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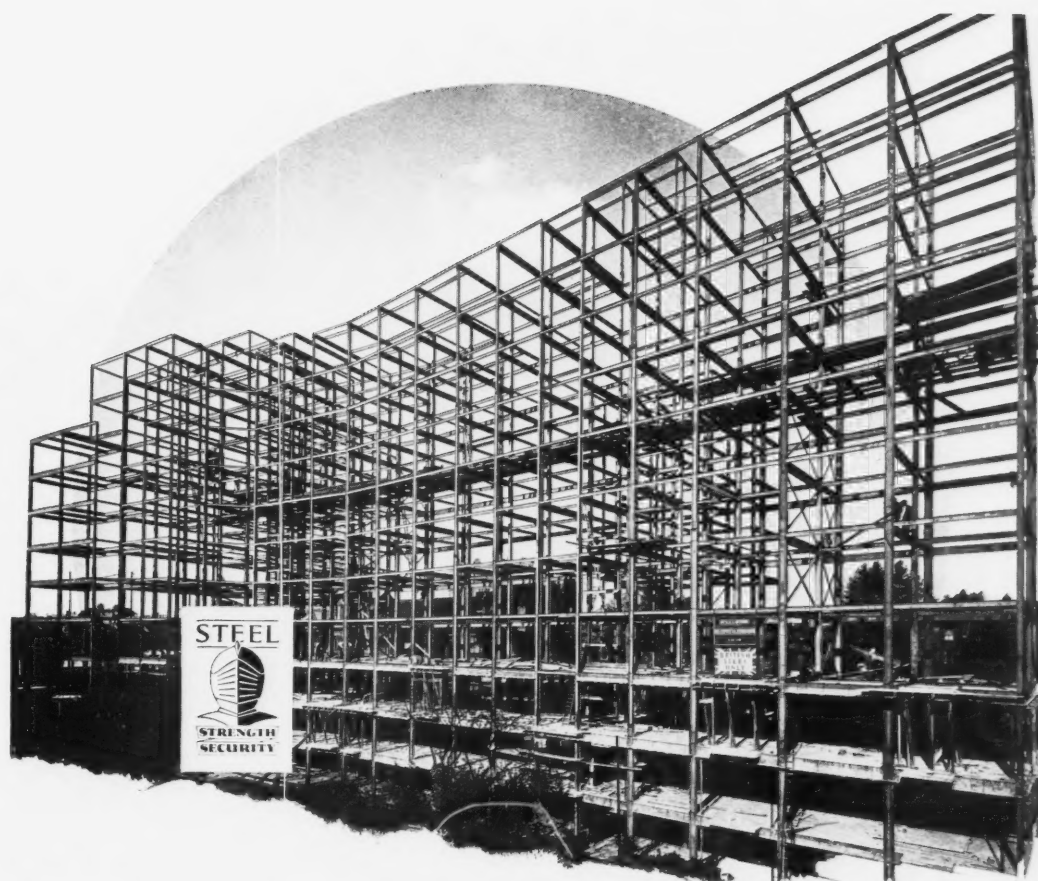
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CONTENTS

	PAGE
THE GLAMOROUS EAST. <i>By</i> Osbert Lancaster	101
VIIIPURI LIBRARY, FINLAND. <i>Alvar Aalto, architect. Described by</i> P. Morton Shand	107
THE ENGLISH TRADITION IN THE TOWN. <i>By</i> Thomas Sharp. III.—Universal Suburbia	115
THE ENGLISH SCENE: A VISITOR'S OBSERVATIONS. <i>Illustrated and described by</i> Herr Carl Hubacher	121
THE NAG'S HEAD, BISHOP'S STORTFORD. <i>E. B. Musman, architect</i>	124
CASTLE CIRCUS HOUSE, TORQUAY. <i>Stewart Thomson, architect</i>	128
MINOR MASTERS OF THE NINETEENTH CENTURY. NOTES ON SOME LESSER KNOWN ARCHITECTS. II.— <i>Samuel Beazley, a Victorian Vanbrugh. By</i> Dudley Harbron	131

	PAGE
STREET BY STREET. A Critical Tour of Famous Thoroughfares. <i>By</i> Professor C. H. Reilly. II.—The Strand (South Side)	134
BOOKS:	
BOOK OF THE MONTH: Cinema without Tears. <i>By</i> Anthony Baerlein	136
The Architect's Book of Reference. <i>By</i> Serge Chermayeff	138
British Heritage. <i>By</i> S. D.	138
THE ARCHITECTURAL REVIEW SUPPLEMENT:	
DECORATION: 13. A Remodelled Interior at Clifton. <i>Marcel Breuer and F. R. S. Yorke, architects</i>	139
THE DESIGNER IN INDUSTRY. <i>By</i> Herbert Read	143
INTERIOR HOUSE EQUIPMENT: BULLETIN OF STANDARD DESIGNS	144
INTERIOR EQUIPMENT. THE INDIVIDUAL SOLUTION: I	146

ANTHOLOGY:
Page 147

MARGINALLI:
Page 147

TRADE AND CRAFT:
Trade News and Reviews. *By* Brian Grant. Page xlv

Plates

THE CHINESE BRIDGE IN ST. JAMES'S PARK. <i>Designed by</i> John Nash	Plate i
BEAUTY FITTINGLY ENSHRINED (circa 1890)	Plate ii

Factories and Houses in the Vicinity of THE GREAT WEST ROAD	Plate iii
AT CLOSE RANGE: THE SOUTH DOWNS. PEACE-HAVEN	Plate iv

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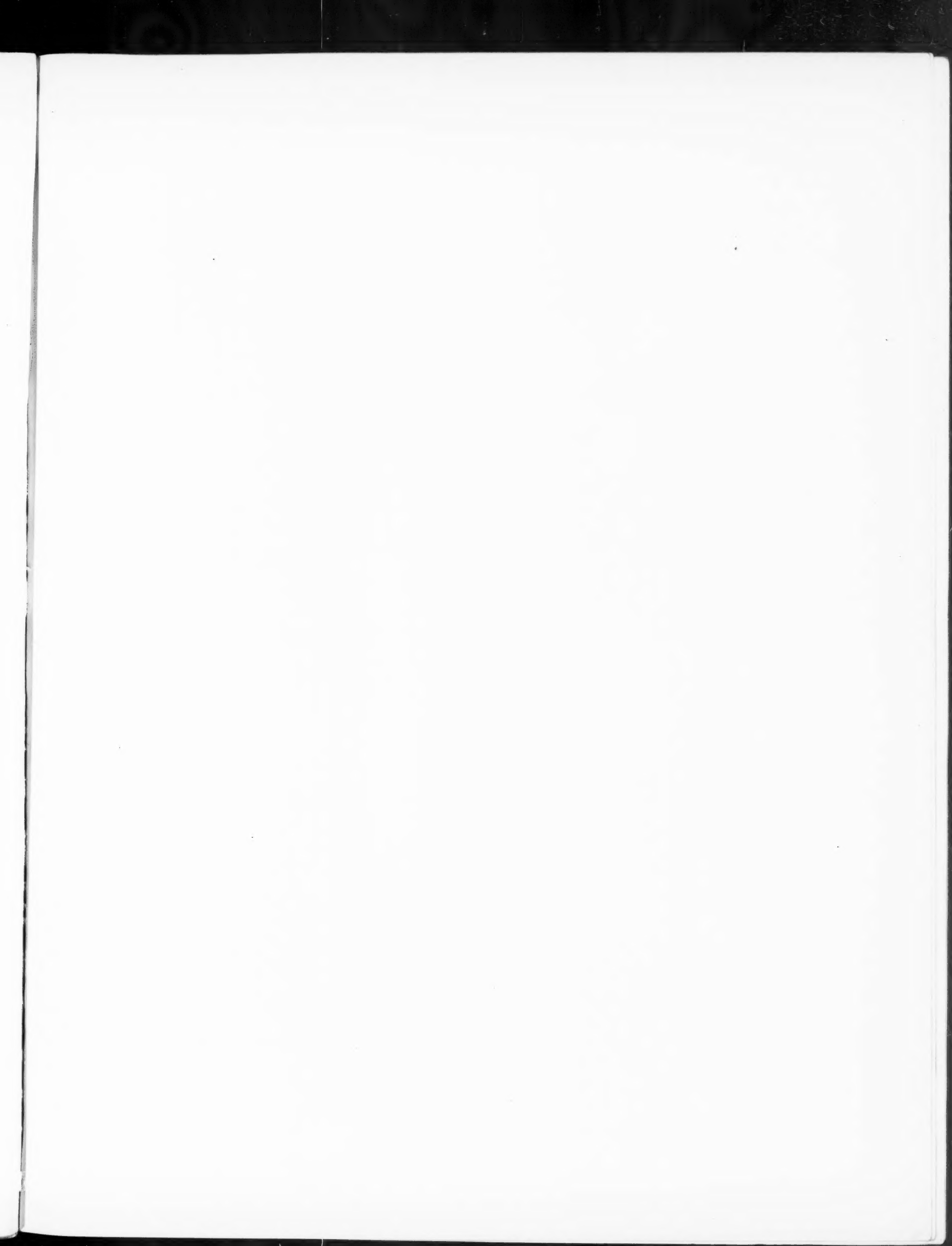
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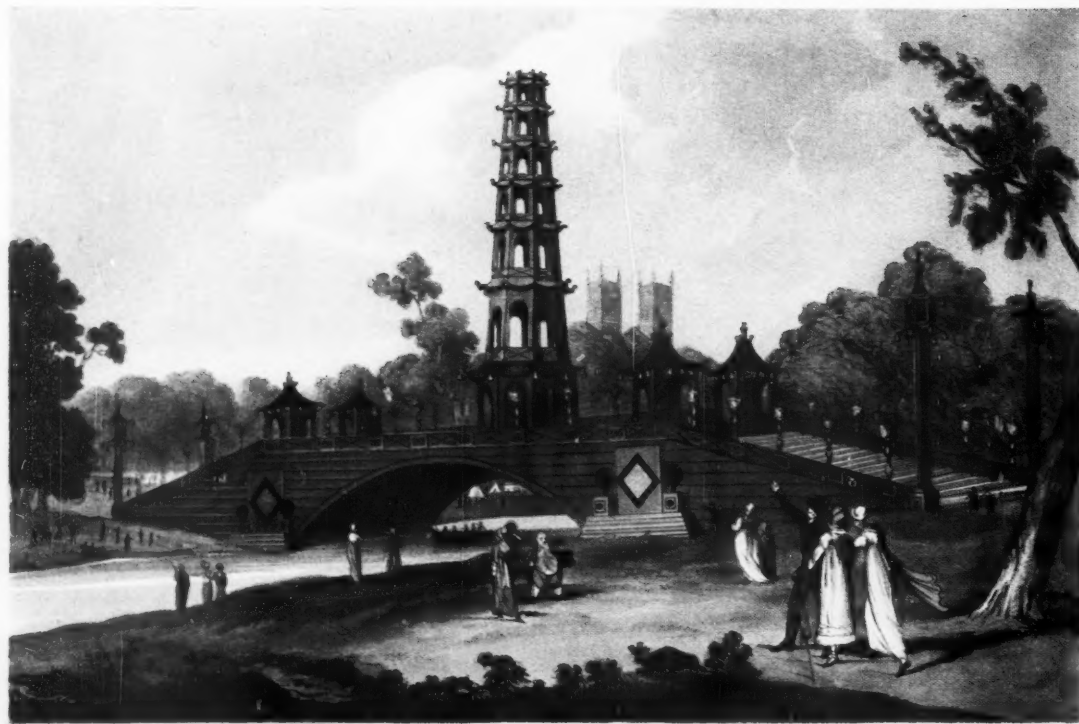
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The Chinese Bridge and the Pagoda in St. James's Park, London

