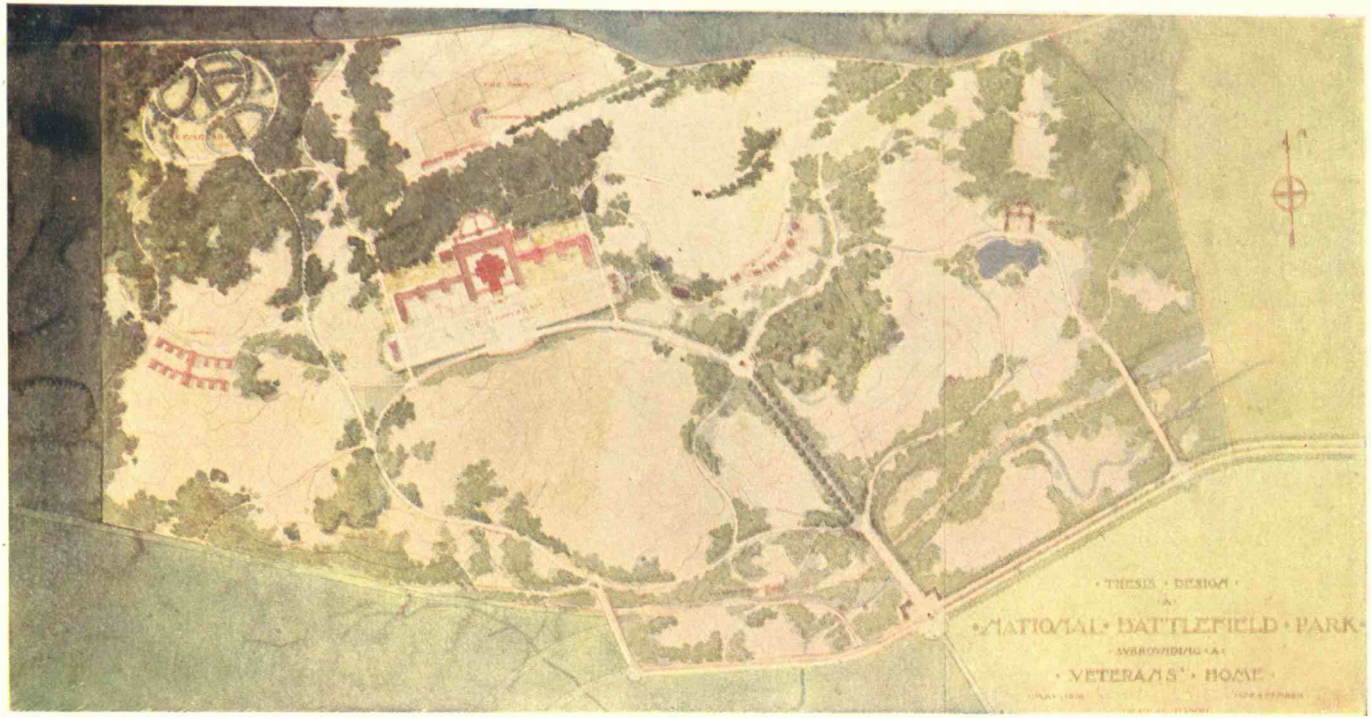

A NATIONAL BATTLEFIELD PARK. W. P. R. PEMBER.

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THE COURSE IN LANDSCAPE ARCHITECTURE

At the Commencement exercises of last year the first graduates of the Course in Landscape Architecture received their degrees. It is too early to judge of the actual success of the new course, whose first years have been necessarily somewhat experimental. But, with similar courses being started at other colleges, an explanation of the spirit of the instruction in the Institute course and a consideration of some of the students' work may be of interest.

With the satisfaction of our material wants comes the desire for the things which contribute to the well-being and pleasures of the mind. Our country is rapidly reaching the point where there is beginning to be felt this desire for the features of civilization which the history of other nations has shown to come with wealth and power. In the century just passed, Science exercised the greatest influence in our progress, with astonishing results. At the beginning of this new century, Commercialism is the spirit most in evidence, with results as astonishing and wonderful. In the next years to come the Fine Arts will, and should, as a natural sequence, exercise a greater influence than they have at any other period of our existence. And not only have Science and Commerce been the means of satisfying

our material needs, but they have in addition given us, in wealth, one of the essential means of supplying this newborn desire.

