

MAYOR GETS MEDAL FROM ARCHITECTS

Presented by American Group of
the French Society at a
Dinner in His Honor.

FOR BEAUTIFYING THE CITY

French Ambassador Praises Appoint-
ment of City Improvement Commit-
tee—Tributes from Art Leaders.

Mayor George B. McClellan received a handsome bronze medal from the American group of the Société des Architectes Diplômés par le Gouvernement de France at a dinner given in his honor at the University Club, Fifty-fourth Street and Fifth Avenue, last night, and accepted it in a speech in which he paid a tribute to the architects of this city.

Among the guests of honor at the dinner were M. Jusserand, the French Ambassador; Sir Caspar Purdon-Clarke, Director of the Metropolitan Museum of Art; F. K. Pendleton, Corporation Counsel; William R. Mead, President of the New York Chapter of the American Institute of Architects; Walter Clark, Frederick Crowninshield, Frank D. Millett, Arnold W. Brunner, Daniel C. Frenon, and Wassily Safonoff.

J. H. Freedlander, President of the American Group, was toastmaster, and in introducing the Mayor paid a tribute to him for the work he has done in beautifying the city.

"There are many things which his Honor the Mayor has done to better the municipal architecture," said Mr. Freedlander, "but perhaps the most important and far-reaching is the appointment of the City Improvement Commission. The plans prepared by this commission indicate how the city can be improved and beautified, and at what points the present irregular plans of New York can be simplified and symmetrically arranged. It was not a bold attempt to demolish the city, but to reconstruct it."

In accepting the medal, Mayor McClellan said in part:

"The mediaeval ascetic and the seventeenth century puritan tried to convince mankind that beauty and righteousness were antipathetic. But his wholesome natural common sense forbade mankind to be convinced. We may and doubtless do respect the excellent but unattractive woman, while the beautiful saint receives our warmest admiration. Where Lucas Cranach and Wolgemuth may have frightened an occasional backslider into righteousness, Gentile Bellini and Titian called hundreds of sinners to repentance. As with women and angels, and saints and pictures, so with cities. Our fellow-citizen sits him down to sleep the Summer day upon a bench in City Hall Park. If he wakes facing the North you know that he will slouch away a better man for having looked upon that little gem of the Colonial—our City Hall. But if he wakes facing the South, and gazes upon the Post Office, can you blame him if he goes away with homicide in his heart? Venice lived a thousand years. During her last two centuries of life she was only kept alive by the love and devotion of her children. Do you suppose that they would have felt for their mother as they did, had she been the architectural ancestress of Hoboken or Jersey City?"

Something more is needed to make the happy city than health and wealth and wisdom. The citizen may feel a just satisfaction in the thought that in his city the death rate is low, the streets clean, and the water pure. He may be smugly complaisant in knowing that rents are high, food dear, and bankers and brewers rich. He may beat his breast with pride at the thought of the wisdom of his town, that all her people are clever, her schools excellent, and her newspapers omniscient. The city healthy, the city wealthy, and the city wise may excite all these emotions, but it is the city beautiful that compels and retains the love of her people. It is in the city beautiful that civic spirit is at its best."

The Mayor was followed by M. Jusserand, who lauded Mayor McClellan and his work to the highest degree.

"What Mayor McClellan has done is worthy of all praise. He has recognized the importance of interfering while it was yet time, of preventing this metropolis from growing any which way, of showing what the brain and hand of man can do to make it more perfect, more healthy, more beautiful. He felt that among his multitudinous duties none was of higher importance than this one, for the beauty, the cleanliness, the dignity, of a town have a moralizing influence. Good examples are catching as well as bad ones; a slovenly street is depressing; a good house with an honest façade, a clean look, and no trumpery ornaments is inspiring; it silently but continuously and efficaciously preaches for decent and honorable living."

"One of the traits which pleased me most in the commission's report is that it does not deal only with ethereal problems of high art but with the practical side of every-day life in such a big city. Inspired by your Mayor, your artists have not disdained to pay attention to questions of transportation; they know that a city must be a harmonious whole."

"This trait in the commission's report shows also that you feel the great importance in educating the public. They must be led gradually, not only to enjoy, but to understand, to form an opinion, to be personally interested in the problems of beautifying the city. We have such a public in France, and it is for us a great force; we do nothing in Paris or elsewhere without admitting the public to form an opinion. All changes are made after competition, the results of which are exhibited, and any one who cares may come to see; there is no fee to pay, the doors are open to all comers."

M. Jusserand wound up by telling of the contribution of James Stillman of 500,000 francs to the Sociétés des Architectes Diplômés, to be used for the furtherance of architectural teaching.

Others who spoke were Sir Caspar Purdon Clarke and Corporation Counsel Pendleton.

Those at the tables were C. H. Aldrich, Harvey W. Corbett, J. W. Cross, J. H. Freedlander, Julian C. Levi, Gamble Rogers, Lloyd Warren, H. L. Beadel, Paul Cret, H. Deville, Howard Greenley, Guy Lowell, Paul Nelson, W. P. Robins, W. J. Smith, Charles Butler, Duncan Candler, E. H. Denby, H. D. Hale, Arthur Nash, Alexander Phillips, C. S. Rodman, J. V. Van Pelt, F. Livingston Pell, John Russell Pope, Thomas Hastings, Isaac W. Seligman, Henry Rutgers Marshall, and John M. Carrere.