

REPORT OF THE PARK COMMISSION.

---

MEMBERS OF THE COMMISSION.

DANIEL H. BURNHAM, *Chairman.*  
CHARLES F. McKIM.  
AUGUSTUS SAINT GAUDENS.  
FREDERICK LAW OLMSTED, JR.

Washington Common.

Lincoln Memorial.

Executive group of buildings,



Legislative group of buildings.

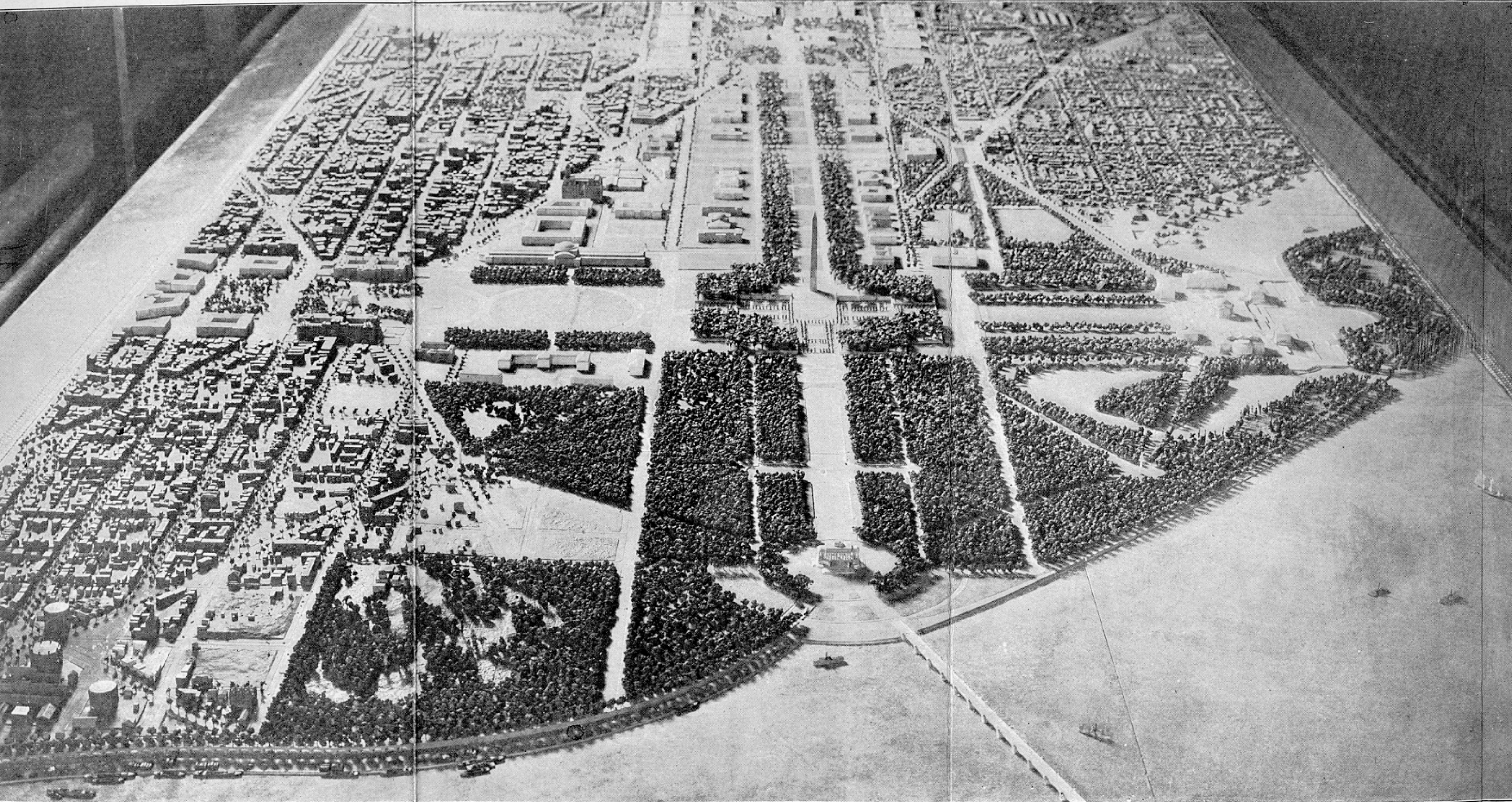
Union Station.

NO. 35.—MODEL OF THE MALL, SHOWING TREATMENT PROPOSED. LOOKING WEST.

Executive group of buildings.

Legislative group of buildings.

Washington Common.



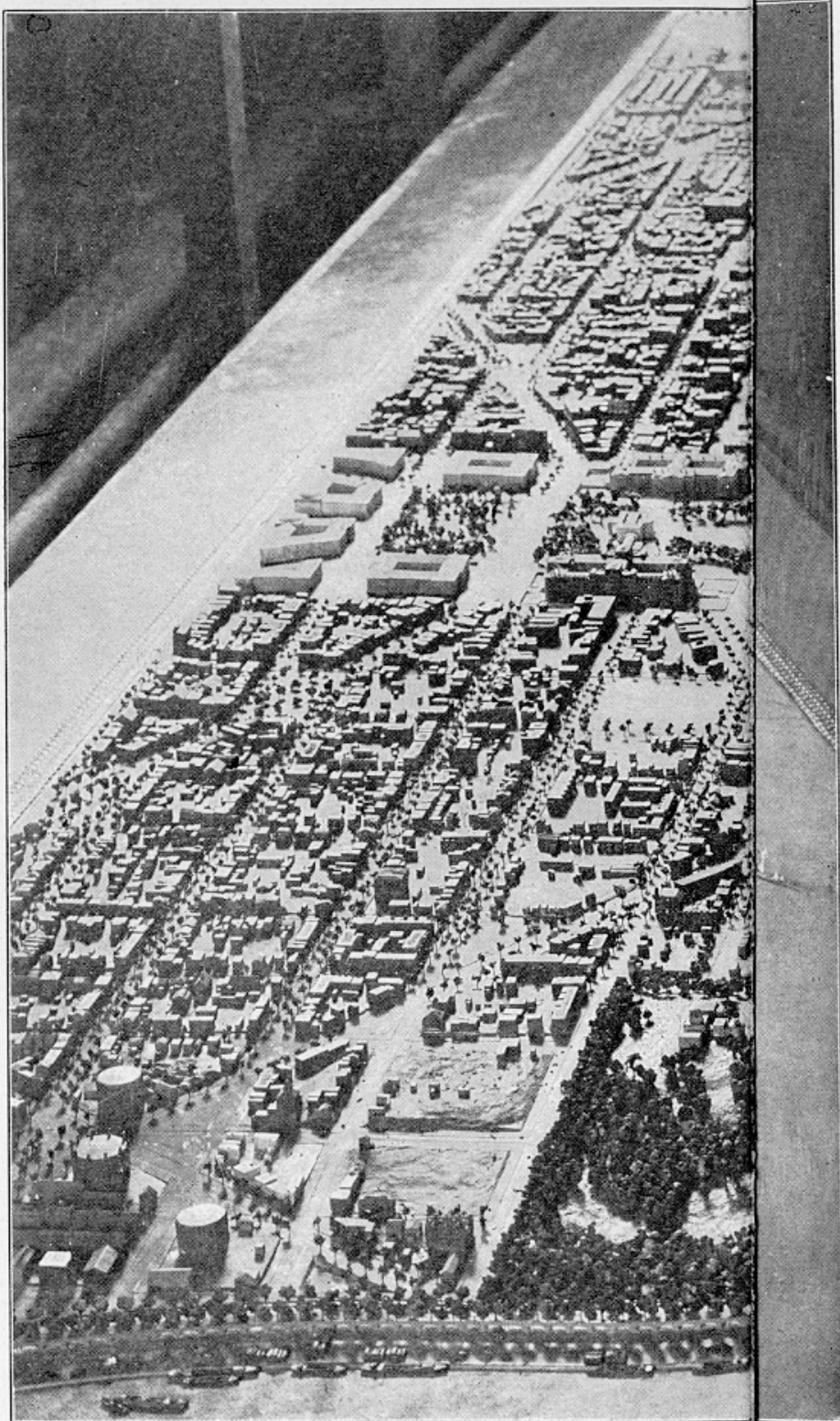
Potomac Park.

Lincoln Memorial.

Memorial Bridge.

NO. 35.—MODEL OF THE MALL, SHOWING TREATMENT PROPOSED. LOOKING EAST.

Executive group of B



## REPORT OF THE PARK COMMISSION TO THE SENATE COMMITTEE ON THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA.

SIR: The Commission appointed by the Senate Committee on the District of Columbia to prepare a plan for the development and the improvement of the entire park system of the District of Columbia respectfully report:

### I.

The city of Washington differs from all other American cities in the fact that in its original plan parks were laid out as settings for public buildings. Even its broad avenues were arranged so as to enhance the effect of the great edifices of the nation; and the squares at the intersection of the wide thoroughfares were set apart as sites for memorials to be erected by the various States. Parks, in the modern sense of large public recreation grounds, there were none; but small areas designed to beautify the connections between the various departments of Government were numerous.

During the nineteenth century, however, the development of urban life and the expansion of cities has brought into prominence the need, not recognized a hundred years ago, for large parks to preserve artificially in our cities passages of rural or sylvan scenery and for spaces adapted to various special forms of recreation. Moreover, during the century that has elapsed since the foundation of the city the great space known as the Mall, which was intended to form a unified connection between the Capitol and the White House, and to furnish sites for a certain class of public buildings, has been diverted from its original purpose and cut into fragments, each portion receiving a separate and individual informal treatment, thus invading what was a single composition. Again,

Changes in the Mall.

many reservations have passed from public into private ownership, with the result that public buildings have lost their appropriate surroundings, and new structures have been built without that landscape setting which the founders of the city relied on to give them beauty and dignity.

Happily, however, little has been lost that can not be regained at reasonable cost. Fortunately, also, during the years that have passed the Capitol has been enlarged and ennobled, and the Washington Monument, wonderful alike as an engineering feat and a work of art, <sup>Improvements ac-</sup> has been constructed on a site that may be brought <sup>complished.</sup> into relations with the Capitol and the White House. Doubly fortunate, moreover, is the fact that the vast and successful work of the engineers in redeeming the Potomac banks from unhealthy conditions gives opportunity for enlarging the scope of the earlier plans in a manner corresponding to the growth of the country. At the same time the development of Potomac Park both provides for a connection between the parks on the west and those on the east, and also it may readily furnish sites for those memorials which history has shown to be worthy a place in vital relation to the great buildings and monuments erected under the personal supervision of the founders of the Republic.

Now that the demand for new public buildings and memorials has reached an acute stage, there has been hesitation and embarrassment in locating them because of the uncertainty in securing appropriate sites. The Commission were thus brought face to face with the problem of devising such a plan as shall tend to restore that unity of design which was the fundamental conception of those who first laid out the city as a national capital, and of formulating definite principles for the placing of those future structures which, in order to become effective, demand both a landscape setting and a visible orderly relation one to another for their mutual support and enhancement.

To the unique problem of devising a way of return to the original plan of the city of Washington, was added the task of suggesting lines

<sup>The original plan of</sup> for the development of those large parks which have <sup>Washington.</sup> been obtained in recent years either by purchase or by reclamation; of advising the acquisition of such additional spaces as are deemed necessary to create a modern park system; and of selecting for purchase and improvement suitable connections between the various park areas.

