ROBERT MILLS, ARCHITECT
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By CHARLES C. WILSON

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“Robert Mills, the Architect, is dead.” In these six words was chronicled the passing of one of America’s great men in the leading newspaper of his native State and city. For sixty-three years he has lain in an unmarked grave, No. 111, in an obscure cemetery in the capital of the nation he served, utterly forgotten, even by the men of his own profession. He has been almost completely ignored in American history, and his name scarcely appears in American reference works.

Fortunately foreign recognition has not been wholly lacking, and at least two important works, Planat’s Encyclopédie d’ Architecture and the Dictionary of Architecture issued by the London Architectural Society, give him very extended notice, more extended in fact than to all other American architects combined. In recent years there has been a striking revival of interest in Mills, and he may yet receive that recognition by his own people, to which his character, his talents and his eminent service to his country so richly entitle him.

The finding of a set of his signed plans of the Asylum in Columbia in an attic in a Massachusetts Asylum resulted in appreciative articles by Dr. J. W. Babcock in the “Hand Book of South Carolina,” in 1908, and in “The Institutional Care of the Insane,” 1916.

Mr. Montgomery Schuyler, an architectural critic and writer of note, in a series of three articles on the Greek Revival in “The American Architect,” in 1910, devoted
one number entirely to the work of this architect, and Col. John J. Dargan contributed a brilliant article on his writings and his architectural work to "The State" of December 30, 1913. Mrs. Austin Gallagher of Baltimore, attracted by the Washington Monument in that city, after discovering its designer with much difficulty, prepared and read before the Maryland Historical Society on December 13, 1915, a charming and appreciative paper, followed by an article in the "Architectural Record" in December, 1916, and she now has in preparation a complete biography. Mr. Fiske Kimball of Ann Arbor, in his recent "Thomas Jefferson, Architect," has noted Mills' early association with, and tutelage under, our most versatile of Presidents, and is now writing an essay "dealing with his influence and historic position in American Architecture." And finally, the certificate of registration of the South Carolina Board of Architectural Examiners, now engraved in steel, is dedicated and inscribed to Robert Mills, and no architect hereafter practicing in South Carolina need be ignorant of the greatest architect which the State, if not, indeed, the nation has produced.

Robert Mills was born in Charleston, S. C., August 12, 1781, and died in Washington, D. C., March 3, 1855. His father was William Mills, a Scotchman, who came to this country from Dundee in 1770, and married Ann Taylor, who is described as "a lady of ancient and honorable Carolina lineage, a descendant of Landgrave Thomas Smith, provisional Governor of South Carolina in 1690."

He was educated at Charleston College, and at the age of nineteen entered the office of James Hoban in Washington, a Charleston architect, who was just finishing the White House, and then engaged as architect of the capitol. He early met Mr. Jefferson, who was greatly attracted to him. In 1802 he made a tour of the country with letters of introduction from Mr. Jefferson, or at least one such letter which is still in existence, dated July 1, 1802, and addressed to Charles Bulfinch, the noted Boston architect.
On his return to Washington, Mr. Jefferson gave him the run of his library, loaned him architectural works, and had him visit him on his estate at Monticello. This visit is said to have been prolonged for a period of two years, during which he made the general drawings for the Mansion, Mr. Jefferson reserving the details to himself.

It is probable that on his visits to Monticello he met the lady whom he married soon after, when still in his early twenties, Eliza Barnwell Smith, daughter of General Smith of Hackwood Park, Frederick County, Virginia. He had four daughters, one of whom married Alexander Dimitry, United States Minister to Central America, whose descendants are still living in New Orleans, and from whom Mrs. Gallagher has obtained valuable material.

In 1803 Mr. Jefferson appointed B. H. Latrobe, Architect of the Capitol, to succeed Hoban, and shortly after, on Mr. Jefferson’s recommendation, Mills was employed as one of his three assistants.

In the latter part of this decade, Mills went to Philadelphia, either as a partner or associate of Latrobe, but the association did not long continue, as in 1810 we find him practicing for himself in that city. Later there seems to have been some friction between them over Mills’ low scale of charges, and Latrobe wrote him “a fatherly letter of remonstrance,” which is still in existence. Happily, however, there was no serious breach between them, and Mills’ high esteem for his former employer and preceptor was in no way lessened, as the passages quoted later will show.

In Philadelphia, as elsewhere, Mills was full of public spirit, and co-operated in movements for the advancement of the community. “He was one of the founders of the Society of Artists in that city and its first secretary.”

In 1812, or shortly after, Mills moved to Baltimore to be in closer touch with engagements already coming to him from that city and further South, and remained
there until his return to South Carolina in 1820. Here his interests extended beyond his professional practice, and we find him organizing a philanthropic society to establish an institution for the relief of the poor along advanced lines. He was also made president and chief engineer of the waterworks company in that city, which position he held as long as he remained there.

In 1820 he returned to Charleston to become a member of the South Carolina Board of Public Works. He is referred to in “Reports & Resolutions” of that period as “State Engineer and Architect,” and as “Civil and Military Engineer of the State.” He signs official papers, however, exactly as other members of the board, “Acting Commissioner,” and designates himself on the title page of the “Statistics” as “Robert Mills of South Carolina, P. A., Engineer and Architect.”

He remained in his native State ten years, going to Washington in 1830, it is said on the invitation of President Jackson, who appointed him “Architect of Public Buildings” in 1836. He formally assumed this office on July 6th of that year, and held it until 1851, when at the age of seventy, he retired from office and from practice. It is interesting to note that the salary of this office was at first only $1,800.00, increased to $2,300.00 in October, 1836, and to $2,400.00 in 1839, at which figure it remained during Mills’ incumbency. There was also an allowance of $500.00 a year for “the hire of draughtsmen.”

From Mills’ work it is evident that he was a man of cultivated and refined taste. Personally he was extremely modest and retiring, and did not seek public attention. He never signed his buildings, which, by the way, is quite a recent custom, not even yet by any means general, and often failed to sign his plans. He avoided the public ceremonies in connection with his buildings, and we have records of only two such occasions at which he was present, laying the cornerstone of the De Kalb Monument at Camden, and of the Asylum at Columbia.
At the former he was accorded a place beside Lafayette, and in the latter he marched in procession with the officials, masons and distinguished visitors from the City Market to the building, and then to the College Chapel to hear the oration of the day, and later to "an excellent dinner prepared for the occasion," and where "a number of volunteer toasts were drank expressive of the feelings of the company present." One of these was offered by Mills himself: "To the Governor of the State."

He had a profound respect for his calling, classifying it both as a fine art and a learned profession. This is significant when most of the architects of the time were signing themselves "Architect & Builder," "Architect & Mason, or "Architect & Carpenter." In one of the rare references to himself, he says in the "Statistics," under the head of "State of the Arts and Literature:" "Robert Mills of this city is the first native American that entered on the study of Architecture and Engineering in the United States—these he pursued under the celebrated Latrobe, to whose talents and taste this country is so much indebted."

