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Recent American Group-Plans.

I. FAIRS AND EXPOSITIONS.

ALFRED MORTON GITHENS.

EDITOR'S NOTE. — In this article, and the two which will follow, Mr. Githens continues the series on "The Group-Plan" begun in THE BRICKBUILDER, July, 1906. The initial articles discussed the subject generally under the headings, "The Theory of Composition" (July, 1906), and "The Elemental Types of Composition" (September, 1906). Beginning in the September, 1907, issue and continuing in October, Hospital Groups were treated, followed by the Group-Plan for Universities, Colleges, and Schools in the December, 1907, issue.

THE past five years seem to have produced no radical changes in the development of the group-plan here. Former influences have continued; effects of the Paris system are more and more evident since all the college courses and the various Ateliers take the teaching of the École des Beaux Arts as their model. Few of the younger men have developed outside its influence, and therefore during the next few years the French ideals will naturally be acknowledged here as they seem to be the civilized world over, except in England and the Teutonic countries.

Modern English ideals are confused. The Secession movement of Austria and Germany, though of great promise, seems sometimes, like the French School, forgetful that a plan is not merely a decorative arrangement on a sheet of paper, that the executed work is more important than the project, the end more important than the means.

Characteristic of the Paris ideal is a certain bigness and simplicity, evidenced in a desire to include all the buildings of a plan in one great composition rather than in a series of smaller arrangements of varied form, more or less closely knit together. A single great impression to the beholder of size and symmetry is preferred to his sustained interest in passing from group to group, and the variety of the picturesque and unexpected. This ideal was impressed on the American students there, and on their return at once accepted by this country, for grandeur seems a quality appreciated by the American people.

The Court of Honor at the Chicago Fair received imme-

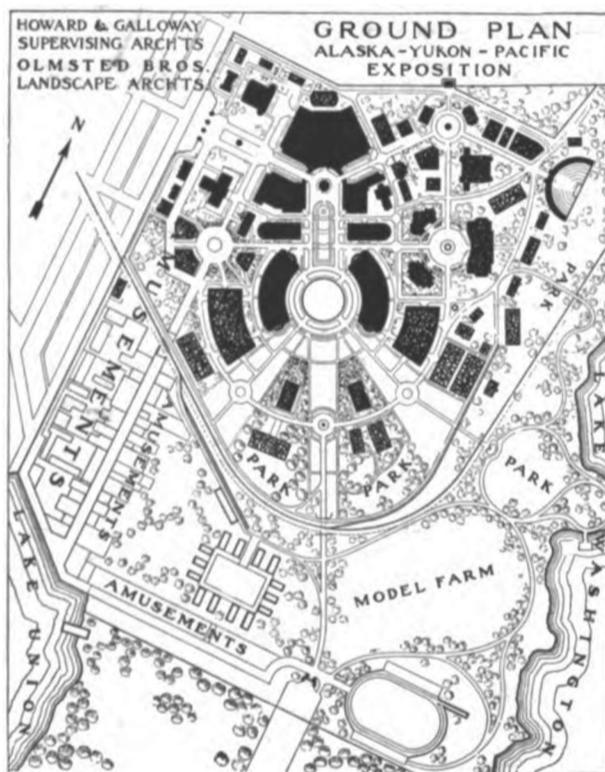
diante acclaim. It was a bold course for the designers to have taken, this manifestation in staff and plaster of an architectural character which in Europe had been applied only to the most dignified and permanent of monumental

buildings. The Court of Honor must be taken as a picture rather than the serious answer to an architectural problem; a model, an illustrated lecture to the people on architectural dignity. The civic center of Cleveland, the MacMillan Plan for the City of Washington, the projected Fulton and Perry memorials, these have been the people's response.

From this point of view, the censure of certain architects has been unjust, the criticism that the buildings of the Chicago Fair were not constructive, did not express their material nor their temporary nature; nor that they were built to house exhibits of manufactures, to promote sales, and to show, in an amusing way, the mechanical and agricultural progress of the preceding twenty years.

