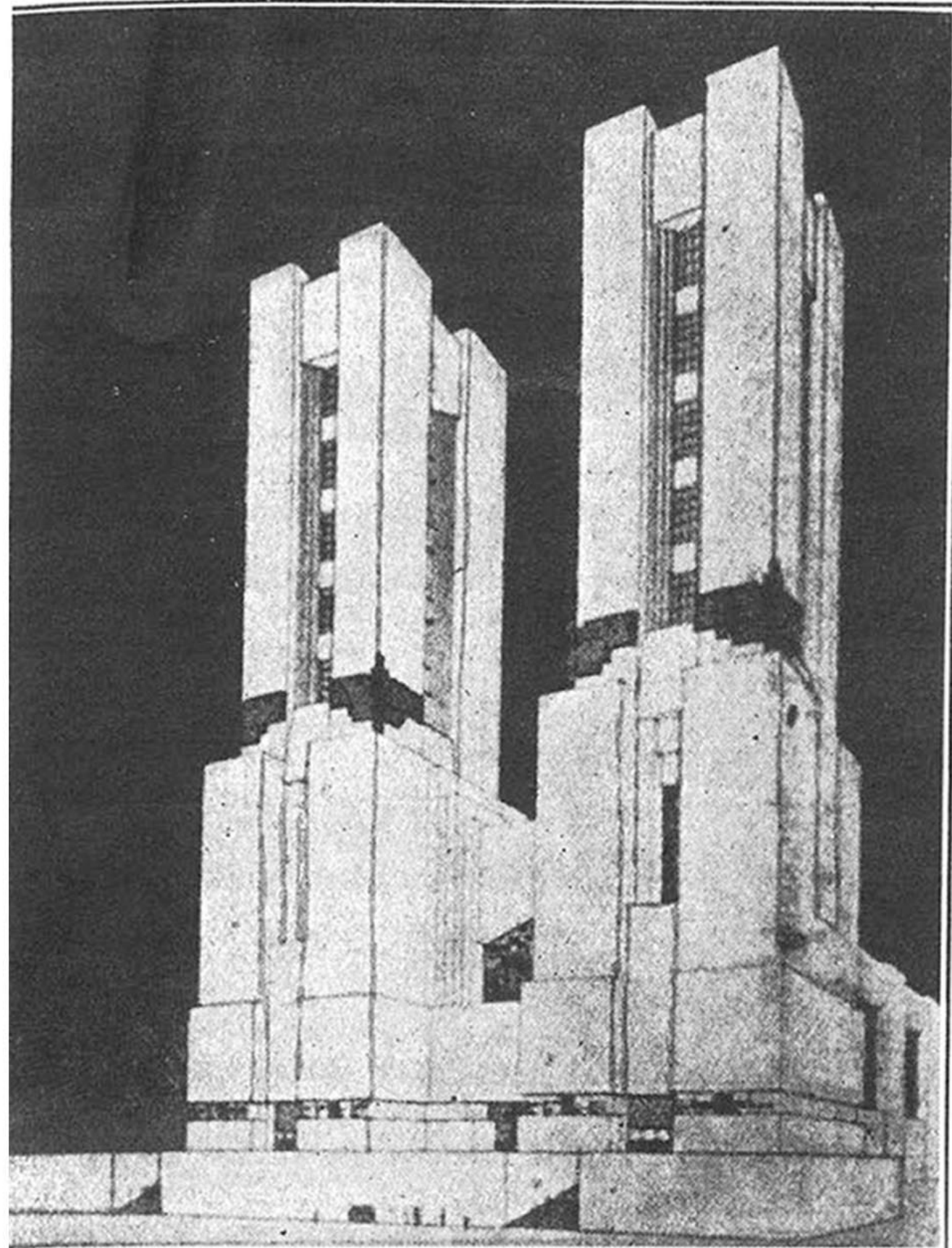


CURRENT OPINION

October, 1919

THE NEW ARCHITECTURE



A TEMPLE OF THE FUTURE

In this design one feels the young architect a trifle too infatuated with straight lines and flat unrelieved surface, his great pillars which seem to support nothing at all.