His practice was upon a high professional plane, with a proper regard for the rights and feelings of his competitors. On one of his plans there is found a notation that he had been unaware that a suggestion had already been submitted by another architect, and, therefore, withdrawing the plans from consideration. His tribute to Latrobe just quoted from the "Statistics of South Carolina," and his reference to him in the "Guide to the Capital" in 1834 as "a man of the first talents and superior genius" show his fine spirit.

He was of orthodox and reverent religious convictions, saying that "every discovery of science more strongly corroborates the Mosaic account of the creation and deluge independent of Sacred History and tradition," and deploring "the pride which vaunts itself on splendid buildings and costly mausoleums" and the vanity of "the ostentation of large estates, of extensive boundaries and of
great empires,” all of which “will in due time be swept away.”

We are indebted to Mrs. Gallagher for this intimate personal reminiscence: “A Washington lady of ninety, of phenomenal mentality, whose early youth was spent in close social relations with the families on Capitol Hill, among them that of Robert Mills, remembers him distinctly as one of the celebrities of the day. She describes him as a man of strikingly strong features, of evidently studious habits, with an air of deep absorption or abstraction; as a man of unusual dignity and reserve, yet affable and kindly, and with the humor of a Bobby Burns. He was of simple but correct taste in dress, and his presence was always an interesting one to everybody. She speaks of his regular attendance at the Presbyterian Church, where he and his friend, President Pierce, seldom missed a service. She also relates one redeeming vice, the intemperate use of snuff.”

Mills deserves recognition in his native State, at least, as a writer, a humanitarian, a reformer and a man of broad and enlightened vision. His “American Pharos or Light House Guide” is a standard work on this subject, and not yet wholly out of date, and his “Guide to the Capitol of the United States and to the Executive and National Offices” is, strangely enough, still frequently reprinted. He wrote numerous pamphlets dealing with projects for the betterment of the State and the Nation, and his “Statistics of South Carolina” was devoted very largely to such objects.

He urges the claims of the Indians to the fostering care of the State, “now lingering neglected and despised amongst us, suffering all the evils arising out of depraved practices and immoral habits, the consequences of the sad inattention of those who are bound in duty and from motives of policy to teach them better; to enlighten them with that knowledge and those principles of virtue which distinguish Christians.”

He pleads for prison reform, substituting the peniten-
Mills' Building, State Hospital for Insane
tiary system with individual cells and with regular work under hygienic conditions and moral influences for corporal punishment, or confinement in idleness in the common jails, and presents the State, free of charge, with plans for such an institution in order to influence its establishment. But strangely enough, he endorses the treadmill, introduced in one of his own buildings, as a salutary improvement. He deplores the abuse of the pardonning power of that day which he attributes to the severity of punishment imposed by the law.

He characterizes the poor laws of the day as "oppressive and evil in their tendency." "It has engaged the attention of the benevolent and wise in all ages," he says, "to devise some effectual relief for the poor" but "was reserved for this age of moral and physical improvement to develope the admirable secret of benefitting the poor without degrading them." He then sets out in detail his plan for district institutions under boards of trustees "chosen out of the most respectable men in the district of known humanity and kindness, and who from principles of benevolence would serve without pecuniary reward," and superintendents "of known integrity, humanity and zeal in the cause of the poor." He proposes that the institutions shall be largely self-supporting by the varied industries of the inmates, for which the necessary equipment is provided so as to make the benefits available to "those who have too much sensibility ever to submit to the disgrace of becoming a burden upon the public, although scarce able to find means to support life." He states that during his residence in Baltimore he "had the honor of drawing up a plan of a public institution of this nature," and that it had been successfully established "on a private scale."

He advocated sane temperance measures. "A reduction in the number of licensed taverns and dram shops, which prove so ruinous to our youth and servants is
much demanded. The increase of these tempting retreats is a serious evil and should command the particular attention and vigilance of our public authorities. Instead of increasing, we should endeavor to reduce these sources of corruption to the morals of our citizens generally, and especially to our poor; pauperism may be traced most generally from the dram-shop." "If we must have drinking places, let them be beer houses, let us encourage the use of malt liquors which may be drunk with impunity."

He found "a very great deficiency in the present system of free schools." "Until we join with the instructions of the head the labour of the hands, we shall never succeed in really benefitting the poor, and extinguishing pauperism in the country." "Indeed, according to the Pestalozzian system of education, their mental instruction is simultaneous with, and intimately enjoined with their physical instruction, so that the labour enjoined, instead of toil, is converted into pleasure, as it partakes of recreation."

He urges building laws to reduce the fire hazard. "Measures ought to be taken," he says, "to compel those who erect houses, (within the populous part of the city at least) to build them of brick." "Mutual safety ought to influence all in this respect, and where we are blind to our social obligations, public authority should intervene to compel us to the performance of what is right."

After discussing the river and canal navigation developed in South Carolina, he strongly advocates continuing the work to a connection with the Mississippi Valley across the mountains, which he shows to be entirely practicable, and not prohibitive in cost. "To the lover of his country the head of this river," (the Broad) induces a most interesting train of thoughts; and when he ascends the mountains, where the western branch of the Broad (here called the Green) river intersects it, he will there behold the waters of the extremes of
the Union almost interchanging and inviting the hand of industry and art to unite them. What a spot for the statesman, the man of business, the friend of his country to pause and contemplate. Unite us and you bind the political destinies of your country in bonds of indissoluble peace and prosperity.”

In a pamphlet, with maps, entitled “Inland Navigation,” published in 1820, before his return to South Carolina, he discussed a system of canals connecting the river navigation of the entire country, and places it on a sound economic and engineering foundation.

In 1834 he published another pamphlet entitled “A substitute for Railroads and Canals,” in which he predicted the development of steam wagons and carriages for use on the public roads, a far-sighted vision of the modern automobile. He described the effect of this traffic on the roads, and the methods of construction to withstand it best, but it was mainly with the broader economic questions that he was concerned.

The question closest to Mills’ heart was the reclamation of the lowlands of his native State. He returns again and again to the subject in the “Statistics” and treats it in several independent pamphlets. “There is no subject,” he says, “associated with the internal welfare of South Carolina more interesting to its citizens than the reclamation of these swamp lands or alluvial low grounds. The best interests of the State, physical, moral and pecuniary are associated with this work and no effort that can be made would be too great to accomplish the object.”

Under a discussion of climate he says: “Under such circumstances it is a matter of little surprise that fevers prevail. It is to be regretted that knowing the cause, no effort has been made to remove the evil.” “Independent of the incalculable benefits which would result from it in point of health and comfort to the inhabitants, the finest lands of the State would thereby be brought in cultivation and the way opened for in-
creasing the population of this section of the State thus adding to the physical power of the country."

