

# JOURNAL OF THE AMERICAN INSTITUTE OF ARCHITECTS

Vol. II

AUGUST, 1914

Number 8

## CONTENTS

	Page
FRONTISPIECE—MISSION SANTA BARBARA, 1786 . . . . .	374
EL CAMINO REAL OF CALIFORNIA . . . . . <i>Fernand Parmentier (M)</i>	375
A QUEST OF BEAUTY . . . . .	389
THE QUESTION OF GOTHIC . . . . . <i>Bertram Grosvenor Goodhue</i>	398
AN APPRECIATION—THE CAPITOL COMMISSION OF WISCONSIN AND MR. POST .	398
HOUSING AND TOWN PLANNING . . . . . <i>Dr. Carol Aronovici</i>	399
The Garden City Idea in Urban Development	
A FLORENTINE CASSONE . . . . .	402
ROME LETTER . . . . .	403
PARIS LETTER . . . . .	404
THE FORUM . . . . .	405
INSTITUTE BUSINESS . . . . .	407
COMMITTEE WORK . . . . .	408
CHAPTER AND OTHER ACTIVITIES . . . . .	410
BOOK REVIEWS . . . . .	413

Published Monthly by

**THE AMERICAN INSTITUTE OF ARCHITECTS**

Crescent and Mulberry Streets, Harrisburg, Pa.

The Octagon, Washington, D. C.

*Committee on Publication*

FRANK C. BALDWIN, *Chairman*  
H. VAN BUREN MAGONIGLE

D. KNICKERBACKER BOYD  
W. R. B. WILLCOX

CHARLES L. BORIE, JR.  
THOMAS R. KIMBALL

C. H. WHITAKER, *Managing Editor*, The Octagon

50 CENTS A COPY. \$5 PER YEAR

Copyright, 1914, by the American Institute of Architects. Entered as second-class matter, December 20, 1912, at the Post Office at Harrisburg, Pa., under Act of Congress of August 24, 1912

# Institute Business

## Official Notices from the Secretary to Members

The attention of all members of the Institute is called to the following:

### *Nominations for Officers.*

In accordance with the latest Convention order in relation to nominations for officers, "Any fifteen Members or Fellows belonging to not less than two Chapters may nominate candidates for any office to become vacant, providing said nominations are filed with the Secretary of the Institute not less than sixty days prior to the Convention at which the election is to take place." At present this date should be assumed as October 1.

The offices for which nominations are to be made are: President, First Vice-President, Second Vice-President, Secretary, Treasurer, Three Directors, and one Auditor.

### *Fellowships.*

A circular notice has been sent to the Secretary of each Chapter, asking that recommendations for advancement to Fellowship be sent to the Octagon by Chapters not later than about September 15, in order that ample time may be allowed for consideration of the names so submitted.

It is suggested that members or any committees in Chapters communicate with their respective Secretaries, if they have any recommendations to make.

In view of the discussion on Fellowships, which occurred at the last Convention, it is further suggested that the names of candidates be accompanied

with statements as to the attainments of the members recommended, both for the information of the Board and of the Convention.

### *Arrears of Dues.*

The Board of Directors, at its last meeting, decided that some amendment to the By-Laws would be necessary in order to provide remedial legislation for reducing the large amount of dues in arrears. Such an amendment will later be proposed for discussion by the Convention, accompanied by a statement of the existing conditions.

### *Reserve Fund.*

The Board of Directors also hereby gives notice that it will propose to the Convention, in accordance with Article V, Section 5, of the By-Laws, that an appropriation be voted from the Reserve Fund to discharge the mortgage of \$3,000 now in force on the property of the Institute adjoining the Octagon. The treasurer will present a statement showing the advantages of this proposed transaction.

### *Convention Place.*

The Board has fixed the next meeting-place of the Convention at Washington, the date to be later determined, prompt notice of which will be given. Any date fixed at a later period than December 1 will automatically extend that number of days the tentative dates here suggested for filing nominations for officers, etc.

