

IDEAS IN THINGS

CFA VOYSEY

I am not here to feel your pulses, diagnose your afflictions, and prescribe any wonderful pill; I have no patent medicine. I believe you are all in excellent health – not bodily health but spiritual health. Yes, you would not be here unless you wanted to improve something, or do some good to somebody, any more than I should, and that is a healthy sign. And, before we part, let us hope we shall all feel that our good desire will ultimately bear good fruit. Let us always carry in our minds the firm conviction that no honest effort is without good fruit. Our accomplishment may be frustrated, but our good intention is always recorded in some way, not necessarily apparent to the world or to ourselves in the way we expect. Neither goodness nor truth can perish. Though we may not see the fruits of our labour, let us believe nothing good is ever wholly lost.

This age we live in is intensely material; it has witnessed a mighty development in material things. Steam and electricity have transformed the world: our minds have been engrossed by material ideas to such an extent that we have scarcely devoted that attention to the spiritual side of our natures which that side deserves.

As we are met here to help each other to produce better work, and, as you will hear from others, as you have already heard, much useful information on the various crafts of a more or less technical and material nature, it is for us to kindle the thought and feeling that shall form the motive power by which material forces are to be turned to good account.

It is lamentable when men's minds are so absorbed by material conditions that they lose all sensibility to the higher forms of usefulness and happiness. Materialism alone is a demon of unrighteousness; one of its commonest effects is to belittle the faculty of reason, and allow our wills to follow the dictates of our emotions. We are content to be pleased with anything, without asking ourselves why. Things said to be charming are often accepted without question.

I have heard artists openly affirm that art has nothing to do with reason. They say they are led in a mysterious way in their work, and never reason about it, although they talk reasonably enough about material qualities.

You can picture a world divorced from reason. Where for instance, would the emotion of love lead us without the guiding hand of reason? And that surely is our noblest emotion.

Our nature has always been twofold, viz. material and spiritual. And it is only common sense to recognise dual quality. We *must* distinguish between things which help to develop the body and those which lead to the purification and advancement of character.

When we speak of spiritual qualities we mean all mental and emotional conditions not necessarily of a religious nature. In these days of conflicting creeds it is rather desirable to foster spiritual activity outside the sphere of theology. Men of every class and every shade of religious belief recognise difference between thoughts and feelings that affect their hearts and characters, and thoughts and feelings which only affect their bodies.

Not for one moment would I belittle the importance of all material and bodily conditions. But in the cause of art and the higher qualities of man, we must pay more regard to the spirit and less to the flesh, without which spiritual basis no art is worth having at all. Personally, I feel that religion is essential to the

healthy development of our spiritual nature. But I must not dwell on that side of the picture here.

The presence of so much ugliness in our life today is largely due to our materialistic habit of mind. We love ease far more than beauty, utility far more than inspiration; consequently 'ideas in things' are not readily recognised. Before going further, it is necessary to draw a clear distinction in our minds between associated ideas and intrinsic ideas. For instance, some have the idea that money is the root of all evil. This is an associated idea, due, we think, to reasoning. It is by the bad way in which money is used that evil is caused. But that is by the way. There is all the difference between such association and that inward intensity of feeling that produces an object, that will express spiritual qualities understood by those who see the object even for generations after the author is dead. Money can only be spoken of in this sense when the actual coins are considered as representing dignity, grace, refinement, reverence, etc. These ideas are intrinsic, not associated. And we shall often find the two kinds of ideas intermingled and overlapping, making it difficult to discern which is most potent. But the intrinsic are always more stable than the associated ideas. The latter are subject to change, but the former can never be.

All art is the expression or manifestation of thought and feeling; a technical knowledge of any craft by itself is but a language with which to express thought and feeling. And such qualities of mind as accuracy, order, neatness, precision, frankness, love of truth, and, above all, reverence, are some of the qualities of mind we call spiritual, because they minister to our characters far more than to our bodily comfort. We may make doors and windows, chairs and tables with mechanical exactness, and be paid in coin in exchange, but neither we nor those who pay for it will gain any spiritual benefit from our labour unless we have put our heart and minds into our work, anxiously seeking to impart some good thought and healthy feeling. Whether or not the workman be seeking to gain praise for himself or express praise of lovely qualities, will make all the difference to his influence through his productions. It will be vain and frivolous, or dignified, simple, and restrained. A thousand subtle feelings may be suggested by it according to the earnestness and purity of the man. It is base materialism to shut our eyes to the spiritual character given by man to matter.

Materialism has given rise to a thirst for artificial excitement. For in proportion to man's loss of interest in spiritual ideas, and in the manifestation of moral qualities, he loses enjoyment in his work, and cries out for amusement by itself. A workman to whom his work is a feast of reason and a flow of soul, does not want to waste much time on watching football matches; he is not hungry for the excitement of gambling; his joy is more constant and less spasmodic. I believe the old carpenters derived more pleasure from their work than we derive from ours, because they read less and thought more; putting more thought into their work, more thought was got out of it. Their ideas were fostered and stimulated by the thoughts and feelings in the things around them. The capital or door-knocker was eloquent in the appeal to their fancy. But now the idea that a chair or table can be made to express thought and feeling seems to our workmen quite ridiculous. Their thoughts are directed to collectivists' visions, votes, and public control of

property; mundane considerations fill their horizon.

Differences in the material condition of men have existed ever since the world began, and I am not here to say if it is right or wrong that it should be so. But let us make quite sure that, however unequal the material condition of men, we all respond to the same virtues – love, reverence, humility, self-sacrifice, simplicity, truthfulness – all are understood, and loved by all. Thus we have a bond of union: whatever the differences may be in development, the spiritual qualities are to all alike a perpetual aim. Once let it be recognised that the spiritual verities are of primary importance, and that we can help on our own as well as our neighbours' growth in virtue by trying to put thought and feeling into our work, we shall then find an added joy in labour far more precious than any material reward. The delight of expressing thoughts and feelings which arouse interest and pleasure in others, is possible to every one of us. We are all endowed with the power to impart thought and feeling. All we need to acquire is the power to discriminate between good and noble thought and feeling and the baser sort. What have our schools done in this direction? What are they now doing? Many of them are teaching us that in certain past ages very beautiful work was done, and that such beauty is not possible to this dark age. We are all miserable sinners, so they say in effect; we must go on our hands and knees and measure up and draw and learn like parrots, to imitate with technical excellence what the ancient and good have showed us. My friends, this is false teaching. There is as much capacity for goodness today as there ever was in any age. Men can turn out work as perfect in all material qualities as the world has yet seen.

The difference between what is done now and what was done in years gone by, is due to spiritual qualities, not to material qualities. In the past men read and talked less, but thought and felt more. They had more pleasure in work and spent less time in games. They were more spiritual and less material in their attitude of mind.