## II.

If Washington were not a nation's capital, in which the location of public buildings is of the first importance, and if the city itself were not by its very plan tied to a historic past, the problem would be less complicated. The very fact that Washington and Jefferson, L'Enfant

<sup>Washington as a</sup> and Ellicott, and their immediate successors, drew <sup>capital city.</sup> inspiration from the world's greatest works of land-

scape architecture and of civic adornment made it imperative to go back to the sources of their knowledge and taste in order to restore

unity and harmony to their creations and to guide future development along appropriate lines.

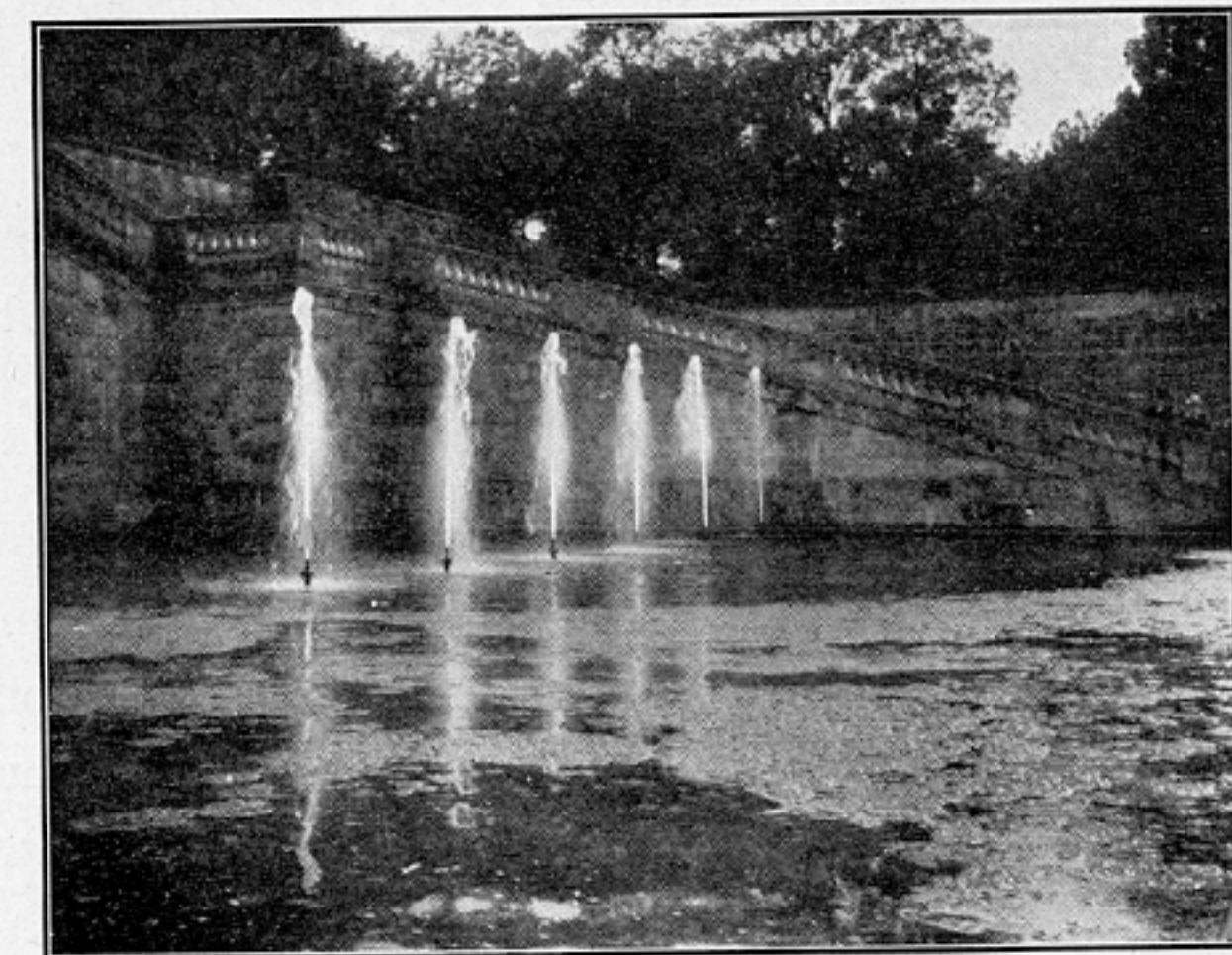
Indeed the more the Commission studied the first plans of the Federal City, the more they became con-

vinced that the greatest service they could perform

would be done by

carrying to a legitimate conclusion the comprehensive, intelligent, and yet simple and straightforward scheme devised by L'Enfant under the direction of Washington and Jefferson.<sup>1</sup>

L'Enfant's plan<sup>2</sup> shows that he was familiar with the work of Lenôtre,



No. 148.—Water jets of the great terrace, Vaux-le-Vicomte, work of Lenôtre.

<sup>1</sup>Through the courtesy of the Hon. Lyman J. Gage, former Secretary of the Treasury, the Commission were enabled to visit those historic towns and estates on the Potomac and James rivers and on Chesapeake Bay among which Washington passed his life, and which exemplify the principles of plan and design for which the seventeenth century was famous. Meager and slight as these examples of formal landscape treatment seem when compared with their European prototypes, they nevertheless possess a simple dignity and stateliness, and they evince an acquaintance on the part of their designers with the fundamental principles of art.

<sup>2</sup>The L'Enfant's plan was in charge of the Commissioners of the District of Columbia from 1791 to 1802; of the Superintendent of Public Buildings from 1802 to 1815; of the Commissioner of Public Buildings from 1815 to 1850, and since 1850 to the present time, of the Commissioner of Public Buildings and Grounds. The map is largely illegible, but has been reproduced by the Coast and Geodetic Survey.

whose examples of landscape architecture, not only in France but also in Italy and England, are still the admiration of the world. We know, also, that L'Enfant had the advantage of those maps of foreign cities, "drawn on a large and accurate scale," which Jefferson gathered during his public service abroad, and we learn from Jefferson's letters how he adjured L'Enfant not to depart from classical models, but to follow those examples which the world had agreed to admire. In order to restudy these same models and to take note of the great civic works of Europe, the Commission spent five weeks of the summer of 1901 in foreign travel, visiting London, Paris, Rome, Venice, Vienna, Budapest, Frankfort, and Berlin. Among the many problems with which the Commission is called upon to deal there is not one which has not been dealt with in some one of the cities mentioned, and by way either of example or of warning the lessons of the past have been brought to bear upon the present work.

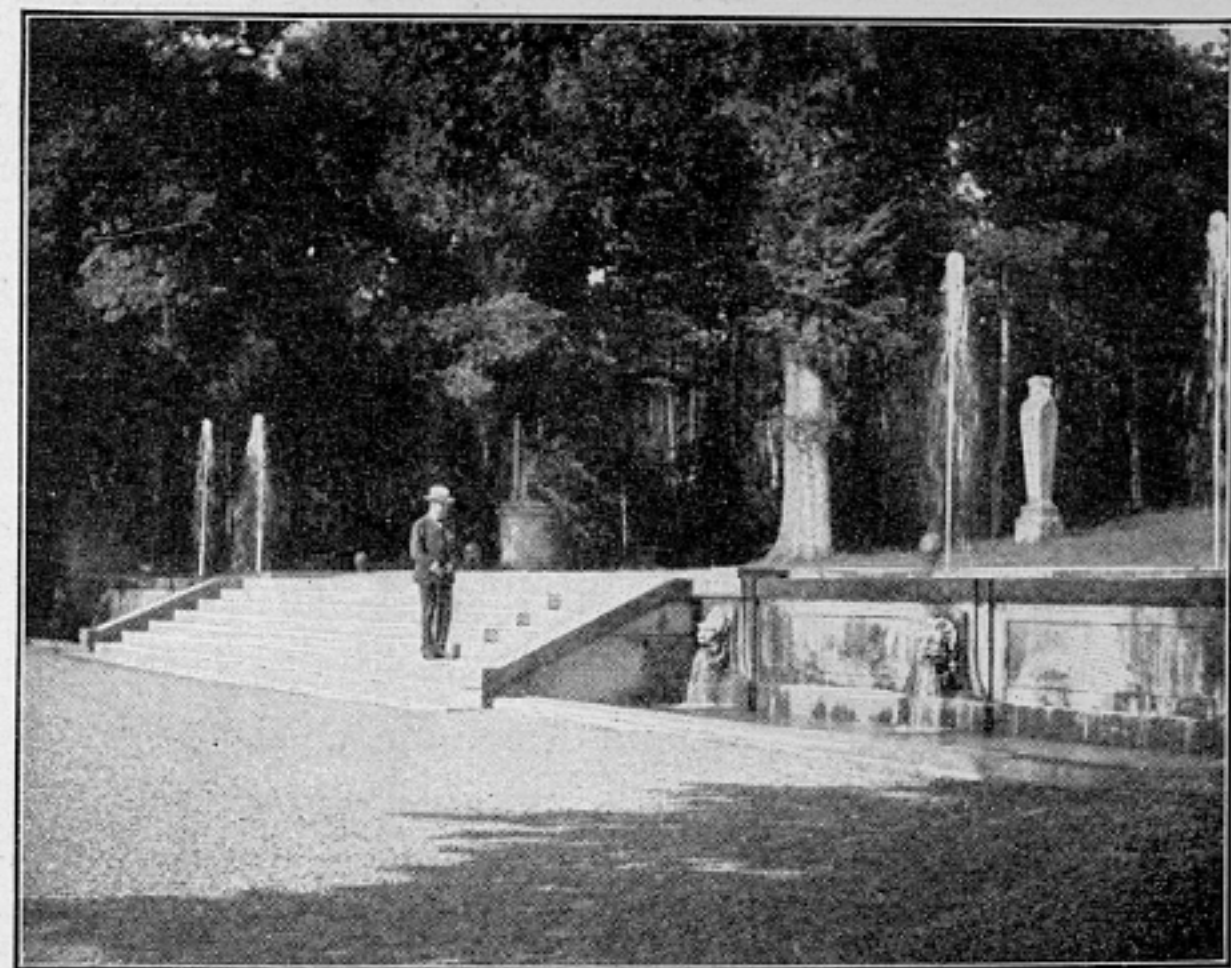
### III.

