

# The ARCHITECTURAL REVIEW

Volume *Old Series Vol. XXIV* Number  
VII DECEMBER 1918 6

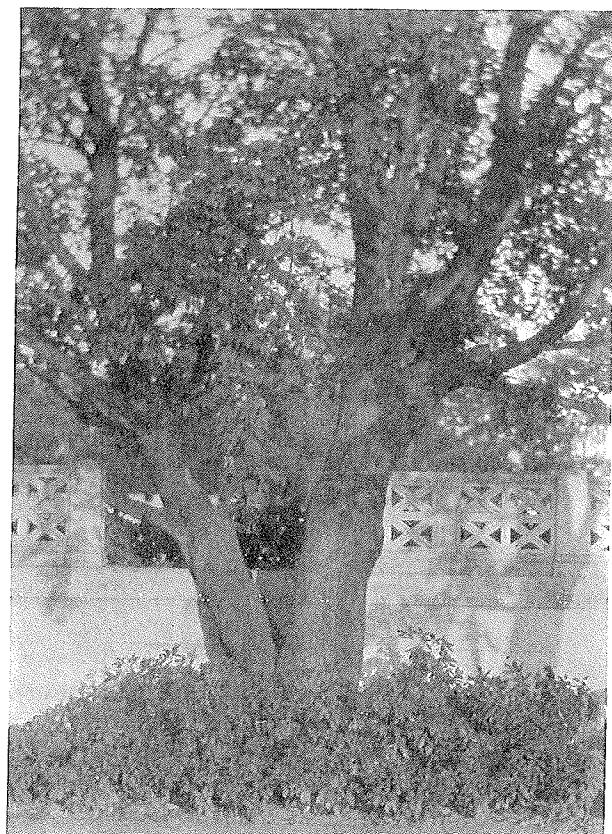
## RECENT GARDEN ARCHITECTURE

By RALPH F. WARNER

FRANCIS BACON, whose wisdom seems to have been as comprehensive as his writings, has defined a garden, with his usual perspicacity, as "a place where one spends both ends of his life." It offers, certainly, the simplest and purest of all human joys. Just as a jewel is incomplete without its setting, so a country house loses vastly in effectiveness without a garden. It is the very essence of the country that it expresses, and, whether one has a large garden with many flowers is not of so much importance as whether there is some treatment that enables one to feel the life of the flower kingdom. An effective and truly beautiful garden is an ideal place for an artist to paint, and such a garden nearly always conveys that thought to those privileged to enjoy its delights. Ideally, a garden should be a sort of radiation of the house itself. Its views should extend, as it were, the rooms of the house. The gardens at Greystone, by Mr. Welles Bosworth, described in this number, do not for reasons noted perform that function, but in the garden of Mr. John D. Rockefeller, at Tarrytown, N. Y., for example, also by Mr. Bosworth, one actually has to look out upon the garden from the interior of the house, to really appreciate it thoroughly. From the dining room, looking north,

one has the vista of the Circular Garden; from the library one sees, to the south, the Aphrodite Temple, and from Mr. Rockefeller's office, the windows open onto the enclosed garden. Here, in the winter, terraces reflect the sunshine, in bright color schemes, and in the summer are seen the softly colored awnings shading the terraces, while fountains standing in the terraces make a sound of splashing water and cool the air with their moisture. And, the great John of Bologna fountain is a constant companion to all the comings and goings from the front door of the house, never failing to strike the majestic note with a grandeur and poetry that only sculptural art combined with the beauty of atmospheric effects,—of foreground, middleground and remote distance—can give.

According to an Oriental idea, a garden should appeal to all the senses: first, the eye, with color and form; then, the taste, through the enjoyment of fruits (which are found in nearly all Oriental gardens); then, the sense of smell, by means of flowers and shrubs. The ear is charmed by the sound of bird notes and running water; and, finally, the touch, not only by handling the various flowers but by caressing breezes and the comforts afforded in resting places and shelters where physical sensations are catered to.



