

WHEN THE ARCHITECT BUILDS HIS OWN HOME

Even the Modernist, When He Designs a Residence for Himself, Is Not Dogmatic and Usually He Follows the Lines of Tradition

(Continued from Page 3)

the heat and its glare than to seek free circulation of air extra-charged with caloric.

Mr. Russell's house consists of two stories of assembled simple cubic masses except for a hip-roof of very low pitch—the Mediterranean angle. One façade shows only

a large, simple, round-arched door on the ground level, with an ironwork balcony above on which a triple window opens. In a general way, the upper-story windows are tucked up very close under the eyebrows of the projecting eaves. The arrangements include an enclosed patio and the hallway or passage has markedly the effect which you can either call modern or refer to Spanish or Italian influence.

On the other hand, the dining room is done in the Adam manner, with mahogany pieces in that spirit.

To round out the picture a little we may take a few examples of American architects' houses a little way out of the working week-end radius from New York. Beginning with a huge Norway maple and a boulder even bigger as items of a site at Annisquam on the north shore of Massachusetts, Rayne Adams built a house of hollow tile

resting on concrete foundations, with a roof of beveled fireproof shingles. He saved headroom and got beamed ceiling effects by using splined flooring of spruce planks.

The type is the New England cottage, with the central chimney and the peaked dormer windows, with casement windows added. The



"No 'Period' Stamp"—The Home of Benjamin Wistar Morris.

grounds are arranged in terraces the levels supported by the stone walls of New England—only the stones seem to be hewn into blocks before laying. This is a very small house. Indeed, there has been no attempt to include here the houses of architects who build themselves palaces. As a matter of fact, most architects have learned better by building palaces for other people and counting the cost.

Out St. Louis way, Benedict Far-

rar has equipped himself with a residence of the English manor-house type, built of light gray and yellow native stone, having a slate roof with a chromatic scale of colors in the slate, gables, big outside chimneys and the rest of the conventional dress of this sort of derivative and imitative country house.

As far away as across the continent at Pasadena, Wallace Neff has built long and low in the manner combined from the Spanish practice and that of the Taos Indian. The house has a ridge-pole roof of very low pitch and unequal one-story extensions on the two flanks of the two-story central pavilion. Here, obviously, tradition has more of a hand in the pile than the modern influence, which perhaps claims closer kin

with the builders of Taos than any others.

W. Duncan Lee has built for his own use out at Westhampton, a suburb of Richmond, Va., a far from typical Virginia mansion—Georgian or Early Republican or Jeffersonian. It is not even elementary Tudor or English cottage Gothic translated into wood. But neither is it modern. A square main house of two stories with a good steep roof, and the second-story windows indenting the eaves as cottage windows do, has stuck on, against a big end chimney half way back, a small steep-roofed extension of one story, the shoulders of the big chimney being protected by cowls of roofing. The windows are multiple below and staggered above. There is a plain door in the middle of the main façade. The inspiration, it is said, came from the Irish cottage.

This may have nothing to do with Virginia. But neither has it anything to do with Frank Lloyd Wright or with M. Corbusier or with Herr Grobius, who is the corresponding German disciple of the cult—completing the trinity of prophets of the new order of dogmatic utilitarian architecture in which the flat roof is an article of faith, and the avoidance of any suggestion of forms approved by the good usage of the past the first duty of the artist who will preserve that "integrity" of structure to which his sacred honor is pledged. The lesson of this brief survey is that practical architects, when they build for themselves, are not dogmatic. They are sentimental, eclectic, human, traditional. They build themselves the kind of houses they think they like—the kind that it pleases them to live in.



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Edition

When the architect
builds his own home

Article from The New York Times
by H. I. Brock

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"Undeniable Dormer Window Effects"—The Home of Ely Jacques Kahn.

By H. I. BROCK

THE question has been raised—with plain intent of making it a test of the apothecary's honest belief in the medicine he sells the public—whether architects who build skyscrapers in an uncompromisingly "modern" manner build themselves "modern" houses to live in. The plain answer is that, in this country, they usually do not.

