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In Memory of Walter Cope, Architect of Bryn Mawr College

M. Carey Thomas
Bryn Mawr College

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IN MEMORY
OF
WALTER COPE

ARCHITECT OF
BRYN MAWR COLLEGE



Address delivered by President M. Carey Thomas at a Memorial Service
held at Bryn Mawr College, November 4, 1902. Published
in the Bryn Mawr College Lantern, February,
1905. Reprinted by request,
June, 1908.



Wm. L. D. D.

Pembroke Gateway and Pembroke Hall - East -
North Front from the Campus.

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*This memorial address was published originally in the Bryn Mawr College Lantern, February, 1905, and is now reprinted by permission of the Board of Editors of the Lantern, with slight verbal changes, in response to the request of some of the many admirers of the architectural beauty of Bryn Mawr College, who believe that it should be more widely known than it is that the so-called American Collegiate Gothic was created for Bryn Mawr College by the genius of John Stewardson and Walter Cope. Radnor, Denbigh, and Pembroke were standing in all their beauty on the Bryn Mawr College campus before Cope and Stewardson had been asked to plan any buildings for the universities of Princeton and Pennsylvania, and may thus be regarded as the models of the later collegiate buildings designed by them in the same style. A comparison of these later buildings themselves with the Bryn Mawr College buildings, together with a comparison of their respective dates of inception and construction, will readily establish the fact that the three earliest residence halls of the Bryn Mawr group antedate all other American college buildings in this style, and perhaps surpass them all in romantic beauty. It is to be regretted that the authors of the two articles on the work of Cope and Stewardson in *The Architectural Record*, November, 1904, and in *the Booklover's Magazine*, November, 1905, do not make this fact clear, as thereby injustice is done to the artistic genius of Mr. John Stewardson, who died in 1896, only two years after the completion of Pembroke Hall.*

IN MEMORY OF WALTER COPE

Architect of Bryn Mawr College

Students of Bryn Mawr College, we have met to-day to honour the memory of Mr. Walter Cope to whose genius we owe the beautiful buildings of Bryn Mawr College. Mr. Cope died suddenly of apoplexy last Friday night after a day's work in his office, and the trustees and president of the college will attend his funeral to-day.

Mr. Cope's career as an architect is coincident in time with the life of the college. A year after its opening, in 1886, when he and his partner, Mr. John Stewardson, like Mr. Cope a young architect of brilliant artistic promise, had just finished their studies, they were asked by our board of trustees to plan Radnor Hall, which thus became the first important building of the young architects. Beautiful as are our later buildings Radnor, completed in January, 1887, possesses a beauty all its own; its quiet outlines and dignified repose show us to-day, what was not then fully understood, that in it a new order of college architecture had come into being.

In the year in which Radnor was finished, Mr. Cope and Mr. John Stewardson planned for us a little physical laboratory, now used as an infirmary, and, in 1889 and 1890, they designed Denbigh Hall which was completed in February, 1891. In Denbigh, burned last March and rebuilt from the original drawings last summer, we have in completely developed form the new style of collegiate architecture that has already done so much to transform the colleges of the United States. Never before in this country had such a beautiful college building been seen. Like Radnor, quiet and simple in all its lines but far more homogeneous

and academic, the soft gray mass of Denbigh rising from out its green lawns, like all beautiful things in art, satisfies the eye completely from every point of view. In sunlight, and twilight, and starlight—and you will perhaps permit me to add in firelight also—it is equally beautiful. As we look at it we feel that there is nothing about it that we could wish different; indeed, when we came to rebuild Denbigh after the fire, no one, not even Mr. Cope himself, could suggest any change that would not lessen its wonderful harmony of effect. In 1892, Mr. Cope and Mr. John Stewardson designed Pembroke West and East (Pembroke West and the central tower begun in May, 1893, and completed in February, 1894, and Pembroke East completed in September, 1894), and brought the new Bryn Mawr Gothic to its perfect flower.

Although the style itself was created in Denbigh, the long low lines of Pembroke extending four hundred and seventy-five feet showed its capabilities better. In the gateway tower of Pembroke Mr. Cope and Mr. John Stewardson created the first of their beautiful collegiate entrance towers, the first ever built in America. Pembroke differed from Denbigh also in the artistically uneven way in which the stones were built into the wall. All of these stones were laid under the direct supervision of the architects, and many by their own hands. Two years after the erection of Pembroke Hall, on January sixth, 1896, Mr. John Stewardson was drowned while skating in Fairmount Park in the thirty-ninth year of his age.