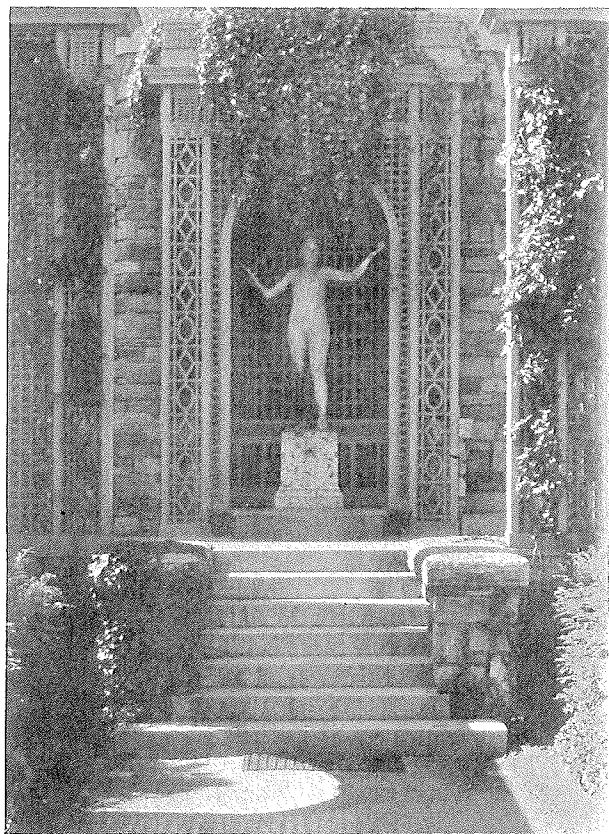
An Interrupted Balustrade at Greystone

Archives of American Gardens  
Smithsonian Institution  
AAG Garden at NY 119 Greystone, Tarrytown, N.Y.  
From GCA Collection. File #

Just as in a simple house we find that the architectural forms re-echo the palace, so in a very small garden, the principles of composition should be drawn from the same theory of accent which governs the design of an important garden. In other words, a formal path or axis should always terminate in an accent of interest—in some form of climax, whether it be a piece of statuary or merely a vase, or, in the case of the important garden, in a fountain or a niche. Then again, the theory of surface as opposed to complicated form remains the same—in the simple case it may be merely a piece of greensward with a grouping of flowers and shrubs against a wall, whereas in the important garden it would be a series of parterres, carrying the eye onward to a wall decorated with rich architectural colonnades or other features. The principle of color contrasts and harmonies, of course, never changes, and this is where the amateur is most likely to succeed better than the owner of a highly pretentious and formal garden, because she (let us say) is usually guided by intuitive feeling for color arrangements and can transplant and remove with her own hands, offending units, whereas the great owner must trust to a gardener, usually more preoccupied with the thought of the health and vigor of his plants than with the subtlety and charm of color arrangements. He falls into the unavoidable rut of the



A Focal Point—The Garden of Mr. Rockefeller



Lattice Niche, Terminating a Vista—The Garden  
of Mr. Rockefeller

Statue by Rudolf Evans

professional gardener, and if he is not closely watched, will put salvias, mahogany red begonias and the like not only in enormous masses but in the most conspicuous places.

The walled garden is surely the ideal, for privacy is the chief charm of any garden. In American life today, we frequently fail to realize that this element of privacy is the essential quality in and about the home and have sacrificed many things for axes, especially in houses where an axis of importance cannot be made effective because the sizes are too small to favor the creation of satisfactory vistas (and the only value in an axis is where a vista is created). In the same way, with respect to garden design, there has been, generally, a failure to realize that privacy is the chief charm of a garden, and instead sacrifices have been made to create effects that will impress the stranger or casual visitor. The ideal garden is one that affords a retreat from the business of the world and the walled garden, in most locations, makes possible the realization of this objective. It is to this type that the first section of our discussion of several recent achievements by American architects relates.

