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ARCHITECTURE

An Essay by FRANK DICKERSON, JR., '27

AT one time in history,—and it was but a few hundred years ago,—a man to complete his education had to know a great deal about architecture. Maybe you did not know that Thomas Jefferson, though not an architect, designed his own home, and also most of the buildings of the University of Virginia. Although this requirement is passed it would help one to appreciate and understand present-day architecture.

There have been vast numbers of definitions given by great men to describe architecture. But each one is weak in one place or another. Here is the one that seems to top the list: "Architecture is the logic which seeks to harmonize in a scientifically constructed building the requirements of utility and beauty."

How many of you engineers have visited the Department of Architecture in our College of Engineering? The department is located on the first floor of Brown Hall in the west wing. There is always a large number of drawings hanging in the halls. Some time when you have a few minutes to spare drop around and get acquainted with the department. Some one will be glad to show you around and tell what it's all about.

Architecture is as old as the hills proverbially and actually. The caves in the hills were the first architecture. One of the first things Adam did, in the Garden of Eden, was to find something to eat (a habit that has been passed down to college students). After he had his fill, the next thing he probably did was to find himself shelter of some kind. So architecture is the second oldest work of man; agriculture being the oldest.

As man progressed from one age to another he told the history of his development in his architecture. As his mind matured, he devised better shelter and ways of preparing and raising his food. He had to do this to keep up with his growing taste for a more comfortable living (or shall we say his increasing laziness).

This leads us up to that majestic and awe-inspiring land of Egypt. You, no doubt, have seen many pictures of their beautiful and picturesque architecture. What is more impressive than those rough bleak pyramids? The Egyptian architecture is known as "post and lintel." This consisting of two upright stones with a flat stone bridging the space between; this distance being always comparatively small. The capacious expanse of the temples of Karnak and Luxor are good examples of this type. When you again see a picture of ancient Egypt notice how large and massive their buildings, tombs and monuments are.

As the Egyptians declined, the Greeks rose to power. Greek architecture is beautiful to look upon; it is pleasing and restful to the eye, yet it is masterful. It is also of the "post and lintel" type but it is very greatly refined yet retaining simplicity. It is known as the Classic style. The Greek was a master stone-cutter as the remains show. The surviving Corinthian columns of the Olympieion on the plains near Athens, the Par-

thenon on the acropolis at Athens are good examples of this style.

After the mighty Romans vanquished the Greeks, the Grecian architecture declined and the Roman buildings took the lead. The victors had developed a new style of architecture—that is the dome and the arch for spanning large distances. They took advantage of this as their buildings show. The public baths at Rome, the Therme of Caracalla, Therme of Diocletian and their triumphal arches will show the greatness and massiveness of their buildings and monuments. They loved ornament and covered their buildings with it. With all their bigness and decorations, the buildings of the Romans did not compare in beauty with the rather plain and simple ones of the Greeks.

As Rome neared the end of its supremacy, Constantine came to the throne. He became a Christian and granted religious toleration. The Christians came out of their caves and catacombs where they had been holding their services. They cast about for places in which to worship. There was a number of Roman basilicas which had not been used for a long time and they dedicated these for their churches. As the religion grew there was need of more churches and as the basilica had set a precedent the new churches were very much like them. These are known as the Early Christian Architecture. Good examples are San Clements and San Peter, Rome.

During the Roman and Early Christian periods a style developed in Asia Minor which was called Byzantine after a city by the same name (known now as Constantinople). It is quite like Roman architecture. They used the dome a great deal, placing many of them on one building as Hagia Sophia. They used a great amount of color in their interiors and also developed the basket or cushion capital and dossier blocks. This style is very picturesque and interesting.

The period of Early Christian architecture was short and soon surpassed by the quaint style known as Romanesque. This architecture is very much like the Roman from which it derives its name. It reflects some of the Byzantine arts of the East. This architecture is unlike the others in that it spreads over a large part of Europe. Hayes Hall on our own campus is a fair example.

So far all of these styles, with the exception of the Romanesque, have been confined to the southern part of Europe, eastern part of Asia, and the northern part of Africa. Here the climate is warm and rather dry, and the winters are mild, used mostly to keep the sun out.

The vast hordes of barbarians of northern Europe had by now been civilized and Christianized and as there was need of places for worship they had to build them. Now the climate here was strikingly different. The summers were very comfortable but there was much rain and the winters were cold and bleak with a great deal of snow. Also building stones were found only in

small pieces. Taking this all together it was necessary for these people to create a new style of architecture and of which they did a very good job. This style was called Gothic, which means barbaric. It is a magnificent architecture. The buildings are tall and slim; this is also characteristic of much of the detail on and in the buildings. The buttress and the flying buttress were extensively used in all the buildings. The roofs were tall and steep on account of heavy snows and rain. Good examples of these buildings are Notre Dame in Paris and the cathedral of Amiens.

After the Gothic period comes the Renaissance, which means revival. It was the rejuvenation of the old Classic style, that is, the use of columns, lintels and arches inside, outside and as decorations. Similar plans and details of old Roman and Greek buildings were used in some cases. There are many beautiful structures that were executed in this style; of these "The Petit Trianon" at Versailles and "Whitehall Banqueting House" at Whitehall Palace in London are the leaders.

Following this comes the Modern style, that is, the architecture of today. You all know this type, the tall office building hundreds of feet high. Constructed with concrete and steel. The A. I. U. building of this city is an excellent example of this gigantic architecture of the modern age.

Architecture is an interesting subject and no one's education is complete without some knowledge of it. As stated before, man's progress is written in his architecture.
