

Renaissance in Architecture

IS LED BY UNCLE SAM

CLASSIC ART IS BEING FOLLOWED IN GOVERNMENT BUILDINGS



THE SOUTHERN COLONIAL A MODIFIED CLASSIC, IS BEING GIVEN THE DISTINCTION IT DESERVES.

Uncle Sam, Architect, Is Adapting the Purest Models of Old Greece and Italy to the Purposes of the Federal Buildings He Is Erecting Throughout the Country—There Is a Renaissance in Architecture in America, Particularly With Regard to the Buildings Being Put Up by the Federal Government.



SPANISH RENAISSANCE TYPE COMMON IN THE SOUTHWEST



THE TOLEDO POST OFFICE IS A PURELY ITALIAN RENAISSANCE STRUCTURE



THE LOS ANGELES POST OFFICE IS A PURE ITALIAN RENAISSANCE TYPE



A STRONG ITALIAN TYPE MUCH USED IN FEDERAL BUILDINGS

PURELY GREEK STRUCTURE, SUCH ARE BEING BRADCAST BY UNCLE SAM

the various designs that may be combined into a postoffice and Federal court to cost \$100,000. It has investigated and developed scores of designs of huge custom-houses that will cost \$1,000,000 to erect.

The architect's office, however, puts up no two buildings that are exactly alike. While the designs of many of the lesser buildings are somewhat similar, they are varied in every instance to meet individual conditions. Elevations and frontages of a proposed building nearly always make it advisable to design that building especially. It is likewise nearly always possible to make a building fit more harmoniously into a given surrounding if it is especially designed for that surrounding. Secretary MacVeagh of the Treasury Department developed the idea of designing certain types of Federal buildings and placing structures of that type without change in whatever community received an appropriation capable of producing the building in question. His idea was to save the expense of making special plans for every Federal building that was to be erected. The architects of the Nation and other students of construction almost universally condemned this practice, and the Secretary of the Interior has given over the idea and returned to the methods that have been in use for the past decade.

Some Larger Buildings. The Government is now congratulating itself upon the general type of its smaller buildings. The office of the supervising architect has for the past 16 years worked in entire harmony with the great authorities of the Nation and of the world in developing the best types. There are, however, certain Federal buildings that this office still declines to design. These are the monster structures such as those at the National Capital and great custom houses like that at the port of New York. With the supervision of 350 buildings under construction at different points it is not thought advisable that this office should take up the task of designing great buildings that should stand for hundreds of years as models of the Nation's capacity along artistic and architectural lines. So a different arrangement is made for the architect in question. So the best men in the business compete in these designs and prize highly an opportunity to do so. This places at the disposal of the Federal Government the best talent of modern times when the occasion arises to construct an especially important building. The supervising architect of the Treasury Department still is in authority over all such buildings, and in no respect are they allowed to fall below the standards which he has set.

There is one characteristic in all these Federal buildings that is not to be found in structures put up for merely commercial purposes. The business block is erected with the idea that the community will have outgrown it in 50 years and that it will be necessary to replace it with a structure that will then be modern. But the Federal Government builds forever. It figures that the structures that it puts up should be performing the same duties two centuries hence as they are performing today. The element of growth is the only one for which the Government provides. All the newer Government buildings are placed upon lots which will allow for their expansion. As it becomes necessary that more space should be available in a given post office or Federal court building there is a provision for obtaining it by putting on an addition. This building for all time makes the construction of those buildings erected by Uncle Sam more expensive than are commercial structures which seem of equal value. Here again is the reversion to the old classic types of architecture found important. If buildings of this type dating back to the time of Rome and Athens are still recognized as the best of their kind, it is held that the type will still command respect, though these buildings stand for thousands of years and serve all the generations that are to come.

