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Thomas Jefferson and the First Monument of the Classical Revival in America

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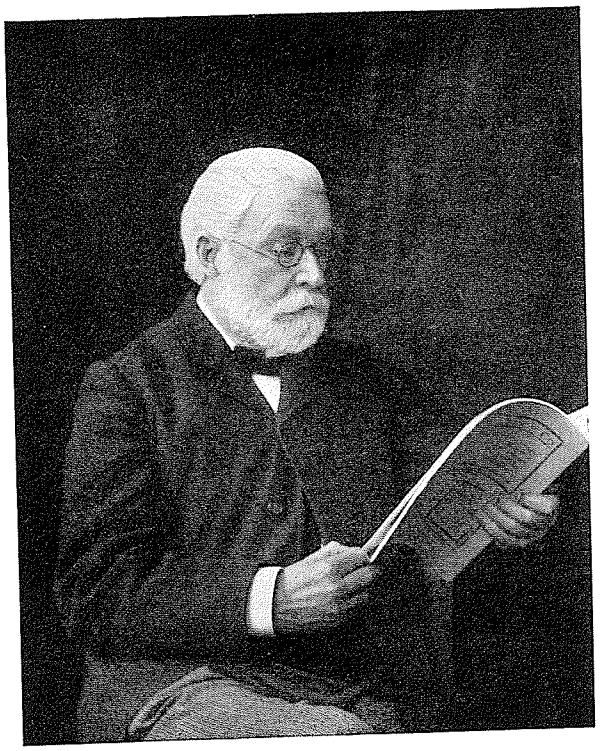
THERE can be little doubt that the first monument of the classical revival in America is the Capitol of Virginia, at Richmond. Conceived in 1785, in conscious imitation of the Maison Carrée, it was essentially complete in 1789, when the next work in the Roman manner, Bulfinch's triumphal column on Beacon Hill, in Boston, was erected. Easy to verify as is this priority, it has been little recognized, and the building itself and the question of its authorship still await scientific study. Though it is well known that Thomas Jefferson and the French architect, Clérisseau, each had a share in its design, the exact nature and relative extent of their services remain to be defined. Unpublished material now brought to light, in connection with published documents which this material will place in clearer perspective, will be found to establish, beyond much dispute, the real designer of this building, and thus the pioneer of our classical revival in architecture. The reactions and methods of an architect at the critical moment between the academic and the Romanist supremacies appear with rare distinctness in these papers. Further documents and drawings, many of them likewise unpublished, permit the original form of the building itself to be reëstablished, and give other important evidences concerning early American architects and architecture.

The writers who have treated the subject have failed to give the full and exact study, both of contemporary documents and of the executed fabric, which the epochal character of the design requires. Concerning the authorship and circumstances of the original design there are two brief special studies, that of Colonel Sherwin McRae, of the Virginia State Library, published in the *Old Dominion Magazine*, July 15, 1871,[1] and that of Alice M. Tyler, which appeared in the Richmond *Times-Dispatch* for July 7, 1912.[2] The authors rehearse Jefferson's published statements in regard to the building, and accept them as establishing his influence in the selection of a model and in the final adoption of a design based on it, but are prevented by lack of material from assigning the credit for this design in its final form. The same

[1] Virginia State Capitol—An Historical Account of the Erection of the Capitol, and a Review of the Question of its Preservation. Separately reprinted. 8 pp.

[2] The Capitol Square a Century Ago and the Capitol Square Today. Illustrated.



William Robert Ware

GIVEN an ancestry distinguished through several generations for high culture; an education, both general and professional, the best that America in the mid-nineteenth century could provide; given an exceptional opportunity for achievement in the professional field, and to meet this opportunity a keen New England conscience with its sense of duty and its reverence for high principle; given with all this a sound physical inheritance, and it needs no mystical vaticination to predict success. But success of what kind and degree and value, and for what ends,—selfish or unselfish? Where, whence, and how to be attained? By what experiences, through what failures, what discipline of life? All this only the man's actual life can disclose, because life alone discloses personality. Success and failure, achievement and defeat, are not each the second member of an algebraic equation; for this mysterious something which we call personality is the problematic *x*, the fundamental unknown quantity on which the result depends, never to be determined by the equation, but to be studied to the end of his days in the man himself.