On beginning work the Commission were confronted by the fact that while from the first of October till about the middle of May the climatic

*Climatic conditions in Washington.*

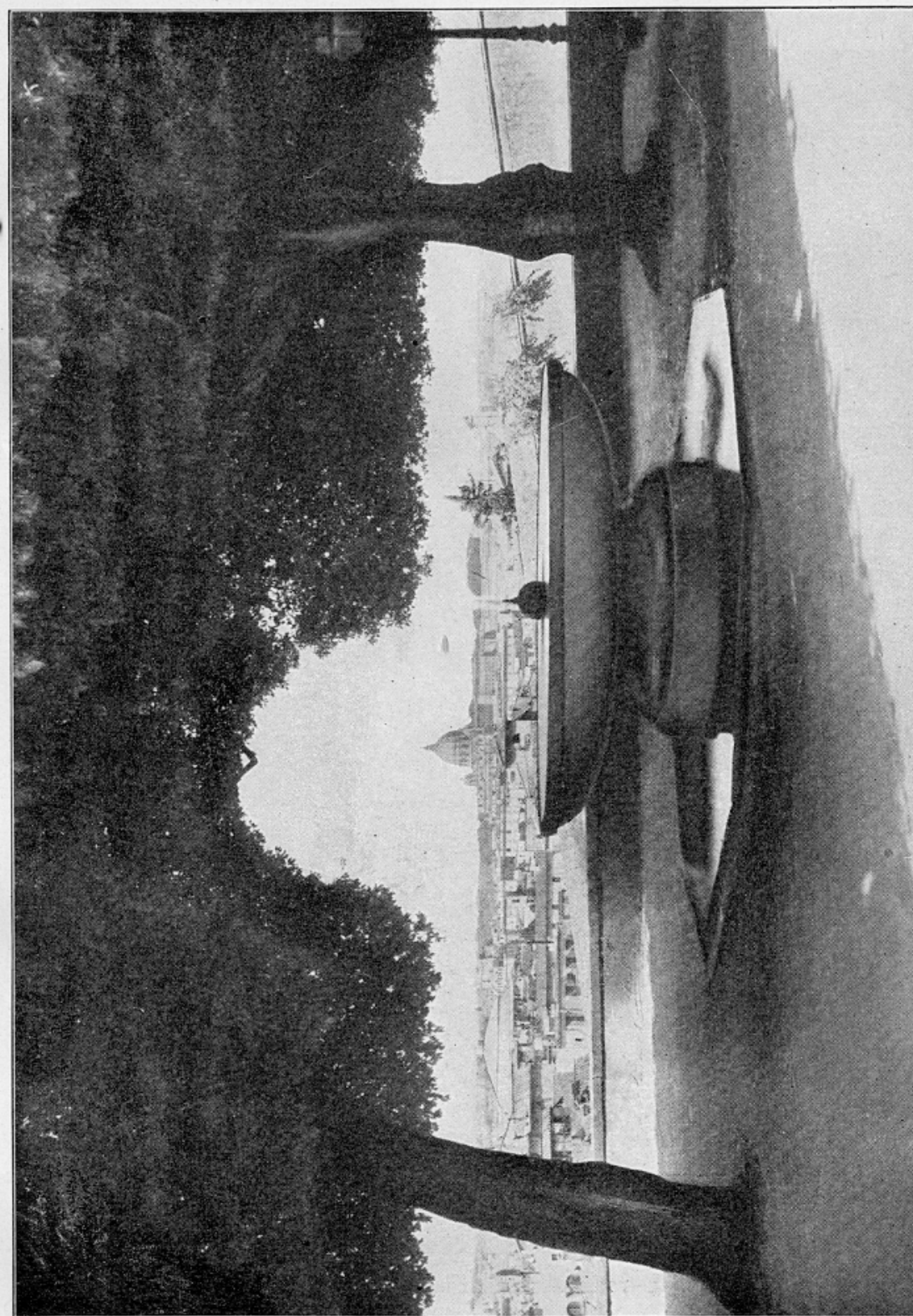
conditions of Washington are most salubrious, during the remaining four and a half months the city is subject to extended periods of intense heat, during which all

public business is conducted at an undue expenditure of physical force. Every second year Congress is in session usually until about the middle of July; and not infrequently it happens that, by reason of prolonged or special sessions, during the hottest portion of the sum-



No. 147.—Petite cascades, Vaux-le-Vicomte, work of Lenôtre.

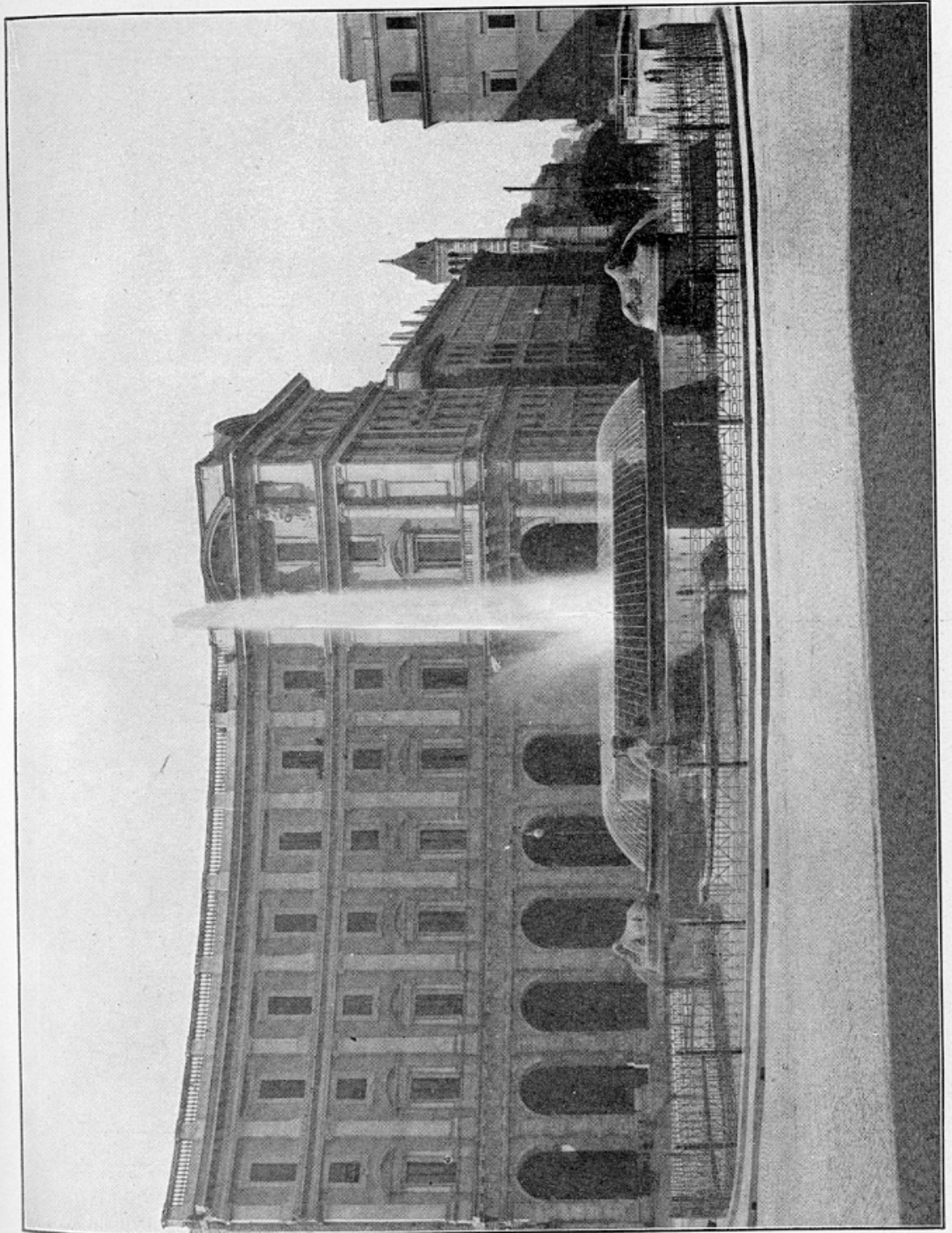
mer the city is filled with the persons whose business makes necessary a more or less prolonged stay in Washington. Of course nothing can be done to change weather conditions, but very much can be



NO. 175.—FOUNTAIN IN FRONT OF VILLA MEDICI, ROME, SUGGESTING THE PUBLIC VALUE OF HILLTOPS WISELY TREATED.



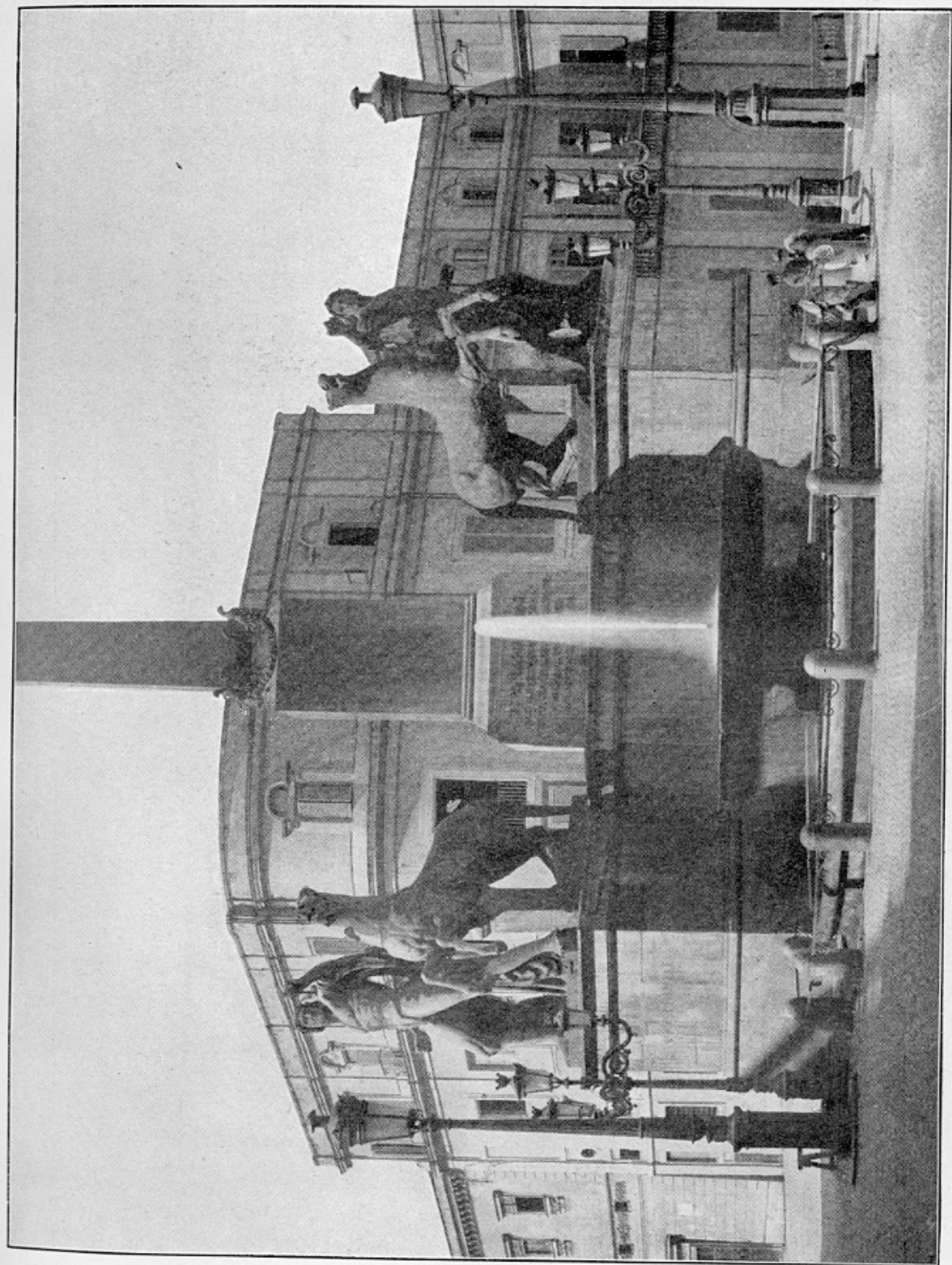
NO. 84.—FOUNTAIN, BARBARINI PALACE, ROME.



NO. 173.—FOUNTAIN, PIAZZA DI TERMINI, ROME.