Even now there are tangible indications of a more universal appreciation of the value of the Fine Arts. One of these indications is the important consideration which the university — Columbia in particular — is giving to the question as to whether or not its curriculum and methods can serve for the proper training of the sculptor and painter. Universities have in the past offered courses in the Fine Arts, but to the end of a broadening culture rather than for the training of men who are able to create examples of fine art. This new movement concerns the Fine Arts from that particular and important standpoint. Architecture, from its very intimate relation to our every-day needs, has always received more attention than the other branches of art; but even that strong, inherent advantage has not enabled it, thus far, to rise above the stronger influences of Science and Commerce. And most of our architecture to-day is architecture in name only, its value measured in the prevailing commercial spirit of the times, and the architect's success rated by the quantity of work rather than by its quality. Painting, sculpture, and landscape architecture in this country have been, up to the present, the interest mainly of individuals who, from a natural inclination toward such things, have striven to keep them alive. But now the people as a whole are awakening to the interest and value of these precious gifts to civilization, and, judging from the results thus far, are awakening with the same sense of bewilderment as that of a person coming out of a deep sleep.

With its usual acumen in providing for the training of men who are to shape, and are shaping, the progress and welfare of this country, the Institute recognized the com-

ing demand for men trained in the profession of Landscape Architecture; and the new course is the result. Up to the present time there has been a demand for the services of such men; but this demand has in itself been of a doubtful and uncertain nature, and with no clear ideas of what landscape architecture really means. It has been supplied, with few exceptions, by men whose professions had some bearing on the work, as civil engineers, whose knowledge of certain of its practical branches stood them in good stead, but whose sense of beauty, proportion, and design, was expressed principally in mathematical curves and trigonometry. Or it has been supplied by horticulturists, whose familiarity with shrubs and plants — important materials of the landscape architect — gave them the necessary assurance to allow them to cut up beautiful lawns with pretty flower beds and specimens of unnatural, curious, and therefore to them very desirable, foreign plants.

The close relation between architecture and landscape architecture makes it very desirable that the school training for these professions should be as closely allied as their actual practice must be. No reasonable architect, however, would expect to become, or approach the requirements of, a landscape architect; and no reasonable landscape architect would presume to supplant the architect. The special training each must have beyond a general æsthetic training is too complex and too manifold to suppose that one man can conscientiously master them both. The architect, working in the materials and constructive methods of our country, seeks to provide shelter according to our needs and according to our climate and customs, and to give to the results the element of beauty, which has been the natural demand of human beings in all stages of civilization. The landscape architect, working with certain ele-

ments of nature in our country, seeks to make practical, and at the same time beautiful, the surroundings of our shelter, be it domestic, commercial, or civic. It is evident, then, that the professions are similar, inasmuch as they both have the task of providing beauty. They differ only in their practical details. To be able to produce this element of beauty means that these men should both be properly trained on the æsthetic side of their professions. Without this training the results are, in one case, mere examples of building or construction, and, in the other, examples of civil engineering and horticulture. The principles of composition, sense of proportion, sense of scale, etc., which are necessary to the architect in designing the façade of a building, are just as necessary to the landscape architect in designing a garden. And, again, the examples of true architecture of past civilization, which must serve for the school training of the architect, are much more plentiful and much better adapted for the teaching of these principles than are the examples of true landscape architecture of past civilization. It follows, therefore, that the association of the two professions in the preliminary training of school work is both natural and intelligent.

