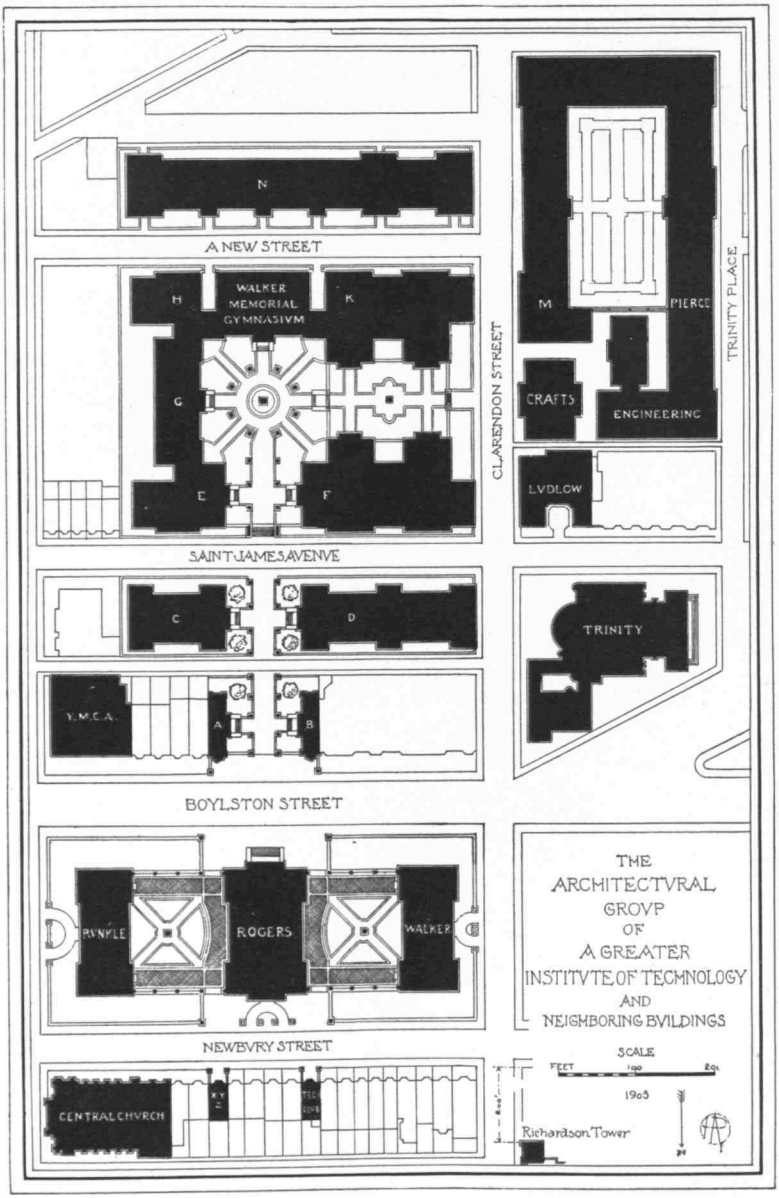
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1903
Richardson Tower

The Technology Review

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A NOTABLE GROUP

The removal of the Institute of Technology to a suburban location has been ably discussed in the REVIEW, and President Pritchett has elaborately and skilfully expounded on various timely occasions the arguments for and against such change.

One aspect of the case, and one that seems of especial weight when considering a great school of architecture, has been only partially considered, and that rather by implication. The President declares that such a school should be housed in a dignified and beautiful manner, worthy a great exponent of the useful arts and the fine arts. That is the spirit in which the school was planned and established. Compare Rogers and its setting with contemporaneous buildings at Harvard, Yale, Pennsylvania, and other American colleges. Here, as in so many other matters, our founders anticipated the spirit of the future. How pitiably ignored has been this fine aspiration during the thirty and odd years following the erection of its one worthy building! When a second structure was required, poverty conspired with the utilitarian-minded to make the factory our ideal; and under the compulsion of such environment an architect, who elsewhere designed beautiful buildings, produced the familiar Walker Building. The factory

was still the ideal when the Engineering Building was proposed; but here, under the influence of Létang, we were more fortunate, for, given a rigid limitation of cost, it would be difficult to find a superior to the Trinity Place façade of the Engineering and Pierce Buildings. Its simple elegance evokes admiration despite its position, close to the curb on a narrow street.

