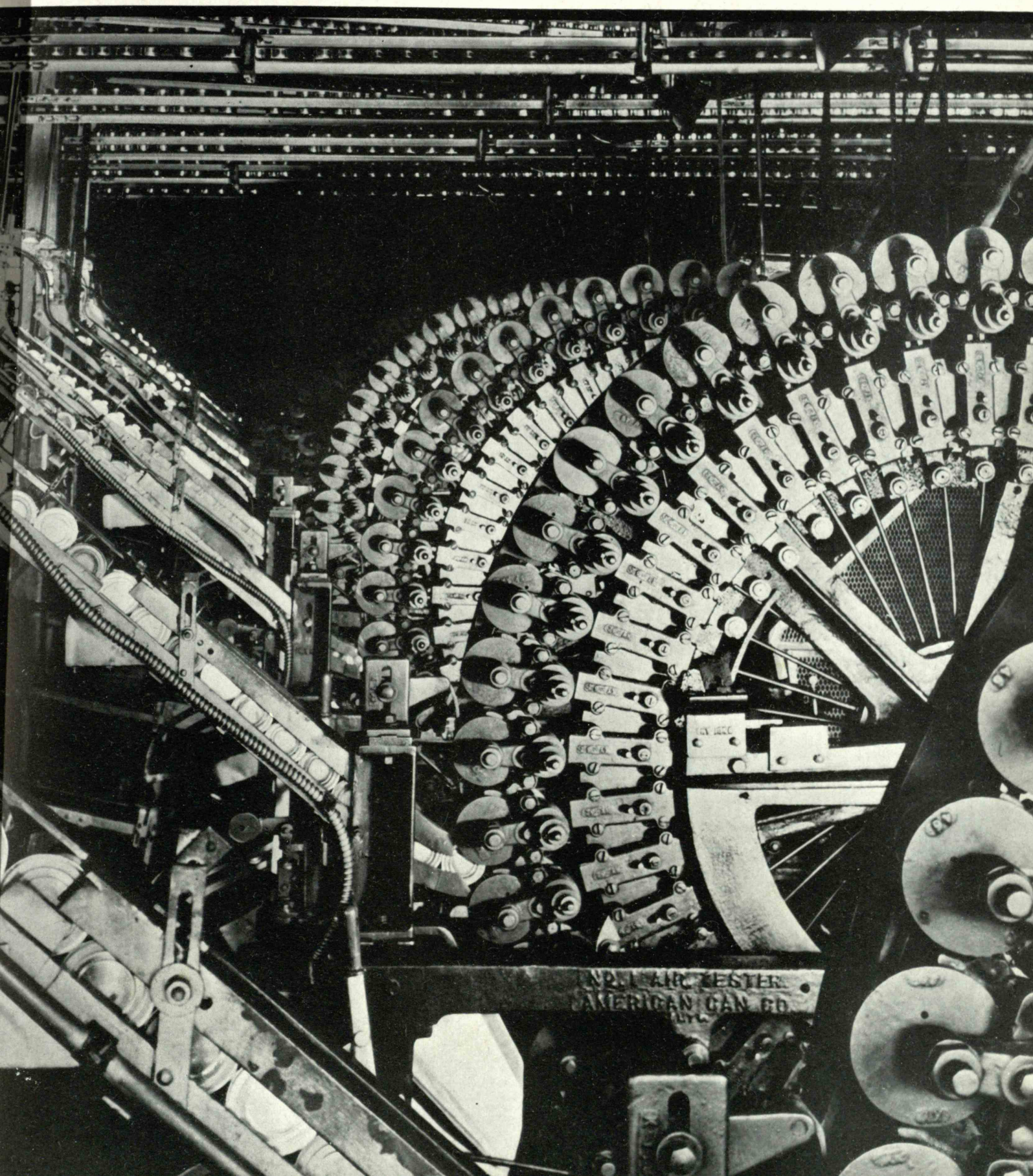
December 1937

TECHNOLOGY REVIEW

Title Reg. in U. S. Pat. Office



THE TECHNOLOGY REVIEW, December, 1937. Vol. XL, No. 2. Published monthly from November to July inclusive at 10 Ferry Street, Concord, N. H. Publication date: twenty-seventh of the month preceding date of issue. Annual subscription $3.50; Canadian and Foreign subscription $4.00. Entered as second-class matter at the Post Office at Concord, N. H., under the Act of March 3, 1879.