BY WILLIAM AHERTON DU PUY. THE ancient glories of Greece and Rome are today being duplicated and reconstructed under the very noses of the 90,000,000. The American farmer and merchant and craftsman are coming to pass daily in the shadows of structures that would do credit to the Apollon way. Nurtured through the centuries the magnificence of the art of these early masters is today being planted on the sagebrush flats of Nevada, on the rock-ribbed hills of New England, in the black land prairies of Illinois, the lands of the South and among the vast mountains of the West which bear their heads in a grandeur that would shame Olympus. After the passing of two and three and four thousand years the art of the ancients, unsurpassed in the world history, is being borne to the whole people and planted in their midst in all the cities and towns of the new nation of the West, and to the 90,000,000 is being brought the influence of first-class art. For the United States Government in its capacity of distributor of mails and dispenser of justice must needs have a building wherever sufficient numbers of its citizens congregate to occasion the transaction of a given amount of business. After a century of haphazard building, the Federal Government has realized the shortcomings of its early structures and has set about the task of correcting its mistakes and putting up buildings that are typical of the best architecture that the world has ever known. So it is today planting in hundreds of towns within its borders buildings that would not have discredited the greatest craftsmen, ancient or modern. It is making its postoffices in cities, large and small, examples of what may be done when sufficient thought has been taken in developing a type of structure that serves the purpose in hand, which is at the same time an ever-present example of the best possible in architecture.

ited designs for the first great buildings that were erected by the Government, they were peculiarly fortunate. The National Capitol has stood for 100 years as the best building that the Government has ever erected. Sir Aston Webb, designer of the Victoria memorial in London and the recognized greatest British architectural authority, stated, upon a recent visit to Washington, that he regarded the Federal Capitol, in connection with its magnificent site, as the greatest building in the world today. This opinion was later concurred in by Van Dine, architect to the Kaiser. The White House has likewise escaped the disapproval of the world's critics through a century, and the modern still maintain that such buildings as the old patent office, to which the British set the torch in the war of 1812; the old Postoffice and the Treasury buildings are the best structures that have yet been erected. But with the passing of the first generation after the Nation's birth the old art ideas were lost and there came in their stead an undirected and chaotic running after fads which resulted in an accumulation of structures that have been the laughing stock of all the discerning who behold them. Youthful America made nearly all the mistakes that were made by the wild people of the North who overran Rome in the days of her splendor. America likewise fought its way back to the classic through the Gothic in all its variations and abuses. Today she has plined her faith to the old masters, and her public buildings are remarkably like those put up in Greece in the halcyon days of her greatest splendor. So is ancient Greece being brought to the very door of the mod-

ern American, and, although that American may not realize it, he is being affected by those old masters who labored before the world knew the existence of the West. Reviving the Classic. The great majority of Federal buildings are constructed under the directions of the architects of the Treasury Department. This is true of all postoffices, and postoffices are the buildings that are scattered broadcast. With the postoffices are usually combined the Federal Courts and sometimes custom-offices, and this necessitates added stories for such buildings. The buildings at Army posts and those of the Indian Bureau are not under the Treasury Department, and have not had the benefit of the architectural experience of that department. But to the supervising architect of the Treasury Department falls the great mass of Uncle Sam's building, and he it is who is responsible for the classes and types of those buildings. The supervising architect, James K. Taylor, has held his present position for 16 years. The architectural renaissance in Federal building has been largely due to Mr. Taylor. When he came to office he found that there was no definite policy on the part of the Government with relation to its buildings. When it was called upon to construct a given postoffice its designs depended upon the current fad in building or upon the tendencies of some given architect to whom this particular class fell. There was no set standard. The chief and the working force of the supervising architect's office had been often changed, and the nature of the buildings that were put up changed accordingly. But Mr. Taylor held that Govern-

ment buildings should be of a given distinctive class. His view was that little more than 1 per cent of the people of the Nation ever saw the National Capitol, where the great buildings of the Government are located. These buildings are largely of the classic type and are different from the ordinary run of commercial buildings. When the people do not see Washington they are familiar with the types of the public buildings because they see many pictures of them. Mr. Taylor holds that a Federal building wherever located, should be of this given classic type, and should, for that reason, be recognized as a Federal building. The old classic should be the standard. This was the first of Mr. Taylor's reasons for determining that he should return to a given type of building and erect it, with given variations, wherever the Government saw fit to build. A Government Type of Building. Aside from making it possible to identify a Government building as such, Mr. Taylor holds that it is worth the Government's while to gain whatever prestige it may among the people through the buildings that represent it. He holds that the citizen of a given city will have a more wholesome respect for his Government, will be more patriotic and will be a better citizen if the Federal buildings in his section are structures of impressive dignity and architectural magnificence. This aside from the constant development of better artistic taste on the part of the whole people. When Mr. Taylor came to study the question of Government buildings in the light of those that had been put up, he found a few very excellent examples of the architecture that most rec-

