



**Figure 3-1.** *The Society's 57th Street Building in New York, 1897*  
*(Courtesy Avery Library, Columbia University)*

The problem was still unsolved 13 years later, when a long-suffering member made a stirring appeal for relief:

I think it is a reproach to a Society as scientific as ours ... that it continues to maintain an auditorium with such uncommonly poor acoustic properties. ... I remember the first meeting we had in this room. ... It was soon perceived that members were changing their seats to hear what was being said ... and somebody asked whether something could not be done to improve these acoustic defects. Some member suggested that wire might be hung across the room, and one man misunderstood the meaning of the suggestion and approved it on the theory that it was a motion to hang the architect!

This plea elicited action to “employ the best talent available” to remedy the situation. The architect escaped unscathed!

In the midst of this building project, this startling letter appeared:

2 East 91st Street  
 New York, February 14, 1903

Gentlemen of the  
 American Society of Civil Engineers  
 American Society of Mechanical Engineers  
 American Institute of Mining Engineers  
 American Institute of Electrical Engineers  
 and the Engineers' Club: