

been paying fire premiums for years were left entirely destitute, and, strictly speaking, were entitled to nothing in the way of compensation. The foreign companies, however, gave credit for one year's premium as an act of grace, while the Japanese companies made sympathy payments amounting to some seventy million yen.

In order to meet these colossal payments the companies were obliged to borrow from the Government; and it now appears that their action in making sympathy payments was taken on the strongest possible representations from the Government and did, in fact, so the companies claim, amount to a forced loan. Some thirty Japanese fire insurance companies shared in this forced loan, and they now claim that the payment of interest and amortization installments constitutes a burden which the companies are finding intolerable.

The whole situation illustrates very clearly the advantage of national insurance against calamity, more than once advocated by *The Outlook*. It is already beginning to be apparent in Japan that the state will ultimately have to make good the vast proportion of the losses sustained in the earthquake three years ago. In other words, the state will have to do in the end what it ought to have done in the beginning, with an incalculable advantage to the country in time saved, anxiety, interruption of trade, disturbance of credit, dissipation of energy, and many other evils avoided. Disasters like the Japanese earthquake or the Florida hurricane are national disasters, and should be dealt with nationally.

Imperial Playthings

THE Czar's toys have been exhibited recently to the foreign correspondents. Nothing could give a more striking evidence of the childlike deficiencies of the mentality that ruled the old Russia than this display of the former Imperial treasures.

The crown jewels—the resplendent crown itself, the scepter with the 200-carat blue-white Orloff diamond in its handle, the greatest sapphire in the world, worth \$11,000,000, the other precious stones of the Romanoffs—are impressive. But the more really significant part of the exhibit is the playthings made to please Nicholas II and his predecessors.

A little model train, for instance, is a souvenir of the opening of the Trans-Siberian Railroad. It is eighteen inches long, with a platinum locomotive and

five gold cars, all modeled exactly from the train in which he inaugurated the operation of the railroad. The cars, in addition to living and sleeping quarters, contain a bath, a restaurant, and an Imperial chapel, all complete. The train runs by clockwork. Wound up with a gold key, it rushes along its track at a speed to delight the hearts of children and potentates.

The gold train is only one of many fascinating and meaningless baubles. A stickpin watch of pure gold was made for Nicholas II by Swiss craftsmen—less than a third of an inch in diameter, no thicker than a finger-nail, and keeping perfect time. There is an orange tree, eight inches high, roped off with rubies and pearls, with leaves of emeralds, fruit of rubies, and flowers of diamonds. At the pressure of a button, the tree opens to show a tiny enameled nightingale flapping its wings and singing on a golden branch. There is a gold stagecoach, four inches long and an inch and a half high, with a twenty-carat diamond within for a lantern. There is a collection of gold and jeweled Easter eggs, and one of rock crystal inclosing a cluster of snowdrops of seed pearl, with foliage of emeralds, showing through snow of diamond dust.

Among the earlier monarchs of Russia, Czar Nicholas I enjoyed a gold filigree bracket holding a Renaissance Venetian mirror as large as a wrist watch made of a diamond slab an inch and a half long by an inch wide. And Catherine the Great sported a pair of ten-pound binoculars with eight-inch tubes of gold incrustated with rubies and diamonds—the gift of the Sultan of Turkey.

These senseless treasures are impassively displayed to-day by gray-clad Soviet custodians. And, without sympathizing in the Bolshevik experiment in Russia, it is impossible not to feel that no more convincing proof of the inevitability of the upheaval in Russia exists than these costly symbols of the vanity and superficiality of the old régime. They are priceless as a warning of how not to govern a country.

Digging for Ancestors

MAN's war against the forces that obscure his interesting ancestors continues on all fronts.

Dr. J. H. Breasted, of the University of Chicago, sailed recently to resume command of four sectors in Egypt and Asia Minor and to launch a new campaign in the Nile Valley. Headquarters are the Oriental Institute in Cairo, which

is maintained by American funds as a laboratory for the study of man's origin and development—a co-ordinating agency for the anthropological material which the expeditions under Dr. Breasted's direction discover. Dr. Breasted considers Egypt the most promising source of data on the physical and social evolution of man; and yet, despite the forthcoming extensive effort, he has little hope that the picture of man's development will be complete in less than a century of continuous work.