The human quality in familiar objects has in many cases been driven out by the machine. Nevertheless, the machine has come to liberate men's minds for more intellectual work than was provided for them by the sawpit, though still there is much work in the world which requires little or no intelligence. Let us remember the sense of duty is yet left to us; and thousands will bear witness to the fact that the sense of duty has often transformed irksome tasks into pleasant labours. But, besides the comforting thought that the unpleasant labour is a duty, we shall find that many dull occupations may be made enjoyable by instilling spiritual qualities into them. Conscientiousness and a love of truth and hatred of all forms of deception will help us to make the hidden parts of our work as good as those that are seen. I do not think there is one here present who would not enjoy making our articles of furniture of one quality throughout, instead of oak in front and deal behind. And our patrons, if they, too, felt the same, would be glad to pay for the absence of sham. If we would frankly acknowledge the structural necessity of nailing down our floor-boards, we should not strain our ingenuity in devising methods of secret nailing. We are far too keen on mechanical perfection. That love of smooth, polished surfaces is very materialistic; it can be produced without brains, and in most cases can only be produced by the elimination of all human thought and feeling. It is delightful to see skill of hand and eye. All evidence of painstaking is a joy to behold. But in our materialism we have run after the perfection of the machine and preferred it to the perfection of the human heart. The modern builder will have the arrises of his stones drafted and made mechanically square and true, so that the mason can set them with plumb-rule and little or no thought, preferring that mechanical exactness to the work of the painstaking human eye. And, alas, many a mason prefers to use a tool rather than have to think. Thus is materialism encouraged on every hand.

You have all observed the soft, yet massive, effect in old

buildings, when the angles were put up by human eye, and compared them with the hard, unsympathetic, mechanical effect of the modern drafted angle.

I would not have you go back to all methods of hand labour and neglect the aid of the Machine. All we need is to recognise its material value, and its spiritual imperfection, and put into all our hand-work that thought and feeling which is the breath of life. The worker and the worked-for all alike must co-operate to instil new life into all they make by dwelling on the moral and spiritual significance of things.

We are all keen enough if our local sanitation is at fault. We cry out loudly if a hospital settles down outside our door. Anything that endangers our body is at once attended to. But the hideousness of our lamp-posts, the poison to our souls' eyesight through the degradation of vulgar advertisements, is allowed to go on unhindered. We cannot hope to stem the torrent of hideousness all at once. Sensitiveness to beauty requires ages of cultivation, and can only spring from a deep and sincere love of truthfulness. To be true to your material, true to your conditions, true to your highest instincts, is the surest and only way to true art. So our first duty must be to sweep away all shams, and give up pretending to be Greeks or Romans in our architecture. If we have no noble ideas, let us hide our heads in the sand until we get some. But for pity's sake do not suppose that we are noble because we have learned how to copy the expressions of the noble men of old.

All the beautiful human work that has been bequeathed to us by the ages was the outcome of sincere and honest thought and feeling. And it is still those spiritual qualities that keep it alive in our affections today. Let us then see to it that our work is palpitating with sincere and noble thought and feeling, whatever our work may be. The frame of mind of the joiner in mitring his architraves is designed to have its effect, whether he be followed by the painter or not. Faithfulness in little things builds up the strong character and makes work enjoyable to the worker, and lays the foundation of that sense of beauty which we all need.

Reverence for nature is a fruitful source of beauty. Suppose the woman who wanted a bonnet were to recognise that her head was made by superhuman power, and out of reverence she ought to regard her bonnet as of secondary importance, her head being only lent to her, while her bonnet is her own; would she not come to think of the bonnet as a head *covering*, as something to protect her head, and so by considering fitness arrive at a reverend complement to nature? There was a striking article in *The Times* the other day, in which the writer advocated an attention to vocation in matters of dress. If people would dress more to fit them for their occupations, the modern costume would undoubtedly be more interesting and more fit, and, therefore, more beautiful. This is a subject worthy of more thought and attention than we can give it now. But it is only one of the many matters by which may be cultivated by both sexes that sincerity, and simplicity, and directness of purpose, which is the essence of all good work in whatever material we may be engaged with. This sincerity, simplicity, and directness we feel to be good, because fitness is a universal law of nature, and these qualities tend towards it, and it is also essential to beauty. The theory of evolution has disclosed the fact that all organisms are for ever moving in the direction of greater fitness and harmony of condition. It is as essential to fitness that objects should minister to our spiritual growth, as that they should minister to our bodily comforts and it is an important fact to which you will all assent, that only to minds set on goodness is the manifestation of beauty possible. That is to say, if our work is to be fit and beautiful, it must express some good thought or healthy emotion. Our homes must arouse the emotions of peace and goodwill.

Whatever we make, be it only a chair, can record our honest endeavour to serve a useful purpose, and stimulate kind feeling. Ruskin said, 'In old times men used their powers of painting to

show the objects of faith; in later times they used the objects of faith that they might show their powers of painting'; and this exhibition of human skill has gradually usurped the place in man's affections that rightfully belongs to thought and feeling of a less material kind.

We make a great mistake in devoting all our attention to men's work. It is better to watch the ways of Providence than to copy the actions of men.

I am reminded of the mad hatter, when he put butter into his watch with a bread-knife. How our students think to ease their labours with the polish of Greece and crumbs of knowledge from Italy! When asked to design anything, we inquire how someone else did it; having no reverence for our contemporaries, we look to the dead and buried and find our museums crowded with lovely examples. Every inducement is held out to us to use the wits of others rather than our own. We even prefer to carpet our rooms with Eastern hieroglyphics, which we do not understand, rather than with patterns made at home. We imitate any foreigner rather than take the trouble to think for ourselves. Now, how does nature go to work? Everywhere we find her making the best possible use of immediate conditions, evolving beauty out of fitness and wisdom out of regard for requirements, materials and conditions all in exquisite harmony with established law. If we would go humbly to nature more, we should have a juster reverence for man's work. We should not be content to copy his successes and his failures, without exercising our own faculties. It is much more healthy for a student to be told the conditions and requirements necessary to provide any given object of use than to set him to copy the best example of the same in existence. The process of thought in the classification of requirements and conditions is immensely valuable. It stimulates the faculties and warms the heart, and encourages the feeling that there is room for improvement. But the general method of procedure is to fix on existing human production as more or less perfect and final, and superior to our own, and then copy, copy, copy, without having a full knowledge of all the circumstances and conditions that gave rise to the object of our admiration. The student's faculties are in this way cramped and petrified.

What we need is more reverent study of nature and nature's ways. The effect on the human mind of watching and tracing out the operations of nature is of untold value. It humbles a man and softens his judgments of his brother; it quickens all that is best in our characters. The more we look into nature, the more we feel the spiritual forces behind us all. It is this perpetual attention to the spirit in its purest manifestation that will improve our work, and so increase our happiness and usefulness. Ruskin says, 'All great art is the work of the whole living creature, body and soul, and chiefly of the soul.' The smallest article of daily life may be greatly enhanced in value by the spirit of the workman in its creation. It is quite easy to see when our articles of daily use are made by loving hands and thoughtful heads, and when they are made by human drudges working for wage alone. To impart this human spirit to anything, we must not imitate blindly; no feeling can be imparted until it has been truly felt by the workmen. This fact concerns us all, for we need to look for that spiritual feeling in objects which we wish to impart to our own productions. If I cannot be graceful and comely, I can at least have a graceful and comely umbrella, and in that way help to keep up my interest in those qualities.