Later fairs, however, have been influenced by these criticisms. Formality is retained, but without such seriousness; rigid lines have given way to curves, at times to the sensuousness of most elaborate curvature. Following the French ideal, there has been a tendency toward the unity of one great

composition of a recognized form. The Pan-American of Buffalo and the Alaska-Yukon-Pacific Fairs are each grouped around an *open court* such as in preceding articles we have called the *telescope*; it is the composition of the Champs de Mars group of the last Paris Exposition, with



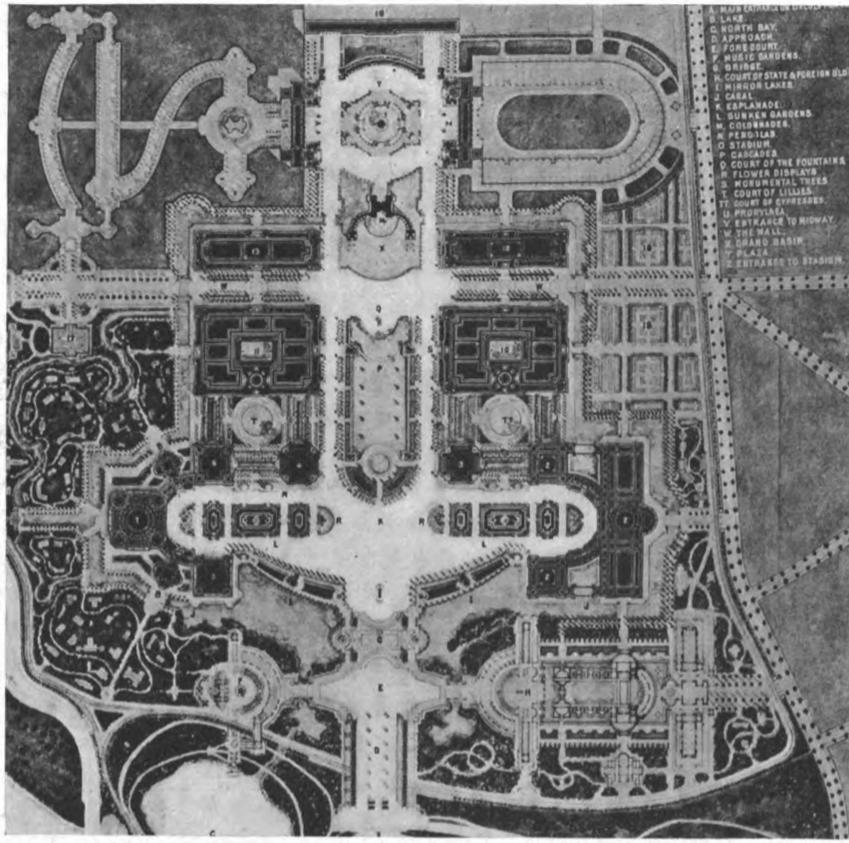
BLOCK PLAN.
ALASKA-YUKON-PACIFIC EXPOSITION.

Howard & Galloway, Olmsted Brothers, Architects.

Situated on strip of land between two lakes; city of Seattle adjoining to the north; entrance at head of *open court* or *telescope*, forming main composition; around it, lesser buildings of the Fair are grouped. Curved buildings of agriculture and manufactures arranged at the foot to accentuate the opening; lanes cut through the great pines, southeast toward Mount Rainier on the horizon, and east and south over the lakes.

the Pont Alexandre III and the Grand and Petit Palais. The New York State Fair at Syracuse is an example of our *unsymmetrical composition on two axes*, and noteworthy in that it shows the successful placing of every building in the single composition; not one could be moved without its loss being immediately felt. The designers have employed every unit to aid toward a single prodigious impression.

The proposed Nashville Fair is entirely different; two race-tracks hemmed it in; a central hillock divided the site; part of the group was required at once, and the rest for some future time. Results have been fortunate; whereas the entire New York State Fair is seen at the first glance and nothing left for exploration, the Nashville on the other hand leads one on from interest to interest, never with the stupendous im-