So when one has predicated of William Robert Ware all the factors of success enumerated above, one has after all only started the environment and circumstance of a life whose fundamental distinction was the personality of the man who lived it. And it was by reason of this personality that Professor Ware achieved the great and notable success which has made his name one to be reverenced in the annals of American architecture, and his memory one to be cherished with deep affection by all who ever knew him in person. For his greatness was achieved in

neither of the fields, certainly not in the manner, which the three great factors of heredity, education, and environment would have led one to expect. Ware was not a great scholar, as scholars are accounted today. That he was, or ever could have become, a great designer of buildings he would have been the last to affirm or believe. But he was a great educator; and the success of the really great educator—be he Thomas Arnold, Mark Hopkins, "Sam" Taylor of Andover, or William R. Ware—is nine-tenths due to personality, to the influence of one soul, mind, and character reaching out to and acting upon another soul, mind, and character.

The great educator is one who, by his own electric vitality, can awaken, as by induction, the slumbering activities of another's soul, which in turn bring into action the forces of the intellect and heart. And in this Professor Ware was wonderful. Not only in his inimitable classroom lectures, abounding in excursions and by-path wanderings from his main theme, but also in the personal intercourse which he always sought and cultivated with his students. He was forever stirring young men's minds to new action, opening new intellectual and esthetic vistas, revealing new meanings and relations in familiar facts, pouring out the treasures of an extraordinarily well-furnished mind. To his thinking, architecture as a profession to be taught was something more than a business or a means of earning one's living; it was a department or section of the larger and broader life in which it was related to all other activities and interests; it was a great and inspiring career, because it opened to its practitioner innumerable gates of access to fascinating and illuminating fields of thought and action. Painting, sculpture, the opera, philosophy, religion, science, history, literature,—with all of these architecture was concerned. And for its practice he insisted that two things were chiefly necessary,—common sense and good taste; and, in his opinion, to the development and cultivation of good taste and common sense the efforts of every teacher, whether of mathematics, theory, design, history, drawing, or professional ethics, ought always to be directed.

The outlines of Professor Ware's history were printed in the last issue of the Journal; they can be found in any recent "Who's Who in America." He was born in 1832, in Cambridge, Massachusetts. His father was a distinguished Unitarian clergyman; he was graduated from Harvard in 1852, later from the Lawrence Scientific School; began his architectural studies in the famous office-atelier of the late Richard M. Hunt in New York, and practised his profession in Boston for twenty years, from 1860 to 1880,—after 1865 in partnership with the late Henry Van Brunt. In 1866 he went to Paris under appointment as Professor of Architecture in the Massachusetts Institute of Technology, to study the French systems of architectural training in the *Ecole des Beaux-Arts* and the *Ecole Centrale.* On his return the new Department of Architecture was inaugurated, under his direction, in the Institute of Technology, and so continued until his resignation in 1881, when he was called to inaugurate and direct a Department of Architecture in the (so-called) School of Mines (now the Faculty of Applied Science) of Columbia University. In this post, as Professor of Architecture, he remained until his retirement as Professor Emeritus in 1903, at the age of 71. The remaining twelve years of his life were spent in the quiet retirement of his charming cottage at Milton, Massachusetts, in the company of his two sisters; and here at the age of eighty-three years, fourteen days, he quietly passed away on the tenth of June, 1915. In 1883 he made a summer's visit to Europe, where he purchased photographs, books, and other equipment for the school. In 1889–90 he spent a year's leave

of absence in visiting Spain, Greece, Turkey, Egypt, France, and Italy. Another short trip abroad was made in 1903, with his sister. Professor Ware was never married. Such is the simple, uneventful chronicle of his life, apart from the record of his incessant professional and professorial labors.