Until the time of the completion of Pembroke Hall Mr. Cope's firm had designed no other college buildings. The originality and beauty of Pembroke were recognised instantly. The donor of Blair Hall at Princeton University heard of its beauty and came to Bryn Mawr to see it. He asked me the name of the architects, and commissioned them to reproduce it for his gift to Princeton. Blair Hall, Stafford Little Hall, Stafford Little Hall Extension, and the great Gymnasium now approaching completion form a splendid group of buildings at Princeton, in the style of Pembroke, and have made the

Princeton campus, like the Bryn Mawr campus, a thing to be loved for its beauty by many generations of college students, and to be dreamed of when left behind.

Denbigh and Pembroke also won the admiration of Provost Harrison of the University of Pennsylvania. I well remember standing with him in front of Denbigh and telling him, as I had told Mr. Blair, the names of the architects who had planned our beautiful buildings. Cope and Stewardson were later asked by the trustees of the University of Pennsylvania to design the university dormitories in the same style as Pembroke. As at Princeton, after the erection of one building the firm became the architects of the University of Pennsylvania, and have designed successively the great Law School, the Chemical Laboratory, the new Medical Laboratory, and the additions to the University of Pennsylvania Hospital, now under construction; the plans for the new Veterinary Building, and the new Engineering Building of the university have also been prepared by Mr. Cope.

The Chancellor of Washington University, St. Louis, likewise greatly admired Pembroke, and after visiting Bryn Mawr College went directly to Mr. Cope's office. Later he sent masons from St. Louis to Bryn Mawr to study the way in which the stonework of Pembroke was laid. Mr. Cope has designed for Washington University six great buildings already completed in the Jacobean Gothic style, in effect exceedingly like Pembroke, which are to be occupied by the Louisiana Purchase Exposition of St. Louis, and are afterwards to become the property of Washington University; and he has also planned four other buildings now under construction, a college library to be used as the Hall of Congresses of the Exposition, a gymnasium, a dormitory, and a physical laboratory.

Since the completion of the first buildings of Washington University, Cope and Stewardson have also been appointed architects of the University of Missouri, and have almost completed six large college buildings in Columbia, Missouri.

For Haverford College Mr. Cope has designed within the last few years a section of a dormitory known as Lloyd Hall, and Roberts Hall, an auditorium now nearly finished.

Since the completion of Pembroke, in 1894, that is, in less than eight years, Mr. Cope has designed thirty-one college buildings which indicates, I think, that if he had lived he would have transformed college architecture in the United States. If you compare the other buildings of Princeton, or Pennsylvania, or the present buildings, new or old, of Harvard, Yale, Columbia, Chicago, Smith, Vassar, or Wellesley with Pembroke or Denbigh you will recognise at once how superior in poetry and charm is the new Jacobean Gothic for college purposes.

Examples of Mr. Cope's non-collegiate work may be seen in the beautiful Pennsylvania Institution for the Instruction of the Blind at Overbrook, one of the most picturesque buildings in Philadelphia; the Choir Screen of St. Luke's Church, Germantown; the Memorial Chapel in St. Mark's Church, Philadelphia; the Archæological Museum of the University of Pennsylvania, which he and Mr. John Stewardson designed with Mr. Wilson Eyre and Mr. Frank Miles Day of Philadelphia; the Leamy Home at Mt. Airy, Philadelphia; the City Hall of Atlantic City; the House of Refuge at Glen Mills, Pennsylvania; the Ivy Club of Princeton; Mary Institute, St. Louis, a large day school for girls; the Municipal Building for the District of Columbia in Washington; in Philadelphia, the Harrison Building at the corner of Fifteenth and Market Streets; 1503 Spruce Street; 1631-1633 Locust Street, and many private city and country residences.

Mr. Cope also planned for Bryn Mawr College Professor Andrews' house on college hill, remodelled the Deanery, designed the picturesque shingled building on the Gulph road above Low Buildings known as the college shop, and Low Buildings itself which is also charming in another architectural style.

