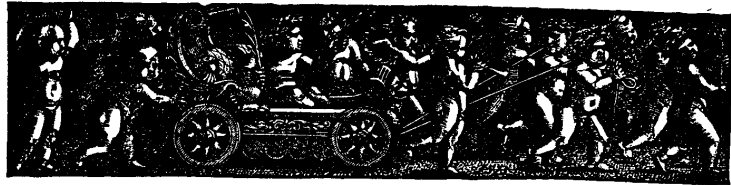


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## ARCHITECT.

LOCAL interest in the worthy structures and the worthies who occupied them in the early days is faint. I cannot be mistaken in the surface indication. I wish there was a power to evoke a praiseworthy pride. In other metropolitan cities historical societies have long since been founded and by these preserved the relics and records of the past in halls of record. Not so here. True of recent establishment is the Columbia Historical Society; and its accomplishment has been large and well-directed; yet its limited membership is a limitation of resources. Within a score of years landmarks and historic structures have been removed and nothing of them remain but dubious memories. And *somebodies* in their day have been closed into the innumerable throng of

Who lived and died;

and though deserved no mention more of them is made.

Elsewhere time-honored houses and scenes of action are marked. November, 1900, in Independence Hall, Philadelphia, by the Pennsylvania Society of the Colonial Dames a State correspondence committee was authorized to stimulate research and it was suggested that throughout the Union descriptive tablets be placed upon historic buildings to maintain interest in colonial events. This may not be practicable in the city of Washington although a bureau as an adjunct to the Historical Society could be conducted to save from destruction the ancient buildings endowed with historic worth by photographic counterfeit. The usefulness of the bureau of photography would be the reverse of the slight expense. In New York the Society for the Preservation of Scenic and Historic Places plans

the purchase and maintenance by city or citizens memorable buildings for museum and other appropriate use.

Twenty years ago the valuable store of Greenleaf's papers was wholly intact, now scattered and lost. Then his life could have been written with comparative facility and fullness.

Now somewhat fallen to decay  
 With weather stains upon the walls,  
 \* \* \* \* \*  
 Built in the old Colonial day,  
 When men lived in a grander way,  
 With ampler hospitality.

Because I can read in the *gothic*, the ecclesiastical architecture of the Mediæval, the impulses of that period, and in the *colonial*, the domestic eighteenth century type, the simplicity and severity of the Puritan; because I see in the *colonial* grace and design, though detail be sparse and ornament sparing; because I feel homelikeness and picturesqueness in the rough brick and white stone quoin of the *colonial* rather than in the smooth brick and brownstone trim of the *modern* signifies I am a discriminating antiquarian and to me is not applicable the rhyme of Peter Pindar :

Rare are the buttons of a Roman's breeches,  
 In antiquarian eyes surpassing riches :  
 Rare is each crack'd, black, rotten, earthen dish,  
 That held, of ancient Rome, the flesh and fish.

These Greenleaf mansions are the true colonial, each

Proudly bears its credentials on its weather-beaten face.

Who the architect?—Greenleaf. Greenleaf collaborated with the draughtsman, it is true; one directed and the other drew, In these Greenleaf mansions is the same fashion, and too, diversity. Even in the roofs, some have a gentle slope while their neighbors have sharp cant and long sweep. All those at the Point that bear the name of Greenleaf were commenced by him although the persistent components of the triune-speculators completed a part.

Ten years since the Greenleaf houses on the Point were nearly all standing. Not that any were unable to stand longer; in instances blasting only shook their steadiness. Modern requirement called for removal; the power house of the Capital

Traction is on the site of four. The walls of these, brick and mortar, were of the solidity of granite. On the Point are several rows of small houses recently built. I suspect a shrewd schemer now and then buys a Greenleaf mansion and strews it into a row.

The Greenleaf houses were begun in 1794. Some were completed the next year, likely, Wheat Row and the Law mansion. In Law's letter to Greenleaf, July 4, 1795, is the expression :

You gave a spring to the City by your Contract & buildings. You are building on N Street & will unite your Point & the Eastern branch.

Morris to William Lovering, his architect at Washington, August 17, 1795 gives a summary of the houses in squares 502, 503 and 504 and a statement of the degree of construction.

And, Daniel Carroll of Duddington, who was the chief brick-maker for that day, reminds, February 29, 1796, Cranch :

Mr. Greenleaf owes me for bricks and other materials furnished the first houses he erected at the point, the sum of £530.