## THE GARDENS AT GREYSTONE

WELLES BOSWORTH, ARCHITECT

MAGNIFICENTLY located on the east bank of the Hudson River, overlooking the finest part of the Palisades of the Hudson, and about forty minutes ride by train from the heart of New York City, "Greystone" will be remembered by many as the former country estate of the late Samuel J. Tilden, philanthropist and candidate for President against Rutherford B. Hayes. The main part of the property lies several hundred feet above the level of the river, whence the ground slopes rather steeply to the river's edge. The present owner of the estate, whose extensive greenhouses testify to his fondness for growing things, wanted a scheme to provide space for the cultivation of all kinds of flowers, fruits and shrubs, with proper adjuncts in trees, water and architectural effects. But the only place for a garden of this type was the site of a previous garden, i.e., to the north of the existing greenhouses, and at some distance from the house. The contour of the ground seemed to lend itself to a system of two terraces, one a few feet below the other, and as the east boundary of the site is quite near an important artery of travel, a high wall, to give the garden privacy and to cut it off from the noise of automobiles, seemed an essential point of departure in the determination of the architectural treatment.

The Indo-Persian type of garden suggested itself as more in the spirit of these special conditions than a European scheme which logically calls for a background of architecture. Many of these so-called Mughal gardens are rectangular in form with a cross of water ways intersecting at the center and bordered with formal *plate bandes* of flowers. They had kiosks and porticoes between the levels or around the boundaries of the gardens, and were nearly always surrounded by high walls. Octagonal towers, topped with summer houses or look-outs, decorated the corners. This form must have come from high antiquity and seems likely to have taken its origin in Greek tradition. The motifs for the formal gardens at "Greystone" were derived from these ancient gardens, and have been detailed in the Greek style. The high wall has Greek crenellations, the porticoes are monolithic fluted Doric columns, and other Greek motifs are found in details of the garden, as the illustrations show.

The garden is planned to be connected with the residence eventually by means of a bridge leading to a broad pathway skirting the present greenhouses. This will bring the visitor, first, onto the lower and outer terrace. As he proceeds along

this outer garden he enjoys the views of the Palisades of the Hudson, seen across the lawn, leading down to the wooded slopes toward the water. And, as he turns in the other direction he sees the circular colonnade with fluted Corinthian columns, of lovely cream Alabama marble. It stands on a high base from which lions' heads carved by Frederick G. Roth spout water into the pool. The colonnade is open at the top, the circle being some thirty feet in diameter. The ring of the entablature makes a beautiful frame for the clouds moving up above. Ramps, reminding one of the giant staircase between the Doge's Palace and St. Mark's, Venice, lead on each side of this colonnade to the upper terrace. The mosaic in the floor is of a gorgeous composition, and beautifully executed;—a Greek head of Medusa forms the center, surrounded by vines and various Greek ornaments in successive borders.

One notes from here the mosaic in the bottom of the pool, which is composed of great eccentric rings such as the rings that form on the surface when pebbles are dropped into the water, interspersed with crabs and fish, in mosaic; and on the walls of the pool at the surface of the water, the mosaic forms wave patterns. This upper garden is planned with great care and arranged to bring out the beauty of the various flowers, according to their seasons, distributed in regular borders around the walls and along the balustrades, and in great formality near the central beds.

The canals crossing each other at the center are supplied with frequent water jets of varied design, and one of them terminates at its upper end in a broad basin before the Greek theatre. This theatre is of a semi-circular plan about sixty feet in diameter, with stone seats. The platform or stage is a superb piece of mosaic, taken from the wall decoration at Tiryns, that famous piece of design featured in every history of art.

The platform is flanked on either side by two Ionic columns of Swiss Cippolino marble which support sphinxes sculptured by Mr. Paul Manship. On special occasions guests can enter the theatre from the north end without coming into the garden. All of the mosaics, of which there are many, show great care as to design and color and are a great adornment to the garden. There are certain bare wall spaces in the covered pergolas or porticoes for which Mr. Edward Simmons is designing the decorations. These porticoes are especially well placed both for the view and with respect to shelter from winds in the cold season, and the enjoyment of breezes in warm weather.

