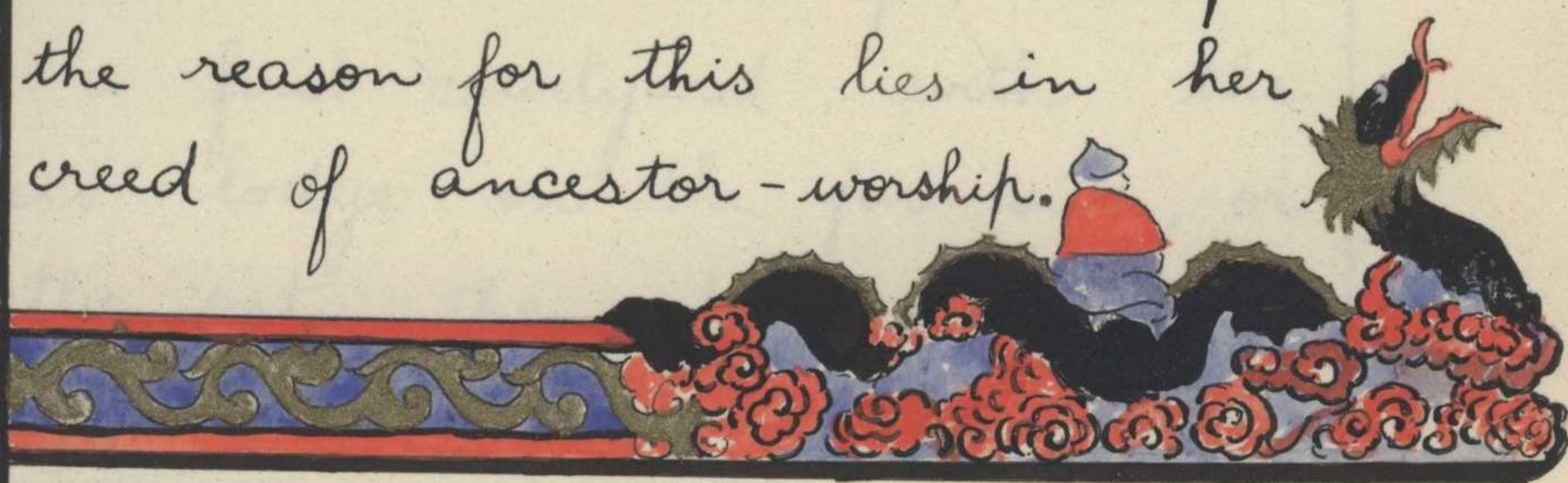




CHINA



often to-day the Westerner dismisses the subject of "John Chinaman" with a contemptuous shrug, forgetting that centuries before England had even received her name the Chinese had reached a high standard of civilization — forgetting that to the Chinese we owe such scientific achievements as the compass and gunpowder. But having developed her civilisation to a certain point, China for centuries has been at a standstill. Perhaps the reason for this lies in her creed of ancestor-worship.



One of the three souls of each Chinese who has gone "On High", flies to his "tablet", and his memory is kept green by the continual obeisance of his descendants before this memorial. Consequently, the same customs hold to-day which were in vogue centuries ago, and through these same centuries their buildings have not varied in character.

In plan the houses consist of a number of long, narrow single-storied units under separate roofs. In the cities a blank wall with a single entrance faces the street; this entrance opens either onto a first courtyard, with the porter's lodge on the far side, or directly onto the porter's lodge. Often the kitchen quarters are

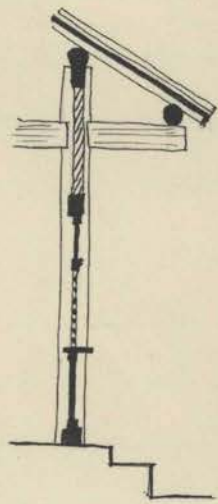
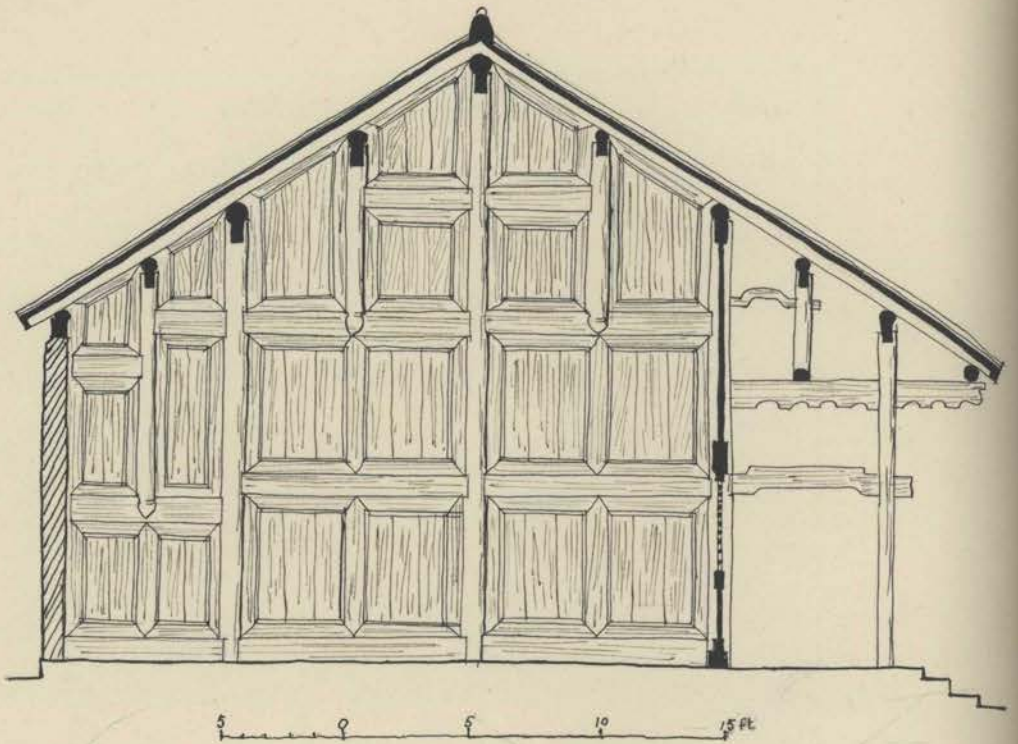
on the street or around the first courtyard. Through the porter's lodge is a court with the reception hall on the far side. This, as the most important room of the house, always if possible shows a blank wall to the north or "black" side, and faces the south.

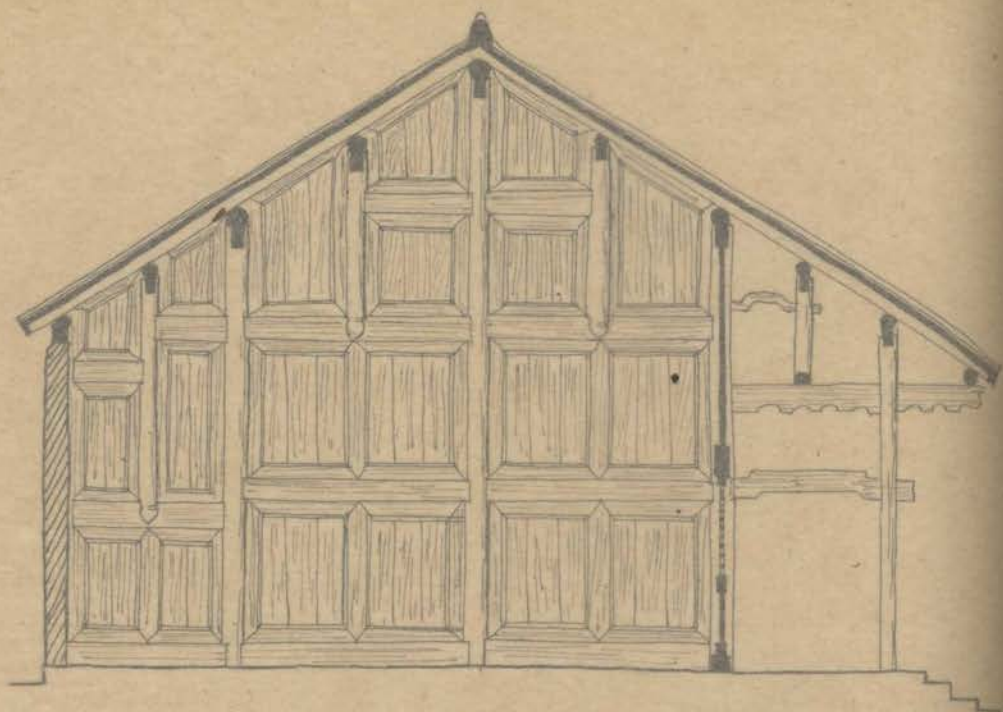
This custom, though possibly considered due to superstition, has its origin in sound common sense, for from the north (corresponding to our south) comes the bad weather — the cold winds and the snows of winter. We might well imitate this "superstition" of the Chinese and protect our own homes on the "black" side.

Through the reception chamber again is another court,

with the private quarters of the household; from this other courts open to right and left, their number depending on the wealth and rank of the owner. One court is exclusively for the women - the "flowery quarters" or the "pepper chamber."

Although in our country we do not require this great number of courts (we have not the ceremonious politeness of Chinese etiquette which demands the first reception court with its corresponding chamber, nor do our customs require the segregation of our women), yet the principle of arranging the units of the plan so as to give privacy and shelter in a courtyard is a sound one. Also, our greater





SECTIONS SHOWING

CHINESE CONSTRUCTION



knowledge of construction would enable us to throw the whole plan under one roof, instead of adopting the Chinese system of single simple roofs.

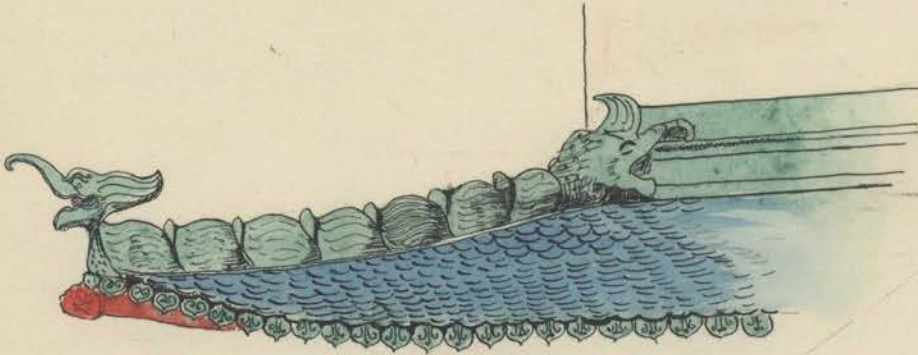
Simplicity is the keynote of Chinese construction. The section of the house never varies from the severe, almost tent-like outline, except perhaps by the addition of another and higher roof.

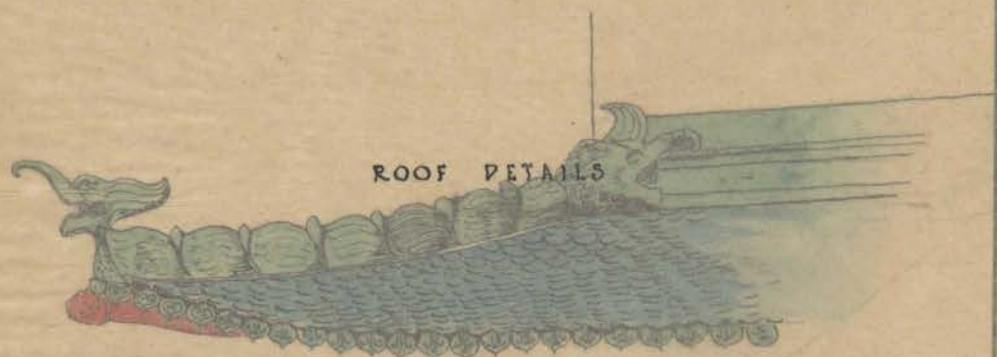
The Chinese apparently realised the paucity of interest in the lines and masses of their buildings, and strove to make up for this by providing interest in detail - we find roofs in particular richly decorated. This careful attention to detail is a national characteristic, and is

exhibited at every turn. One example is to be found in the thrift of the coolie farmer (who, incidentally, is supported on one sixth of an acre), who breeds fish for market in the water with which he is obliged to flood his rice-fields every season.

A great amount of the ornament of each house is lavished on the roof, which structurally is the most important feature. This is due to the fact that the country is subject to torrential rains, and steep roofs are essential to throw off the water. In Egypt, where rain was unknown, the roofs were invariably flat.

In summer, also, China is flooded with brilliant sunshine; consequently we find wide overhanging

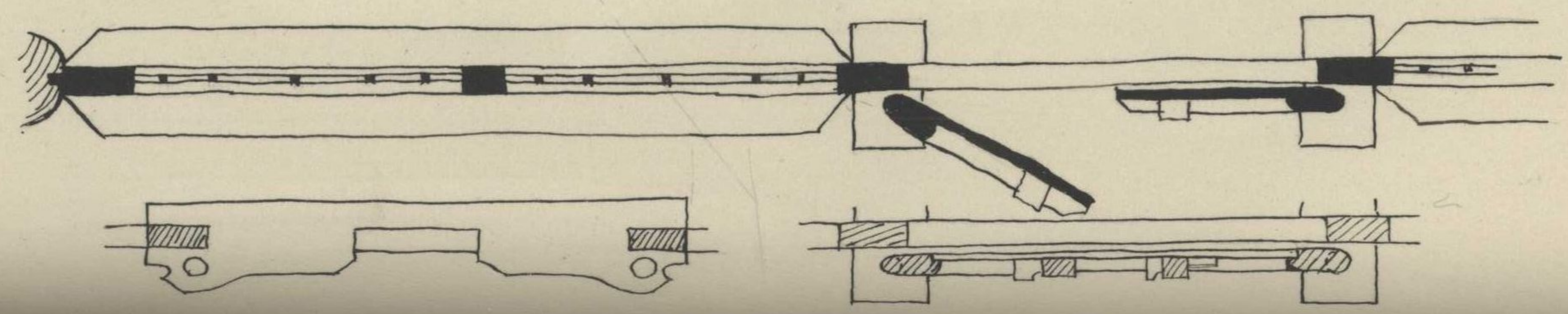
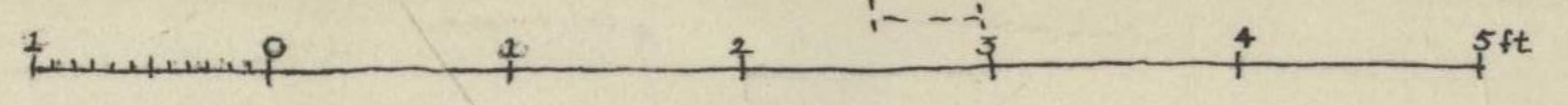
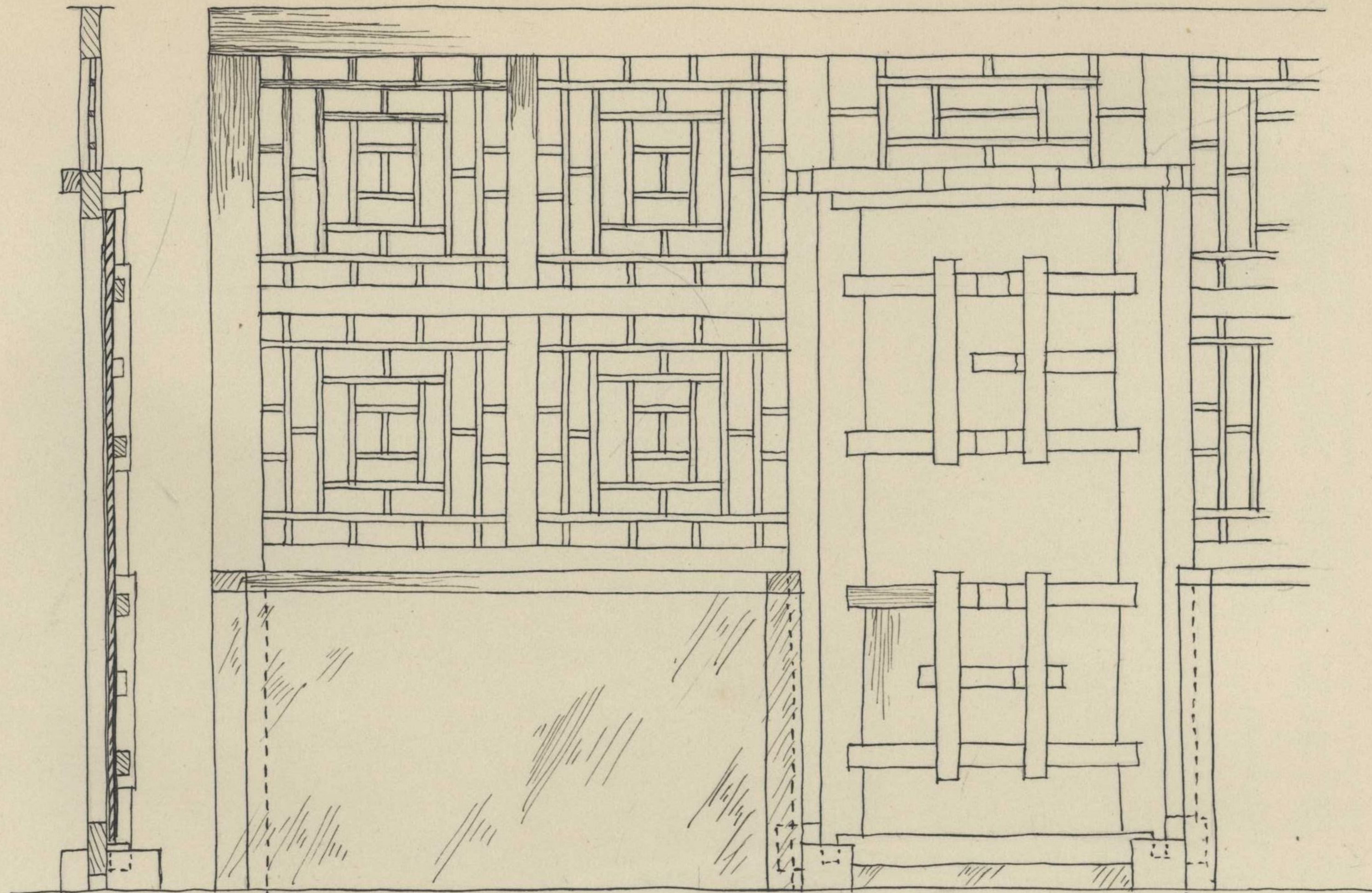


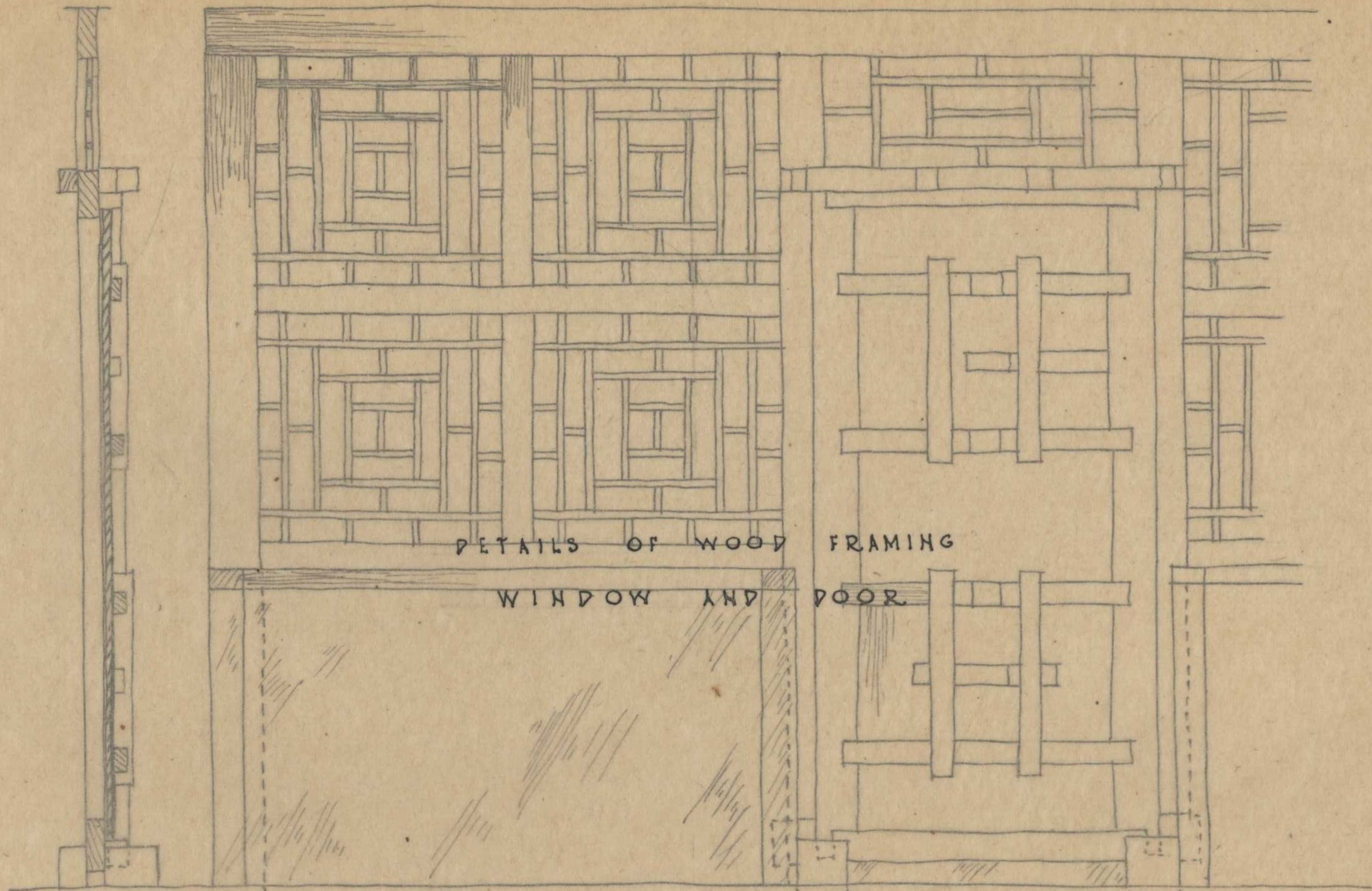


eaves to keep out the sun, which are, however, tilted up at the edges to let in the light.

The roofs are of tiles, coloured and glazed. Large deposits of porcelain clay are to be found in the country, and from earliest times the potter's art has been highly developed. Dragons, animals, figures of all descriptions sprawl along the hip lines and leer out at the eaves; porcelain beasts guard the gateways, and keep watch over the entrances to bridges.

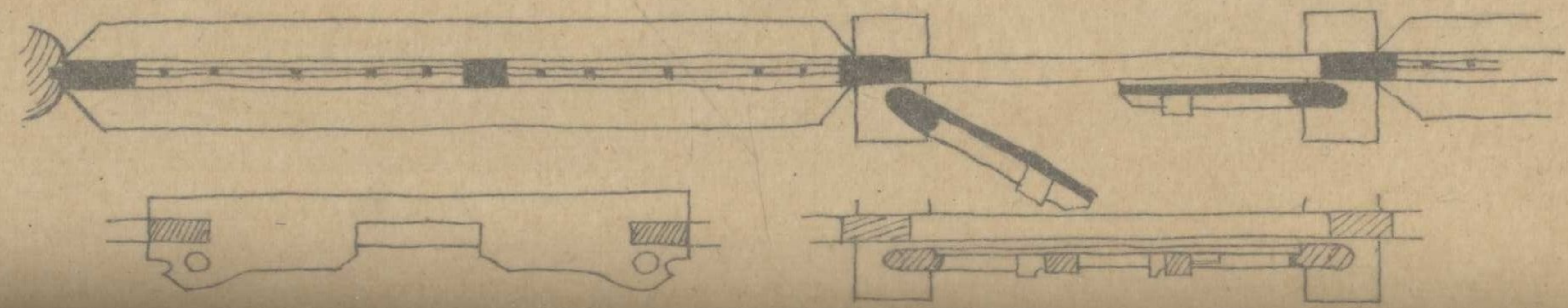
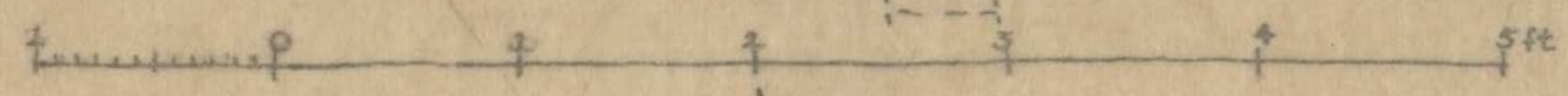
These steep and heavy roofs are carried on strong wooden posts, which are often richly gilt and painted; in the temples they are often unpainted trunks of "nanmu"





DETAILS OF WOOD FRAMING

WINDOW AND DOOR



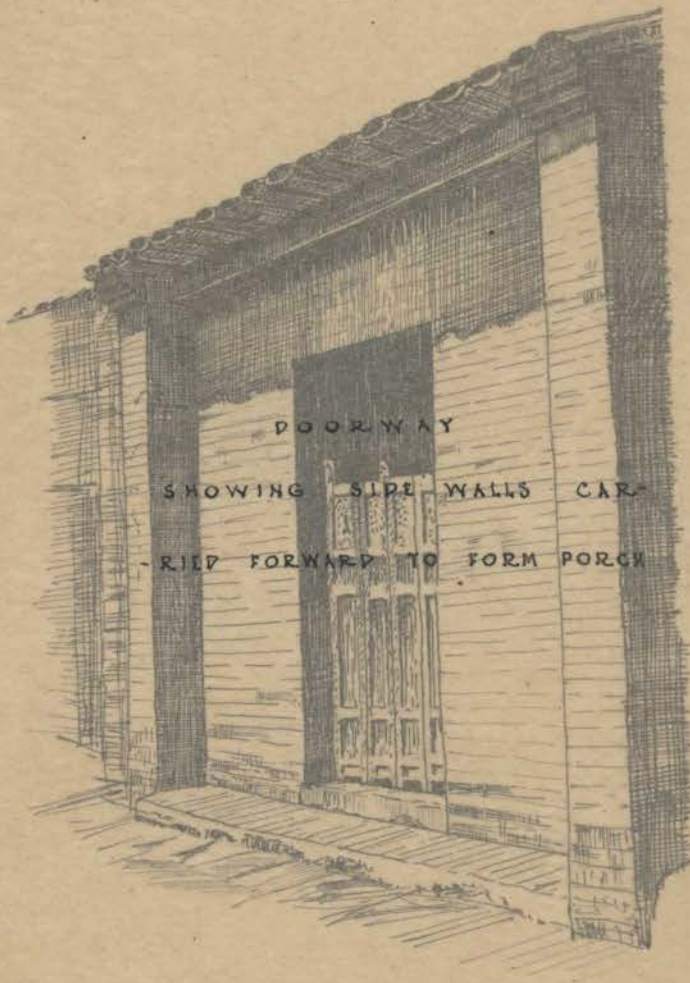
an aromatic timber which dries to a dead-leaf brown tint, and even centuries after being cut from the forests still breathes a faint fragrance.