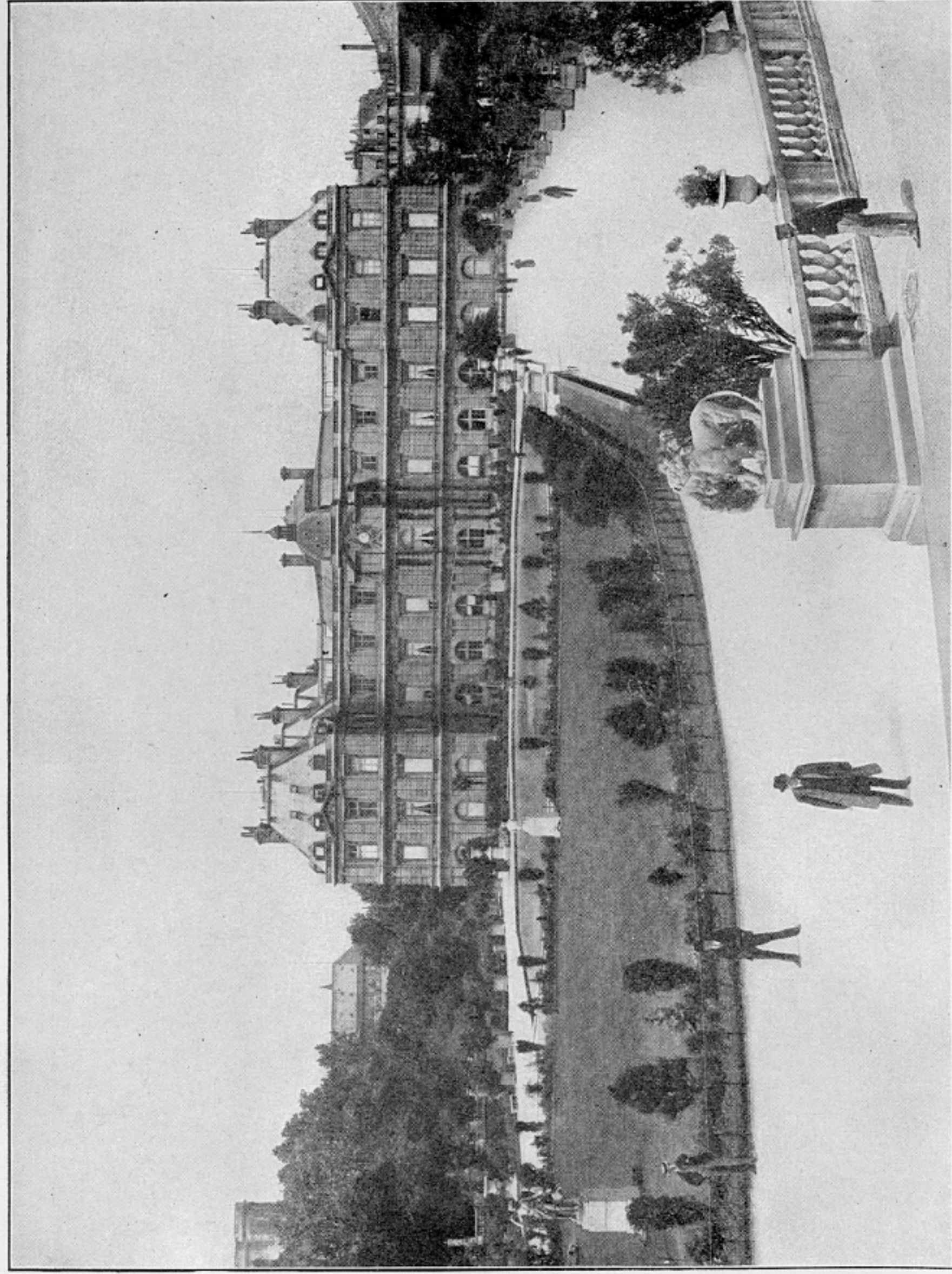


NO. 63.—FOUNTAIN, FARNESE PALACE, ROME.

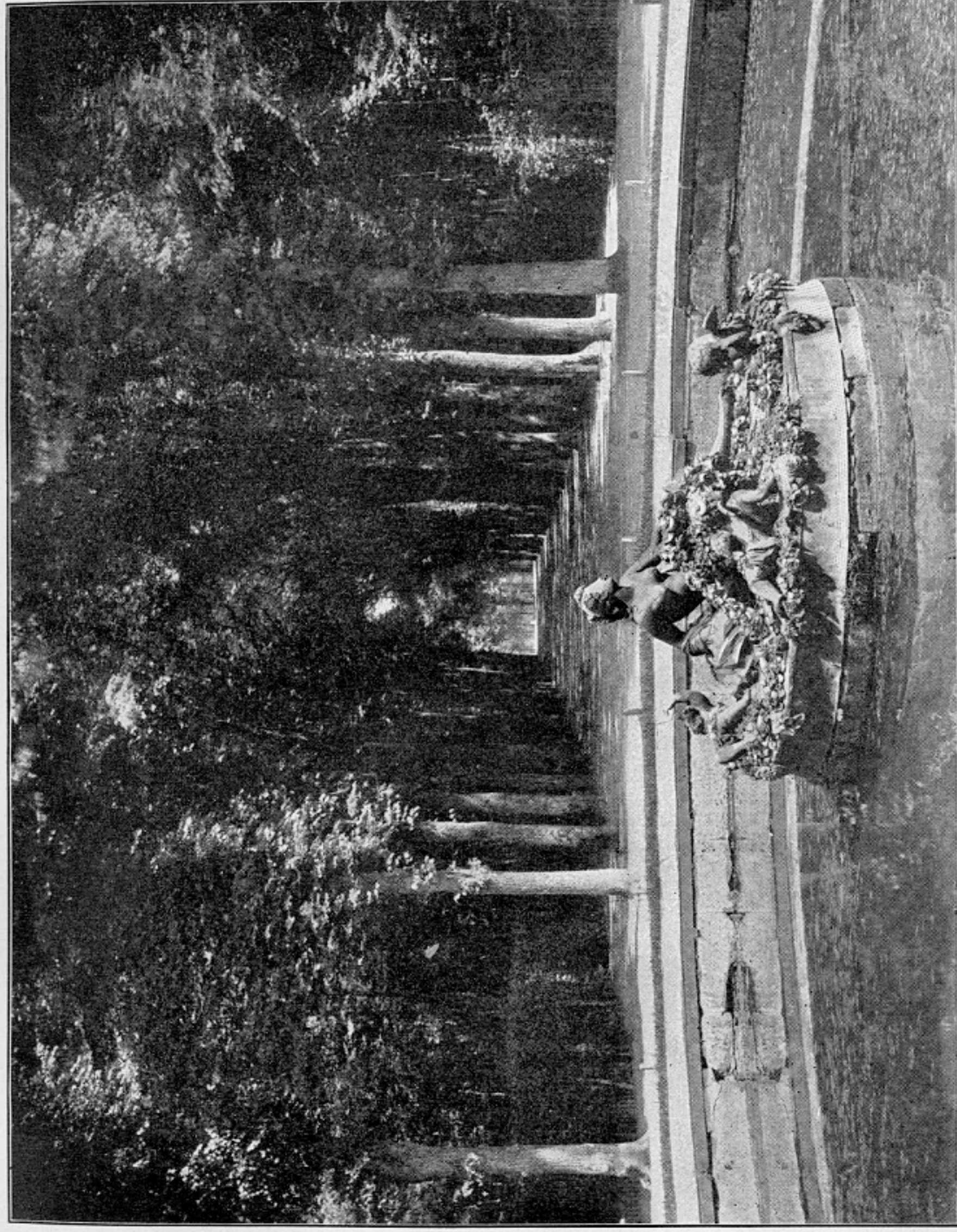


NO. 86.—FOUNTAIN, PIAZZA DEL QUIRINALE, ROME.