ommended itself. At Quincy, Ill.; at Alexandria, Va.; at Springfield, Ill., and at Ogdensburg, N. Y., were old post-offices that were built along the lines of the magnificent simplicity which most highly recommends classic structures of old. These Mr. Taylor took as types of desirable postoffices and from them as modern adaptations and with the old Greek structures as models he developed the type of American public building which is now being erected throughout the country. The postoffice is usually a structure of no great height. Often it is merely a one-story building given over entirely to the distribution of mails. From this it develops into a two and three-story building, harboring a courtroom and possibly customs offices. The old Greek models may be readily adapted to use in these low buildings. With it has often been combined given local architectural tendencies that are recognized as having particular value. In New York State, for instance, there were early constructed some public buildings that were of the North Italian type. These were most attractive structures. They had gained a hold upon the American consciousness as a type that belonged to this section. So when the Treasury Department came to erect other buildings there it followed this accepted type. Likewise, when it came to put up buildings in the South did it adopt certain of the characteristics of the old colonial architecture, a type that is more nearly American than any other. In the far Southwest it found again that the Spanish architecture of the early missions had gained strong hold upon the public appreciation and in this section the public buildings

were often given the characteristics brought to America by the Spaniards, who in turn had gotten them from the Moors when those swarthy Mohammedans overran the realm of the proud don. Prices of Buildings. The Federal Government never puts up a postoffice that costs less than \$25,000. It is very rare that one is built that costs less than \$35,000. In communities which are not large enough to warrant the erection of such structures the Federal business is transacted in rented quarters. Even in the larger centers where Federal buildings are now maintained it is recognized that money could be saved by renting quarters instead of building them. There are few Federal buildings in the United States that result in a saving of sufficient money to pay interest on the investment in them. But Uncle Sam places a cash value upon his increased prestige with the people because of the advantage of buildings which he owns, and he is likewise coming to appraise the educational value of his architecture. So he has intrusted to his architects the task of developing types of buildings that are peculiarly well fitted to his commercial needs, and he intended to give him a prestige among his people, and that are capable of arousing the right artistic instincts among the populace. The office of the chief architect has developed, through the last 15 years, types of buildings that may be erected for given sums of money in almost any community. It has in hand exhaustive information as to just how the greatest possible convenience and artistic effect may be secured out of an appropriation of \$25,000. It knows

SOME SHORT STORIES OF THE BUSINESS WORLD

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Great Activity in Federal Building. The renaissance in American architecture in the present decade has been most important from the standpoint of Federal buildings. The number of Government-owned buildings in the United States has almost doubled during the last 10 years. Strange as it may seem, the fact stands that in 1852 the Federal Government owned but 23 buildings, nearly all of which were in the city of Washington. By 1885 this number had grown to 187, and in 1901 the number of Government structures was 352. Then in the single decade which followed the number jumped to 625. Yet the growth in that span seems slight as compared with what is promised in the next ten years. There are, in fact, 350 buildings now in course of construction by the Federal Government. A hundred and twenty of these buildings are now being finished annually. For them is being expended \$12,000,000 a year. So it becomes obvious that building on the part of the Federal Government, when viewed merely from the standpoint of the amount of it being done, is on the boom. But the size of the work being accomplished is not its important feature. The big thing in Government architecture is the turn it has recently taken toward becoming architecture that is art. When George Washington and Charles L'Enfant laid the foundation for the National Capitol and distributed the sites and solici-

of the men to remain on guard that night with his employer, and also asked that Mrs. Svenson should be informed that he would not be home, but to send him something to eat. Really, this was entirely unnecessary. Mrs. Svenson knew what was going on. Everybody in town knew that the big Swede was sitting up with his silver. John Svenson never knew how long the night was until he had his first night's experience in that cellar. He smoked more than he ever had before. He thought more than he ever had before. He looked at his watch a hundred times. He was mighty glad when it came daylight. After the clerks came around he took a few hours' sleep, meanwhile leaving the chief clerk on guard. That afternoon and all the second night he was on guard again. He had read in the papers all that had been printed about his affair, and all about the critical situation in the big cities. Banks in various places had closed their doors, and actual money was at a premium. Montrose was in the Dakotas, and all the had men were not dead yet, as Mrs. Svenson knew. He did not like all this publicity he was getting. He had an idea some desperate gentleman might be tempted by the knowledge of his silver hoard to call on him when they were least expected. He would not be at all fearful on this score if he had a