Timber is the main structural material, because the country is rich in forests of bamboo and pine. Stone is used for city walls and for memorial arches, and occasionally for important buildings, while brick is sometimes used for the walls of houses and shops.

Between the timber posts curtain walls are built, sometimes of brick, sometimes of carved wood panels, sometimes of carved stone or marble.

The intricacy of the patterns is often marvellous - and incidentally should be a great inspiration for the ornament of to-day, which shows





DOORWAY

SHOWING SIDE WALLS CAR-

-RIED FORWARD TO FORM PORCH

a tendency to geometric patterning.

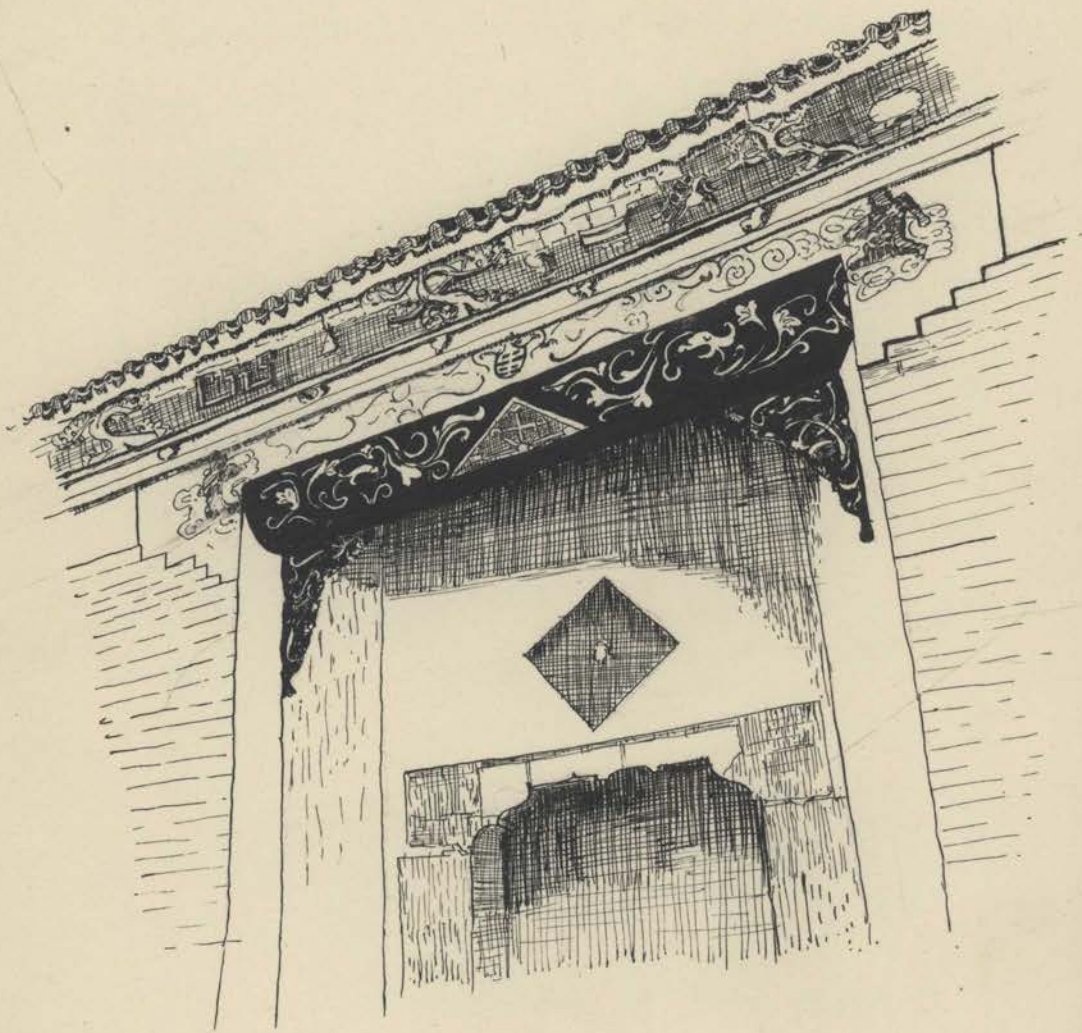
And is not the system of posts, with infillings of curtain walls, analagous to our own steel frames? From the Chinese houses we might adopt constructions and patterns for our curtain walls, capable of adding interest to the facades of our city buildings.

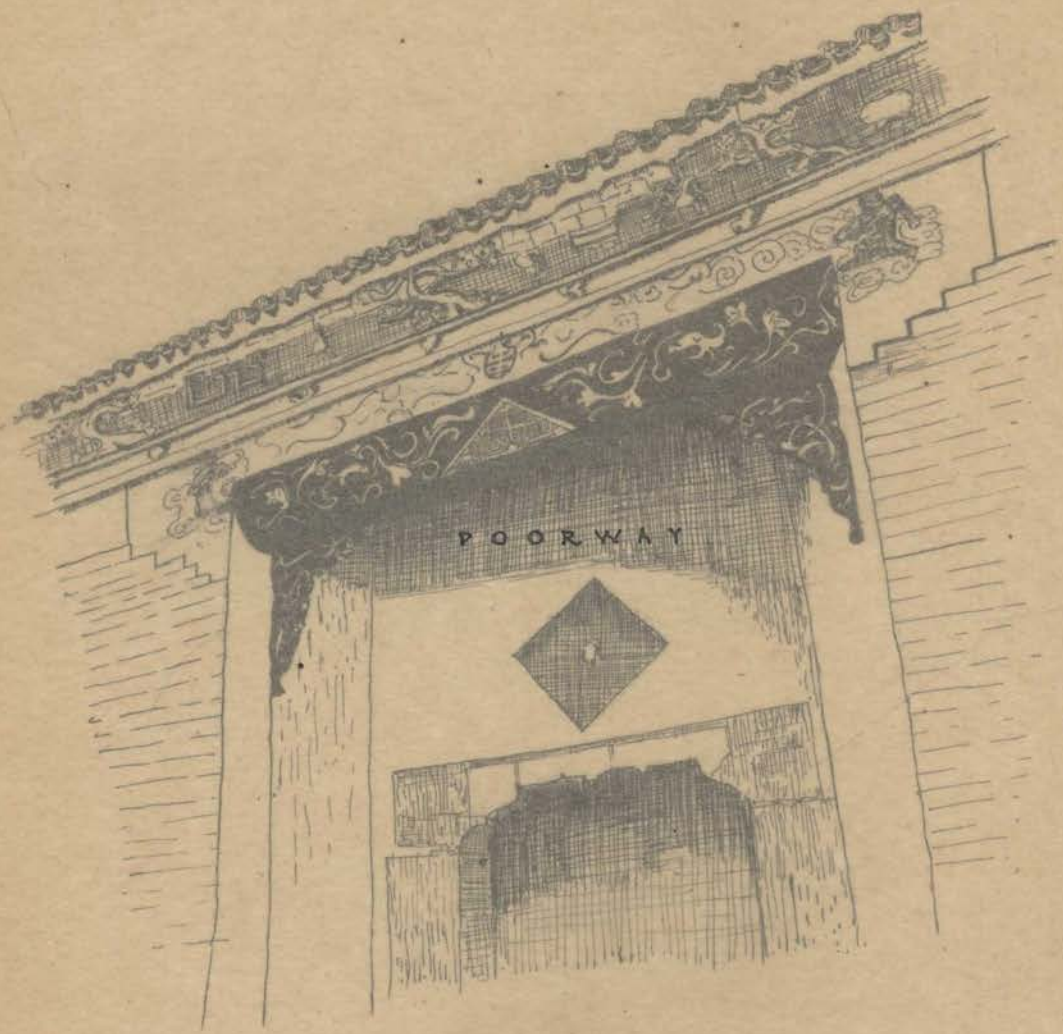
Generally in the houses only interior walls are richly treated in this manner, richness in exterior walls being reserved for temples.

In domestic work often only the entrance is treated, with perhaps a frieze under the eaves as well.

Sometimes the side walls are carried out so that the eaves may project even further and shelter the doorway.

The interior of a wealthy man's

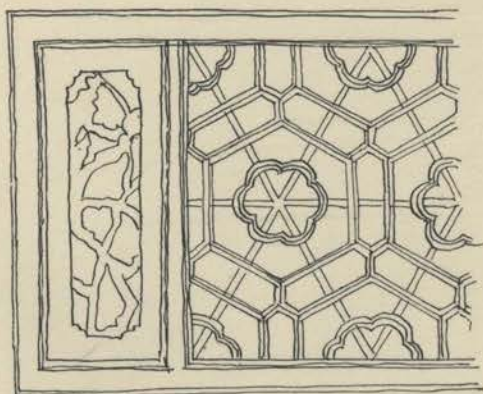
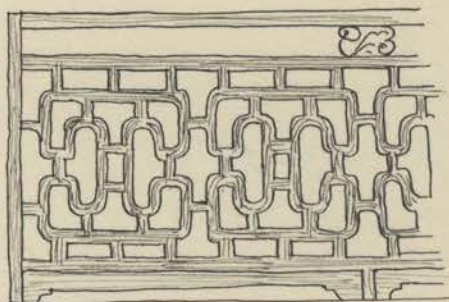
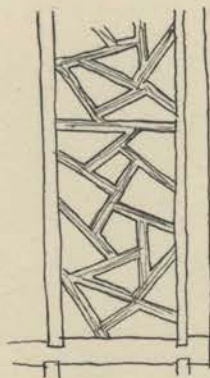
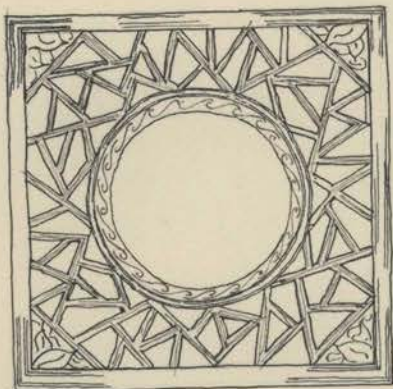


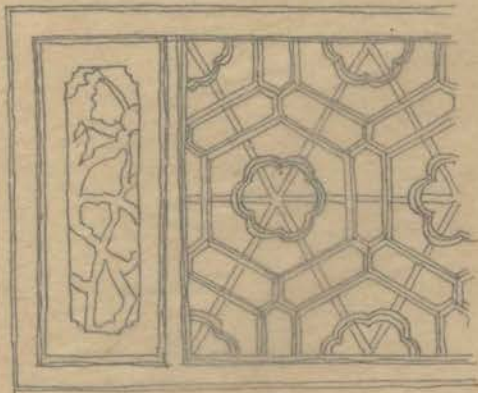
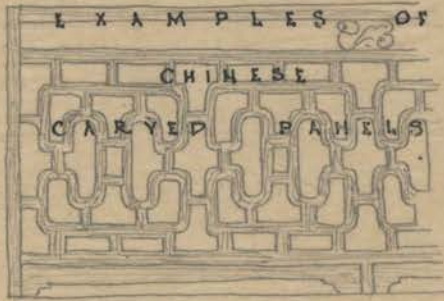
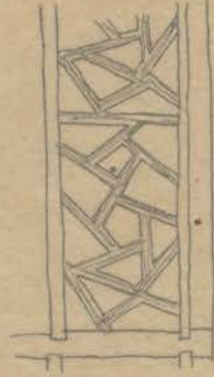
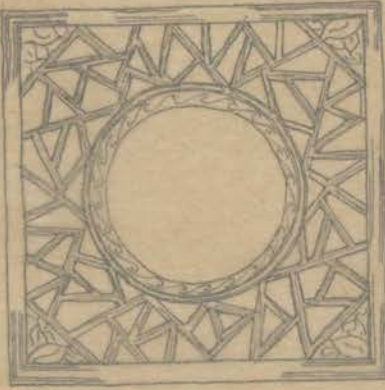


house is very rich. The floors are of red tiles a foot square, and are covered with rugs; the partitions are of fine wood carved and pierced; the walls, though often not plastered or papered, are hidden by embroidered hangings and paintings; cabinets display porcelain and rare bronzes.

For an integral part of the make-up of every Chinese is a love of the beautiful, be it the glory of a sunset or the charm of a bird on a bough, or the more artificial beauty of a painted scene, the wonder of a curve in porcelain.

Colour plays a most important part in Chinese architecture. One reason is the brilliance of her summer sunshine, for in all hot climates we find strong colours employed. But





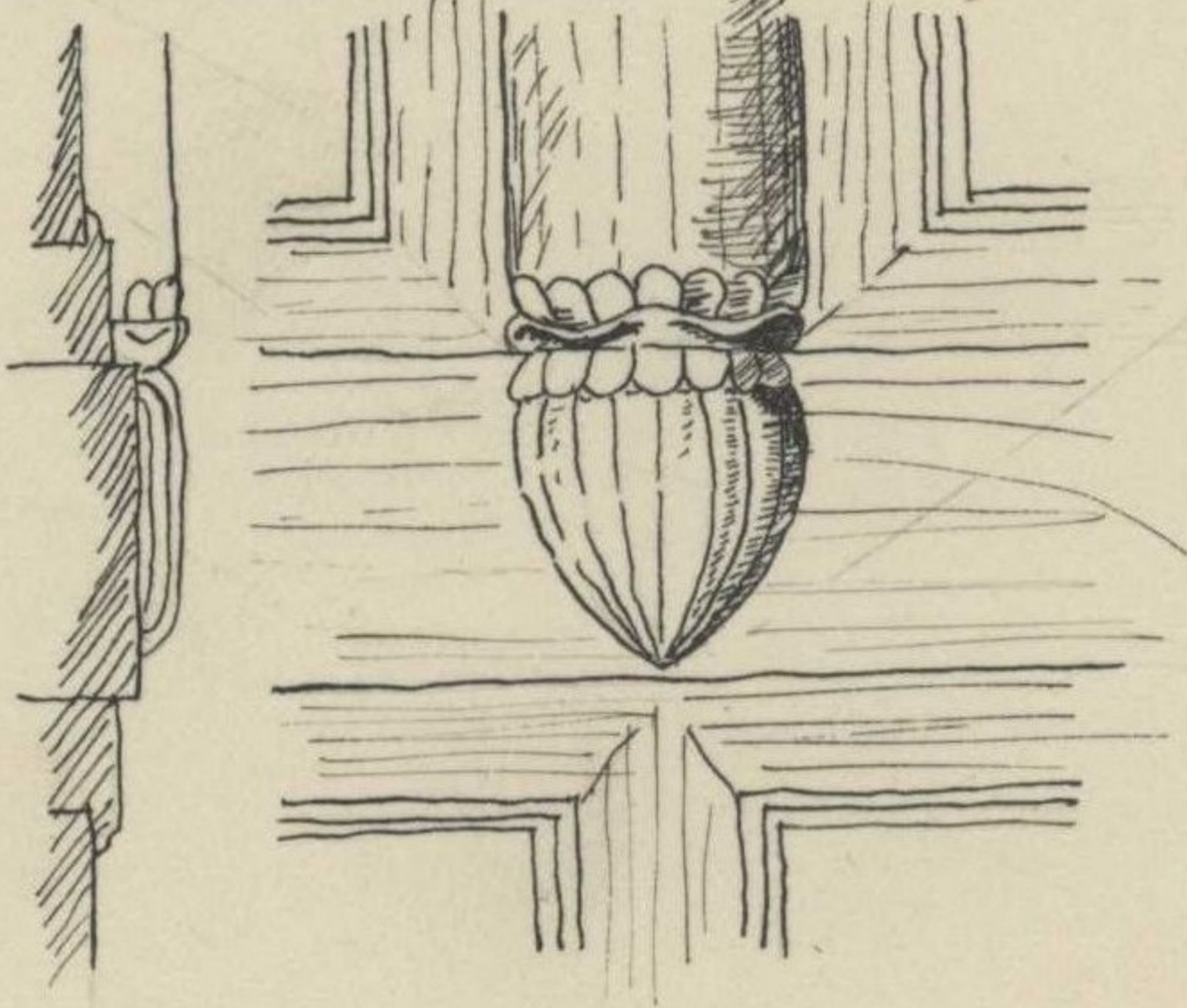
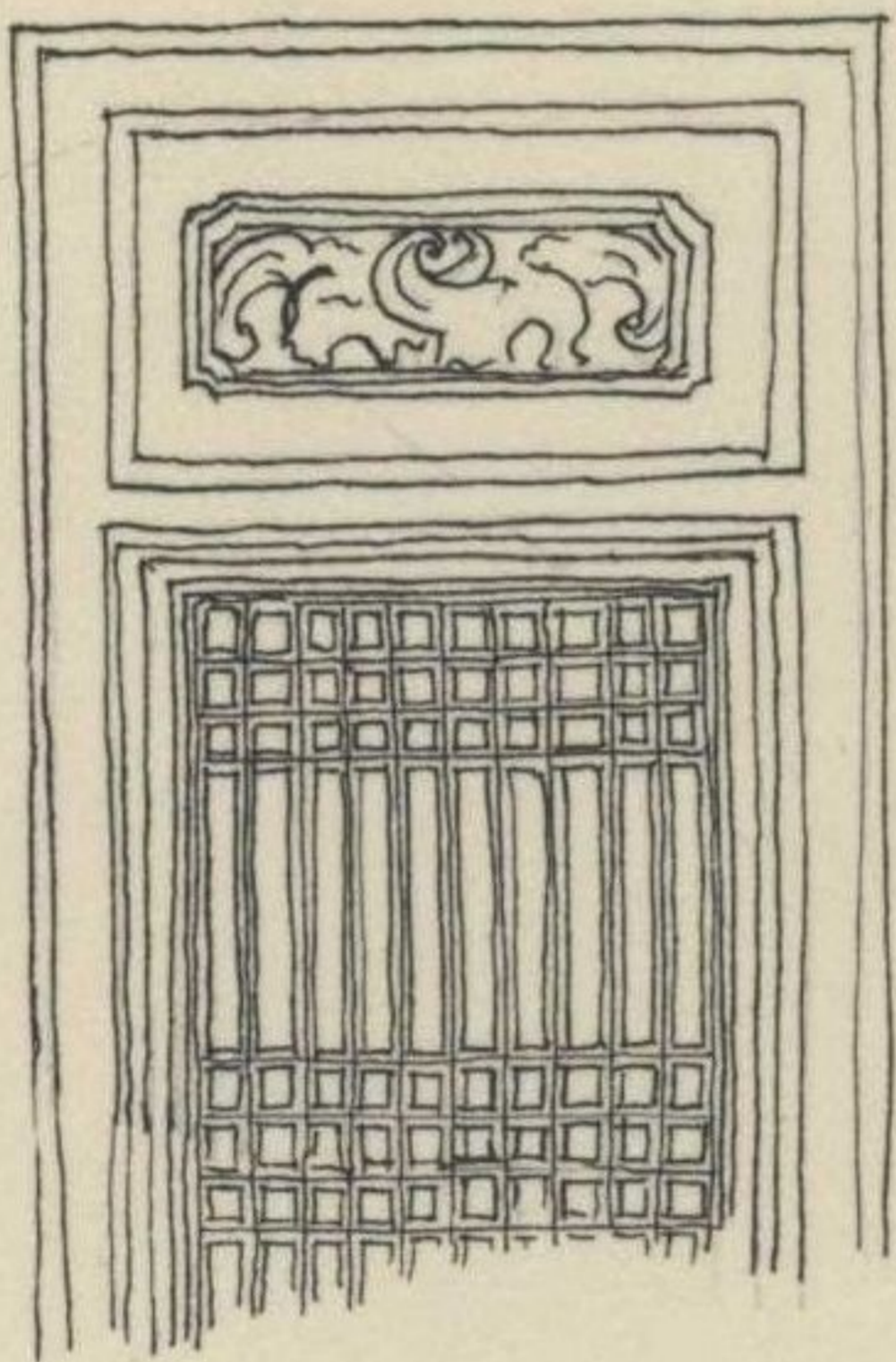
among the Chinese another reason also exists - colour there is highly symbolic. No-one but the emperor may wear yellow; white denotes mourning, while every deity has his own particular colour. Chi-Kuen-Sien, or the Temple of Heaven, near Peking, where the Emperor goes yearly each spring to make offerings for a good season, is an excellent example.

There the colour is blue - the building itself is covered with cobalt-blue glazed tiles, the sacrificial vessels are of blue porcelain, the worshippers are clad in blue brocade, while even the atmosphere is rendered blue by hanging blue glass venetian blinds in front of the window openings.

barring this symbolism into



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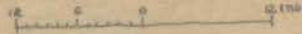
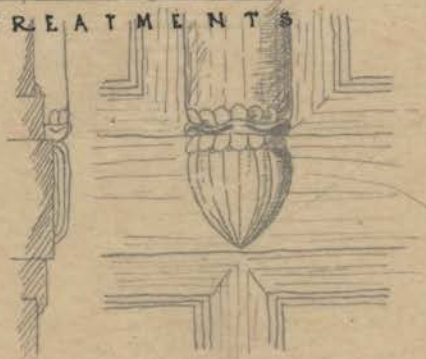


12 6 0 12 ins





WALL TREATMENTS



domestic work, a man's rank may be read by the colour of the tiles on his roof. The wooden columns are often painted red, because red is the colour of joy.

Of Chinese gardens a word must be said. Chinese womenfolk are kept very much at home, and, being great lovers of nature, the men strive to re-create some of nature's beauty for them within the bounds of their own gardens.

Streams with bridges, miniature mountains, ponds, rockeries - all are manufactured with the greatest care; great trees are grown, mantled with the lovely wistarid. The courtyards too are filled with sweet scented flowering vines and trees - a veritable paradise for those

who are not allowed to wander where these beauties can be found naturally.

Unfortunately during the last generation China has become Westernised. Her old customs are fast disappearing; all buildings now being erected are commonplace imitations of Western designs. The old charm of colour and riot of ornament are giving place to the colourless boxes of bricks with which we are so familiar. In the words of Li-Po, one of the greatest of China's poets:—

"We cannot keep the gold of yesterday;
To-day's dun clouds we cannot roll away,

I too have felt the wild-bird thrill of song
behind the bars,

'But these have brushed the world aside and
walked among the stars'

Unfortunately also there is in
our own land a craze for "Oriental
Art" - Chinese silks, fans, rugs,
decorative motifs. Some of it is good,
some bad; the bad has caused those
who have a vital interest in art to
eschew the whole, just as after the
Victorian age there was a reaction
against the use of mirrors in
interior decoration.

But as we may learn from
the Chinese the use of courtyards,
of colour, the simplicity of line, the
concentration of ornament, so
from the detail of that ornament
much inspiration for our own
may be gathered. We cannot
directly copy a Chinese house any

more than we can copy an Egyptian
one, but the spirit of Chinese beauty
can be wedded to our utilitarian
needs, until they

" Like to the one-winged birds, will
ever fly,

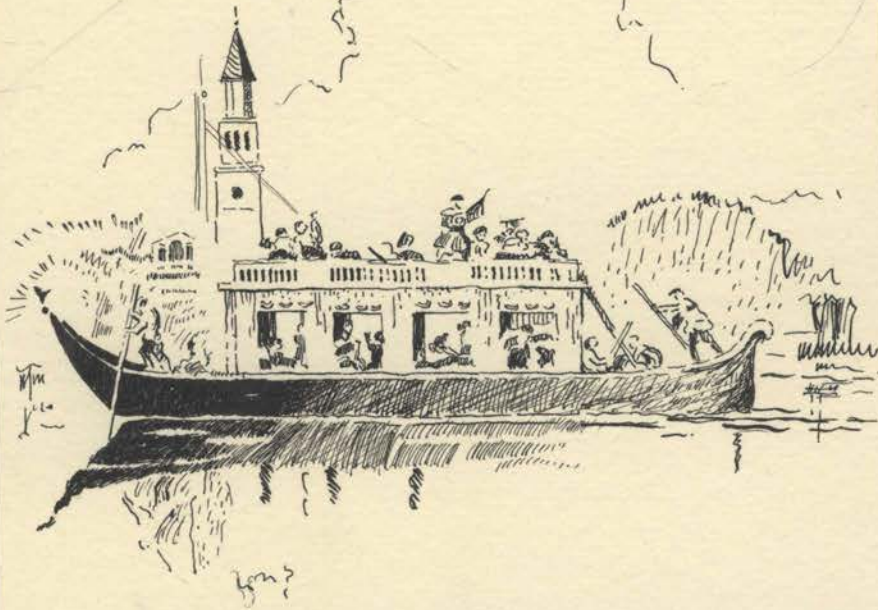
Or grow united as the tree whose
boughs,
are interwoven."

