

ginia, New England, and Pennsylvania down through the variations of the Georgian, Federal, and Greek revival periods to the tribulations of eclecticism and our contemporary experimentation. Rightly he points out that our English forebears knew nothing of the horizontal log cabin which, introduced in 1638 by the Swedes, was to play so important a part in the westward movement and that our earliest houses were medieval rather than Renaissance in manner. He illustrates by sketches the early and later developments of the English colonial house in New England and down the Atlantic seaboard. The balance of our colonial infiltrations—Dutch, German, Swedish, Spanish, and French—he sketches but briefly.

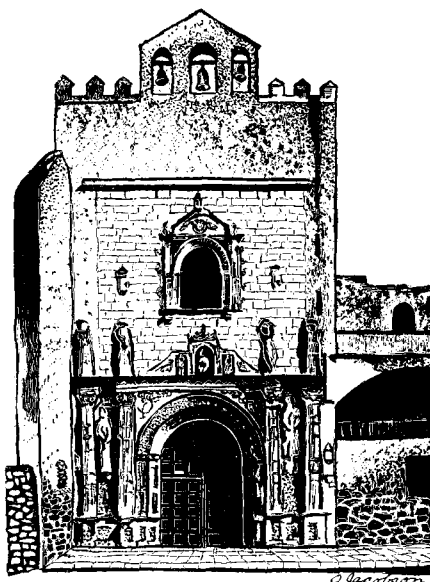
The career of the Greek revival, with its temple-type houses, churches, banks, and state capitols, receives more generous treatment, for this was our national style from about 1820 to the Civil War. The period from the Civil War to the depression of the early 1930's, including the vagaries of eclecticism, is outlined sufficiently to form a foil for the experiments of our first modernists, Louis Sullivan, Frank Lloyd Wright, and William Le Baron Jenney, the last of whom figured prominently in the development of the skyscraper. The author closes with an exploration of contemporary trends and an admonition addressed to both architect and layman: "Let us proceed, but thoughtfully."

The book, written in a lively and enthusiastic style, should prove of great value to people who seek an acquaintance with those architectural movements which culminate in American building. It should make excellent collateral reading for high-school or college courses in history; and it should prove of value to clubwomen or businessmen who would round out their knowledge of the history of "the most universal of the arts." It provides a highly readable, concise popular history of the art of building.

The volume is amply illustrated with 114 text drawings and 170 halftones. Naturally, a book that covers so large a field in so brief a space is filled with broad generalizations and tends to an over-simplification of the many complex movements discussed. These defects, however, this reviewer, a professional historian of architecture, forgives the author, for he understands well the difficulty of the task.

Rexford Newcomb is professor of architecture and dean of the College of Fine and Applied Arts at the University of Illinois. His publications include "The History of Modern Architecture" and "Architecture of the Old Northwest Territory."

Monuments and Images



MEXICO IN SCULPTURE: 1521-1821.

By Elizabeth Wilder Weismann.
Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press. 224 pp. 167 illus. \$7.50.

By HAROLD E. WETHEY

ELIZABETH WEISMANN is a champion of the Indian, to judge by the emphasis she places upon the survival of Indian themes and techniques in Mexico after the Spanish Conquest in this profusely illustrated volume. Finest among such works of the sixteenth century are the stone crosses of Acolman and Villa Madero, superb in their primitive stylization. No other Latin-American country, at least none in South America, ever produced anything like them. It would have been interesting had Mrs. Weismann ventured here into the esthetics of primitivism, an important subject studied by Robert Goldwater, Herbert Read, and others. But her intention is on the whole to avoid stylistic problems and larger issues and to limit herself to individual monuments.

Seventy-one of the 167 illustrations are devoted to the sixteenth century, most of them details of architectural ornament together with some architectural figure sculpture. The choice of illustrations shows how and where the emphasis is placed. Mrs. Weismann's personal interest clearly lies in architecture and in folk sculpture, and she appears to regard purely European artistic styles as unfortunate intrusions.