Again in discussing Charleston District, he says: "What incalculable blessings would flow to Charleston, to the State, to every individual resident in it by such a change in the climate of the country, in its health, population, wealth and political strength. Those rich spots, where solitude and death reign in gloomy terror, would then become the abode of cheerfulness and health. Those luxuriant but fatal wastes, which now fatigue the eye of the wanderer, would then be converted into fruitful fields or clothed with perpetual verdure and grazed by innumerable herds. Those fairy spots, from which we now fly, as from the pestilence, would then become the delightful habitations of social life, the scenes of abundant harvests, and industry receiving its rich rewards."

He estimates 1,280,000 acres of swamp lands in the State, which he values at an average of $5.00 the acre. The cost of diking, drainage and clearing this land, making it ready for cultivation he estimates at $16.00 the acre, and the value of the improved land at $50.00, although he says, "upwards of $300.00 have been given for some of our choice low land." This gives a profit on the improvement of $29.00 the acre, or $56,352,000 for the entire State. "After this expose," he says, "shall I be taxed with holding extravagant views on this interesting subject." "Does it lie within our power to realize these inestimable benefits? Most certainly."

In a pamphlet published in 1822 he proposes that the State purchase the low lands, take over all the slaves, with due compensation to the owners, undertake the reclamation and on completion colonize the negroes in Africa, "providing them ample means to form a comfortable settlement there." "Sound policy," he says, "and our best interest demand that some system should be put in operation, the tendency of which will be to root out slavery amongst us." "Happy period!
when South Carolina shall commence a system which shall have for its consummation, however distant, the total abolition of slavery! Who can conceive the moral benefits which will emanate from it, or estimate the advantages which the country will realize in its political concerns.

From 1816 to 1819, inclusive, the State of South Carolina made appropriations, amounting to $52,670.00 for a "map of the State," probably covering field surveys, and in 1825 a further appropriation of $12,000.00. A separate map was made for each of the twenty-eight districts of that time. These are signed by twenty-two different surveyors, and two, Darlington and Marlboro, are not signed. These maps are variously dated from 1817 to 1821, and all of them were "Improved for Mills' Atlas in 1825." All of them are drawn to a uniform scale, and are evidently by the same draughtman, probably Mills himself.

I have had occasion in the course of my practice to test the accuracy of these maps by extensive and precise surveys in thirteen of the twenty-eight districts, and have yet to find the first material error or omission. Every stream, lake, road, hill, swamp or other permanent landmark, I have found to be exactly as represented and no surveys or maps have since been made which will compare with this work of a century ago in completeness or precision. Whatever may be said of the "Statistics" as "full of errors," this certainly cannot be said of the "Atlas."

As early as 1782 the General Assembly of South Carolina passed resolutions looking to a system of internal improvements." The work was actually commenced in 1816, under the direction of John Christian Senf, as Engineer, "a Hessian, who was captured with Burgoyne, embraced the American cause, and was sent to South Carolina, and who sixteen years before, had completed for the Santee Canal Company the canal connecting the Santee and Cooper Rivers."
In 1819 a Board of Public Works was created, with Joel R. Poinsett and Abram Blanding as “Acting Commissioners” and in 1820 Robert Mills was added to this board, and, as already stated, is generally referred to as Civil and Military Engineer of the State, an office created by Act of the Legislature in 1817. At a meeting of this board a year later, on December 21, 1821, as reported in the City Gazette, the following appointments were made: Nicholas Herbemont, president; Wm. J. Middleton, secretary and treasurer of the Contingent Fund; Robert Mills and Abram Blanding, acting commissioners; John Cantey, engineer; W. H. Gibbes, Jr., assistant engineer, and Robert E. Payne, assistant to the board.

From 1816 to 1819 the expenditures for internal improvements were $588,320.00 and from 1820 to 1825 $1,123,742.00, continuing until 1829 with annual appropriations of about $100,000.00. The work executed under these appropriations consisted of the State Road from Charleston to Columbia, and from Columbia to Greenville, and a system of river navigation.

Little work was done on the Pee Dee or eastern group of rivers as they were already navigable to the State line. A canal was cut from the Santee into Winnyah Bay, another planned from the Santee into the Wando, thus connecting Charleston directly with Georgetown and the eastern rivers, and still another was cut from the low country Broad into the Savannah, connecting Charleston with the western system. Mills says, in advocating the Wando project: “Hence it will be seen that with fourteen miles of canalling, a good steam boat navigation, entirely inland and parallel to the coast, may be effected from the North Carolina to the Georgia line. It is supposed that five locks will be all that are necessary. This work has been estimated at less than $250,000.00.”

No work was done on the Savannah River, which was already navigable for 258 miles to Andersonville; the
Tugulo was improved for 25 miles to Pulaski, and the Seneca 26 miles, or six miles above Pendleton Court House.

A canal was planned from the Edisto into the Ashley, but never built, and the canal from the Santee into the Cooper had, as already stated, been completed by private enterprise in 1800, giving Charleston direct connection with the central group of rivers. This canal, however, was already doomed, by the failure of the water supply in the three years drought of 1817-19, and Mills advocated a new project from Charleston to Columbia, but it seems never to have taken definite shape.

The Santee, Congaree and Wateree required little work up to Columbia and Camden, but from these points very extensive works were built on the Saluda, Broad and Catawba Rivers. On Saluda 120 miles of navigation was established by four miles of canal and ten locks, overcoming a fall of sixty-one feet. Broad River was developed to the State line by two miles of canal and seven locks, covering a fall of sixty-one feet. These two rivers were connected with the Congaree by the Columbia Canal three miles long, with five locks overcoming a fall of thirty-four feet and a dam across the Broad at the mouth of the Saluda just below the present C., N. & L. Railroad bridge. The Catawba was developed above Camden with fifteen miles of canal and thirty-one locks, overcoming a fall of two hundred and twenty-nine feet. The most extensive of the works on Catawba River were at Rocky Mount, now Great Falls, "where there is a fall of one hundred and twenty-one feet requiring thirteen locks." In describing this spot, Mills says: "Here repose the ashes of one whose memory should be cherished by Carolinians, for his devotion to their cause in the Revolution, and his subsequent efforts to serve them in his professional capacity—Colonel Senf, the engineer, both of the Catawba Company and of the Santee Canal. He sleeps in
what was his garden, at Rocky Mount; but no obituary stone records his name. Colonel Senf was a military engineer of considerable talent.”

In addition to the canals, narrow channels were blasted through many shoals on all of the rivers where the fall was not so great as to require locks. With all these improvements, Mills says in the Statistics: “We have now an inland navigation equal to 2,370 miles, besides what we shall gain after the completion of the present works of the State—not to notice the numerous creeks and inlets of the sea.” The navigation thus developed, above the fall line at least, was for small pole boats only, probably not exceeding ten or fifteen tons capacity.