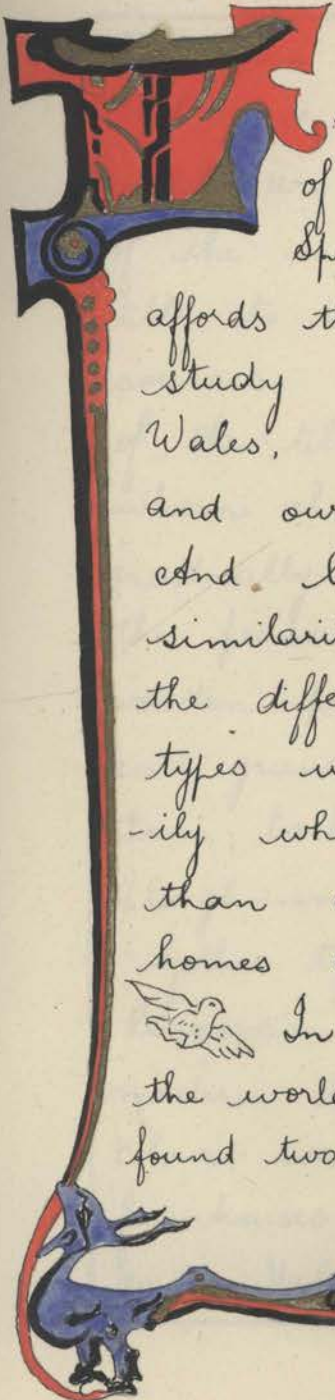


ITALY

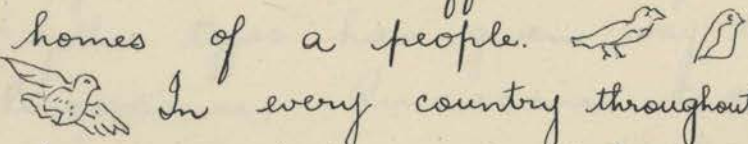
AND

SPAIN





The domestic architecture of the two countries of Spain and Italy perhaps affords the best ground for study in New South Wales, since their climates and our own are similar. And by comparing the similarities and contrasting the differences between the two types we may see more readily what considerations other than climate affect the homes of a people.



In every country throughout the world's history might be found two classes of people.



One class consists of the dwellers in cities and towns, who in all phases of life are swayed by the fashions of the moment, and are susceptible to influences from outside sources. The other is formed of the tillers of the soil, among whom changes take place far more gradually. In parts of Italy to-day the peasants still employ the old wooden ploughshare which their fathers and grandfathers have used before them, back to the days when the ploughmen were the slaves of Rome. Gothic types have given way to Renaissance, Renaissance to the modern chaos, yet in the little colour-washed villages and scattered farmhouses among the hills of Spain and Italy the peasant is still

content to use the same materials in the same way.

Before comparing the architecture of the two countries, however, some comparison of their histories must be made.

The most important factor in the study of Italian history is the presence of Rome - Rome was the glorious head of the ancient world, and Italy has never been entirely freed from the influence of her power. During the middle ages classic architecture in other countries was entirely replaced by Gothic, but in Italy it remained side by side with the new forms, mingling with them, perhaps, but keeping classic tradition strongly to the fore. Consequently it was

easy for the Renaissance to gain ground in Italy - it was merely a matter of making diluted wine pure again, instead of changing water into wine as elsewhere.

This constant devotion to ancient tradition, however, tended to stabilise art to a certain extent, just as in China ancestor-worship retarded the progress of civilisation. The

Italian was content to use the forms of construction which his noble forerunners had perfected - his ambition did not lead him on into the intricacies of thrust and counter thrust, balance and buttressing, in which his neighbours delighted to revel.

But founded on that ancient culture of the Romans was his

outstanding characteristic - his love of beauty, particularly beauty of detail. The Roman himself perhaps had an overflorid taste, but treasures were gathered in great quantities at Rome, and every emperor was a patron of the arts. From this emphasis of the importance of beauty sprang the more refined taste of the Italian.

It developed to such an extent that when centuries later the artist consciously turned to the old forms for inspiration, he produced from them examples which were entirely free from the gross exaggerations of the originals.

Nowhere is this love of detail better exemplified than in the better-class domestic work of the Renaissance - the villas of Palladio,

Vignola, Peruzzi. And since the Renaissance work showed no radical change from that which preceded it, being merely the culmination of previous effort, a study of it is sufficient.

The Renaissance was a period of great contradictions in Italy - months of turbulent fighting, punctuated by months of riotous, luxurious living. The country was divided into "signories", each city having her own duke and her own dominions, and each continually struggling to expand her territories. Florence, Milan, Venice - each in turn became the most important city, and in the times of peace and prosperity culture flourished.

Never was there such a time

for artists - painters, architects, musicians, poets, sculptors - for cities fought for the privilege of gaining the services of the best the land could offer.

Dukes vied with one another in the magnificence of the courts they held. "It was the best of times and the worst of times" - best for the nobles of a prosperous court, worst for the peasants who were ground down that the signory might support such luxury. Religion could have no great influence on the country, since the Papacy fought with the rest for temporal power, while intrigues, poisonings and debauchery were as common among the clergy as among the laity.

A time when men played

hard and fought hard, but a fortunate time for the architect, since new and magnificent buildings were required to house this luxury.

Spain has no such story of profligacy to utter. Her history is one long succession of wars both internal and external. Her country is much more mountainous and barren than Italy, the ranges splitting it naturally into a number of small domains, oases among the barrenness of the hills.

From earliest times there were wars between the territories, as in Italy, and when in 800 A.D. the Moors swept completely over Spain, it was the overlooking by the conquerors of one small fastness in the north which led

to their ultimate ruin. For this small remaining Christian kingdom extended its boundaries gradually, fighting every inch of the way, until all the peninsula was again Christian. This took six hundred years to accomplish, however, possibly because though each was fighting against a common enemy, there was not unity amongst either Moors or Christians.

It was the amalgamation of the two great Christian kingdoms of Aragon and Castile by the marriage of their rulers which in 1492 completed the overthrow of the Moorish domination and united Spain for the first time under one crown.

From this event dates Spain's

meteoric rise to the position of premier nation of the world. Rulers of the various small states had always been ambitious of power, and now that internal troubles were settled these greater rulers turned their thoughts to foreign conquests. So Spanish resources went out of the country to be spent on foreign wars until by the end of the eighteenth century her king was emperor of half the world, and her navy mistress of the seas.

Only one century was required to reach this height, but her fall was even faster. The constant oppression of the people to provide money for wars and more wars had its effect, and

after a brief period of greatness Spain's glory rapidly faded and her dominions one by one were lost.

It was the six hundred years crusade against the Moors, however, which had the greatest effect on Spanish character. It was in every sense a religious war, and though in Italy as we have shown religion could have no great effect on the character of the people, in Spain it was the dominating factor of their lives.

The Italian's religion was a careless, joyous affair, but the Spaniard's was a fierce passion, amounting often to fanaticism.

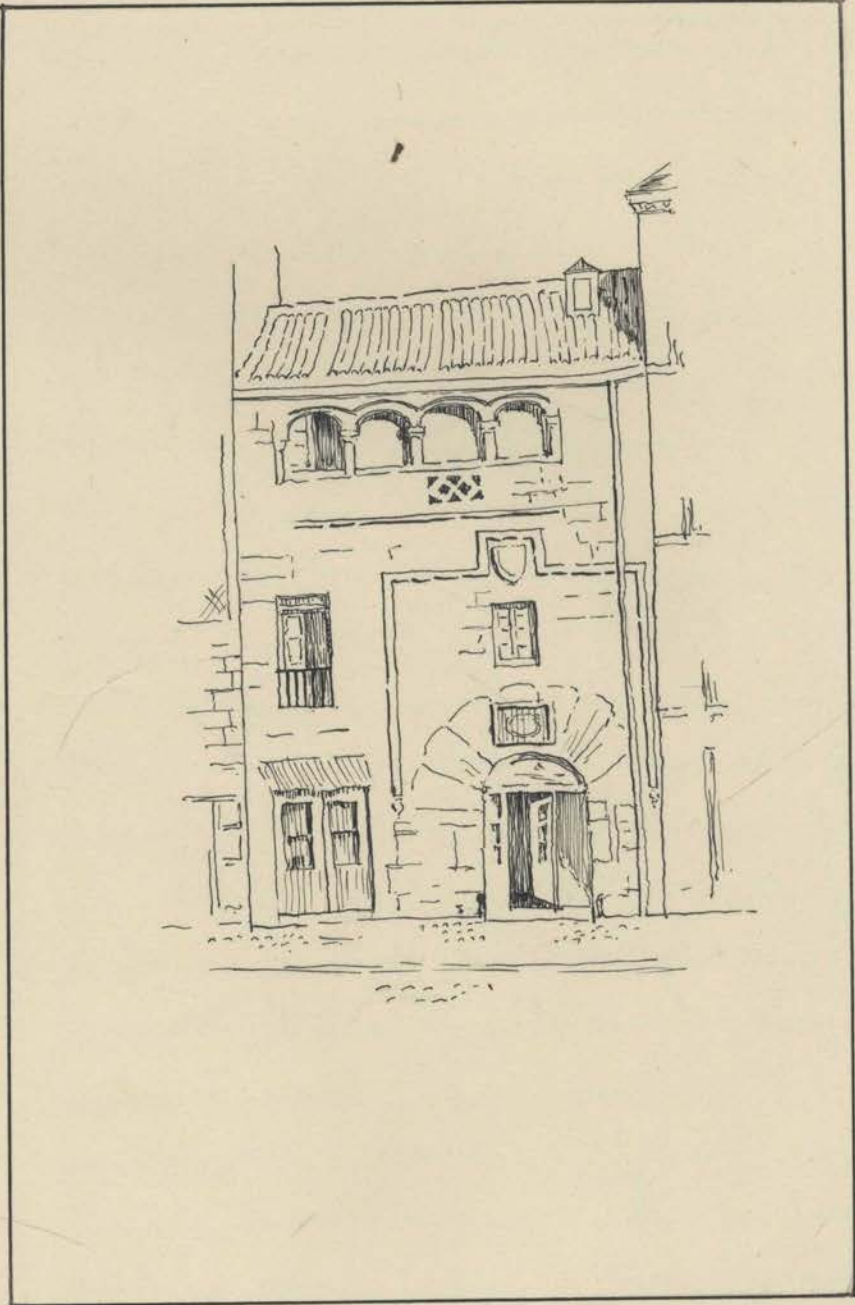
What but morbid fanaticism could have inspired the awe -

inspiring ritual and the relentless persecution of the Inquisition, or the wholesale slaughter of such Mohammedans as refused to forsake their native faith when at last the Moors were conquered?

Intolerance in any form breeds hardness and heaviness, sombreness even, but coupled with these in the Spanish mind was a dramatic instinct, a love of theatrical effect, which was probably an inheritance from the barbaric splendour of the Moors. It is exemplified in the solemn ritual which attended a trial by the Inquisition, culminating in an "auto da fé". "Morbid mysticism" is the phrase which has been used to express

the keynote of Spanish art, its most characteristic exponent being the painter Murillo.

This religious fanaticism was sufficient in itself to preclude from Spain any suggestion of the riotously joyful living which became a byword in Italy. But once the persecution of the Moors was finished yet another reason kept Spain from enjoying the fruits of her labour. The ambition of her emperors drove her armies farther and farther afield, spending abroad money which in Italy was being spent at home. For though wars were constant in Italy, no money was going out of the country, and when peace was established for a little





while, riches were still at hand. But in Spain peace meant an exhausted treasury and an overtaxed country.

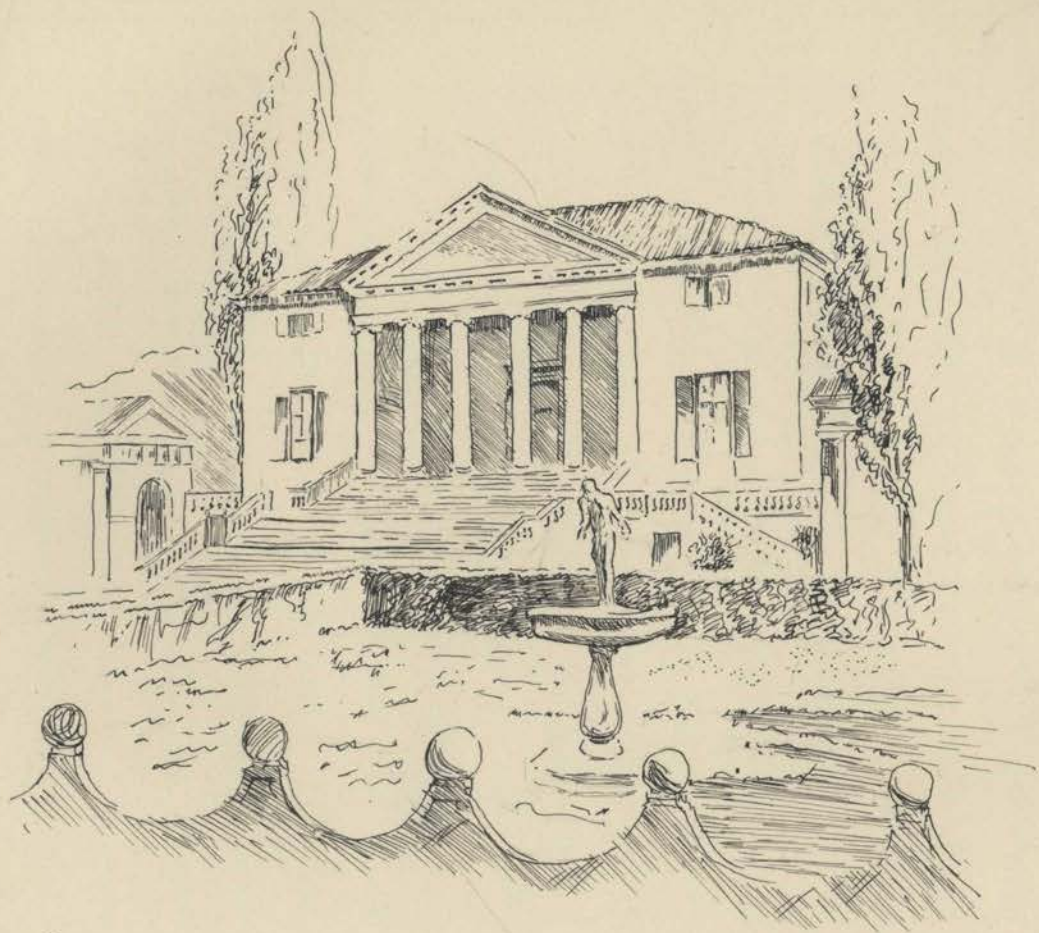
There was no question either of one court striving to outdo another in splendour if she could not in arms, for by the end of the fifteenth century there was but one court.

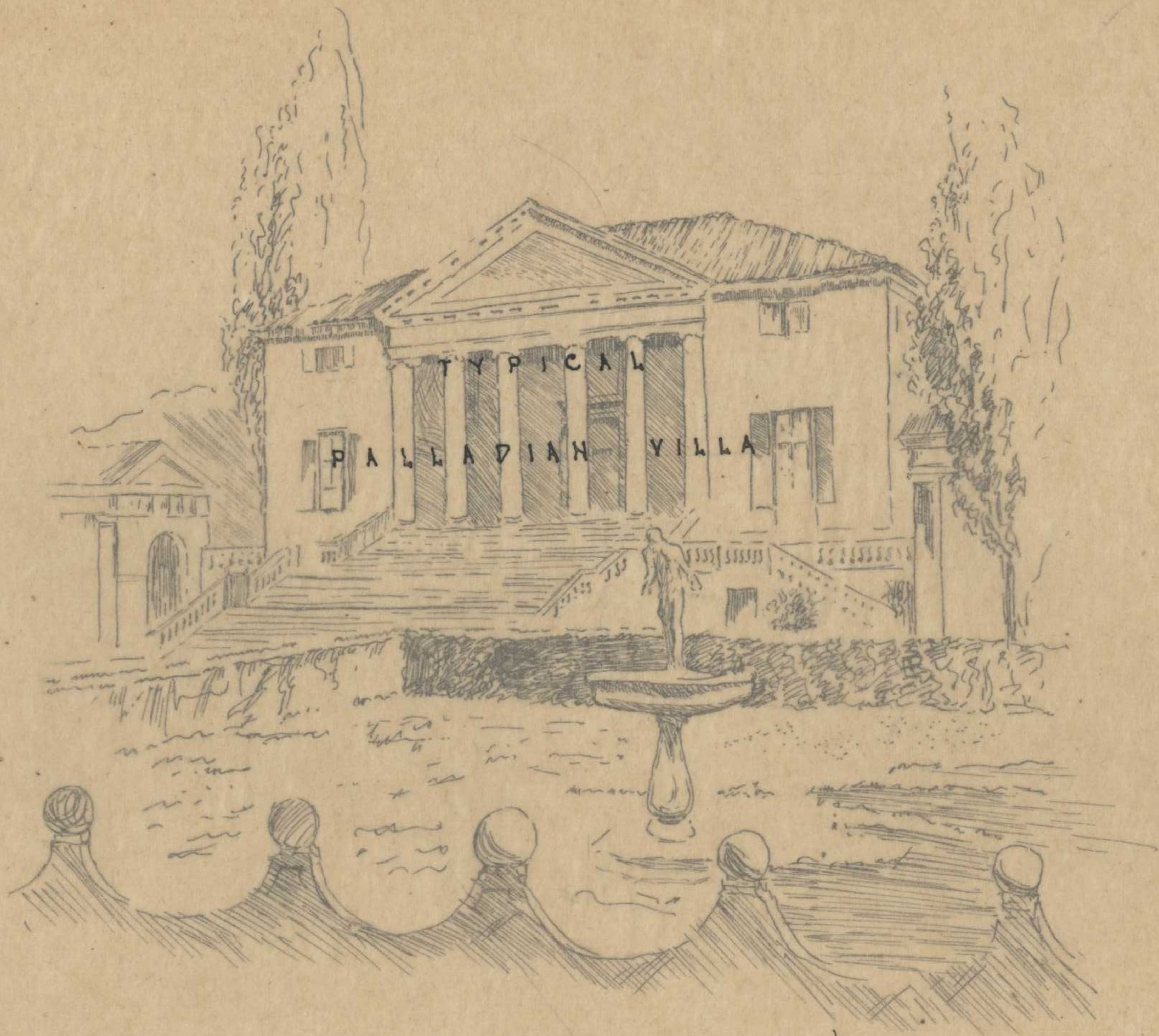
In Spain, then we find no "playhouse" villas such as those which sprang up throughout Italy.

The houses of the nobility are all in the cities, and for the most part are fortress-like palaces, built with enormous stones, with perhaps a little ornament around a window or a door. The proportions are often good, but the Spaniard has not the Italian's centuries steeped

in art treasures behind him, consequently the refinement of detail is lacking. Moldings are often clumsy, and ornament coarse though well placed.

Reproduction of the condition of society which fathered these palaces is impossible to-day. We have no use for fierce fanaticism or relentless persecution of a brother race. But pleasure and luxury are as avidly sought to-day as they were in Renaissance Italy. We have not the riches to reproduce her large houses, but the spirit which moved them moves us also, and therefore in our dormitory towns, our week-end cottages and summer resorts, and even in our remoter





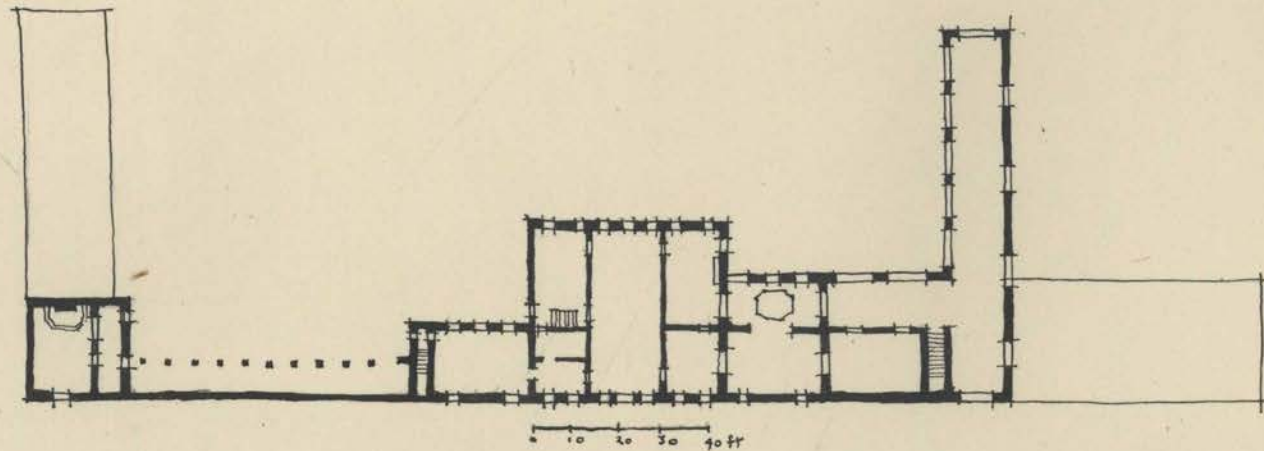
suburbs, some of the atmosphere of an Italian villa might well be caught and held. The villa was essentially a place for living and enjoying life - some spot to which the toiler might escape and leave all care behind. And if in Italy the toil existed amid the tramp of feet and the clash of arms, while bread to-day is won in a more humdrum battle, still the need for escape and relaxation by contrast is as strong as ever.

The heavy sombreness of the Spanish palace was not produced by any desire to enjoy life, and is therefore of no use to us. But the simplicity and light gracefulness of

the Italian villa, that perfect embodiment of the spirit which produced it, are just what we require.

Another factor which brings Italian conditions closer to our own is climate. Italy, like New South Wales, is a land of vivid sunshine, where intricate undercut mouldings are out of place, and only broad masses of light and shade and colour are effective. Hence the need for simplicity of line and mass.

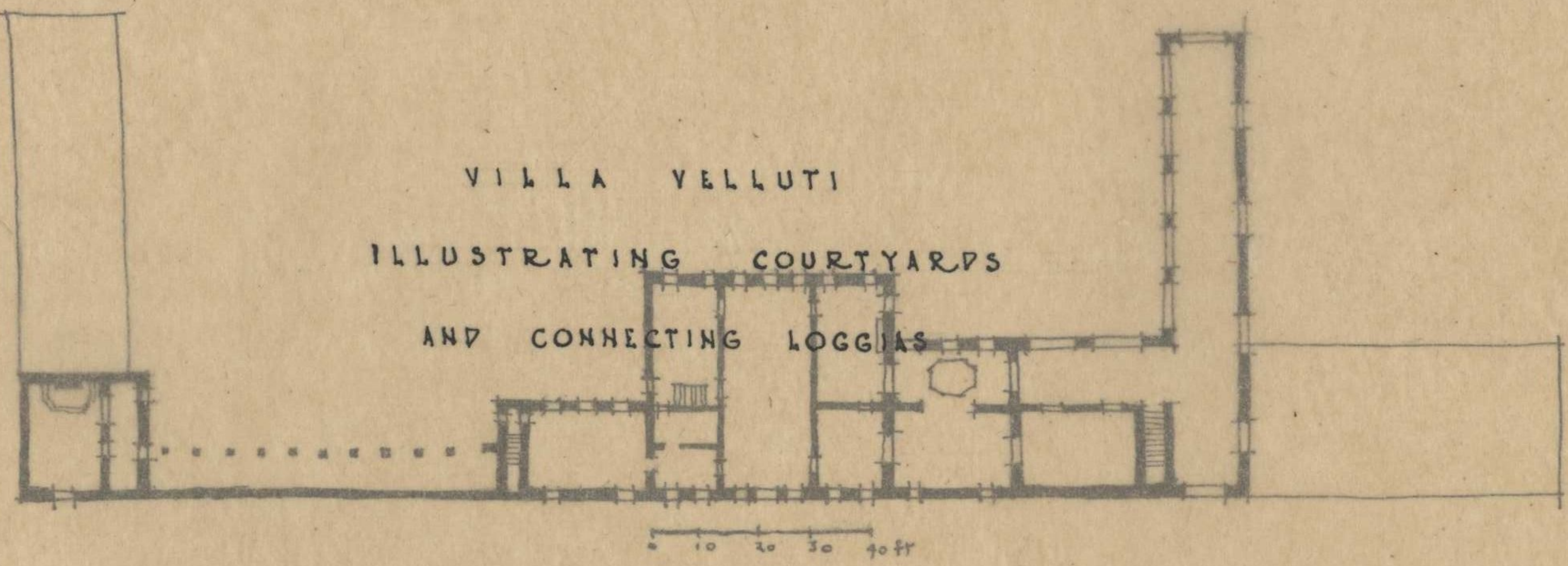
The elaborate planning of the villa, with its vast reception rooms, is probably beyond the scope of the average householder, but the general outlines of a plan are fixed by the req-