Since it is desirable that a course of landscape architecture should be associated with one in architecture, it is particularly fortunate that the latter course at the Institute is as strong as it is. It was the first of the architectural courses to be established, but its position as one of the leading schools is due to something more than seniority of age. Its present success has been due without question to an appreciation of the value of the spirit and methods of instruction of the École des Beaux-Arts at Paris, and to the efforts, especially of Professor Chandler, to encourage their adaptation in the course at the Institute. France as a

nation is the recognized leader in the appreciation and production of the Fine Arts. The Institute is fortunate, then, in having in charge of the course in design Professor Despradelle, a native of France, a graduate of its École des Beaux-Arts, and, what is most important of all, a born teacher, with an immense enthusiasm for architecture itself, and with the ability to transmit that enthusiasm to the student. He possesses, moreover, the highest ideals of his profession,— ideals which a school of architecture should hold and foster above everything else. In all the recent discussion as to whether the system of the university is adapted to the proper training of the sculptor, painter, and architect, one point has been brought out upon which there have been no differences of opinion: that the most essential factor in the teaching of the students in these branches is the individual instruction which can be had only by the close association of master and pupil. That this is very true is evident from experience in teaching design in the course in architecture, where this individual instruction is employed, and where the value of Professor Despradelle's influence is most felt.

Teaching the young men of this country by methods adapted from those of a race of very different temperament and attitude of mind has been criticised as fundamentally wrong. The sculptor, the painter, the architect, each is an artist. This one characteristic they have in common, and the lack of it reduces their professions to a commercial plane. This characteristic has no racial distinction, except, perhaps, one of degree; and, since it is a recognized fact that the artist is born and not made, and requires but to be awakened and developed, it would seem to be very advantageous to bring him in contact with the strongest artistic temperament available for his awakening and develop-

ment. Since the pre-eminence of this quality in the French school comes from the greater natural endowment of this quality in the French people as a nation, it would appear that the method of teaching architecture at the Institute in the spirit of the École des Beaux-Arts is entirely reasonable.

Criticism is heard, again, of the results of the teachings of the École, as shown by the work in this country of some of its recent graduates. Such criticism is superficial, failing to appreciate the spirit underlying such work, and mistaking for the true results of the French school that which time will soon show to have been but a passing fashion, or the results of an abundant enthusiasm not yet cooled by contact with our actual conditions and temperament.

That the Beaux-Arts method of instruction can prove its worth in something more tangible and real than is shown by school work has been most interestingly shown by the recent competition for the new Boston Athenæum.* A competition nowadays, as a rule, has but little value in determining real merit; but it is safe to say, considering the standing of the judges and the comparative obscurity of the successful competitors, that the results of this particular competition have some value. The architects ranking highest in the decision were all trained in the methods of the École des Beaux-Arts. The winner was a Tech man with Institute training amplified by further study at the École itself. The difference in the plans submitted by architects with and without this training was a silent but potent witness to the value of the methods of the École des Beaux-Arts in teaching architecture.

