

Victorian Architect; the Life and Work of William Tinsley.

By John D. Forbes. (Bloomington, Indiana: Indiana University Press, 1953, pp. xiv, 153. Illustrations, bibliography, and index. \$5.00.)

In a pleasant and readable style John D. Forbes has told, for the first time, the story of William Tinsley's life. What could have been a prosaic biography has turned out to be lively narrative, interspersed with interesting anecdotes and useful information about the problem that faced the average architect in the nineteenth century.

Tinsley was not the most famous architect of his generation nor the leader in any of the new movements, but he was more than average in artistic stature. For us he is of considerable significance because of his activity in Indiana and the importance we attach to some of his buildings.

As fascinating as any chapter in Forbes' account is that dealing with Tinsley's formative years in Ireland. With his customary painstaking approach, the author apparently submerged himself in the lore of southern Ireland and in the activities of the people with whom Tinsley came in contact. He even refers to the countryside of County Tipperary with such intimacy that the reader unconsciously feels that Forbes has, himself, often travelled the road from Clonmel to Cashel and knows intimately such landmarks as Knockevan House and Tullemain Castle.

As the story unfolds and the author follows the architect to Cincinnati and then to Indianapolis, Tinsley's professional and domestic problems interweave in such a way as to keep the narrative on a high plain of interest. Tinsley was forty-seven when he arrived with his family in Cincinnati in the autumn of 1851, and the competition for the proposed North Western Christian University (later Butler University) brought him to Indianapolis soon after. His winning of that contest led him to change his residence to Indianapolis, where he remained, except for professional activities in nearby mid-western cities, for almost twenty years. He died in Cincinnati in 1885.

Tinsley was principally a designer of institutional buildings—colleges, courthouses, and churches—and among the best-known examples still standing are Center Hall at Wabash College, Bascom Hall at the University of Wisconsin, Ascen-

sion Hall at Kenyon College, Institution for the Education of the Blind at Columbus, Ohio, Calvary Church at Cincinnati, and Christ Church on Monument Circle, Indianapolis. Of the last the author writes: "This handsome little church is Tinsley's finest ecclesiastical building in America."

Characteristic of nineteenth-century architects as a group, William Tinsley was an eclectic. He borrowed principally from two earlier historic styles, sometimes resorting to one and at times to the other, but always adding his own imagination and touch in adapting them to the problem at hand. Those sources of inspiration were sources for most of our buildings, civic and domestic, in the mid-nineteenth century: English Tudor (Gothic) buildings and Italian Renaissance villas. On one occasion he turned to the Greek temple as a prototype, and at another time he experimented with the Romanesque (the Henry Probasco house in Cincinnati), in which he was anticipating a movement that swept the country in the 1880's.

Indianapolis and most of our Indiana cities reached their periods of prosperity and expansion soon after the Civil War, and erected their first important buildings during Tinsley's residence here. Our architectural heritage is what is loosely called Victorian (more specifically Italian Villa Revival, Gothic Revival, and late French Renaissance Revival), and it is through books like *Victorian Architect* that we come to understand and appreciate the stately old houses that dominate some of our streets—and that are fast disappearing in the path of what we call progress.

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Wilbur D. Peat

Lincoln's New Salem. By Benjamin P. Thomas. (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1954, new and revised edition, pp. xiv, 166, v. Illustrations and index. \$2.50.)

The scholarly approach which characterizes the biographical contributions of Benjamin P. Thomas would not allow one to anticipate many important changes in a reprinting of *Lincoln's New Salem*, regardless of the book jacket announcement that it has been "extensively revised." The only alteration in the text important enough to attract attention is the author's comment on the authenticity of the Lincoln-