Since June, 1902, when the friends of the college gave us \$250,000 for our new library, and thus enabled us to claim Mr. Rockefeller's

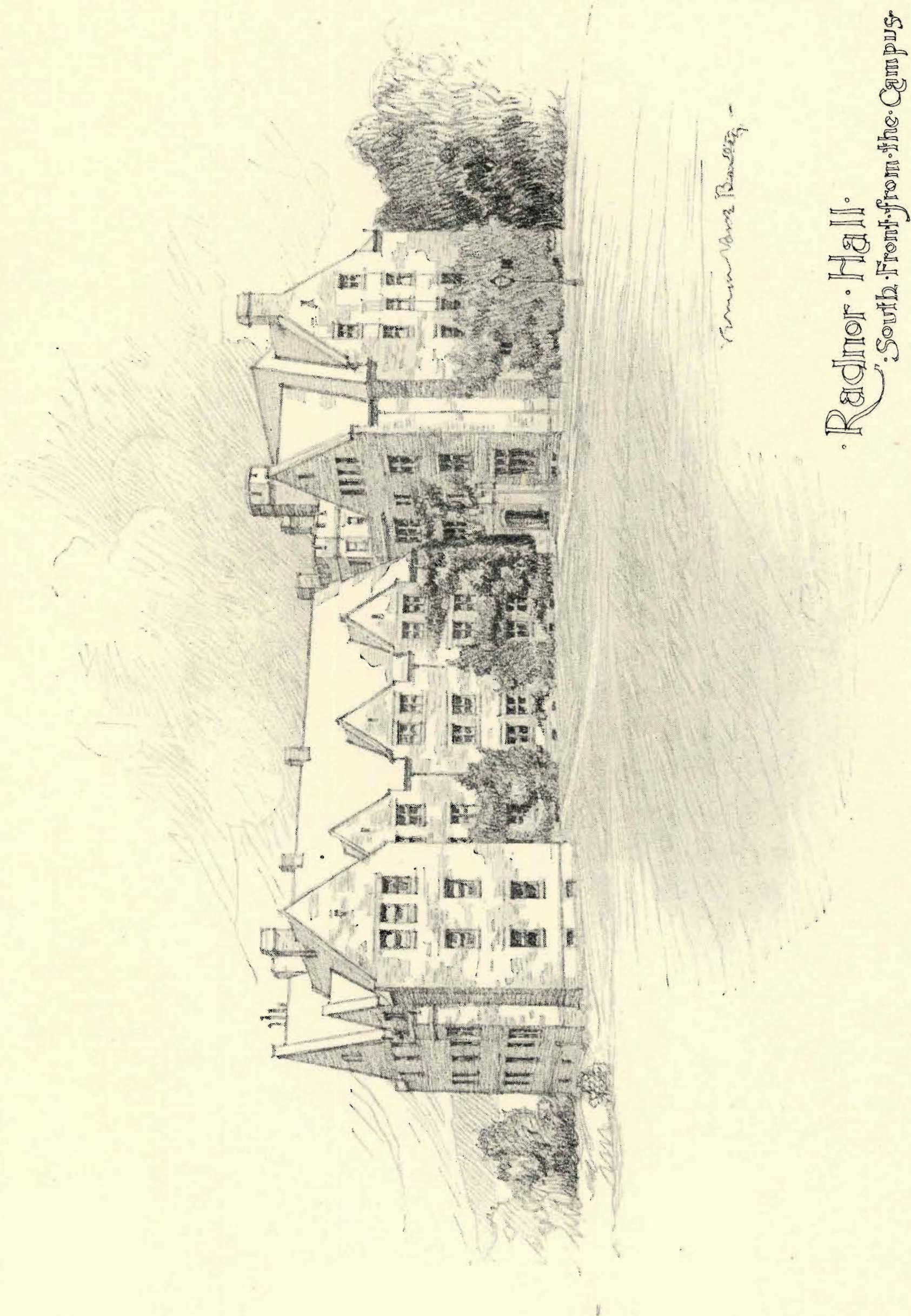
great gift of a residence hall and a heating and lighting plant, Mr. Cope and I have been very closely associated in planning the new hall of residence and the library, and during this past summer we have spent many days together in perfecting the plans. Rockefeller Hall has been designed by Mr. Cope in the most minute architectural detail, and will, I believe, be the most beautiful of all our buildings except the library, for which his plans are also complete in general outline. It was a great delight to me that he consented to incorporate in the design of the library my suggestion of a great reading-room, modelled after the dining-hall of Wadham College, Oxford, with the exterior aspect of an English college chapel, and that he also accepted our floor plans and agreed to design the building in the form of a hollow square with a central cloister as an architectural feature. Only a few days ago Mr. Cope said to me—and, as it turned out, these were to be the last words I heard him speak—that he wished to take three months more to work over the details of the library in order that it might be as beautiful as he could make it. He has also drawn the plans of Guild Hall, the students' building which the alumnæ and students have recently begun to beg for.