It is a material necessity that we should specialise in various vocations. Life is so short. But we must not confound this specialising in various crafts and professions with the development of our spiritual nature. One man may work with a chisel and another with a brush, but both have the same human virtues to deal with. Both have the same spiritual qualities to think and feel about. Beauty in its myriad forms is not the prerogative of the painter. The expression of beautiful thought and feeling is the function of every

human creature and, for aught we know, every animal. It is a most mischievous distinction that has designated some men and women as artists, and led others to think that the expression of beautiful thought and feeling in things material is a matter they need not care or think about, or are incapable of understanding. It is universality of artistic expression and sympathy we need to encourage and foster, and which the attention to our spiritual nature will do more to stimulate than anything else. The added charm of mingling material and non-material, of living and working in the conscious light of spiritual ideas and feeling, must enrich the dulllest labour. It surely is much more invigorating to believe that we are working to express universal ideas, than that our labours are purely material and perishable, appealing only to the lower part of man's nature. If also the spiritual quality is uppermost in our minds, we shall feel less the relative importance of our several occupations. We shall find spiritual giants in small, secluded places. A man's importance in the world will not be measured so much by his social position as by his earnestness. We cannot all be high priests, but we can all do much of the work of archbishops, if we like. At any rate, we must recognise that technical skill and material advantages carry us only a very little way in this world, and no way at all in the next. It is our spiritual fire that forces us onwards and upwards.

Let us now see how far these visionary ideas can be applied to everyday things. We pride ourselves on being such a hard-headed, practical nation. 'Utterly material' would be a more accurate description of us. It is quite common for people to remark, 'Oh, do look at that, did you ever see anything more hideous in your life?' but you never hear any one say, 'Oh, do go and inhale that foul odour, it is the worst you ever met with.' Why this difference? Surely it is because we all recognise that a bad smell is injurious to health or body; and in the former case we do not remember that ugliness is injurious to the health of our soul. Indeed, I fear some of you may not even admit my assumption. I am nevertheless convinced that if we paid more regard to spiritual matters, we should feel that all ugliness was to be avoided as a form of sin, and that it was as harmful to our characters as sewer gas is to our bodies. We should never look twice at what we believe to be ugly, any more than we would read of murders and divorce. If, then, we are to avoid all ugliness, we must be very simple in our homes and very careful not to harbour things that are intended to look better than they are. This striving for simplicity, if sincere, will enable us to distinguish between sensuous forms and colours and those things which stimulate the thought as well as the feeling of the beholder. It is very tempting placidly to enjoy mere sensuous effects and forget the much more valuable qualities that charm the mind as well as the heart. A great deal we collect around us is of that sensuous kind that causes purely emotional and vague feelings of pleasure, but leaves us no better than we were before. Lavish ornament is like a drug, the dose requires increasing as it loses its effect. But the moment you couple thought with sensuous feeling and healthy emotions, you feed the character and strengthen spiritual life.

We have, then, to bear this principle in mind in furnishing our homes. Let the simple articles of use show an honest endeavour to fulfil the practical purpose of their existence, and a reverent regard for the materials of which they are composed – that is, we must not use wood as if it were wrought iron, but suit our design to the natural character of the material. And let every bit of ornament speak to us of bright and healthy thought.

Do not string meaningless forms together merely for the purpose of sensuous pleasure. Better derive pleasure from the observation of fitness and proportion, because it is a nobler form of enjoyment – nobler, simply because it appeals to the whole man and not to the one faculty of sensation only.

We may learn something from the tree of the spirit of domestic happiness. We find the branches as they spring, radiating in

rhythmic flow from the parent trunk, all harmoniously, not one on the top of the other in confused angularity; each bough and each twig grows a little to one side of those above and below, so that all can enjoy the sun and shower. This surely is brotherly love. Can we not get this feeling in our rooms by arranging our furniture and ornaments so that each has its due share, nothing being crowded, and every article helping to make its neighbour's virtue more, not less, pronounced. The essence of good proportion is brotherly love, making one line, surface, or space helpful to the full expression of another, in harmonious contrast, not angry rivalry.

The quickest thing in nature is a flash of lightning; it is made up of angles. So we find to give the effect of movement we require angularity of one kind or another. We call people crooked or cranky when they lack sweet reasonableness, and they show a want of stability that is disturbing. A stormy sea or sky is angular and cut up – the pained soul is said to be 'cut up'.

On the other hand, nature generally expresses the sweetest calm and repose. At sunset we see the horizontal lines as if all nature were reclining and preparing for rest, dim light drawing a veil over disturbing detail. Horizontalism thus suggests repose; it is the greatest contrast to angularity. These two opposite forms of angularity and horizontalism are the plainest statement of the opposite states of mind of disturbance and peace. Now when a friend enters your room and seems in doubt where to be seated, if he shows any signs of restlessness, be you very sure your room is at fault. But if he feels a half-conscious sense of repose, and is inclined to be peaceful, it will be in some measure because your room is not crowded with conflicting forms, colours, and textures.

The disturbance of the senses is often very subtle. You go to call on a friend; you leave the York stone pavement and stand on mosaic or tiles, then on coconut mat, then possibly, on polished wood, and then on pile carpet; all varying sensations in rapid succession, which are more or less destructive of repose according to the sensitiveness of the visitor. We do not need to be told that peace of mind is a desirable condition; therefore very little device we can bring to help us to that peace of mind which passes all understanding is good. This illustration is trivial enough, but it establishes a principle that in material things we can foster mental conditions by the aid of nature. How then can we get help from nature in the matter of colour? Grief and joy are expressed by our colours more than any other emotions. We find colours that stimulate and colours that soothe. We can produce the sensation of a drunken brawl by our combination of various coloured articles. Most of our drawing-rooms are of that type. Your eye is pitched from cushion to cushion like a hockey ball – the velvets, plushes, satins, silks, wools, cottons, marbles, metals, woods – it makes one's brain reel to mention the multitude – all trying to monopolise attention; not to speak of the so-called ornaments. Now what do we find nature doing? She furnishes with an abundance of the most soothing colour, viz, green; she uses her red most sparingly. In the spring she feasts us with delicate greens, greys, blues, purples, and, later on, yellow, gradually warming and strengthening her colour as the summer sun increases its power over the eye; and as our eyes and our senses are tiring, come the more stimulating oranges and browns, the deep, emphatic autumn colour. Then it is you hear people enthusiastic about ampelopsis and autumn tints generally. The more sensitive to colour have been enthusiastic all through the year. It takes a red flag to rouse John Bull.

One point we must all observe, whether we are very sensitive to colour or not. That is, that nature never allows her colours to quarrel. Her purple trees, with their gossamer of delicate spring green, dwell lovingly with the blue carpet of hyacinths. Harmony is everywhere. Nowhere without its dominating tint and jewel-like spots and patches of more brilliant colour. But the most brilliant colours are always in relatively small quantities. Nature never painted long lanes of brick-red. If you give her a chance she will

bury your red with gold moss. It is the relative quantities of colour that make for harmony. Colours themselves are innocent enough. Like words, they need combining to demonstrate their worth. When nature is kindly treated and allowed healthy development, she shows her joy by purity of colour. Stir up the sediment of your pool and the mirror will no longer reflect truly, and so the idea of corruption is inevitably associated with impure colour.

One of the chief reasons why we should evolve our creations out of a due consideration of conditions and requirements, instead of imitating tradition or well-beloved examples, is that our conditions and requirements are always changing; new methods and new materials are constantly being evolved, and men's habits and tastes are for ever developing. What suited people of the last century is not quite in tune with the feelings and needs of our own time. If fitness is to be our law, as it is nature's law, we must not pin our conceptions to pre-existing forms too rigidly.

