

THE ENLARGEMENT OF THE UNITED STATES CAPITOL.

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The Capitol at Washington, famous as one of the most notable architectural masterpieces in the world, will, in the near future, receive the most extensive addition which has ever been made to it. This statement is especially significant from the fact that the entire history of the building has comprised a series of additions to a nucleus of rather meager proportions. The present project dates from the spring of 1901, when the architect of the Capitol was directed by act of Congress to prepare plans for the extension of the central portion of the Capitol, for the renovation and decoration of the Rotunda and for the erection on ground adjacent to the Capitol of a fireproof building for office, storage and power-plant purposes.

Presumably no architect would have the temerity to suggest any radical change in the structure of the Capitol; but in the interest of adherence to the present style, it is particularly fortunate that plans for an enlargement such as is now contemplated were handed down to the present architect of the Capitol from his distinguished predecessor, the late Thomas U. Walter, architect and engineer, perhaps best known to fame as the creator of the great white dome of the Capitol and the marble wings now occupied by the Senate and House of Representatives, respectively. Not only was the enlargement of the Capitol provided for in the plans prepared years ago, but the extension soon to be undertaken will in reality but carry out the original conception of an enlarged Capitol as evolved by Architect Walter at the time he planned the Senate and House wings and capped the structure with its state-ly dome. Moreover, the new portion, instead of appearing incongruous or out of harmony with the present pile, will actually add to the majesty of the ensemble effect.

The old Capitol building, fostered by George Washington and designed by Thornton, was considered to afford, when completed in 1830, ample accommodations for the then existing and probable future needs of the country. However, the tremendous progress of the nation soon rendered imperative the provision of more space. Then came the first extensions begun in 1851 and completed in 1859. Congress authorized and Architect Walter carried out the construction of the marble additions at the north and south. In this, as in all his work in connection with the Capitol, the architect adhered faithfully to the spirit of the original; and realizing at the same time, that the future might again find the Capitol inadequate in accommodations, he devoted much time to the preparation of plans for an extension to the eastward of the present building—an addition which would harmonize with what already existed, and also give additional beauty to the splendid dome which he designed and erected and which he hoped would one day grace a completed structure. The most eminent architects have agreed that in meeting present exigencies it would be unwise to alter the original plan in any particular as concerns the exterior proportions and alignments. The construction of the addition contemplated will cost approximately \$2,500,-

000, and while it involves the removal of the old portico at the east, it does not involve the removal of the principal walls of the old and historical portion of the Capitol. The present front wall of the old building remains as the rear wall of an open court, which lights the west side of the proposed addition. It is difficult for even the persons thoroughly familiar with the building to appreciate what an enormous addition will be made to the capacity of the structure by this new construction. The area will be increased in the aggregate from 132,730 square feet to 184,120 square feet, an increase of 51,390 square feet, or 38 per cent. Otherwise expressed, the increase of the capacity of the building amounts to 1,854,400 cubic feet, of which amount 1,068,000 cubic feet are provided in the new east front, or in other words, the addition to be built eastward from the central portion of the building as at present constituted. To the reader dependent upon

the wings. In short, the new construction will not only convey an impression of greater depth and compactness in the entire building, but will also provide a larger, broader and consequently more imposing base for the massive dome.