THE CHINESE BRIDGE IN ST. JAMES'S PARK

This bridge was designed by Mr. Nash for the celebrations of the centenary of the Hanoverian dynasty's accession to the English throne. It was illuminated by gas, then a startling novelty, concerning the dependability of which the pyrotechnicians were perhaps unduly optimistic, for at ten o'clock on the night of August 1st it "exhibited an appearance that excited much doubt." When, a few moments later, the pagoda, wreathed in flame, was seen to topple into the lake, the perspicacity of the observers was fully proved. Luckily the attendant loss of life did nothing to diminish the enjoyment of the crowd, who rightly considered that the entertainment compared very favourably with the mimic sea-fight on the Serpentine, Mr. Sadler's daring ascent in a gas balloon and the various other spectacles of that memorable day.

If its destruction afforded pleasure to the populace, its erection had been regarded by *The Times* with peculiar distaste, occasioned,

perhaps, by the fact that that Radical organ was unlikely to see any particular cause for rejoicing in the completion of a century of Hanoverian rule. They said:

"As other prints have got the subjoined precious piece of nonsense, we are obliged to insert it likewise. The public will first gape at the mummery, then laugh at the authors of it, and lastly grumble at the expense. . . . The Pagoda, the Balloons and Girandoles of Rockets, the Chinese Bridge! . . . Alas! Alas! to what are we sinking."

Architecturally the bridge may be regarded as a final flowering of eighteenth-century Chinoiserie, and at the same time as foreshadowing the exotic, though transitory, delights of the White City and Earl's Court. In common with so much exhibition architecture, it proved far easier to put up than to take down and its blackened ruins long remained a much-criticized addition to the amenities of St. James's Park.

The Glamorous East

Some Oriental Episodes in the History of English Taste

By Osbert Lancaster

"**L**A STYLE" says Flaubert, with that passion for generalizations that has characterized all French writers since Voltaire, "c'est l'homme." If this be indeed the case what a fearful monster of motley does the representative twentieth-century man appear, as we observe him rising from his Louis Quinze bed, hastily gulping his coffee from his willow-pattern cup in his Jacobethan parlour, passing down a row of Tudor cottages as he emerges on his way to work, turning the corner by the Byzantine church of Christ Scientist, on past the Japanese tea-rooms and the neo-Egyptian super-cinema and finally passing out of sight beneath the Gothic portals of the railway station. That this clutter of imported styles that forms the gaudy backcloth in front of which he pursues his daily task is not peculiar to the age in which we live, the following passage* from the writings of Pugin will show.

"We cannot," he says, "fortunately, import the climate of a country with its architecture or else we should have the strangest possible combination of temperature and weather; and within the narrow compass of Regent's Park the burning heat of Hindustan, the freezing temperature of a Swiss mountain, the intolerable warmth of an Italian summer: with occasional spots of our own climate." However, although the seed of exoticism was even then bringing forth plentiful fruit, the steady application of the artificial manure of modern all-too-easy communications has increased the crop an hundredfold and, moreover, it does not at the moment appear that the law of diminishing returns is likely soon to come into operation.

"There is," said *The Observer* recently, "to be a Chinese vogue in interior decoration. The great London shops are prepared for it. Large stocks of Chinese pottery and porcelain, lacquer furniture, carpets and rugs have been laid in, and the Chinese Exhibition is expected to do the rest." Another newspaper announces that "Chinese pottery and porcelain, Chinese rugs and carpets, Chinese screens, carved lacquer

*Quoted by Kenneth Clark in *The Gothic Revival*.

and" (may Heaven preserve us!) "black-wood furniture—all these are being used increasingly in the latest schemes of interior decoration and furnishing, and even modern style furniture may soon show a free interpretation of Celestial motifs." With these threats hanging over our heads it might be as well to pause for a moment for a backward glance and consider the nature, the course and the results of Oriental influences on European taste in the past and to discover what morals and conclusions can be drawn to serve as guides for the future.

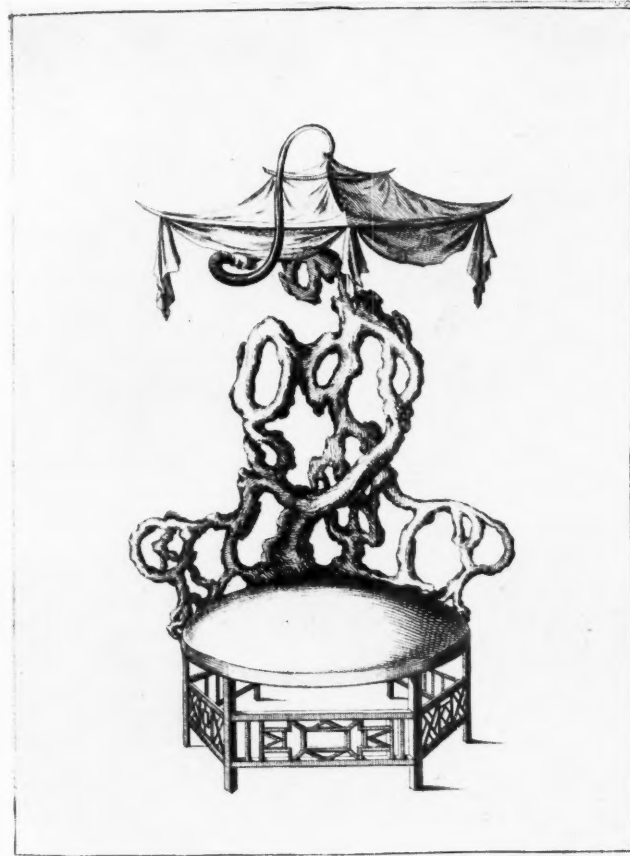
Although the western world had long been aware of the existence of the Chinese Empire, it was not until the second half of the seventeenth century that its products were being imported in sufficient quantities to have any perceptible influence on contemporary European taste. However, the early Sinophiles did not have long to wait for more detailed accounts of the arts and customs of the Orient than were provided by the painted landscape at the bottom of a tea-cup for, towards the close of the century, the exhaustive descriptions of returning Jesuit missionaries supplanted porcelain and paper-hanging as the main sources of evidence on the subject.

