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\*\*\* START OF THE PROJECT GUTENBERG EBOOK THE BROCHURE SERIES OF ARCHITECTURAL ILLUSTRATION, VOL. 01, NO. 05, MAY 1895 \*\*\*

## THE BROCHURE SERIES OF ARCHITECTURAL ILLUSTRATION.

VOL. I.

MAY, 1895.

No. 5.

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### TWO FLORENTINE PAVEMENTS.

The church of San Miniato al Monte, just outside the walls southeast of Florence, and the Baptistery, or church of San Giovanni Battista, in Florence, are among the finest examples of the Tuscan Romanesque style, and both probably date from about the same time—the early part of the twelfth century—although the date of San Miniato has until recently been referred several centuries further back.

These two churches have many points of similarity, although entirely different in plan. San Miniato was referred to in the article upon the Byzantine-Romanesque doorways of Southern Italy in our February number, and Fergusson's classification of Byzantine-Romanesque was, for the time being, adopted for lack of better authority. Later writers have, however, generally agreed that there is little or no Byzantine influence in these two churches; that the delicate and refined treatment of classic forms here found is not the result of Byzantine or Greek influence, but is due entirely to the natural refinement of the Tuscan race. The same characteristic was again shown later in the treatment of Gothic detail, and is evident in the Renaissance work of this locality.

The dimensions of San Miniato were given in the February number referred to above. The interior of this church is generally considered one of the most beautiful interiors of Italy on account of its effective basilican plan with a crypt opening from the nave, its beautiful and rich detail, and its fine mosaics and decorations. The pavement is not the least of its attractions.

The Baptistery will be remembered for its famous bronze doors, the work of Ghiberti, which have given occasion for so much discussion, favorable and unfavorable. It is octagonal in plan, and 108 feet in diameter externally. It was erected originally for the cathedral of the city, but in the eleventh and twelfth centuries was so thoroughly remodeled that no recognizable features of the old building remain.

The pavements, in point of design, appear quite independent of the other ornamental work in the two buildings we are considering.

The motives of ornament are those commonly found in the stuffs, especially silks, of Sicily and the East, and their use here could easily be accounted for through connection with Sicily. It is known that the Hotel de Tiraz at Palermo, the great royal manufactory of stuffs, artistic metal work, mosaics, etc., established in the sixth century, and which continued until the sixteenth, supplied not only much of the finest textile products for all of Europe in that time, but also furnished workmen who carried with them the designs and methods of Sicilian textile manufacture to other countries. Such manufactories were established in several Italian cities, among them Lucca.

The relationship seems clear, as the forms are perfectly similar. The beasts and birds set in balancing pairs facing each other and repeated in an all-over pattern, as in a woven fabric, strongly suggest the Sicilian silks. Eug. Muentz in his work, "La Tapisserie," speaks of this evident relationship. The internal evidence of the design itself would be quite sufficient if we had no other means of tracing it.

These two pavements are practically unique, as far as we are able to learn. They are marble inlay, the pattern having been cut out in a slab of white marble and pieces of black marble carefully fitted in to form the figure. This is not true mosaic, and differs essentially in design from the mosaic work of the same period which was derived from the Roman mosaics made up of small pieces of marble or other material. Most of the floor mosaics in Italy have suffered from wear and tear, and have in many cases been very poorly restored; but these two pavements appear to be in nearly their original condition.

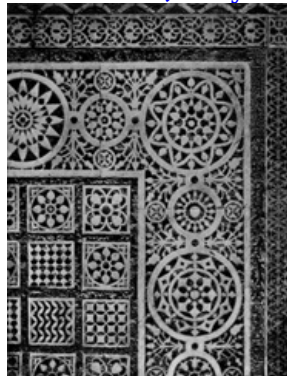
The design does not have the merit of belonging distinctively to the material in all cases, and might just as well be applied to wood parquetry as stone. In fact, it might be even more effective in this material if the colors were judiciously chosen.