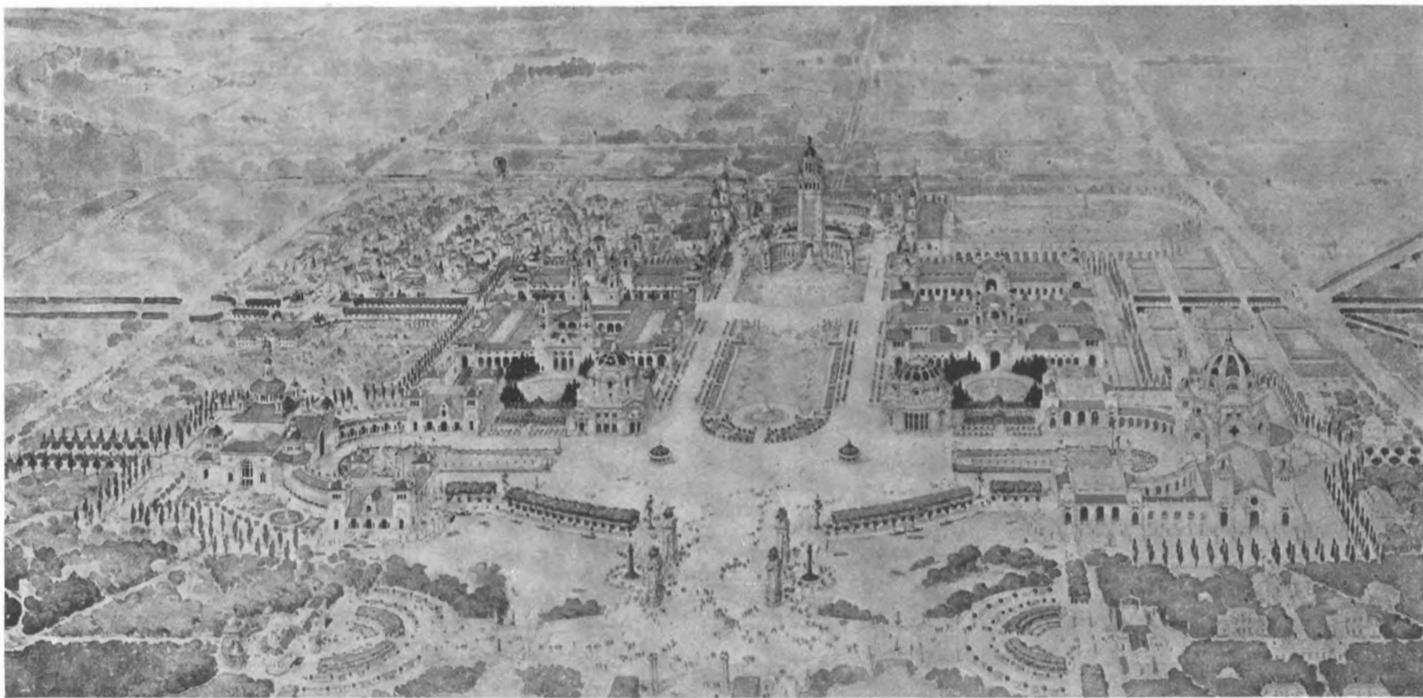
GROUP PLAN — PAN AMERICAN EXPOSITION.

- I. Dominant *compound Open Court, or telescope*; head at electric tower, foot at the Bridge of Honor.
 - II. At head, *closed court*, formed by railroad station, arcades, and electric tower.
 - III. At foot, *open court or telescope*, in direction opposite to that of dominant composition; Bridge of Honor forms foot of this as of dominant.
- Principal entrances are at head of dominant composition, as in Seattle Fair.

arched gate with flanking churchlike mass, its long street arcaded to shelter sidewalks from a burning sun, and great central plaza. . There is no trace of French influence; the ground-plan as a decorative drawing shows that. Nor is it

