

I think the condition which has made *l'Art Nouveau* possible is a distinctly healthy development, but at the same time the manifestation of it is distinctly unhealthy and revolting. Was not all traditional art that has ever lived the direct outcome of noble character which has a sort of divine intuition behind it? The Art of to-day seems void of intuition and shows no sign of reverence. Atheism, conceit, and apish imitation seem to be the chief features. Like the emancipated slaves, we have gone back into savagery on being emancipated from tradition. But this is no argument for slavery. What we need now is more religious earnestness and conscientiousness, and real style will in the end result from it. I believe artists all over the world are feeling more and more that personal character is more important than archaeological knowledge, and fidelity more than executorial skill. Surely *l'Art Nouveau* is not worthy to be called a style. Is it not merely the work of a lot of imitators with nothing but mad eccentricity as a guide; good men, no doubt, misled into thinking that Art is a debauch of sensuous feeling, instead of the expression of human *thought* and feeling combined, and governed by reverence for something higher than human nature?

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"I come not bring peace, but a sword," to cut down a popular idol, and win allegiance to an older, a more healthy, and more universal principle.

First, we must clear our minds of all conceptions of symmetrical elevations, made after the likeness of temples, and return once more to the Gothic principle of evolving our homes out of local conditions and requirements, once more paying due regard and respect to natural conditions, both climatic and geological, and above all, to a love, reverence, and obedience to the laws of fitness, fitness to our aspirations and needs. Let us give up masquerading as Greeks, and sincerely express our natural characteristics. The classical idol has reigned long enough; it must be cast out, because it is a false expression of our climate and character. It was a glorification of ceremonial, and in its earliest forms confined to the Temple. Man's habits, customs, conditions and ideas have entirely changed, and we have many practical problems of domestic economy to engage our attention. We must approach such problems with open minds ready for all healthy development, and be prepared to accept condition which we cannot alter, such as the advent of the machine, and the improved conditions of transit and commerce. We must be prepared, if need be, to use marble from Italy, if our country cannot produce material equally suitable for our needs. But we need not feign Italian sentiments or cloak ourselves with the airs and graces of foreigners. We must shake off the fashionable convention of obedience to style, and dare to be sincerely ourselves, and recognise our limitations.

The great artist Wren, with his exquisite sense of proportion, has made us believe that classical expression in architecture will suit any climate; in other words, that quality and quantity of light and natural climatic and geographical conditions have nothing whatever to do with fine architecture. Because he was an artist he has pleased us with his buildings: his qualities have led us astray, and we are now building all our town halls after the manner of St. Paul's, because the county and town councillor thinks that is the finest example of what modern architecture should be. He recognises the Renaissance style, and finds that if he advocates it, his

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electors are less likely to condemn his judgment than if he sought for fitness of purpose, and condition, regardless of style.

The clamouring for style is merely a cloak to hide our want of discrimination, and many think that the establishment of a national style would make it easy for them to be in the fashion; most people wish to be in the fashion as to taste. The discernment of fitness needs careful consideration of many subjects, and a wise, brave judgment, which the average man finds beyond his power or inclination. The architectural profession has done its best to encourage the adoption of the style called English Renaissance, because it is possible for the average man to obtain a degree of proficiency in it; it is easily crammed, and is a sure crutch for the halt and the lame. The term English, as applied to Renaissance, is inaccurate, and a dishonest attempt to make an entirely foreign style appear national; but I do not wish to quarrel over the little difference there may be between what is called Italian and English Renaissance. All we need here to make clear is that all Renaissance architecture is conceived on a definite classical principle, diametrically opposed to the principle of Gothic. The former is deductive, while the latter is inductive. In other words, Renaissance is a process by which plans and requirements are more or less made to fit a conception of a more or less symmetrical elevation, or group of elevations. The design is conceived from the outside of the building and worked inwards. Windows are made of a size necessary to the pleasant massing of the elevations, rather than to fit the size and shape of rooms.

The Gothic process is the exact opposite; outside appearances are evolved from internal fundamental conditions; staircases and windows come where most convenient for use. All openings are proportioned to the various parts to which they apply, and the creation of a beautiful Gothic building instead of being a conception based on a temple made with hands, is based on the temple of a human soul. The Baron or peasant planned his house to express his daily aspirations, customs and needs. It is quite true that architecture has progressed much more in domestic than in public building. We set to work in the one case to study the conditions and requirements, and make a good plan, and from it evolve a good elevation—that is, when we are engaged on domestic work. But for the alderman and councillor we conceive a might elevation, a true aldermanic corporation, a fatness and display, behind which we hope to accommodate the policeman.