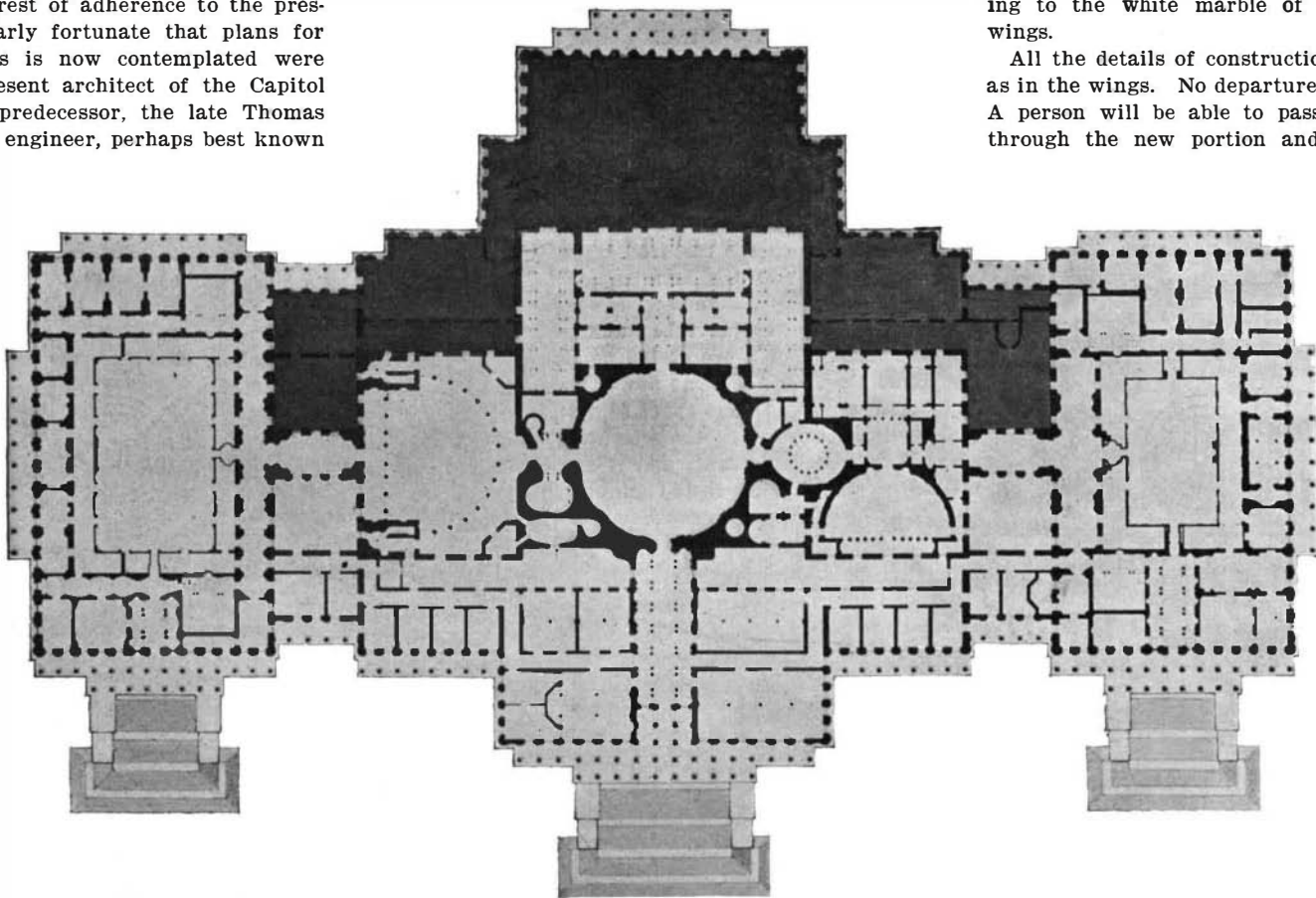
Admirers of the Capitol should welcome the planned enlargement by reason of the fact that it will give opportunity for a much-to-be-desired uniformity of construction throughout the entire noble edifice. For years past it has been a matter of regret that the material comprising the older portion of the building was not marble, but scaly sandstone, which has required constant repainting in order to preserve its appearance. An opportunity is now afforded, however, to displace or cover over this unsatisfactory material, thereby restoring uniformity to the exterior of the building, and accordingly it has been determined that the facings of the extensions on both the east and west sides of the building shall be of marble, conforming to the white marble of the Senate and House wings.

All the details of construction will also be the same as in the wings. No departure from this will be made. A person will be able to pass from either wing and through the new portion and see the same general structural and or-

na mental features. The magnificent entering vestibule, 108 feet in length, will be but an enlarged example of those at the east doors of the Senate and House respectively. The rooms will appear in interior form like those in the wings, and will be commodious and large, approximating 22 by 30 to 32 feet in dimensions. The interior arrangement, it may be noted, does not conform to that outlined by Architect Walter. The requirements of the times have necessitated some departures from his proposals. The splendid marble corridor leading to the Rotunda, which was his conception, has been retained, but the rooms on either side of it have been rearranged. Under the modified plan it has been found possible to provide a total of sixty-six rooms—thirty-three apartments for the use of the Senate and a like number for the House of Representatives.

The improvement of the rotunda presents some exceptional difficulties. The leading artists and

architects of the country have been called in consultation, and the conclusion reached that two things are possible—either that it may be simply redecorated as it is, or all the work below the cornice may be remodeled. Which plan will be adopted has not yet been definitely determined, although it is probable that there will be an adoption of the proposal advanced by Architect Walter for increasing the appearance of strength of the present pilasters by the addition of outer columns and a modified cornice above. The additional proposal, which is likely of acceptance, contemplates the addition of a casing of marble, suitably disposed as to color, the carrying of the same to the cornice and the reconstruction of the latter in marble. Furthermore, it is planned to reframe and somewhat elevate the immense historical paintings which now ornament the Rotunda, and form one of the features of popular interest in the Capitol. The approximate cost of this portion of the work will be \$275,000.



PLAN OF THE CAPITOL AND OF THE PROPOSED EXTENSION.



DESIGN FOR THE ENLARGEMENT OF THE UNITED STATES CAPITOL AT WASHINGTON.

recollections of the appearance of the Capitol, or even upon consulting a picture of the building as it at present appears, it may seem well-nigh incredible that there is available space for such an addition as is proposed with so slight a departure from the present perspective. As a matter of fact, however, the central flight of marble steps on the east front, leading to the portico of the rotunda, is indented twenty feet within the line of the two marble wings. Not only will all the space of this indentation be occupied by the addition, but it will project about fifteen feet beyond the line of the wings, thus eliminating all suggestion of a rambling appearance in the building considered as a whole, as well as any suspicion of the undue size of the dome. In the interest of the maintenance of absolute harmony, the extended front will be faced with a magnificent portico of fluted Corinthian columns, so elaborate and superior in general contour and size as to unmistakably dominate the porticoes of