It is impossible for me to express in words how great have been Mr. Cope's services to the college. For the past sixteen years he has aided us by counsel and advice in every matter concerning our buildings and grounds. He has spared no pains and no time, when time meant to him not only money but fame. His interest in all that concerned the college could not have been more generous, or more self-sacrificing. His sudden death, when he had just reached the full maturity of his great powers, cannot but be regarded as an almost overwhelming misfortune. There are other good architects, of course, but no other architect can feel, as Mr. Cope felt, that his first important building, his first really great artistic work, was conceived here, and that the beauty of the college as a whole was in a peculiar sense due to his fostering care.

We cannot, I think, honour too greatly the genius that creates for

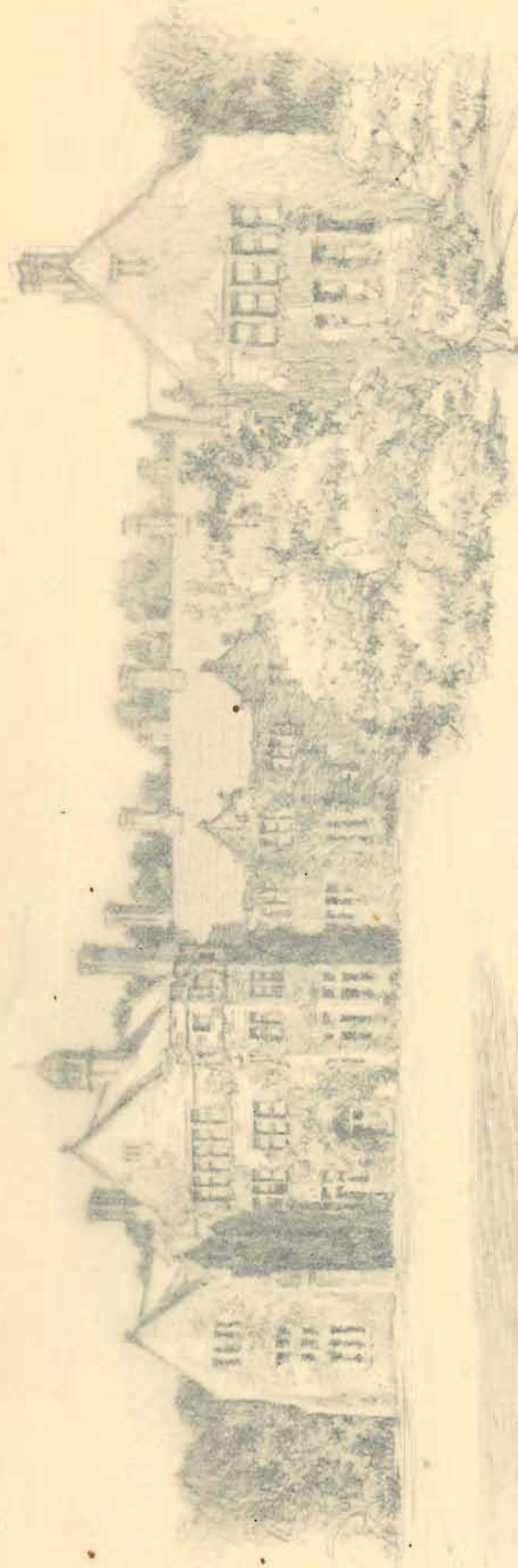
us a new form of art. The collegiate Gothic of Denbigh and Pembroke and of Mr. Cope's later college buildings is surely not a copy of any Oxford or Cambridge college, or group of colleges; it is rather the spirit of Oxford and Cambridge architecture reproduced in new form by a wonderfully sympathetic understanding of changed architectural conditions. During the past three summers I have examined attentively all the most famous and beautiful colleges of Oxford and Cambridge, and compared them on the spot with photographs of our college halls, and I have satisfied myself, as you may easily satisfy yourselves when you visit Oxford and Cambridge, that our Bryn Mawr College buildings are truly original in their adaptation of Jacobean Gothic, and possessed of more romance and charm than any except the very most beautiful of the older colleges of Oxford and Cambridge; and that in themselves they are far more sympathetic and satisfactory in their architectural effect than any of the many college buildings erected in England after Jacobean models since the latter half of the seventeenth century.