Any revivalism must involve the sacrifice of fitness. We should be ready to part with old traditions when we have found other methods more fit. We have certain characteristics peculiar to our own country and nation, such as climate, which we ought always reverently to acknowledge and rejoice in. Were we more spiritual, these conditions would be more respected and regarded as super-human. They would help us, rather than hinder us, to a fuller expression of the thoughts and feelings common to us all, and which, after all, are the main source of our real happiness and progress. It is by keeping alive and active these living faculties and continually polishing them up by sympathy and controversy, that we shall develop character and so beauty in the world.

One of the commonest and yet the most precious feelings we all have is that of generosity. We admire the bounty of the wealthy, but how much more do we delight in the generosity of the poor. How different are the mediums of generous feeling. Ruskin told us the greatest charity was the giving of praise. Certainly it is more tonic to the praiseworthy than much fine gold. But it is the effect of generosity on the giver to which we wish now to draw attention, for in the feeling of generosity we have a very powerful influence for good which affects our works in a marvellous manner. Unfortunately, it is more often a quality we look for in others than in ourselves. But it is one that affects every craft and every production. The feeling that we must bestow some benefit, give to others something we believe to be good. If this feeling were more cultivated it would tend to greater enjoyment of life to all of us. This spiritual quality is stifled by over-attention to material gain. The carpenter in making a door for us will think he has served us better by adding an eighth of an inch of thickness more than he bargained for than if he strove to think and feel and show a keen desire to express dignified and simple proportion, faithful care in the hidden parts, and an earnestness to serve well and assist the efforts of brother workmen. That spiritual frame of mind is nonetheless real because we cannot gauge it with a foot rule. How often, indeed, metaphorically speaking, we measure out our wood and labour and balance it with the payment we are to receive; but in nowise does the bestowal of anything come into our reckoning – and therein lurks the great question of life. Wood and labour we can measure and weigh; but if in addition to material and labour we add thought and feeling, we are bestowing just that spiritual quality which will make our wood and labour a joy to producer and possessor alike. Is not this thought and feeling, then, the very soul of material creations, and the only enduring quality about them? Is it not because we believe the pursuit of beauty tends to improve character that we are so keen about the arts? Or perhaps we are ordained to derive pleasure from beauty because it is elevating to the soul. So we are led by natural instincts to seek that which will improve our condition, both material and spiritual. But, although so precious, it cannot take the place of the material qualities or be made manifest without matter; thus we have still to be careful to

give the material qualities we are paid for; and in our care we are bestowing a certain amount of that very thought and feeling we regard as essential. We thus show an anxiety to be just and to avoid taking more than our due. So by the very nature of things we cannot escape from spiritual considerations. It rests with us to stimulate and enrich this quality by the addition of generous feeling, and in so doing add the thought and feeling that will make our work something more than the mere fulfilment of material requirements. The door, then, may be a joy and even an inspiration; it may express welcome, grace, dignity, simplicity, and arouse interest; it may soothe and solemnify or irritate and vex you. You pass through it with feelings of pleasure or of pain, or with no feeling at all. But the point for us to consider is, what has the maker of it gained and given by his labour? Has he polished up his own and our thought and feeling? If he endeavoured to do his best and gave a little more thought and feeling in the making than he was paid for, then has he truly enriched his own character and all those of us who take the trouble to observe his work with care; and if we lived in a less material state of mind we should be more entertained by the observation of each other's work. It is unfortunate that we only observe the work of those that the newspapers call out about, and then often only superficially.

We frequently find the instinct to enrich exercised in adding only material qualities. As, for instance, the door may be moulded and chamfered, and have bevelled panels, innumerable crevices and ledges for dust, which in no way minister to our thoughts and feelings except to distress them with a sense of wasted labour – labour not only in the making, but in the keeping clean. Such so-called enrichments are not real enrichments at all, though they add to the complexity and intricacy of anything. Unless they add to our pleasures, they are so much waste, not to say poison. If, on the other hand, by our mouldings and panellings we arouse the sense of grace, proportion, dignity, delicacy or greater fitness, we are certainly enriching our work. And these qualities can be made manifest only by our earnestly feeling them.

Think what a keen love of cleanliness could do if applied to our architecture in dirty towns. How much so-called ornamental enrichment collects dirt and depresses us by harbouring all that is unclean and repulsive – producing feelings the very reverse of pleasure. The very proper pleasure we feel in dexterity is often sacrificed for the sake of elaborate ornamentation that is hopelessly meaningless and sometimes used to hide bad workmanship and bad material. This kind of enrichment gives no pleasure, and cannot stimulate any nice feeling or healthy thought.

We cannot be too simple. A true desire to be simple strengthens our sense of fitness, and tends to the perfecting of proportion and workmanship, and a more reverent regard for the natural qualities of material. Carving richly veined marbles and finely figured woods is only the action of irreverence and conceit. We ought to respect nature's veining too much to allow of our chopping it up with man-made pattern. We are too apt to furnish our rooms as if we regarded our wallpapers, furniture, and fabrics as far more attractive than our friends. We don't mind how a hideous chimney-piece destroys the outline of our human heads and protrudes its complex gathering of forms, colours, and textures in distressful restlessness, catching our eye at every glance and robbing us of that calm we need wherewith to see into the soul of our companion. In this climate the fireplace should be the centre of interest in a room, when considered as an apartment. But in actual life it is subservient to human beings, pictures, sculpture, or books, or anything else possessing more thought and feeling. It is the thought and feeling alone by which we must classify the things around us.

Often the feeling of generosity is expressed by making the parts of a building or object larger than may be actually required on structural grounds. For instance, the old roofs were composed of massive timbers, it being in old time often cheaper to use a whole

tree than cut it up. There is a certain satisfaction to the eye to be gained by proportions which are in excess of mathematical requirements. We call the architect's work an art, but the engineer's work a profession; and the difference may be traced to just that addition of the spiritual quality of generosity, just that thought and feeling which humanises the work. The engineer's labour satisfies us on account of its fitness; it appeals to our intellect rather more than to our heart.

Of course, the association of ideas is a very important factor in the formation of our taste, and must often be the chief groundwork on which we build up our principles of design. For instance, the ocean illustrates perpetual motion, and nature contrasts with it the horizon as if to steady our contemplation. It is obvious the wave lines and forms give movement, while angularity suggests violent action. The lightning flash we have already alluded to. When the storm rages, does it not hide the horizon, and so increase the sense of violent action?

Would that we more often thought of this principle in our house-building. Looked at from every point of view, most of our houses resemble the forms of storms. Hardly anywhere do we see houses standing peacefully as if to stay and calm you by their reposefulness. They look more like spectres that came and went in the twinkling of an eye, angularity and infinite variety of shapes and proportions jutting out at you with surprising wildness as if they were waving their arms impatiently and angrily; and to add to their complexity they are composed of an infinite number of differently coloured materials and textures, just like the drawing-rooms inside, which I likened to drunken brawls. It is our mad rush for wealth and material things that feeds on advertisement, until our very houses shout at us for attention.