The finest architecture the world has ever seen has always been the honest expression of human needs and aspirations. And this is equally true of the noblest classic buildings. If we lived and thought and felt as Greeks, Greek architecture would be a true expression for us. This principle applies to every country throughout the habitable world. Why, then, should England turn her back on her own country and pretend that as she is such a born mongrel she can have no truly national architecture? Has she no national climate? Are her geological and geographical conditions the same as all other countries? Is there no difference between English or Italian men? The absurdity of the suggestion is irritating. No one denies strong national character to the British people. Why, then, do we so persistently try to ape the manners of foreigners? Why, because we have learnt how to travel abroad, should we despise our own country and its limitations? Why have we lost our patriotism, and adopted a foreign child to inherit and record our unfaithfulness? Surely a national style would be both possible and desirable as it was in the Tudor period, if allowed to develop out of natural conditions and requirements. It is the ingrafting of a foreign style, or manner of buildings, which is so poisonous and utterly subversive of any natural growth.

Do we not all desire peace, repose, protection, warmth, cheerfulness and sincerity, open, frank expression and freedom from chafing convention in our homes? Surely, then, the Gothic principle can help us to attain all these qualities. It sets the mind free to consider all the moral sentiments and mental and physical, emotions which, when properly classified and controlled, will form—as they have done in the past—the only sure foundation for our design. It is the craving for repose that leads us to make our houses long and low, and to avoid the multiplication of angles and divergent planes. Forked lightning is Nature's expression of unrest and disturbance; complexity of angles and planes is our forked lightning, and conveys unrest and disturbance. In like manner multitudinous mixtures of various materials, textures, colours and forms all disturb the sense of repose. All observant people will tell you how very tiring they find museums. The constant calls made by the various objects on the senses is very fatiguing. And yet it is sadly common to find drawing-rooms and whole houses more like museums than homes of grace and rest. People with such places show a keener love of display or sentimental regard for associations than a love of repose, and by this we are reminded once more of

the fact that it takes many different kinds of minds to make a world, and that it is really a great blessing that we do not all think alike. Therefore, in laying down the qualities we suppose necessary to make an ideal home, we must remember that when finished it cannot fit all men. All objects possess intrinsic qualities, having a direct influence on our minds and emotions, but, in addition, we invest them with associations. It is therefore necessary in arriving at a just valuation of anything, to enquire as to which of these operates the most forcibly. The useless ornament or grotesque may charm us by its associations, and be valued on that account. We all incline to the reverence of family heirlooms, when we know their history, and many ugly atrocities are thus sanctified. But to the uninitiated such objects can have no charm apart from their intrinsic worth. Therefore, we have to be on our guard, to see that all objects should charm by reason of those intrinsic qualities which appeal to all men.

There are certain qualities that may be regarded as essential to all classes of homes, but there are certain other qualities like grandeur, splendour, pomp, majesty and exuberance which are suitable only to comparatively few. In the category of qualities of general need, we should put repose, cheerfulness, simplicity, breadth, warmth, quietness in storm, economy of up-keep, evidence of protection, harmony with surroundings, absence of dark passages or places, evenness of temperature, making the home the frame to its inmates, for rich and poor alike will appreciate these qualities. The sense of privacy is not desired by all. The delicacy in feelings with regard to lavatory and cloak-room arrangements is one of breeding, varying in the different classes, but one that is to be encouraged in all by careful planning. The builder who places his lavatory on the half-landing, in view of main entrance or principal rooms, shows a want of delicate feeling; and if the public would consider such matters, they might do much to correct the error. They might have warmer houses by calling for solid floors, avoiding the presence of damp, cold air under the floors, and fire-places fed with air through small tubes direct from outside, so as to avoid draughts under doors and consequent cold feet; iron casements and stone windows would do away with rattling, draughty windows, and ventilation by means of air flues by the side of smoke flues, would allow of the height of rooms being in better proportion to their areas, and ventilated without draughts, so saving expense in building, furnishing, decorating and upkeep.

Thousands of unnecessary dust traps may be avoided with a little care without sacrificing any beauty. Miles of inane moulding are made and fixed in obedience to no law but that of thoughtless convention. We are henpecked by Dame Convention. Courage is needed to free us from the slavery in which we are living. Man goes on wasting his time and money on countless, necessary embellishments, because he is unable to face the change to greater simplicity, to break away from blind custom. The weakness of our imagination is a fruitful source of stagnation; we are doubtful as to what will be the effect of departing from established customs.