In its outward aspects his life was more placid, less marked by striking episodes than that of many an architect of less fame. His nature befitted this calm and happy existence; it was gentle, kindly, without rancor or vindictiveness, patient and forbearing in adversity and in the face of opposition, courteous with a high-bred, simple courtesy springing from a knightly heart, not a mere external habit. But behind and underneath this quiet, placid demeanor, and this tenderness of affection and sympathy,—too often imposed upon by unscrupulous and designing persons,—there was a strength of purpose and a firmness of principle which no temptation nor hostile attack could shake. The inner life of the spirit was deep and full, but was disclosed to few, and those only his most intimate and lifelong friends. But to all with whom he had personal relations he was frank and open-hearted, and his genius for friendship manifested itself not only in the extraordinary number and variety of his friends, but in the degree to which he interested himself in their affairs, their joys and sorrows, their successes and failures. There were hundreds who found in him their wisest counselor, and felt toward him something of the affection of a son toward a father. The purity and the absolute sincerity of his life inspired perfect confidence, while the sparkle of his conversation and the surprising breadth and accuracy of his information were a constant intellectual stimulus.

To some aspects of his work as a teacher I have already alluded, but it would take many pages to do justice to the subject. Ware was, in the first place, a pioneer in his field. He was the founder of the first professional school of architecture in America and the first official professor of architecture. He was likewise the organizer, and for twenty-two years the head, of another school in what is now one of the greatest of American universities, which school he raised from an insignificant beginning into the very first rank, with but one or two others to question its premiership in that rank. He was, indeed, the virtual creator of the American system of architectural education, in that those broad features common to all our larger schools of architecture, which distinguish them from the various European schools and systems, rest upon conceptions which he was the first to formulate, and upon methods which he to a large extent initiated. With great skill he developed, gradually but surely, the distinction between architecture and engineering, with which it was perforce closely associated at first because the engineering schools were better equipped than any others to give the scientific instruction which is essential to architectural training. At Columbia, the last year of his active service witnessed the final severance of the Department of Architecture from the Faculty of Applied Science, and its erection into a full-fledged independent school of the university. The cultivation of good taste, which as earlier noted, he considered an essential part of the work of the school, he conceived to be impossible without liberal culture; that is, without the study of collateral and outlying subjects and, as far as possible, visual contact with the world's masterpieces of thought and design. The history of architecture was especially emphasized and related to history in general; the theory of design was treated as giving outlooks upon psychology, esthetics, physical science, and all the allied arts. With these ideals in mind, he was forever experimenting, devising new and original methods,

exercises, and devices; and at his retirement in 1903 his keenest regret was that he had two or three new educational experiments still in view and untried. This tendency to change and this discursiveness were no doubt an element of weakness in his methods, or would have been in any other hands. But with his intellectual enthusiasm, and the magnetism of his personal intimacy with his students, they became instruments and means for the inspiration and fruitful awakening of undisciplined minds. And withal Professor Ware was intolerant of mental sloppiness, of inaccuracy, of slipshod thinking; and if he was too kind to many lazy and incompetent students, he was also most helpful and encouraging to all who showed promise of mental development, and he awakened many an apathetic youth out of his intellectual lethargy.

Broad-minded in the acceptance of French ideas and methods (he brought over the late Eugène Létang, the first French professor of architectural design in America), he was equally insistent upon the necessity of modifying French methods for American needs. He was a thorough believer in the independent strength of American architecture.

During his long academic career Ware was active in many extra-academic lines. At his death he was the oldest member of the Institute, was for several years its secretary, and was active in the New York Chapter and in the Architectural League of New York. He was also an active member of the Archæological Institute of America, and for years a member of its Committee on the Classical School at Athens. He designed the building for that school, and his services in connection with the conduct of the school were invaluable. He was a Corresponding Member of the Royal Institute of British Architects, and numbered many of the leaders of the profession in England among his warm friends. His correspondence with them and with scholars, architects, and former students was enormous. He ceased architectural practice in 1881, so that the works of his firm belong to the period preceding the great architectural awakening of the "eighties" and after. They include the fine First Congregational (Unitarian) Church and the old Harvard Medical School in Boston; the former Union Station at Worcester, Massachusetts; the Episcopal Seminary at Cambridge, Massachusetts; the Memorial Hall of Harvard University, two dormitories and the enlargement of the old Library at Harvard, and many other buildings. In connection with the Library he devised the first book-stack storage system (1877); and as the inventor of this system conferred upon library administration a great boon, for which he has never received adequate credit.

