In 1916, at La Chaux-de-Fonds, Le Corbusier erected a house with a centrally disposed blank panel. Forty years later, in the monastery of La Tourette and at a heroic scale, he has repeated something very like this device. At La Chaux-de-Fonds the blank panel is the central figure of a façade. At La Tourette a largely blank wall comprises the north side of the church. But in both cases, in the villa and in the monastery, as the building is first experienced, the focus of the visual field is provided by an element without high intrinsic interest which, while it absorbs the eye, is unable to retain its attention.

In 1920-21, running through the articles in L'Esprit Nouveau which were later to be collected as Vers Une Architecture, there appeared the first public evidence of Le Corbusier's intense preoccupation with the Acropolis.