The popular idea that the excessive height of a room was conducive to its healthiness has led to our forgetting that there is a right proportion for every room, and that height only affects the time it takes to make a room unbearably unhealthy, unless it is provided with means for carrying off the vitiated air. A rightly proportioned room should not strike one as high or low. Then, again, persons accustomed to living in large or high rooms naturally feel the contrast on going into lower ones, and should not on that account conclude that the low rooms are in any way detrimental to mind or body. The rooms that are in good proportion to their size are easier to warm, to ventilate and to light. The nearer you keep the reflector to your work the brighter is your light, and if you can supplement direct light with reflected light from the ceiling, you may reduce the necessary area of your windows and save so far the chilling effect of excessive areas of glass without loss of cheerfulness. You save also in the accumulation of upholstery and consumption of coal.

Anyone may well ask, what is right proportion? Why, if my room is 18ft. by 12ft., may I not have it 10 or 12ft. high? The answer is that it would be wasteful, and, therefore unfit and ugly. Such a room 8ft. high would be just as healthy (if ventilated as above suggested), and more easy to clean, cheaper to build and to furnish, easier to warm and keep an even temperature, and much more bright and cheerful, because the ceiling would reflect light into every part. Against these advantages, I can think of no argument in favour of the greater height, except that gratification of a sentimental preference, association, no doubt, being the main—if not the only—foundation for this feeling. Many a room is made gloomy by its excessive height, and also made to look narrower. The height of a room may be made more noticeable by dark cornices of moulding or colour, and great contrast between the colour

of walls and ceiling. On the other hand, the height may be obscured by carrying the ceiling colour a few feet down the walls, and omitting the cornice mouldings, or keeping them very delicate. Whichever bias we may feel, whether for high or low rooms, the quality of cheerfulness is to all alike most desirable, and cannot be produced by height, though it may be destroyed by it. A predominance of horizontalism in any room is conducive to repose, and, on the other hand, any accentuation of vertical lines or spaces, suggests movement and absence of repose. We remain standing in our rooms only when we cannot be at rest. The sunset is more horizontal in effect than the sunrise, we are induced to rest by the one, and to be up and doing by the other, unless our taste is vitiated. Another condition that is destructive of repose is the multitudinous mixture of materials, colours, and textures, the cutting up and mingling of parts—like the modern fireplaces that have a raised hearth of one material in order to sink a hole in another, and is then surrounded by glazed earthenware, cast, wrought, dull, polished iron, brass or copper, then marbles and wood all at war with each other for the glory of attracting the most attention, and disturbing the peaceful reflections of the householder.

The burning wood or coal is our congenial friend, that sheds a warm glow over our affections; let us raise him up as we do the Host, and do honour to him by putting around him a suitable frame; but do not forget that the frame exists only for the picture.

Simplicity, sincerity, repose, directness, and frankness are moral qualities as essential to good architecture as to good men. All the culture derived from the study of existing buildings, foreign or otherwise, which reflect these qualities, will not enable us to reproduce them, unless we first have the love of them in ourselves; and the full recognition of these qualities will check the tendency to imitate foreign nations, or disregard our own national characteristics and conditions. A Chinese pagoda or Egyptian pyramid are no less exotic in an English park than a classic dome or portico, and our architects call them English Renaissance.

This importation of exotic architecture is belauded and regarded as an evidence of catholicity of taste, whereas it is really and truly the fruit of a want of taste, a want of sensibility to the fitness of things, and a direct outcome of feeble imagination. Men steal the expressions of others, because they are not honest enough to express their own. The so-called catholicity of taste shows itself

in many ways. Our homes are furnished and decorated with French, German, Italian, Persian and Indian designs of every description, until all harmony is lost, and all the pleasure derived is sensuous, and instead of looking for the expression of poetical ideas and moral sentiments, we are satisfied with the sensations of form, colour, texture and light and shade. Pattern, which should be a combination of thought and feeling—that is intellectual, spiritual and sensuous combined, is no longer so. The machine is found quite good enough to produce our ornament, as we are content to have it materialistic, and appealing to our lower sensuous nature only. The finest ornament in all countries, possesses a meaning, and has a message to the mind as well as the heart of man. How comes it, then, that we are satisfied with a Persian rug, without being able to interpret its symbolism, or derive from it one spark of intellectual light? Would it not be more simple and sincere to have a plain British rug with no pattern on it at all? It is quite logical to say I do not want to be edified, I only want my sense of colour, form and texture tickled; I do not want repose, or the effect of simplicity or frankness. I wish to live in a museum, and have anarchy throughout my home, and gather together all the tribes of the earth, or their manners and customs. Then, would it not be well to make your home in an hotel? But do not desecrate the sacred name by calling it Home.