THE TABULAR VIEW

SOME of the best received articles which The Review has published have been suggested by our readers. This quite naturally leads us to invite suggestions for future subjects which subscribers would like The Review staff to illuminate. Some suggestions are already in hand, and to stimulate further ideas, we list these:

1. An executive of a great oil company asks us to present a popular explanation and interpretation of the polar-front theory of air-mass analysis, which has received such great impetus in this country from the work of Technology's meteorological staff. This theory has been adopted by the United States Weather Bureau and is helping notably, not only in the form of better weather broadcasts but by aiding our understanding of weather phenomena.

2. "Personally," writes the associate editor of a well-known technical magazine, "I should like to see a Review article dealing with recent advances in, and a critical comparison of, the various commercial systems of making amateur color photographs, both transparencies and 'opaques,' and including a critical evaluation of Kodachrome, Dufaycolor, Agfa color plates, Finlay plates, and any others — if any. The story should be written by some well-versed, disinterested party. . . ."

3. From this same reader comes a second suggestion that we have an article from the news or human-interest angle on the transmission of news pictures by wire. This is one of the most spectacular communication developments of recent years, particularly the transmission of pictures over ordinary telephone instruments.

An example of an article suggested by a reader is the article on appertizing, or canning, in this issue. We hope that these examples will inspire additions to this list. As we have announced before, we also always welcome suggestions for striking pictures from our readers, as well as actual pictures themselves.

IT may not be immediately obvious, though it is demonstrably true, that an expert on housing should be able to write authoritatively on the canning industry (page 71). Possibly JOHN E. BURCHARD'S ['23] preoccupation with that human can, the trailer (The Review, May) or the prefabricated house, was but a step toward studying the habitat of the sardine. ¶ The engineers and scientists who replied to The Review's questionnaire on the automobile really wrote the article on page 75. Please note that readers are urged to send in their own conceptions of tomorrow's car. ¶ The physicist who plays with cosmic rays must of necessity also flirt with the stars. PHILIP M. MORSE, Associate Professor of Physics, is no exception; he seems well acquainted (page 77). ¶ At its sesquicentennial in October, Franklin and Marshall College bestowed upon KARL T. COMPTON, our President, an honorary degree of LL.D. The Review presents (page 81) the address on Benjamin Franklin which Dr. Compton delivered at that time.

MAIL RETURNS

PICTURES AND LETTERS FROM REVIEW READERS

Let's Argue It

FROM ALBERT MAYER, '19:

I have just received the alumni appeal for funds and the accompanying pamphlet. At first, I thought the printer had mixed things up, because the printed appeal was for a recreational building, but the photographs showed what appeared to be a Classical mausoleum, a Greek temple, or a museum of ancient art.

Unfortunately, I found, after further study, that the archaeological affair and the recreational center were the same thing. Surely this is a ghastly misstep. This reproduction of a dead architecture has nothing to do with the spirit of Technology, whose essence is the realistic search for scientific and engineering and human progress; nor has its cloaking, static façade anything to do with the freedom of spirit and movement which should be inherent in a center of recreation. To be consistent with the gymnasium architecture, the Institute's Departments of Physics and Chemistry should be teaching that there are four elements — earth, air, fire, and water; in its Electrical Department, which might be further advanced, the Leyden jar would be the last word in apparatus; and in the Structures Course, only the theory of masonry structures and stone arches should be taught. Or possibly a more accurate comparison would be if the Institute kept to its present advanced program but published the results in Latin or Greek.

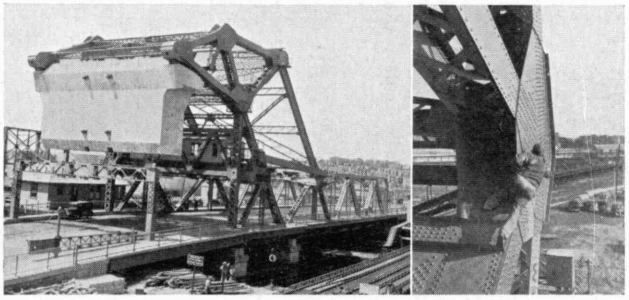
The answer is, of course, that we have progressed far beyond those primitive concepts and methods. And so we have in building construction and architecture. The dead hand of anachronism and fake is just as fatal in architecture, in its phony effect on the beholder, as is more palpably the case in the study of engineering and science.