The fact that the enthusiasm and taste for things Chinese first developed under Jesuit supervision is not, I fancy, without importance, for not only did it mean that at its inception the "Chinese Taste" was confined to the continent, but also that it was bound to develop in a certain definite way; for the influence of the Society of Jesus on European art, more particularly on architecture and decoration, was very great and indeed it would hardly be exaggerating to attribute to it the lion's share of the credit for the great artistic revival that dates from the counter-reformation, and Chinoiserie may perhaps be regarded as the Roman Church's last gift to the arts.*

It was a gift that was not despised;

*Herr Laske in his *Der Ostasiatische Einfluss auf die Baukunst des Abendlandes im 18. Jahrhundert* has actually identified several Chinese motifs in the decoration of the Grand Trianon. These, however, may only be visible to the eye of pure Aryan faith.

in princely gardens throughout Europe, pagodas and summer-houses raised their curved and tinkling roofs above the still stripling trees planted according to the precepts of M. le Notre; on every boudoir wall, supported by extravagantly twisted brackets, diminutive mandarins nodded their porcelain heads and under the influence of the prevailing cult Baroque merged into Rococo. In England the movement was naturally rather late in arriving and it was not until 1753 (in that year *The World* devoted an article to the subject) that it made much headway. This was due in part to the fact that in this country it found in the Gothick style a rival in fashionable favour that had preceded it by two or three years. However, once the new taste was properly launched, the Gothick changed from a rival to an ally and it is to its influence that English Chinoiserie owes many of its peculiar characteristics. Soon the national taste was as firmly in the grip of the new craze as the continental; architects and furniture designers fell over themselves in their eagerness to give to the public numerous vast tomes of designs for arbours, gazebos, follies, tables and chairs in the new style and even such large-scale undertakings as Thames bridges were carried out in the Chinese taste. But in the general chorus of enthusiasm for the new style one or two dissentients were audible, among them Goldsmith and Walpole (a clear case of the Gothick kettle and the Chinese pot) who were of the opinion that it bid fair permanently to debauch the nation's taste. The fact that this melancholy consummation was reserved for a later generation and that we can still regard the products of eighteenth-century Chinoiserie, if not with the admiration that great art evokes, at least with kindly approbation, is due to two factors. The first of these was the admirable sense of proportion that the eighteenth century seems always to have preserved, that saw to it that the new style was kept in its proper place, i.e., the garden and the boudoir, and made no attempt to utilize it for large scale buildings. The second was the compara-



2

tively poor state of contemporary communications which set a strict limit to the amount of original material that could be imported from the East, and thus forced European artists to rely largely on their own imagination and saved the movement from the dry rot of "expertise" that afterwards overwhelmed the gothic revival. Luckily, the imagination of such men as Neumann, Chambers, Cuvillies, Boucher, Kaendler, Bustelli, and Chippendale was both fertile and reliable.

Lacking any deep roots and being essentially a style that made its principal appeal to fashion, it was obvious from the start that it would endure just so long as there were no rivals in the public favour, leaving an increased gaiety and lightness behind as its only permanent memorials. Rivals were not long in appearing. In England it was discovered that while the Chinese taste could undoubtedly lay claim to a large share of that indispensable quality "picturesqueness" it could not compete in the matter of emotional appeal with the equally picturesque Gothic and long before the end of the century it had been swept from the scene by the rising tide of mediævalism. Abroad its death-knell was sounded by the discovery of Herculaneum and the writings of Winckelmann.

The earliest manifestations of the new classic revival, the paintings of Hubert Robert and the ceilings of the Adams, are charming and innocent enough, but in the

sudden chorus of enthusiasm for the works of antiquity a more sinister note is audible, the overtones of which are resonant with menace for the future. Pictures and styles begin to acquire a moral value and their virtues to be assessed by other standards than those of taste and convenience. This new spirit of criticism had, in fact, been latent for some time previous to the new antique craze and even the Chinese taste had owed some of its popularity to the widely current idea that the inhabitants of that country existed on an exceptionally lofty moral plane, but with the arrival of the supposedly Greek style at the end of the century it came out into the open. Was it not universally admitted that the Ancient Greeks and Romans were lavishly endowed with all those high moral virtues that in contemporary Europe were only to be found in the ranks of the Philosophes? Therefore it followed logically that their architectural style must be the best of all possible styles and only by sedulously pursuing it could the polite world hope to acquire those advantages that were known to be derived from the contemplation of and familiarity with Great Art.

Any form of art that pays exaggerated homage to purely ethical considerations inevitably, sooner or later, exposes itself to the danger of political manipulation, and the new classicism soon found itself hopelessly involved with the Rights of Man. To the doctrinaire leaders of the French Revo-

lution the architecture of the New Jerusalem appeared rigidly classical, just as to the Left Wing prophets of our own time it has been revealed as being no less rigidly functionalist. Today, when the corridors of art-criticism are continually echoing with such terms as "Proletarian Art" and "Kultur Bolshevismus" this first appearance of art in a propagandist rôle is not without a certain interest, but for us the importance of the political patronage that reached its height under the Empire lies in the road that, indirectly, it opened up for a new incursion of Oriental influences into Europe. In the cultural, as in the political sphere the lamentable results of Napoleon's Egyptian adventure were not immediately apparent; a superabundance of Sphinxes and a rush of turbans to fashionable heads were but faint indications of the flood of Oriental magnificence that the diligence of French savants had unleashed. It is quite possible that, but for the change of direction imparted to the Romantic movement by the emergence of Byron, this Eastern tide would soon have retreated, and that the Battle of the Pyramids would have resulted in nothing more fearful than the New Egyptian Hall in Piccadilly; but the change from Romanticism to Byronism made so tame an outcome impossible.

The background for the first act of the great romantic drama had, with the exception of Mr. Beckford's Oriental Divertissement, been strictly mediæval—the Ruined

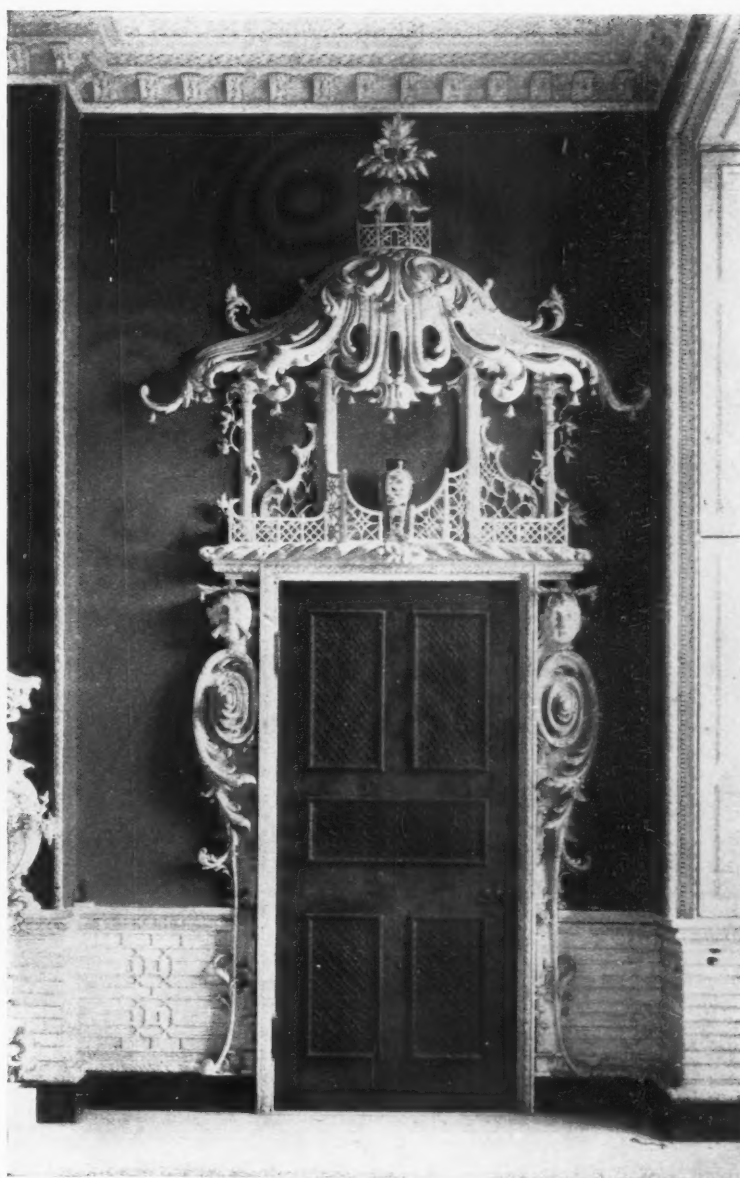
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1. A design for a garden temple taken from Mr. Halfpenny's book on the Chinese taste published in 1754 that shows a happy blend of Gothick and Oriental motifs. The interesting combination of styles in this architectural whimsy gives it a faintly devotional air that is characteristic of many English achievements in Chinoiserie and serves to distinguish them from the more light-hearted products of the same taste on the continent. No less ingenious is 2, showing the orientalizing of rustic furniture, that remarkable invention that has done so much to make English gardens intolerable. This example is taken from "A New Book of Chinese Designs" by Edward and Darley, 1753. 3. Thebes has not been rediscovered in vain; Karnak has not burst afresh on unappreciative eyes. The new Egyptian Hall in Piccadilly, 1821. 4. A design by Mr. Gifford, 1807, from "Designs for Small Picturesque Cottages and Hunting Boxes." The change that has come over taste in the half-century since 1750 is here discernible. Gone are the scrolls and undulations of the earlier Chinoiserie, and a new severity deriving from the Antique characterizes these examples of the Silver Age of the Chinese manner. 5. A doorway in the Chinese Room at Claydon House. This mansion of the Verney family was begun by the elder Adam on his return from Rome in 1758. It is thought, however, that the Chinese Room was possibly the work of Chippendale. Whoever was responsible, it is undoubtedly the highest achievement of the Chinese taste in this country. 6. Schloss Pillnitz, near Dresden, dates from several years earlier, and it is interesting to notice in this, probably the largest scale work carried out in this manner in Europe, how relatively superficial are the Chinese elements incorporated; the architect relying for his Oriental effect chiefly on the high pitched roof, the capitals of the pillars remaining resolutely Corinthian.