A little more love of peace and quietness and a greater readiness to take a seat behind nature, instead of crushing her under our feet, will help to make our buildings more pleasing and restful. Greater spirituality, in fact, should blot out all material vulgarities. Our wonderful resources for gaining knowledge and culture has not made our work more beautiful. The most intimate knowledge of the history of Greece and Rome, what has it done for our buildings? It has failed hideously, and stimulated pride in scholarship. It has made us vain, but not thoughtful; arrogant, but not emotional. Better had we sought out the immortal thoughts and feelings that guided the spirits of ancient times.

Materialism has been the seed we have sown, and we have only tares to reap. Or let us say, we are at the end of a hideous night, and now awakening to the necessity of sowing living seed. All around are signs of renewed activity and reaction from materialism.

Whether you be architects or craftsmen of any sort, you are all interested in home life; so I now invite you all to fancy you are architects, and commissioned to build me a home. Shall I tell you of some charming villa, say in Italy, or Kamschatka, that I have seen and liked. Shall I dwell on my own taste, and so control your actions and feelings; because I am paying you, must you be my humble servant? No! My dear architects, let me rather marry your spirits to my own, and see what broad principles of thought and feeling are there already, to work in unison with me – affections common to all men. I will be no slave-driver, but we will work together for good. A united effort on our part to express the best thought and feeling, and foster the noblest ideas, will surely tend to the production of more good than if, with perfect taste, imposed thoughts and feelings upon you, or for one moment forgot that you had a conscience to obey as tender as my own.

We have only £3,000 to spend on land and building; we have to be in easy reach of a railway, and live with constant thought for economy of time and money. We have a site with trees on undulating ground. The view to the north-west is lovely. But the main road is also on the north-west. Will it not then be better for soul and body to capture the early morning sun, which is never too

hot in England, and is a great purifying influence, rather than allow the beautiful view to direct the placing of our rooms? A view can be enjoyed out of doors; it is surely second in value to the sunshine. The latter is very inspiring, and will cheer the sad spirit at breakfast, much more than the view. And it is in the early morning that the spirits of the hyper-sensitive and physically weak need the encouragement of sunshine. So we surely all agree that that which most contributes to spiritual health is the most desirable. We then have fixed a south-east or east aspect, and our prospect will be best from our hall, or staircase, or passages, on the north-western side of the house, where we are more often passing along than resting. No one in his senses will sit for hours in the house, looking at the view he has every day, no matter how beautiful it is. But it does us all good to have the stimulating joy of a good view intermittently, and for a short time. We enjoy it more if so presented to us.

Our next care in fixing the position of the house is that we should show no want of reverence for trees or natural levels of ground. We can never build anything half as beautiful as a tree; and we agree that human reverence for nature is not a quality to be despised, so we will choose our ground with due regard to all upon it. And for the sake of simplicity and repose, select the most level part. You will express decision and determination by forming a straight path or drive from the road to the house, making it wide to suggest hospitality and welcome, and avoiding any wobbling indecision, which only suggests weakness.

Our need for economy will keep us near the entrance boundary, that is, the north-western side; our love of privacy, which is very much a matter of temperament, may be a good reason for leaving little or no garden between the house and the road. On a small site the entrance must be very evident, and overlooks the whole area on the roadside of a house. You may not quite share my love of privacy, but if I ask for it to be considered, even if some may think it a weakness, I shall not be asking you to violate your consciences.

Let our love of privacy be encouraged into reticence, and, let our building play into the hands of nature. As a sympathetic accompanist, both in colour and form, we can show a desire to be subdued and quiet and restful, modestly hiding behind trees, if possible, and not towering into the air to look down on them with scorn. We may be sure that all who behold our countryside will regard our building, whatever it be, as of second importance to the natural scenery, and will be most grateful to us if we do not mar their enjoyment. It will affect our design materially if we both feel a desire not to hurt the feelings of any beholder. A jagged, angular outline against the sky, a forest of chimney-stacks, or roofs of purple slate edged with pink binding, complicated, intricate masses piercing every space – there is no end to our power to disturb and excite our fellow-creatures; and we do it often quite needlessly from want of thought and because we do not believe that sincere desire not to be noisy and restless will help us when we are designing. Furthermore, a feeling for simplicity and restfulness will result in economy of labour and material, and perhaps leave us with a little spare cash to devote to one spot of sculpture, one point of pre-eminent interest in which we might suggest some merriment like the old grotesques. If, however, we use figure sculpture, let it not be a gentleman without his hat, or a lady with nothing on. For in this climate such exhibitions only excite our pity and discomforting sympathies. Hence the severe convention that the old workers always adopted. If the material selected to represent our merry thought is handled with due regard to its intrinsic nature, we shall be helped to feel that the image is only stone or wood or lead, or whatever it be, invested with ideas – in short, a symbol, the idea of which so dominates that our pity is not aroused. The more materialistic our minds, the more realistic our art. Realistic rendering of material qualities should only be allowed so far as is absolutely necessary for the force of spiritual expression. For the sake of repose, let it be at rest, and not representative of perpetual

or sudden action. All workers associate home with the idea of rest. Repose, we hope for, even in the vilest cockney villa. Then must we surely try to suggest in our building the possibility of gaining our heart's desire.

So you will gather your flues together, and collect the rooms in such sequence that will enable you to cover them with one roof, or as few roofs as possible.

Planes at varying angles catch and cut up the lights and shades and add to complexity, to the destruction of repose and breadth.

If I am wrong in desiring simplicity and repose, and you honestly feel it to be wrong, your clear and only duty is to throw up the commission, for we are at variance on one of the main principles which is going to affect our action throughout the entire building and its furnishing. But supposing we are agreed in the belief that the highest developments of character are only possible under peaceful and simple conditions of mind, that war and turmoil are only the extreme conditions of a want of repose and simplicity – then it is obvious that the home should be the most peaceful, restful, simple servant we possess. And we will run our thoughts over the whole place to see wherein ideas in harmony with and conducive to these feelings can be reasonably manifested. My architect will gladly join with me in warm welcome to friends, and kindly sympathetic thought for domestics. That will make us hesitate to spend an undue amount of money on entrance hall and reception-rooms, which would necessitate shabby quarters for servants, and greater pretence to luxury and display than our means could sustain. The visitor must not be disappointed when he becomes intimate, and is allowed into the more private parts of the house. The wide door, like the arms we open to receive our friends, is right and suggests generous feeling, but more than sufficient height in our door only gives the idea of magnificence, which would only lead to disappointment if the rooms, for economy, are low. The same character and scale must be observed throughout, from the beginning to the remotest corner. We need to be consistent, to be sincere. Neatness and order we require in every detail, because they are associated with precision and order of mind, the keeping of appointments and prompt attention to engagements – faithfulness, in fact. These are habits of mind greatly encouraged by neatness and order. And to suggest these qualities few materials are more effective than many.

If the money at our disposal will not pay for oak joinery everywhere, then let us have it nowhere. It is far more durable than painted deal, and more expensive in the first instance; therefore to have the entrance and reception-rooms in oak, and the rest deal, at once suggests the 'whited sepulchre'. As Augustus Welby Pugin said of the dissenting chapel-builders of his day, 'And then they thought the Lord to cheat by building the back parts shabby.' If we are to encourage our carpenters and bricklayers to be conscientious in their work in hidden places, we must set them the example by designing our house to have every part of equal quality, so far as is consistent with the use of each part. That is, fitness must be studied. But it would not be consistent with fitness to use deal in my kitchen that I might have oak in my hall; it would be regarded by some as mere vulgar display. One little jewel-like spot of stained glass would be better than any great expanse of material more costly than the average material used throughout the building.