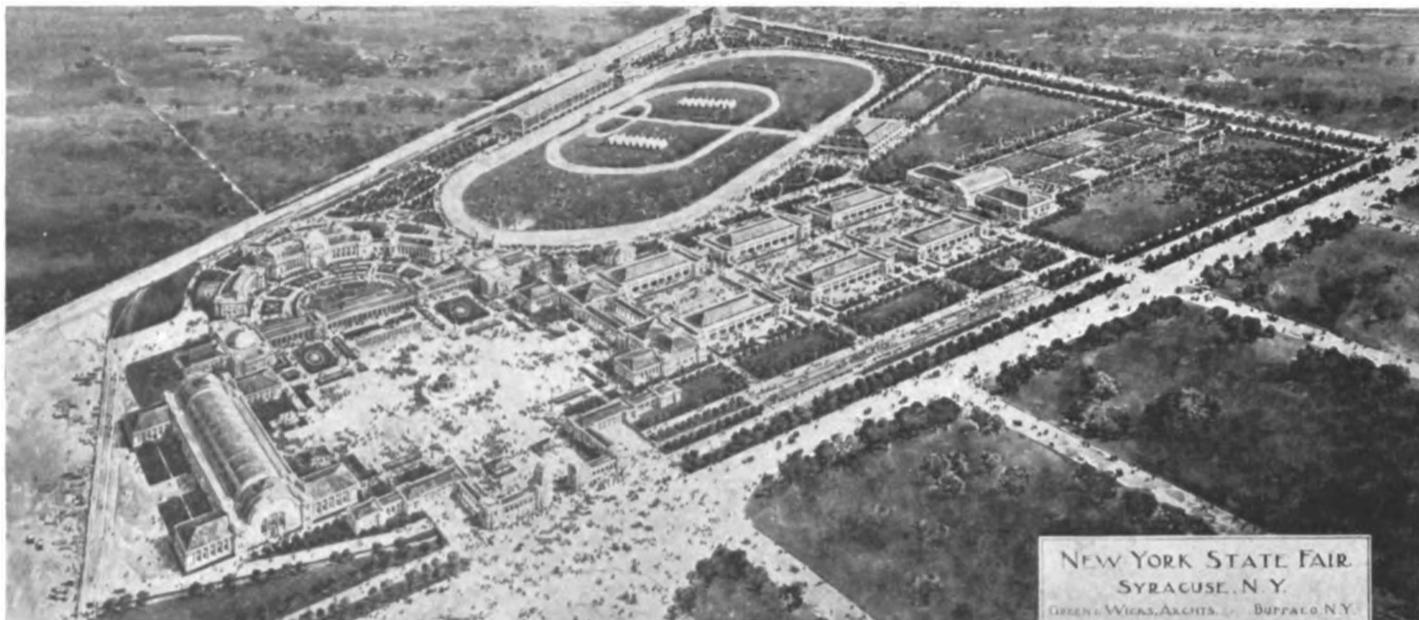
pression of space as at the New York State Fair, but with always something fresh and unexpected. The French influence is evident in the central domed Concert Hall, with its Château d'Eau and its Trocadero-like colonnade, and elsewhere in sweeping curve and terrace, forecourt, avenue, parterre, and pool.

Of an entirely different character is the proposed Panama Exposition at San Diego. The problem is new; the sunlight severe, and the locality and its traditions suggest an expression different from the others. This the authors have found in their idealized Latin city with its narrow entrance causeway and



PAN AMERICAN EXPOSITION, BUFFALO. Carrère & Hastings, Architects.

A dominant and two minor compositions, intimately connected by means of a building common to both. Principal entrances are at head of dominant composition, as in Seattle Fair.