It is tragic to die at the age of forty-two, but it is much, like Walter Cope, to leave behind as a lasting memorial so many beautiful works which make the world a better place to live in. His name will be revered by the professors and students of Bryn Mawr College as long as his buildings remain to inspire our love and admiration.



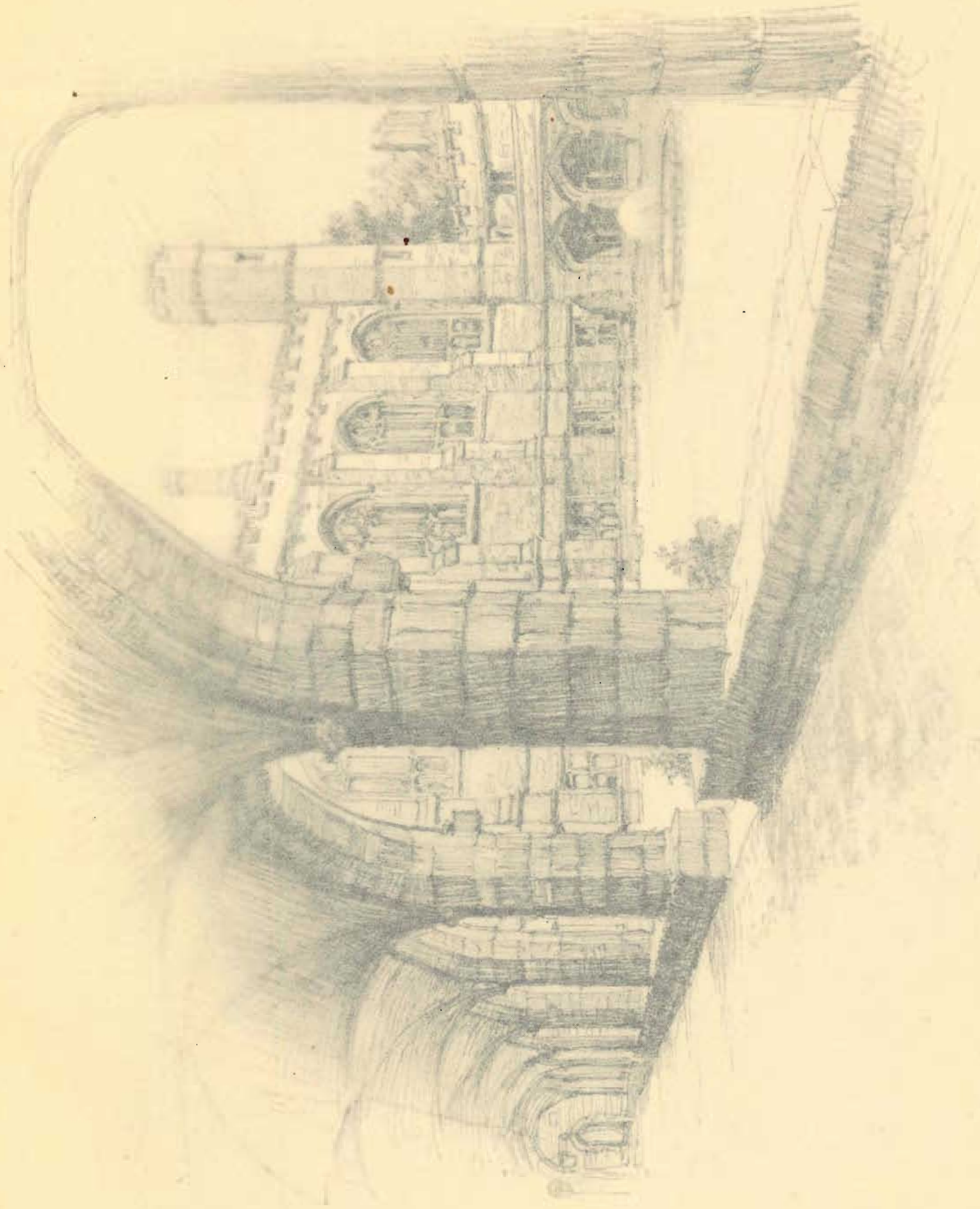
Ernest Van Buren

Radnor Hall.
South Front from the Campus



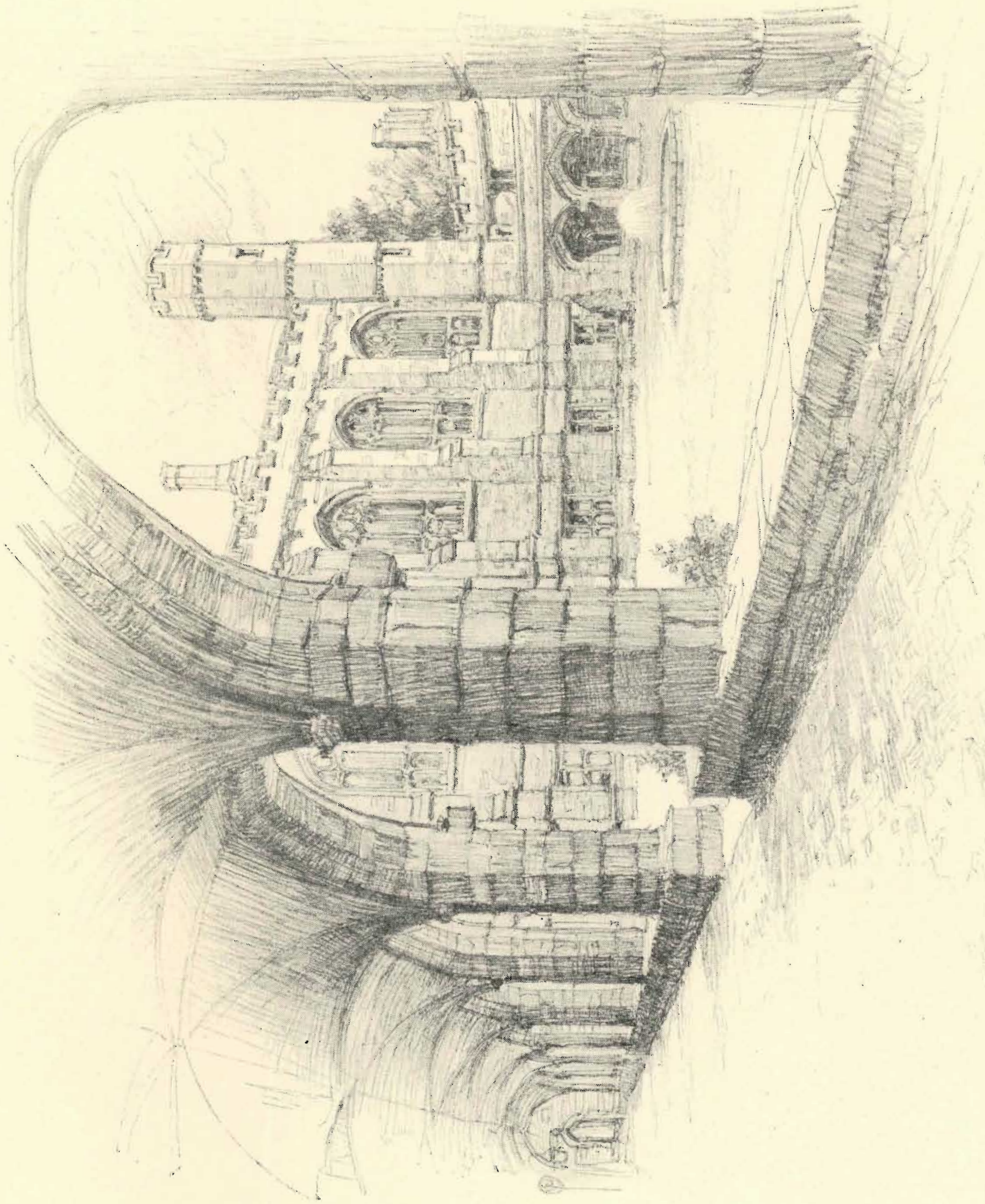
Pembroke Hall
West front from the Campus.