7. *The Chinese taste at its most charming and most successful. A French bookplate by Gabriel Huguier, dating from the first half of the eighteenth century. In such arts as book production, porcelain and, to a lesser extent, stage design, the Chinese influence was wholly beneficial and resulted in some of the loveliest things the century produced.*

Abbey and the Gloomy Keep; but now for the second act the curtain rises on the Palace of the Caliph and the Harems of Stamboul.

"The Childe* departed from his father's hall;

It was a vast and venerable pile;

So old, it seemed only not to fall.

Yet strength was pillared in each massy aisle."

and with him we too depart to

"... the land where the cypress and myrtle†

Are emblems of deeds that are done in their clime

Where the rage of the vulture, the love of the turtle,

Now melt into sorrow, now madden to crime."

Everywhere the noble symmetry of eighteenth-century apartments was rudely upset by a flood of cushions and draperies which, for reasons hard to understand, were apt to be concentrated in the corners of the

* Childe Harold.

† Bride of Abydos.

room; presumably because it was thus easier to obtain the tent-like effect which was now so generally admired. One of the more unfortunate merits of the new style was the ease with which it could be adopted; when the ideal to be striven for was still Gothic, to give to an apartment by Adam the appearance of an abbey refectory necessitated structural changes both costly and prolonged, but this tent idea could be carried out with the aid of no more elaborate equipment than a plentiful supply of Turkish shawls and cushions, a few scimitars and daggers to hang on the walls, a hookah or two, and, worst of all, a selection of potted palms tastefully arranged. The chief, and, alas, most permanent result of all this activity was to render fashionable the acquisition of numberless knick-knacks and *objets de vertu* with the consequent introduction of that sempiternal menace, the occasional table. The speed with which the new craze, deriving its support from such figures as Disraeli's Lord Alhambra with his turban and his mameluke boots, gained a hold, and the tenacity with which it kept

THE GLAMOROUS EAST

it are well illustrated by the following quotations. The first is a description of Lady Blessington's apartment in the early 'twenties,* the second of George Moore's rooms in Paris in the 'seventies.†

"The walls of the rooms are literally covered with pictures; the architraves of the doors of the principal rooms are of oriental alabaster and the rarest marbles; the tables and consoles are composed of the same costly materials. . . . An abundance of the finest and rarest porcelain vases, rock-crystal, malachite, and agate ornaments are piled on the marble tables and consoles."

"The drawing-room was of cardinal red, hung from the middle of the ceiling and looped up to give the appearance of a tent; a faun in terra-cotta laughed in the red gloom, and there were Turkish couches and lamps. In another room you faced an altar, a Buddhist temple, a statue of Apollo and a bust of Shelley. The bedrooms were made unconventional with cushioned seats and rich canopies; and in picturesque corners there were censurs, great church candlesticks and palms."

The reasons for this unprecedented longevity, this state of semi-permanence that the Oriental vogue attained in the nineteenth century lies partly in the extraordinary sterility of the epoch which, once the Gothic style had been discovered to be fraught with various inconveniences that rendered its employment difficult in domestic interior decoration on a general scale, could discover nothing with which to replace it; partly in the repeated external stimuli that it was constantly receiving. Philhellenism, the French conquest of Algiers, the Bible illustrations of M. Tissot, the opening of the Suez Canal, all combined with the constant improvement in international communications to play their part. As the century wore on, the Near East, while still maintaining a strong hold, was forced to share its position as the chief exotic inspiration of European decorators with newcomers from further afield. In 1847 a Chinese Industrial Exhibition was held in Paris, and towards the end of the century Japan was beginning to prove a serious rival. From the 'seventies onwards one must picture an annually increasing fleet of steamers from Yokohama descending on our shores, their holds bulging with horribly contorted ivories, paper fans, stunted trees, and vast quantities of that loathsome Satsuma ware. The effect of these treasures on a public whose taste had already been successfully undermined by the pernicious doctrine that the value of any work of art depended on the amount of labour that had gone to its making, was naturally disastrous; an enthusiasm evoked by the arabesques of the Alhambra and the statuary of Chartres ("Just like lace, dear") could all too easily be extended to those beastly little nests of ivory balls and other similar products of misplaced Oriental ingenuity. On walls already overlaid with scimitars and yatagans were now hung

* Quoted in Mr. Michael Sadleir's *Blessington and D'Orsay*.

† From *Confessions of a Young Man*.



A

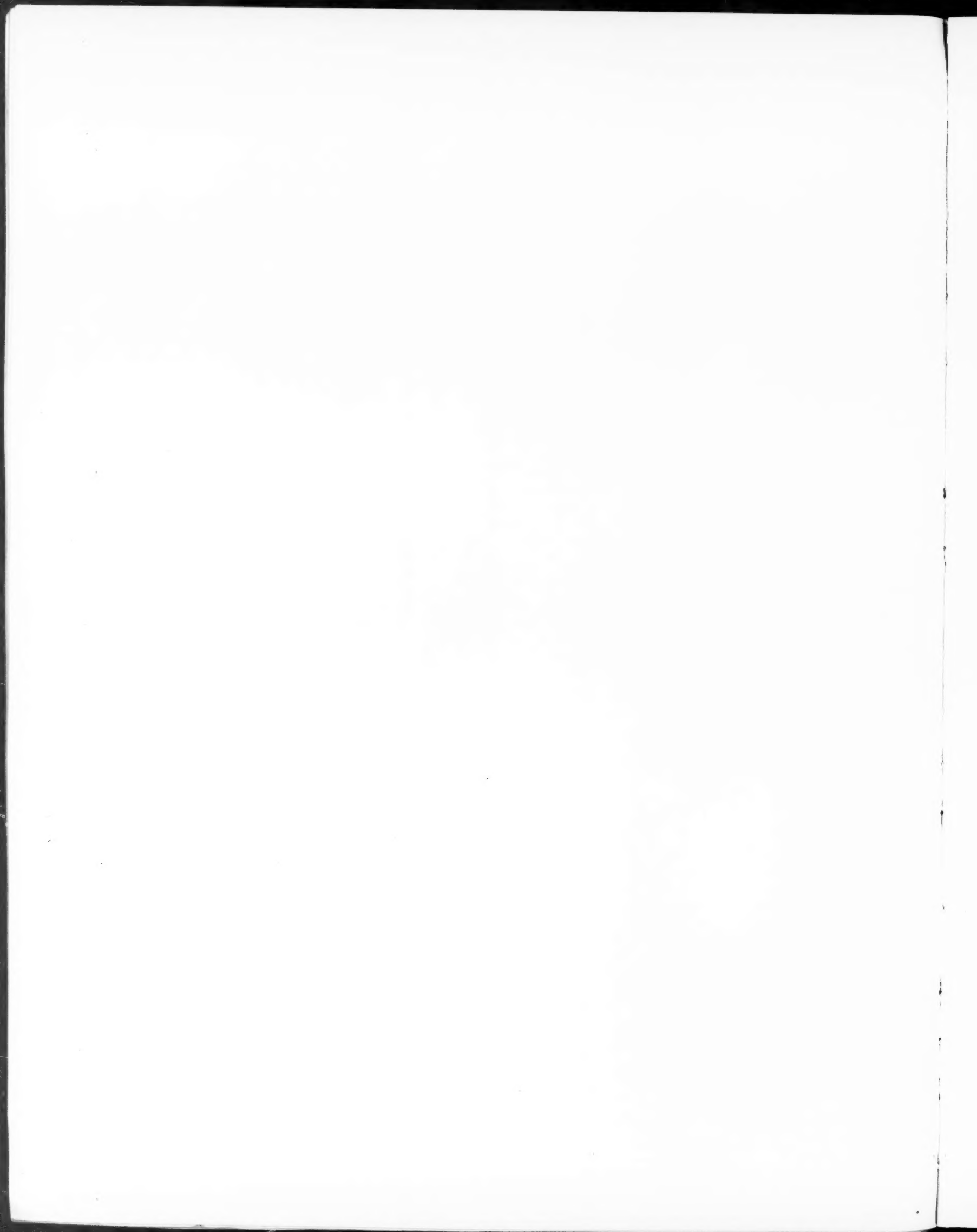
Beauty fittingly enshrined (circa 1890). The first (A) of these two charming lights of the Paris stage, finds that her personality is best expressed by the Chinese style in decoration, at this time beginning once more to exercise its complicated fascination. Note how cunningly the *décor* is built up around the focal point of the potted azalea. The second syren (B) prefers those rich Moorish surroundings which had suffered no diminution in public favour since they were first brought to the general notice by Lord Byron in the early years of the century.