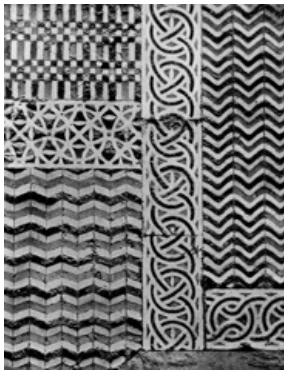
**XXXIII. Portion of  
the Pavement in the  
Baptistery,  
Florence, Italy.**



**XXXIV. Portion of  
the Pavement in the  
Baptistery,  
Florence, Italy.**



**XXXV. Portion of  
the Pavement in the  
Baptistery,  
Florence, Italy.**



**XXXVI. Portion of  
the Pavement in the  
Baptistry,  
Florence, Italy.**



**XXXVII. Portion of  
the Pavement in the  
Baptistry,  
Florence, Italy.**

**XXXIII to XXXVII.**

#### **PORTIONS OF THE PAVEMENT IN THE BAPTISTERY, FLORENCE, ITALY.**

One exception should be made to the remarks above in relation to true mosaic. The lower left-hand portion of plate XXXVI is without doubt made up of small pieces put together after the manner of the old Roman mosaics, and it is possible that the portion shown in the upper left-hand corner of the same plate is made in the same way. There are several parts of the floor laid in this manner, but they are distinctly secondary in interest to the inlaid portions.

The pavement is divided irregularly by squares and rectangles, the portion especially rich in ornament being that between the door and the altar. The rectangular patterns are irregularly cut into by special pavements, placed before several of the monumental tombs in the walls.



**XXXVIII. Portion of  
the Pavement in the  
Church of San  
Miniato al Monte,  
Florence, Italy.**



**XXXIX. Portion of the Pavement in the Church of San Miniato al Monte, Florence, Italy.**



**XL. Portion of the Pavement in the Church of San Miniato al Monte, Florence, Italy.**

**XXXVIII to XL.**

**PORTIONS OF THE PAVEMENT IN THE CHURCH OF SAN MINIATO AL MONTE, FLORENCE, ITALY.**

In the first of these plates there is a suggestion of the mosaic treatment commonly seen in the pavements of Rome, Venice, and Siena. The sort of guilloche of interlacing circles was very generally used.

Plate XL on the other hand is as plainly reminiscent of textile designs as it well might be; and in plate XXXVIII from the Baptistery the same characteristic can be seen.

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## **Wood Floors.**

The addition which a fine hardwood floor makes to the attractiveness of a room is appreciated by some architects, but good floors are not by any means as common as they should be. The expense of hard wood is not so much more than that of a cheap floor as to stand in the way of its use when the final result is considered.

It is generally admitted that a floor entirely covered with a carpet is in many ways undesirable, especially from a sanitary point of view; while a hardwood floor, wholly or partly covered with rugs, has every advantage. Furthermore, the fashion, which has a great deal to do with what shall be used, aside from any question of intrinsic merit, has set strongly in this direction, and in many cases old floors are replaced with new ones of hard wood for the sole purpose of giving a chance for the use of rugs in place of carpets. This is one, even if it be a rare instance of the agreement of fashion and good taste. In working over an old floor a plain or ornamental border can usually be laid at no great expense by using the thin wood carpet, manufactured by all the best makers of parquetry, and the centre can be laid with a pattern or with narrow strips such as the "roll goods" which are manufactured by S. C. Johnson of Racine, which are made up of strips usually one and three-eighths inches wide and five sixteenths of an inch thick, glued to a backing of canvas.

Patterns of all descriptions made from all the best foreign and domestic woods can be obtained, as the designs of the best manufacturers include an almost unlimited choice, and there is no end to the combinations which can be made from the stock patterns. As an instance of this, the catalogue of J. W. Boughton of Philadelphia contains a remarkably fine selection of borders which can be combined and adapted to almost any requirement, while the designs for the field or centre of the floor are fully as varied and usable. These designs are made in such shape that they can be

easily adapted to any shape of room and fitted to all sorts of irregular niches and jogs at slight extra expense.