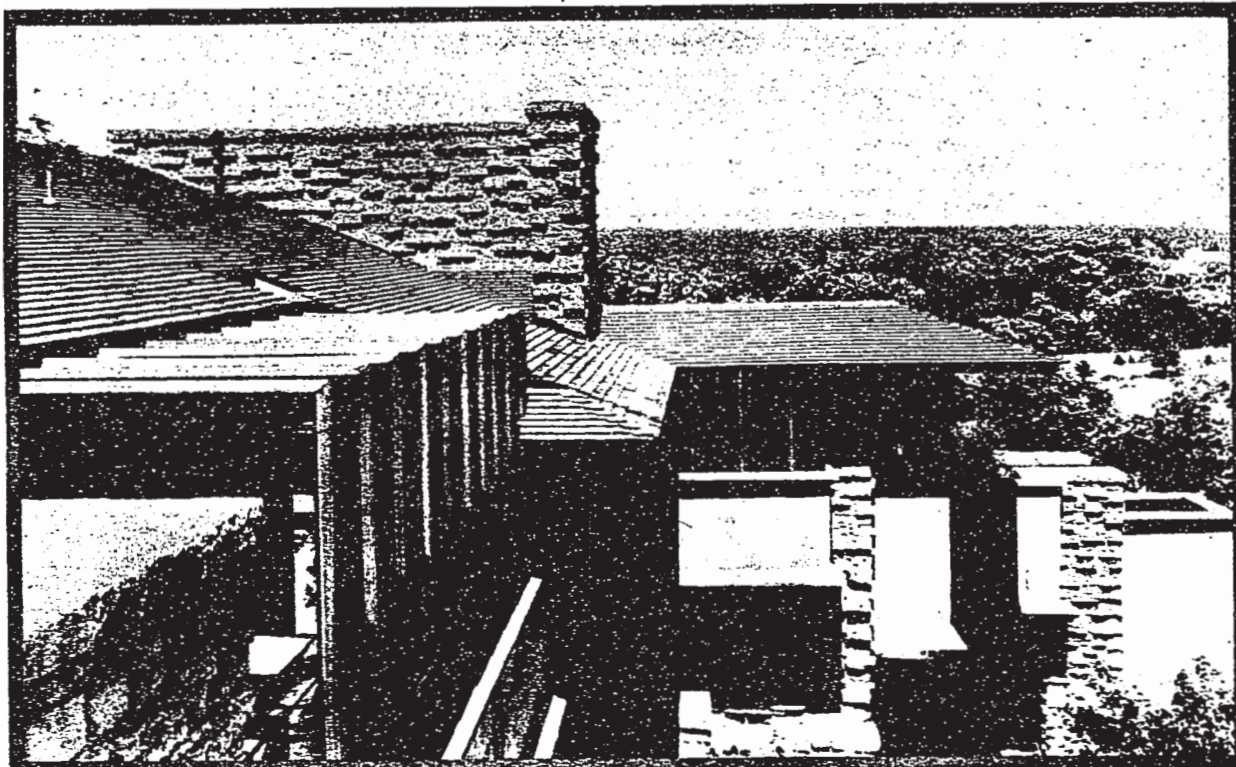
It is true that Frank Lloyd Wright has contrived for his own use out in the West several houses which resolutely defy the cherished traditions of country-home building in favor of the new formula of box-like angular simplicity which he with much verbal felicity exploits as the "horizontal line of the home," or reduces in practice to the house that looks like a ship. It is true that in Sweden, where an admirable contemporary architecture has been developed with perfect modernity, Sven Markelius has built himself a villa with a projecting sun-parlor on stilts. This edifice literally does carry out, as it thrusts forward on its bluff among the hemlocks, the impression of the pilot house of a steamboat. The rest of the structure is chastely expressed essentially in the packing-case manner brought into familiarity by the experiments and propaganda of Mr. Wright and taken over as a specialty by his French disciple Corbusier.

Somewhat belatedly, to be sure, Mr. Wright has been accepted as a prophet by our most conspicuous American exponents of the modern practice of building on a great scale with a jealous regard for the "integrity" of the steel cage structure as such. These same men honestly admire and generously approve what the Swedes have done in the last decade in buildings above the domestic level—for example, the great Town Hall at Stockholm by Ragnar Ostberg, and the surprising Hogalid Church and the handsome Swedish Match Company building—both by Ivar Tengbom, who was lately a visitor among us. Yet, taking the outstanding three of our advance guard, each man of them lives in a house of his own designing which follows familiar lines—which looks every inch a home in the old-fashioned sense.