VILLA VELLUTI

ILLUSTRATING COURTYARDS

AND CONNECTING LOGGIAS

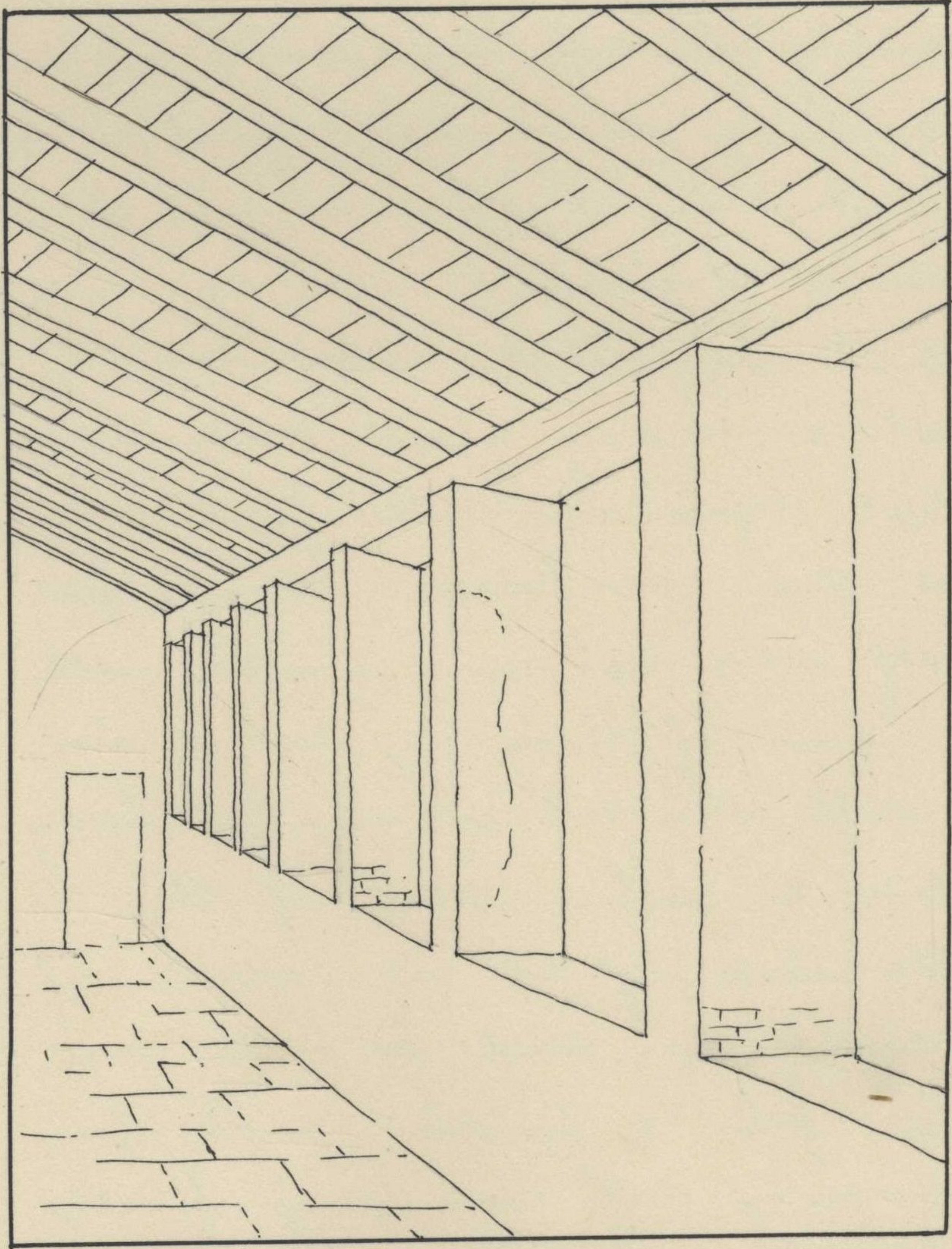


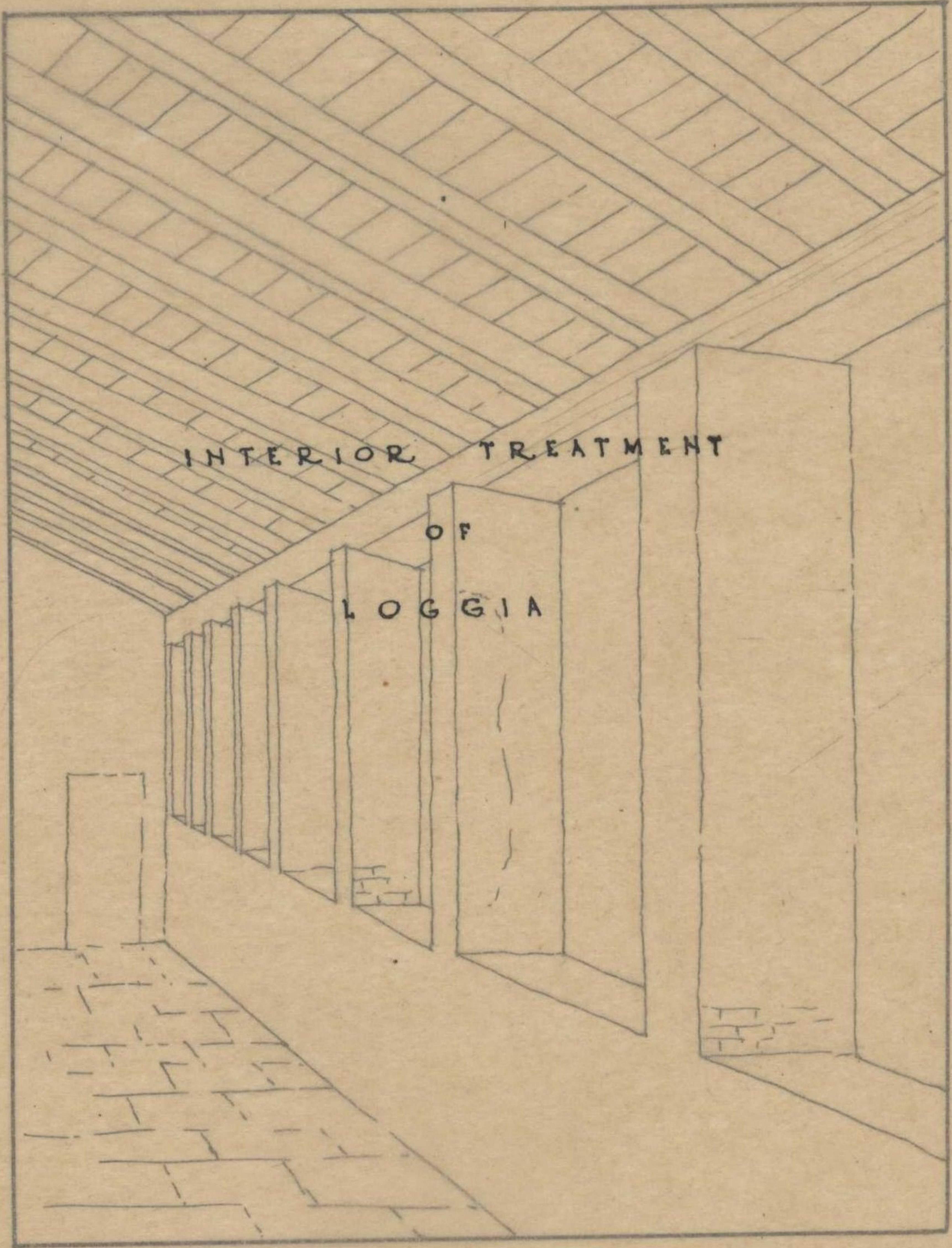
requirements of climate and comfort. And the first lesson which we learn here is one which was taught even by Egypt and India - namely, that the starting point of the most satisfactory house plan is a courtyard. In Italy these are either enclosed on four sides, with entrance through a large arch, or else open on the fourth side.

Loggias and balconies, either arcaded or lintelled, form a part of every design. We find verandahs in most Australian homes, - but how often they detract from instead of enhancing the appearance of the building! "Simplicity" should be the watchword here again. And coupled

with it, perhaps, "logical construction."

Too often atrocities are achieved simply through the desire for something new. The logical thing to do with a solid verandah pier is to carry it right up and let it support the roof beam. But so many people have done that before us - therefore let us stop our fourteen inch pier half-way up, and finish with a piece of three by two, or else a little twisted column! Nobody seems to realise that if the little three by two is capable of carrying the load for the last three feet, a fourteen inch pier is really not necessary for the lower five feet, and its inclusion in the design only makes the





INTERIOR TREATMENT

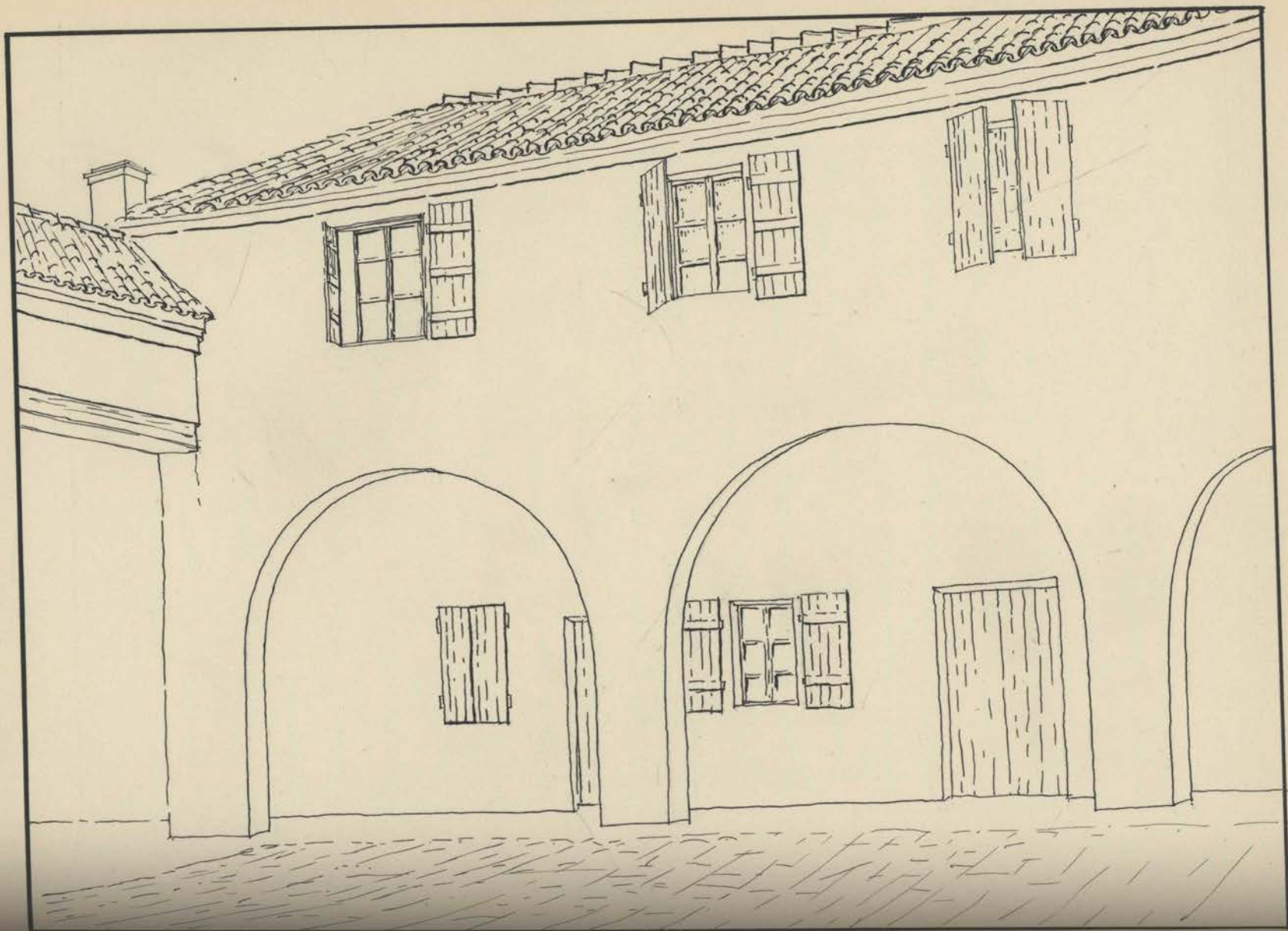
OF

LOGGIA

whole construction a farce.

Learn the lesson from the Italians. Their verandah piers, whether of wood or brick or stone, are always simple, and they look right because they are logical. Each pier is really carrying its share of the load. And the best effects internally in their loggias are often gained by allowing the construction itself to form the decoration. Certain beams or rafters are necessary to carry the roof - let them be seen doing their work, and they form a pleasing roof pattern, besides saving the cost of additional covering.

But the best method of discussing these points is by





FARMHOUSE - VENETIA

ILLUSTRATING ONE TYPE

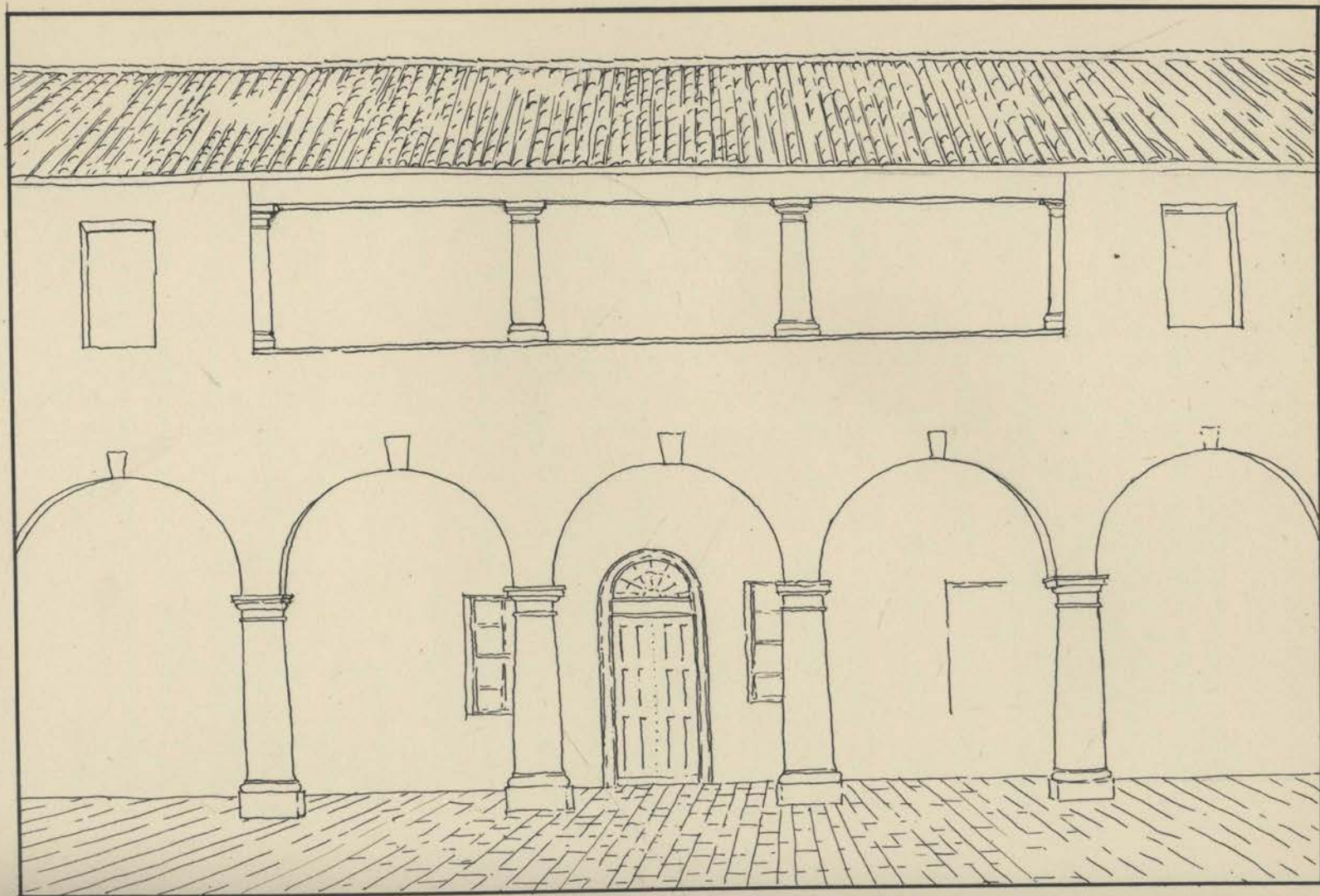
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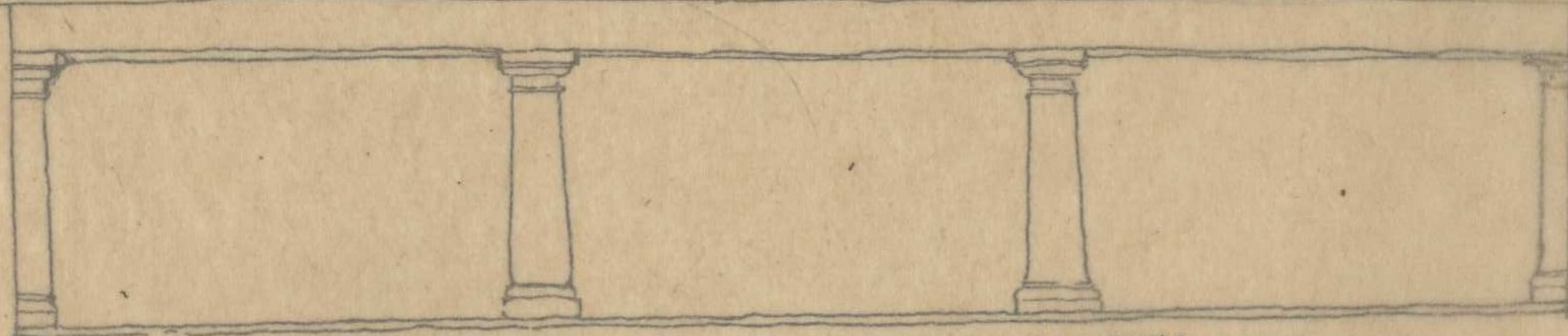
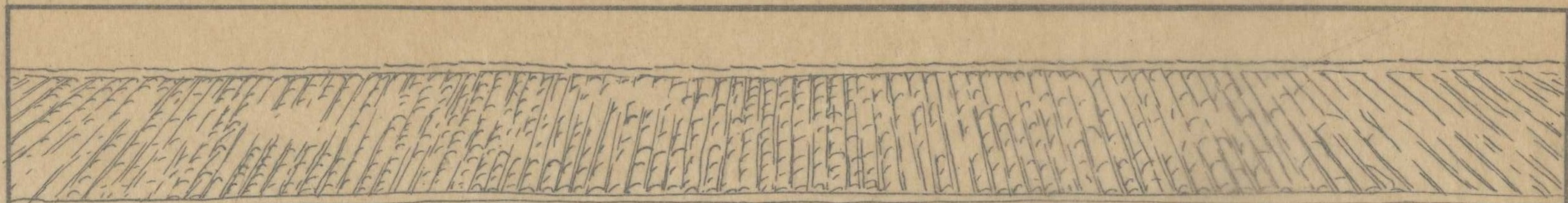
LOGGIA

illustrating them, and several examples of Italian loggias are here shown.

The walls of the villas are usually of brick stuccoed or colour washed — a cheap form of construction, and one which takes the greatest advantage of the depth of shadow thrown by the brilliant sunshine.

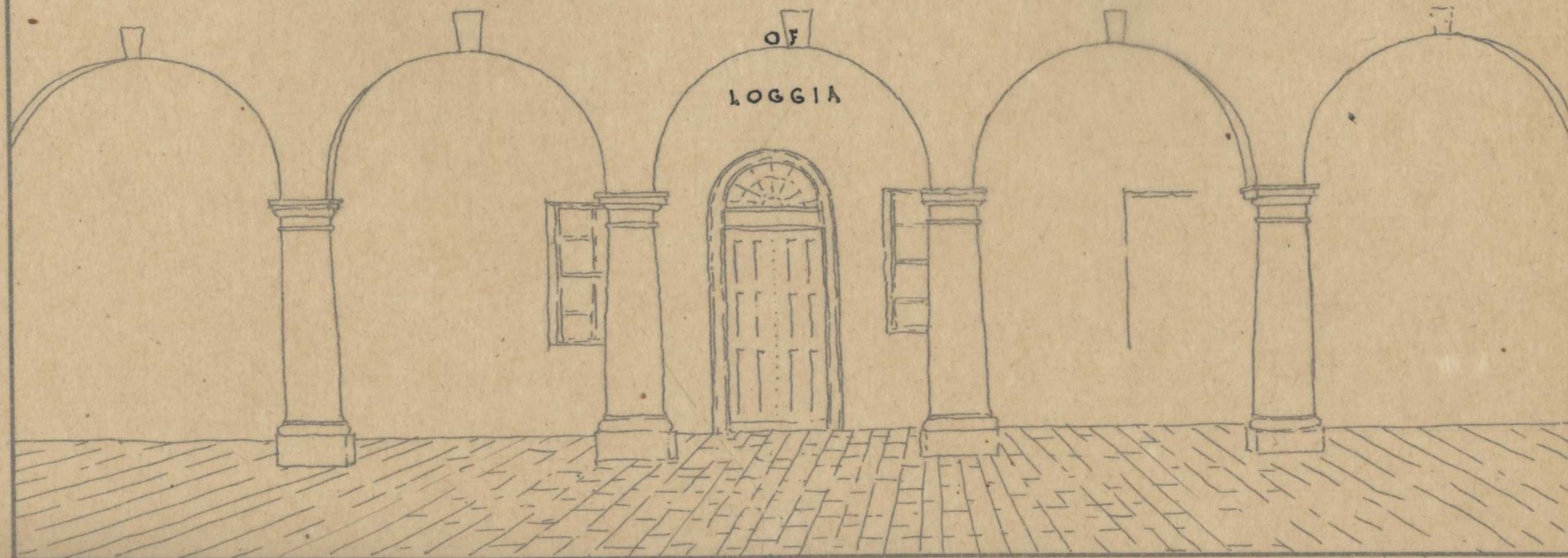
This same brilliant sunshine produces thick walls, as a protection against the heat, and results in small windows, so that the rooms will not be overlighted. This last measure is one which we would do well to observe. The modern tendency is to crowd as much window area into each room as is humanly possible. No outside wall to a room can ever be left without a window. Designers





S M A L L V I L L A N E A R V I G E N Z A

I L L U S T R A T I N G T W O T Y P E S



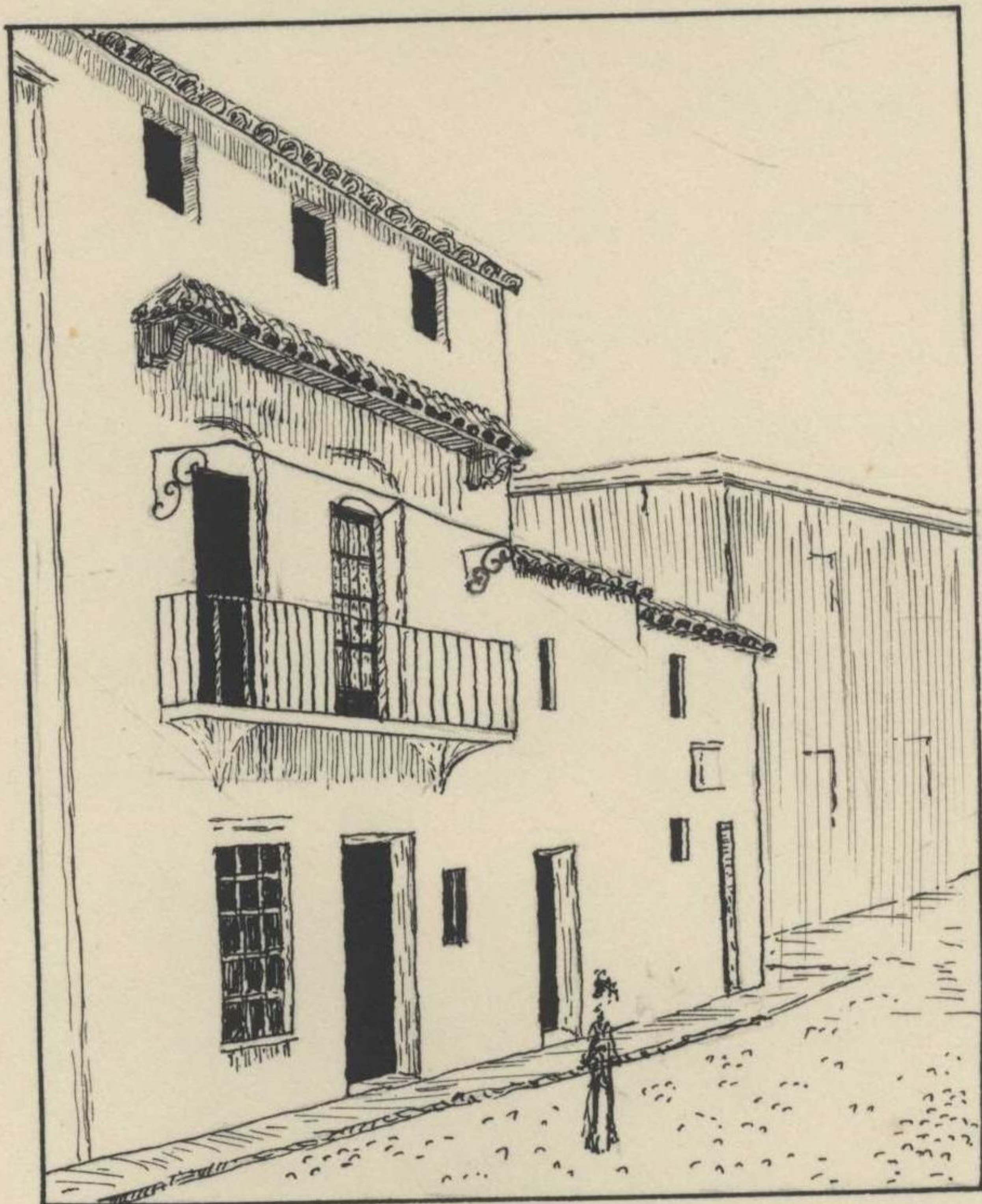
L O G G I A

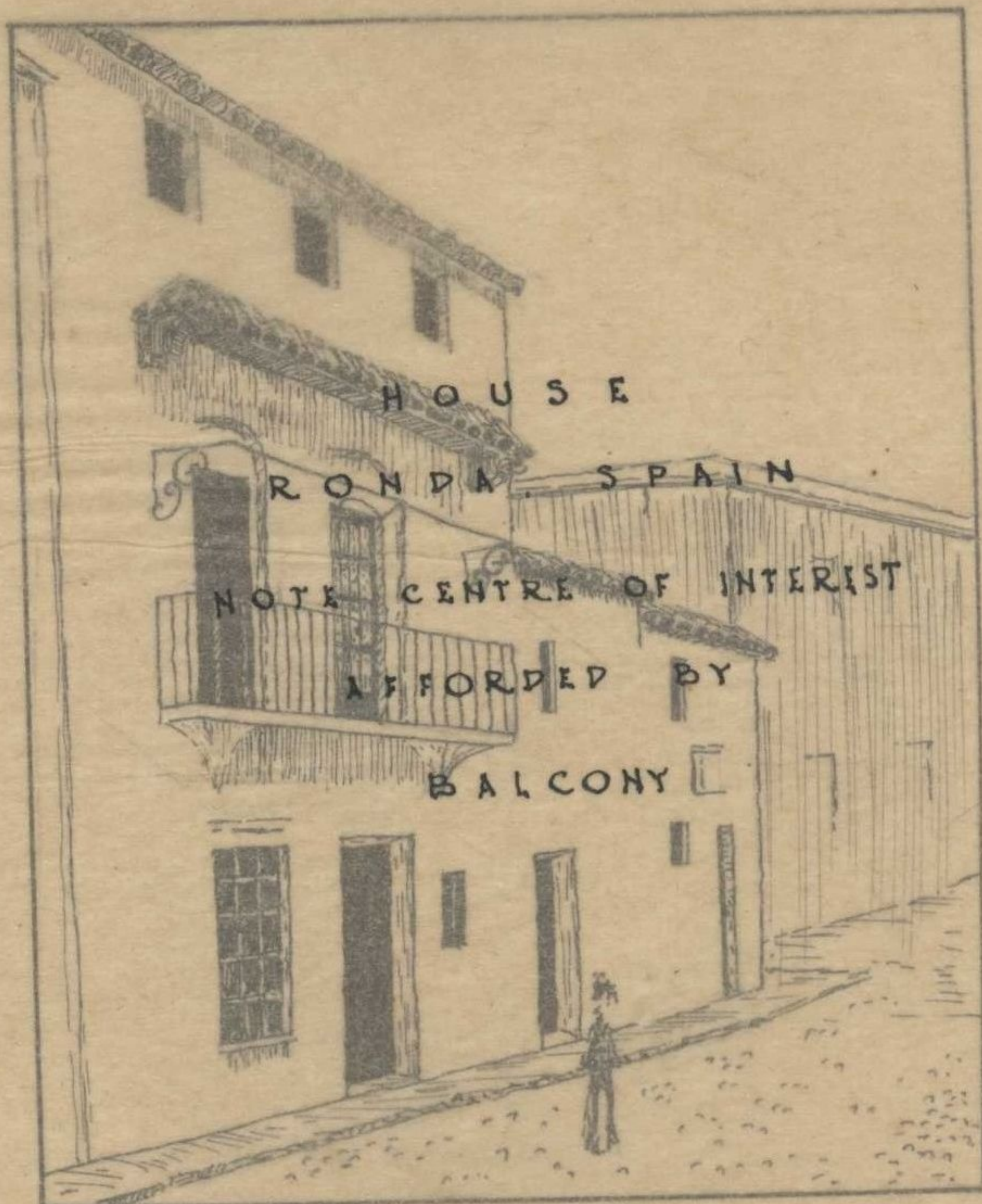
O F

are apt to forget that too much light causes as much discomfort as too little, while no glass window can ever hope to keep out the heat as well as a brick wall.