Owing to the economy of manufacturing floors made from pieces which can be put together on a system of squares, hexagons, or octagons, most of the patterns in common use are made up of these units, or of triangles or rectangles combining to form these figures. Curved forms cannot be used to good advantage in this way as it is difficult and expensive to cut or join them properly. Nevertheless, all the principal manufacturers will execute to order any design desired.

When placed in a new house floors of 7/8 inch or 1-1/4 inch are usually to be preferred, and are made in sections of convenient size for shipment at the factory, and finished after they are in place.

Most of the makers nail thin parquetry work through from the surface and fill the nail holes with putty, although in some cases blind nailing is used.

Western manufacturers have in the last few years been making rapid progress in this industry. While J. W. Boughton, who is one of the oldest and best known makers of ornamental flooring, is still doing a large and increasing business, Western houses are catering to and obtaining a great deal of the best trade. The Interior Hardwood Company of Indianapolis, under the business management of its vice-president, Mr. Charles Hinman Comstock, has doubled its capacity in the last year and shows commendable energy in pushing its business. S. C. Johnson of Racine, Wis., is also in the front rank in first-class trade. The Wood-Mosaic Company of Rochester should also be considered as one of the leading and reliable houses. Its collection of designs is full and varied and its work of the best.

Architects will find the catalogues of these firms most valuable reference books.

The finishing of a good floor requires care and attention as well as special knowledge. Oil, varnish, shellac, and wax are the finishes ordinarily used, but wax is usually the most satisfactory.

The floor should be carefully and thoroughly smoothed, so that no waves or plane-marks will be seen, and then filled if the wood is at all porous or open grained. This is done with preparations manufactured by any of the firms mentioned above, or with fillers specially made for the purpose such as those sold by Harrison Brothers & Company of Philadelphia, or the Chicago Wood Finishing Company of Chicago. The wood filler made by the latter firm is especially adapted for this purpose and will give excellent results. The finish is then applied in one or more coats as required, oil and shellac finishes usually requiring more than one application and an intermediate rubbing down with fine sandpaper. Shellac and ordinary varnish are usually unsatisfactory from their tendency to wear unevenly. The Chicago Varnish Company of Chicago supplies a varnish under the name of "Supremis," which has proved by years of use under trying conditions, such as those of asylums, hospitals, and public buildings, to be of exceptional merit. It is elastic, tough, and gives a fine waxy surface which can be rubbed and will preserve its finish. It has the additional merit of being easily applied. It dries quickly and is remarkably durable. Wax should be carefully applied and then polished to the required finish with a weighted brush.

Of wax finishes one very largely used is that made by the Butcher Polish Company of Boston. It has all the best qualities of other wax finishes and has stood the test of time and experience.

There are numerous variations in the products referred to above suited for different purposes. The Wood-Mosaic Company makes end-wood mosaic 7/8 inch thick made of small blocks joined by means of a lead tongue; wood carpet similar to that of S. C. Johnson; and thick and thin parquetry. S. C. Johnson also makes a flooring of 1/4 inch face glued to a backing of pine to make 7/8 inch, 1 inch, or 1-1/4 inch stock which is found to stand the changes of temperature in American houses remarkably well. The thicker floors of 7/8 inch and upwards are frequently made with tongued and grooved joints and blind nailed.

These patterns when properly chosen are just as appropriate for stairs, walls, or even ceilings, as for floors, and are frequently used for these places.

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## **Modern Mosaic Floors.**

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The use of mosaic floors, especially for corridors and entrances of public and business buildings and in some positions of private residences, is rapidly increasing, and every specimen of work gives this art impetus. The laying of a mosaic floor is not so simple a matter as it appears to many architects, and the fact that anyone cannot do it is proven by the bad work one constantly runs across. It is, therefore, advisable that work of this sort be entrusted to a concern that can be found after the job has been finished and paid for, and that has a reputation to maintain and a willingness to make good any imperfection that a few months' wear will bring to light. As this number of THE BROCHURE SERIES will often be referred to where ornamental floors are being designed, we take pleasure not particularly in recommending a house for executing such floors, but rather in calling attention to some of the work executed, inspection of which will be the strongest endorsement possible. We refer to the Murdock Parlor Grate Company of Boston, a house known by name at least to every architect and builder of New England.