PLATE ii

March 1936



B





8

8. "The Eastern Room" in a house in Talbot Square, dating from the early years of the present century. Here the slightly sensual aspect of the Oriental style, which is so well exemplified in Plate ii. B. has suffered a sea-change, and the resulting effect is perhaps more reminiscent of the mission-hall than the harem. By a skilful use of occasional tables a simple progression from one side of the room to the other has been cleverly transformed into a fascinating form of obstacle race. 9. Edwardian Chinese. Here the slight reduction in the number of occasional tables has been amply compensated for by the larger and more expensive porcelain



10

treasures that have been balanced upon them. 10. A charming example of the revivifying and stimulating influence of the Far East on the productions of "l'Art Nouveau," or as the French with their natural aptitude for transferring the blame



9



11

prefer to call it, "le Modern Style." 11. The Japanese tea-room, the eagerly sought goal of every female visitor to every international exhibition. The above lovely structure was the crowning success of the St. Louis World's Fair of 1904.

painted fans and Samurai swords, tables groaning beneath their load of bibelots received further burdens of netsukes and Benares brass, and everywhere the eye was startled by "ces estampes Japonaises, alors si répandues qu'on en trouve jusque dans la serviette de Clemeneau, jusque dans le cabinet de travail de Zola."* That despite this the Japanese colour-print exercised a healthy influence on western painting cannot be denied, but some may consider the vast quantity of pseudo-oriental trash that still litters the shops and drawing-rooms of England a high price to pay for a Whistler Nocturne. The Impressionists, however, were alone in deriving any benefit from this Far Eastern invasion, the majority of artists and architects, lacking any rational standards of judgment,

* Paul Morand, "1900."

were simply swamped. Art criticism, swayed by the preaching of Ruskin and confused by the results of mass-production, had become hopelessly entangled with ethics and economics. The eighteenth century, happily protected by far slower and less efficient methods of transport and secure in the possession of fixed principles of taste, had been able to dominate the situation; the nineteenth was dominated by it.

By the turn of the century the confusion had become indescribable, even the tolerably sane Arts and Crafts movement abandoned the doctrines of Morris and, entering into an unholy alliance with the siren from Japan, brought forth that misbegotten offspring, Art Nouveau. By the light of an electric bulb cunningly placed in the beak of an attenuated bronze stork, and clad in what she hoped was a kimono, the young lady of

the period pored over the romances of M. Pierre Loti, so rich in Oriental atmosphere, while that remarkable novelty, the phonograph, sang the woes of Madame Butterfly. For the moment the Far East was triumphant, but the eclipse of the Moorish taste was merely temporary; on the eve of the war the cushions and the canopies, more lavishly fringed and tasselled than ever, swept back in the train of the Russian Ballet. From Byron and Beckford to Benois and Bakst, from Vathek to Scheherazade, the wheel had come full circle. Even Armageddon itself could not wholly defeat this resolute orientalism, and Pekin and Baghdad, working hand in hand, combined to maintain that masterpiece of a vanished era, Chu Chin Chow, in theatrical circulation for the duration of the war.

On looking back on the havoc this

enthusiasm for the remote wrought during the nineteenth century, one finds it hard to believe that it has left us anything of the slightest value. Certainly judging by the still extant ruins, Lord Leighton's Moorish palace in the Melbury Road, the Durbar Room at Osborne and the Alhambra music-hall, there seems to be little enough to set on the credit side, but nevertheless it did bring with it certain intangible assets. By the beginning of the present century there had grown up a conception, glimmerings of which had been vouchsafed to the Impressionists, of the true significance of Oriental art, far removed from and much truer than that which had hitherto obtained.* It was realized that art in the Far East was as subject to fluctuations as it was in the West, and that at the period when its examples were being imported in vast quantities it had markedly declined from its former excellence. How far and how rapidly it had done so was apparent when the prints of Hokusai and Hiroshige were available for comparison with those of Kunisada, which were all that an earlier generation had had to guide them. Moreover, alongside this new appreciation there developed a more

*1900 was the year that Paul Claudel's *Connaissance de l'Est* was published. With the possible exception of Lafcadio Hearn, Claudel was the first of European intellectuals to arrive at a more rational comprehension of Oriental philosophy and aesthetics.

penetrating understanding of the principles underlying Oriental practice and criticism. As the value that the Chinese and Japanese placed upon extreme simplicity was realized, the gulf which separated their spare apartments, each with a solitary spray of blossom and one carefully selected painting, from the crowded boudoirs in the Chinese style as interpreted in South Kensington, became terrifyingly apparent. For the first time those who were working for a simplified and rational style in architecture and decoration could regard the Far Eastern influence as a possible ally.

Having briefly reviewed the duration and extent of the ravages of this Eastern pestilence, it might perhaps be as well to conclude with a few words on the subject of the principal germ-carriers. These were undoubtedly the innumerable international exhibitions that from 1851 onwards took place with increasing frequency in London, Paris, Brussels, Milan, Barcelona, Chicago and San Francisco. These extraordinary phenomena, direct descendants of the Prince Consort's original heaven-sent inspiration, were representative of all that was least attractive in the nineteenth century: nightmare monuments to its materialism, ostentation and self-satisfied belief in a facile Progress. From the very first, the Japanese village and the Chinese tea-room

had shared with the Funfair and Amusement Park the distinction of being the most popular sections of any exhibition, and soon the art of those countries was to prove a most potent influence in the development of the new science of exhibition architecture. While earlier exhibitions had all contributed their quota of oriental rubbish it was in the Paris Exhibition of 1900 that the East, hand in hand with "le Modern Style," definitely triumphed. Here the dragon roofs and temple bells of China and Japan were supplemented by the newly discovered ruins of Indo-China and the bulbous domes and improbable towers of all the Russias. (It is not surprising that the British section, resolutely Tudor, remained comparatively unvisited.)

The principal object of all these exhibitions, from Hyde Park to Wembley, including even those which, like the Exposition des Arts Decoratifs in 1925, paid a dubious homage to Art, was primarily commercial, and so they are in no way comparable to the present Chinese Exhibition. But, nevertheless, even this severely aesthetic display may perhaps have regrettable consequences if, as the newspaper paragraphs quoted at the beginning of this article seem to imply, it provides optimistic importers and manufacturers with large stocks of oriental rubbish on their hands with the opportunity of launching an artificially created Chinese craze. Personally, I fancy that the Mayfair decorators and the furniture barons of the Tottenham Court Road are unduly sanguine, but lest there may still be people who, overcome by the glories of Burlington House, feel impelled to rush out and advocate the adoption of a Higher Chinoiserie, I append as a suitable corrective the following extract from Sir William Chambers's preface to his *Designs of Chinese Buildings, Furniture, Dresses and Machines*, published in 1757. The italics are mine.