As an additional protection against the heat, Italian windows are often shuttered, and the eaves are allowed a wide overhang. Wide eaves have another advantage also - the deep shadow thrown against the plain wall surface is more effective than any band of ornament.

In order to give the greatest shadow contrasts walls are left plain, but not flat. Nothing is more uninteresting than a dead white wall surface trowelled





absolutely smooth; the Italian is not likely to make that mistake. Walls are more often cream or faintly pink than white, while the surface is roughened in a thousand different ways, forming numberless small pinnacles, each with its pinpoint of shadow, woven into an intricate and pleasing pattern. These results are achieved nowadays very simply by scouring with a wood float or dragging with a wire brush.

With a perfectly plain wall surface some centre of interest is required or the design will be a failure. Consequently accent is placed on the entrance, and sometimes on the window treatment. But there is still no

question of ornament for ornaments sake - all enrichment is perfectly logical and structural. The entrance may be emphasised by a columned portico such as those which characterise the work of Palladio; by a rich and heavy door in a simple architraved opening; by a pedimented hood over the opening, serving to shelter the traveller; by stone arch voussoirs set in a white-washed wall; by a rich iron gate which could be closed against intruders while permitting a free passage of air through the house.

The treatment of the windows is also varied. Sometimes in the smaller houses no enrichment is attempted; sometimes just the

splash of colour afforded by the shutters is sufficient; sometimes an architrave is added, and again a wrought iron grating or a balcony.

Some effect may possibly be lost in our modern versions through the fact that thick walls have been replaced by cavities.

But it is only the absolutely untreated openings which rely entirely on their reveals for their force, and if a deep reveal be impracticable, an opening can always be made to tell to the required extent by the addition of enrichment.

In the interiors of these villas again perfect taste is displayed. Generally the walls are left plain

as a foil for the rich ceiling, which in the more important houses is vaulted or coved, and often richly painted by the leading painters of the day - Michael Angelo, Raphael, Peruzzi. Another common ceiling treatment is one which we have already noted as successful in dealing with loggias. The beams carrying the ceiling or the floor above are allowed to show, and are either waxed and polished or painted in strong colours. Floors are of polished wood, stone flags or tiles.

All the effect in an Italian interior is gained by leaving the walls plain. This allows scope for plenty of enrichment in the ceiling, and also acts as a foil for the rich and heavy furniture

which is used. And since the question of money enters so much into our calculations nowadays, note that plain walls are cheapest, and by saving on them something more perhaps may be spent on enriching the ceiling. It is better to concentrate on one portion of ornament and make that good than to try and spread all the available money over the whole room. So that once more a practical consideration brings Italy into line with us.

One other factor binds Italy still more closely to our own land - the setting for these buildings. The Frenchman, living in a cold climate, placed his castle on the flat lands, where

he could spend his time hunting and hawking. In the more enervating climate of the Mediterranean, the Italian likes his home set on a hillside, where he can sit in "dreamful ease", with his gardens falling away in terraces before him, melting into the natural bush in the valley below, and with the dark woodland behind acting as a foil for the white-washed walls. There is no ugly scar on the hillside to mark his home, no ruthless hacking of trees to make room for acres of bare lawns — the soft sea of green laps right to the foot of the white walls; the olive trees cast intricate shadow patterns on the portico.

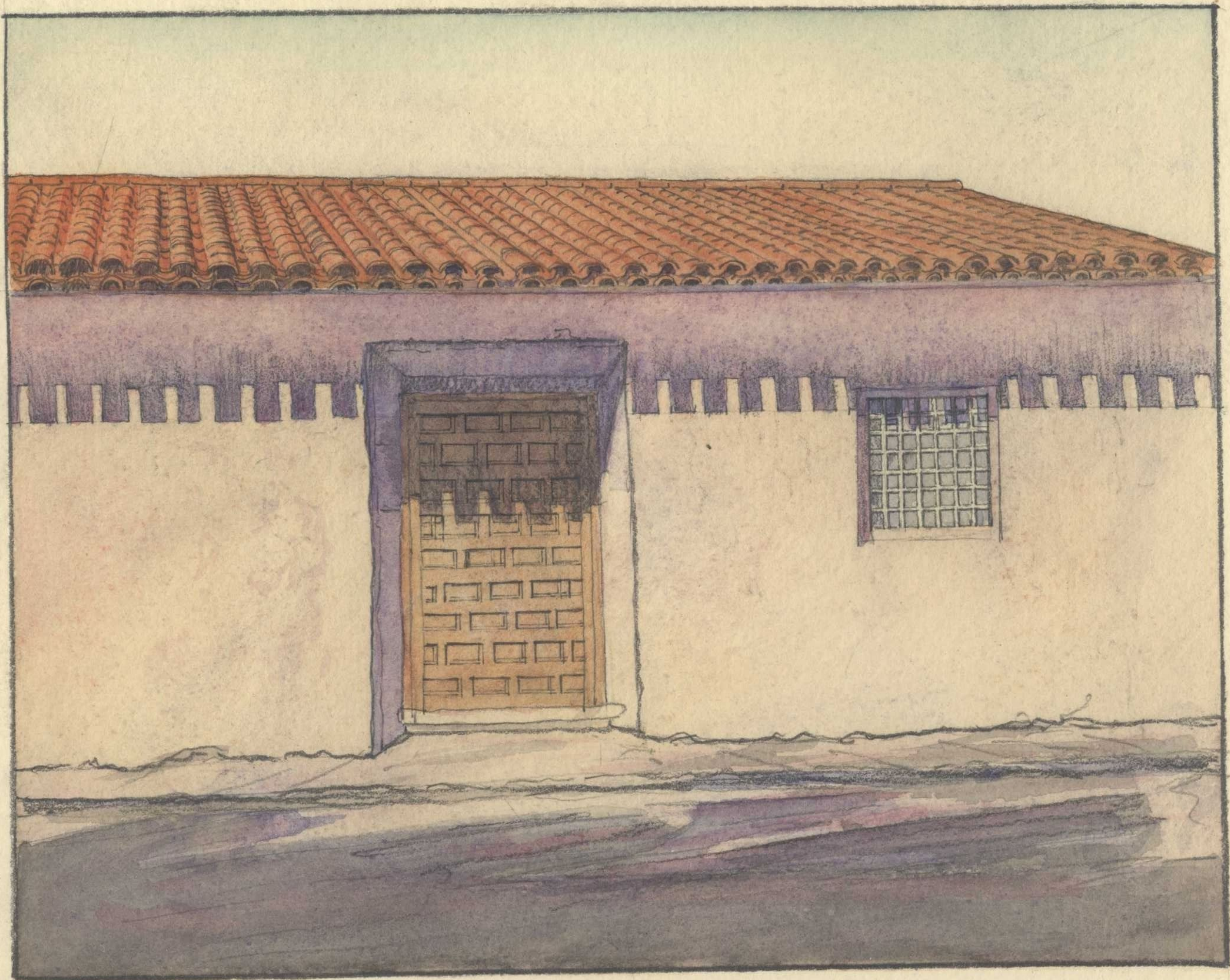
Our own ranges afford just such a setting. Imagine creamy walls with a background of gum trees on the hills above Prospect, with a wide loggia looking out over terraces to green pastures; or in the valleys, where olive trees already sweep up the hill-sides.

Simplicity, then, is the chief lesson which we learn from these homes which are essentially places in which to live. Let us turn now to the buildings of that other class of people which we have mentioned - those who live their lives withdrawn from the constantly changing influences of city life, and whose houses generally are to work in as well

as to live in. Here, as may be expected, we find more similarity between Spain and Italy than in the houses of the city classes.

To begin with, conditions of life were similar, since agricultural development was at the same primitive stage in each country.

Each farmer led a life of unceasing toil, often oppressed by an overlord, and, in Italy especially, living in constant danger of attack from neighbouring signories. Means of communication were few and poor, consequently the materials at hand had to be used. This helped to keep the dwellings simple, for multiplicity of material was impossible. A quotation from Ralph Adams Cram, the American





COTTAGE NEAR LIBRILLA

SPAIN

authority on Spain, perhaps describes the houses best. "The Spaniard can build up his flat wall of rubble, cover it with toned whitewash, pierce it with a door and five windows, add a balcony and two rejas of perfect ironwork, crown the whole with a sweeping roof of tawny tiles, plant two cypresses and an almond tree, and produce a composition that is the despair of a trained and cultured architect."

The process in Italy is the same, except that in the north, where clay is plentiful, bricks are used instead of rubble. The Italian, too, is content with soft pink and brown tonings for his walls, while the Spaniard favours



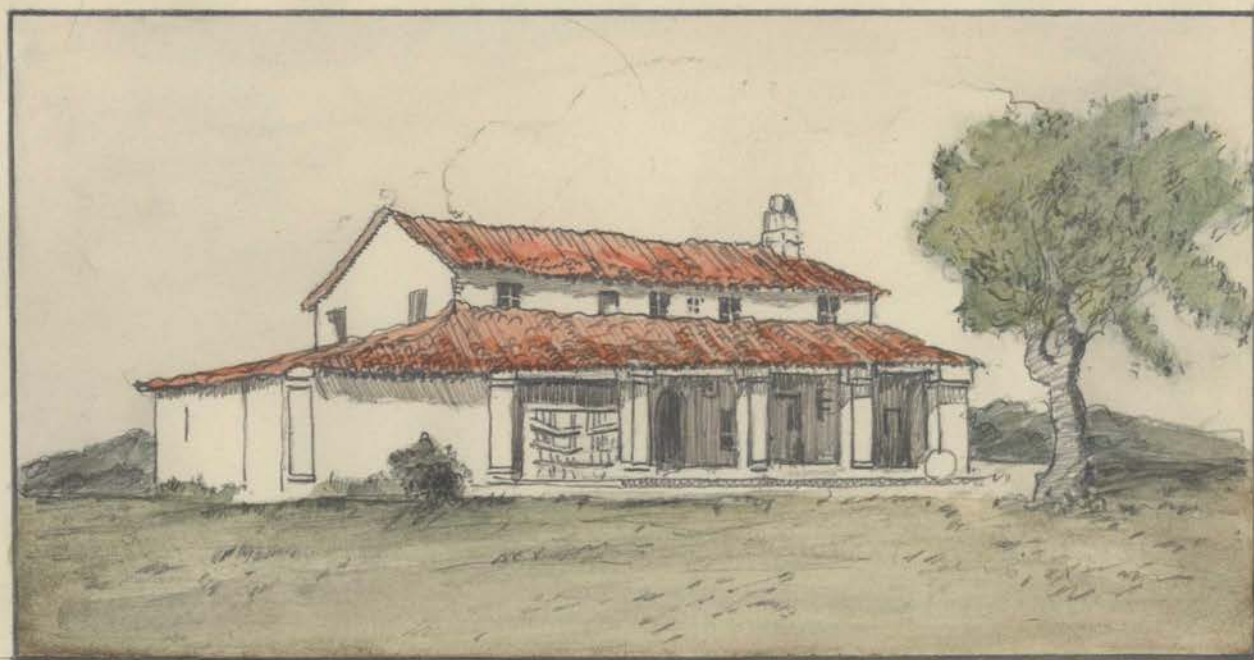


brighter tints - yellow, blue, sienna or rose-red. This love of colour is probably a heritage from his Moorish conquerors.

The Italian farmhouses have much in common with the Italian villas. And since the Spanish farmer was more content to dwell in peace than his city brother, fanaticism was missing from his character.

Consequently his buildings lose the heavy sombreness of the Spanish palaces and approach more nearly to the grace of the Italian.

Simplicity cannot be beautiful without perfection of proportion, and these uncultured farmers in both countries seem to have had an unerring instinct for proportion.





Something of the lightness which goes with the villa is missing from the farmhouse - the forms have solidified as it were, marking distinctly the difference between the building for pleasure alone and the one for utilitarian purposes also. We still find the plain wall surfaces with accents on doors and windows, but the graceful Palladian portico is missing; so are slender columns.

Loggias are even more frequently seen, as they are used to connect outlying buildings, and besides forming covered ways for shelter they are excellent store-houses for grain. Loggia piers are generally square and heavy; if round, they are much fewer





SPANISH FARMHOUSE

NOTE. ABSOLUTE PLAINNESS BUT

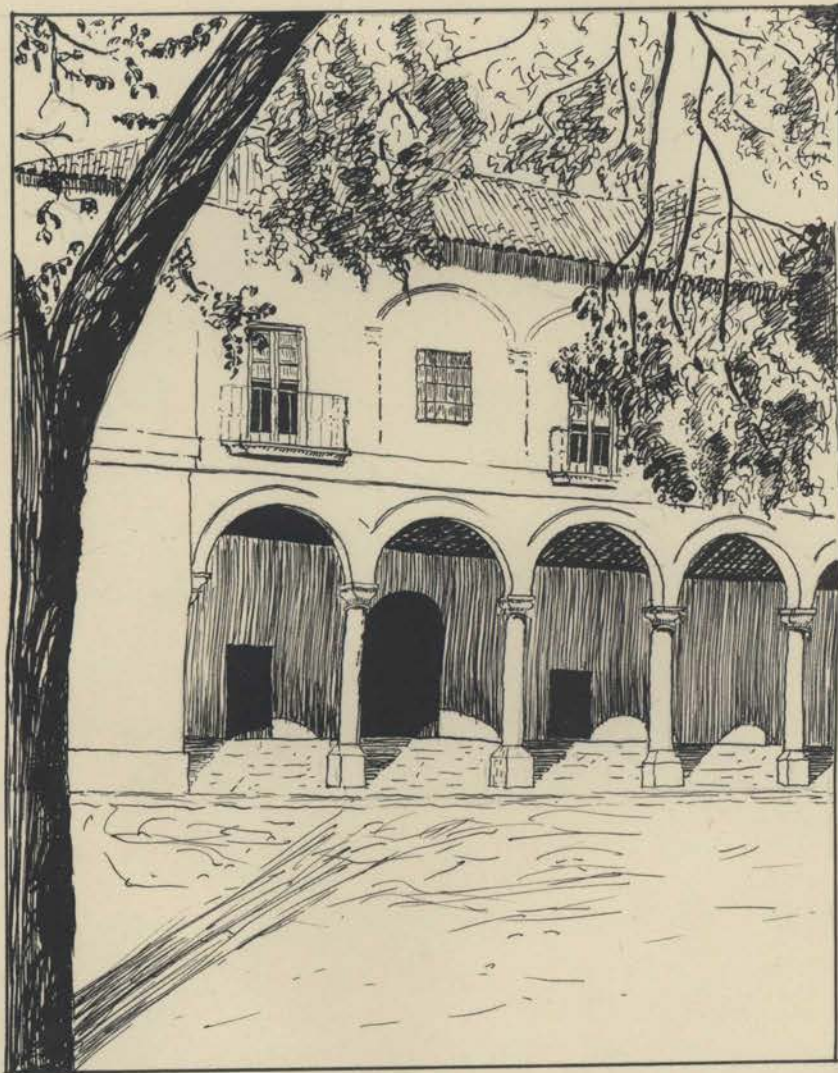
FOR BALCONIES

diameters in height than those of the villas.

Often a squat, square tower forms part of the design; originally probably it was a look-out tower. This always adds a final touch of perfection to the building, drawing the design together. A house is not a sufficiently important structure nowadays for a tower to be used simply for the sake of having a tower, but often its inclusion in the design is perfectly logical.

For example, it might house the water-tanks of a country estate; it might be the bell-tower for a large country school.

Although the differences between villas and farmhouses





are brought about by definite sets of circumstances, yet it seems reasonable to employ the farmhouse type for homes which by being purely residential belong to the other class. What we should strive to do is what the Italians would have done had they been forced to design under our conditions. The graceful forms of Palladio are suited to a formal landscape background, and Palladio's clients had always the money to form the background. But funds today are often lacking once the house itself is completed, and in some of our more rugged settings the light forms are out of keeping when the background cannot be brought up to suit

them. Consequently they should be taken back to suit the existing background, and then the heavier forms are brought into use.

For example, the quiet pasture lands, with their well-shaped trees, around Prospect or Campbelltown are well suited to Palladian forms, but the steep hillsides with scrubby growth nearer the sea-coast, such as at Ballaroy or Vacluse, require the sturdier features.

We may transplant features at will, and as long as there is a definite reason lying at the back of any move we make, as long as every step is logical, then no serious mistake can be made. Too much stress cannot be laid on the fact that

design is very much like a mathematical problem - indeed, the accepted design is known as "the solution of the problem".

In addition to studying the examples of the past, even greater assistance can be obtained from seeing how men of the present have solved their problems by turning to the past for inspiration.

Among the first who seriously tried to recapture the spirit of Italy was the American, Charles A.

Platt. He spent years studying in Italy, making careful measurements not only of buildings but of their gardens as well. On his return to America he struck what was for him a fortunate economic period. Many citizens had been

accumulating vast sums of money, and there began a movement for the establishment of large and permanent country homes, to which the city man could retire at intervals to rest and to entertain his friends. This is exactly the set of conditions which produced the Italian villa, and also which obtains in our own country when towns like Bowral and Katoomba are brought into existence.

In summer-time, too, parts of America have a sunny climate very similar to that of Italy, while some of her wooded hill-sides give an ideal Italian setting.

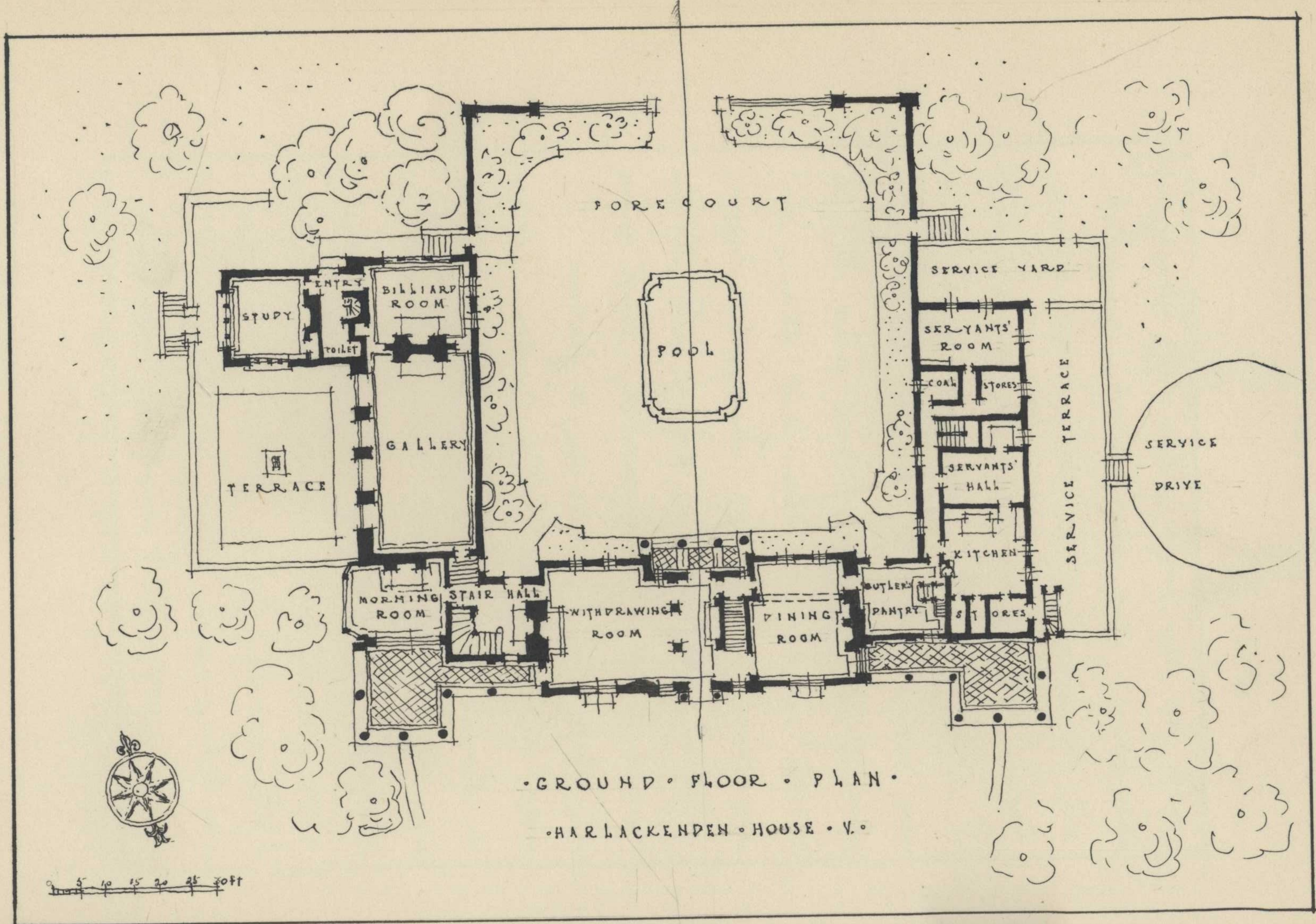
These, then, are the points of similarity between the two countries, and are sufficient for

Platt to be justified in turning to Italy for inspiration.

The differences, however, are as many as the similarities, and therefore he could not bodily transplant the "style." To begin with, the plan of a house is its most important feature; comfort and beauty in this must be considered before anything else — and of these two comfort is more important. The Italian was able to spread his plan and take up as much ground area as he wished because armies of servants were at his command, under pain of death for disobedience. Their convenience never had to be studied. Not so the American — his servants had to be considered almost as

much as the owner himself. Consequently the houses are much more compact, all corridors and other waste space being cut down as much as possible.

The country, too, although sunny in summer, is subject to extremes of cold in winter, and also to a much heavier rainfall than is known in Italy. Thus the low-pitched roof found along the Mediterranean was impossible; and once a steep roof became a feature, it was a natural step, when making a house compact, to add rooms in the roof with their inevitable dormer windows. Chimneys, too, are practically unknown in Italy, but since fires were essential in America their existence had to be expressed in the elevation,



• GROUND • FLOOR • PLAN •

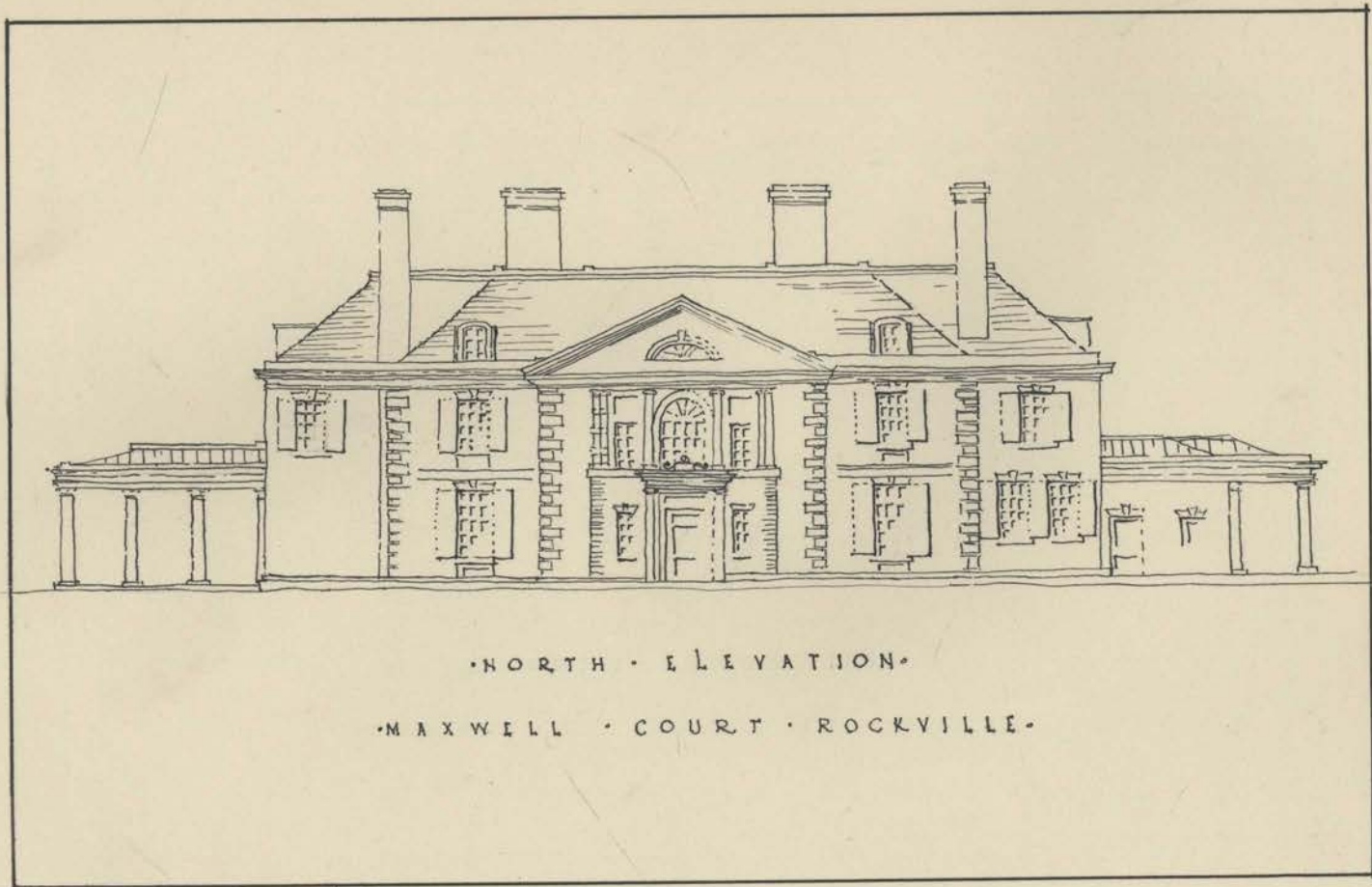
• HARLACKENDEN • HOUSE • V. •

0 5 10 15 20 25 30 ft

and large chimney stacks became a feature of every design.