•THE ARCHITECTURAL REVIEW•

VOL. VII, No. 6

PLATE LXXXIX



THE GATEWAY

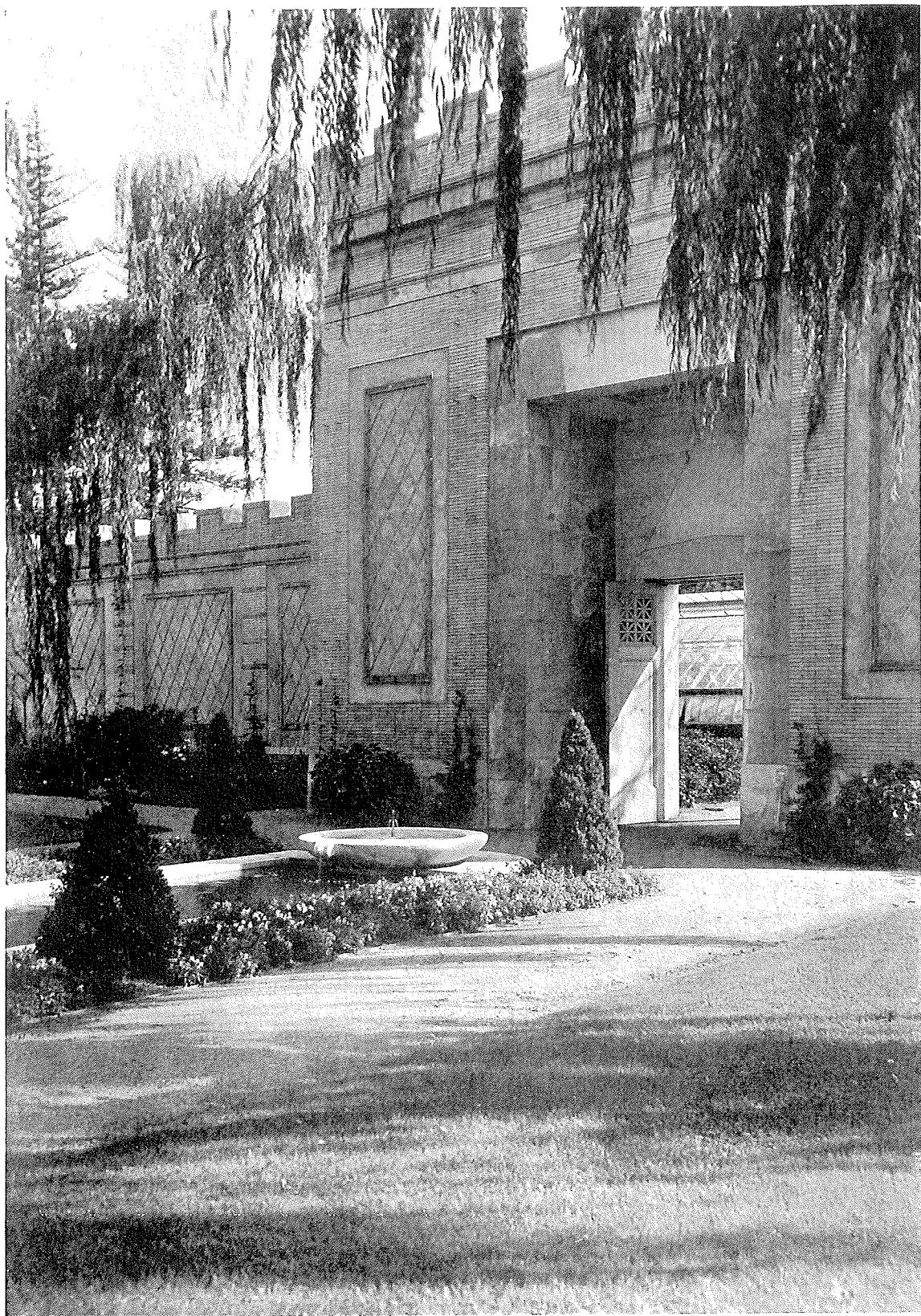
THE GARDENS AT GREYSTONE, N. Y.