Why is such a thing possible at Technology? The argument may be advanced that the main building is Classic; therefore this should be. . . . Of course, I am aware that our American institutions of learning have a passion for uniformity of style, whether Gothic, Colonial, or Classic. But surely this is the negation of what should be the provocative, forward-moving spirit of education and research. Technology, above any other institution, should avoid this snobbish, static attitude. Why should not the architecture reflect the forward march, the inevitable changes of viewpoint of a dynamic society? Why should not this building reflect the fact that it is built of structural steel or reinforced concrete? Why should its forms and fenestration be placed into the strait jacket of a stone-masonry structural system current two thousand years ago? Why shouldn't this recreational building look like a recreational building? Why should it be indistinguishable from a museum, a Federal Reserve bank, a post office? It will be distinctly an architectural loss when the new Classic jewel replaces the present refreshing, straightforward, wooden building.

If the Classic treatment is retained, I suggest that in accordance with custom, there be a frieze of incised names of men famous in the field, such as Babe Ruth, Red Grange, Zbyszko; or if they are modern anachronisms, we might have research conducted to ascertain the names of prominent gladiators and chariot drivers.

The architecture of this building is a very fundamental question indeed. It seems to me that without stopping the progress of the campaign, it would be the best plan to have the Alumni *and* the students express their views. The campaign will take some time. Plans and façade can be restudied in ample time. Let's argue it, and then let's vote on it.
New York, N. Y.

FROM ARTHUR W. VOSE, '13:



The picture of the Chelsea Street Bridge in the June number of The Review was of special interest to me because I was connected with its construction. I am sending you prints . . which I took while on the job. The completed bridge is simple in appearance when compared with its complex skeleton. Huge rockers and a thousand-ton counterweight overhanging the roadway are the striking features of this type of bridge. Strength, and efficient service for motor traffic and ocean tankers, it provides at low cost. In the midst of oil-storage tanks, along Chelsea Creek, beauty of line would have been misplaced. The bascule is called the modern version of the old castle drawbridge. In each, the similarity of operation is apparent, and in each is found romance of the builder's art.
Milton, Mass.