What Platt did was to apply the Italian's two principles of simplicity and attention to detail to his own problems. And to begin with, he used to perfection the old principle of beginning his plan around a courtyard. A study of the plan of Harlackenden House will show how admirably this type at once separates the domestic quarters of the kitchens and offices from the rest of the house, besides giving a pleasant sheltered garden.

Then, too, we find him using plain wall surfaces with accented windows and entrances, often giving interest to a facade by



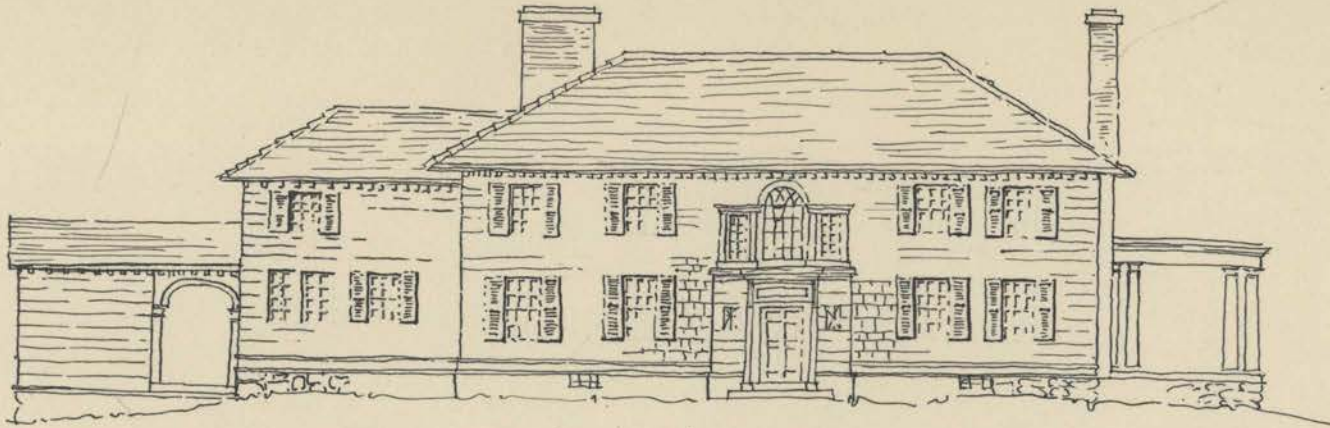
• NORTH • ELEVATION •

• MAXWELL • COURT • ROCKVILLE •

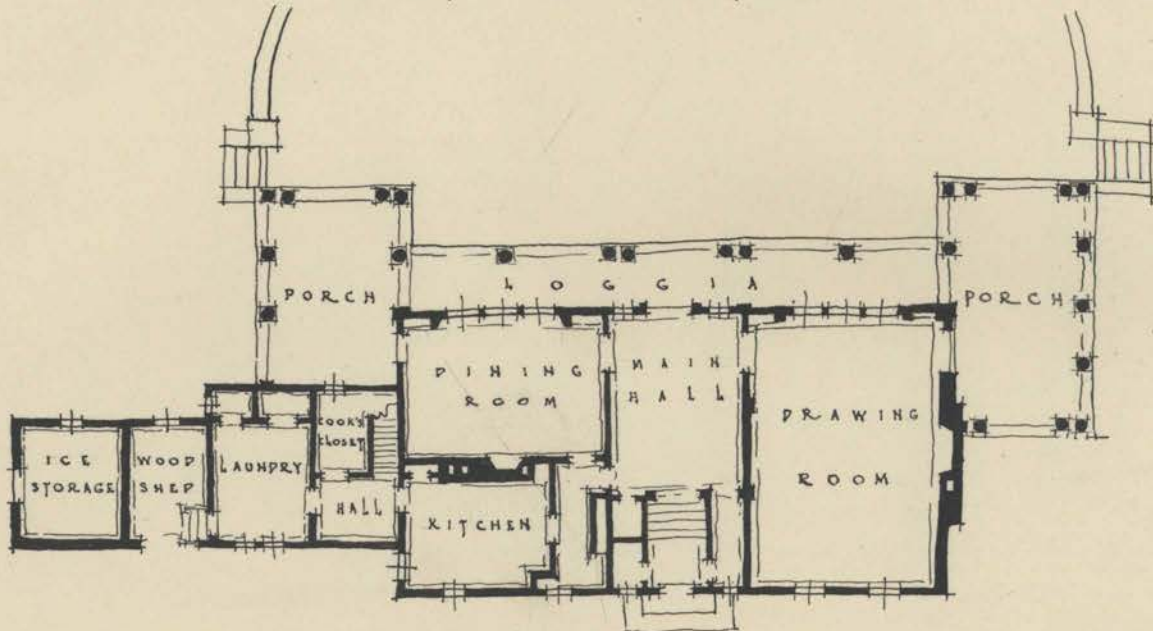
making a central gable over the door, on axis with the main approach.

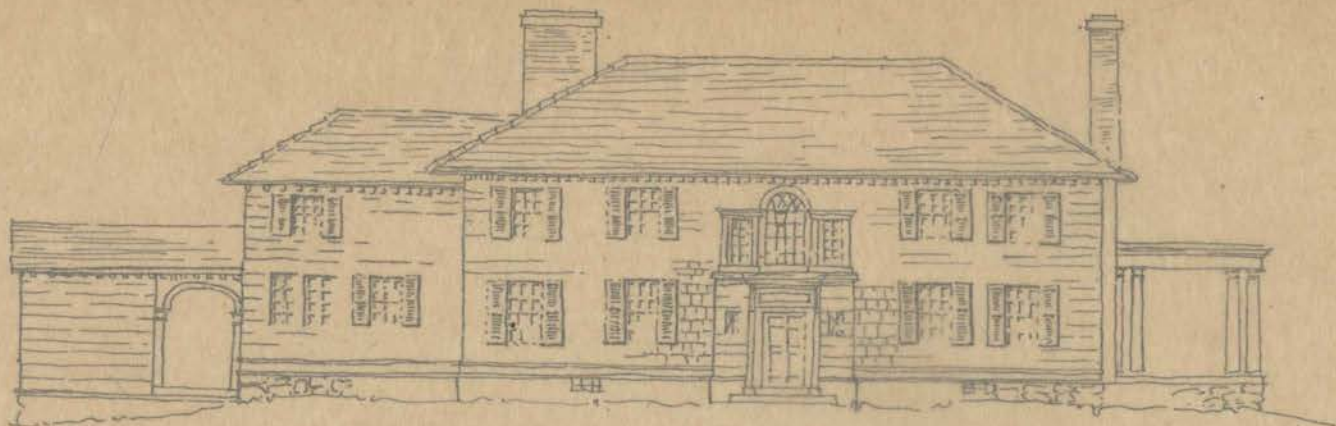
Palladio had used for his entrance a pedimented porch running through two storeys. Platt sometimes followed his example, but he was often prevented from employing it on the grounds of economy of money and space. So the projecting feature becomes a gable with perhaps some additional architectural treatment, giving from the approach the same centre of interest as the porch, but making use of the room over the entrance which in a two-storeyed porch is wasted.

Maxwell Court is an excellent example of this treatment; in this case the entrance has an entablature on columns, while the

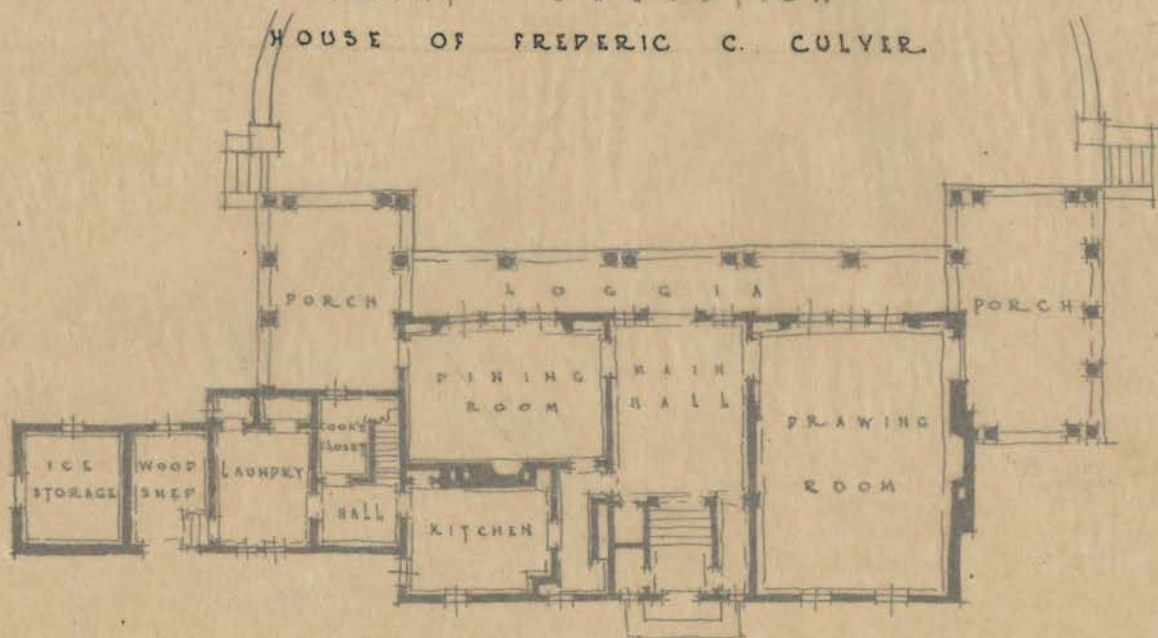


FRONT ELEVATION





FRONT ELEVATION
HOUSE OF FREDERIC C. CULVER.



upper storey is pilastered, with a large central window opening into a bedroom.

Of the smaller houses, that of Frederick C. Bulver is most delightful. This example is not of brick, the wall surface being of wood shingles. Since this gives much more texture than stucco, the accent on windows and entrance should not be as heavily marked as with the plainer wall treatment; the eye is caught by the wall itself, and should be allowed to rove over that. The windows in this house are shuttered, but otherwise are absolutely plain, while the entrance has no projecting porch, being simply marked by

a pilastered opening with a Palladian window above.

Like all Platt's houses, it has plenty of loggias and balconies, which are required by the pleasant climate of the summer. And it has also that valuable link between house and garden - the pergola, which by its combination of architectural forms and trailing vines belongs simultaneously to building and to setting.

Platt, like the Italian, was very sparing in his use of ornament; he relied mainly on line for his effect.

But every detail is perfect; every corner has been carefully studied. The garden was always planned with the house, and nothing was left to be added afterwards by a careless or unappreciative client.

Fountains, wells, gates, garden walls, garden steps, pavements, courtyards, - all he studied carefully and treated with the same rigid simplicity and perfect taste.

Other seekers after simplicity were contemporary with Platt and have followed in his footsteps, McKim, Mead and White being perhaps the best known. A happy hunting-ground for the student is California, where the climate is most like that of Italy during both summer and winter months. It is the playground of America, attracting millions of holiday-seekers all the year round. And we may expect to find Spanish influence here more than anywhere else in America because it was in this district that the

Spanish mission fathers in the early days built their chain of stations, in which they sheltered the wayfarer and strove to bring instruction to the Indian tribes.

In seeking inspiration from Italian examples no-one can go very far wrong, for so perfect in restraint are the originals that nothing crude can possibly be taken from them and exaggerated to grossness by the unskilled student.

The same cannot be said of Spanish types. The detail there is the weak point, being as often crude and clumsy as delicate and refined. The tendency of the Spaniard to dramatise everything in his life, including his buildings, has been mentioned

before; and although success is often attained by a design whose theatrical motif strikes and holds the onlooker, this type of work is dangerous if used as a source of inspiration. It is like strong wine - invigorating in the hands of a seasoned warrior like the Spaniard himself, but apt to mount to the head of the uninitiated and to cause him to do wild and extravagant things.

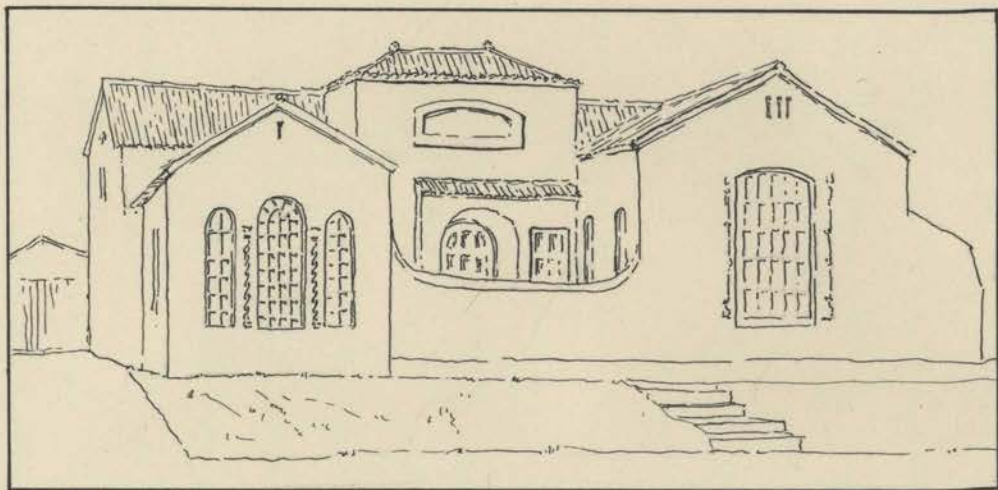
In America and Australia during the last few years there has been a craze for the so-called Spanish. Everyone wants to be in the fashion and to own a Spanish house, while going a little further than the last man and having one a

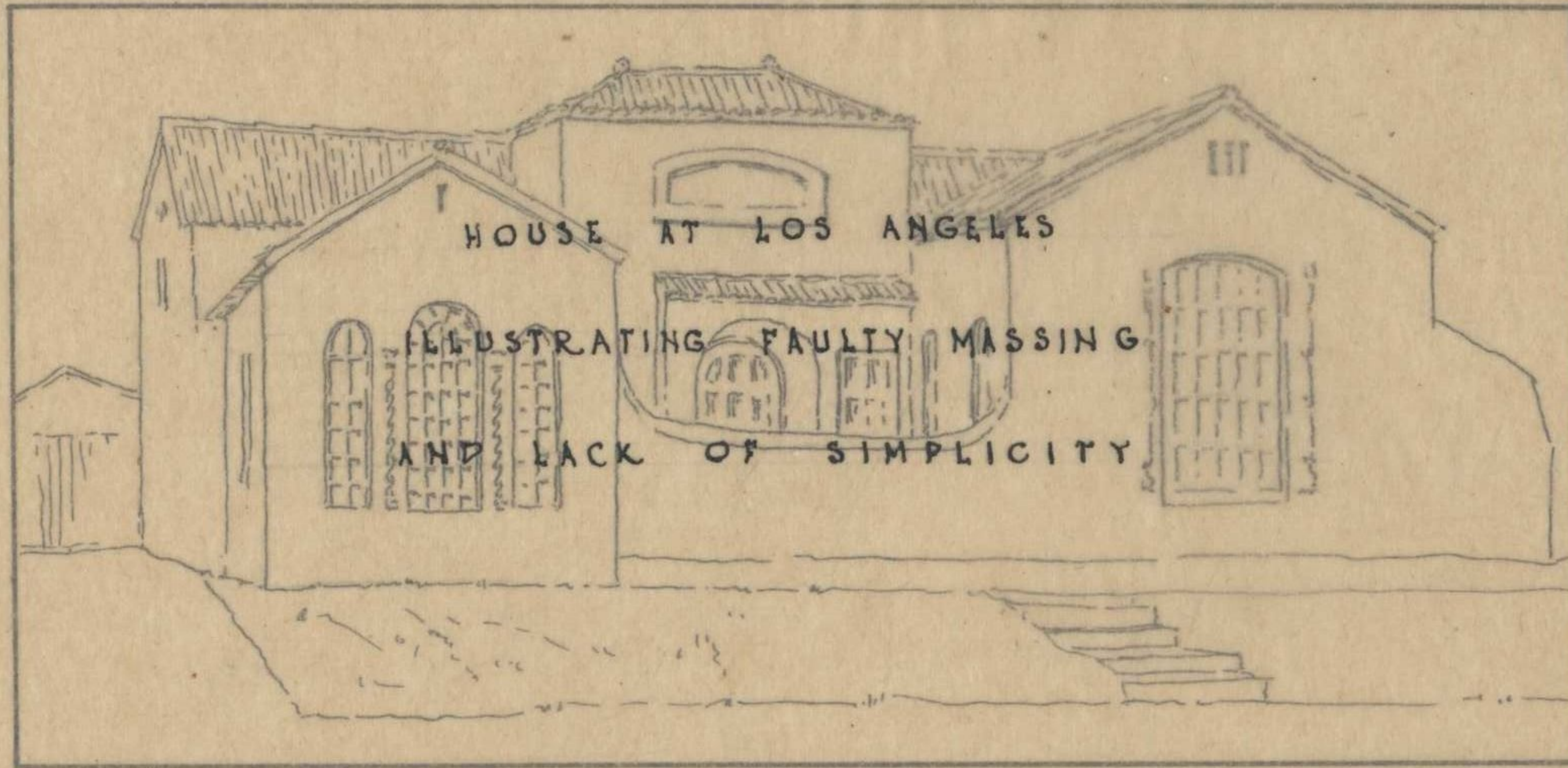
little more startling as well. All typical features are uprooted and presented one by one - bracket caps, rope moulds, twisted columns, tiled steps - features which when brought together and set in their proper places result in perfect harmony, but when thus shorn of their settings are harsh and discordant. For since the "jerry-builder" acquired Spanish it is only the trickery of detail which he considers - mass, line and proportion mean nothing to him. Consequently a Spaniard walking down one of our streets of "Spanish villas" would wonder into what strange and ugly land he had journeyed.

Here again the question of principle should be stressed. We cannot produce a Spanish house anyhow because we are not

Spaniards, but least of all can the matter be achieved in the last five minutes of building by adding two twisted columns at the front porch, and perhaps, if the money holds out, covering every available window with an iron grille.

A writer in a recent American magazine put the matter very succinctly in speaking of the Spanish - "We must get out from under the word": yes, get out from under it and hasten back to first principles - start right at the beginning of the sketch plan to do what the Spaniard or the Italian would have done to fit his plan to the site, to the climate, to the individuals. Don't just add two or three pieces of false detail at the finish. And follow