The forces in the Near East expect to work in valuable co-operation with the expedition of the New York Museum of Natural History in Mongolia. Roy Chapman Andrews, the director of the Mongolian expedition, will return in March from America to his scene of operations. At opposite poles of Asia, both enterprises are working on the same lines. An interesting conclusion of each expedition is that the Sahara Desert in one case and the Gobi Desert in the other were once—perhaps 100,000 years ago—well-watered, forested areas.

From another battle-front, no farther away than Western Reserve University in Ohio, Professor T. Wingate Todd has contributed as spoils of war the discovery that modern safety and improved living conditions have advanced the average age of man at death about thirty years even from Roman times. He described his research to one of the sections of the Philadelphia Convention of the American Association for the Advancement of Science. By continued study of the composition of the bones in his University's collection of fifteen hundred skulls and skeletons of varying ages he has concluded to his satisfaction that the average historic ancient died at the age of forty-two.

Three centers of activity are represented by these current reports. Many more are the scene of sustained, unsensational effort in the crusade of discovery.

The Riverside Church

THE OUTLOOK of December 29 contained a picture of New York's tallest building as it will look when it is built. Obviously, the *motif* was the Tower of Babel.

From a less remote civilization, the Gothic—the civilization which produced the most imaginative, the most meaningful buildings the world has ever known—New York has drawn its inspiration for another building, the Baptist church on Riverside Drive, the erection of which was one of the conditions on

which Dr. Harry Emerson Fosdick accepted the pastorate of the Park Avenue Baptist congregation. The architects' plans have been approved within the past fortnight, and preparation for the foundations is under way.

So far as the drawings and advance description indicate, the Riverside Church will constitute a high achievement in combining genuine academic tradition, creative interpretation, and contemporary usefulness—which is the qualification of vital architecture. The elements of the design were collected by the architects, Charles Collens and Henry C. Pelton, in a study of Gothic and Romanesque ecclesiastical buildings in France and Spain. From the Cathedral in Chartres came the definition of the simple, sturdy, noble Gothic that will characterize the church—windows without tracery, and with heavy leading framing the glass; an exterior of a grace spiritual yet severe. From Chartres was adapted the massive, aspiring 375-foot tower, which is to contain twenty stories of parish rooms for many uses, reached by an elevator, and, at the top, a carillon of fifty-seven bells. From the Cathedral in Bordeaux came the precedent for having the entrance at the side, which in the case of the New York church permits the axis to run parallel to Riverside Drive. Projected adjoining Gothic buildings of the Union Theological Seminary as seen in the drawing tend to give the church the appearance of an

English cathedral, with its great tower in the middle rather than at the front.

From a number of churches in Spain and southern France came the suggestion of a low, wide vault for the nave. In contrast to the narrow, lofty proportions of northern French and English cathedrals, the broader treatment was adopted as most suitable to accommodate 2,400 worshipers and to provide the improved acoustics and increased vision desirable for the Protestant form of service. The architects feel that none of the inspirational qualities of the loftier naves is lacking from the prototypes of the wider, lower design for the River-