Ware was also one of the earliest agitators—perhaps the very first—for the reform of architectural competitions. His efforts only slowly bore fruit, but his own successful conduct of a long series of important competitions did much to educate the profession as well as the public, and the present standards maintained and enforced by the Institute would not have become possible today without his twenty years of labor for the reform. The long list of his competitions includes such projects as the Indianapolis Soldiers' Monument, the Philadelphia Art Club, the Madison Square Garden and the Public Library in New York, and Libraries in Utica, Louisville, and other cities, the St. Louis City Hall, the D. A. R. Building in Washington, and city halls, churches, libraries, clubs, and office-buildings in many cities.

Professor Ware's chief literary work was in scattered articles in periodicals, chiefly architectural. His "Modern Perspective" (1883) was, however, his *magnum opus*, a classic treatise now, scientific, almost exhaustive, but hardly the student's text-

book he meant it to be. On the other hand, his "American Vignola" (1903) is the most simple and practical of all treatises for students of the orders and other traditional elements of architecture. His "Shades and Shadows" (1912) has somewhat the same merits and defects as his "Modern Perspective." These are his only books.

His death removed from the ranks of American architects not only a rarely beautiful and genial spirit, but one of the greatest personalities in the development of modern American architecture.

A. D. F. HAMLIN.

[A typographical error in the Journal for July made the date of Professor Ware's death appear as 1910, an error so obvious as to hardly require correction.—EDITOR.]

Civic Architecture in Providence, Rhode Island

POLITICAL influence is no new enemy to the architectural profession, but in view of the tremendous progress of the last few years in the elimination of this factor in public buildings, at least in the large centers of the country, one is somewhat astonished at the persistence of the effort which seems to have been directed against the architects in Providence, apparently entirely political in its character.

Two years ago an order was introduced in the common council, creating the office of City Architect. The reasons cited were the very ones which have been so completely demonstrated to be economically unsound. The "Providence Journal," in an able editorial, exposed the fallacious method of reasoning. In reply to the contention that "the establishment of such an office would result in a saving of several thousand dollars a year to the city, and that, moreover, there would be a corresponding prevention of waste of time in procuring and deciding upon plans and specifications," it pointed out the following:

"In the first place, what is true economy, either of money or of time? Is it to substitute an inferior article at a hypothetically less cost of effort and dollars? If so, then the resolution presented should be accepted by the Ordinance Committee. But if our civic pride finds it necessary to consider the quality of the work resultant from the adoption of such a plan as that suggested, then it must be doubted gravely whether the measure would make for economy at all. There are several workings of the law of cause and effect which must induce lower artistic standards in the designing of future municipal buildings, if the task is to be consigned to the care of one man paid a definite salary, to draw plans for every variety of architectural work required by the city of Providence. And the expense of maintaining the office would probably be greater than that of the present system.

"If we could ignore the probabilities in the case and deal only with an imaginary architect possessing the highest quality of ability, and willing to expend that ability for obviously inadequate remuneration, —according to current prices paid for architectural plans,—it might still be possible to consider the project of entrusting all city architectural designs to one man a feasible one. But we cannot ignore those probabilities. The element of competition eliminated means that the spur to endeavor is removed. And it is obvious that only a man of mediocre talents would accept a position clearly less remunerative than the opportunities of a free lance of ability would be. Therefore we are confronted with the possibility that all our civic architecture in the future should be the product of a commonplace brain operating under conditions which do not prick it to its best efforts.