My architect will give me ventilation and a system by which the air of my rooms is kept slowly moving, thus avoiding draughts. He will not make my rooms high, and thus deceive me into thinking them healthy. Height must be controlled by the length of my rooms. Because we are seeking to produce the feeling of repose, low rooms will help us greatly, and give us the benefit of reflected light, and allow of smaller windows. You will tell me, small windows, when rightly placed, in conjunction with white ceilings and friezes, may produce very light rooms, and have the advantage of preserving equable temperature throughout the year. You will so

save me the expense of elaborate blinds and curtains, and give me all the sun I need without the scorching or glare on the hottest summer days; again simplifying not only the furnishing of my rooms, but the cleaning and warming of them.

It is pleasant to feel well protected when the weather is disturbed and angry; so you will not give me great sheets of plate glass, which look like holes in the walls both from within and from without. I much appreciate your regarding me, and suggesting to others that I am to be regarded as a precious thing, to be protected from all violent intrusion.

We like, on entering a house, to see our wants anticipated. A warm fire in the hall is akin to a warm welcome. You will provide a lavatory for coats and hats, boots etc, so that mud need not be taken upstairs – as we feel that coats and hats without a soul inside are distressful objects, so they should be stowed away out of sight.

The same material for my entrance hall and lavatory floors will save me the sensation of change and loss of repose; and it will be comforting to feel I am doing no damage before my hob-nailed boots are taken off.

You will think of my taste for music and give me bells each with its individual voice, to be rung with wire in the old-fashioned way, so that through them we may express our feelings and denote our personality. The electric ring only stabs without revealing the assassin: it cannot call like a bell.

The number of servants kept and the extent of my family we may assume you to be aware of; such are purely material conditions that are of great importance, but may be omitted for the moment, while we are considering the less material character of the home.

It is desirable to so plan the house, if it is not too small, that the servants shall enjoy the same freedom to be reasonably merry as I wish to enjoy myself. My noise should be shut off from them, as theirs is from me. The laughing and talking in which one does not participate is not always pleasant. But my architect will find it hard to give me that quality, if I am not very generous. So if I am ungenerous with my money, it behoves me when in the house to be very generous in my sympathy, and bear the noisy servant with patience. Double doors and double windows are delightful harbingers of quiet. But am I reasonable in expecting such expensive qualities for the amount I have to spend? And will not greed show his ugly face in my house if I ask for too much? If you be my friends, you will check my greediness. Many must suffer if it is allowed to prevail, and then all sorts of nasty ideas will appear. The sitting and dining rooms may be likened to human heads. The door is the mouth, through which many good things may pass. The windows are the eyes, through which we may see the beauties that are superhuman, and the fireplace is the heart of the room, or the countenance of the whole face. If it is a well fire, low down and dejected, it looks cringing and lazy. But if it is high up above the hearth, it seems standing as a good servant ready for service. Here I am, it says, ready to warm all who come near; I am not trying to hide my head in the ashes. Behold my wide, open mantelpiece, broad and simple as if to make room for many. The natural flame and flicker and smoke are so rich and lively in their movement, all the arts of man cannot compete with such form and colour; so my reverent architect will take very good care not to oppose his hand-made lustres and elaborate combinations of textures and colours that will rival the fire's charms and make us indifferent to both in the end. The idea that the burning wood or coal is the centre of the interest in the fireplace, and that grate and hearth and fender and fire-irons all its humble servants, need not prevent these accessories from being pregnant with delicate grace and lively thought and feeling. All we ask is that they be reticent and unassertive in colour; never for a moment put into competition with the super-human fire; and I don't want to be frightened out of my life by having a hearth that will break if I by accident drop the poker.

You will so proportion my fireplaces to their rooms that where I

enjoy the company of my family and friends, there shall be ample room for all to gather round, and feel the moment they enter that there is room. It is painful to enter a room and feel you are disturbing any one. This feeling can be avoided by you, if I allow you to build and furnish my home. If all I care about is the needs of the flesh, I shall save a lot of thought and feeling by handing over my home to a universal provider to be furnished and equipped. All the thinking that will be needed will be to tell him what foreign style or ancient period he is to follow. And even that amount of thought I may save myself, as it is only one of price. If we fix that, Mr Upholsterer will do all the rest. But why should we turn the house into a co-operative store, and advertise everybody's mustard and credulity, when all the while my architects are bursting with thoughts and feeling that people read novels and go to churches and theatres to think about, because they have not got attractive ideas in their own homes? Here, in this hall, are the same elements that have written volumes in stone and wood, glass and painting, and all literature besides. We only need to turn the current of our energies on everyday articles of use, and they shall speak to us of beautiful thoughts and feelings, as they spoke to our forefathers in the 13th and 14th centuries.

With this difference, that we have changed our mode of life, and many methods of work, many materials and material advantages have been discovered which must change our forms, but need not change our feelings. The love and protection of home has not, or should not have died out with battlements. We have now to protect our homes from the onslaught of the fraudulent, the insincere, the gross, and the ugliness of thoughtlessness and animalism. I need you to barricade my doors not against battering rams, but against the poison of pretentious ornament and elaborate shams.

Will you help me show my respect for local conditions of climate and soil, not ignoring altogether the modern facilities of transit, but as far as possible selecting your material to harmonise with local character in colour and texture? For instance, can there be any harm in using green slate from Wales or Cumberland in counties that produce no slate, considering that the green slate is far more harmonious with nature than red tiles, and makes a more durable roof? Then, again, you will tell me oak was once the most durable and plentiful building wood in England. Now we can get it from Austria better seasoned but much softer. It is more quickly grown than English oak, and therefore easier to work, but not so beautiful; and the latter is hard to get well seasoned. Our habits of looking for material excellences, fine finish, smooth, polished surfaces and perfect workmanship, has made us shy at English oak joinery, when it opens at the joints, cracks, and winds and gets uneven. Are we right in adopting the French taste for French polish in this way? I think not, and give you leave to pardon any roughness, provided it is due to natural causes and not to man's carelessness or fraud.

In old time, when the carriage of materials was more costly, local material was more used, and only the vain rich made use of imported material. Vain we call them, because we think it was vanity of wealth or travel that led them to such display. And so we have come to notice and be greatly charmed by the characteristic colour and texture in the old buildings of different districts. There is a harmony in nature's materials both in colour and texture, and you notice it among the peasants of some counties still: their eyes and their dress harmonise with the colour of the rocks and soil, and are eloquent in their appeal to our sense of fitness. It is when you get near great towns you find materialism more pronounced than spirituality. Then all sorts of influences of a material nature come in to destroy the intuitive grace of the ignorant peasant, as if Providence forced us to develop our own faculties by withdrawing our intuitions where opportunities for self-culture were more abundant, so leaving us to feel that we have to find out the laws of harmony and beauty for ourselves. We have begun by floundering.

but we are in health, because we are conscious of and dissatisfied with our floundering.