little more confidence in his employees, but unfortunately he was such a severe taskmaster that none of his hired hands bore him affection. Maybe it was his lack of sleep; maybe it was over-smoking; maybe it was just anxiety; maybe it was because the clerk who was expected to sit up with him at night nodded and snored—snored in such reprehensible tones—or maybe it was all four of these things that got on the nerves of Mr. Svenson until at the least noise he would jump and grasp his six-shooter. The hardware man had the good sense to know that this thing could not last very long. On the fifth day after he drew his money he went out a little before noon to the Stockmen's National Bank and announced to the cashier that he would like to rent one of the bank's vaults. The cashier expressed sorrow, but said he had no more vault space to rent. Svenson then went to the Merchants' Bank. Mr. Keith, president of that institution, said their vault was only large enough to accommodate their own needs. At the Montrose National Mr. Slocum, the president, was more direct. He acknowledged they had plenty of vault space, but said he would not rent one inch to Mr. Svenson for any amount of money. Then Mr. Svenson understood. He went back to his store and that night, when the rats who before the panic had never been disturbed on their

innocent prowls in the Svenson cellar, came out. The big Swede blazed away at them whenever they showed a nose. Svenson thought that night that he was a pretty badly abused man and he had nothing but rancor in his heart for the bankers of Montrose. The next night he was not quite so bitter, but he was very sorry for himself. To add to his woe he practically was doing no business. Nobody seemed to want to trade with him. Lots of people came into the store, but they were drawn by idle curiosity. Lots of people could have had all the credit they wanted if they wished to purchase stuff, but nobody in Montrose seemed anxious to do business with John Svenson. The following night he was so nervous and overwrought that he walked up and down the cellar throughout the long hours. When morning came he was worn out physically, but he could not sleep. Then there was another night of worry and unrest. He almost hated to look at the keys and boxes that contained his silver. He determined he would end this nightly ordeal even if he had to back down from the stand he had taken. Soon after he had his breakfast he went to the Stockmen's National Bank and saw Mr. Chambers, the president. It was a different Svenson from the loud-voiced Swede of nearly 10 days before, who now said he would like to open an ac-

count with the bank. Mr. Chambers was very polite, but managed to make Svenson understand that as Mr. Svenson had been a client of the First National, the Stockmen's National did not care for his patronage. Svenson went out in a bit of a rage. His temper was not improved when Mr. Keith of the Merchants' Bank said the same thing. He was furious when President Slocum of the Montrose National told him he did not care to do business with him or any one like him, and never would, and explained why. There still was another bank for Mr. Svenson to visit. That was the Savings Institution. Under the rule, money deposited there could not be drawn except on 30 days' notice, if the bank so elected. Svenson told President Fink he would like to deposit \$25,612. Mr. Fink said he didn't want the money. Svenson went back to his hardware store, desperate. That night he brooded and brooded over his troubles. He slept a little the next day, but the next night he was in despair. He brooded Svenson who went to the First National Bank on the third day after the rejection of his money by the Savings Institution. He went into the private office of the president. "I'd like," he said in a broken voice, "to have you take in a broken voice, I am ruined if you won't. I am doing no business. I can never do business un-

less I am allowed a banking account. This silver has driven me nearly crazy. I cannot eat. I cannot sleep; I cannot rest because of it. For God's sake, take it back, Mr. Forbes!" The president looked at the pale and anxious face of Svenson for a moment before replying. Then he nodded his head in acquiescence. "All right, John," he said. "I am sorry you had to suffer, but there was no other way of making you see things right. If two or three of the large depositors in each bank acted as you did, every bank here would have gone to smash. Today all our banks are as sound as the Government at Washington. This is because the depositors showed a spirit of courage and selflessness that business men must have in times of stress. Without unity, without confidence, without patience, there would be widespread disaster. The unreasoning, the selfish man, can do much harm. Do you know what the failure of the banks of Montrose would mean? It would destroy homes, scatter families, bring want and suffering into many households, ruin and break the hearts of many of us. Do you understand now, John?" The bank president looked at him steadily for a moment. It was hardly necessary to ask the question—and there was more than one suspicion of a job in Svenson's "yes." (Copyright, 1912, by Richard Spillane.)