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LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Vernon was depicted as being built of rough field stone. I wrote the publishers a very courteous letter pointing out this mistake, stating that our profession considered Mt. Vernon one of the most perfect of our wooden houses and that if their book was to be of any real value these historical buildings should be shown as they are.

From them I received the following letter which explains itself:

"DEAR SIR:

Your letter of January 4th addressed to the David McKay Company, in reference to the illustration of Mt. Vernon in their publication 'Colonial Homes,' has been handed to me for reply, as I was responsible for the artist who made the pictures for this book.

"The illustrations were not made with any thought to faithfulness to the originals, in so far as the color or material used in their construction is concerned. If you purchased the book having this in mind, it is unfortunate. Mr. Preston has made illustrations for a number of books along this same line, and he has taken liberties with all of them without any thought as to the material used in the construction of the buildings.

"Very truly yours,
THE BECK ENGRAVING COMPANY,
CHARLES W. BECK, JR.,
Secretary and Treasurer."

If such practices are common, as this letter indicates, I think the Institute should step in and notify these people that such practices are immoral if not illegal. Please let me know how you feel about it.

ALFRED GRANGER.

TO THINK—OR TO "REVIEW"

SIR:

In a "Review of Recent Architectural Magazines" in the *American Architect* and the *Architectural Review*, Mr. Swartwout wonders, in characteristic fashion, "what the little group of earnest thinkers will do next." What will they spread on "the background of pessimistic socialism?" Which is Mr. Swartwout's way of suggesting the character of the A. I. A. JOURNAL and the outlook of the "earnest thinkers."

Precisely what "pessimistic socialism" is I do not know. Changes are not ordinarily launched under the auspices of a dubious outlook. But I take it that the expression refers to a questioning attitude; that apparently is sufficient to characterize it as pessimistic. And no doubt "socialism" is sufficiently accurate as descriptive of a questioning attitude, since to question implies an open mind; and an open mind on matters social and economic (which I believe have some relation to architecture) is socialism. That, I think, is what is meant by the term.

Which suggests that it might not be entirely out of place as contributing to that background to spread thereon the remarks of President Harding as reported in his address before the National Agricultural Conference of 23 January. It is true, he was not speaking in direct reference to architecture; he was speaking in reference to the production and distribution of farm products. But his observations may be recalled, since, after all, he was dealing with production and distribution—a matter quite as much involved in the production and the use of buildings as in the production and use of wheat and cotton:

"The disastrous effects which arise from overproduction are notorious. The Congressional Joint Committee on Agricultural Conditions, in the valuable report which it has recently issued,

declares that a deficiency of one-tenth in the production of a particular staple means an increase of three-tenths in the price, while a deficit of two-tenths in production will mean an increase of eight-tenths in the price.

"The converse of this is just as emphatically true. In a recent address to the Congress, I stated this situation thus:

"It is rather shocking to be told, and to have the statement strongly supported, that 9,000,000 bales of cotton, raised on American plantations in a given year, will actually be worth more to the producers than 13,000,000 would have been. Equally shocking is the statement that 700,000,000 bushels of wheat, raised by American farmers, would bring them more money than a billion bushels. Yet these are not exaggerated statements. In a world where there are tens of millions who need food and clothing which they can not get, such a condition is sure to indict the social system which makes it possible."

Had he added shelter to his last sentence, he would have voiced the point of view of the "little group of earnest thinkers." Not that they would have used the term "over production" to describe a normal crop or a normal volume of goods which could not be made use of by tens of millions. They would have been more precise in the choice of words. But there is nothing to be gained by finding fault in the case of such a little matter; for President Harding has summed up the case as viewed by the "little group of earnest thinkers" very neatly indeed. And if he has given voice to thoughts of "pessimistic socialism," it is a pity!

F. L. ACKERMAN.

Obituary

Will A. Stevens

Elected to the Institute in 1918
Died at Chicago, Illinois, 18 December, 1921.

Will A. Stevens was born in 1863, and was graduated from the Cornell University Department of Architecture in 1890. For eleven years he was draughtsman with E. O. Fallis, Architect, of Toledo, and in 1901 entered the firm of D. H. Burnham and Company, remaining with Graham, Anderson, Probst and White until his death. Much of the last five years was spent in Toronto as manager of their Canadian office. Most of his work was consummated in his home town in Huntington, Indiana. Here he was the architect of the Presbyterian Church, the Reformed Church, and the Huntington Light and Fuel Company's office building. He was engaged at the time of his death on plans for the Hotel La Fontaine, to be erected in Huntington.

Austin W. Lord

Elected to the Institute in 1901; to Fellowship in 1903
Died at New York City, 26 January, 1922

(Further notice later.)

Evarts Tracy

Elected to the Institute in 1909
Died at Paris, France, 1 February, 1922

(Further notice later.)