You, my good architects, can help to steady my tottering by your manly defence of those ideas and feelings, which you feel within your own breasts, and know to be of universal esteem. The repose and breadth of the rooms I leave you to arrange as I ask for no cornices which produce lines of shade, no ornament on my ceiling which I cannot look at without paining my neck – ornamental ceilings are fit only for large rooms and halls. Then with deep frieze and picture-rail high enough to take pictures of the right size for my rooms, the utmost effect of length and width will be given to each room, which in a small house is more valuable than height. By omitting the cornices you avoid emphasising the height of the rooms, and you also omit so many dust traps. To some minds the very absence of these things suggests cleanliness and order. I want no finger-plates, because they suggest dirty fingers in my house.

You will arrange my rooms with their furniture so that each piece has the place most suited for its use, with light helping to make it more useful, so that we feel no single bit of furniture is quarrelling with or harassing another, and everything shall have its useful purpose. Thus proportion and grace and the intention to serve a useful purpose will provide the very best elements of beauty, and ornaments will be little required. If you give me one or two in each room, such as pictures and sculpture, they will be infinitely more impressive when alone than when in a crowd. You cannot listen to two people talking at the same time, so we don't want a thousand ornaments to be bawling at us all day long. The fewer ornaments you give me, the more keenly I shall demand that each shall be of high quality. Again we feel that simplicity involves perfection. The more simple the ornament, the better must be its proportion, the more graceful and the more noble its appeal to my mind and heart. By your great discrimination you enhance the value of the artist's work, you draw special and careful attention to it, and allow it to engage undivided attention, which is far kinder to all concerned than plastering the walls with lovely pictures from floor to ceiling, giving the effect that I was infinitely proud of my wealth, and infinitely indifferent to my friends' enjoyment. I would rather delight you with the contemplation of one ornament, than weary you with a museum full, however beautiful the objects might be. Museums are places for special study, and when used as such are most valuable.

When you design my tables and chairs, you will think of the machine that is going to help in the making, and choose such shapes as are easily worked by machinery. When labour was cheap and men uneducated and less fit for more intellectual work, the legs and arms of tables and chairs were charmingly curved and formed by hand into fanciful shapes, and delight us still with their human subtlety. But now, alas, your wood comes to you machine-sawn and machine-planed, and the only thought and feeling you can put into your furniture must be through a mechanical medium. So right proportions and the natural qualities of the wood, the suitable colour and texture of the upholstery make up your limited vocabulary. You can tell me if the master and mistress have a sufficient sense of importance to give themselves high-back armchairs to dine in, while their family and friends have low backs and no arms. If all had high backs, by the way, it would be difficult for the waiters, unless the chairs were very wide apart.) This idea of the importance of host and hostess is not to be despised; it is closely related to ceremonial of all kinds, and ceremony was always associated with kingship, and kingship with self-control. The origin of the crown, you remember, was to symbolise self-control by the binding round, controlling, and confining of the head with a band or ring. It was believed once that self-control was the first and essential quality for the control of others. The nimbus of the saint first of all denoted this quality, until men became materialistic, and then self-control was translated into power and glory. Crowns are

now used to denote splendour. If I give splendid pecuniary assistance to my political party, they will procure for me a splendid crown. Then shall you address me as Your Lordship. But first you must be lord over me; that is, guide and control my affections, and express the better side of my nature, as in harmony with the better side of your own. You may find the ceremonial ideas dependent on my social position in a great measure; but not wholly. Wealth fixes social position in our days, but breeding or heredity settles instincts. So you have to find out if I have a taste for putting on my boots in the dining-room or not, and many other little habits which are fairly innocent and in no way material to the moral and spiritual verities that we are most concerned with. The less attention is drawn to class differences, the better; so I shall leave it to you to suit your designs to my little idiosyncrasies, remembering, as you will do, that the vital thoughts and feelings are common to all, and if there is a difference it is only one of degree.

Enough has been said to lead you to introduce ornament, that is, machine-made mouldings and pattern and decoration of any kind, only when it is needed on practical grounds, such as the moulding of a skirting board to avoid the wide ledge for dust at the top, or the rounding, splaying, or moulding of exposed angles, or the emphasising of horizontalism with a view to suggest repose, or the binding together of points of interest by strings of moulding, delicate lines that express unity and rhythm. You will naturally concentrate the effect of richness and focus the attention on those objects that have most to say to us, things which appeal most readily and profoundly to our thoughts and feelings; you will hesitate to waste mouldings on places and things, when the addition of such can add no interest and no joys. The mere effect of meaningless elaboration is called by some the effect of richness. But we want real richness, not the effect of it. And real richness is not possible without thought and feeling. Miles of machine-made mouldings cannot arouse a moment's pleasant thought or feeling.

The effect of real richness is only obtainable by having precious materials, elaboration concentrated and harmoniously arranged, and eloquent with thought and feeling.

Your attention to this principle is going to affect your design of every detail, including spoons and forks. It leads to the full use of the individual characteristics of the different materials we are using, so that interests gained by the observation of natural qualities, and is not dependent on artificial elaboration. The full force of our thought and feeling not coming into competition with nature, but added to it only in certain places. Everything we have to handle may be so fashioned as to show indifference to our feelings or a desire to please. It will either attract or repel our touch.

We do not run to embrace the hedgehog, nor does any one desire to wring the neck of an apostle – yet we find the apostle on the handle of spoons. The significance of which – but for our demand for fitness – we should be expected to applaud. But as a handle it is no better than our fire-irons, door knobs, knockers, and innumerable other things we have to touch, which are cast and chased or wrought in rugged irregularity, as much to say, if you come near me you shall be stabbed and bruised; instead, the idea of friendliness and loving help could be suggested by making all our handles not only pleasant to feel, but looking attractive to feel. The same may be expected of caskets, inkstands, ash-trays, and everything that we have to touch. Your desire to serve me well and avoid paining me must help to convey pleasant thoughts and feelings.

You have my guest chamber to arrange. Will it not charm the visitor more, to find every little want anticipated, writing and reading provided for him so that he may retire and yet be entertained, if he so desires it, rather than to find his room a perfect reproduction of the bedchamber of a foreign potentate? If my friend be an archaeologist, no doubt at first he will be overjoyed to find a room of revived antiquities, but may end by swearing because he cannot find a button hook. But if the room be of the

former type, will he not exclaim, 'Oh, bless mine host!' and go down to dinner with an appetite?

In olden time, when people believed in knights and fairies, the four-post bedstead suggested protection while you slept, and gave an air of solemnity and importance to the bed which was once regarded as the soul of the bedchamber. But since then the sanitary expert has come along, and in his craze for perfect physical conditions, he made us all believe we needed more fresh air than our forefathers, and iron and brass bedsteads were found to be capable of glitter and tawdry effect. They were cold homes for insects and inhospitable alike to them and all who liked glowing thoughts. The designers were so cold-blooded that they arranged metal balls conveniently high to chill your hands upon. The one idea was air space – air space. Are prophets and poets bred on air space? If not, what is?

The proper ventilation of the bedroom and healthy conditions of rest do not entirely depend on air space or metal bedsteads. Indeed, the old fourposter was much more calculated to inspire right thoughts and feelings, and in a properly ventilated bedroom is as healthy and clean as any metal atrocity.