The Board of Public Works in addition to its works of engineering, had charge of the public buildings of the State and the districts, for which appropriations were made ranging from $50,000 to $80,000 annually; in ten years, 1816 to 1825, these appropriations aggregated $672,475.00, which probably provided most of these districts with the needed buildings. Those erected from 1820 to 1830 were, doubtless, all designed by Mills. In the Courier (Charleston) of February 28, 1822, there appears an advertisement signed Robert Mills, Acting Commissioner, Board of Public Works, 169 Bay Street, inviting proposals for the erection of court houses at Kingstree, Newberry, Yorkville and Greenville, and jails at Union, Spartanburg, Lancaster and Yorkville, and on May 8th of the same year he advertises for proposals for a fire proof office for the public records in Charleston.

Though the Board planned and executed the work committed to it with economy and efficiency it did not escape adverse criticism. The Courier of March 30, 1822, says: “The truth is the Legislature have burned their bridges on Internal Improvements; and so unfortunate has been much of the expenditure hitherto, that all expectation of further appropriations is rendered
The Board of Public Works is responsible for the works of engineering, and charge of the public buildings of the State and the public roads.
very remote and almost hopeless." In the issue of May 24th of the same year there is a protest against the Board of Public Works building a powder magazine in the vicinity of Charleston, and in criticism of the Inland Navigation, the "Maid of Orleans" is reported a-ground at Campbell's Shoals. Under "Taxes" in this issue the Board of Public Works is directly charged with "squandering the funds and sacrificing the interests of Charleston to the aggrandizement of Columbia."

On May 29, 1822, after copious rains, replenishing the water courses, it "thanks Providence and not the Board of Public Works for relief."

By 1828 the public interest in internal improvements had subsided, in 1830 the work was entirely suspended, and a few years later all the canals and locks were advertised for sale. Probably no purchaser was found and they were abandoned and allowed to fall into ruin. Notwithstanding this fact and the rapid development of railways this inland navigation continued in use to a limited extent and at irregular intervals, certainly as late as 1888.

Some years ago, I had occasion to remove one of the locks on the Saluda River, and can testify to its substantial and workman-like character, and if we may judge all of the improvements by this specimen, the Board designed and executed its work in a most thorough manner.

Planat's Encyclopedia credits Mills with having "studied the creation of a canal in the State of Delaware" and the execution of "numerous roads and ferries between Baltimore and the port of New York, and between Charleston and Hamburg," and also mentions his famous wooden Schuylkill bridge. I have been able to verify none of these, except the last. Mills himself describes this bridge as "The greatest span of arch that ever was attempted in any country and executed in this over the river Schuylkill, near Philadelphia. It is 360 feet in the chord, verse sine only 19 feet." This bridge was built
in 1812, when Mills was but 31 years of age, and was burned in 1838.

The Architectural Dictionary of London says Mills was the first to suggest a railway from Charleston to Hamburg, which is probably true though not verified, but the record is clear that he had no further connection with it. Mrs. Gallagher has a letter of Mills to the Postmaster General, dated December 16, 1826, pleading for the construction of a railway from Washington to New Orleans, "thereby," he writes, "to reduce the time of transit from 26 to four days," showing that he was alive to the possibilities of railway development a year before the epoch making South Carolina Railroad was chartered or even proposed. Later, as shown by old files, of the Scientific American, he was the first to propose a transcontinental railway to the Pacific. "Even at that early date," according to Mrs. Gallagher, "he advocated the monorail on which he believed a speed of 100 miles the hour could be attained with safety."

As Chief Engineer and President of the Baltimore Water Works Company, Mills held a position of great responsibility, demanding the employment of his technical skill and engineering talents, but I have no record of the works designed and executed by him. In the Statistics he says: "The City Council have lately passed an ordinance authorizing Mr. Mills to raise a Company to supply Charleston with water from such source or sources as may be found most expedient; and as it is practicable to introduce such a supply, provided proper means are adopted, the realization of so great a good will now depend altogether upon the interest taken in the work by our own citizens. Of its profitable result there can be no question." I have no record of the outcome of his efforts in this enterprise, nor of the proposed source of supply. He opposes the idea of artesian wells, and says that none have ever been successful "in the alluvial region," and that "no prospect of success can be anticipated below the granite region to procure an overflowing
stream by boring.” “In this idea,” he says, “he was strengthened by the opinion of two of the most distinguished geologists in the United States, Dr. Thomas Cooper and Mr. Vanuxem.” The wells of Artois, an alluvial region, had been flowing since the twelfth century, and artesian water has since been obtained in Charleston, and all along the Atlantic and Gulf Coast, and this region is now known as the most favorable for such sources of supply. But after dismissing wells and springs, he says: “Indeed, for so large a city as Charleston, and under such solar influences, a river itself would not be too abundant to answer the requisite demands.”

Mills also suggested a plan for the drainage and sewerage of Charleston, which was never carried out, consisting of several cross tunnels from river to river and an intersecting longitudinal tunnel along Meeting Street, all at low water level, and of “suitable size to admit the free passage of the tides through them.” Existing and future lateral drains, both public and private, were to be connected into these tunnels, which would be flushed by the ebb and flow of the tides, which would “cleanse out all their filth and sediment.”

In the “Statistics” he mentions a proposal to construct jetties in Charleston harbor parallel with the current, very much on the lines that they were built later which would insure a depth of thirty feet at low tide. Whether this suggestion was his own or that of some other engineer is not stated, but it is interesting as the first work in the world on these lines was not built until some twenty-five years later.

Patriotic and far-seeing as Mills undoubtedly was as a constructive reformer, bold and original as were his plans for the development of his State and country, important as were his works in engineering, his fame rests chiefly upon his achievements in Architecture.

From Mills' boyhood impressions in Charleston, his early training under Hoban and Latrobe, his intimacy with Mr. Jefferson and his free use of Mr. Jefferson's
library, mainly Palladian, he would naturally have been expected to fall into the traditional style of the time, Colonial. But he was far too independent and original to subordinate his own taste to the conventionalism of these early influences. While he never visited Greece or even crossed the Atlantic, he must have had access to Stewart and Revetts' Antiquities of Athens and other works on Greek Art, which appeared in Europe in the latter part of the 18th century and in America at the first of the 19th. From these he eagerly absorbed the pure Hellenic spirit, "filled himself with the feeling and sentiment of Greek Art," and soon became the pre-eminent leader of the Greek Revival in America.