The mansions are distinguishable although a few are masquerading in modern fronts, which ill become them. The row on Fourth street is the *first* and *oldest* in the city. It is named Wheat Row after John Wheat who owned and occupied in the early times the north house. A central roof window is an architectural feature; it now yawns desolate that erstwhile was "handsomely glazed." The mansion, 468 N street, was occupied by Judge Cranch and mansion, 470, by Captain Duncanson and by Mr. Samuel Eliot, junior; both were provided with coach houses and stables. The Law mansion, Sixth and N streets, is ruining with that rapidity to rack the soul of the real antiquarian.

In the house of the four on O street next to the river lived Commodore John Rodgers, who made so many remarkable cruises and brilliant naval exploits. When he laid aside the spy-glass for all time, 1838, Minerva, his widow, continued to reside there. Upon her death the mansion was acquired by the family At Lee of honorable repute. Mr. At Lee engaged a mason so much for the job to widen the space between parlor and dining room for a folding door. The wall was of unusual thickness and adamantine firmness. Ever after that mason

shunned contracts for a stipulated sum and insisted on a per diem.

While in the debtor's prison, Morris writes:

On some of those lots there were erected between forty and fifty brick houses, some of which were finished and others nearly so; but many of them have suffered great damage by neglect, pillage, etc., so as to be now in a most ruinous situation. There were also several frame buildings, some of which were sold, others pulled to pieces and plundered, etc. It is not possible for me to delineate all the embarrassments that hang over this property, because there are several of which the particulars are not known to me.

Mr. Cranch testified in the twenty buildings' case:

Morris and Nicholson had before the 26th September 1796 erected several other houses in the city of Washington which on that day were not finished and some of the same remained in an unfinished state for several years after they came into possession of their assignees; the greater part of them had windows well and handsomely glazed and good doors and were well secured from injury from the weather and depredations; some of them were left without doors and windows and were exposed to depredations and injury from weather; the reason why the houses were so left is not precisely known to the deponent; but the general opinion was that the embarrassment or insolvent circumstances of Morris and Nicholson was the reason why they were so left.

Greenleaf began the construction of the historic Six Buildings on Pennsylvania avenue. Reasonably solicitous to ascertain the credit he would receive on the building contract he through his attorney, Cranch, communicated with the Commissioners.

March 3, 1795.

I should wish to know whether the houses now building by Mr. Greenleaf on square No. 74 are considered as discharging Mefrs. Morris & Greenleaf's contract with the Commissioners for building 20 houses annually in proportion to the number of square feet they cover. If I understand the contract Mefrs. Morris & Greenleaf are obliged to build annually 20 houses two stories high covering 1200 sq. ft. each, making 24000 sq. ft. of 2-story houses or 20 3-story houses covering 960 sq. ft. each making 19200 sq. ft. of 3-story houses—but they cover only 750 sq. ft. each—as a question may arise upon this point in future, I wish it might now be ascertained before any other expences arise upon these houses.

This letter was a repetition of one the month previous which had received no reply. The indecision and procrastination of the Commissioners was a cause which prompted Greenleaf to relinquish his enterprise.

In pursuance to an agreement, September 19, 1795, Morris and Nicholson conveyed, December 28, 1795, to Isaac Pollock for thirty-four thousand dollars all their property in the square and he completed the Six Buildings. I have heard names of tenants mentioned which I did not catch. Here are some of the occupants a few years *prior* to the removal of the government: Capt. Elisha O. Williams, Doctor Dinsmore, Isaac Pollock and John Francis Mercer. This block is sometimes styled Seven Buildings, because of the adjoining house nearest the corner built by William Worthington early in the century.

Seven Buildings are on the north side of the same avenue beginning with Nineteenth street. They were commenced by General Walter Stewart and Major Moore, continued by Morris and Nicholson, and perhaps, completed by them. The corner was once the President's house. Upon the destruction by the British the Executive Mansion was transferred here. In the spacious first floor room now lined with drugs to heal the physical ailments, were concocted the antidotes to the political disorders of America and Europe. And up the mahogany stairs pressed the fair and the gallant to be received in the drawing room above by the queenly Dolly and the courtly Madison. One of these Seven Buildings has been the Executive Mansion; another, the State Department—August 27, 1800 to May, 1801.\* Here two premiers of revered memory, John Marshall and James Madison, steered the ship of state safely by international peril.

\* Removal of the Government to Washington.—*John Ball Osborne, A. M.*