



ROBERT CLOSSON SPENCER, JR.

PRECISION and breadth stand out as conspicuous characteristics in the work of Robert Closson Spencer, Jr. He believes that the joy of creative work is legitimate, that it is not only the right of the architect, but that it also is essential for the greatest good to the client that the architect should experience that pleasure which comes from doing original work. And the noteworthy fact is that he never forgets his convictions nor recedes from his position. His work is uniformly in harmony with his theories.

His precision he inherits from his father and from his grandfather, who was the author of the Spencerian System of Penmanship. His breadth and his democracy come, I suspect, from his mother. At least, it is safe to assume that most creative democrats — for that is what he is in architecture — have mothers noted for quiet force and unassuming strength and sweetness.

He was born in Milwaukee, April 13, 1864. After the usual common and high school training he entered the University of Wisconsin and graduated as a mechanical engineer in 1886. He commenced his study of architecture at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology, after which he studied and worked in the offices of Wheelwright & Haven, and with Shepley, Rutan & Coolidge. He crowned his eastern experience by winning the Rotch Traveling Scholarship in 1891 and for two years he studied in Europe as the eighth Rotch scholar. The colored drawing of the ceiling of the central dome of the Villa Madonna, Rome, which was published in the Rotch Scholarship Envois, has shown his ability to work and to show every detail without the loss of breadth. Many acquire breadth by elimination, but Robert Spencer never does. He includes everything, but always keeps all parts in proper relation. This drawing is one of many made during his study of Italian interiors from the standpoint of decoration and color.

In recognition of his work the American Institute of Architects conferred the honor of fellowship upon him in 1909. His interests as well as his attainments are shown by his membership and activity in the University and City clubs of Chicago.

He began independent practice in Chicago in 1895 and in 1905 he took into partnership Mr. Horace S. Powers.

Robert Spencer was one of the first to put the popular periodical article on domestic architecture upon a basis dignified, valuable, and suggestive. His series of articles on Farm Houses in the *Ladies' Home Journal* in 1900 were a distinct contribution to society and to architecture.

In addition to the value which his clients receive in his work, and the pleasure which he and his associates get from doing it, he never fails to interest and satisfy his brother architects, whether it be the drawing they look at or the finished construction. — *D. H. P.*



CHARLES D. MAGINNIS

CHARLES D. MAGINNIS was born in Londonderry, Ireland, in 1867, and educated at the Cusack's Academy in Dublin, and later won the Queen's Prize in Mathematics at an examination held at South Kensington, London. He declined appointment to the English Civil Service when seventeen years old and came to Boston as a lad in 1886. He began his architectural experiences when he entered the office of W. P. Wentworth, a man who in his day was associated with much of the most serious and the best work of Boston. About 1888 he entered the office of the late E. M. Wheelwright, who was then serving as city architect. Mr. Maginnis rapidly made a brilliant reputation for himself as a draftsman, his pen and ink renderings being particularly fresh and original in their style. He remained with Mr. Wheelwright until 1896, when with Timothy Walsh and Matthew Sullivan he formed the firm of Maginnis, Walsh & Sullivan, later continuing the business with Mr. Walsh alone. He has been a member of the Municipal Art Commission of the City of Boston since 1908 and of the Massachusetts State Art Commission since 1911; a Fellow of the American Institute of Architects; member of the Boston Society of Architects, Boston Architectural Club; very prominent in the Arts and Crafts Society, and a frequent contributor to the architectural periodicals, besides having published a very clear and much sought for work on the subject of "Pen Drawing." He has won his chief fame in the designing of Roman Catholic churches, a task to which he has brought a degree of enthusiasm and thorough appreciation of the possibilities of material, the value of wall surfaces, and the efficient massing of ornament, light, and shade, that are his not merely by temperament, but also because of careful training. He is essentially an artist and is able to embody in his work those delicate shades of meaning which count for so much in an architect's life, but which so few of us are able to make real. In all of his work, however humble the building or however exalted the problem, he never loses sight of the essential character of the edifice. He has used color a great deal—indeed, all his work has a quality of color even though carried out in monotone, and monotony or mere adherence to types has never been his limitation. He loves his problems and works over them, idealizes them, dreams of them, until they assume visible, blooming shape. And though his architecture is so thoroughly picturesque, and though the element of color plays so large a part therein, he follows perfectly legitimate academic tradition. He is a product of the American School of Architecture, plus all the idealism which made the early Italian Renaissance so charming, and his churches in every instance are truly monuments of architecture. Scattered as they are throughout the country, they are works of careful, conscientious art and a joy to all who behold them. — *C. H. E.*