WELLES BOSWORTH, ARCHITECT

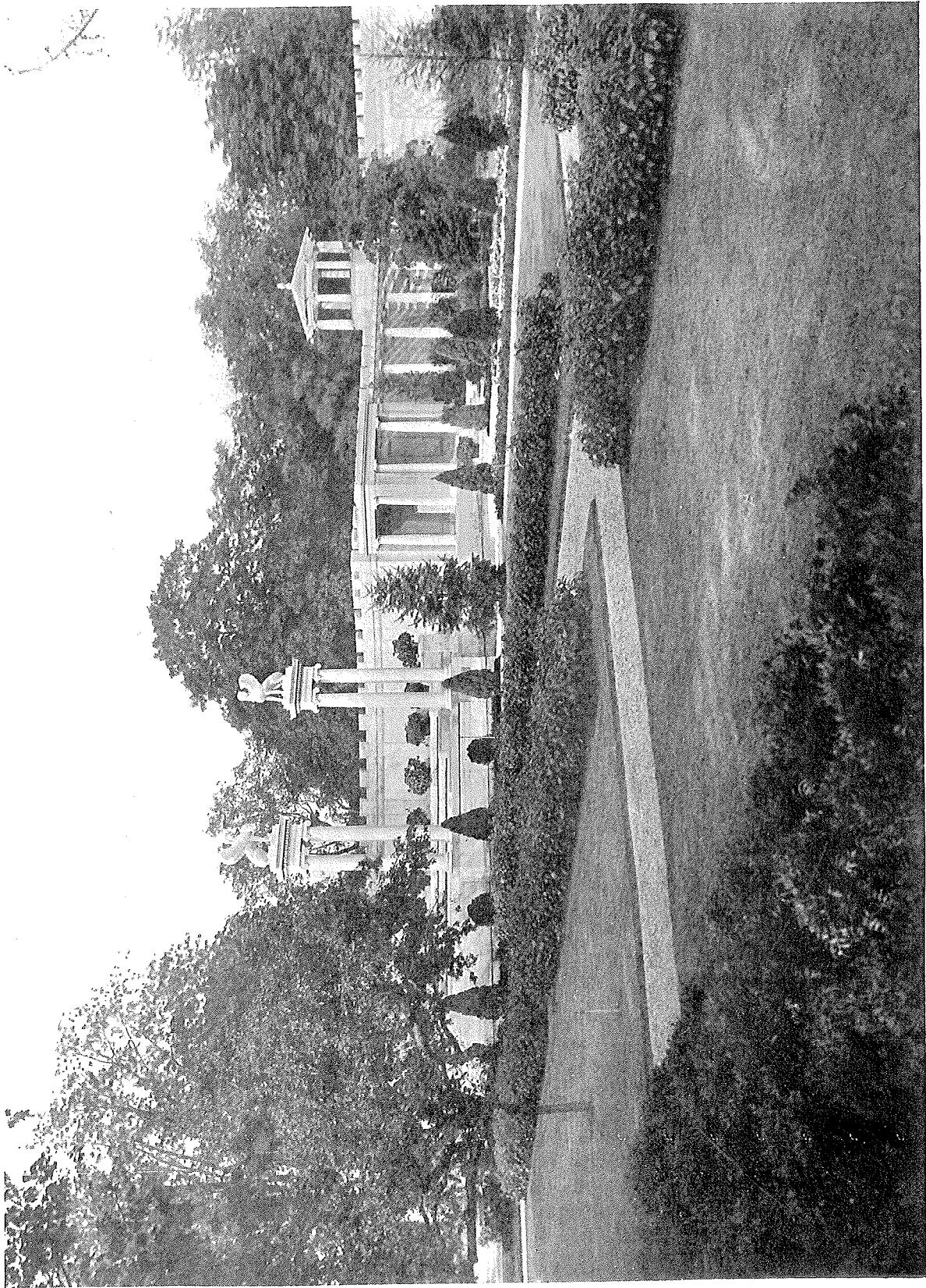
THE ARCHITECTURAL REVIEW.