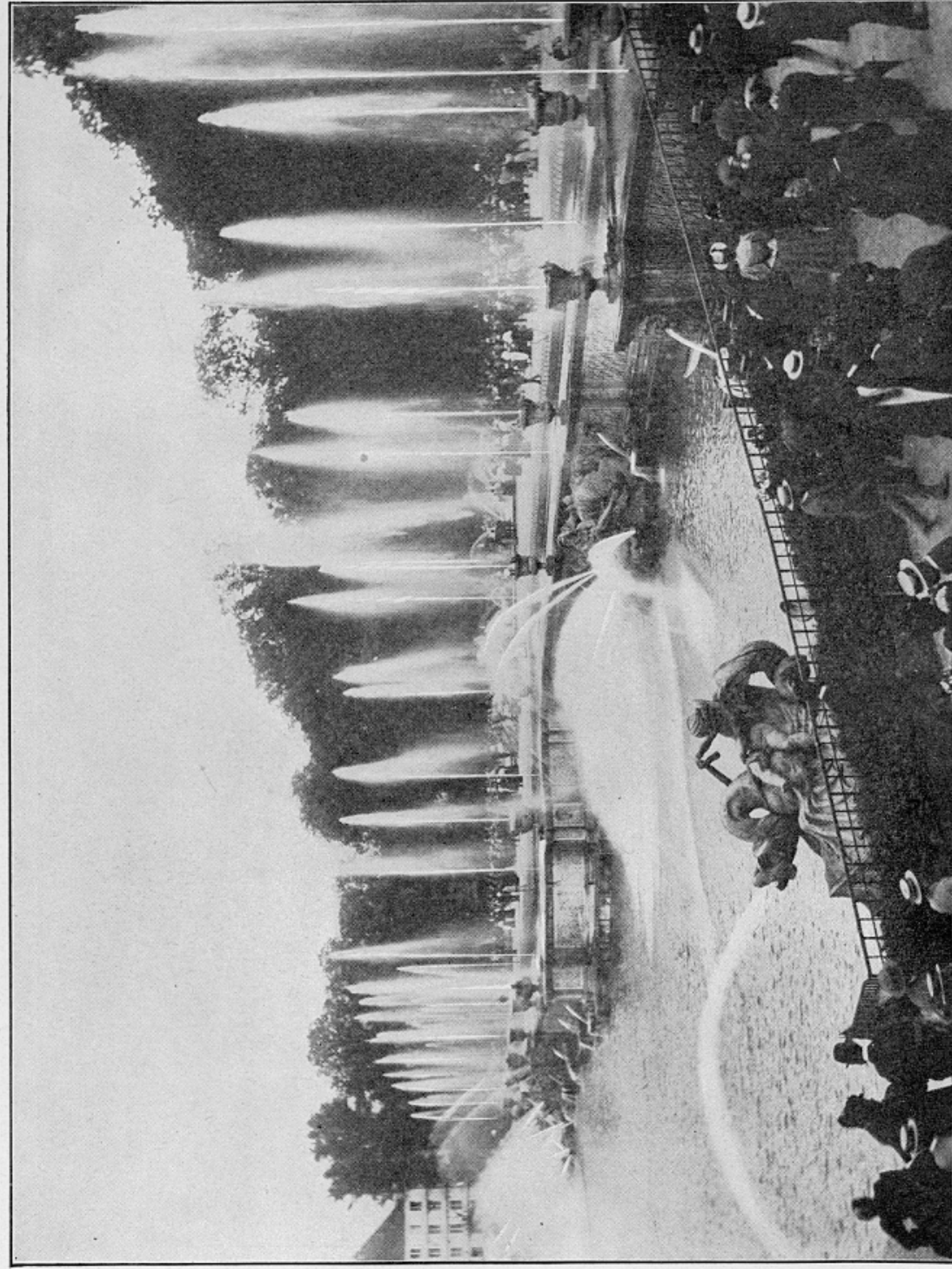




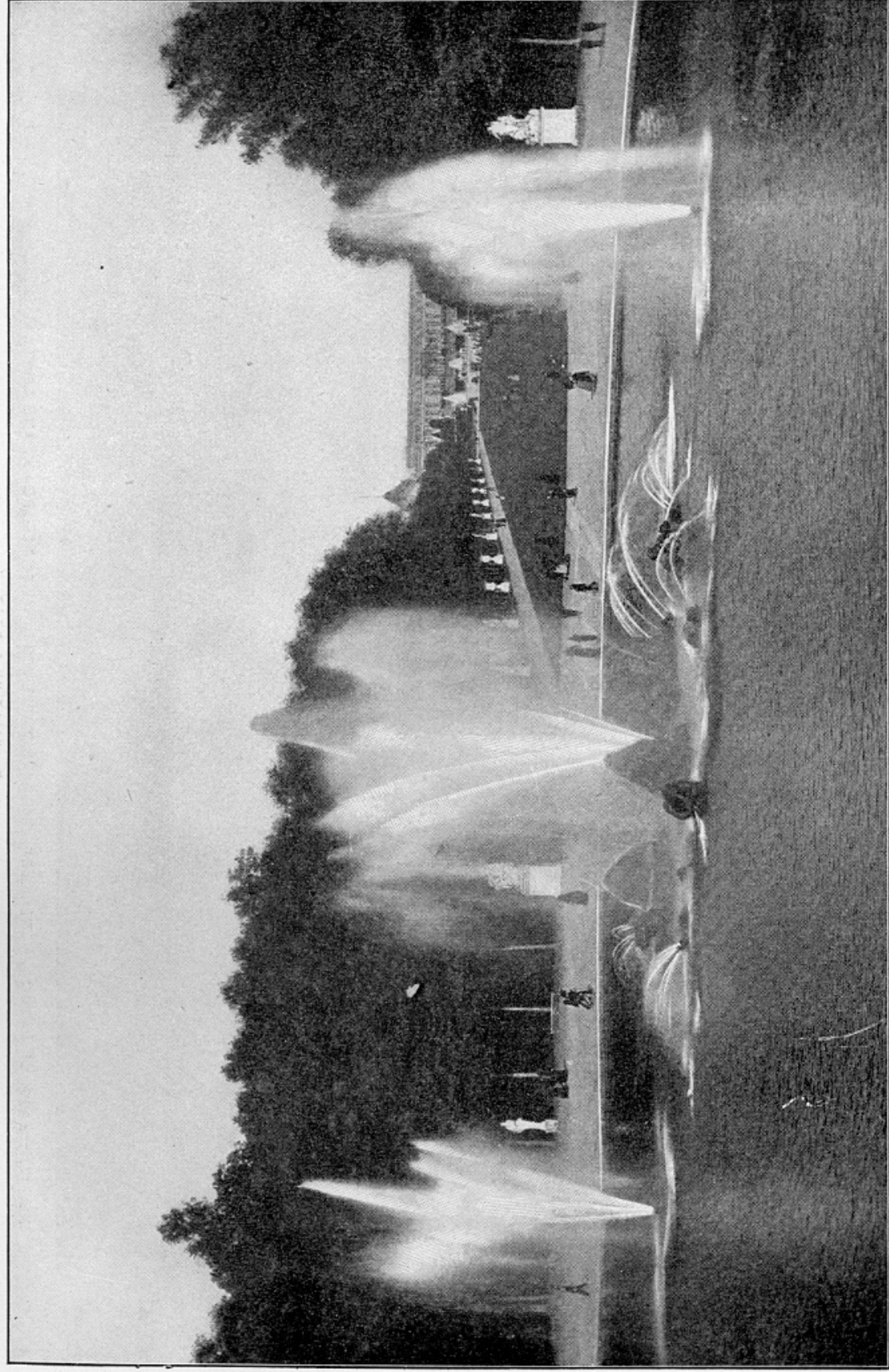
NO. 105.—PALACE AND GARDEN OF THE LUXEMBOURG, PARIS. A PUBLIC GARDEN ENRICHED BUT NOT CONFUSED.



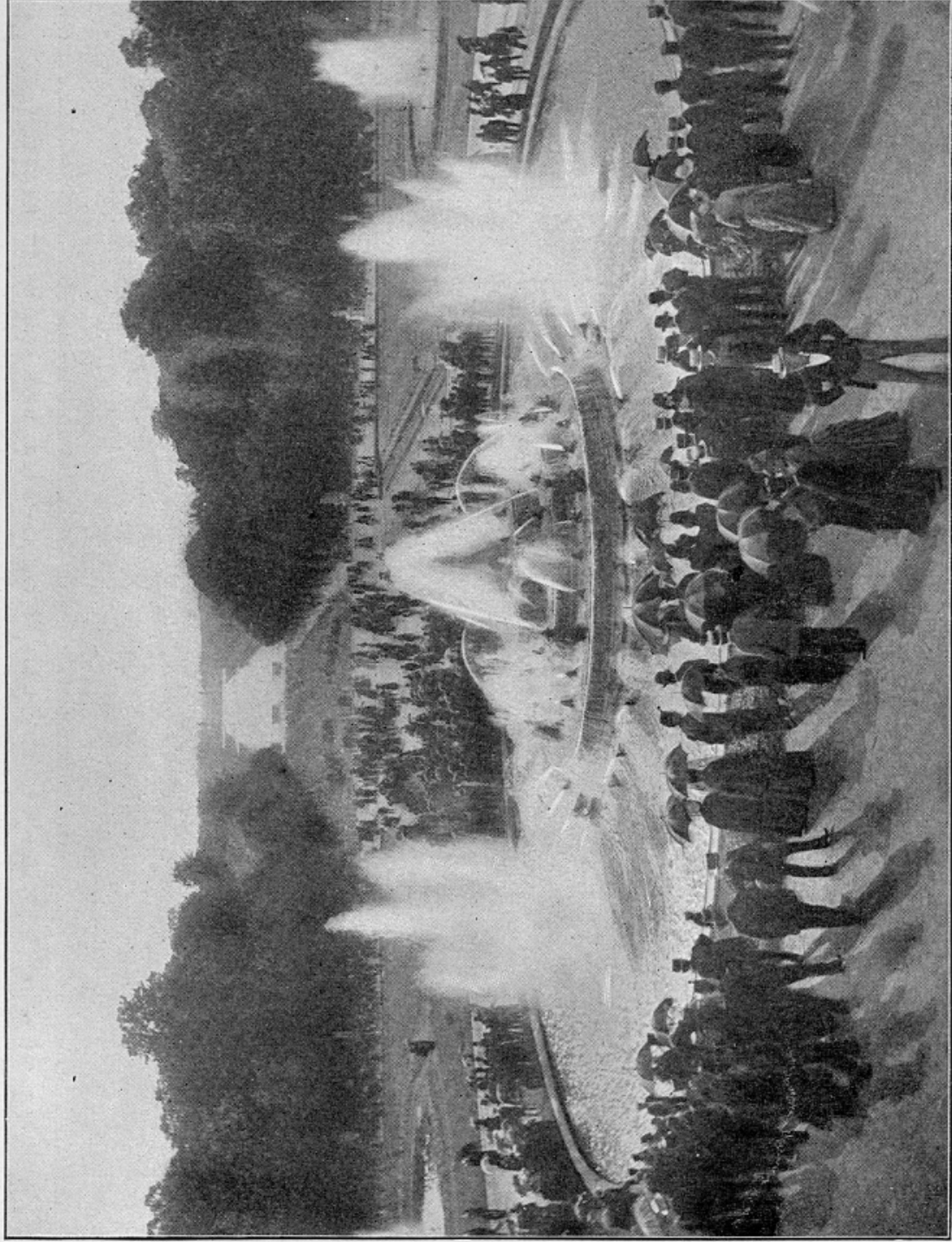
NO. 78.—VERSAILLES—AVENUE IN THE PARK, SUGGESTING THE SHADED WALKS OF THE PROPOSED MONUMENT GROVE.



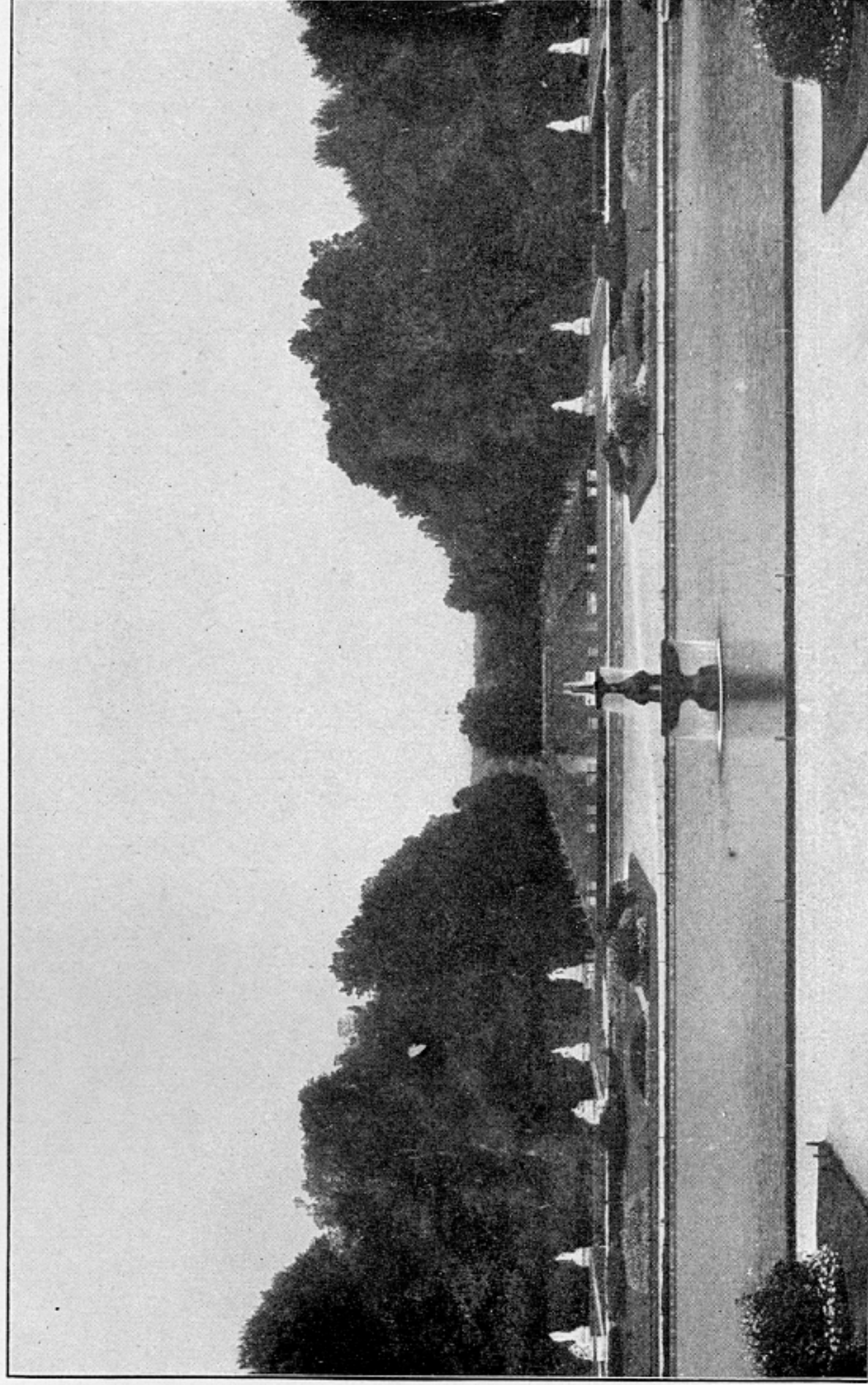
NO. 79.—BASIN OF NEPTUNE, VERSAILLES.