We hear and read much of the beautifying of American cities. Forty years ago the knowledge of such possibilities, and how well they were worth accomplishing, was confined almost wholly to the few architects and art-lovers familiar with Old World cities. The gridiron street-plan was our universal admiration, because it was so practical, although truly it was not even that. Costly buildings were placed to suit the real estate hustler, regardless of the lamentable waste resulting from the expenditure of great sums for effect, placed where ineffective. The larger architectural problems are, with rare exceptions, still met in the old haphazard way, neglecting opportunities and destroying possibilities for fine things, while we console ourselves that this is so new a country, regardless of the fact that the municipal splendors of Paris, Vienna, and Berlin are largely the intelligent work of the last half-century. Those cities have laid out streets to give suitable emplacements for their important buildings and have put new and noble buildings on such sites; and for their valued monuments of architecture they have opened new streets, so that, like Notre Dame in Paris, these can be best seen. Boston has no *Notre Dame de Paris*, but it has the finest Gothic spire in America, and one worthy to compare with its English prototypes; and by more than a happy chance, and indeed by a notable and exceptional civic foresight, there is space about it, so that it can be seen. Very narrow is the view that would limit

to its owners the beneficent influences of the noble spire, regardless of the countless thousands passing and repassing on Boylston Street. Or let the reader stand on the east side of Berkeley Street next Commonwealth Avenue and he will see what fine groups it makes with the excellent buildings beyond it. Now to destroy the happy conditions of noble architecture is not the ideal course for a great school of architecture to pursue. This is the thesis that the present reader is besought diligently to meditate. The longer and more such a course is considered, the less gracious will it appear. Granted the legal right, granted that it will put money much needed in the purse, will not some sacrifice of rights and of cash better befit the broad and high standards of civic and professional life for which the Institute is preceptor? The New York City government in less enlightened times gave St. John's Park to be covered with the sheds of a corporation. One may see a certain harmony between that appropriation and giver and receiver, but to profit by the appropriation of open space long dedicated to the benefit of the public does not harmonize with the traditions of our school and city. We are told that mind is more than matter. The fine arts enhance the useful arts. Architecture is the noblest of all the arts. Great architecture glorifies a country for ages. Good architecture ennobles a city. The highest work of a school of architecture is to teach its students directly, and the public indirectly, to know the best in that art, to admire it, to love it, to strive for it, to respect and magnify it. The student's faithful drill in mechanical, scientific, and artistic details, and the professor eloquently describing great accomplishments of the past for emulation in the future, are only preliminaries. The language of architecture is not in words or in drawings, but in the accomplished works. The first step is

to recognize fine work where it exists. That we have no Parthenon, nor great mediæval poem in stone, is no reason why we should be careless of the good we have. A church in Florence treasures a picture of the Madonna, stiff and crude, but containing a trace of the divine spark that previous pictures lacked. Newly painted, it was carried through the streets amid the joyful acclaims of the admiring citizens. Among the grandchildren of those discerning men the splendor of the Renaissance culminated. Many readers of the REVIEW have seen the photographs exhibited to show how the present promising but neglected basin of the Charles might be given as much value to this city as the Alster Basin has for Hamburg. Have they noted how superior is the beautiful group of spires and towers that rise above our maltreated river to those which grace the more beautiful sheet of German water? Few Institute men realize the exceptional architectural surroundings which the Institute now possesses, standing in the midst of the most notable architectural group in America. The authorities of our school are to determine whether that group shall be sundered and shattered or shall be further unified and developed. When we see the beautiful new buildings of Princeton, of Pennsylvania, or of Washington University in St. Louis, and think of the magnificent groups that are foretold by these beginnings, we are moved to decide for the moment that the only thing for the Institute of Technology to do is to migrate and start anew. But the school would be singularly fortunate if the architectural result were better than could be accomplished where she stands. Upjohn's spire and the beautiful rear of Trinity in close proximity, Richardson's Brattle Square tower and the Public Library near by, are factors in an architectural ensemble which will not be replaced elsewhere. Very attrac-