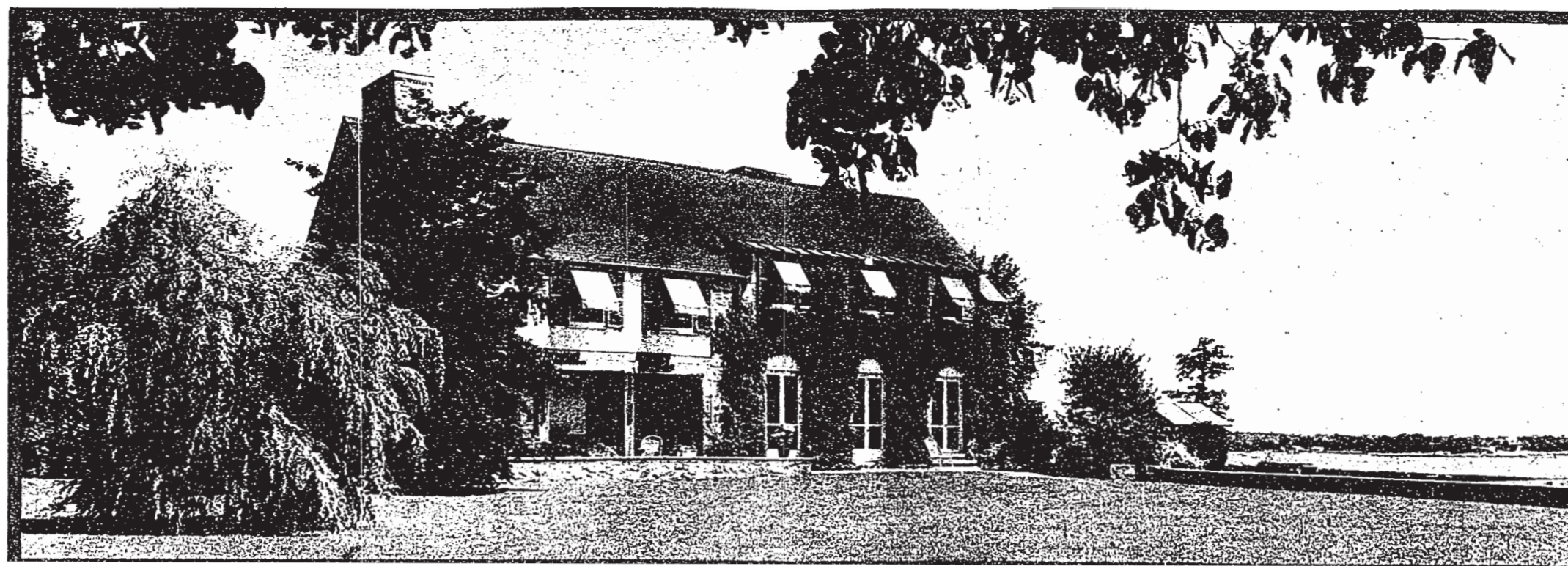
No one of the three houses has a

flat roof like a deck. No one of them has windows that lie horizontally along the façade, producing in the distance the effect of being intended to allow a raking fire from a long-range gun swung on a pivot within. Each one has comfortable fat chimneys and gables and an agreeable mixture of stone and timber in the visible composition. Two of them have undeniable dormer window effects. And each is framed in lawns and trees and gardens, planted precisely in the old-fashioned way.

THE best of the conservatives—persons accused of clinging desperately and illogically to "outworn" traditions of French Beaux Arts ornamental detail and charged with being incurably addicted to appliqué of the classic orders—the very best of these have sometimes built themselves more formal houses. They could not have built houses which show less trace of the sort of thing which the world is in process of being frightened and dragged into accepting as setting the new standard of beauty—the beauty which is use-



"Composed of Many Spread-Out One-Story Units"—Taliesin, the Home of Frank Lloyd Wright.



"Every Inch a Home in the Old-Fashioned Sense"—Raymond Hood's Country Place.

Photo by Samuel H. Gotscho.

WHEN THE ARCHITECT BUILDS HIS OWN HOME

Be He Never So Modern, as His Own Client He Usually Follows Tradition

and its criterion logic, relentlessly expressed in building material.

Naturally, the three men immediately in view are Raymond M. Hood, momentarily most conspicuously identified

all right. A principal function of the building was precisely to focus public attention on the American Radiator Company, the concern that engaged Mr. Hood's ingenuity upon the job.