Proposal for a New Book

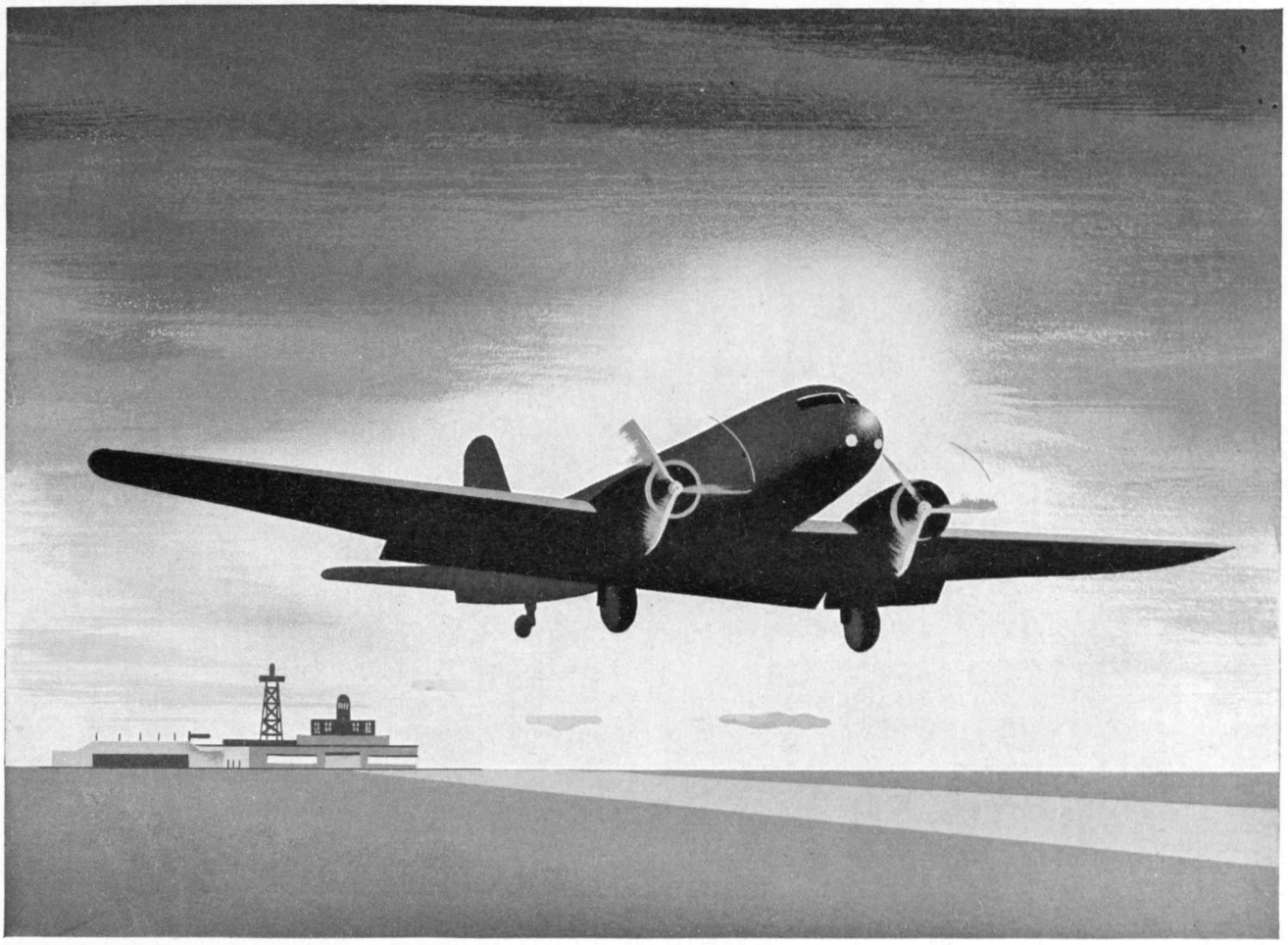
THE author of the following letter prefers to remain anonymous, but both he and The Review Editors would like to know whether other readers feel the need for the book he describes and whether they have specific suggestions for its contents and preparation.

FROM A REVIEW READER:

I wish to place before you a suggestion which has been buzzing around in my bean for a long time. With every issue of The Review, I am more impressed with the ability of the present Review staff to present interesting facets of science to readers who are not familiar with scientific intricacy.

There have, of course, been many books of popular science, but most of them have missed their mark. I think it would be quite possible to frame a book which might be called "Modern Science," or more appositely something else, which would indulge in no more historical survey than seems necessary to lay a background and which would concentrate therefore as Huxley, Tyndall, *et al.*, did in the last century in interpreting *to those intelligent enough to understand it*, what modern science is doing.

It would obviously be difficult to plan the contents of such a book, but I feel that the present staff of The Review, plus one or two obvious augmentations, could lay out a coherent program. I think that with the resources (*Concluded on page 60*)



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MOLY

MAIL RETURNS

(Concluded from page 58)

available to that staff, they could indulge in a swell job of collaboration (a symposium would be deadly, and the book should have the atmosphere of a single writer). Such a book, published by The Technology Press, ought to have sufficient sale to pay for itself, ought to reflect considerable credit on The Press, The Review, the members of The Review staff, and the Institute itself. A leisurely program of a couple of years might be envisioned. . . .
Boston, Mass.

Brain Teasers, Cont.

WINNERS in the November brain-teaser contest for Review subscriptions will be announced in this department next month. The number of replies has been so large that we have not yet finished examining them all.

In the meantime, problem fans may quiet their nerves with the following.

FROM HOWARD M. EDMUNDS, '05:

HOW MANY GIRLS AND HOW MANY DAUGHTERS?