Mills' first laurels were won before he was 21, when still a student under Hoban in Washington, a half share in a prize of three hundred dollars for the South Carolina College, the other half going to Mr. Edward Clark, who afterwards became the "undertaker," or contractor. This was for "Rutledge College," the first building erected; burned in 1855, and rebuilt probably on much the same lines. This building now possesses no special merit, except the admirable arrangement of students' suites into a study and two bed rooms which fixed the type for the institution. Credit for this feature, however, is given by the committee to Mr. Asa Messer of Rhode Island, one of the college presidents to whom the Governor had written for plans or descriptions of the institutions over which they presided. Strangely enough, the committee reversed the proper use of these suites by designating the small rooms as "studies" and the large ones as bed rooms. From the diary of Edward Hooker, 1808, quoted by Dr. Green, it appears that the original building had some architectural pretensions, on the interior at least, which is wholly lacking in the present structure. "That part of the work," he says, "which is done, is in a handsome, though not all in a durable style. The chapel occupies the two lower stories of the central building on the right, and is in a beautiful style of workmanship both
within and without. The library room above is supported by four stately Tuscan columns which rise from the area of the chapel with considerable majesty, and give the room an appearance of grandeur."

While Mills is credited by Planat, the London Dictionary and Mr. Schuyler with the entire college group, there is no record of his connection with any other structure on the campus, except the Maxcy monument which he designed, and Dr. Green's history accounts definitely for every building in the group. Even with Rutledge, Mills' connection was very slight, probably extending no farther than preliminary sketches.

It would be interesting to know who is responsible for the serious blunder made at this initial stage or at any rate not later than the erection of DeSaussure College in 1805, in placing the axis of the campus coincident with the north instead of the center line of College Street.

The library erected between 1837 and 1840, "respectable in style of architecture and as secure as possible from fire," was designed according to the record quoted by Dr. Green by "the professors" and "a certain Mr. Beck was the contractor." This is hard to believe in spite of the records, as the work does not appear to be that of amateurs, and as there were no architects on the faculty. Mr. Schuyler says of this building: "The only one of his college buildings that can be identified with the Greek Revival is the Library. The Hellenism, even of this is of the spirit rather than the letter, excepting the interior, an admirable composition of which the order is a literal version of the Tower of the Winds." There are just two points about this building which do not bear the stamp of Mills; its non-fire proof construction and the over decoration and somewhat crude divisions of the ceiling, in which the ornament is too profuse and not well connected. The first is easily accounted for by an inadequate appropriation, and the second by lack of supervision and want of skilled craftsmen.

The only building now standing in Columbia which is
unquestionably by Mills is the first of the group of the Hospital for the Insane, erected in 1822, and even in that he is referred to in The Courier as “one of the Architects.”

This building is described by the London Dictionary as “a very spacious and costly building entirely fire proof.” In discussing this structure, Dr. Babcock calls attention to the fact that Mills was attacking a comparatively new problem in this country, that there were no such institutions south of Virginia, and only five in the United States, all except one of which was less than five years old; that it is doubtful if there were available to him any works on the subject; that this was long before the reforms resulting in modern hospital practice; and that he was restricted for building and grounds to a single city square of 417 feet. Yet he designed, not a prison, but a hospital, with all rooms and wards with southern exposure, overlooking an ornamental garden or half enclosed court, and with a roof garden over the entire structure. “It is the latter,” says Dr. Babcock, “that invites special attention and shows that Mills appreciated the value and importance of fresh air as an adjunct in the treatment of the mentally ill.” I may add that he designed a building in which the helpless inmates might be safe from fire, which is more than can be said for the more extensive and pretentious buildings that have followed in later years.

Mills describes the prominent architectural feature as follows: “The entrance to the center building is under a grand portico of six massy Greek Doric columns, four feet in diameter, elevated on an open arcade, and rising the entire height of the wing buildings; the whole surmounted by a pediment.” He adds: “The cost of the whole is considerably within $100,000.00. Similar buildings, executed at the north and in England of equal accommodation, yet not made fireproof have exceeded this sum.”

Mr. Schuyler says of it: “Of the spirit altogether is the
Hellenism of the State Hospital for the Insane, the robustness and dignity imparted to the portico by that narrow intercolumination, which Sir William Chambers regarded as a defect, but later generations have agreed to accept as a merit in Classic Architecture.

The first Ainsley Hall mansion, later known as the Preston and again as the Hampton home, and now Chicora College for Women, has been attributed to Mills by some. While this is a well designed and well built house, with some Greek detail, it is rather Colonial in spirit and not like Mills' usual work. Scott, in his "Random Recollections," speaks of it as being built by Yates & Phillips, carpenters and contractors. This is by no means conclusive, as he also speaks of the Asylum being built by Jabez Warner and William Gray, and does not mention the architect. Yates however, was an architect of some pretentions, and Dr. Green speaks of his firm as contractors and "perhaps also the architects" of the first professors house at the South Carolina College.

The second Ainsley Hall mansion, now the center building of the Presbyterian Theological Seminary, has also been attributed to Mills, but while I have been able to find no records, the character and detail of this building are so distinctly Roman, that I am quite sure it is not Mills' work. There is a fine old drawing in the Seminary library, showing the present group, and certain proposed new buildings, and additions, signed J. Graves, Architect; and in the absence of other evidence, it is only fair to give him credit for this excellent piece of work.

The De Bruhl or Marshall house has some charming Greek detail, and is much more in Mills' style, but I have found no evidence to fix it definitely as his work.

Mills' comments on some of the buildings of Charleston indicate his own taste, and show his distinct preference for Greek lines. He describes St. Phillips and St. Michael's Churches as among the "ancient buildings;" the former exhibiting "more design in its arrangement" than any other, and of the latter he says: "The steeple
is one of the greatest ornaments of the city.” “The Ex­change (now the custom house and postoffice) is another venerable building which proves that the hand of science was engaged in its design. Though its style of Archi­tecture is not what we desire to see imitated, it is yet a fine building.” “The Court House (formerly the State House) is another of these substantial and well ar­ranged buildings which do credit to the art.” All of these buildings were Colonial, and it is clear that he had no enthusiasm for the style.

Of another much admired building, of distinctly Co­lonial or Palladian type, he says: “The old Bank of the United States, now the City Hall, is an expensive building, and in design adapted to any other purpose than that for which it was built. Its facade is showy, but like the City Hall in New York, exhibits a crude taste in architecture, only meritorious as a work of art unaided by science.” “But although this building is repugnant to good taste, and offensive to the critical eye, it is yet an ornament to the city, and will probably at some future day, be so im­proved as to be brought within the pale of good taste, of which it is in some degree capable.”

He then describes two of his own buildings. “To the northwest angle of the (City Hall) square, the building for the fireproof or State offices for the public records is erected. This edifice (now finishing) in its form is a complete contrast to the one just described. It is designed in the simple Greek Doric style, without any ornament, except that afforded by the porticos, which face each front.” “The Baptist Church exhibits the best specimen of correct taste in Architecture of the modern buildings in this city. It is purely Greek in its style, simply grand in its proportions and beautiful in its detail. The plan is of the temple form, divided into four parts; the portico, vestibule, nave and vestry rooms. . . . . This building is situated in Church below Tradd Street.”