His office is a busy one, but what Mr. Hood is doing about 5:30, most afternoons, is scurrying along Fortieth Street and across the Fifth Avenue traffic toward the Grand Central Station. He is on his way to Stamford and the house of stone and stuccoed tiles which stands close to the shore on Southfield Point. It is a house with green blinds and half-rounds of stucco above French windows opening down almost level with the lawn. It has two great chimneys and one of them has a huge fireplace out on the flagged porch which is partly terrace and often serves as dining room. There is a sizable living room inside, having another big fireplace, with a wood cellar door right at it for convenience. Steps lead from this room to the dining room on another level. Outside are trees—elms, maples, willows—some of which have been planted and some just grew. At opposite ends are a formal garden and a tennis court. On the edge of the lawn is a bathing beach and a pier for boats. There are children in the house.

Mr. Hood has his office in the black building richly trimmed with gold (including a crown) which stands just south of Bryant Park. It is a building which in its time gave the conservatives a short, sharp shock. But this was quite

pling rock in a series of miniature falls and rapids. For that reason it was called Roaring Brook—referring properly to flood time. For no more than a decade short of 100 years a barn had stood on the place, a barn built of stone for one story up, then of timber for another story, with a loft under the roof.

The previous owner had lifted the wooden upper part off the stone lower part, slid it along lengthwise and set the two pieces end to end with a woodshed between. Walker built on more rooms on the other side of the wooden part which had been the top-hammer of the barn. He built the new part of stone, with a living room with a coved ceiling up under the gentle slope of the roof. The composite result was a long, low house with many doors opening at the ground level and most of it only one story high. The barn became the garage. The woodshed stayed where it was. It is still a woodshed.

Gardens were laid out: the house is now ringed with gardens. In front, toward the Roaring Brook, is a formal sunken garden with box borders and perennials. Behind the house, backed by the ledge of gray rock, like a very high wall, is another garden, not so formal, with yellow daffodils and after that purple iris—relays of iris of different colors in season. Back there also are winding paths and turf and shrubs and trees. Among them are locust trees which have been pruned till they have become tufted instead of spindly. In front, close to the house, are two cherry trees that were there before the house. The house was, indeed, built around them. As you drive up, you cross Roaring Brook on a bridge.

WHEN Mr. Walker is reproached for not condemning himself (for conscience' sake, like the Christian martyrs) so to live in the packing-box sort of contraption which is so confidently prescribed as the only honestly beautiful dwelling house for Zeitgeist-conscious individuals, he explains quietly that he built his house "for a client." Driven into a corner, he admits that the client is his wife. She, it seems, it not "modern." The furniture is eclectically accumulated and assembled. Modern items occur, but they do not give the tone. Some items are Spanish; some are early American.

Mr. Kahn's house is older (in its present form) than either of the others. It nestles among trees and lawns, though it is built upon a hilltop overlooking the valley of

the Sawmill River near White Plains. There is a view from the place over the Hudson. Built partly of stone and partly of stucco over hollow tile, with timbered eaves in the good old English manner—the house has a steep roof with generously overhanging eaves and a gable with a swag and hooded dormer windows, and large, tall chimneys with chimney pots on top. There is a modest entrance from a flagged walk, and beamed ceilings occur inside. Like Mr. Walker's promoted barn, it is furnished eclectically and progressively, according to taste and fancy. This process has left little room for modern furniture to move into. The trees are oaks and maples. The garden is informal.

YOU will look in vain for contrast—as you may imagine—when you turn your back on these renegade radicals and proceed to inspect the house at Mount Kisco of Benjamin Wistar Morris. Mr. Morris years ago assisted those pillars of the Beaux Arts tradition, Carrère and Hastings, in preparing the drawings for the New York Public Library, down upon which with the guardian lions in front and the staturary up aloft and all that, Mr. Hood's black-and-gold building looks directly. Somewhat later Mr. Morris designed the Cunard Building down toward the tip of the island. Very recently he did the Union League Club's new house in Park Avenue which, having reduced to desolation a corner of Fifth Avenue never precisely gay, boldly essays to be Georgian on an almost skyscraping scale. Right there in the Morgan Block on Murray Hill, the purpose of the dissimulation is to prevent the clubhouse from looking like an office building. With this record—not to insist on his connection with the Metropolitan Opera's proposed new home—you certainly cannot call Mr. Morris "modern."