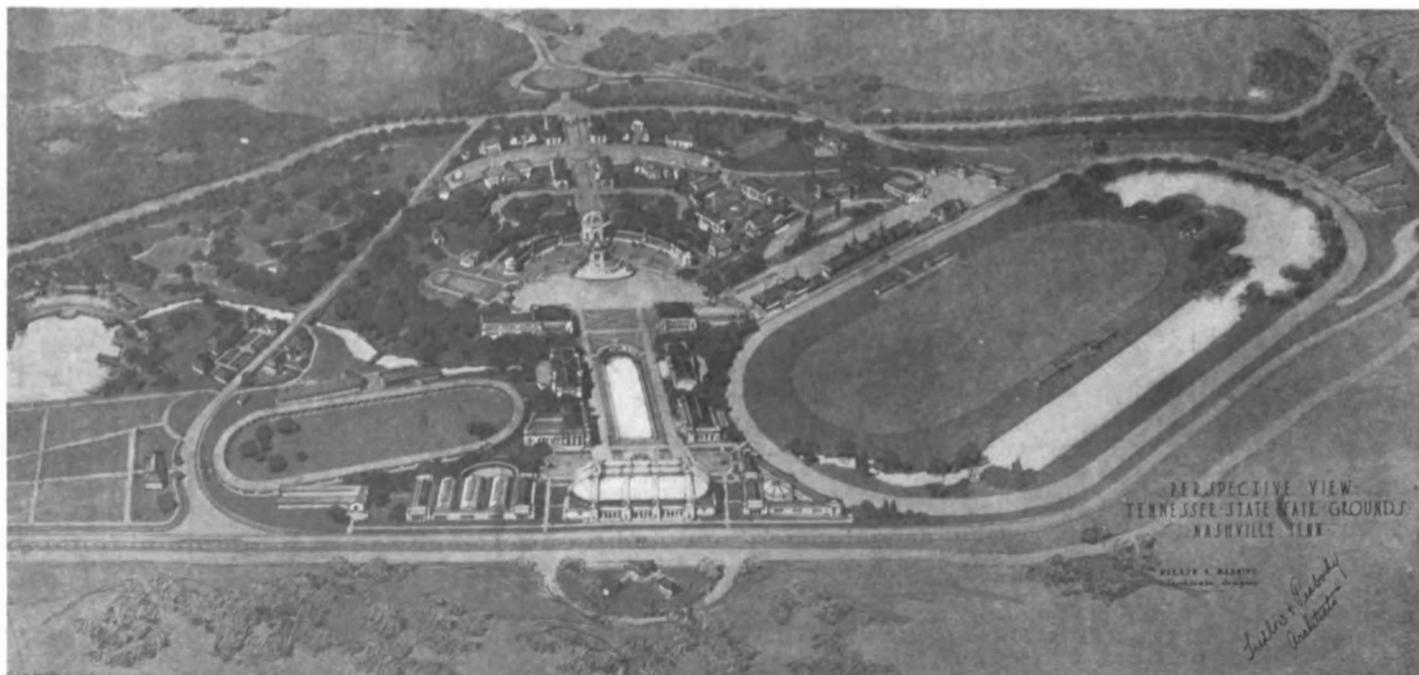
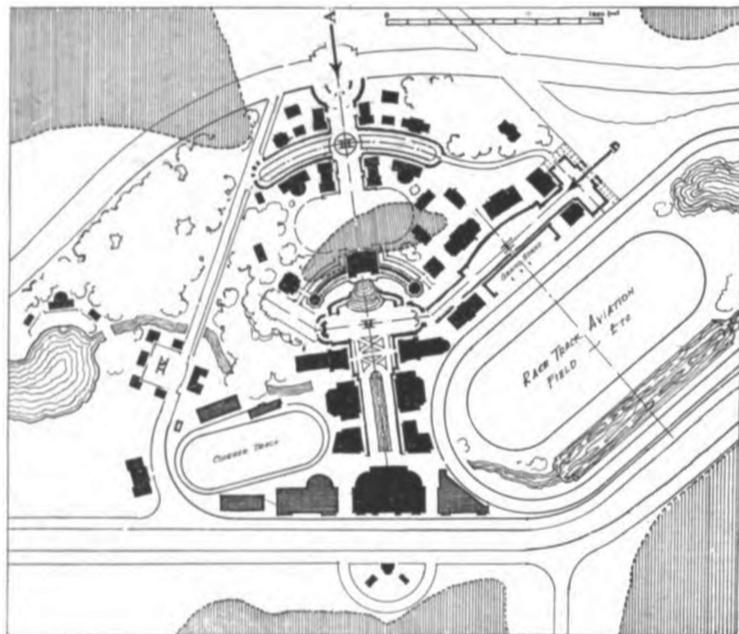
NEW YORK STATE FAIR, SYRACUSE.
Green and Wicks, Architects.

A pure example of the *unsymmetrical composition on two axes*, incorporating all buildings in a single indivisible composition.
Farm-station and race-course are extraneous.

BLOCK PLAN, TENNESSEE STATE FAIR, NASHVILLE.

Ludlow and Peabody, Architects.

Higher portions of ground hatched with vertical lines. Two entrances demanded, at A and B.
Music and Lecture Hall with lower surrounding buildings follows in composition the principle of *pyramid*. In detail there are four separate compositions:
I. Principal approach (from B, *closed avenue*, terminating in terraced steps which form entrance to—
II. Central Group, an *unsymmetrical composition on two axes*, the major axes extending from Music and Lecture Hall to Coliseum and the minor axis terminating in terraced steps to higher garden on the left.
III. *Closed Court* of unusual form, with circulation across center.
IV. *Open Court* or 'L', with no relation to the rest.



TENNESSEE STATE FAIR, NASHVILLE. Ludlow and Peabody, Architects.

Situated at junction of three shallow valleys, with small hillock at center of their intersection. Two race-courses, grandstand, and two near-by buildings were already constructed. Central hillock chosen for dominant building, the Music and Lecture Hall (c. f. St. Louis Exposition). Interesting treatment of slopes; existing creek widened to form lagoon at end of large race-course, pool for swimming races, and formal basin in central court. In general, combination of formal and naturalistic treatment particularly interesting.

in any way suggestive of Paris or a French project. Paris walks in the full sunlight of broad avenues and boulevards, so spacious themselves that the Places give little contrast. The Place d'Etoile is enormous, but the Avenue des Champs Elysées is so broad that one scarcely realizes it when the Place is reached.