Imagination breeds sympathy, and sympathy breeds love; therefore we do well to cultivate our imagination. The complexities of Nature are so vast that human eyes can discern only a suggestion of their infinity; hence the imagination is stimulated in the search for, and perception of, fresh truth. Our imagination ceases the moment we perceive the completion of any object; the limitation and finality shuts out the thought of the unknown and unseen, and the imagination is stilled. We cannot see the end of Nature's ways, so thoughts of fresh revelation, and suggestions of fresh light, are always revealing themselves to us. This fact should strengthen our desire for simplicity and breadth in our homes, that condition which is rather more suggestive than complete, leaving a field for the imagination. The sketch will often charm more than the completed picture, the value of a picture being more in what it suggests than in what it portrays—that is, in its spiritual significance. For the same reason a loving glance is more eloquent than a written chapter.

Try the effect of a well-proportioned room, with white-

washed walls, plain carpet and simple oak furniture, and nothing in it but necessary articles of use, and one pure ornament in the form of a simple vase of flowers, not a cosmopolitan crowd of all sorts, but one or two sprays of one kind, and you will then find reflections begin to dance in your brain; each object will be received on the retina, and understood, classified and dismissed from the mind, and you will be free as a bird to wander in the sunshine or storm of your own thoughts. Go then to an ordinary room, with its usual mixture of colours, forms and textures, useful and useless articles, and unless you wilfully avoid looking at anything, your brain will be pitchforked from sensation to sensation, with no clear impression or refreshing thought; you will be tired out, or dumbfounded, before the imagination will assert itself. The spirit is crushed and silenced by material qualities, and so are we grown sadly materialistic, and accustomed to regard our possessions as more real and more precious than our thoughts. But still, beauty is born only of the spirit, so our homes should be harbours of refuge for the weary brain or bleeding heart—protective, and peaceful.

The method of procedure I wish to advocate when any work has to be done is to put down all requirements tabulated in order of importance, then all conditions, from which two lists you will be able to formulate a third—of materials. Then ask the everlasting *why* are we doing this at all? Let motive strike the keynote of the tune of ideas, the key and rhythm of your song. You want (we will suppose) to make a home with all the qualities of peace and rest, protection and family pride—the privacy and mutual enjoyment, the hospitality and large-hearted generosity of proportion. The doors will be wide in proportion to height, to suggest welcome—not stand-offishly dignified, like the coffin lid, high and narrow for the entrance of one body only. Then in offices for servants' use, let them be cheerful, and not shabby and dark, as if it did not matter how you treated your servants because you were paying for their services. Some day men will be ashamed to do ugly things, and cheap and nasty treatment of servants will be regarded as dishonouring to the master. We need not lay down velvet pile before the kitchen range; fitness must always be religiously regarded, but to have your kitchen dresser and your necessary details ugly and shabby is not right or necessary. Ugliness is a poison wherever it is found, and harmful to all concerned in its making, as well as in its use, therefore to be spurned at all costs.

We must have light, bright, cheerful rooms, easily cleaned, and inexpensive to keep; not mocking the abodes of the more wealthy, but sincerely sufficient for our use. Our reference to the past should be only to learn the possibilities and limitation of the materials we propose to use. What domestic habits King Henry the Eighth chose to adopt may be very interesting to the historian and archaeologist, but they must not be allowed to usurp our thoughts to the exclusion of consideration of modern modes and manners. We are in the midst of life, and must concern ourselves with living things, thoughts, and feelings.

This manner of going to work is the exact opposite of the usual method, which is to seek the books and museums, or monuments of ancient time, or, worse still, the example of foreigners, and so save personal thought and enquiry. Many a student's faculties are stunted by his adoption, often without any enquiry, of the designs of others. The forms that are stolen not only make us ridiculous, but leave our faculties starved and our characters degraded. It will be admitted that this system of evolving out of requirements and conditions is much more stimulating to the common faculties of man than the adaptation of past examples to present needs. But the greatest advantage of all is the freedom it gives to the expression of our higher nature; all the lovely qualities of mind and heart are called upon, not to repeat like parrots, but chant in living strains the spiritual thoughts and emotions of living men, always developing and blossoming in more vigorous beauty, the more freed from petrifying convention and dogmatism. The noblest styles have ever been an unconscious growth, never a slavish conformity enforced by penalties. There is no freedom that man needs more than that of honest thought, and he is not encouraged in this by having the past perpetually held up to him as beyond his attainment. We have minds and hearts to-day as of old, and ought to cherish and value them as much as the dead ones of the past. I want to encourage my brother artists to believe in and rely more on themselves. Moral sentiments are our heritage, and the everlasting and imperishable verities of life, if not indeed the only life.

This recognition of moral sentiments as the basis of our work should strengthen our feeling of brotherhood, and cloud over those distinctions between skilled and unskilled, capable and incapable, while we rejoice rather in the thought that we all have within us the main springs of noble art.