D. KNICKERBACKER BOYD, *Secretary.*

## In Memoriam

ALBERT PISSIS

DIED JULY 5, 1914

Admitted to the Institute in 1886

# JOURNAL OF THE AMERICAN INSTITUTE OF ARCHITECTS

Vol. II

NOVEMBER, 1914

Number 11

## CONTENTS

	Page
FRONTISPIECE—CHURCH AT GRAVESEND . . . . .	498
THE CONVENTION OF 1914 . . . . . <i>R. Clipston Sturgis, F.A.I.A.</i>	499
THE DESTRUCTION OF RHEIMS . . . . . <i>Jean-Paul Alaux</i>	500
ARCHITECTURAL DRAUGHTSMEN. IV—Thomas Girtin . <i>William Walker, A.R.E.</i>	502
PLAYING FAIR IN BUILDING . . . . . <i>J. Horace McFarland</i>	509
MAINTENON . . . . . <i>H. P. Pennington</i>	511
THE LINCOLN HIGHWAY AND THE AMERICAN INSTITUTE OF ARCHITECTS . . . . .	515
SEATED FIGURES. ITALIAN (Verona): 14TH CENTURY . . . . .	520, 521
IN MEMORIAM. Albert Pissis . . . . .	522
THE ANNUAL CONVENTION OF THE ARCHITECTURAL LEAGUE OF THE PACIFIC COAST . . . . .	525
THE FORUM . . . . .	527
INSTITUTE BUSINESS . . . . .	530
COMMITTEE WORK . . . . .	535
CHAPTER AND OTHER ACTIVITIES . . . . .	536
ROME LETTER . . . . .	539

Published Monthly by

**THE AMERICAN INSTITUTE OF ARCHITECTS**  
Crescent and Mulberry Streets, Harrisburg, Pa.  
The Octagon, Washington, D. C.

*Committee on Publication*

FRANK C. BALDWIN, *Chairman*  
H. VAN BUREN MAGONIGLE  
C. GRANT LA FARGE

W. R. B. WILLCOX  
C. H. WHITAKER, *Managing Editor*, The Octagon

CHARLES L. BORIE, JR.  
THOMAS R. KIMBALL  
WILLIAM M. EMERSON

50 CENTS A COPY. \$5 PER YEAR

Copyright, 1914, by the American Institute of Architects. Entered as second-class matter, December 20, 1912, at the  
Post Office at Harrisburg, Pa., under Act of Congress of August 24, 1912

## In Memoriam

ALBERT PISSIS

THE following introduction to a review of the works of Albert Pissis, a notice of whose recent death appeared in the *Journal* for August, was written by Mr. B. J. S. Cahill (*M*), in January, 1906, and at his suggestion is here reprinted as a tribute to the memory of Mr. Pissis.

"Ce style et ces sentiments sont si éloignés des nôtres que nous avons peine à les comprendre. Ils sont comme des parfums trop fins; nous ne les sentons plus; tant de délicatesse nous semble de la froideur ou de la fadeur."—TAINÉ.

"Je le sais, la doctrine du trop, de l'exagération dite légitime, de la monstruosité même, prise pour marque de génie, est à l'ordre du jour; je demande à n'en être que sous toute réserve; j'habite volontiers en deçà."—SAINTE-BEUVE.

"We need men who place nothing higher than the glory of their profession, men for whom that glory consists in having well performed whatever their profession called them to perform. Amidst the countless forms of consciousness, few are more indispensable to the progress of culture and civilization than professional loyalty, and I think of all the many virtues that may be ours, there are few that give us more just title to honor, or a better claim to the recognition of posterity."—FERDINAND BRUNETIERE.

Refinement of style which seems cold and insipid to coarse perceptions, moderation that persists in spite of passing extravagances, and loyalty to ideals that will brook no compromise, are the three notes which strike the dominant chord in the work of Albert Pissis; work that is in the aggregate of extraordinary merit, and which from first to last flows on in an even and harmonious series of architectural successes so far without a parallel on the Pacific Coast.

These three characteristics, which are so conspicuous in the work of Mr. Pissis, may well be considered separately as a general clue to the architect's career

before entering on to the consideration of his works individually.

The French was not the only influence by any means that controlled our early architecture; but it was always a potent one, not so much by the mass as by the quality of the output. During the years of subsequent mill-made mansions, Queen Anne and Romanesque revivals, the French influence continued to abide with us, where it grew and culminated in the work now under discussion. And this practical example of the vindication of Beaux-Arts teaching has grown up parallel with a similar movement throughout the East, although it is in no sense derived from it. The result of this general movement via New York and Boston, has also touched San Francisco in the persons of our younger practitioners more recently come amongst us who rejoice in the Beaux-Arts training; but they belong to a later generation and are not a part of the original impetus derived from French affiliations in San Francisco, which, as far back as 1872, was responsible for sending young Albert Pissis, then 20 years old, to study architecture in the *Ecole des Beaux-Arts* in Paris, under the special tutelage of Monsieur Guadet. The result of four years of this incomparable training on a mind naturally gifted, and by temperament, heredity, and inclination at one with its doctrine and spirit, is instantly visible, not only in the planning and appearance of Mr. Pissis's work, but in every part of the buildings themselves, to one who goes over them, and in all their details to one who examines them. This quality of a pervasive and diffused excellence deserves special consideration.

The delicate sensibility, the innate fineness of perception to which all excess is equally abhorrent is an inherent quality in

## IN MEMORIAM

the individual from which, of course, a perfect sense of proportion is a corollary. \*All the buildings of Mr. Pissis are notable for their proportion, their freedom from affectation, their simplicity; for the straightforward and sane use of the plain recognized motives of classic architecture without any deliberate attempt at originality. And yet this very quality of being sane and normal, how original it is after all, and how uncommon and, one might add, how little appreciated!