A group of young ladies in a small town meet once a week to embroider a flag for the church. When it is finished, they celebrate the event by having a tea party to which, besides themselves, only the rector is invited. At this function, they all kiss each other, but the rector kisses only those among the girls who are his daughters. There are 109 kisses all told. How many girls were there and how many were daughters of the rector?

THE FIVE RIGHT TRIANGLES

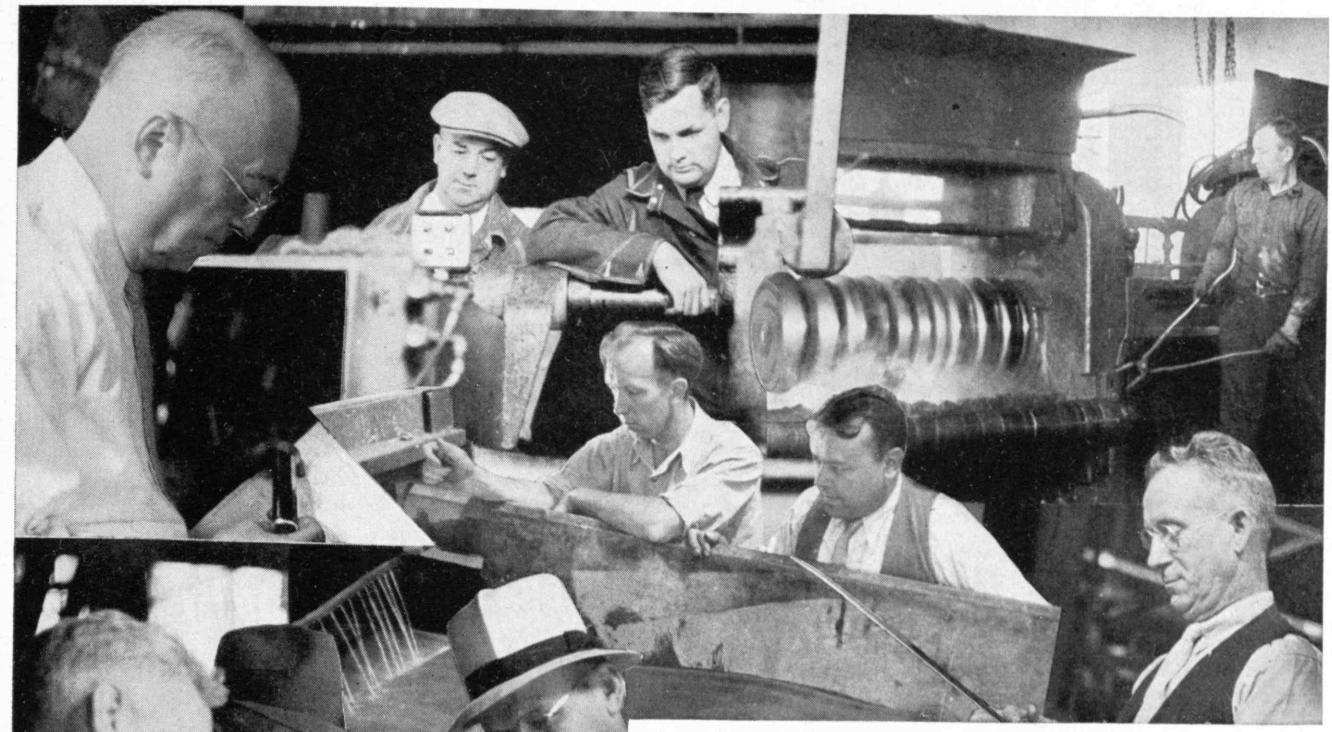
There is one (and only one) set of five right triangles whose sides are all whole numbers and whose areas are all equal. What are they?