Organized over forty years ago, and with prospects of active existence for as many or more years to come, their contracts contain the element of responsibility that is the best guarantee an architect can have that his client's interests are in good hands.

The mosaic and terrazzo flooring department of the Murdock Parlor Grate Company already has a list of over fifty public buildings in which important work has been done. The terrazzo floors so much admired in the new Public Library, covering a surface of 60,000 square feet, the mosaic floor of the Members' corridor in the Massachusetts State House, and especially the entrance to the Members' vestibule, a part of this floor, and the lobbies to the Bowdoin Square and Keith's Theatres, Boston, also mosaic, are examples easily inspected by Boston architects.

Other public buildings in New England in which this company have done admirable mosaic work are the new McLean Asylum buildings, the Arlington (Mass.) Public Library, the Exchange Club, Boston, and a number of bank buildings.

Throughout the Back Bay district there are numberless vestibule and hall floors in fine residences, many of which are gems in color and design.

We have mentioned only a few examples, but almost every New England architect can, by writing to the Murdock Parlor Grate Company, be referred to examples of their work in his neighborhood, and we think he will find their estimates as low as it is safe to accept, and their responsibility is beyond all question.

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## Books.

*A Handbook of Architectural Styles*: Translated from the German of A. Rosengarten by W. Collett-Sanders. New edition, 639 illustrations. New York: C. Scribner's Sons. 1895. For sale by Bates & Guild, Boston. \$2.50.

A review of the contents of this work is scarcely necessary, as it is already recognized as a standard by all who are at all familiar with architectural literature. As compared with other books upon the history of architecture, the point of view from which the subject has been looked at furnishes the main distinction. This cannot be better stated than in the words of the editor of the present edition, Professor T. Roger Smith. He says: "It is essentially that of an academic and classical professor, and one brought up not only in familiarity with the best examples of ancient art, but with the habit of mind which recurs to classic and especially to Greek originals, both as a standard of taste and as models for treatment of modern works. This feeling, which held sway in England in the day of Chambers, of Soane, and of Cockerell, has now almost died out from our practice and our literature. The works of the contemporary English and French writers on architecture, which are now widely known and read, proceed avowedly and unmistakably on a different basis. Such writings as those of Street or Scott, Viollet-le-Duc, and Ruskin breathe a totally different inspiration; while even the valuable series of architectural writings which we owe to the pen of Mr. Fergusson are too cosmopolitan in range and too impartial in tone for such a peculiarity as is here traceable to be visible in them."

The illustrations show some of the wear and tear of former editions, but are still of great value.

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It has been called to our attention that some of our subscribers object to duplicating, or at least object to paying for duplicating plates or photographs which they already have in some other form. This is of course perfectly natural and was a point which we had fully in mind in formulating the plan of THE BROCHURE SERIES. And this was one of the main considerations which influenced us in making the subscription price so low. At the price of fifty cents a year, if only a dozen out of the hundred plates are worth buying to a subscriber his year's subscription is

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It is now too late for those who have not already subscribed to obtain a complete set of THE BROCHURE SERIES as our supply of the first three numbers is exhausted, and no attempt will be made in future to carry in stock any back numbers. Only enough copies of each issue will be printed to supply immediate demands. On this account those who wish for the current numbers must subscribe at once in order to make sure of them. Less than one hundred copies of the April number are now in stock and these are fast disappearing. Subscriptions in future will only be taken to date from the next succeeding issue.

We wish especially to call attention to the arrangement by which clubs of five subscriptions may be made up for \$2, or 40 cents for each subscription. A very little inquiry among one's friends will bring to light four who are ready to combine at this price.