Mr. Morris's house is a remodeled farmhouse, added to, one, two, three times. The house started as a wooden frame building. The last two additions are built of reinforced concrete and hollow tile stuccoed over in pale pink, with the roof a light saffron yellow. This sounds a note of color daring beyond anything the others have to show. From the entrance hall is a hundred-yard vista through the garden. The house pretends to no archaeological style and claims no "period" stamp. It has many fire-

places, one of stone in the entrance hall, where beneath the beamed ceiling—which is not a fake—stands a tall eighteenth-century clock which Mr. Morris likes the better because it was once owned by Fritz Kreisler. There is a garden room, glazed all around three sides and furnished with low bookshelves and a carved wooden mantel and equipped with a brick floor. The drawing room is hung with yellow gold Chinese paper and has a mantelpiece of white Sienna marble. The living room has a very large bay window.

Sloping down somewhat steeply, the hillside to which the house clings gives to different parts of the house different levels and serves the garden in the same way. This garden is laid out with box borders and flower beds massed toward the part furthest away from the house. Like his contemporaries, Hood and Walker, Mr. Morris has had the idea of making the garden an integral part of the living quarters—in the English fashion, an outdoor living room. It should be added, however, that Mr. Morris built his house before the modern influence produced any effect on either building or furniture in this part of the world, though Mr. Wright was building in his domestic manner a quarter of a century ago out further toward the setting sun.

Indeed, his own curious house, Taliesin, at Spring Green, Wis., arrived in its first edition in 1911. This may be remembered as a structure lying very low to the

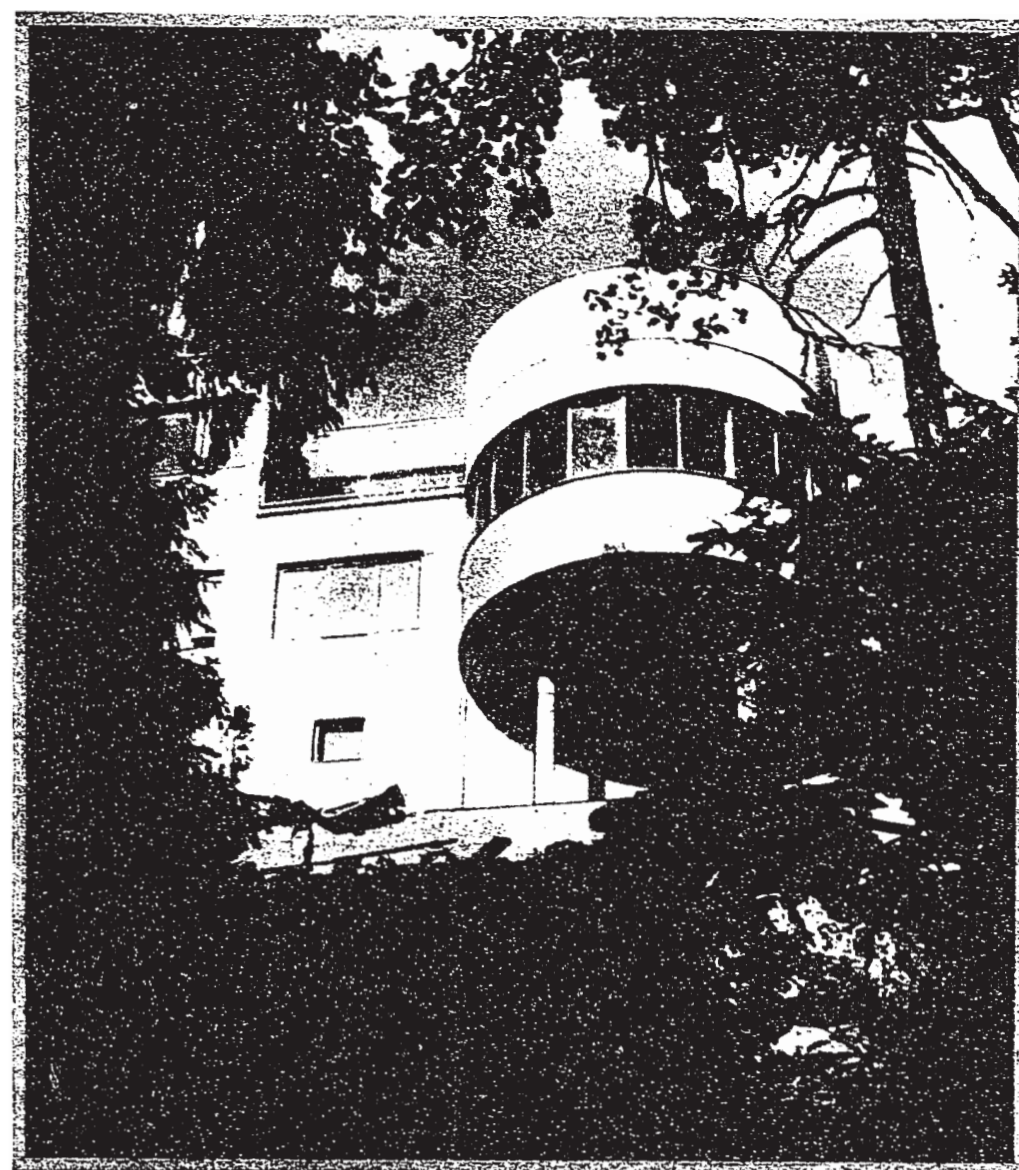
ground and composed of many spread-out one-story units with flattened—not flat—roofs. The smooth flat wall of the typically modern house had not arrived; there were many lumpy pillars of undressed stone supporting table-like effects of projecting roof, and many other walls of the same material relating the house with the grounds. At least the old school and the new agree in the basic character in good country architecture of this relation.