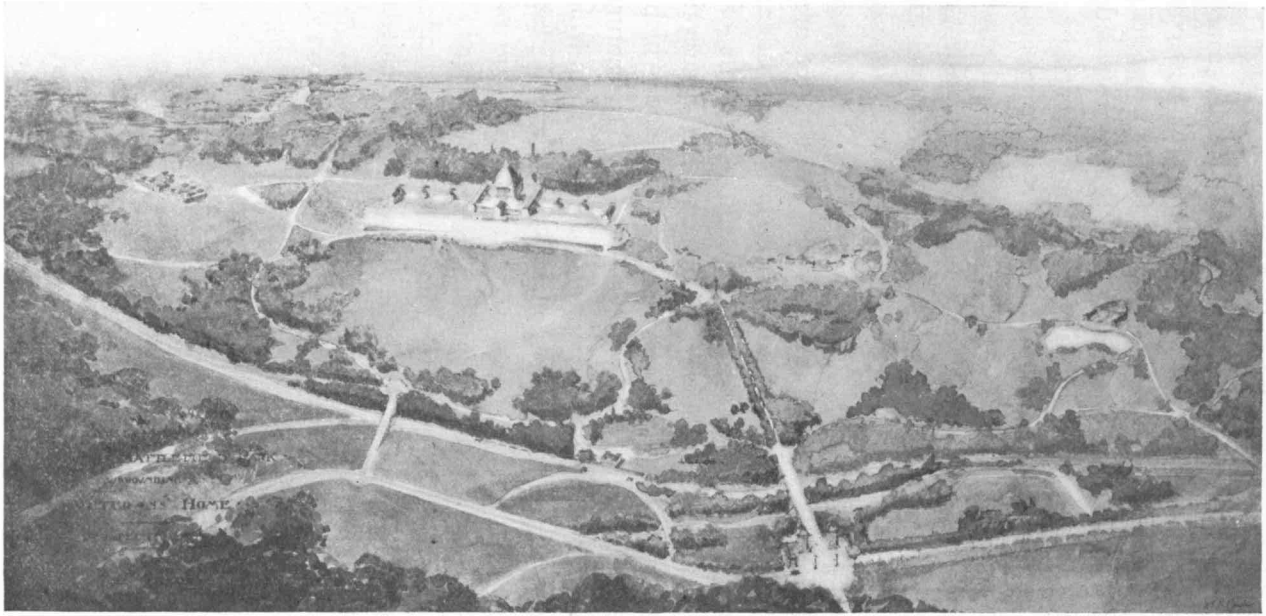
This article may seem to have given more consideration to the architectural course than to the course in landscape

* See Review, Vol. IV., p. 321.

architecture. But this was necessary, because the principles of architecture are so important a factor in the new course, and also because of the desire to show the value of its system of teaching design in developing the æsthetic side of the landscape architect. This development can be but started in the right direction during the school years, and can reach maturity only by further application and study in the years of practice. It is the keynote to the fullest realization of the profession, and must be encouraged above all things if landscape architecture is to take its proper place among the fine arts.

The following illustrations and the frontispiece are reproductions of some of the work done by the students in the course, accompanied with their own accounts of the working out of the problems. These written descriptions, which are required as a part of the work, and which are printed *in extenso* in order to give an idea of the nature of that work, give excellent training for the reports which a landscape architect is called upon to write in actual practice. These plans, from their nature, can show but little of the value of the æsthetic training; but there can be seen at least a logical and intelligent treatment of the practical considerations which form the basis of landscape architecture, as well as the basis of architecture.

H. W. Gardner, '94.



PERSPECTIVE VIEW

A NATIONAL BATTLEFIELD

W. P. R. PEMBER

THESIS DESIGN FOR A NATIONAL BATTLE-FIELD PARK SURROUNDING A VETERANS' HOME

Programme.— On a large tract of land comprising a part of the site of one of the great battles of the Civil War, in Eastern Tennessee, there is to be created a national park. This park is to include a large home for veteran soldiers of the Civil, Spanish, and other wars, a national cemetery, and other necessary buildings and divisions. (1) The Veterans' Home, whose chief buildings have been designed by E. F. Lawrence, as a thesis in the Course in Architecture, is to accommodate 1,500 inmates, and is to include, in addition to the buildings provided for in Mr. Lawrence's main group, the following: —

(*a*) A hospital to accommodate 300 patients, with contagious wards.

(*b*) Private houses for the commandant of the home and for the following officers: surgeon, chief engineer, quartermaster.

(*c*) A farm, with gardens and a greenhouse.

(*d*) Power-house and coal-sheds.

(*e*) Laundry, stables, storehouses, etc.

In addition to these there are required in the park: —

(2) A national cemetery, with receiving tomb and chapel.

(3) A railroad station.

(4) A casino and band-stand for the use of the public who make use of the park.

The park is to be connected with the park system of Jackson City, Tenn., which is situated near by, and is to furnish convenient means of communication between the roads which bound it on the north and south. The available land is a piece of rolling, hilly country, lying on the lower slopes of a high range of hills, and bordering a small stream which flows through the valley below. The tract consists essentially of a spur of the hilly country which runs from the higher land in the north-west corner, entirely through the northern part of the land. To the north is an almost continuous slope to the stream below, broken, however, into three small