Wm. Wm. S. S. S.



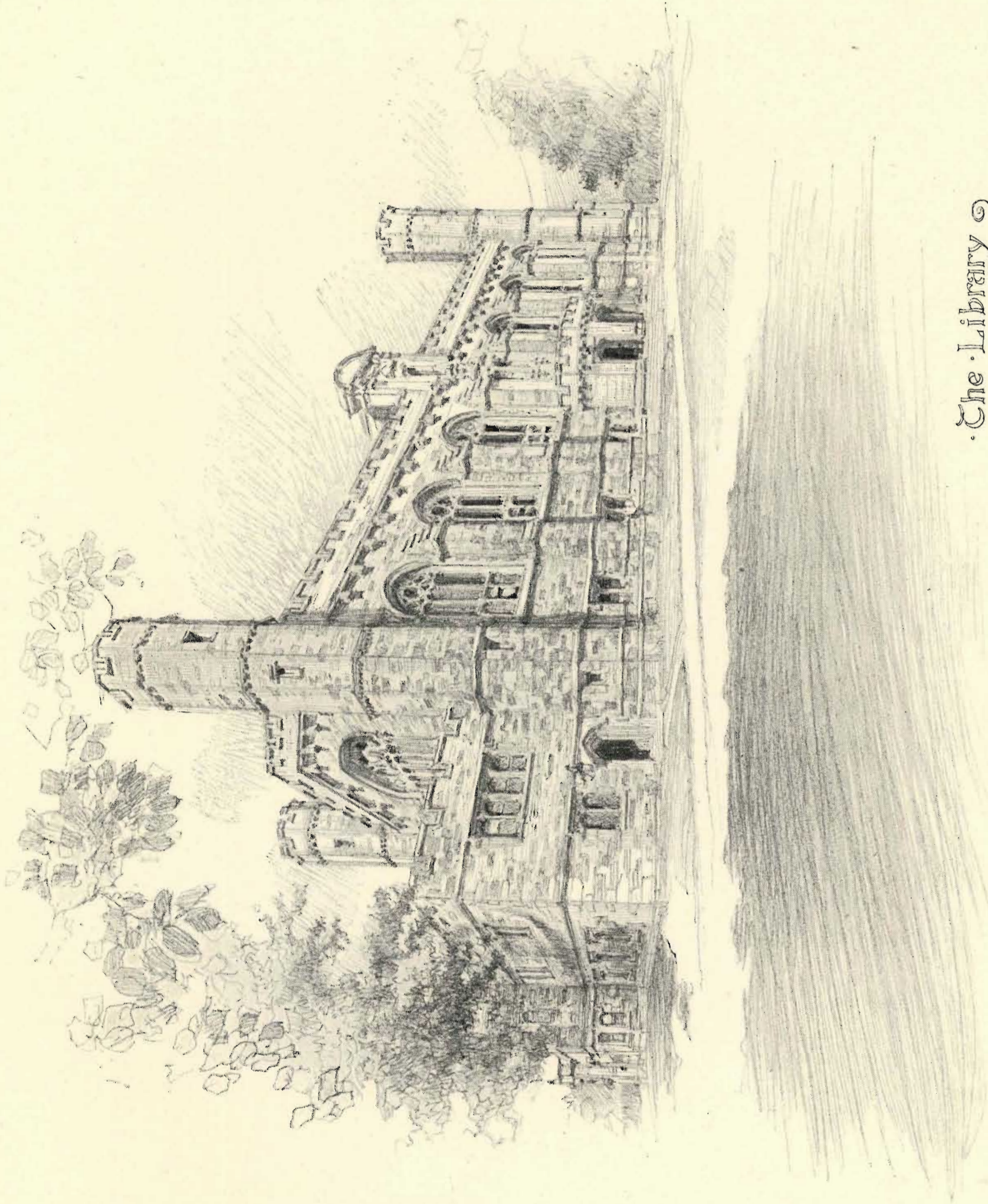
The Library Cloisters.