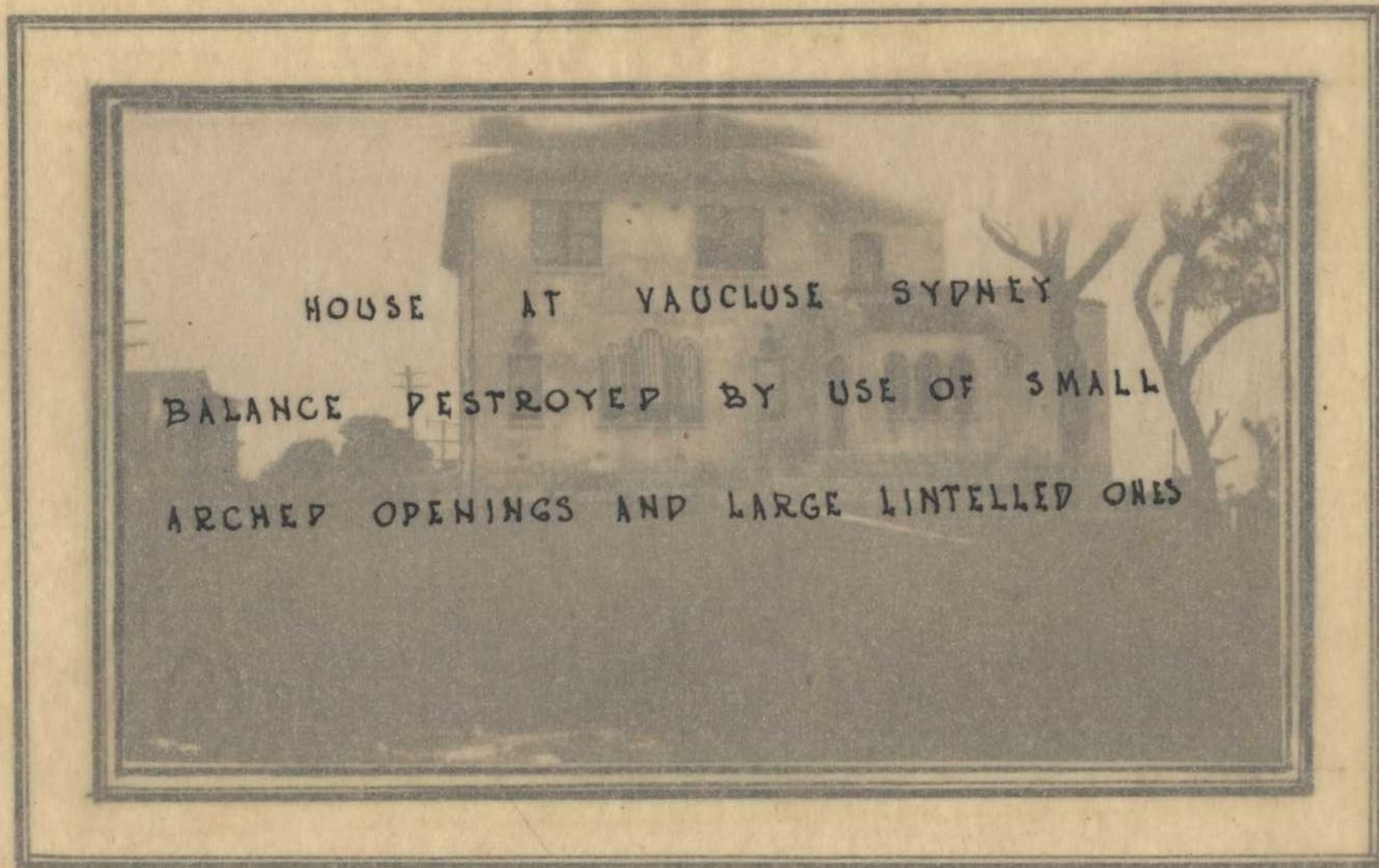


HOUSE AT LOS ANGELES

ILLUSTRATING FAULTY MASSING

AND LACK OF SIMPLICITY





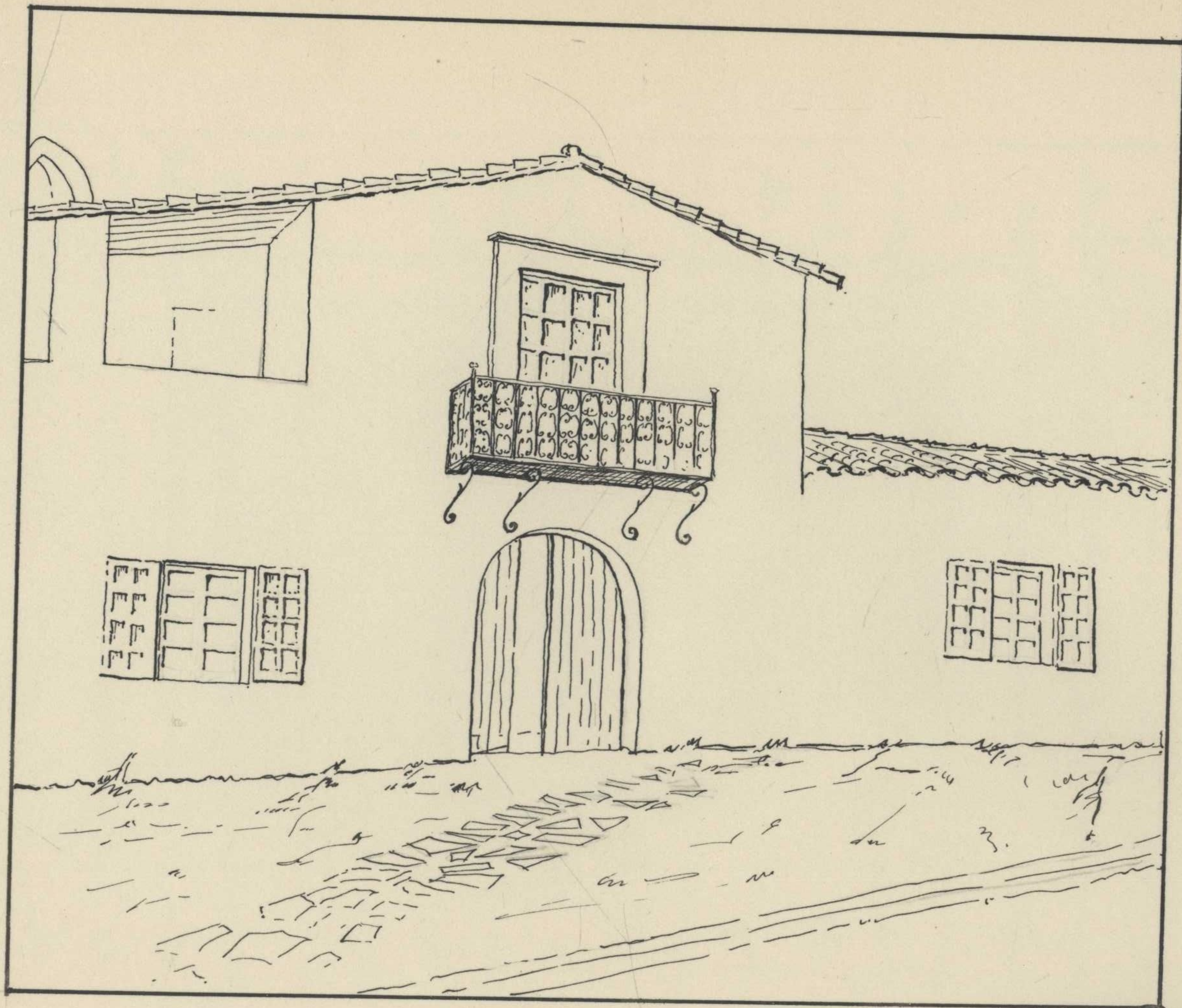
HOUSE AT VAUCLUSE SYDNEY

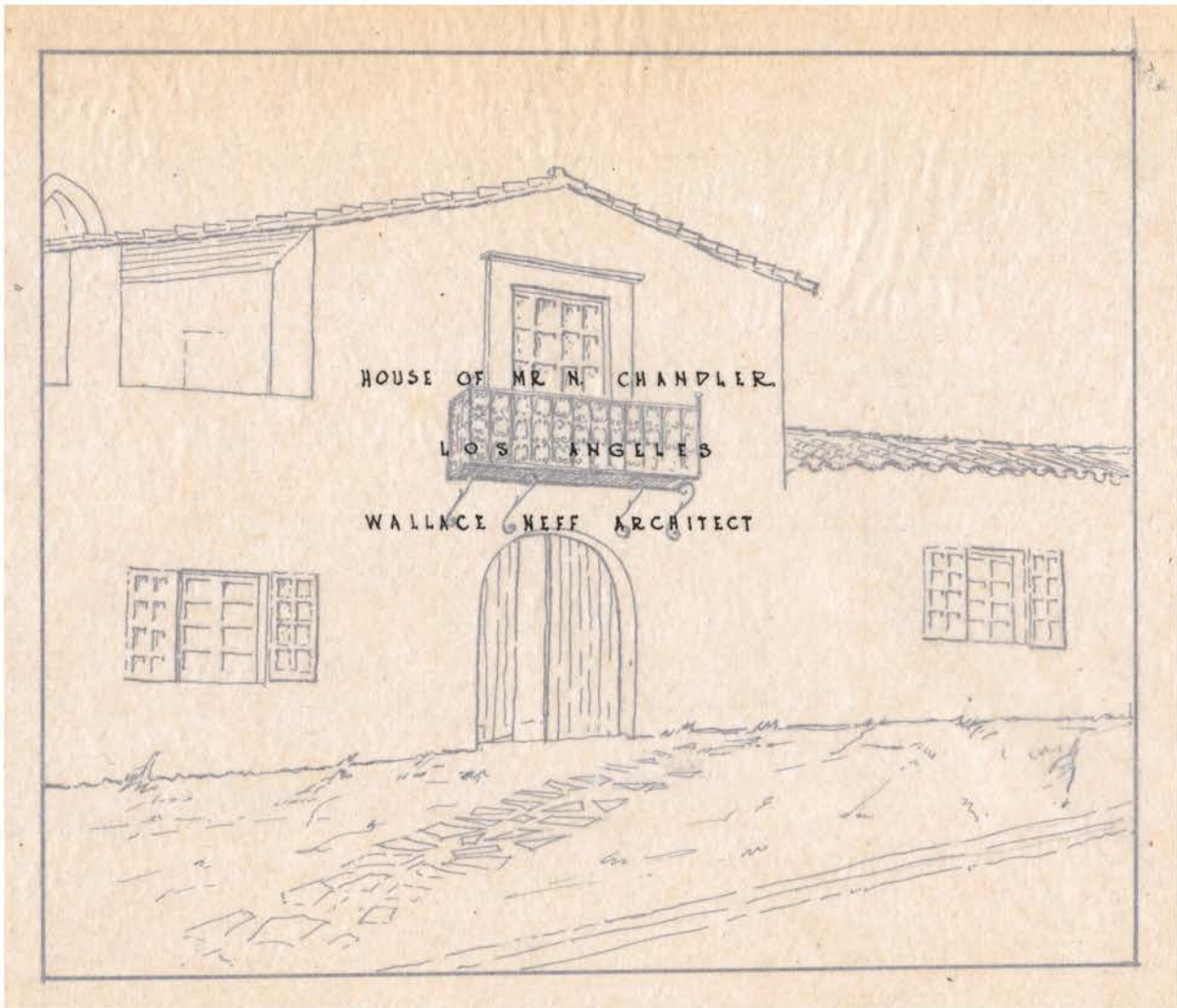
BALANCE DESTROYED BY USE OF SMALL
ARCHED OPENINGS AND LARGE LINTELLED ONES

main elevation; some small and round-arched, another with a segmental arch, flanked by candlesticks, another with a segmental head and completely surrounded by a frame, yet another square-headed. All are sub-divided by sash-bars, but in no two windows are the panes the same size.

We have our twisted columns, to be sure, but they support nothing, and are merely placed against the window-mullions with their caps ending in space.

The second example is from Vaucluse, Sydney. It is better than the other, but still the effect is somewhat strained. Here it is the arch which the architect felt he must have at all cost, and he





HOUSE OF MR. N. CHANDLER

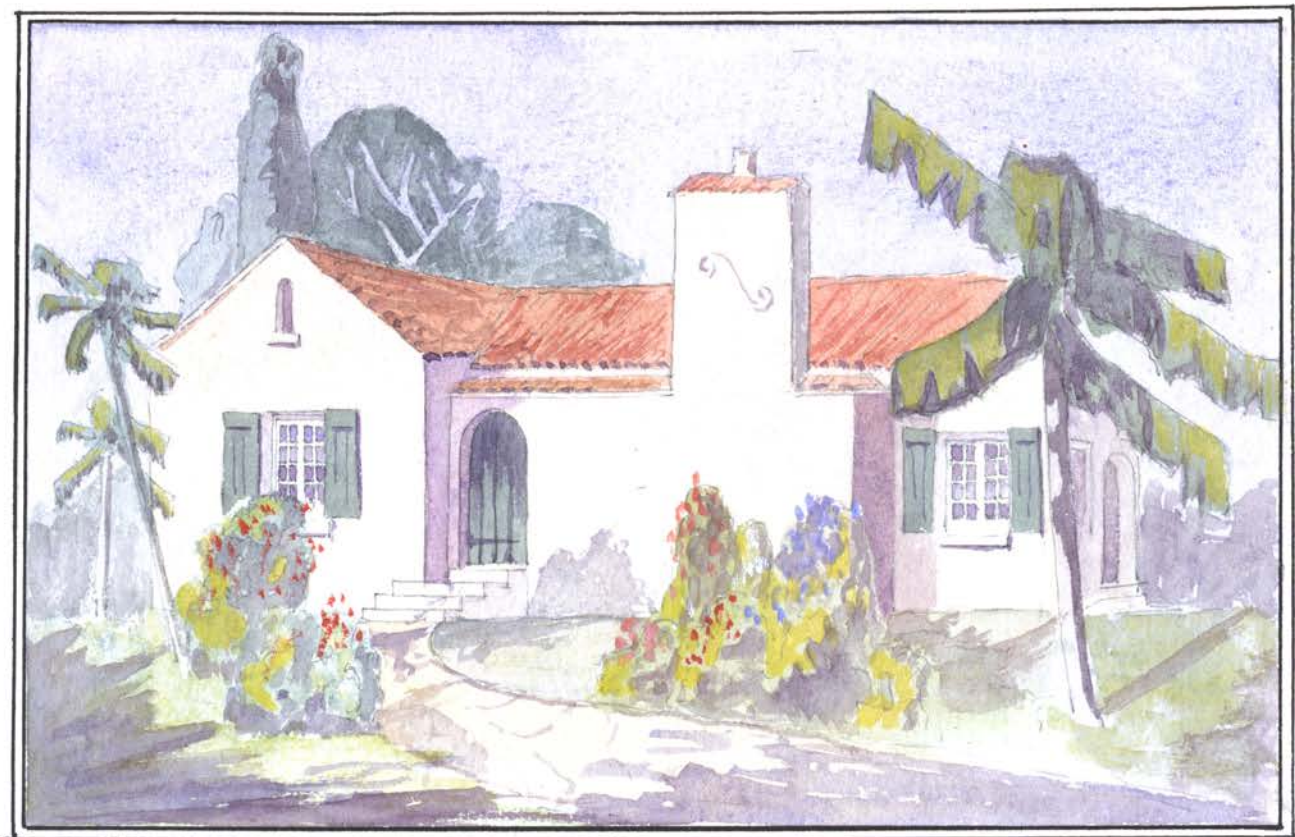
LOS ANGELES

WALLACE NEFF ARCHITECT

has spoilt the otherwise pleasing balance of his elevation by arching openings which are only about one quarter of the span of the lintelled ones - a practice which always gives an illogical and unsatisfactory effect.

In the next example we find no twisted columns, no arched windows, no rope moulds, no tower - yet it cannot be denied that the architect has caught the spirit of Spanish design. The house is simple and straightforward; nothing is inserted which is not logical.

The walls are plain, and interest is centred in the balcony over the entrance. The large opening of the sleep-out porch is perhaps not quite satisfactorily placed, but this

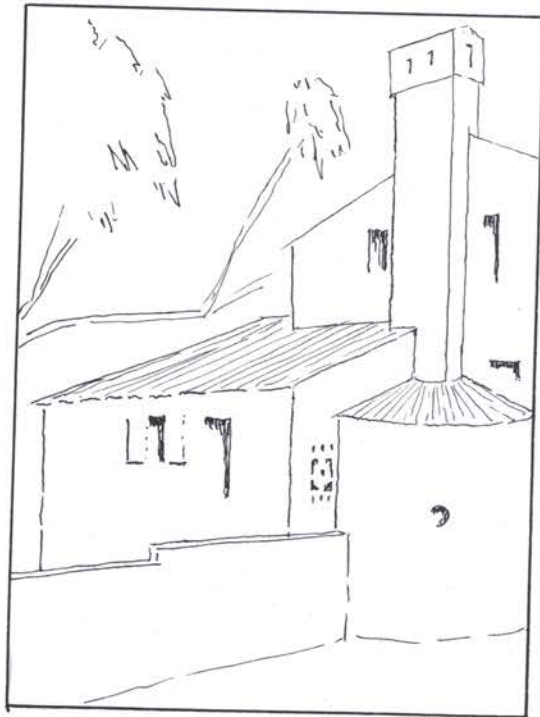


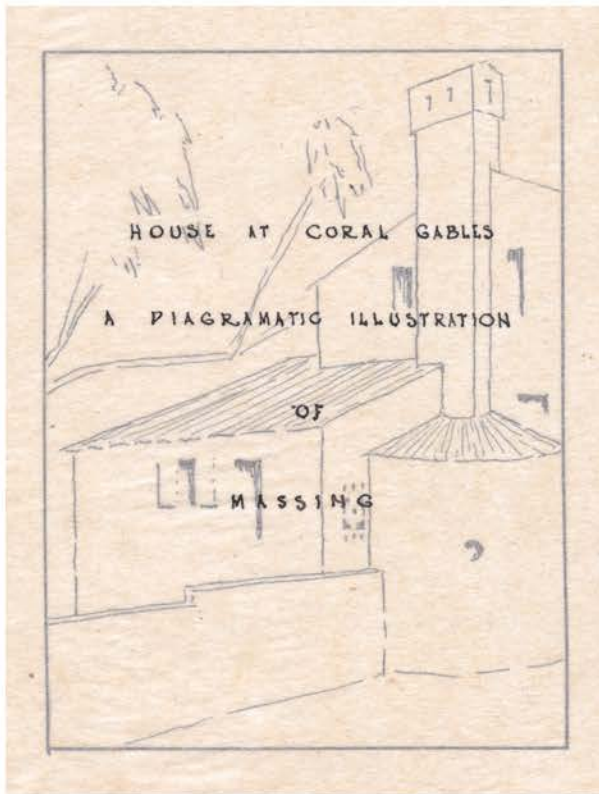
error is not the result of any straining after effect.

Another example is shown opposite. Here simplicity again holds sway, and the whole effect is gained by balancing the mass of the chimney against that of the gable on the other side of the entrance.

The house from Coral Gables, Florida, U.S.A., is another example of the charm of carefully considered masses. The detail in this is severely plain, but the grouping of the various parts more than compensates for any lack of interest.

The lean-to roofs seem to the casual eye to be placed anywhere, but they all build up to the central feature of the chimney.

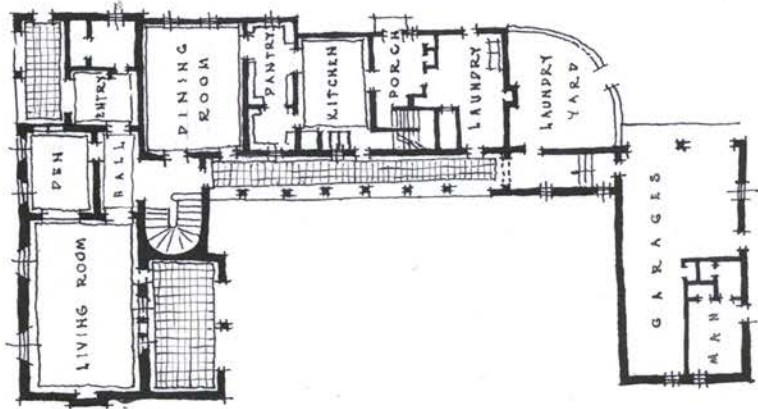


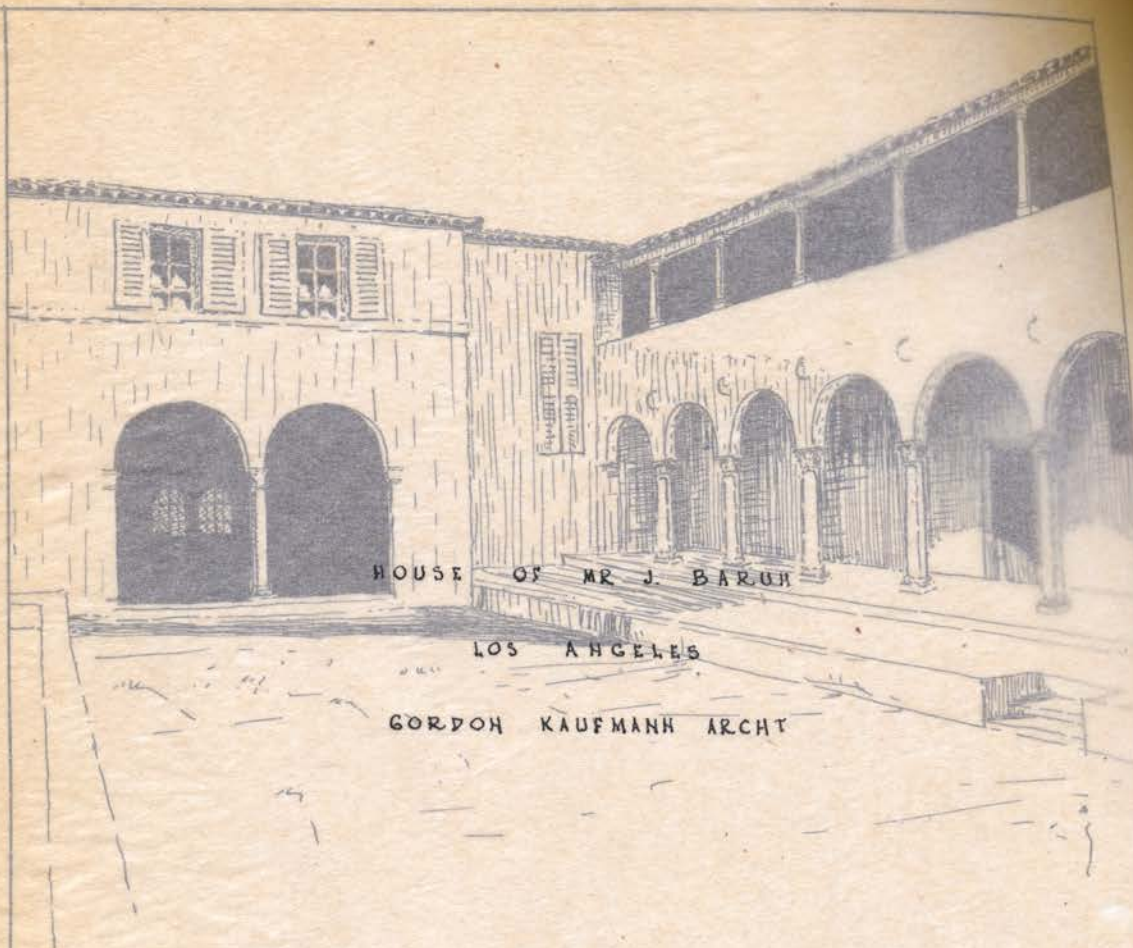


which is carried up and emphasised and so pulls the whole design together.

The setting too is brought into the picture and made part of the house - the branches of a neighbouring tree just complete the composition from this point of view. It may have been an accident here, but such accidents teach us that similar effects can be gained intentionally by careful study of the positions for planting new trees, or of the setting out of the plan with regard to existing trees.

The plan of the house of Mr. J. Baruh shows an adaptation of the Italian use of connecting loggias, and the covered way not being on the weather side of the house, the scheme is quite

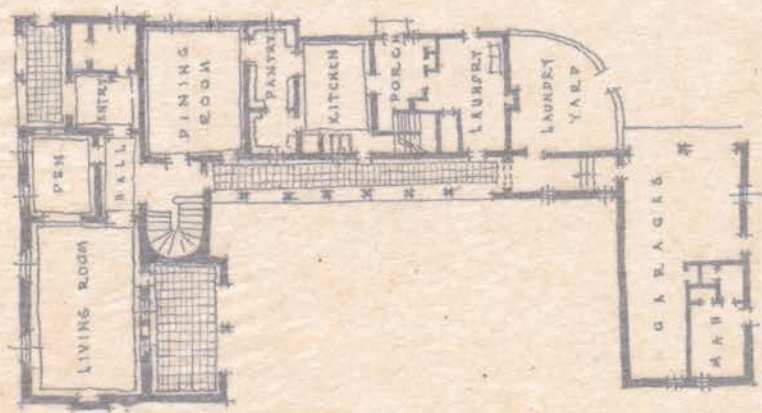




HOUSE OF MR. J. BARUH

LOS ANGELES

GORDON KAUFMANN ARCHT



practicable. The perspective sketch is taken looking into the "back-yard". Compare this "back-yard" with those of the houses of Sydney, particularly with those whose builders have scorned to follow any "style."

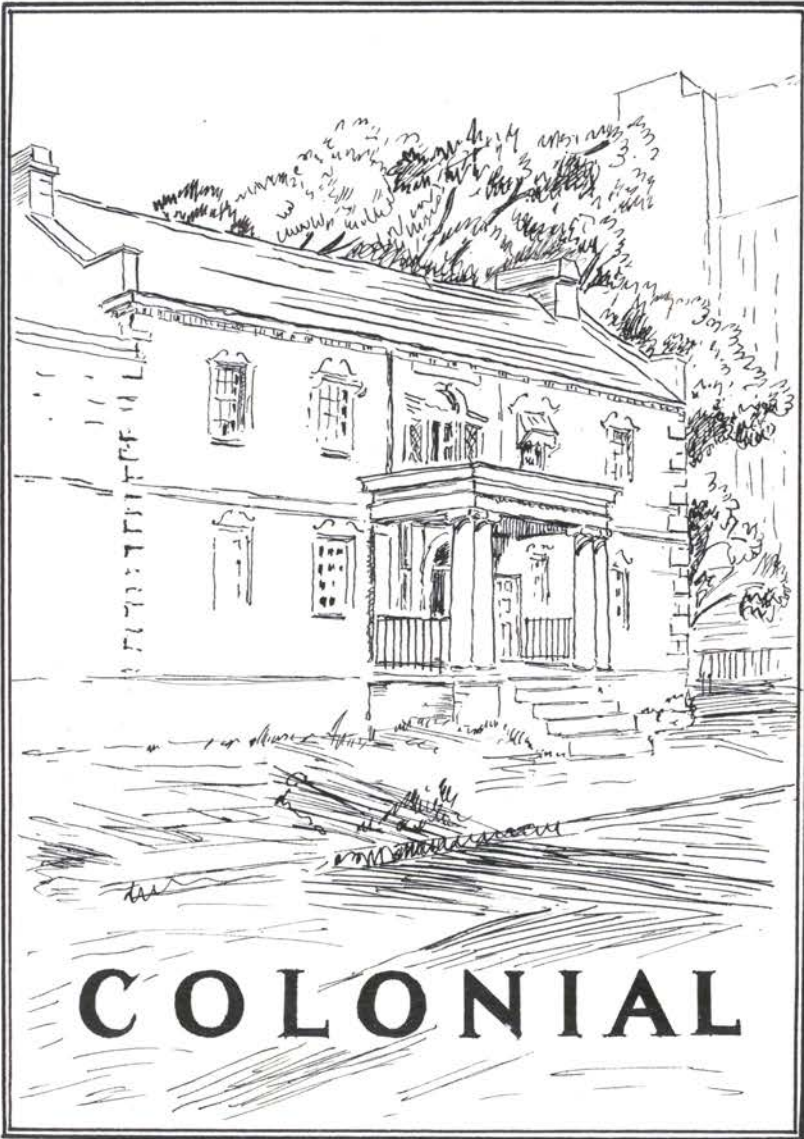
This example shows too the application of the Italian principle of attention to detail - no side of the house must be left untidy. The arched ground floor loggia in stone and stucco with the lintelled wooden one above might have been taken straight from Spain or Italy, but it fulfils the requirements of the plan so satisfactorily that even such a direct transplantation cannot be condemned.

Examples of modern work with Mediterranean influence could

be multiplied, but enough has been shown to point out the lines on which the best work is being done.

And to that work are signed the names of men who, like Charles A. Platt, have thoroughly studied the principles of composition as well as the detail of the houses of Spain and Italy.





COLONIAL



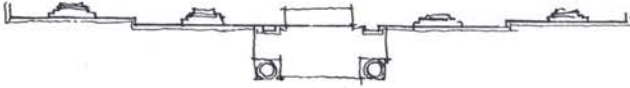
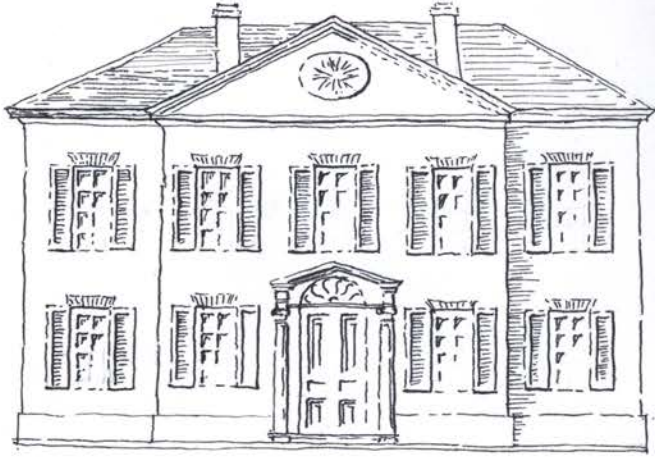
The solution of architectural problems by our ancestors in our own land must always be of greatest interest to us. And since the early architecture of America presents many points of similarity to that of Australia, it becomes natural to study both under the heading "colonial." Before doing so, however, some mention must be made of the prevailing types of building in England at the times when the colonies were first settled. The first pilgrims sailed for America not very many years after the death of Inigo Jones. That pioneer of the Ren-

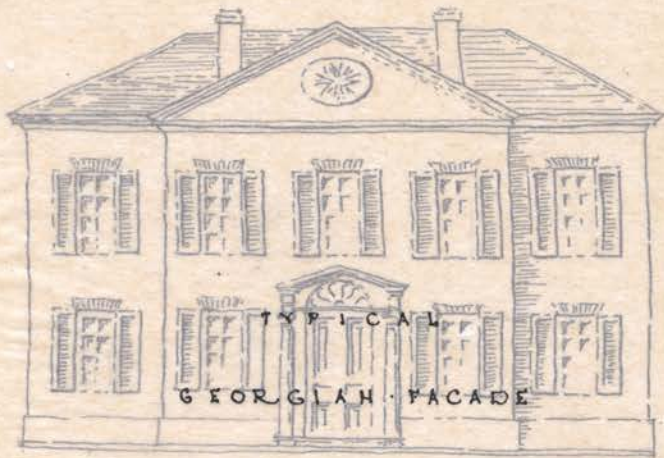
-aissance in England had gone straight to Italy for his inspiration, and had transplanted Palladian principles and forms to English shores. There they flourished - with certain modifications.

The first modification was the omission of the loggia, due to the rigor of the English climate; the next was the substitution of brick itself for the wall surface instead of cement rendering.

This again was a result of the climate, for England is a land of mists and fogs, not of brilliant sunshine; consequently a wall surface must have inherent texture instead of relying on shadows to provide interest.