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The large circulation of THE BROCHURE SERIES among the younger members of the profession furnishes an excellent opportunity for the interchange of ideas with men who are all working with the same end in view—the advancement of the profession of architecture. There may be a wide difference in their aims, influenced by personal considerations, the various differences of training and environment; but all are looking forward to increased opportunities and a wider field of usefulness. The experience of many young men will be found of value in shaping the course of those who have not yet won their spurs. It is the purpose of THE BROCHURE SERIES to furnish information as far as possible on everything relating to the profession which will help to make the course of such men an easy one. The articles upon the sketch clubs, scholarships, and other educational work, have all been intended to serve this purpose, and the cooperation of all who are working to this end is earnestly solicited. Our pages will always be open for the discussion of subjects of vital interest to young architects, and we shall hope to see the opportunity largely taken advantage of.

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## **American School of Architecture, Rome.**

A recent circular issued by the committee of the American School of Architecture at Rome contains a general description of the organization of the school and its work. On the twelfth of last June, at a meeting held in New York, it was decided to found such a school, and a committee of control was selected including the chiefs of the schools of architecture at the different American colleges where such exist. We give below some quotations from this circular which will be found of interest.

[77]

The school is founded for the benefit of advanced students only, and is designed to further the more disciplinary work of other institutions by opening to young men, already well trained by them in drawing and design, certain special lines of study, which at present can be pursued only under great disadvantages. Beginners, accordingly, will not be received. Such work is not suitable to their condition, and it would be a mistake to encourage them to devote their time to it. But to the holders of traveling scholarships, to those who have acquitted themselves with distinction in the competitions for these scholarships, and to members of the Ecole des Beaux-Arts of at least three years' standing, it offers opportunities for the completion of their professional training which students thus equipped will, it is believed, find of inestimable value. Other well-accredited students may be admitted to certain hospitalities of the school, at the discretion of the secretary.

Hitherto the holders of traveling scholarships have followed very largely their own judgment as to their travel and study, and have produced, as required, a certain number of carefully measured drawings, which have borne testimony to the diligence of their authors, their facility with pen, pencil, and brush, and the evident seriousness of their intentions; but the work has necessarily shown no common purpose and little consistent prosecution along carefully chosen lines. This being their common experience, the past holders of traveling scholarships are general in their approval of the effort to direct foreign travel and study hereafter to more definite and specific courses.

The school is one of observation and research rather than of design, aiming to form a correct

taste and to impress upon the mind, by daily contact with great examples, those principles which are essential to the enduring quality in architecture, be the style what it may. To this end the founders of the school believe it to be of the utmost importance for an architect, before he begins his professional career, to study thoroughly and on the spot the monuments of ancient architecture and such works of the Italian Renaissance as are worthy of being considered their successors. The monuments best suited to this purpose are those of Greece and Italy, and the headquarters of the school are established at Rome rather than at Athens, because of the greater amount of material there at hand of use to the modern student not only in the art of architecture itself, but in that of mural painting and in the decorative arts, including architectural sculpture.

The school was formally opened under the charge of Mr. Austin W. Lord, as secretary, on the first of November last, in temporary quarters in the upper story of the Palazzo Torlonia, on the southwest corner of the Via dei Condotti and the Via Bocca di Leone, between the Corso and the Piazza di Spagna; but a permanent home has now been secured in the building known as the Casino dell'Aurora, occupying a part of the grounds formerly belonging to the Villa Ludovisi. This building is situated upon an isolated plot of ground, raised fifteen or twenty feet above the surrounding streets, and comprising about eighty thousand square feet, which is the size of the enclosed space in Gramercy Park in the city of New York. It is on the Pincian Hill, not far from the French Academy in the Villa Medici. The building contains about thirty rooms; some of these are decorated with well-known frescoes, among which is the Aurora of Guercino. The grounds, which were laid out by Lenôtre, are well covered with trees and shrubs, and afford ample space for the erection of additional one story buildings, should such be required at any time for workrooms or studios.