"If, again, we turn from the suggestion of common sense to that of known experience, what do we find? What has been the result in other cities where the experiment recommended has been tried? What has been that of the United States Government—where at the present time the official architect is about two years behind on the required plans? Can we blink such palpable testimony as that which investigation of these conditions offers as to the inefficiency of the idea of one architect for all civic architecture? It is impossible to do so. And it is equally impossible to believe that the representatives of civic intelligence in Providence to whom the

The Refurnishing of the Octagon

At a recent meeting of the Board, the question of refurnishing the Octagon was discussed, and the hope was expressed that it might be possible eventually to completely refurnish the building in the manner which prevailed at the time of its occupancy by President Madison. The memorable contribution of the famous table upon which the Treaty of Ghent was signed, made by the San Francisco Chapter, was recalled, and it was felt that other Chapters might welcome the opportunity now presented.

A group of members of the Philadelphia Chapter have subscribed the sum of one hundred and seventy-five dollars, which has been placed at the disposal of the Board.

Obituary

Robert A. Bethune

Admitted to the Institute, 1902
Died at Buffalo, N. Y., July 17, 1915

Mr. Bethune was born in Bowmanville, Ontario, but began the study of architecture with Mr. Gordon W. Lloyd, of Detroit, continuing with Mr. R. A. Waite, of Buffalo. He began practice with Mrs. Louise Bethune, his wife, in 1881, under the firm name of R. A. & L. Bethune. In 1890, Mr. William L. Fuchs became his partner under the firm name of Bethune, Bethune and Fuchs. Since the death of Mrs. Bethune, who was at one time a member of the Institute, in 1913, the firm has been Bethune & Fuchs.

News Notes

The Activity of the St. Louis Chapter on the New City Plan for St. Louis

At the last Chapter meeting, Mr. Russell, chairman of the special committee of five appointed to meet the City-Plan Commission, and work in conjunction with the Projects Committee, in advancing the New City Plan, reported that the committee had interviewed several members of the City-Plan Commission, the Mayor, the President of the Board of Public Service, and the President of the Board of Aldermen.

All the men interviewed seemed now to be aware of the necessity of providing the city with a comprehensive City Plan, and expressed their willingness to work in conjunction with the architects from now on and along right lines.

The different civic organizations, whose views were obtained, also expressed themselves as willing to fall in line, and work for a comprehensive City Plan, and asked immediate action, which now it seems is considered very important.

American Builders' Week at the Panama-Pacific Exposition

The week of October 18 to 23 next will be American Builders' Week at the Exposition in San Francisco, and the committee in charge is planning a special daily program of particular interest to visiting builders. Quite apart from the exhibits in the exposition, the buildings themselves will offer an unusual variety of suggestions to builders, and it is not to be doubted that the influence of the Exposition as a whole will be felt throughout the whole country for many years to come. Builders' Week would seem to be one of the most fitting of the many observances which have been planned by the exposition authorities. Curiously enough, we have not heard of an Architect's Week.

The Fireproofing of Wood

The Most Comprehensive Report on this Subject

The National Fire Protection Association has published its report of the Committee on Uses of Wood in Building Construction, Mr. Julius Franke, chairman. A special edition of the report has been printed for members of the Institute, and has been distributed by the Committee on Fire Prevention, of which Mr. Franke is also chairman.

The bulk of the report is given over to the narrative of the exhaustive tests made by Mr. R. E. Prince, Assistant Engineer in Forest Products, Forest Products Laboratory, Madison, Wisconsin. The principal object of the tests was to determine, if possible, the most practical methods of rendering wood fireproof. The report treats of the relative inflammability of fifteen or twenty specimens of the commonly used woods, the relative inflammability of wood treated with various chemical fire-retardants, and the relative inflammability of untreated and treated siding and shingles, an investigation of the relative inflammability of unpainted and painted shingles and siding. The whole narrative is replete with interesting experiments and deductions, of too great length to be here reprinted. The general conclusions were as follows:

1. There was very little variation in the inflammability of the various species of untreated woods when tested at the higher temperatures. For example, all of the specimens tested at 375 degrees C. ignited within two minutes.

2. Ammonium salts and sodium borate gave more