tive is the cloistered charm and spacious quiet of a suburban college, but the Institute has a position, character, and work peculiar to itself, a career brief but vigorous; and the artistic way, scientific as well as æsthetic, is to accept the good peculiarities, hold to them, and develop them.

Let the reader imagine what could be done to make a greater Institute of Technology where she stands, a dignified architectural whole, harmonious with her architectural neighbors. Rogers would well hold its own. The accompanying block plan (*see Frontispiece*) is offered as a help to make a little clearer what such possibilities are and what they would involve. When Columbia College recently removed to Morningside Heights, they planned for the future and built what was needed for the present. The plan for the future shows a ground area of buildings about the same as that shown in the block plan here presented. Columbia planned for buildings of four stories above the basement. The Institute buildings have five, so that the block plan shows a capacity greater by about 20 per cent. This somewhat more than quadruples the present permanent buildings of Technology, counting as such Rogers, Walker, Engineering, and Pierce.

The vista suggested between Rogers and the Walker Memorial; the cross vista to an Institute building on Clarendon Street, flanked to the north by the Ludlow and Trinity, flanked to the south an equal distance by worthy Institute buildings; these faced on the opposite side of the street by a symmetrical group of school buildings; the Engineering-Pierce quadrangle completed, enclosing a court, perhaps roofed to form a gallery for the largest architectural casts; the original block on Boylston Street, appropriated wholly to the Institute and perhaps, as suggested in the plan, with Walker and Natural History ulti-

mately rebuilt symmetrically and connected by suitable walls or fences to Rogers, forming courts,—all these would afford sufficient and abundant architectural opportunities for a very imposing development.

Evidently, the acquisition of the additional property means a very large expenditure, its assessed valuation being about $1,800,000. On the other hand, the departure of the Institute and of the Natural History Society means a probable sacrifice of buildings valued at nearly $1,000,000. To stand fast requires a great effort; but is the problem more difficult than that which fifty years ago confronted the Virginia professor who offered to the comparatively small and poor community the "New Education," then unknown, untried, and unvalued?

The advantages of removal have been stated to be seven. May we not think some of these might as well or better be attained by remaining? If a partial quotation be permitted, may we not, without destroying all the Institute now has, *increase public interest through the conspicuousness of a radical step, which will possibly create a new sentiment and affection for the Institute, enable the buildings to be replanned on a more suitable and unified scheme, and gain an unsurpassed increase of dignity that will make the greatness of the Institute more patent?*

Henry A. Phillips, (IV.) '73.