VOL. VII, No. 6

PLATE XC



THE GATEWAY FROM THE GARDEN  
THE GARDENS AT GREYSTONE, N. Y.  
WELLES BOSWORTH ARCHITECT



THE GREEK THEATRE AND CORNER LOOKOUT TOWER  
THE GARDENS AT GREYSTONE, N. Y.  
WELLES BOSWORTH, ARCHITECT

THE ARCHITECTURAL REVIEW

VOL. VII, No. 6

PLATE XCII



THE SPHINXES  
THE GARDENS AT GREYSTONE, N. Y.  
WELLES BOSWORTH, ARCHITECT

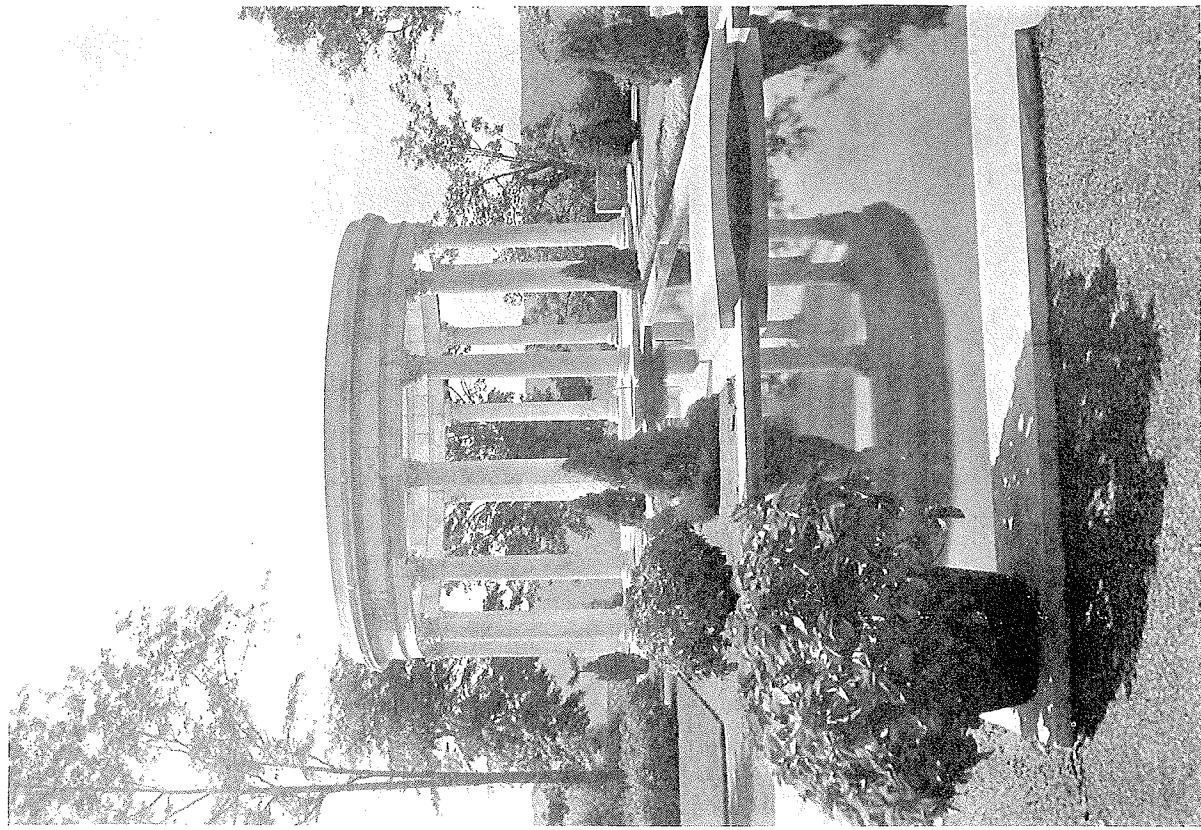
THE ARCHITECTURAL REVIEW.