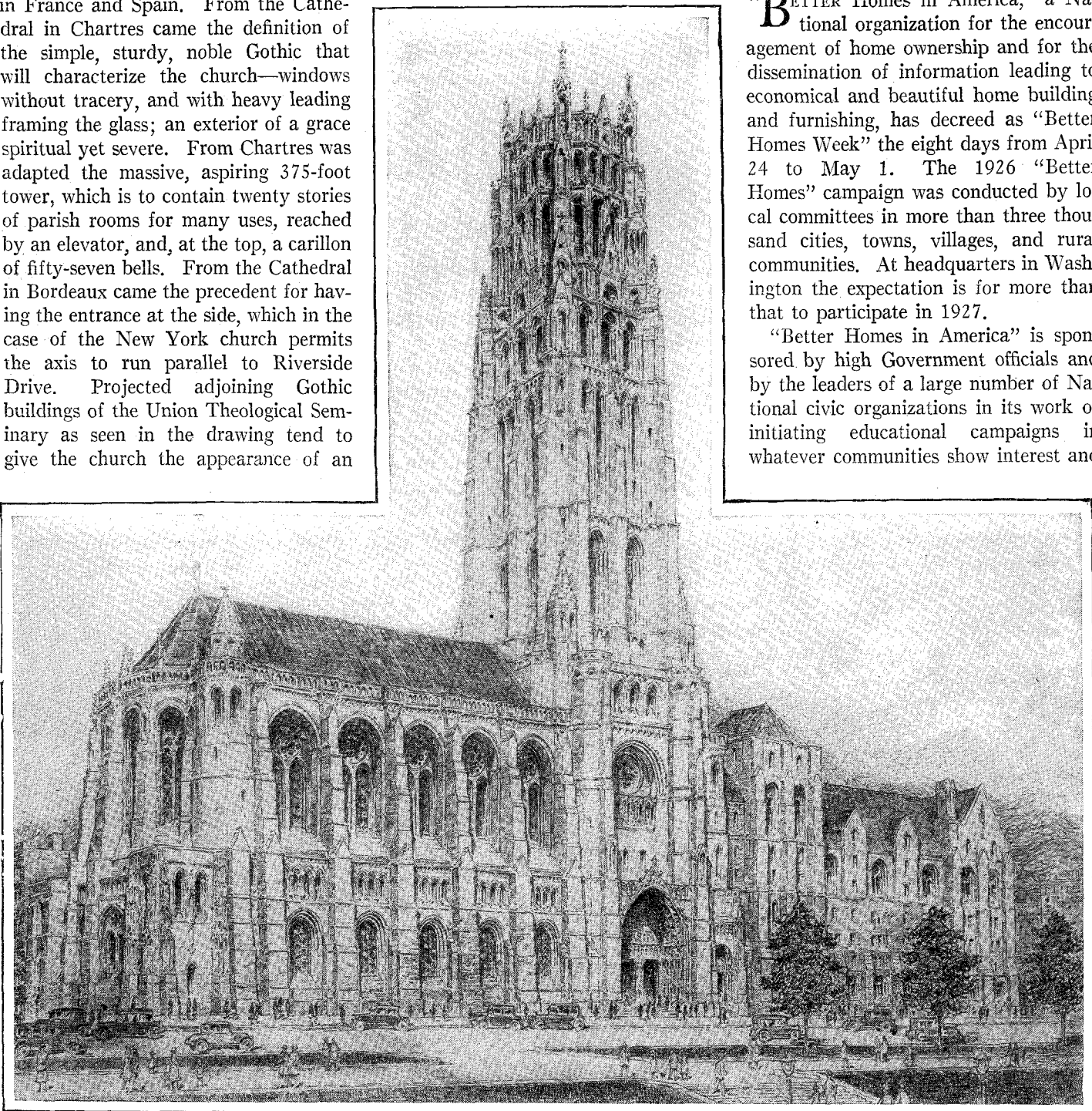
side Church. A chapel to hold 200 persons, entered by the door visible on the drawing immediately south of the main portal, has been designed in a pointed Romanesque style in what promises to be charming contrast with the later Gothic of the rest of the church.

When the surpassing grace of the Woolworth Building threatens to be followed by the gaunt lines and blank walls of merely "the tallest building in the world," it is reassuring to find another major American architectural project dipping into the exhaustless stream of historical beauty for its form.

Better Homes

"**B**ETTER Homes in America," a National organization for the encouragement of home ownership and for the dissemination of information leading to economical and beautiful home building and furnishing, has decreed as "Better Homes Week" the eight days from April 24 to May 1. The 1926 "Better Homes" campaign was conducted by local committees in more than three thousand cities, towns, villages, and rural communities. At headquarters in Washington the expectation is for more than that to participate in 1927.

"Better Homes in America" is sponsored by high Government officials and by the leaders of a large number of National civic organizations in its work of initiating educational campaigns in whatever communities show interest and



The architects' drawing of the projected Riverside Church, New York