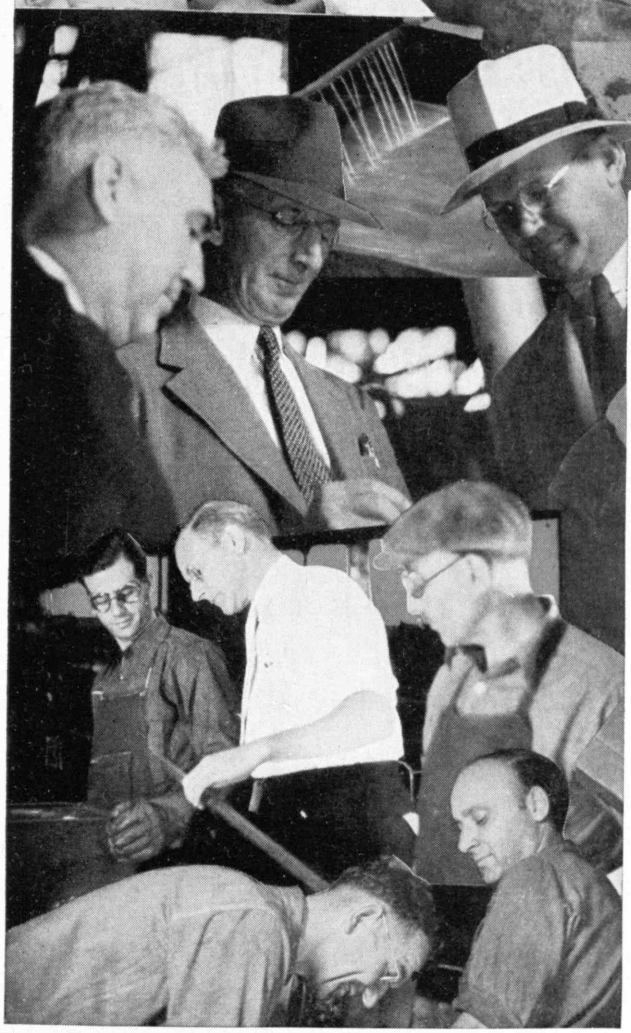
(I once saw the answer to this and know positively that it is true. I would much like to know the answer. It is a real twister.)
New York, N. Y.

Homes of Tomorrow

FROM GENE CARY, '33:

May I congratulate you on publishing the five papers on "Homes of Tomorrow," which were recently presented on Alumni Day. These papers have stirred my imagination more than anything has for many years, and their contents are pertinent to my present business. . . .
Chicago, Ill.





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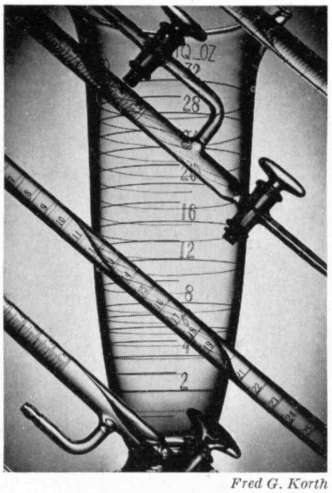

Fred G. Korth

THE TECHNOLOGY REVIEW

Title Reg. U. S. Pat. Office

EDITED AT THE MASSACHUSETTS INSTITUTE OF TECHNOLOGY

VOL. 40, NO. 2 DECEMBER, 1937

CONTENTS

PUBLISHED MONTHLY FROM NOVEMBER TO JULY INCLUSIVE ON THE TWENTY-SEVENTH OF THE MONTH PRECEDING THE DATE OF ISSUE AT 50 CENTS A COPY. ANNUAL SUBSCRIPTION $3.50; CANADIAN AND FOREIGN SUBSCRIPTION $4.00. PUBLISHED FOR THE ALUMNI ASSOCIATION OF THE M.I.T. MARSHALL B. DALTON, PRESIDENT; H. B. RICHMOND, CHARLES R. BOGGS, VICE-PRESIDENTS; CHARLES E. LOCKE, SECRETARY; J. RHYNE KILLIAN, JR., TREASURER. PUBLISHED AT THE RUMFORD PRESS, 10 FERRY STREET, CONCORD, N. H. EDITORIAL OFFICE, ROOM 11-203, MASSACHUSETTS INSTITUTE OF TECHNOLOGY, CAMBRIDGE A, MASS. ENTERED AS SECOND-CLASS MAIL MATTER AT THE POST OFFICE AT CONCORD, N. H. THREE WEEKS MUST BE ALLOWED TO EFFECT CHANGES OF ADDRESS. BOTH OLD AND NEW ADDRESSES SHOULD BE GIVEN.

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