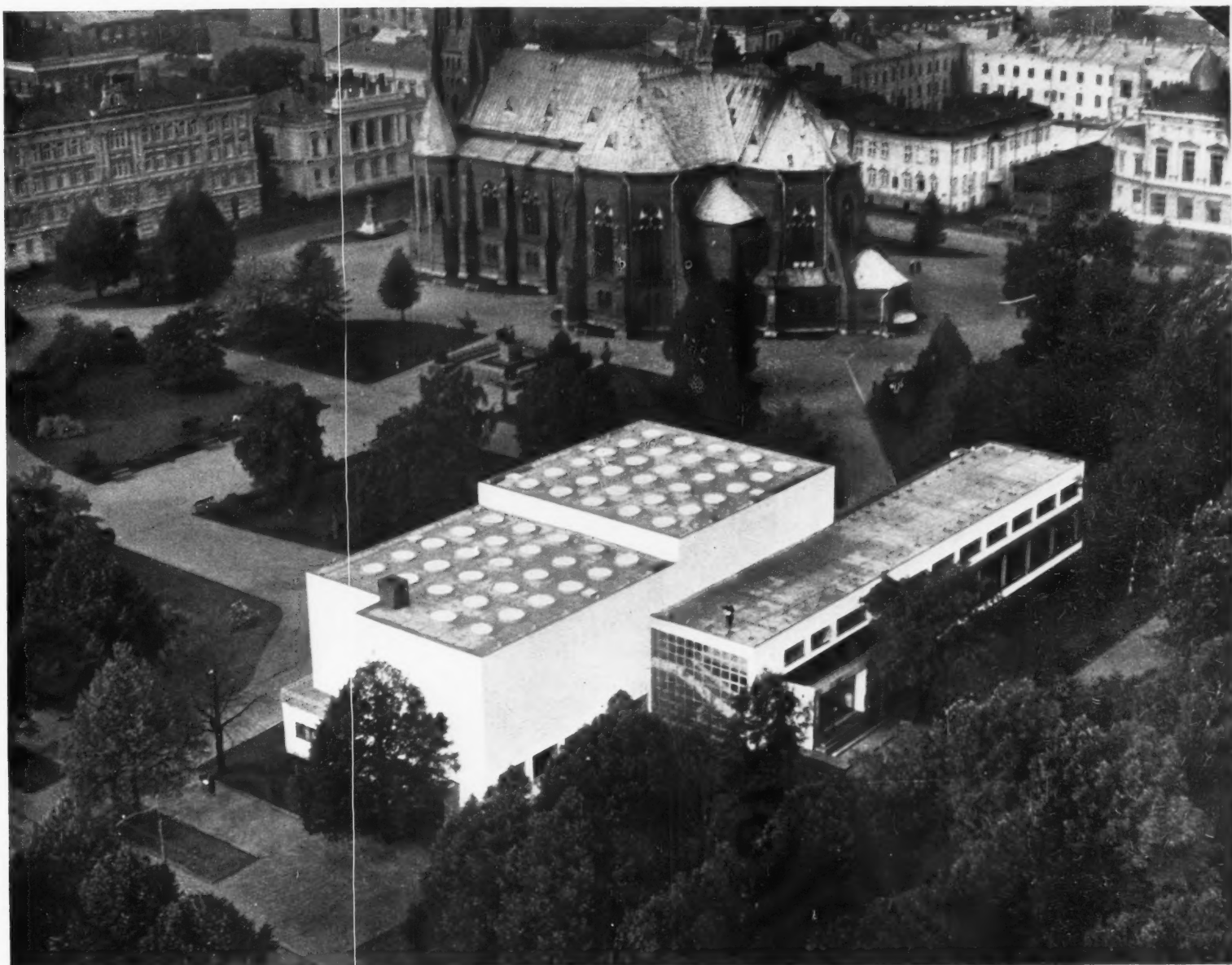
"Though I am publishing a work of Chinese Architecture, let it not be suspected that my intention is to promote a taste so much inferior to the antique and so very unfit for our climate; but . . . at least the knowledge is curious and on particular occasions may likewise be useful, as he (the architect) may sometimes be obliged to make Chinese compositions, and at others it may be judicious in him to do so. For though, generally speaking, Chinese architecture does not suit European purposes; yet in extensive parks and gardens where a great variety of scenes are required or in immense palaces containing a numerous series of apartments, I do not see the impropriety of furnishing some of the inferior ones in the Chinese taste. Variety is always delightful and novelty attended with nothing inconsistent or disagreeable sometimes takes the place of beauty."

The present generation of architects, unlike Sir William's contemporaries, have not been so lavish with beauty that we can ever afford to sacrifice it for novelty and variety, twin delights that bitter experience has taught us are too often attended with much that is inconsistent and more that is disagreeable.

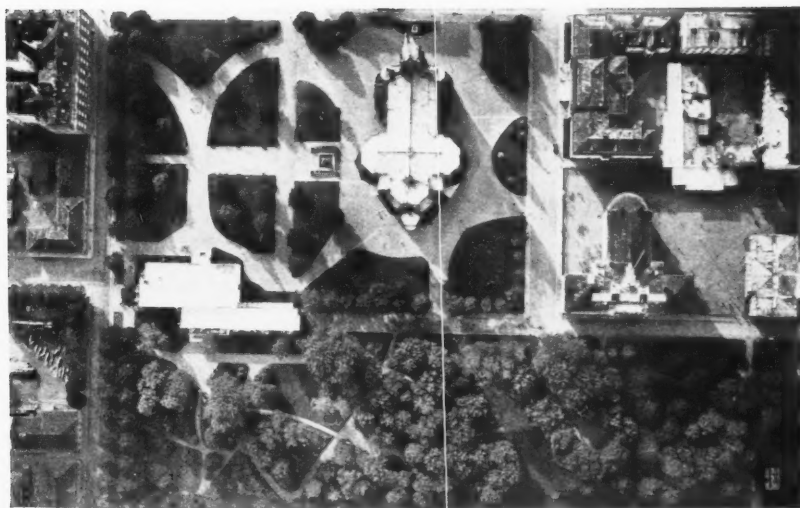


Benjamin Disraeli as a young man, by Maclise. Both in his writings and in his life this great man did much to propagate the Moorish taste among his contemporaries. Notice particularly the "narghile," or Eastern pipe, an indispensable adjunct to the bachelor apartments of the period. However, Disraeli was far too clever not to be conscious of the absurdity of the craze, one of whose fervent devotees he caricatured in "Vivien Grey" in the character of Lord Alhambra, who wears yellow mame-luke boots, always sits cross-legged and cuts his food with a yataghan.

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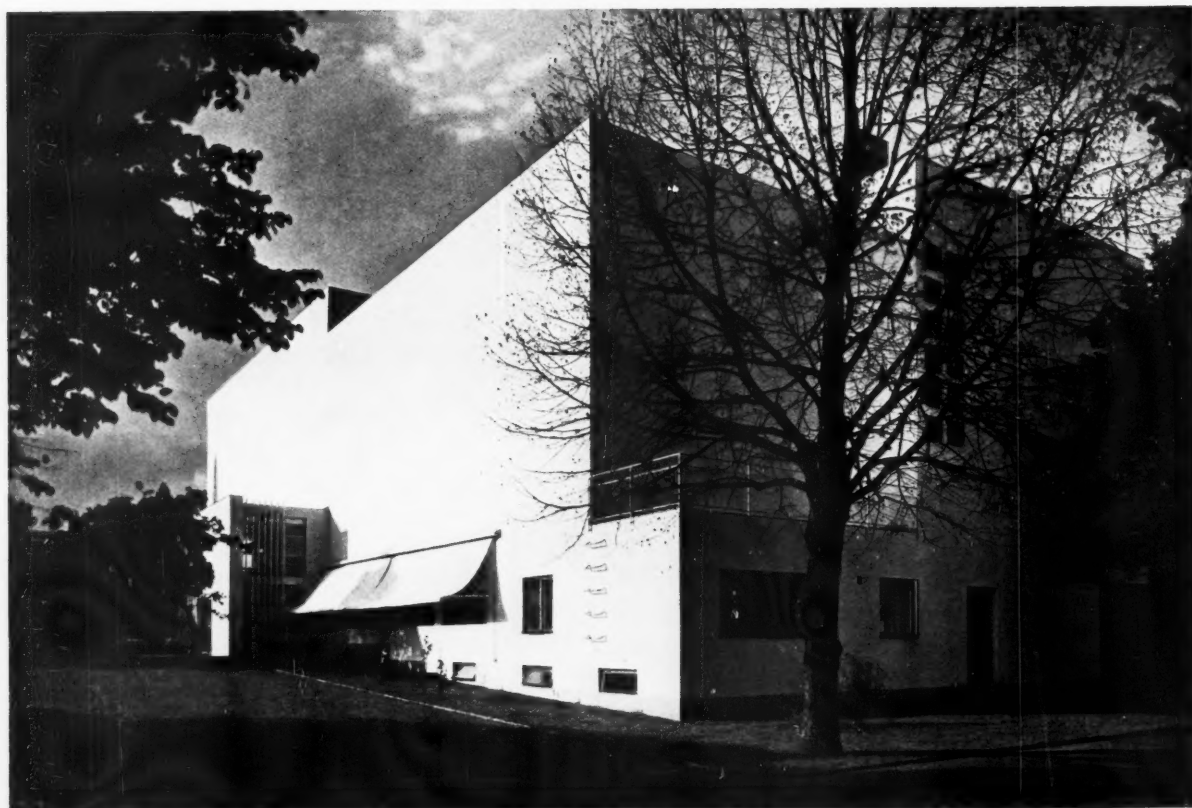
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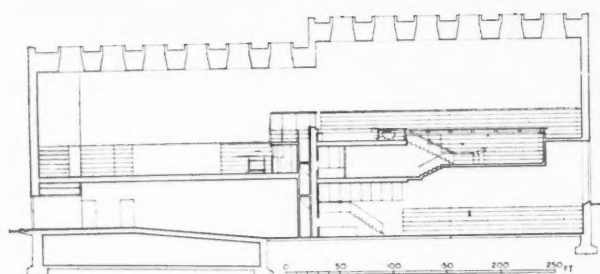
2