VOL. VII, No. 6

PLATE XCIII



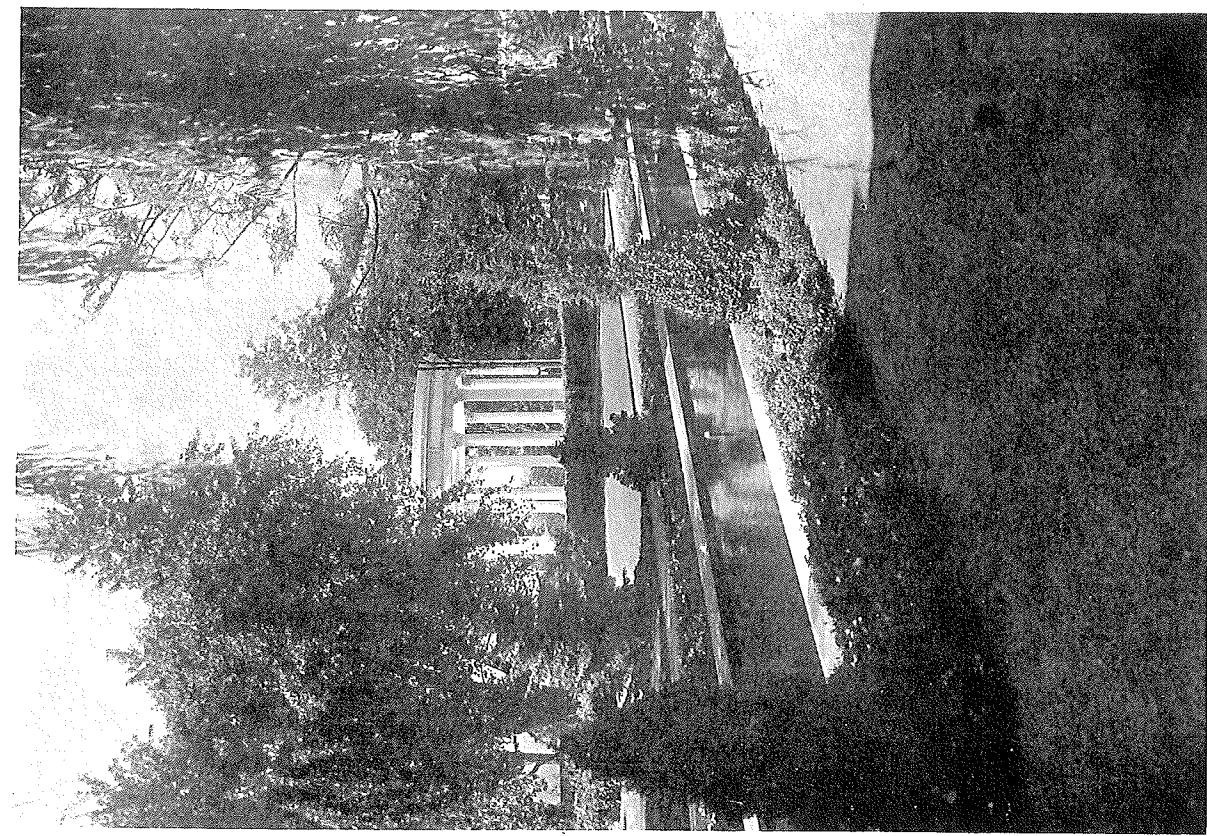
CIRCULAR COLONNADE AND SWIMMING POOL  
THE GARDENS AT GREYSTONE, N. Y.  
WELLES BOSWORTH, ARCHITECT



CANALS AND PAVILION

THE GARDENS AT GREYSTONE, N. Y.

WELLES BOSWORTH, ARCHITECT



VIEW FROM THE GATEWAY