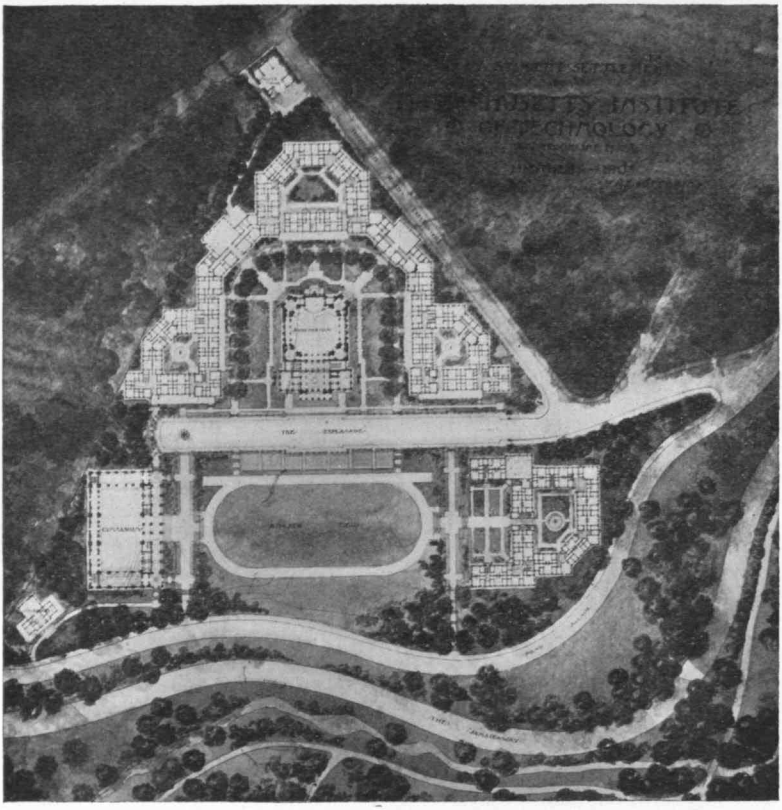
A STUDENT SETTLEMENT FOR THE MASSACHUSETTS INSTITUTE OF TECHNOLOGY

BEING A

THESIS PRESENTED FOR THE DEGREE OF MASTER OF SCIENCE, JUNE, 1903

During the summer of 1902 the long-mooted question as to the future location of the Massachusetts Institute of Technology was brought to a head by the offer of Mr. Samuel Cabot, whereby an opportunity was given to purchase at a reasonable figure a desirable tract of land, situated five miles from Boston, in Brookline, Mass. Prior to this, the question of change of location had been one of but vague interest to the majority of alumni and other interested persons. When, however, Mr. Cabot's offer was announced, the question assumed a leading place in the thought of those concerned in any way with the future welfare of the Institute. Its needs, present and future, were discussed from every point of view and in every phase. Among the questions, by no means the least important was whether the whole Institute should be removed to a quieter and more extensive location or whether a place should be provided simply for the students themselves,— a place in which to foster their social relations. It is with the adaptation of the Brookline land to these conditions that the present thesis has to do.

A very cursory examination of the site offered served to show that an entire lay-out for the Institute of lecture halls, drawing-rooms, and laboratories on the Brookline lot is out of the question. A reference to the original survey dis-



closes the following as the nature of the land. It is an irregular triangle in shape, its base facing to the south-east, and resting on the Jamaica Way, one of the roads of the Boston Park system. From this the land rises steeply on the sides, gently in the centre, through its whole extent, to the apex of the triangle, which lies on High Street. To the north-east a wing stretches out toward Boston, so rough and steep, however, as to be of little value. To the north, across Highland Road, the land rises abruptly to the summit of the hill whose crest is occupied by a private resi-

dence. To the west is another property, on a considerably higher level than that under consideration, but of such a nature that it might be considered as a possible addition. To the south and east is the parkway, on the other side of which the land rises sharply. The whole property comprises fourteen acres of land, of which less than thirteen are available for building. The very peculiar shape reduces the "carrying power" of the land even more. It is evident, then, that only a limited number of buildings can be effectively placed upon it. In view of these limitations of site it seemed necessary to consider in the problem solely the arrangement of the tract for a student settlement,—a place for the fostering of college relations and for the development of a stronger spirit of union among the students. This, together with the advantages of purer air and quiet, would be the things sought.

As a result of the above, we have the following program of requirements: —

Dormitories, with dining-rooms, for 1,500 students.
Gymnasium.
Athletic field.
Auditorium.
Administrative offices.
Library.
Infirmary.
Power House, Laundry, Service, etc.

The whole to form an "open-air" composition and to utilize as well as possible the land in question.

In considering the problem as thus stated, it has been my endeavor to combine with practical considerations as much of what the French term the "monumental" quality as possible. By that is meant the securing of as much dignity of arrangement as is possible, and the making of