The new library at Viipuri, in eastern Finland, one of the most up-to-date in planning and equipment in Europe, was completed and opened last autumn. The library has been built at the corner of a public park. 1 and 2 are air-views of the site that contrast the simple asymmetrical pattern of the new building with the fussy cruciform elaboration of a neighbouring neo-Hanseatic Church (whose pastor fought for years to preserve its impeccably academic "periodicity" from the sully of proximity of this uncompromising example of *Kulturbolschewismus*), and the planless grouping round overshadowed interior courtyards of the buildings on the extreme left. The glass discs of the circular skylights (illustrated by a close-range detail in 26) are clearly discernible as rows of spots dotting the roof of the library block.

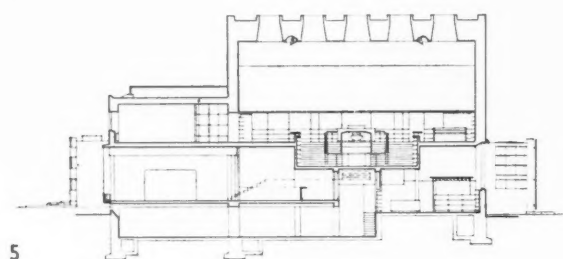
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3



4



5



6



7

3, 6 and 7 help the reader to orientate, and so visualize, the sections (4 and 5) reproduced immediately above and the plans on page 110. 3 shows the all but blank-walled main front of the library-block (seen from further off through intervening trees and across grass beds in 7) with the entrance porch of the children's library facing the municipal gardens. 6 is a side view of the main entrance in the lecture-room block, which looks out on to the park in rear. The continuous window of the lecture-room is visible beyond the glass doors.

The Library in Detail

By P. Morton Shand

The site, which is entirely open except for standing timber, 6 and 7, lies on the edge of a central public park and faces what in an English seaside resort would be called "an expanse of ornamental gardens," 2. This is patterned with shrubberies and broad gravel paths that open out to insulate its dominant feature; a large Gothic-Revival Lutheran Church whose apse stands in advance, and well to the right, of the new library.

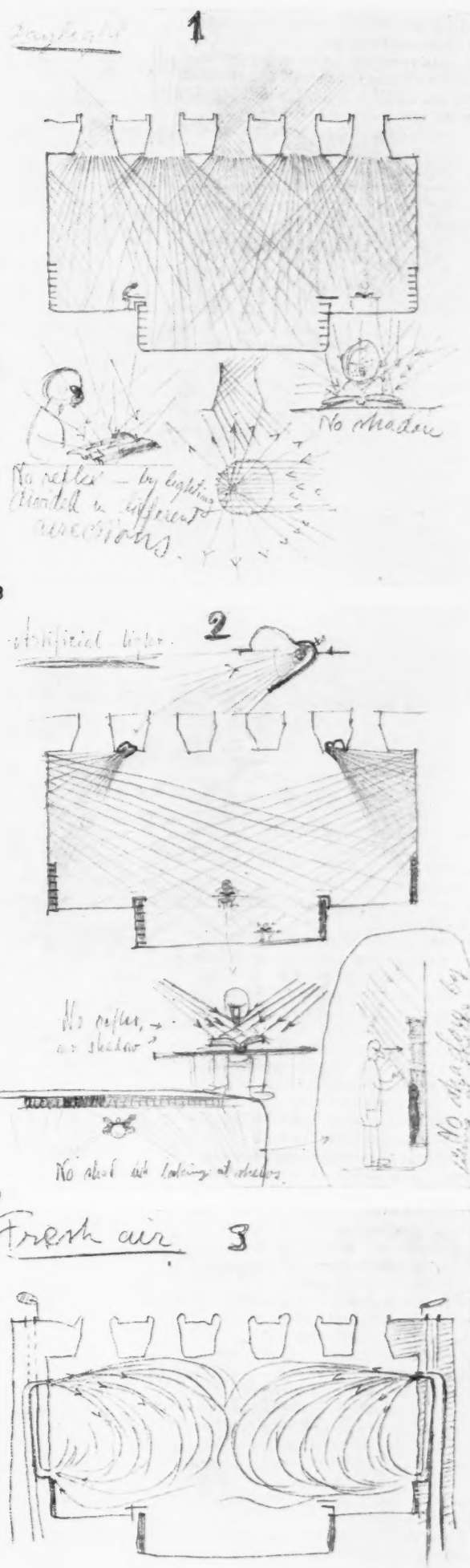
The library buildings consist of two rectangular flat-roofed blocks, asymmetrically arranged *en échelon*, 1. These differ in height, breadth, length and ground-level; the larger fronting the gardens and the smaller the park. As plan 12 shows, the main entrance, 6 and 15, is in the smaller block. The separate, though parallel, access to each of the blocks stresses the fact that they serve quite different functions. There are two additional entrances at a lower level. One, 3, leads from the "children's playing lawn" outside the larger block into the children's library, 24 and 25, occupying most of this side of its ground-floor; and another, visible on the extreme right in 3, opens directly into the newspaper-room behind the children's library from a side road delimiting the park and gardens from the surrounding streets. The rest of the ground floor in both blocks is used for book-stacks, the heating and ventilation plant being housed in small corner basement rooms built into the foundations.

The building has two radically divergent purposes: to provide individual educative facilities and communal social services respectively. On the one hand Aalto had to provide lending and reference libraries, newspaper and periodical rooms, with cubicles for research students; on the other he was called on to house a local cultural society that required a large hall for debates and lectures as a focus for its various activities, besides the usual offices, club and refreshment rooms, etc. This duality in the building programme sufficiently explains the logical division of his plan into two structurally separate blocks in asymmetrical juxtaposition, the necessity for separate yet adjacent entrances, and the adoption of different methods of construction to solve the varied technical problems that arose in each—methods that were dictated by the needs of the eye in the former and the needs of the ear in the latter. Thus the library, being totally enclosed and indirectly lit throughout, opens inwards on itself; while the lecture-room, whose longest side is one con-

tinuous window overlooking the park, opens outwards on to grass and trees. As their only connecting link the entrance hall, 19 and 20, naturally assumes peculiar importance.

The library, 16, 17 and 18, forms a single room, having three floor and two ceiling levels, surrounded by windowless brick walls, 75 cms. thick, into which were built the glazed earthenware and cast-iron ducts of the ventilating system that has been designed to be convertible into a complete air-conditioning installation by the addition of a little extra plant. It is roofed by a series of 17-60 metre span reinforced-concrete beams that are honeycombed at regularly spaced intervals with 57 circular skylights. This is the structural system for maintaining intensified indirect daylight throughout the year which Aalto originally devised for the linotype room in the Turun Sanomat building at Åbo (illustrated in THE ARCHITECTURAL REVIEW for September, 1931). In Finland the maximum angle of insolation is 52 degrees; the conical cavities for these skylights are therefore made of sufficient depth to prevent the possibility of sun-rays from this, or any lower, incidence passing straight through them. Externally the slots are sealed by discs 1-80 metres in diameter, 26, made of rough glass with a thinner under-surface of clear crystal, which keep in position by their own weight. Each of these prisms throws down a circle of light much wider than its own circumference, which overlaps all the circles similarly projected by the other prisms surrounding it, so that every part of the floor is evenly lit by a concentration of light-rays converging simultaneously from a great number of them. Consequently there are no shadows in the room, and wherever a reader happens to be sitting or standing his eyes cannot be dazzled by glaring light refracted from the pages of an open book. Yet another advantage is that the books themselves are protected from the injurious action of direct sunlight. In order to keep the bookshelves as shadowless at night as by day, the white walls are indirectly illuminated by invisible electric globes, collared with powerful reflectors, wired into the base of the outer rows of cones. The library is panel-heated, the close criss-cross net-work of heating tubes being woven round the slots of the skylights.