NO. 101.—BASIN OF APOLLO, VERSAILLES, SHOWING THE TAPIS VERT WITH ROAD ON EITHER SIDE.



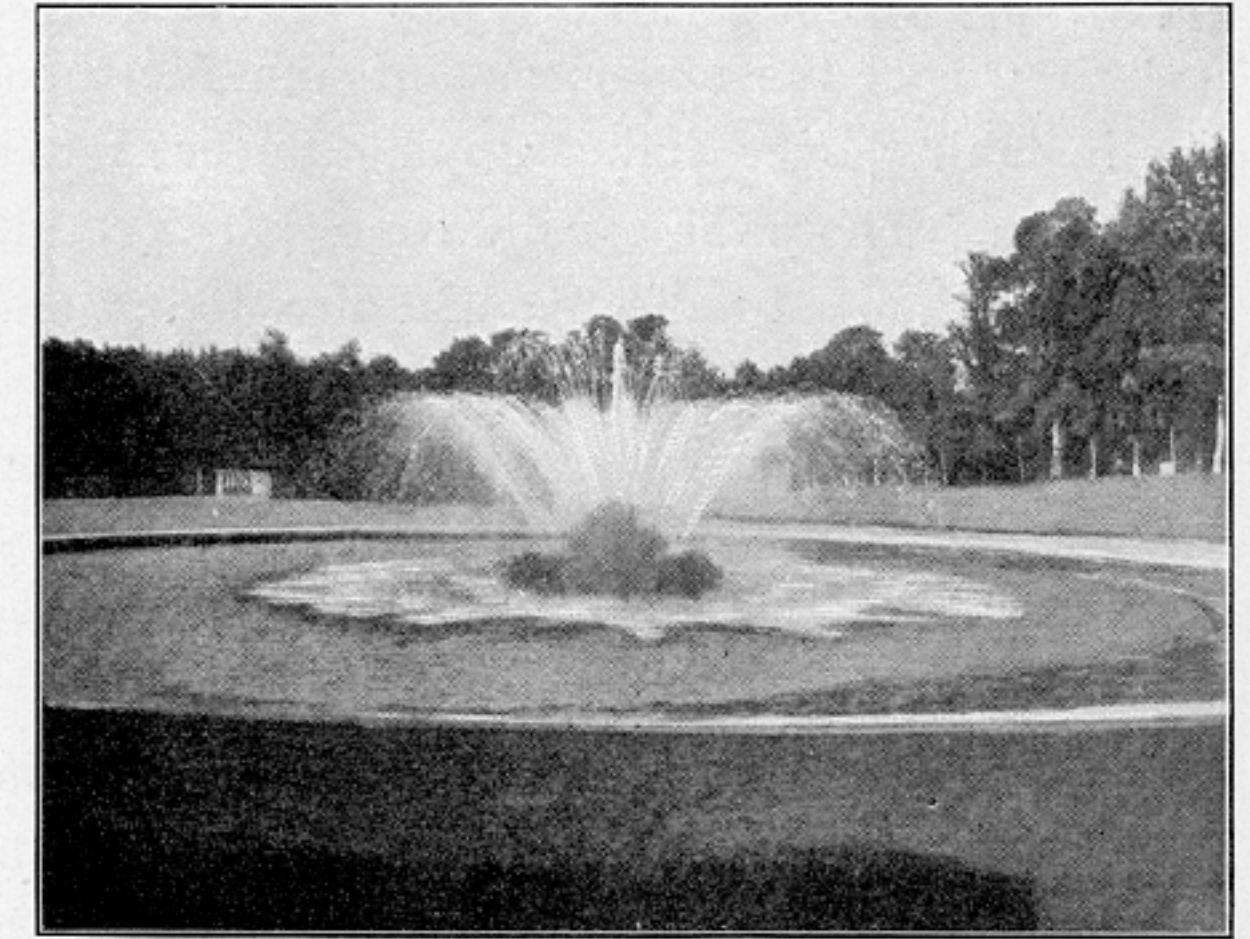
NO. 177.—BASIN OF LATONA, VERSAILLES, SHOWING TAPIS VERT, WITH SIDE ROADS AND CENTRAL GREENSWARD, AND GREAT CANAL BEYOND.



NO. 100.—BASIN AND GREAT CANAL, FONTAINEBLEAU, SUGGESTIVE OF THE TREATMENT OF THE CANALS WEST OF THE MONUMENT.

accomplished to mitigate the physical strain caused by summer heat. Singularly enough, up to the present time the abundant facilities which nature affords for healthful and pleasant recreation during heated terms have been neglected, and in this respect Washington is far behind other cities whose climatic conditions demand much less, and whose opportunities also are less favorable.

In Rome throughout the centuries it has been the pride of emperor and of pope to build fountains to promote health and give pleasure. Mile after mile of aqueduct has been constructed to gather the water even from remote hills, and bring great living streams into every quarter of the city; so that from the moment of entering the Eternal City until the time of departure the visitor is scarcely out of sight of beautiful jets of water, now flung upward in great columns to



Fountain, Vaux-le-Vicomte.

add life and dignity even to St. Peter's, or again gushing in the form of cascades from some great work of architect or sculptor, or still again dripping refreshingly over the brim of a beautiful basin that was old when the Christian era began. The Forum is in ruins, basilicas and baths have been transformed into churches, palaces have been turned into museums; but the fountains of Rome are eternal.

If all the fountains of Washington, instead of being left lifeless and inert as they are during a greater portion of the time, should be set playing at their full capacity, they would not use the amount of water that bursts from the world-famous fountain of Trevi or splashes on the stones of the piazza of St. Peter's. At the Château de Vaux-le-Vicomte, near Paris, the great landscape architect Lenôtre built cascades, canals, and fountains using one-twelfth of the daily water-supply of the District of Columbia. The fountains at Versailles are one of the most attractive spectacles enjoyed by the people of France.

The necessity of fountains.

The original plans of Washington show the high appreciation L'Enfant had for all forms of water decoration; and when the heats of a Washington summer are taken into consideration, further argument is unnecessary to prove that the first and greatest step in the matter of beautifying the District of Columbia is such an increase in the water supply as will make possible the copious and even lavish use of water in fountains.<sup>1</sup>

## IV.

Scarcely secondary in importance to fountains are public baths. An instructive lesson in this respect may be found in the experience of the Metropolitan Park Commission in taking over and equipping Revere Beach, immediately north of Boston. There the squalid conditions prevailing in former years have been changed radically; and a well-kept and well-policed beach, sufficient in extent to accommodate over 100,000 persons, is publicly maintained; no fewer than 1,700 separate rooms are provided for bathers, and bathing suits are furnished at a small expense. The receipts pay for maintenance and yield a surplus of several thousand dollars for repairs and extensions.

In Washington the use of the present bathing beach shows how welcome would be the construction of modern buildings with ample facilities. Moreover, the opportunities offered by an extended river front should be utilized in furnishing opportunities for free public baths, especially for the people living in that section of the city between the Mall and the Potomac.

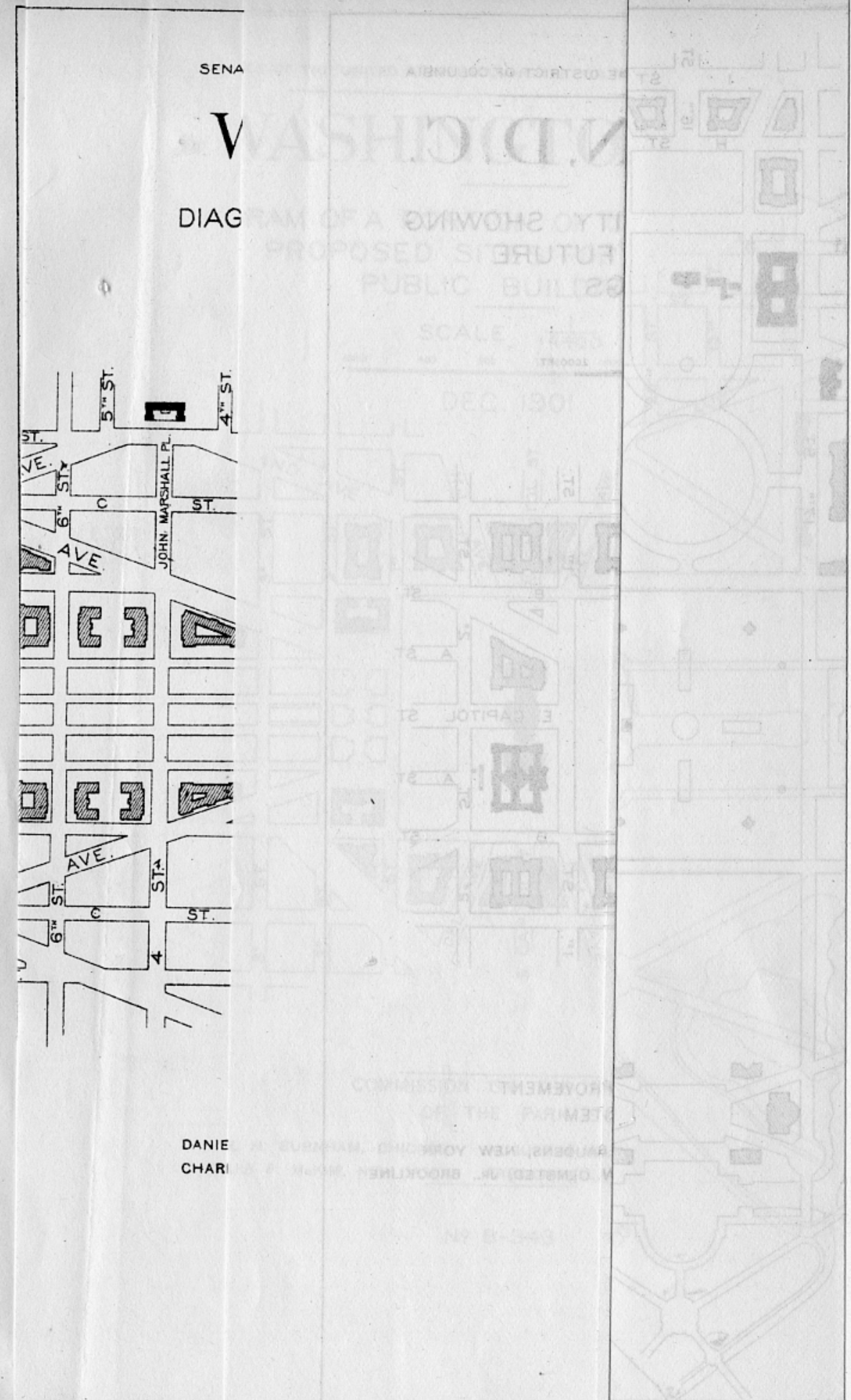
## V.

The location of public buildings has received the very careful consideration of the Commission. In general terms their conclusions are:

First. That only public buildings should face the grounds of the Capitol.

Second. That new Department buildings may well be located so as to face Lafayette square.

<sup>1</sup>The present daily consumption of water in the District of Columbia is about 62,000,000 gallons; the reservoirs now have a capacity of 75,000,000 gallons; and the filtration plant will have a capacity equal to that of the reservoirs. The Chief of Engineers estimates that even if the work of increasing the supply is begun immediately, the task can not be completed before the demand will exceed the available supply.