In Rome, however, out of the shadows of narrow streets and alleys between huge palaces, one emerges on the Piazza Colonna, de Spagna or Barberini; a vivid contrast is felt, the shadow intensifies the sunlight, and the sunlight the shadow; a contrast which Paris sacrifices for space for her greater traffic.

Now as Rome is to Paris, so is this to other exhibition plans. Its long street and shadowed arcade contrast with

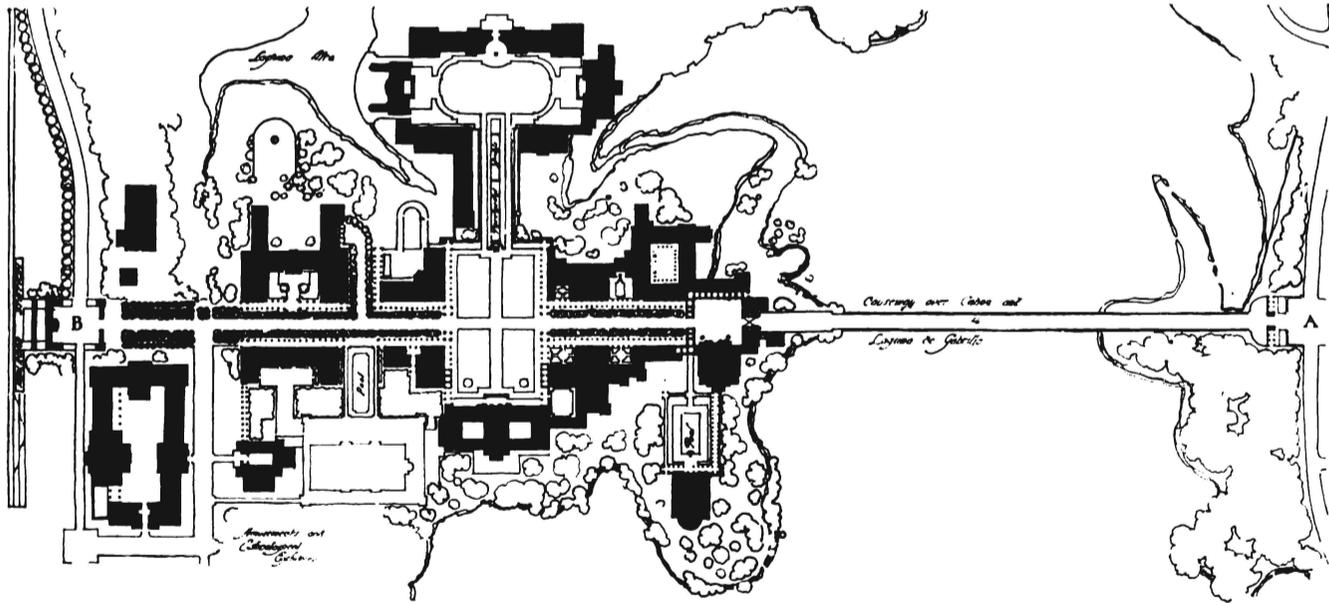
its great plazas; the plan is not arranged as a unit, an organism subject to definite laws of composition, but is more in the nature of a well-arranged city. There is something interesting to see at the end of each street or arcade, an adequate climax to each vista. Here and there, unexpectedly seen through some archway, is a sunny "patio" with its fountain, as through a Roman palace doorway one has a passing glimpse of cortile and old sarcophagus, with jet of water from an antique lion's head. It is all totally different in spirit from the other fairs.

An interesting problem is this of a fair, for the author may express any characters he wills. He may be gay or serious, frivolous or stately, conventional, original, utilitarian, or even somewhat sentimental.



ENTRANCE.

Showing causeway, entrance gate, and flanking churchlike California State Building. Central portion of Exposition omitted on this drawing.



BLOCK PLAN OF CENTRAL GROUP.

Situated on a spur of land at side of a canyon; entrance at causeway leading from the city "A"; railroad station at "B"; a city plan; long streets, arcades, rows of trees, open plazas. Interesting treatment of each vista; outside of the group irregular, conforming more or less with the contour of the canyon side.

PANAMA EXPOSITION, SAN DIEGO, CALIFORNIA.
Cram, Goodhue & Ferguson, Architects.