



CHARLES A. PLATT

**C**HARLES A. PLATT, who was born in New York in 1861, is an original figure in American architecture. The canonical practice in this country which imposes upon every young draftsman a certain amount of office training, under some senior of established repute, is contradicted by his career. He did not begin life at the drafting board and he knew no office until he organized one, for he did not need either of them in his formative period. He began, instead, by painting and etching. When he went to Paris, in 1882, to study at Julian's under Boulanger and Lefebvre, and for some years thereafter, he seemed destined to make pictures alone. They were landscapes, chiefly, and they had the merits that endure, being truthful, beautiful, and full of personality. With such traits, and an inborn faculty for acquiring almost any technique, it was a simple matter to unlock the doors of other arts. Wandering in Italy he fell under the spell of the formal garden. He wrote a book about it and proceeded to design gardens himself. By this time the impulse to design buildings also, which had long been stirring in him, came irresistibly and as a matter of course to the surface. He became an architect as he had become a painter, out of a creative inspiration, and the outstanding precious fact resulting therefrom is that his buildings have style.

This it is that fixes his rank and explains his constantly growing influence. Appreciation of his first buildings must take account of their indebtedness to the Italian villa, but even at this point the derivative factors in a design of his are of a very subtle sort, and as the chronological sequence develops it very soon discloses the artist's essential independence of his Renaissance models. The facade into which he may introduce a Florentine note is expressive of a plan based upon the daily needs of an American household. And his Italianism, in fact, is at bottom nothing more than a love of simplicity, of pure line, of rhythmic proportion. For some years these predilections were illustrated altogether in the solution of a single problem, the country house. More recently a large apartment house in New York and office buildings there and elsewhere have engaged his attention. In these fields, too, he has affirmed his salient qualities of taste and beauty. At present he is preparing the plans for the Freer Museum at Washington, a monument of unique significance inasmuch as it is to house a single collection and to express a particular idea. The drawings foreshadow a structure of rare interest. It will be perfectly adapted to the everyday working requirements of a museum and it will be a thing lovely to look upon, light and graceful in style, yet with the due reposefulness and dignity of a public building. The fusion of practical and aesthetic issues is characteristic. It supplies the key to Platt's genius as an architect. — X. X.



FRANK MILES DAY

**T**HE completion of the Art Club in 1887 on Broad street, Philadelphia, was the beginning of Frank Miles Day's career as an architect. Born in Philadelphia in 1861, after graduating at the University of Pennsylvania in 1883, he studied at South Kensington and was admitted as a student at the Royal Academy, London. His chief architectural education, however, was derived from several periods of travel-study in Europe. Returning to Philadelphia in 1886, where he soon opened an office, the above named clubhouse was his initial performance. Then it was that the public noted the arrival of an able designer, while the local circle of architects and their assistants witnessed another telling personality in that of Mr. Day joined to the brilliant group of Wilson Eyre, Walter Cope, and John Stewardson, all of whom were destined to work much good for the profession in their community. In 1892 Mr. Day joined in a partnership with his brother, H. Kent Day. In 1911 Charles Z. Klauder was admitted to partnership, and with the retirement of H. Kent Day in 1912 the firm became Day & Klauder.

Mr. Day follows an unswerving path toward the best in architecture. Time and study he lavishes unstintingly upon pure design, and in this task his quick discrimination discovers the good as unflinchingly as his uncommon critical faculty discards the poor and commonplace.

But Mr. Day's talents are many sided. No one has a clearer and more just perception of the proper relations that should exist between architect, owner, and contractor. His mind assumes an almost legal cast when the execution of his buildings is to be begun, and the business methods of his office have largely contributed to that standard practice which fair minded men to-day accept and are following in the business of erecting honest buildings. One of Mr. Day's absorbing interests is that of literature; and in a country such as this, where so few professional men are possessed of literary tastes and ability, it has been indeed fortunate for the important field of architectural letters that Mr. Day has lent it much willing and effective service. Nor does he excel in the effective presentation of subjects by means of writing only. He is one of the ablest public speakers that the profession in this country has ever had. In addition to his regular lecturing to students of the Pennsylvania Academy of the Fine Arts, the universities of Pennsylvania and Harvard, and the cares of his large and increasing practice, he finds time to speak often in the interest of public spirited movements and civic betterment. He is an authority on competition programs, and probably has served on more architectural juries than any other practising architect. Mr. Day has twice been president of the Institute. He is identified with numerous learned societies both here and abroad, and is now supervising architect to at least ten prominent colleges or universities in this country. — H. C. W.