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December 29, 1931

Miss Ida M. Tarbell, President
Pen and Brush Club
16 East 10th Street
New York, N. Y.

My dear Miss Tarbell,

Do you believe that modern architecture, as expressed in a few buildings like the new Philadelphia Saving Fund Society building, is an expression of the soundest attitude towards architectural design, and that American buildings of the near future must adopt its guiding principles?

This method of design, often called functional, if frankly and honestly followed, leads, I know you will agree, to a form of expression independent of individual whim. The general theory which it follows is that architecture is and always has been a function of construction, and that construction in turn is more than an accidental economic necessity, but a function of the social and spiritual attitude of its period.

Functional architecture is essentially a return to truth. It is a removal of all false fronts and masks to conform to the advantages and necessities of contemporary life.

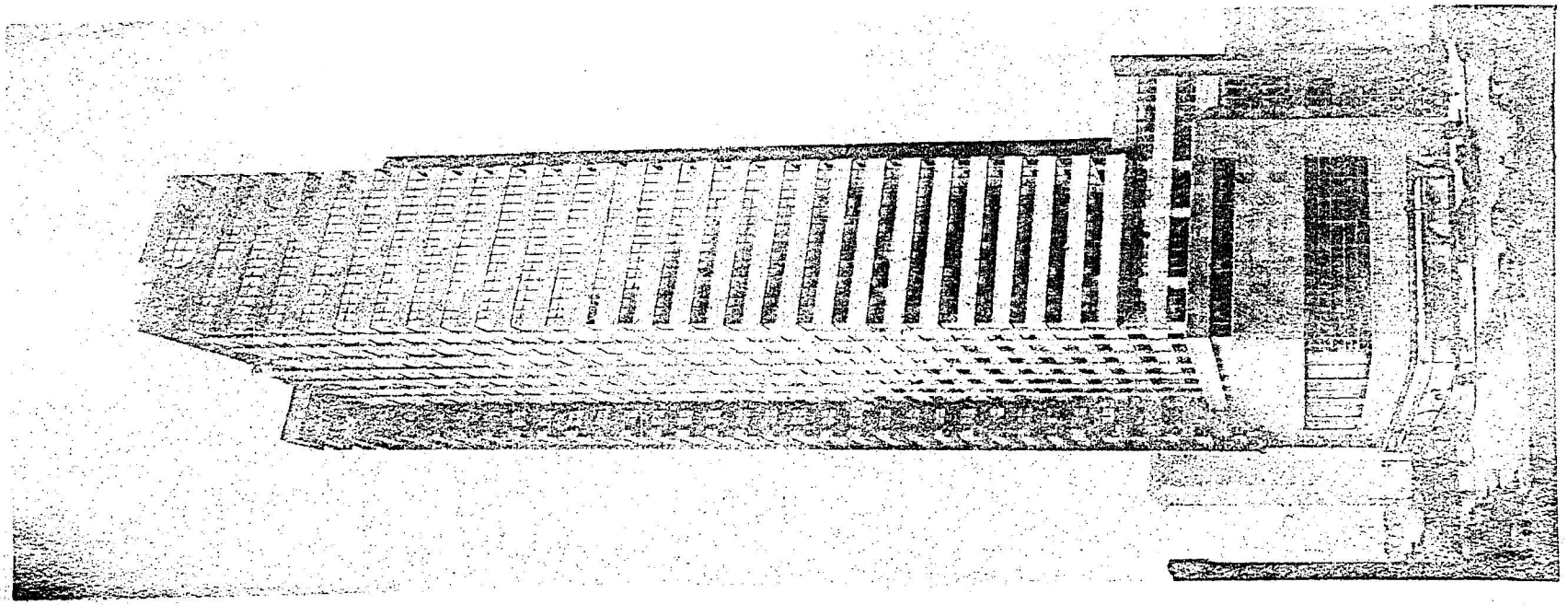
We are asking for your comments because it is upon the leadership of men and women like yourself that both the architects and builders of the future will rely. Unless you advise to the contrary, your opinion, together with that of others, will be made available for publication to educate and to crystallize public opinion on this important subject.

Sincerely yours,

Henry Bern

HENRY BERN

Digital Image, 2009. The Ida M. Tarbell Collection, 1890-1944, Allegheny College Pelletier Library



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