Everyone familiar with Mexican colonial art is struck by its opulence and by the overwhelming richness and splendor of its churches, replete with gilded altarpieces, sculptures, and paintings. Ten baroque altars are reproduced here to represent many hun-

dreds, the most typical manifestations of colonial Mexican sculpture. About five times that many illustrations are devoted to folk images. Such provincial sculptures occur in abundance in the remotest villages of Spanish America from the colonial frontiers of Argentina to New Mexico. At times they have an innate primitive sense of form. On the whole they are poor reflections of Spanish prototypes, incompetently executed. The really significant schools of figure sculpture in colonial Latin America are those of Ecuador and Guatemala.

The notes at the back of Mrs. Weismann's book contain scholarly information which will prove of value to the specialist. When dealing with single Mexican monuments the documentation and bibliography are detailed. When touching upon matters relating to Latin America in general or European sources the bibliography is largely unexplored.

Mrs. Weismann has intentionally written a subjective book. Since she knows the material so well I hope that some day she will publish a critical and historical study of Mexican sculpture, treating the subject with an international audience in mind. Only by an objective evaluation of monuments in relation to their true importance as works of art can the splendor of Mexican sculpture fully be revealed.

Harold E. Wethey, of the fine arts department at the University of Michigan, recently published "Colonial Architecture and Sculpture in Peru."

FRASER YOUNG'S LITERARY CRYPT No. 402

A cryptogram is writing in cipher. Every letter is part of a code that remains constant throughout the puzzle. Answer No. 402 will be found in the next issue.

MLKIHMF HX GNEAAO PLGC

DMANXX OLD PLDAB

GEKING RN BLHMF

XLQNKIHMF NAXN.

—XHG ZEQN X REGGO

Answer to Crypt No. 401

Disease generally begins that equality which death completes.

—DR. SAMUEL JOHNSON.

How Two Artists Lived and Worked

EDVARD MUNCH. By Frederick B. Deknatel. New York: Crown Publishers. 120 pp. \$3.50.

MOHOLY-NAGY. By Sibyl Moholy-Nagy. New York: Harper & Bros. 253 pp. \$6.50.

By JEROME MELLQUIST

OFTEN it has been said that the North European artist longs for the watermelon colors and roasting suns of Sicily or other far-Southern places. Dürer, one remembers, filled his notebooks with ejaculations about his dropped chains immediately he crossed the Alps, and Goethe, among the writers, also helped to propagate this view. But the artist Edvard Munch, a Northerner if there ever was one, reflects little or none of this anticipated attitude.

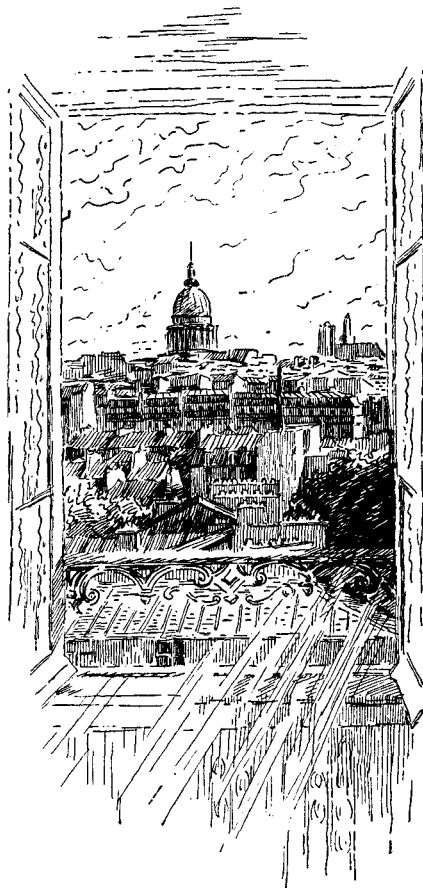
Coming from a distinguished Norwegian family and early committed to art, he suggests rather the ingoing mind and blind, bleeding pain of a Strindberg. Surely little light penetrated his childhood. Born in 1863, he lost his mother five years later and he found all too little sympathy from his father, a military doctor, who eventually neglected his profession for religious meditations. Reared by an aunt, he remained often moody and restless until starting art school at seventeen. Soon, however, he was absorbing the ideas of his more advanced teachers and showing that quickness at assimilation which never entirely left him. He liked subjects of sickness and he could portray the handicapped with a peculiar sympathy. Before departing for Paris in the late Eighties he already had collided with the same granitic morality Ibsen hated so much and sometimes been branded as not altogether a worthy fellow. He understood the literary currents of his time and readily circulated among the spouters in the cafés.