Wm. Wm. Poole



The Library Cloisters.

Vernon Henry Pooley



• The Library •
• East Front From The Campus •

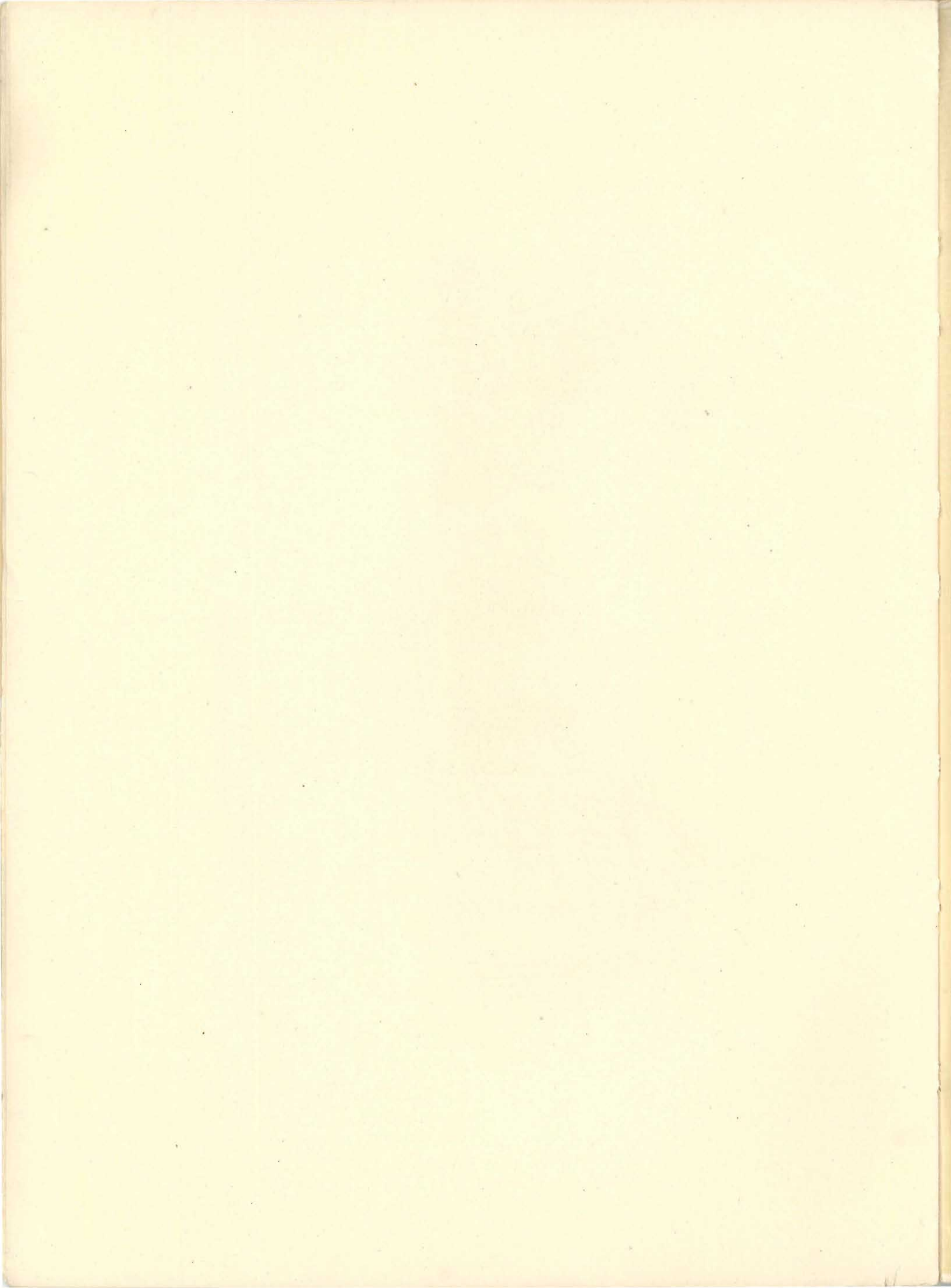
W. W. Conz (handwritten)



Rockefeller Hall.

North Front from the Campus

Wm. H. H. H. H.





Rockefeller Hall.
Owl Gateway.

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