But the main principles of Palladio's designs were applied - the symmetry of the main elevation, the plain wall surface, capped usually with





used by Jones, in being adapted to smaller work, retained much of their dignity. To begin with, balance of proportions was characteristic of smaller Italian work, but symmetry was not; the latter, however, was a feature of most Georgian houses. The courtyard disappeared in England in all but the largest houses, the main elevation particularly being flat and unbroken, except perhaps for a central gable or small pedimented porch to mark the entrance — both descendants of Palladio's noble two-storied porch. Sometimes a flat-roofed portico was over the doorway, this having its origin in the lintelled Italian entrance loggia, since it was the same form added to the building instead of being incorporated in it.

In some of the houses, more

particularly the larger ones, cut stone dressings were employed; then the windows were usually architraved or pedimented. But the omission of these dressings gave rise to the use of flat rubbed-brick arches over the windows; these were often picked out in bricks different in colour from the rest of the wall. These arches give a distinct character to the building and have come to be known as the most typical feature of Georgian work. Sometimes windows had a semi-circular arch, with the voussours picked out in bricks of a different colour; an excellent example of this treatment is St. James' Church, King St., Sydney, where the arches are of rose pink bricks against the orange-red of

the main walling.

Windows might be flat or round arched, but in one feature the Georgian house almost invariably retained the arch, and that was the entrance doorway, where the arch was either semi-circular or semi-elliptical.

Often sidelights were added to give a greater sweep to the arch, and consequently more importance to the entrance, without making the door an unwieldy size. The arch was filled with a fanlight of wood or iron.

The detail of this fanlight, as of the little ornament used in the facade, was always restrained; great attention was paid to the profile of every mould.

The outstanding characteristics, then, of the houses of this period

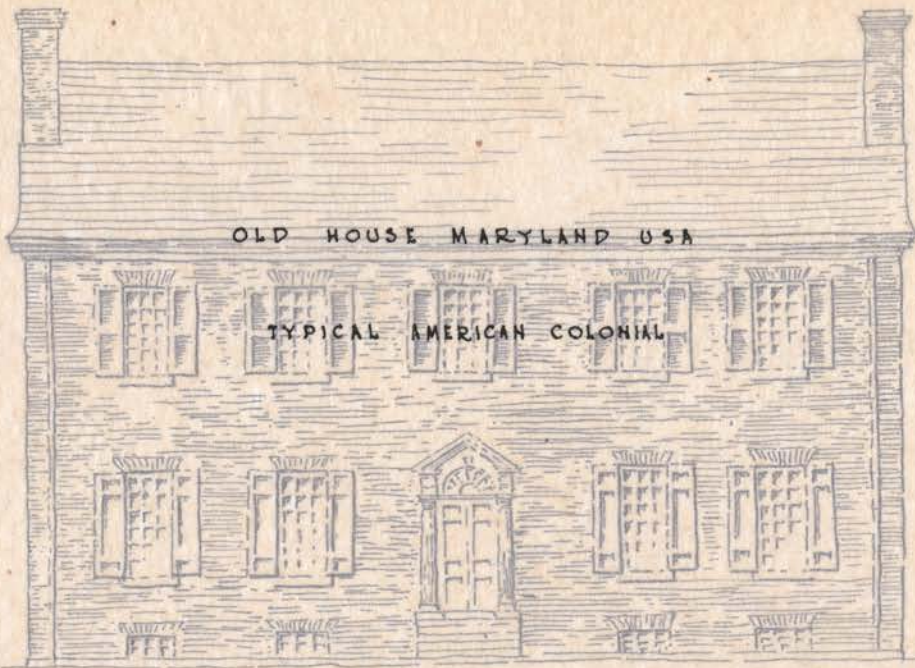
were dignity and refinement, and they formed a fitting background for the pomp and ceremony of a splendid time, when England was powerful and her people rich. A picture full of life and colour should have a sober frame, and against the restraint of their buildings the tableaux of lavish entertaining stood out in vivid relief.

As we have mentioned, the first colonists arrived in America when the Palladian forms introduced by Inigo Jones were being generally used in England. Consequently it was these forms which the colonists employed when their first hardships were over and they could think beyond log huts with bark roofs - huts which, incidentally, were

not without a charm of their own.

But, just as Jones had used Palladio's forms with a difference, now the colonists used Jones' forms with a difference. The loggia appeared again under the influence of the warm climate, but this time in wood almost invariably, even if the house itself were of brick or stone. There had been no place for it in the English type, so now it was something added to the familiar forms, with a roof of its own, instead of being part of the general mass and under its roof. Changes in proportions were brought about by a general use of wood where stone had usually been employed - in the entrance porch, in the cornice





OLD HOUSE MARYLAND USA

TYPICAL AMERICAN COLONIAL

under the eaves; sometimes indeed the whole house was of timber construction, being of the same forms simply translated into the new material.

Communication between England and America being constant, the general development of architecture was along the same lines; in the colony we find monumental houses belonging to the early days, some even having the two-storied porch. Then a process of simplification went on just as it did in the old country, until a typical colonial house was arrived at even as a typical Georgian house was evolved.

The typical American colonial house is shown opposite; it had two storeys and a cellar, and was entirely of brick with

wood for the details ; consequently the characteristic gauged brick arches were present. Ornament was sparingly used, but again great attention was paid to detail ; as a field for study of joinery work American colonial houses are unsurpassed.

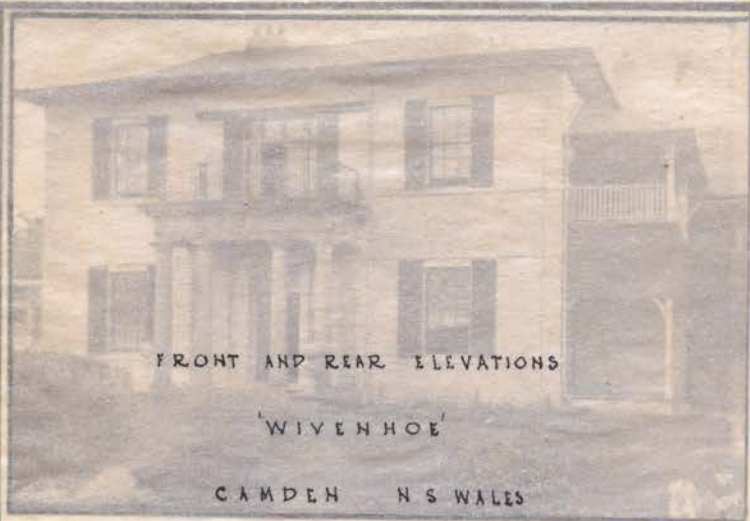
The first colony in Australia was not founded until late in the eighteenth century, when America had been settled for a century and when domestic architecture in England had been considerably simplified. Nowhere in this country do we find large and monumental houses such as were erected in the early days in America. The type which was first introduced here was the simpler Georgian. And once it had been introduced it began to

diverge a little more from the original than had the American, the reason being that ships came less frequently to our far-lying island.

To begin with, the L- or U-shaped plan giving sheltered courts came once more into favour, because Sydney is subject to both hot sun and strong winds. 'Greystanes', on Prospect Hill, the home of one of the Lawsons, is an example of a U-shaped plan (the present billiard-room was originally a courtyard); so is 'Kelvin', near Suddenham; the plan of an old house, now deserted, on the Bow-pasture Road, said to have belonged to one Colonel Keys, is L-shaped.

The courtyard was usually to the rear, since the builders





FRONT AND REAR ELEVATIONS

'WIVENHOE'

CAMDEN N.S. WALES

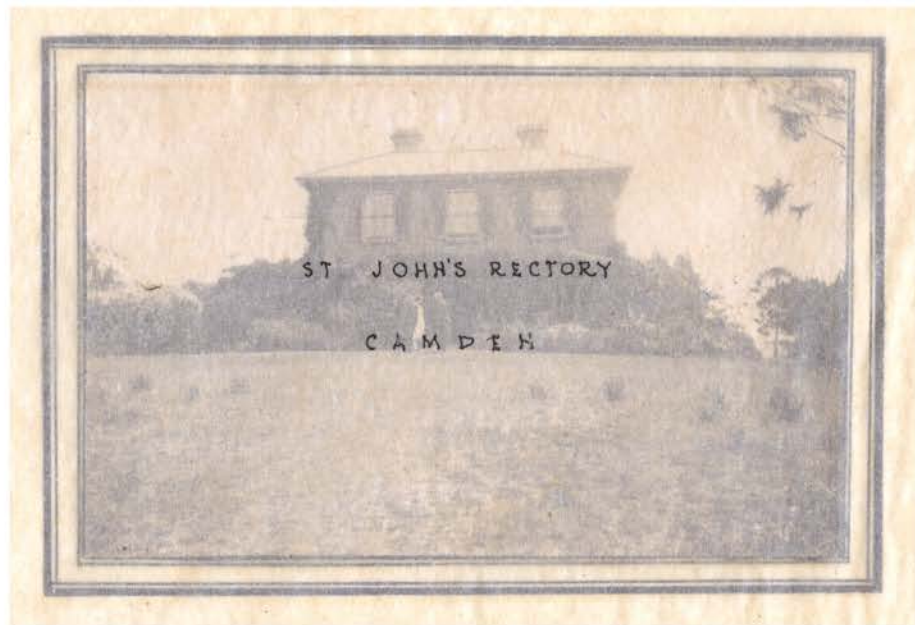


felt they must preserve the straight facade to which their forefathers had accustomed them.

There are two types of houses, one being of two storeys, and more or less following the Georgian tradition, the other single-storied and much freer.

Consider the two-storied type first. The chief alteration to the elevation, as in America, lay in the addition of loggias. There was generally one on the main facade, and often one on the rear as well. Since the old builders chose their sites on the hill-tops, with acres of glorious pasture- or bush-lands stretching away before them, they could not help but build loggias where they could sit, sheltered from the sun, and gaze out over their new country.



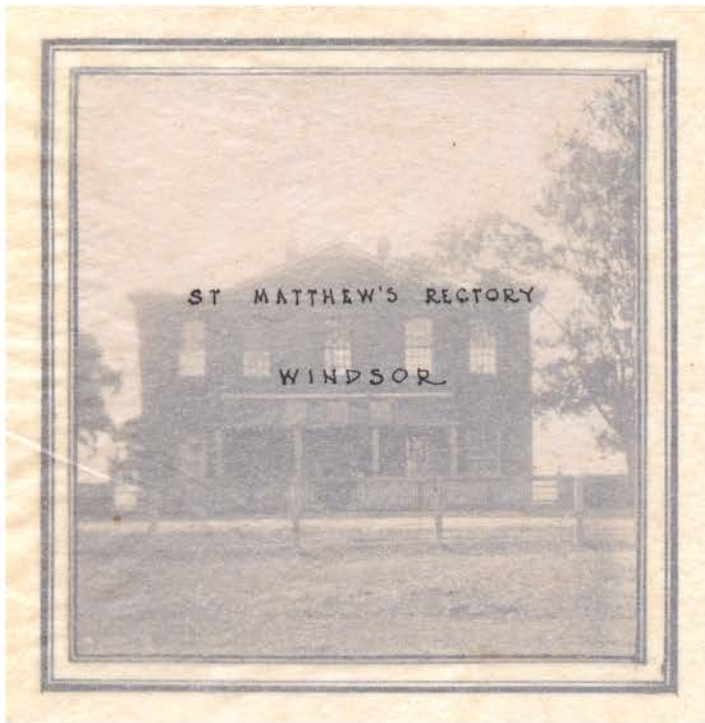


ST JOHN'S RECTORY

CAMDEN

and again as in America the loggia was an addition to the main structure and not part of it; sometimes it was two-storied, but more often only one. The construction was simple and straightforward — a number of wooden posts supporting a cross beam, which in its turn carried the rafters of the lean-to roof. The posts might be oblong, square or round; they were seldom given more ornament than a slightly moulded cap and base, or perhaps a panel, if they happened not to be round — fluting was the exception rather than the rule, though it is to be found at Burdekin House. Occasionally stone loggias were employed, as at 'Subiaco', on the Parramatta River,





ST MATTHEW'S RECTORY

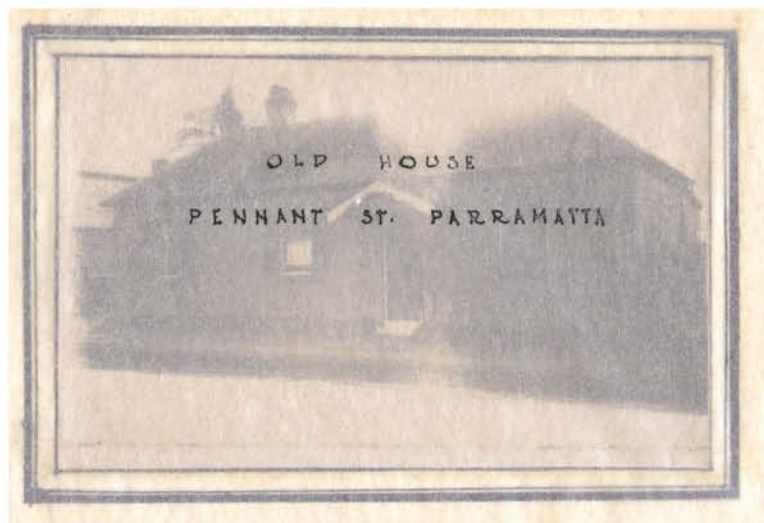
WINDSOR

and the building now occupied by the Clwington Old Women's Home; but in stone as in wood the same simplicity held.

Above the loggia on the main elevation the principle of a straight facade was adhered to; it was the exception rather than rule for it to be broken even by a central gable. The rectory at Windsor is one of the exceptions; that at Camden shows the more usual form.

If no loggia existed on the front elevation, a porch over the door was added, this being either of wood or stone and flat roofed; those in America were more usually pedimented. An example of a wooden porch is Old Government House, Parramatta, now Junior





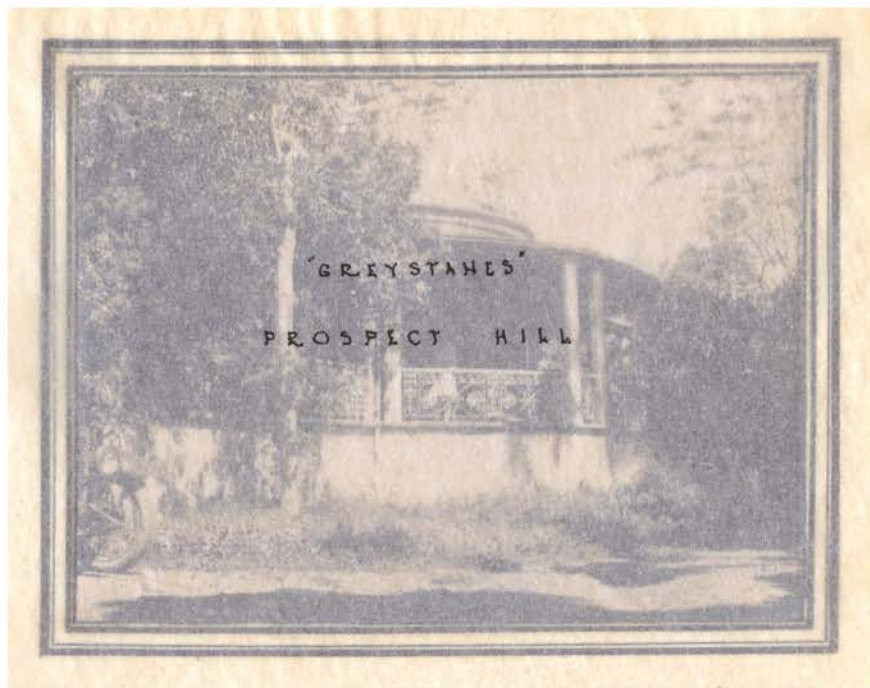
OLD HOUSE

PENNANT ST. PARRAMATTA

House of The King's School; of a stone one, 'Wivenhoe', near Camden, where the original homestead stands, intact externally, silently rebuking the medley of restless additions which from time to time have been made around it.

Occasionally, if the house were directly on the street, a hood only was placed over the door, this again being either of stone or wood. A stone example exists in what is now the Bank of New South Wales in the main street of Campbelltown; a wooden example is shown on a single storied house from Pennant Street, Parramatta. Originally this entrance was on the centre of the facade; the extra bay to one



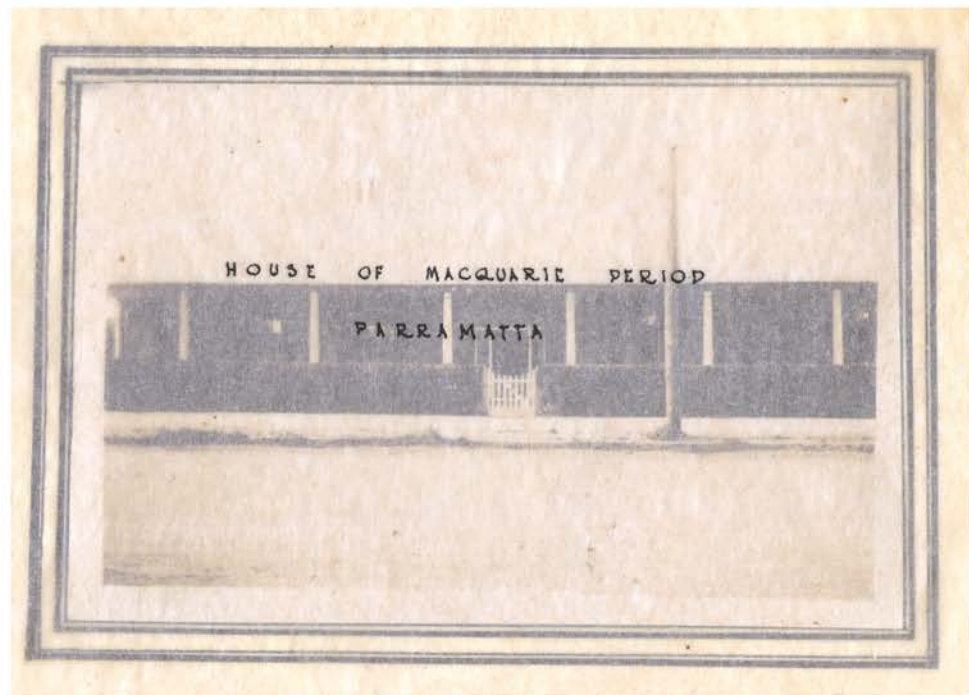


side is a recent addition.

Single-storied houses as well as the other type were well equipped with loggias, the difference here, however, being that they were usually under the same roof as the rest of the house, and were not added as lean-tos. "Greystones" is an exception; here the main roof rises well above that of the verandah, which, incidentally, runs round three sides of the house, its most delightful feature being a semi-circular porch with its flight of steps leading to the garden.

An excellent example of the common type with the main roof extending over the front loggia is the little Macquarie house from O'Connell Street, Parra-





HOUSE OF MACQUARIE PERIOD

PARRAMATTA

-matta. This type often has a high pitched roof.

The absence of an upper storey on these houses takes away some of their dignity and gives them instead a more homely air; even Macquarie Fields, with its pedimented Doric portico added to its wide loggia, looks more like a home than the country seat of a governor.

Both types of houses show the application of the Georgian principle of plain wall surfaces with accents of interest. The wall material was either textured brick - and fine brick, of broken sizes and broken colour ranges - giving the gauged arches, or brick cement rendered - a necessary precaution





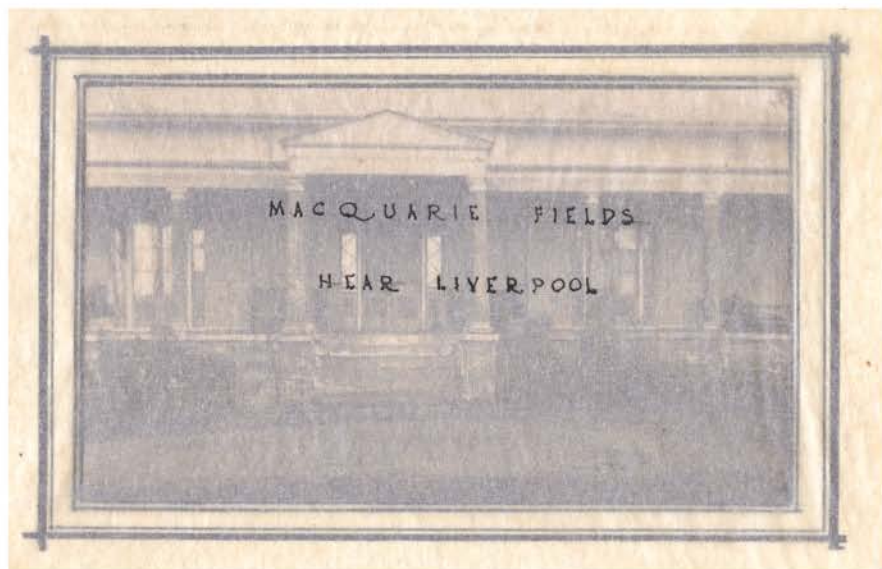
COLONEL KEYS' HOUSE

COW PASTURE ROAD

in exposed positions on account of the porosity of the hand-made bricks. The doorways were of the typical Georgian fanlight type, while windows seldom had any enrichment other than their arches and their coloured shutters.

The necessity for accenting windows by shutters or by some other means, however, is illustrated by a glance at the Colonel Keys house. Here windows are simply holes punched in a textured white wall, without shutters; the door behind the loggia is not even accented. The whole façade is devoid of interest; compare it with the rectory at Camden, which has the same component parts, but has both window shutters and





MACQUARIE FIELDS

NEAR LIVERPOOL

a marked entrance door.

Ornament was even more sparingly used in Australian examples than in the American ones; to begin with, wide overhanging eaves took the place of the cornice at the top of the wall, while the only orders employed were Doric and very occasionally Ionic (as in Burdekin House, Macquarie Street); in American homes the Corinthian of various types was used as well.

One other important feature marks the difference between Australian and American Colonial.

In Italy, and correspondingly in Georgian work, roofs as a rule were hipped. So they are in Australia, but the typical American houses are gabled. This

is probably due to the influence of the Dutch settlers who for a while disputed with England the possession of parts of America.

In the preceding chapter the underlying principles of Italian and Spanish work were discussed.

Let us now analyse those of Georgian and Colonial types. We find again simplicity of line and mass, symmetry of arrangement, restraint of ornament, the use of accented centres of interest - in short, almost exactly the same principles. This is not surprising, since the most typical of Colonial examples has a lineage which is directly traceable back to the work of Palladio. But it may be as well to briefly summarise the

reasons why two classes of buildings with the same underlying principles can be so different in appearance.

The most important reason is change of material. Obviously two houses which are identical line for line will look entirely different if one is of wood and the other of stone. And if each material is logically used it must of itself produce modifications - take for example the entrance into the design of gauged arches when brick is the wall surface.

Again, the use of timber for loggias at once precludes the use of the favourite arch of the Italians; every example must be lintelled.

The roofing material of the Mediterranean was always vividly

coloured tiles; in England this became slate or shingles, while in the colonies we find these two materials and also quite often corrugated iron. In addition to taking away most of the colour of the composition, the use of the smaller unit required a roof of steeper pitch, thereby at once changing the character of the design.

Thus it follows that the architect should first fix the principles of his design, and after that let his material carry him to its logical conclusion.

It has been shown how our forefathers adapted other types to suit the conditions of our country; it follows, then, that it should be easier to adapt the work they

did to modern needs than to transplant types from other countries.

Unfortunately, however, there is too much truth in the saying, "A prophet is not without honour save in his own country", and we are apt to despise these treasures of ours for their very simplicity.

We call them old-fashioned and useless, just because they are our own - "Oh, the brave music of a distant drum!"

There is an excellent illustration of this lack of appreciation to be found on the outskirts of Liverpool. A family there has been living for just over a century in a simple and typically charming colonial home, with a broad two-storied loggia facing the

river. Now, unfortunately, the place is falling into ruin, so the family has built itself a weath-
-erboard cottage, right on the road and away from the river, which is more like a Hudson's Ready-cut Home than anything else, and which has about ten square feet of verandah facing the road, with none at all towards the river.

Some fine old trees, of course, are around the original house, while the new one stands in bare desolation. Yet they are prouder of it than of the old home!

It was with the glad hail of a fellow-countryman in a strange land, too, that a kindly nun greeted us when we visited one old house, which

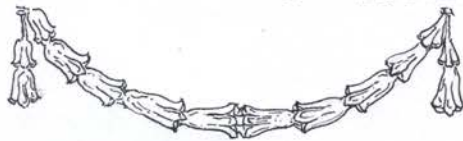
is now a Roman Catholic orphanage, and has many modern additions. She saw that our eyes were all for the original home, and exclaimed, "Oh, I see you have the right spirit and know something of buildings. That is the only piece here worth having - the rest is all tawdry beside it!" But she was the only one of her sisterhood who thought so.

It may be argued that the best of these houses are too large for modern requirements - indeed many of them, such as 'Greystones' are empty and falling into ruin on that account, while others are used as schools and asylums. But they themselves are adaptations of larger houses,

so why cannot we take our cue from them and adapt them yet again? Besides, we do not want to copy them, but merely to let their principles influence us.

The American Colonial type, too, on its simple rectangular plan under one roof, is particularly suitable for small houses on restricted sites, where economy is essential and a courtyard impracticable.

But apply to colonial types the remarks concerning so-called Spanish which were made in the last chapter. A few shutters and a pedimented porch do not make a colonial house.





When concluding a speech in favour of a motion it is customary to bring the motion itself once more into the foreground.

"This house is in favour of architects turning to the accumulated experiences of the past to obtain inspiration for solving the problems of the present."

But let the point once more be stressed that turning to the past for inspiration does not

mean slavishly imitating those solutions of past problems which those who solved them have left us. It is ridiculous, as Corbousier himself points out, for a modern American millionaire to sleep in an unhygienic box-like bed from Brittany in order to get the proper "atmosphere" in his French mediæval castle at Los Angeles.

But a successful design is always such because it follows some definite principle, and principles can be applied the world over. We should strive to follow the lesson taught by Yeats in the "bountess bathleen"—
"The Light of Lights,
'Looks always on the motive, not the deed,
'The Shadow of Shadows on the deed alone."

1931
THE END