Another important element you will have to consider is the carpets. I will not ask you to provide them with pattern, because pattern hides dirt. The fact that dirt is merely hidden ought only to satisfy the ostrich. He is the gentleman, I believe, who thinks he is not seen when his head is hidden in the sand. We have already come to the conclusion that pattern to be worth anything must contain thought and feeling; so the floor is hardly the place to look for it, unless it be in a small mat that is not cut up by furniture. Besides, we must remember that the floors, like the walls, are backgrounds to things of greatest interest and importance. And therefore the pattern, if we have any, should not interfere with the attractiveness of the objects seen against it. That is, if we want to avoid quarrelsome, noisy confusion. Remember you are considering an average man's home. There are places, of course, where handsome and elaborate floors and ceilings are most fit. The Persians have shown us what perfection the carpet may be capable of, but they have also shown us how to use it when made. They do not cover it with little tables of plush, and use it as background to museum and bazaar articles.

Much that we have been considering is not applicable to the rich man's palace or public building. When speaking of the fireplace many of you will have recalled the exquisite examples of richly carved and emblazoned chimney-pieces in which the symbolic interest of the decoration is made of greater importance than the fire by reason of its being charged with human thought and feeling, making it in some measure a more intellectual treat to behold than the first which arouses a material and sensuous kind of pleasure.

In like manner magnificence of all kinds was excluded by my poverty. My station in life must determine your indulgence in the rendering of ideas most fit and harmonious. You will not hang around my hall the dead heads of wild beasts, unless you think me a bloodthirsty murderer, vain of my killing powers; and even then your better natures would check your encouragement of my vice.

Let natural qualities strike the keynote of your design. If you are building a garden pool – think first of the water, its crystalline quality and reflecting power, which will be strengthened by having a dark material as a background or lining, so emphasising the chief charm of the water, and showing a proper reverence for its natural beauty. But on the other hand you would provide a washhand basin with inside as pure white as you can find, because with a small quantity of water that will accentuate the transparency and purity which attract one to wash in it.

It is in this way we should reverently follow nature's suggestions, and not be absorbed by our own sensuous likes or dislikes of certain colours and textures.

If, then, in building for me you find so many conditions and

feelings to be thought of and served, every one you have to work for must in like manner furnish you with similar conditions, varying as the personality varies. And if we will respect all these variations in character and temperament, it will add enormously to our pleasure and interest in the work of life.

Drumming and drilling human beings into the same conventional mould is madness and folly.

Instead of studying the five orders of architecture, we had far better study the five orders of Englishmen: The really noble, the would-be noble, the cannot-be noble, the sometimes noble, and the half noble. As Pope said, 'The proper study of mankind is man.' This would give immense vitality to our work, and we should feel the perpetual progress of the immortal spirit of things. It is enervating to dwell perpetually on dead and perishing materials. We instinctively recoil from all ideas of decay, and rejoice in the permanence and stability of nature's laws; and so we try to build with imperishable material and select all those that are most lasting. This quality of permanence and stability is only relatively possible in the material world. But it is the very life of the spirit. The idea of durability is one we will sacrifice much to convey.

The use of animal life is dependent on our spiritual activity. If we are thoroughly materialistic, we prefer fruit and flowers in our wallpapers and fabrics, and feel hurt by the mutilation of birds or animals when cut round furniture or upholstered on to seats. But if the rendering of animals in our decoration is so conventional that we feel only that the spirit of the beast is recorded, no pain is felt. The martlet in heraldry never pained any one, but a very realistic bird with all its feathers carefully drawn and its legs cut off would pain us at once, the dominant impression or idea being, a very material bird injured, mutilated, and maimed. While, in the case of the martlet, the illustration is of the bird spirit; it is a generic bird, not any particular species. And our thought is kept in the region of spiritual rather than material realities. It would be well if this distinction could be understood and appreciated more generally, because there is a vast amount of prejudice against the introduction of animal forms in our decoration which is entirely due to our materialistic attitude of mind. Materialism has been the cradle of realism in art. The life of animals might be made a source of stimulating joy to our own lives. We all feel a sense of pleasure when the wild birds sing, and the idea of their love-making and aspiring and growing more good and useful every day is delightful, and ought to be recorded in our everyday articles of use, as well as in our natural history books. What is it that makes us all delight in Shakespeare's work? Is it not his own spiritual delight in spiritual ideas: in life, in thoughts and feelings, rather than in things?

You shall perch four eagles on my bedposts to drive away bad spirits, as the Byzantines believed, and rest my fire-irons on the backs of brass cats, not dogs, for cats are the most faithful fireside dwellers. On my table let there be fruit and flowers and one or two *symbolic* animals, and let the foods be handed round. A boiled potato is not inspiring, however well it may be served; and, moreover, the momentary glance at food is more appetising, therefore it is better on a side table.

The living, conscious life is far more healthy to dwell upon than anything that is dead or lifeless. So we desire to add thought and emotion to all things around us.

A well-known paint manufacturer told me the other day that when his men brought him a new colour or new mixing they were pleased with they always spoke of it as 'she'. 'Isn't she a beauty?' they would say; showing their pleasure and interest in their work led to their endeavour to invest it with spiritual significance, to give it a personality. Surely it is a natural instinct to attach spiritual ideas to the materials that please us. Were this feeling more common we should be less led away by fashions in things.

In lighting by day and by night, invite you to bestow much care. The essential idea suggested by light is activity, and the chief

material consequence is cleanliness. We all like abundance of light for work or play. It stimulates action. But we do not want windows that have to be covered up by the upholsterer morning, noon, and night. Precious as the light is, we must not be blind to the soothing mystery and charm of shadow and twilight. The suggestions of repose and mystery are sublime, and as necessary as the brilliant light. To light up an ordinary room all over at night is to destroy all sense of repose. Again observe nature, how she lights by day and by night. There is always one dominating point most brilliant and never more than one, attended by countless degrees of subordinate brilliancy in reflections around it. The old builders understood the value of a dim religious light far better than this materialistic age. So in my dining-room you can suggest by your method of lighting the splendour of my guests and the richness of flowers and fruits on my table, while contrasting them with the solemn mystery of the gloom all round the room. When I look across the table into the faces of my family I do not want to see them confused with ornaments, and furniture of any kind behind them, but to behold the guardian angels hovering in the shade, or the glittering haloes that

my good spirit may perceive.

We have alluded to many trivial details of domestic life, believing that great ends have small beginnings, and that if the thin end of the wedge of spiritual significance can be driven in among the common objects of life, it will raise our interest and stimulate our higher nature and lead to noble thought and feeling by which we hope to advance in character and conduct and brighten many a dark place in this vale of tears.

The only instruction I have, then, to give you, amounts to this: Think of the needs of the spirit more than of the flesh. Then, and then only, shall we witness really good and great architecture, really good carpentry, and really good work of any kind.

From T Raffles Davison (editor), The Arts connected with Building: Lectures on craftsmanship and design, delivered at Carpenter's Hall, London Wall, for the Worshipful Company of Carpenters by RW Schultz, CFA Voysey, E Guy Dawber, Laurence A Turner, A Romney Green, MH Baillie Scott, Chas Spooner and J Starkie Gardner, London, 1909.