In reviewing the work of Mr. Pissis one instinctively feels that the owners or trustees back of each enterprise were men of parts, of discernment, of liberality, and of taste. In finance and real estate it is customary to speak of securities and properties that are "gilt-edged," those that are the cream, so to speak. Not a few of his buildings belong to this class. In them one sees no stint of outlay, no pinching or compromise to eke out the returns. Expenditure is lavish and the result aimed at is as often as not a matter of personal pride, so that some of our business buildings are almost monumental in their massiveness. These cases are exceptional in any architect's experience, and entirely foreign to most. How then can one account for the fact that, by external evidence alone, all the buildings [\*here shown] are what might be called first class; how account for the fact that so many of them are of stone in a country where stone is not cheap, and that they are of stone clear up without compromise of copper or admixture with brick? How account for the fact that they are not merely stone for the sake of saying so, a thin skin of ashlar with the weakest of reveals and the minimum of mouldings, as some of our buildings are; but built with full jambs and deep soffits almost Roman in their boldness, with full treatment of order upon order and cornice over cornice in a way

\*Referring to the illustrations which originally accompanied the article.

that is so dignified, so complete, so satisfying to the eye of the architect?

How is it, again, that a personal inspection reveals the fact that all these buildings are carried out to the last detail with that finish and completeness that shows no flagging of interest, no compromise, no ragged edges, so to speak, no place inside or out where one can point the finger of the fault-finder and say, "there is an omission," or "here is a mistake," as one can do in almost any building, not omitting those that are so interesting in places, so admirable in certain particulars.

The young architect asks these questions and again asks them. "Why can this man make his clients always agree to do the right thing architecturally from the beginning, and how on earth does he manage to see that the right thing is done up until the very end? I cannot do it myself; my client professes to want good design, but he balks me at every turn. We start out all right, but by the time the work is let I have surrendered my really good points for something inferior, and by the time the building is finished every part seems crippled and nothing is just what I really intended, so that I am glad to wash my hands of the job, of which really I am ashamed, and try again. And then I find that to get the next building done right I have a continual fight on hand with the very men above me I am trying to serve, to say nothing of the men below me I am trying to control."

To answer these questions one might lay it down as a general law that "every architect gets the clients he deserves" or gets none.

In the process of getting work there is a constant segregation going on. Instinctively a good architect is indifferent to unworthy employ, and though he may not actually reject work that comes to his door, so little comes to those who don't go out to meet it, and so many others are hungry for anything that comes along,

that an architect who is bent on worthy employ need not be embarrassed with the other kind. All this means very plainly that large game is scarce game, and he who scorns lesser things is likely to go hungry. There is no big victory without an equally big chance of defeat. The man with enough professional pride to pass over unworthy work is in perpetual risk of being passed over himself. Professional loyalty, like any other kind that fights for a principle, really means victory or—death. There are noble failures in life just as surely as there are contemptible successes.

This is the first risk, the first danger that the architect takes who aspires to do good work. And good work is by no means necessarily large work. There are architects giving far better service on medium residences and even frame flats than others who are conspiring with skinflint owners to build unsafe apartment houses and flimsy-looking office blocks where safety is most requisite, where flimsiness is least pardonable. If an architect survives this first test and gets a start on the right road there still remains the need of a resolute nature, an almost inflexible will, in dealing even with the most favorable conditions and with clients inclined to a high standard from the beginning. But there is also the client whose taste in design is deplorable, who has not that fine trust in his architect's judgment that he should have, and who is obsessed with theories of his own, which are usually as deep-rooted as they are wrong. Such a one may be liberal and

well-meaning, and yet to get his coöperation in what is good architecture is a perpetual worry. Only the architect with experience can know what are the demands on professional loyalty in dealing with this type; the patience, the finesse, and the firmness needed to secure acquiescence in what one knows to be right, without surrender and without compromise.

Good architecture is to be judged by finished buildings and by no other tests. The mere ability to design well, the mere wish to preserve a high standard, the most strenuous efforts to enforce the conditions of the building contract, even the limitations in the outlay—all these things cut no figure,—the building alone counts. By these tests, and not by what one might, could, or would have done, the work of Albert Pissis seems to me to be pre-eminent in San Francisco. I can think of no one else whose work is so uniformly excellent, whose buildings are so nicely toned to their varying character, use, and magnitude, and where the tone once established is so uniformly preserved; where proportion in all its shades of meaning is so generally pervasive; and when the grammar of classic design is so generally faultless. This success I attribute to that inflexible professional loyalty of which Brunetiere speaks so splendidly, no less than to that delicacy of perception which is the basis of talent and that discipline of intellect which alone can lead it to great artistic victories.