“The next specimen of the Greek style,” he says, “is the facade of the Academy of Fine Arts. The appearance
MILLS' ORIGINAL DESIGN FOR THE WASHINGTON MONUMENT
of this edifice is upon the whole agreeable and exhibits the hand of the artist.”

He describes the First, Second and Third Presbyterian and the German Lutheran churches, all with the Roman orders, without enthusiasm, and then returns to another specimen of his own work. “The Circular, properly the Congregational Church, is a rotunda of near ninety feet diameter, surmounted with a dome, the first erected in America, crowned by a lanthorn light. From that part of the rotunda, which faces the west, a square projection runs out, supporting a tower; before this rises a portico of six columns surmounted by a pediment which forms the facade of the building. A double arcade is carried all around the circumscribing walls, the openings of which constitute the windows. The modern Doric style pervades the design of this building which is to be regretted, particularly in reference to its great portico; had the Greek proportions been adopted, (as was recommended by the architect), the effect of the whole building would have been much more interesting. It is, however, not yet too late to remedy this defect. ... ... A light gallery sweeps nearly a complete circle round the room, and presents the appearance of a great settee; the columns supporting it being of a character suited to convey an idea of this kind. ... ... In the original design of this building a steeple was contemplated, which has not yet been erected; the tower part is, however, built, and it is hoped that the period is not far distant, when not only this, but the steeples and spires projected by all the several churches will be erected, as these tend much to add to the beauty of our city.” A hope, which he lived to see realized within twenty years, at least as to this church and St. Phillips.

St. Paul’s Church in Archdale Street he describes as “a fine looking building with something like design about it; the style of its architecture, however, is mixed, which disturbs the critic eye of taste.”

A somewhat flippant staff writer in “Harper’s Magazine” for June, 1857, agrees with Mills as to the City Hall,
which he says, "Is in frivolous taste," but is equally severe on Mills and his work. He describes the fireproof record building as "a dull square mass of brick and stucco, which has but the single merit of looking solid and, perhaps, of being so. It was designed by Robert Mills, a native architect, who has distinguished himself more recently and most deplorably, according to our notion, by his design for the Washington Monument of the Federal City, the conception of which seems due to a very vivid recollection of one of the little three-cornered cocked hats of the Revolutionary period with a great rapier of the middle ages thrust upward through its crown."

His description of the Circular Church is scarcely more flattering. "This church belongs to the medieval period of the Palmetto City. ... ... Until recently it was without a spire. Its portico is heavy and of wretched proportions. ... ... The effect of the interior is good, in fact, very striking, particularly with a full house."

Other buildings in Charleston designed by Mills are "a four story wing to the public prison on Magazine Street. ... ... divided into solitary cells, one for each criminal, and the whole made fireproof; also nine fireproof and bombproof powder magazines with a total capacity of 12,000 kegs.

The Presbyterian Church, De Kalb Monument and Court House at Camden are his work. Of the latter he says: "An elegant Court House is now building here, which will be superior in its design to any in the State, both for convenience of accommodation, beauty and permanency. Its facade presents a grand portico of six Greek Doric columns, spreading the whole extent of the building, and so high that the main roof will cover it and constitute its pediment."

It was from South Carolina that Mills won the competition for the Bunker Hill Monument, the cornerstone of which was laid by Lafayette in 1825, and which Mills describes as "an obelisk of massy proportions 250 feet high." "A singular fatality," says Mr. Schuyler, "at-
tended his efforts to combine the Egyptian obelisk with some Greek or Graeco-Roman decoration around its base. Of the actual monument at Bunker Hill it is recorded that it differs from the design only by the omission of some decoration which he considered essential to the beauty of the structure.”

Mills’ first independent practice was in Philadelphia about 1810 with the possible exception of not more than a year or two in Charleston. Here he had charge of the restoration of Independence Hall and designed the two fireproof wings. This building is Palladian, and the style was, of course, carefully preserved, both in the main building and the additions. It was no small compliment to a man under thirty to have entrusted to his taste and judgment a building already held in National reverence.

The Bank of Philadelphia since demolished, was his only venture into Gothic, the first Gothic building in America, and real Gothic at that, with actual vaulting in masonry.

The Stoughton Circular Church on Sansom Street, seating 4,000 people, or twice as large at the Circular Church in Charleston, was reported to be “the best as to acoustics in all the Union.” Mills is also credited in Philadelphia by Planat with Washington Hall and “Salle de Reunion,” since burned, probably both referring to the same building.

Planat credits him with the design for the State prison in New Jersey, which he probably handled from Philadelphia. In the “Statistics” Mills says: “The plan of the penitentiary at New Orleans (a similar plan to which has been adopted by the Legislature of Pennsylvania) is the design of Mr. M. and possesses peculiar advantages.” The London Dictionary says of this plan: “The principles were adopted in other similar erections.” The Pennsylvania prison, which is of the radial type, with individual cells, is credited in a recent article in the “Architectural Forum” to John Haviland with no mention of Mills. It attracted wide attention, and undoub-
edly had its influence on the design of the Pentonville Prison in England, which in turn was copied throughout Europe, and which the Encyclopedia Brittanica regards as the beginning of modern prison architecture.

In 1812 Mills was commissioned to design the Monumental Church in Richmond, erected as a memorial to the seventy odd persons, including the Governor of Virginia, who lost their lives in a theatre fire on that spot. Mr. Schuyler describes the building as “manifestly an auditorium of the utmost rigor and austerity, but in its simplicity nothing of crudity. The specially monumental feature is the vestibule, in which stands the urn symbolically supposed to hold the ashes of the victims of which the porch is the protective canopy. This is of the same severity as the rest of the building, the only piece of developed decoration it shows being the antefixae which by their scale and their detail have a rather finical air, and so far tend to contradict the general character of the architecture. The capitals are but channellings of the shafts, and the architect has had the odd but not unhappy thought of introducing lachrymatories instead of triglyphs to punctuate the expanses of the frieze. While the building is unmistakably a church, it is as free from the conventions of a place of worship as Lathrobe’s Cathedral in Baltimore.”