TAKE now the villa of the Swedish architect, Sven Markelius, which has already been briefly mentioned and which figured along with much more important matters in the Swedish section of our most recent Architectural League show. There its eccentricity—from the point of view which we are used to—was attracted to it many a roving eye.

The Markelius house is at Nockeby Mälaren where that body of water—adjacent to Stockholm—lies tangled up and distributed into many winding ways among the countless islands of which the landscape is composed. In general shape, the house is a box with a notch in the top part of the front and a curved or short horseshoe-shaped extension below the notch which is in

function—reasonably enough—an observation living room intended to provide those who use the villa the maximum enjoyment of a fine panoramic view. The slope of the hill allows this bay to stand out on supports or stanchions, leaving room for a terrace under it. As the bay sticks out over the terrace as if it were a deck, the effect, seen high up there among the hemlocks and the firs, is precisely the dominating effect of a ship's pilot house on the bridge.

The entire house is cast in concrete, the forms made of planed boards in order to obviate any need of smoothing the surface afterward for the coats of paint which it is to receive. These cement walls are lined inside with cork insulating material and painted or papered on the cork preparation for interior decoration. The top of the pilot house is enclosed by a tall parapet or, more exactly, a rim. It is intended for sun baths. Windows run in a horizontal strip around three sides of the pilot house. Windows are distributed in horizontal staggered strips, or bands of units, about the rest of the wall surface



"The Dominating Effect of a Ship's Pilot House"—The Home of Sven Markelius.

as the lighting of the various rooms up and down stairs suggests and as the Corbusier formula of the relation of flat wall surface to openings prescribes.

It is just as well to say here that Mr. Markelius's accomplishments as an architect up to date are not matched with those of Ostberg and Tengbom. He has, however, built villas and apartment houses and has been pushing a large city planning project—that of turning into building lots the Ladugårdsgårde, or drill ground of the Swedish Guards regiments of infantry, cavalry and artillery, the barracks of which are on the outskirts of the present city of Stockholm. City planning is more effectively correlated with architecture in Sweden than it is with us, proportion of open space to built-upon area being a matter of government control much more completely than it is here.

OF no such standard "modern" pattern as Mr. Markelius's is the house much nearer the Swedish capital built by the architect, Evert Milles, at Lidingsö for his brother, the sculptor, Carl Milles, and therefore sufficiently in the family. It is probably a collaboration of the two men, since it serves as a setting for Carl's sculpture. Here are pools, terraces connected by flights of steps, arcades and pergolas, relating the house to the grounds, the whole having a distinct Italian flavor—the roof and general design. The material is concrete or brick and stucco, and the effect of it all, with the drapery of evergreens over the walls and garden "properties," is highly theatrical as well as pleasing.

If we look here in America for the same sort of house, with the pergolas and the terraces and the outdoor studio effects omitted, we find some of the characteristics in the house which William H. Russell has built for himself at Islip, L. I. Here the modern effect of plain walls is arrived at by use of concrete or stucco as a material and by the sparseness and severe simplicity of the window and door openings. After all, that is a trick learned long ago—and not in the school of esthetics—by builders in regions where it is better, for a great part of the year, to shut out:



"Having a Distinct Italian Flavor"—The House That Evert Milles Designed for His Brother.

(Continued on Page 4)