THE BEACON OF PROGRESS.

A Monument to the Glory of the American People.

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The title of this article is that of a design which was awarded the first medal in architecture at the Paris Salon this year. Titles are catchwords, and it is our purpose to invite our reader’s critical attention to the illustrations presented herewith, that these may be deliberately studied and their significance deeply felt.

It is no casual matter to imagine, much less to design, a monument dedicated to the American people. The author of this design, Professor Désiré Despradelle, was born in France some thirty-eight years ago, and educated at the Ecole des Beaux-Arts. He competed several times for the Prix de Rome, and once surpassed all other competitors (in the year 1889 when the prize was not awarded to anyone), held several minor positions in offices doing government work, was appointed Professor of Architecture at the Institute of Technology, and came to this country to take up his duties in 1893.

He visited the World’s Fair at Chicago, and there received his first impression of American energy and American idealism. Standing near the Peristyle of the Court of Honor, he pointed to the dome of Hunt’s Administration Building and exclaimed, “That is fine, it is grand, but I wish it were as large again.” It seemed to him a scarcely adequate centre for the noble collection of buildings surrounding the Court of Honor. He felt too, a regret that the Columbian Exposition should vanish into memory without leaving a permanent monumental expression of its national and international significance. The need of such an expression became, as it were, a personal feeling. He was possessed by the idea of a monument embodying the characteristics of American civilization, to be a memorial to the genius of the American people and a reminder of the glories of the Columbian Exposition in Jackson Park. The thought that the genius of America could be expressed in such a monument and that he could find the expression inspired Mr. Despradelle to devote much of his time and energy during six years to the elaboration of the design that is here suggested. The genius of America, the dominant note of American life,