Planat credits him with the Court House and “many private edifices” in Richmond, and Mrs. Gallagher writes me she has some interesting material on his work in that city, but the monument on the Capitol grounds is his most important achievement there. He was employed in 1849, in collaboration with Crawford, the sculptor, to design, what Mr. Schuyler calls “a commemoration of the greatest Virginian, with a subordinate celebration of six lesser Virginia worthys.” His architectural scheme, “the six-pointed star diverging from the central mass which carries the dominating figure was a notably ingenious and successful solution’ of this difficult problem. Nevertheless he failed to receive credit for this work until quite
recently. "He is ignored by every book of reference, and even by Crawford himself in his report." This would not be surprising had his work been confined as is usual to the design of a pedestal for a single figure. "But with so elaborate a work as this," quoting Mr. Schuyler again, "the case is very different. The architectural conception here is the basis and gist of the whole work. If either art be accessory, it is the sculpture. . . . It was by far the most important and elaborate purely monumental project thus far conceived and executed in the United States, and it happily fell into quite the right architectural hands. One would be at a loss to name another American practicing architect in 1849, who could have handled it so cleverly and so successfully."

Thirty-seven years before, that is in 1812, when practicing in Philadelphia, Mills won the competition, carrying a prize of $500.00, for the first monument erected to Washington, that in Baltimore, and soon after moved to that city to supervise its erection. This monument is a simple, but very graceful and chaste Greek Doric column of white marble 175 feet high, "the largest in the world," surmounted by a statue by Causici. It has given to Baltimore the well deserved name "Monumental City" and to Mt. Vernon square "an air of distinction and refinement very unusual in American towns."

Mills remained, according to Planat, many years in Baltimore but as a matter of fact only about seven, or until his return to South Carolina in 1820. While there he won a $500.00 prize in the competition for the Pennsylvania Capitol, but does not appear to have had any further connection with the building. He designed in Baltimore St. John's Episcopal Church, and also a Baptist Church, circular in plan, 80 feet in diameter, which is said to have been surmounted by a dome.

Mills says himself of the Circular Church in Charleston, that its dome was the first constructed in America. It appears, therefore, that the Charleston church was built before his return to South Carolina, in 1820, or
that the Baltimore church was roofed in some other manner.

Mills removed to Washington from South Carolina in 1830, but was not appointed architect of Public Buildings until 1836. His status from 1830 to 1836 is not clear, but it is certain that he was engaged in the design and execution of government buildings. The old Custom House, now the Sub-treasury in New York, completed in 1835, is credited to him by Mr. Schuyler and Mrs. Gallagher, though Mr. Kimball does not agree. This structure must have been three or four years in building and at least a year in planning, so that its beginning under the hand of the architect may well take us back to 1830. It is a Greek Doric temple fronting 80 feet on Wall and Pine Streets and running back 200 feet on Nassau. It has a portico on each end of eight marble columns 32 feet high and a flight of 18 steps on Wall Street, but due to the unfortunate slope of ground only three on Pine. On the interior there is a rotunda 60 feet in diameter, with a low dome, not showing above the roof, supported by 16 Corinthian columns. It is quite in keeping with Mills' usual style.

Other government buildings outside of Washington designed by Mills, probably at his period, are the Custom Houses at Middletown, Newburyport and New Bedford, "plain and cheap," says Mr. Schuyler, "but so solidly built that they are still fulfilling the uses for which they were erected."

Mr. Schuyler "on internal evidence would ascribe to him the Branch Mint at New Orleans," built in 1835, and states that he certainly built Marine Hospitals in Charleston and New Orleans. The latter building was used during the Civil War by the Confederate Government as a powder factory, and was destroyed by a tremendous explosion, which projected brick and stone clear across the Mississippi River. An old builder, who remembers the building, describes it as of unusually massive and substantial construction and fireproof. The very site of
this building has since been swept away by the encroach-
ing current of the river.

While Mills’ early work placed him in the front rank
of the architects of his day, and his Baltimore Monu-
ment was a work of genius, it was not until he was past
fifty that he developed his full talents, and earned his
preeminent position in American Architecture. The
Patent Office, the Treasury Building, the old Postoffice
and the Washington Monument are the four structures on
which his fame must finally rest.

The Patent Office, commenced in 1836 and completed
in 1840, was, as Mr. Schuyler points out, “the first strict
element of the Greek Revival in Washington.” Mr.
Schuyler commends its south portico particularly as a
faithful copy of the Parthenon, and says that “in scale
and material, it is comparable with the original.” While
the necessary detail is pure Greek Doric, it is reduced to
the utmost simplicity, and in the bare frieze and pediment
there is no suggestion of the rich sculpture of the Par-
thenon. Nor does the high basement story, with the
heavily buttressed and broken flight of steps suggest the
sublime repose of the Parthenon, raised on its simple
stylobate of three steps surrounding the entire build-
ing. The two wings and the entire north facade are of
granite, and of good workmanship though hardly com-
parable with the marble of the Parthenon but most un-
fortunately the central part of the southern facade, in-
cluding the portico, is of stucco.

In spite of its bareness and the cheapness and inferior-
ity of the material on its most important front, the build-
ing is unquestionably one of the most imposing and digni-
fied structures in Washington and in the nation. It is a
straightforward and practical design for a very practical
building, and meeting successfully very exacting condi-
tions. It expresses the true Greek spirit in its originality
and freedom from conventional forms, and not less the
American spirit of the times in its simplicity and robust
vigor.
“It gains a peculiar effectiveness,” says Schuyler, “from the felicity with which it has been placed, so as to stop the vista of a street, between the sides of which it is framed so that one always comes upon it with fresh pleasure.”

Mills was not so fortunate in placing the Treasury Building, 1836-41, but he definitely disclaims responsibility for its location, and it is said he even went so far as to make an eloquent plea before Congress for a proper setting and for the preservation of L’ Enfant’s plan with an unbroken view from the White House to the Capitol. President Jackson, however, finally settled the long controversy by thrusting his cane in the ground and ordering: “Build it here,” and there it was built, without surrounding grounds, with its north end buried in a hill side, and approached through a great sunken plaza and with its great bulk blocking Pennsylvania Avenue at an oblique angle.

The eastern facade on Fifteenth Street is adorned with a collonade of thirty-eight stately Ionic columns, “the Ionic of the Erectheum,” and the other three facades by porticos of similar columns.

This building is second only to the Capitol itself in architectural importance, and yields to it only in size and dominating position. Indeed, it is regarded by some critics as the best specimen of architecture which America has yet produced. Certainly its magnificent colonnades have not been approached by any other American building.

It is unfortunate that the sand stone used for the columns was so soft that in sixty years of exposure to the weather they were worn away and badly disintegrated. They have recently been replaced with granite, but the architect has followed the original so faithfully that one scarcely notes the change.

The old Postoffice Department, now used by the Department of the Interior, commenced in 1839, is in the Italian Renaissance, a distinct departure from all Mills’ previous work, and a style which he did not use again. While
this building has doubtless gained in elegance by the greater elaboration of detail, notably the decorative framing of the openings, it has lost in dignity and proportion by the greater height and emphasis of the basement and the consequent reduction in the scale of the other of the two principal stories and of the entablature. "But this is managed," Mr. Schuyler well says, "with especial delicacy and sensibility, insomuch that there is, perhaps, not another of the public buildings in Washington which can be compared with it in the article of elegance." "At any rate," he says, "the Postoffice is one of the municipal possessions of the district, one of the National possessions of the country."