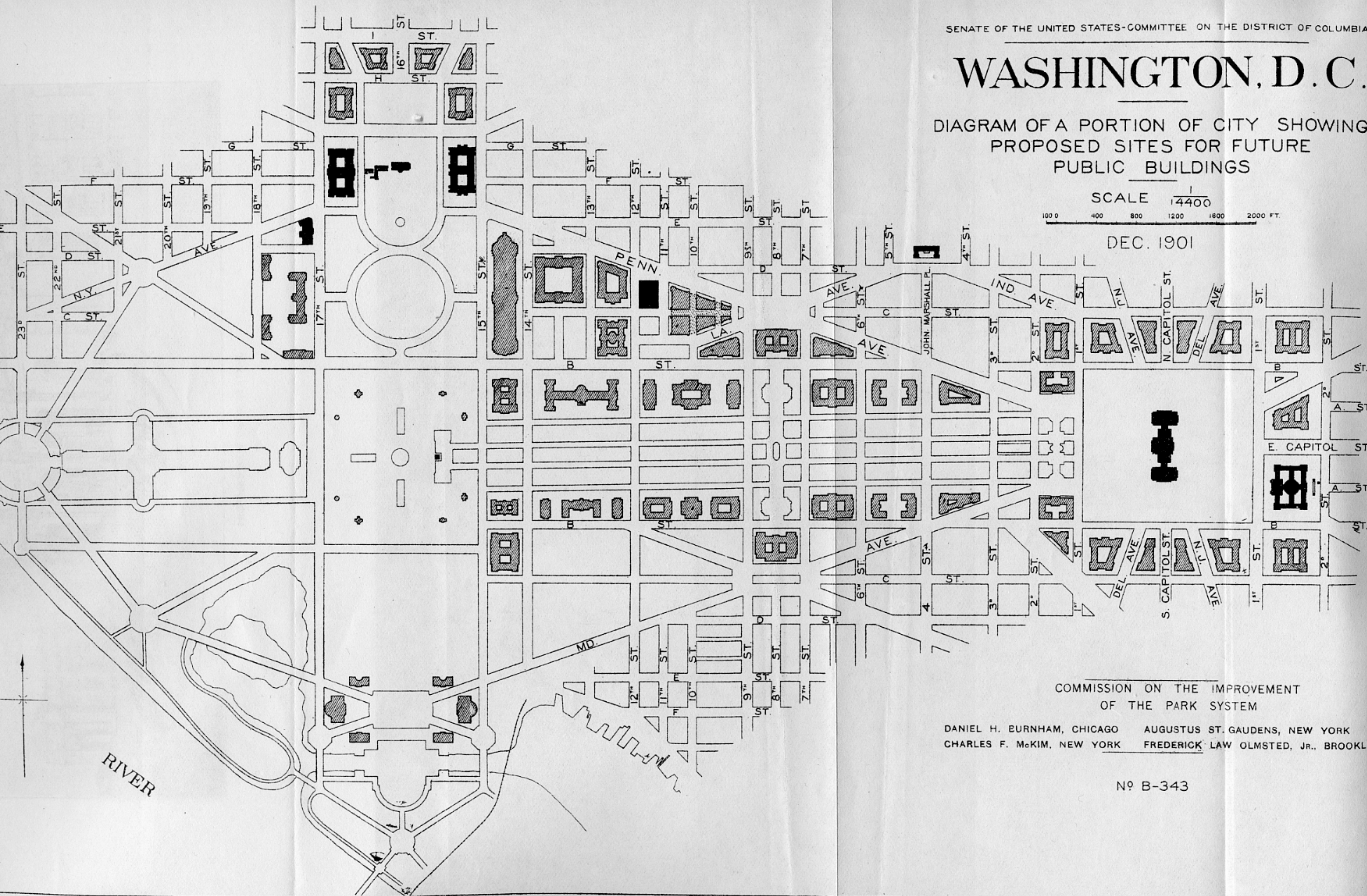
# WASHINGTON, D. C.

## DIAGRAM OF A PORTION OF CITY SHOWING PROPOSED SITES FOR FUTURE PUBLIC BUILDINGS

SCALE  $\frac{1}{14400}$

100 0 400 800 1200 1600 2000 FT.

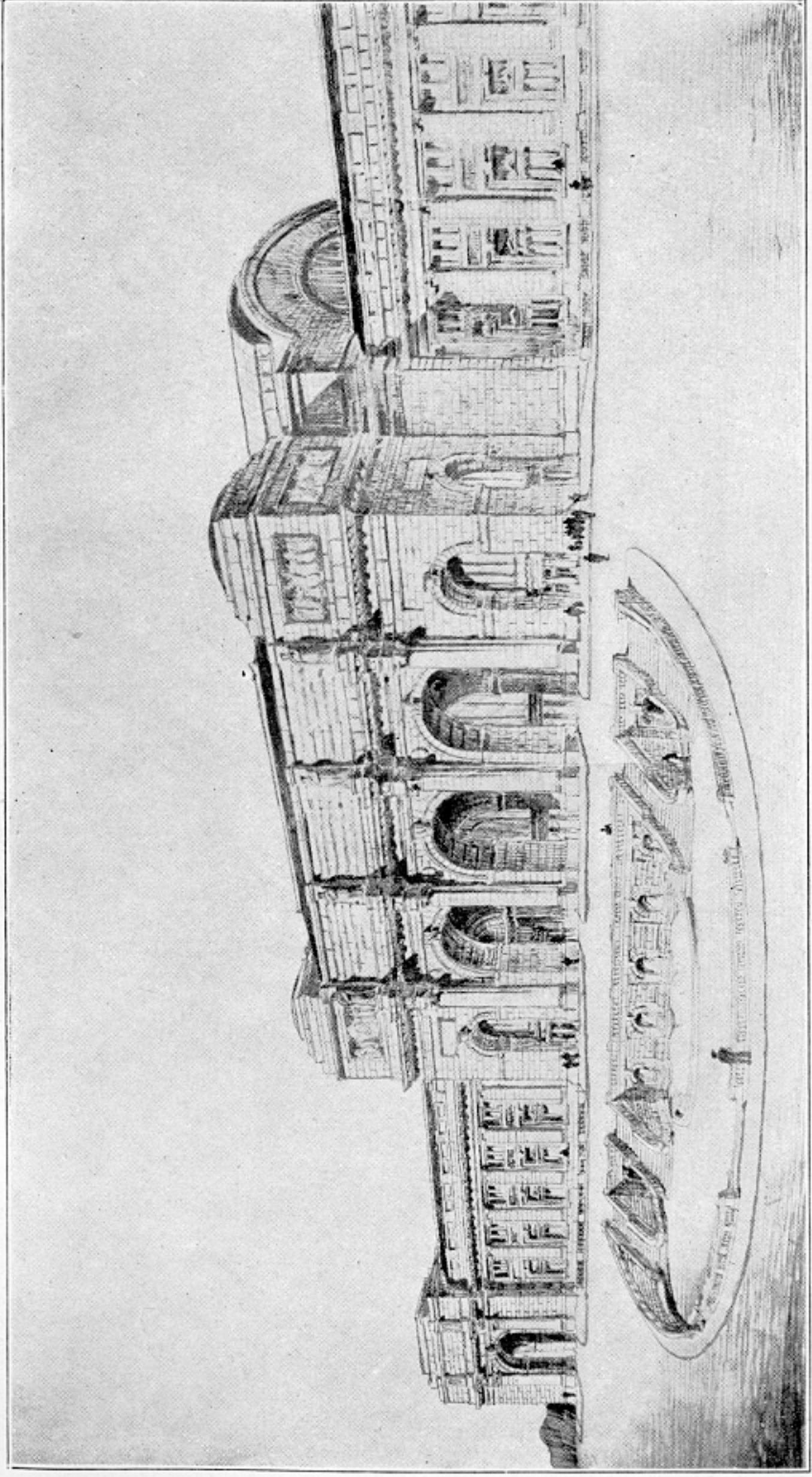
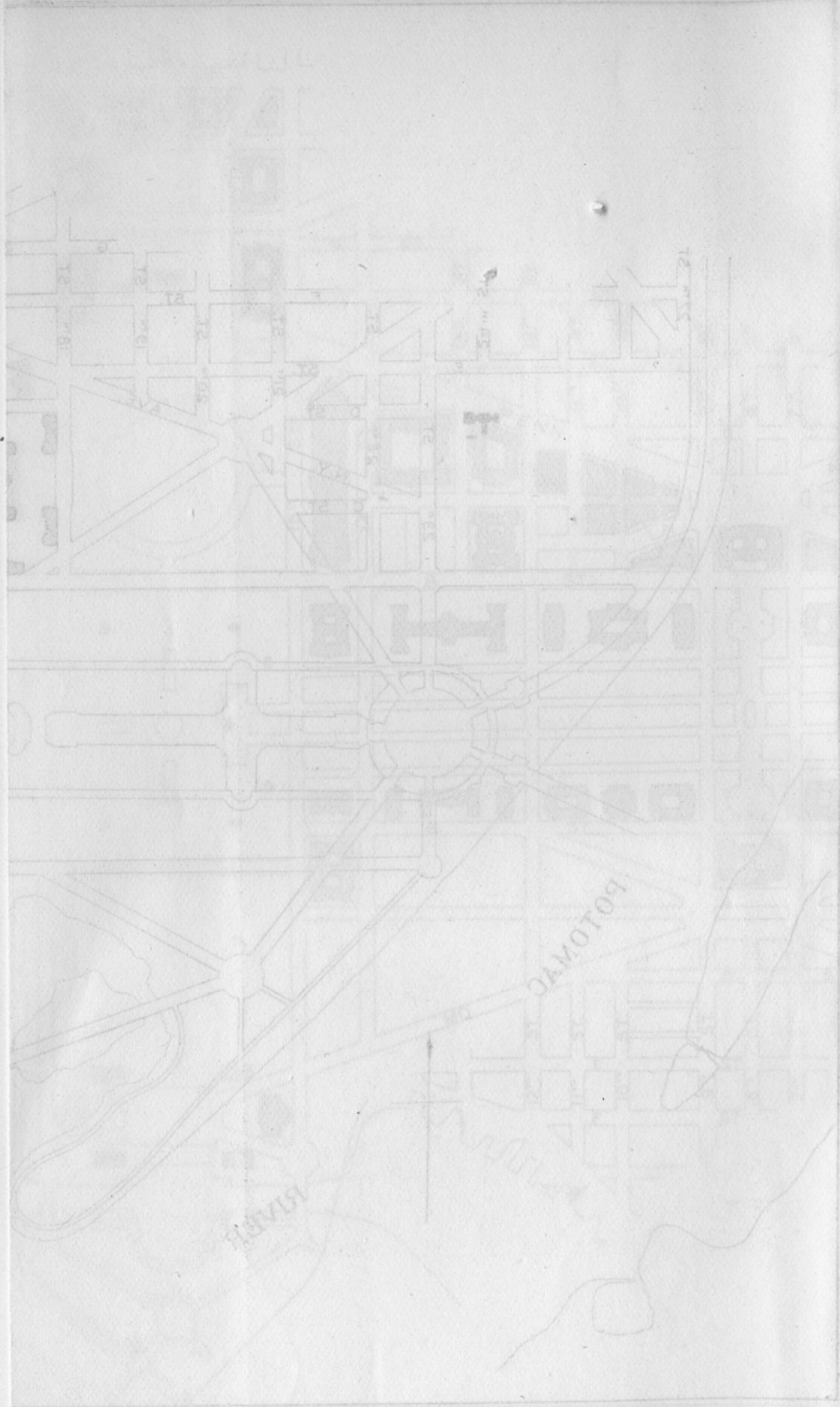
DEC. 1901



COMMISSION ON THE IMPROVEMENT OF THE PARK SYSTEM

DANIEL H. BURNHAM, CHICAGO    AUGUSTUS ST. GAUDENS, NEW YORK  
CHARLES F. MCKIM, NEW YORK    FREDERICK LAW OLMSTED, JR., BROOKLYN

No B-343



PROPOSED NEW UNION STATION.