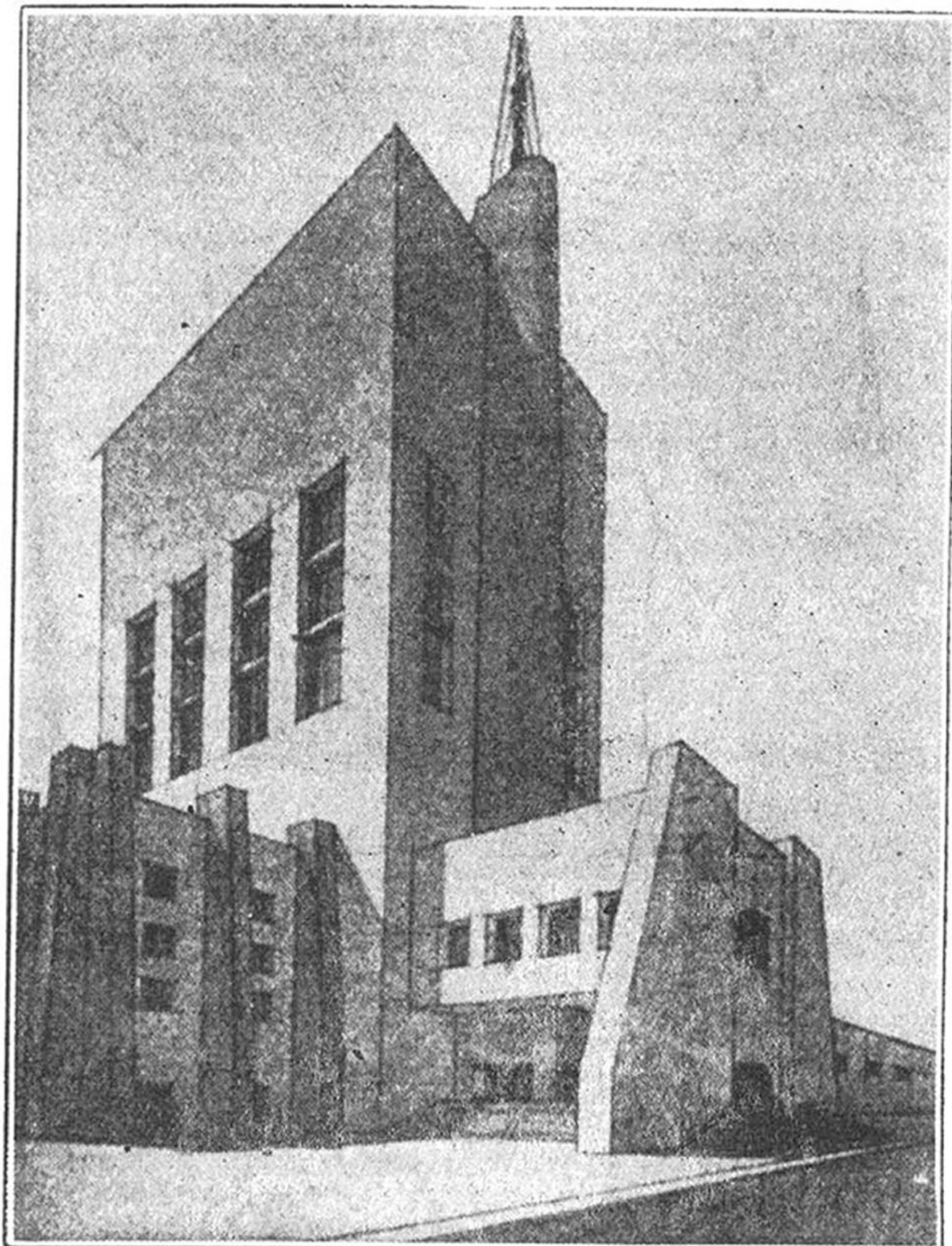
ARCHITECTURAL DREAMS OF YOUNGEST ITALY

A LREADY the young architects of Italy are looking forward to a new renaissance of building, toward the production of a new style based upon modern methods of building and adapted to modern needs. The impulse to this new movement came from the brilliant futurist, Antonio Sant'Elia, who carried the ideas of the Italian innovators into the field of architecture, but whose development was cut short by his heroic death in the war. Sant'Elia's architectural schemes were entirely "paper" architecture. Yet his plans were not unlike many buildings that are realities in our own country. Nevertheless his influence upon the younger architects has been great. Fortunately they have been able to adapt his ideas to the exigencies of practical building, and in some examples to avoid a complete severing with the traditions of the past.

The work of one of these young architects, Mario Chiattoni, is appreciatively presented in a recent number of an art journal of Bergamo, entitled *Emporium*. Chiattoni, as Signor G. U. Arata informs us, is by birth a native of Ticino, one of the southern cantons of Switzerland. But the young architect is Italian in spirit and sympathy. His progress has been rapid. Beginning with perhaps too great a respect for the iconoclastic ideas of Antonio Sant'Elia, he has gradually developed a sense of actuality and constructive power.

Designs for a "palace of fashion," a wireless station, a modern apartment house, and for country and mountain churches are perhaps a trifle too fantastic and futuristic ever to be considered for actual construction. This is architecture for a virgin and unbuilt country. Nothing, it seems, could be more inappropriate for a land so steeped as Italy in the architecture and atmosphere of the past.

But in his designs for certain villas to be erected in Ticino, Mario Chiat-



DESIGN FOR A WIRELESS STATION

Here is one of Mario Chiattoni's interesting attempts to solve a modern architectural problem by modern means.

tone shows that his ingenuity is practical and adaptable. One of these was awarded first prize in a contest held by the Ticinese society for the conservation of natural and artistic beauty in Ticino. The basis of Chiattoni's power, Signor Arato writes in *Emporium*, is the power of construction and design. Chiattoni is not one of those who can merely present with great expressive power concepts that are innately mediocre; nor is he one who behind artificial technique and imposing façades conceals a vital deficiency in building. In his work above all we must admire, according to *Emporium*, the solid and sincere strength of presentation, combined with the constant aim at being essentially a constructor, even too rigidly a constructor, as his latest projects indicate.

After his initial flirtation with futurism, Mario Chiattoni passed to the design of ordered structural organisms, characterized by a rather excessive simplification and use of parallels. The lesson to be learned by such efforts, thinks the Italian critic, is that architecture cannot break completely those laws which unite it with the past. Nevertheless such work as Chiattoni's is ample indication that architecture to-day is in a state of ferment, that the old styles are decaying, and that the new ideas are not yet coordinated.

"The young architects are not yet prepared to undertake the great tasks. In them is lacking the rational instruction and the proper historical method and perspective which would illuminate their ideas and destroy their preconceptions. An obstinate juvenile reaction and a superficial culture hold them still bound to a joyful madness in efforts more bizarre than pleasing, more fantastic than constructive; and the lack of the sense of the past makes them more frequently follow forms too egregiously foreign. Nevertheless, investigation reveals among our young architects a rivalry worthy of our attention and at times of admiration. . . ."

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OPINION**