In 1833, the Washington National Monument Society was formed, and funds raised by popular subscriptions for the erection of a suitable memorial to our first president. Mills' design was adopted providing for an obelisk 600 feet high surrounded by a Pantheon of Greek Doric columns 100 feet high and 250 feet in diameter, and over the portico a statue of Washington in a chariot with six horses driven by Victory.

Funds were slow in collecting and the cornerstone was not laid until 1848. In 1850 a further appeal was made, and engravings of the design were widely circulated and "earnestly recommended to the favour of our countrymen" by the President, Vice President, all living ex-presidents and ex-vice presidents and by Henry Clay and Daniel Webster. Popular subscriptions failing, the work was suspended in 1855, when the shaft had reached a height of 152 feet, and was not resumed until 1878, when Congress appropriated the money, $1,300,000.00, for its completion.

The monument has been reduced in height from the contemplated 600 feet to 555 feet 5 1-8 inches, but is still the tallest masonry structure in the world, exceeding the spires of Cologne, the dome of St. Peters and the pyramids of Cheops by from 31 to 37 feet. As at Bunker Hill, it has suffered thus far the omission of the parts
which the designer regarded as “essential to the beauty and utility of the structure.” “That basic Pantheon, a hundred feet high and two hundred and fifty in diameter is much more,” says Mr. Schuyler, “than a detail. The pyenostyliar grove of Doric columns, thickened and shortened to the extreme of classic precedent promises a unique impressiveness.” Mr. Schuyler describes the monument as it stands as “a crystalline shaft, impressive and telling at a distance but with little to reward closer inspection,” and Mr. Ruckstuhl as an “astonishingly bold obelisk,” entitling its designer to be ranked as a genius of the first order, shedding lustre on his native State of South Carolina. Mr. Chas. B. Reynolds speaks of it as “an imposing shaft of white marble, seen towering against the sky long before one reaches Washington; and in the city its tremendous height confronts one at every turn and has place in a thousand vistas. Seen at different times of the day it has a new character for each new hour; its appearance changes with the varying lights and with alternations of clear sky and cloud.”

The duties of Mills’ office included the completion and care of the Capitol, in which work he succeeded Bulfinch. He remodelled the heating, ventilating and lighting systems, and successfully corrected the acoustic defects of the Hall of Representatives, now Statuary Hall, at the same time enlarging the seating capacity. Of this alteration he says: “The change this room has undergone in its original arrangements has resulted in giving greater accommodations to the House, and more comforts to the members. . . . But in addition to these improvements a more important object has been accomplished, namely rendering the hall a better speaking and hearing room, in which it was before seriously deficient.”

In 1850 at the instance of the Senate Committee on Public Buildings, of which Jefferson Davis was a member, Mills submitted a design for the north and south wings of the capitol, and the central dome. This design was reported favorably by the committee and its adop-
tion recommended, but Congress ordered a competition. Later Mills was directed to prepare the working plans, "utilizing the four sets of competitive drawings which had been submitted for what he might find them to be worth," but he was now past seventy, and soon relinquished the task to one of the competitors, Thos. U. Walters, of Baltimore.

Mills' original design is interesting mainly for the dome, designed for masonry construction, and representing what he regarded as the correct proportions for the extended building. He has been amply justified by subsequent opinion as "the erection of a much larger and loftier dome of cast iron stimulated an agitation, still in progress, for the extension of the Capitol east and west."

Mr. Schuyler says of Mills' work for the government: "His service to the public architecture of the United States is very great, probably greater than that of any other architect. He was at any rate the most important and influential of the Greek Revivalists."

His work throughout his career was characterized by a striking boldness of conception. He urged upon the attention of the people schemes of State and National development far beyond the vision of the times, and supported them with accurate engineering and economic analyses. He did not hesitate in his youth to undertake the greatest framed arch in the world nor in his old age the loftiest structure. His methods were as sound as his conceptions were bold, and stability was manifest in every building.

Planat says his buildings were "toujours concu a l' preuve de feu," not quite an accurate statement, perhaps, but they were fireproof when the means at his disposal would permit, and always highly fire resistant. It is hardly too much to claim that he was one of the American pioneers in fireproof construction.

His taste in design was for extreme simplicity, and he relied for his effects almost entirely upon proportion, for which he had a finely developed sense and upon deep
shadows, rather than upon detail or developed ornament.

For nearly a century his school, the Greek Revival, has been subjected to a severe and more or less just criticism which may be summarized in the following paragraph by Van Brunt.

"A fever arose to reproduce Greek temples; and to such an extent was this unintelligent revival carried out that at one time it bid fair to supplant the older Renaissance. The spirit of the new Renaissance, however, was one of mere imitation, and had not the elements of life and power to insure its ultimate success. It was a revival of formulas and not of principles. Nobody thought of applying the refining influences of the Greek lines to any structural forms save those used by the Greeks in their temples and stoas. The Roman arch, which had become indispensable was not purified by the Greek spirit of truth. No attempt was made to acclimate the exotic to the new conditions it was thus suddenly called upon to fulfill; for the sentiment which actuated it, and the love by which it was created, were not understood. It was the mere setting up of old forms in new places; and the Grecian porticos and pediments and columns which were multiplied everywhere from the models supplied by Stewart and Revett. . . . Still stare upon us with strange, alien looks. . . . The spirit of formalism, engendered by the old Renaissance took hold of the revived Greek lines and stiffened them into acquiescence with a base mathematical system, which effectually deprived them of that life and reproductive power which belongs only to a state of artistic freedom. They were reduced to rule and deadened in the very process of their revival. The "Carpenters Guides" in the opening of the 19th century explained to the builders the details of this system, and everywhere throughout our country the public buildings and private mansions of that period reproduced the forms of the Greek orders with unimaginative reiteration."
However applicable this criticism may be to most of the work of this school, Mills' work rises clearly above it. He repeatedly used the circle, the octagon and other forms in plan, and the arch, the dome and the obelisk in elevation and construction, and nearly always with Greek detail. He acknowledged no formula, and did not stiffen his Greek lines into any "base mathematical system," but varied them as occasion or his fancy dictated. There is as great a difference, for instance, in the profiles and proportions of his Doric of the Baptist Church in Charleston and that of his Pantheon of the Washington Monument as between the Acropolis of Selinous and of the temple of Ceres at Eleusis.

Paraphrasing another passage of Van Brunt: He knew the secret of the Greek ideal and the virtues hidden in simplicity, and truth, and he loved his art with the wisdom and chastity of the old Hellenic passion. To him Greek lines were not a system but a sentiment which wisely directed might enter into the heart of any condition of society and leaven all its architecture with a purifying and pervading power without destroying its independence.