Third. Buildings of a semi-public character may be located south of the present Corcoran Art Gallery, fronting on the White Lot and extending to the park limits.

Fourth. That the northern side of the Mall may properly be used by museum and other buildings containing collections in which the public generally is interested, but not by Department buildings.

Fifth. That the space between Pennsylvania avenue and the Mall should be occupied by the District building, the Hall of Records, a modern market, an armory for the District militia, and structures of like character.

The location of public buildings is discussed in several portions of the report, under the appropriate subdivisions.

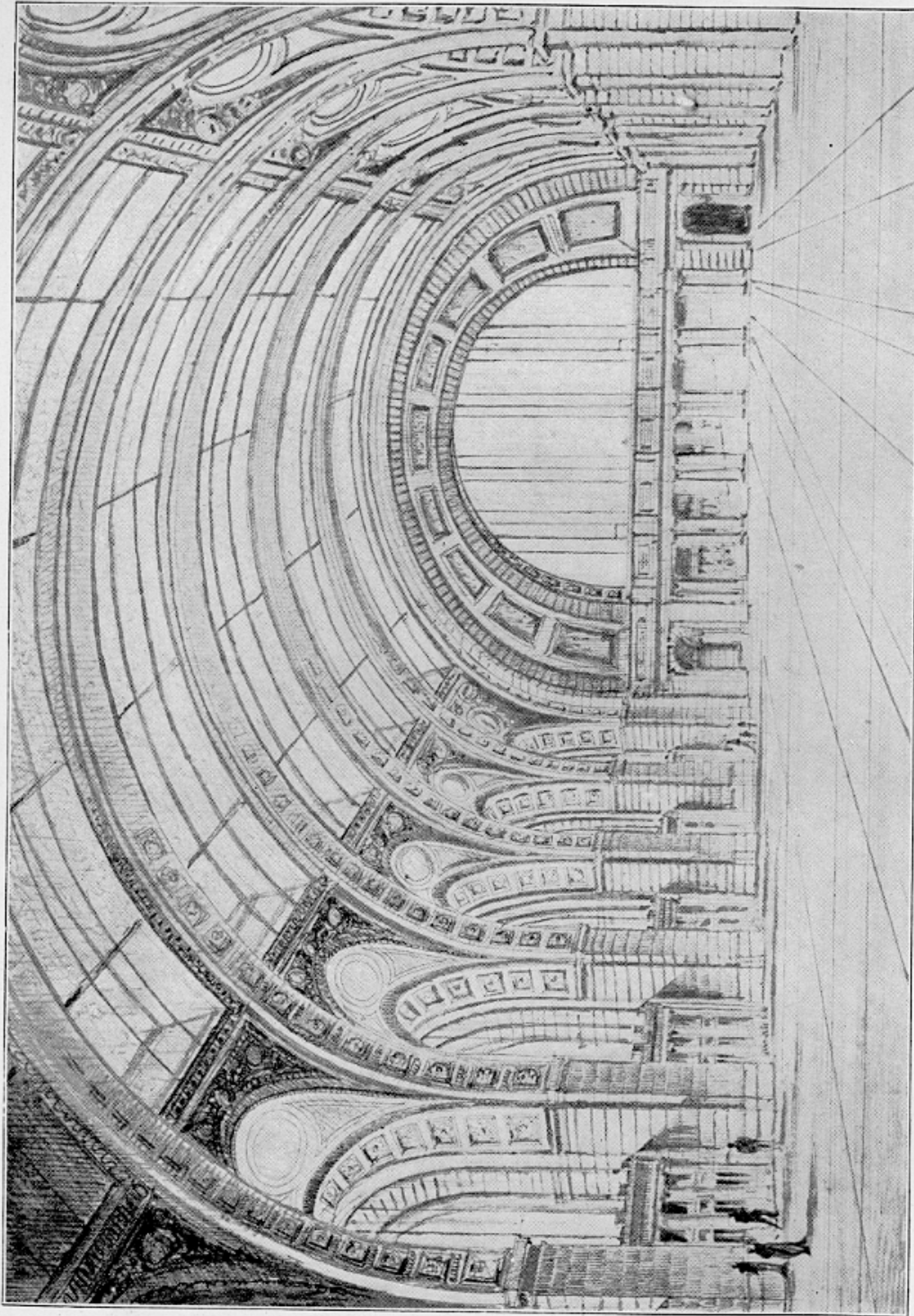
## VI.

When the Commission was appointed the Baltimore and Ohio Railway was entitled, under an act of Congress passed on February 12, 1901,

A union railroad to condemn and occupy a site for a depot fronting on station.

C street; and the Pennsylvania Railway, under an act approved at the same time, was given a strip of land about four hundred feet wide crossing the Mall. The Commission found almost at once that unless the Pennsylvania Railway would leave the Mall and build its station elsewhere the improvement of that great park would be impossible. No one had any serious hope that the Pennsylvania Company would withdraw. However, in the summer of 1901 the president of that company consented to do so, provided the Government would meet the company in a spirit which would enable him to justify the move to the stockholders. It was then suggested that the Pennsylvania and Baltimore and Ohio companies should build a union station at the site on C street granted to the latter by Congress, the five Southern roads reaching the location through a tunnel under Capitol Hill. But after careful consideration it was found that this site for a union station was not adequate, and also that it would result in a train shed extending over Massachusetts avenue; and therefore the Commission suggested that the station be located north of Massachusetts avenue, the center of the building being on the axis of Delaware avenue, about a quarter of a mile from the Capitol.

This location has been accepted by the Engineer Commissioner, the Park Commission, and the railway companies, the latter consenting to



INTERIOR VIEW OF THE PROPOSED NEW UNION STATION.

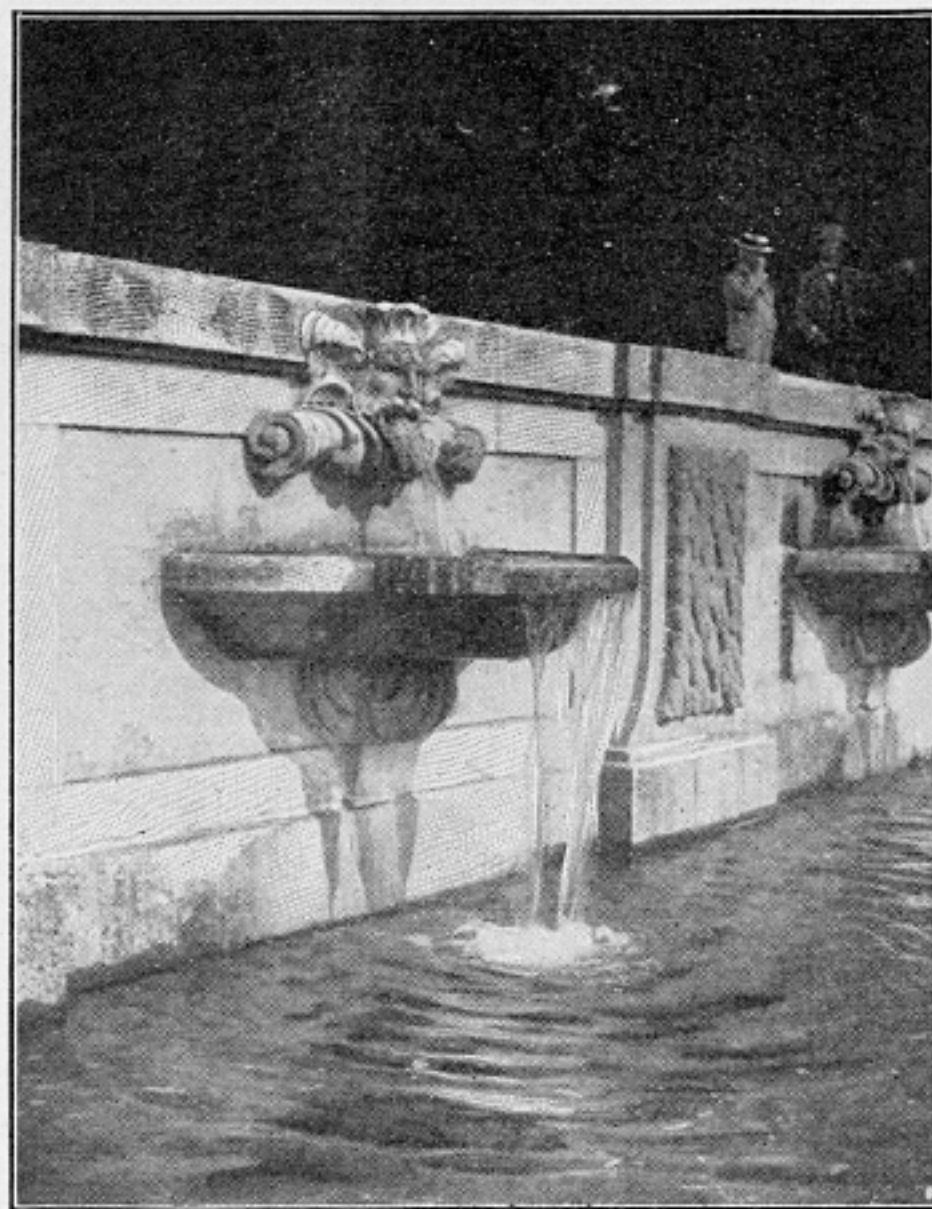


make the moves provided the Government will treat them in a reasonable manner. The attitude of the railways has been public spirited and most admirable in this matter. They have consented to give up a location eminently fit for their business, and for no other purpose than to help out the general conditions of convenience and beauty as laid down by the Park Commission.

In front of the union station the Commission proposed a public plaza to be six hundred feet in width by twelve hundred feet in length,

ornamented with fitting terrace, basins, and fountains. Park Commission's suggestions.

Facing this plaza, and a hundred feet north of the line of Massachusetts avenue will be the marble façade of the station, seven hundred and sixty feet long. This great station forms the



No. 149.—Fountain, Vaux-le-Vicomte.

grand gateway to the capital, through which every one who comes to or goes from Washington must pass; as there is no railroad entering the city that will not use the station, it becomes the vestibule of the capital. This being the fact, the importance of this station is greater than that of any other one in any city in the world. If there were several stations in the city each might be treated as a railway shed and the architectural expression need not properly be of so high an order. But not so this one. The three great architectural features of a capital city being the halls of legislation, the executive buildings, and the vestibule, it is felt by the railroad companies that the style of this building should be equally as dignified as that of the public buildings themselves. Therefore it is that the design goes back to pure Roman motives, the central portion being derived directly from the triumphal arch of Constantine and the wings being brought into subordination to it.

The central part, the vestibule of the station, is two hundred and ninety-three feet wide, containing three arches, each opening being

about thirty by sixty feet; with end pavilions for foot passengers.

The waiting room will be one hundred and thirty by Monumental design. two hundred and fifty feet, its walls of masonry and its arched ceiling of glass and iron. The usual rooms of a grand station are added. Behind the head house is a lobby eighty by five hundred and fifty feet, and an open space next the tracks runs beside this lobby, this space being forty feet in width. The lobby opens out upon the side streets and is perfectly accessible to the waiting rooms.

The design of this station is intended to be monumental in every respect and to be in keeping with the dignity of the chief city of America and with its present and future beauty.



No. 196.—On the Pincian Hill, Rome.