Arriving presently in France, he quit Northern heaviness for the impressionistic color-mottling of a canvas. Also he turned more to landscape. Amidst later shuttlings between Norway and other European points he not only noted Gauguin and Toulouse-Lautrec but he added much lithography and etching to his repertoire. He produced such images of torment as "The Cry" (1895) and "Anxiety" (1896), both suggesting by their repeated swirls some vortex of the mind from which there was no issue.

Gradually he won a place even among the museum collections of his

native land and early in the twentieth century was getting substantial commissions. Immoderate drinking and quarrelsome habits sometimes offended the respectable, to be sure, and once he spent long months recuperating from a drinking-bout. But he never mooned for Southern seas nor did he posture about the tinted circles he might have missed by continuing to reside in the land of his birth. Perhaps best he is to be regarded as an introspective—a type who, as he once said, resembles "a shipwrecked vessel that had half of its rigging washed overboard because it had not reached harbor in time." As such, he did both woodcuts and lithographs that can be remembered. He should always have a niche among the Expressionist painters, and his special seal of originality can hardly be doubted.

Such is the picture emerging from a perusal of this study, which has been assembled with both taste and thoughtfulness by Frederick B. Deknatel, of the Fogg Museum at Harvard University. It forms a counterpart to the large Munch show presented last summer at the Museum of Modern Art in New York, and it should prove a permanently valuable repository of documents and insights on its man. Surely it plunges us



—From "All Men Have Loved Thee."

again into the fjordlike fissures and troubled silences of an intrepid artist who, like Strindberg, lived deep under the shadows and fought there to find the illumination others associate too readily with a more tropical zone.

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THE PRESSES still discharge their tonnage about modern art, but somehow good memoirs are rare. Any professor can junket about amidst dates and compile his treatise on the proliferation of geometrical quotients since Cézanne. Similarly, butcher-knife journalists can once more lop off the ear of Van Gogh and start the public into some profitable blubbering. But the tactful, concise, and revealing book of memoirs seldom gets written. Whether this is because problems dominate over personalities or because sensitive companions have been lacking to the artist might be difficult to say. But in the present volume about the designer, photographer, teacher, and painter Moholy-Nagy, by his wife, for once a book of the right stamp has been produced.

According to this account Moholy-Nagy never had many childhood advantages in Hungary, where he was born in 1895. His father appears to have been an adventurer who gambled away the family's wheat farm and then decamped for America. The boy developed a great attachment to his mother and resolved that some day he would direct life into better ways for them both. While serving as an artillery officer in World War I young Moholy-Nagy underwent several experiences that formed his future: he was wounded on the Isonzo front, he had a first apprehension of light as a creative element in painting, and he withdrew from the pot-tossing escapades of his fellow officers. Demobilized, he ardently returned to the drawing he had started in the trenches, soon saw the dross in Bela Kun's revolutionary goals, and experimented with his first collages. Quitting Hungary and Austria, he walked his way Sandburg-wise through Germany, earning bed and meals by odd jobs of lettering. He collapsed from influenza in Berlin, tottered back to health, secured much help from a sympathetic university woman, and slowly forged himself a name. After being exhibited as an advanced abstract painter (chiefly because of his so-called photograms, a device enabling him to superimpose photographic images to get startling effects of space and lighting) he was called to the Bauhaus staff in 1923.

Here this intrepid worker devised new courses of instruction, invented fresh typographical and industrial layouts, and painted. His indeed was a demonic energy. But he quit the Bau-