## Personal.

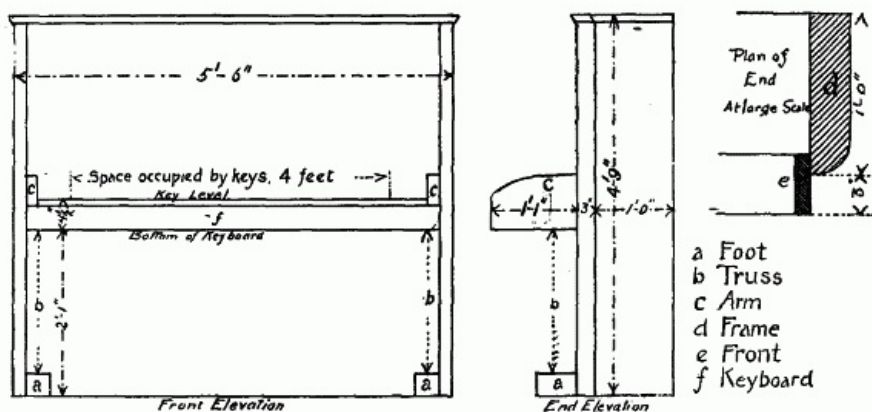
Mr. A. L. Nicholson, formerly with Davis & Von Storch, architects, Scranton, Pa., has accepted a position with De Lemos & Cordes, Fulton Building, Fulton and Nassau Streets, New York.

Mr. Dwight H. Perkins, of the firm of Perkins & Selby, Marshall Field Building, Chicago, opened a new office on May 1 at 1107 Steinway Hall Building, Chicago.

Mr. Myron H. Hunt, recently returned from an extended trip abroad, has gone into the office of Shepley, Rutan & Coolidge in Chicago. [79]

Mr. F. N. Reed, who has distinguished himself in the Rotch Scholarship competition, having been given second place each time in the last three years, is now with Cabot, Everett & Mead of Boston.

## Brochure Series Competition No. 1.



Program: The Henry F. Miller Piano Company of Boston, with the idea of turning the attention of designers to the problem of artistic piano cases, has placed in the hands of publishers of THE BROCHURE SERIES \$50, to be awarded for sketches of piano cases. Three prizes of \$25, \$15, and \$10 will be given for the three best designs submitted, the judges to be the officers, of the company, assisted by an architect who shall be appointed by the publishers.

It is not the idea of the Henry F. Miller Piano Company to secure designs for actual use, as their work in special case design is almost entirely to order, carrying out designs for architects and decorators. Therefore, only sketches are required which may be executed in any medium the designer may choose, although due regard should be paid to the reproductive character of the drawing. A perspective sketch, showing the right end and front of the case, is required to be made on paper, not exceeding 8x12 in. in size.

The diagram above gives the necessary dimensions. In designing the end the only thing to be



borne in mind is the construction of the case, the front telescoping into the back or frame, as shown by the plan of the end. The quarter round finish of the back is not necessary, the treatment of the end being optional so long as dimensions and construction are regarded.

The arm or end of the keyboard (*c*), the foot (*a*), the "truss" (*b*), which supports the keyboard, are all left entirely to the designer, the only dimensions to be regarded being the height of keyboard from the floor (2 ft. 1 in.), the top of the keys (4-1/2 in. higher), and the space (4 ft.) occupied by the keys. The arm projects 1 ft. 1 in. beyond the front.

Drawings must be sent carriage paid so as to reach the editor of THE BROCHURE SERIES on or before July 15, 1895.

The prize designs will become the property of the Henry F. Miller Piano Company. The other designs will be returned to their authors. It is to be understood, however, that any or all designs may be exhibited or published, and that they may be retained a reasonable time after judgment for these purposes.

The details and management of the competition are left entirely to the publishers of THE BROCHURE SERIES, and it is hoped that this, the first of a number of competitions they will endeavor to arrange, will bring out the work of the best designers. If there is any portion of this program not clearly understood, the publishers will explain more in detail upon request.

\*\*\* END OF THE PROJECT GUTENBERG EBOOK THE BROCHURE SERIES OF  
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