One half of the library consists of rows of readers' tables flanked by open counters for periodicals. This is divi-



Alvar Aalto's own sketches, 8, 9 and 10, explain the advantages and the scientific basis of his system of library lighting. 8 shows the daylight lighting, a diffused light being distributed over the library without glare or shadows. 9 shows the artificial lighting with the same ideal conditions maintained. 10 shows the accompanying air circulation system.

ded up the middle by tall bookcases which screen the entrance to two small students' rooms in the rear. The other, under a slightly loftier roof and raised to a much higher level, is the lending section, arranged as a wide open gallery, from which stairs descend to a sort of open crypt lined with bookshelves. At the head of these stairs, and in the centre of the whole library, stands a conning-tower for supervision, that overlooks all three levels. Immediately beneath it is the librarian's department, which has direct access through a tunnel to every part of the building.

The lecture-room block is of light steel-frame construction. Its main floor comprises the lecture-room itself, the entrance hall and main staircase, a standing buffet and small kitchen; above these is a continuous row of small office- and club-rooms opening on to a long lateral corridor.

The outstanding feature of the lecture-room, 21, 22 and 23 (which can be divided by a collapsible partition), is the curiously undulating profile of its acoustic timber ceiling that has a surface area of no less than 58 square metres. Some 30,000 knotless strips of red Karelian pinewood, cut from a tract of dead forest, went to the making of this false roof. The specific object for which these gracefully recurrent Baroque curves were so laboriously constructed was to design a hall for debates, in which the speakers might rise anywhere on the floor, be interrupted here and there from the opposite side, and called to order from one end of it, having equal all-round audibility. The prototype for this, the English House of Commons, with its notoriously defective acoustic properties, could only offer a cautionary example. The architect of the Viipuri Library claims that after years of experiment he has been able to construct a debating-chamber in it which has proved 99 per cent. acoustically perfect—by which is meant that any point on its floor, and some seven feet above it, is equally good for the transmission and reception of even the faintest sounds to and from every other part of the hall.

In conjunction with the solid concrete floor (on which the parquet squares were fixed without intermediate packing) and a wall-revetment of fibrous boards, this curling ceiling's backing of lead-sheeting coated on both surfaces with bitumen, provides complete sound-insulation from the rest of the building. The same composite material was adopted for insulating the roof above it and that of the library block.

Throughout the building natural wood has been preferred to painted timber or synthetic materials in order to reduce maintenance and renewals to a minimum. Sycamore is used in the entrance hall, oak and birch in the children's library and for most of the built-in furniture, and a combination of Karelian pine and red beechwood in the library; the last of these woods being employed for all surfaces likely to be subjected to heavy wear and tear. The window-frames are of steel cased in teak and oak. All the movable furniture was made of solid birch or birch plywood.

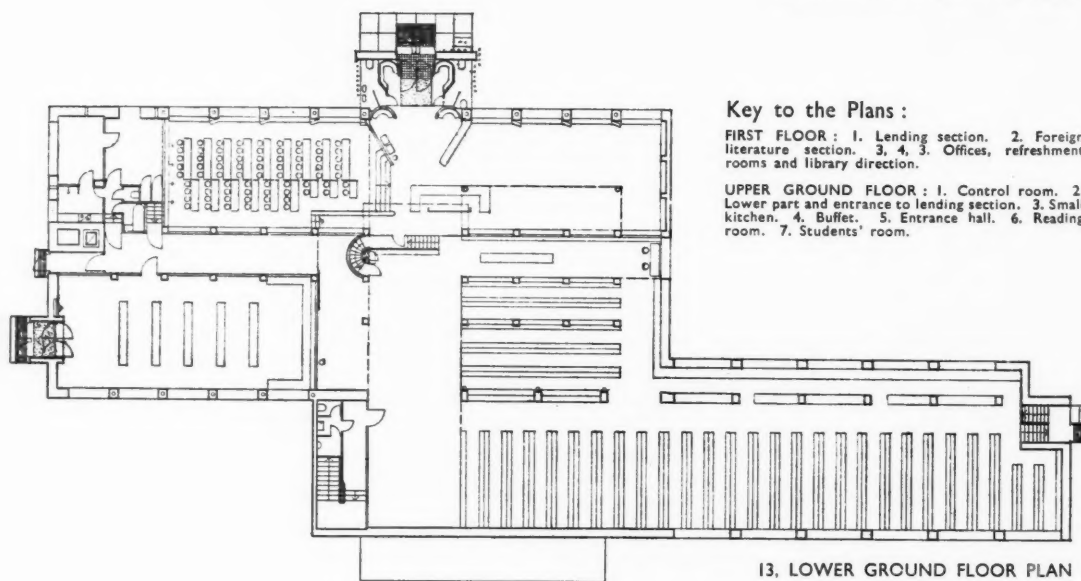
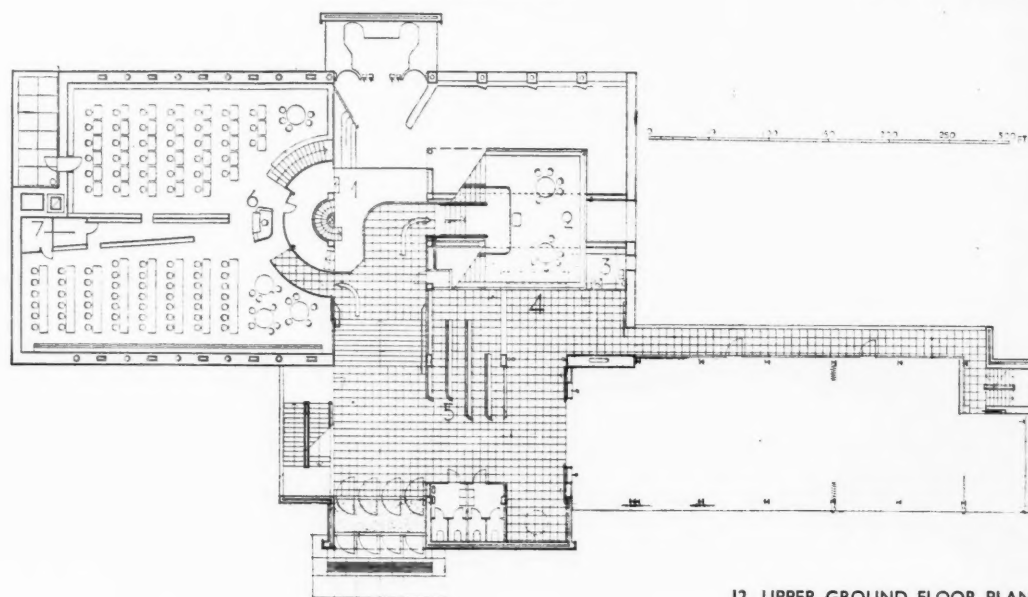
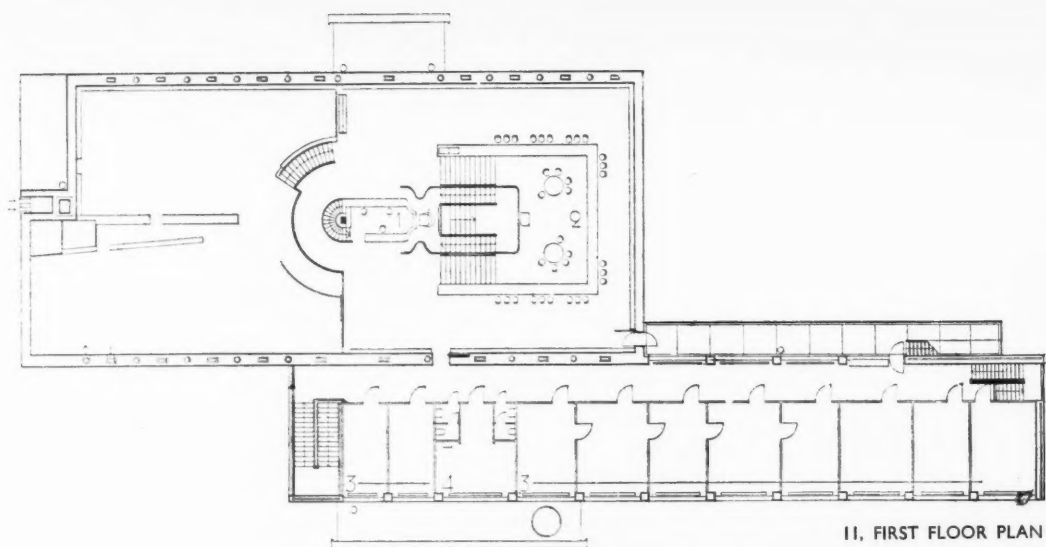
The colour scheme was based on the natural colours of the materials used, unstained and unvarnished wood, and textile fabrics used as draperies, parti-

tions, and door or wall coverings against a background of walls either whitewashed or finished with a coat of white oil-paint. Apart from books in their shelves, creepers growing inside the entrance-hall and on the landings of

the main staircase are the only other decorative element.

Owing to opposition "on æsthetic grounds" from the local clergy and the intervening financial crisis, building did not start till 1934. This enabled

the architect to prepare an entirely different plan to that with which he won the competition held in 1927. The result, in his own words, is the first job of work he has ever had time to finish properly.



Key to the Plans :

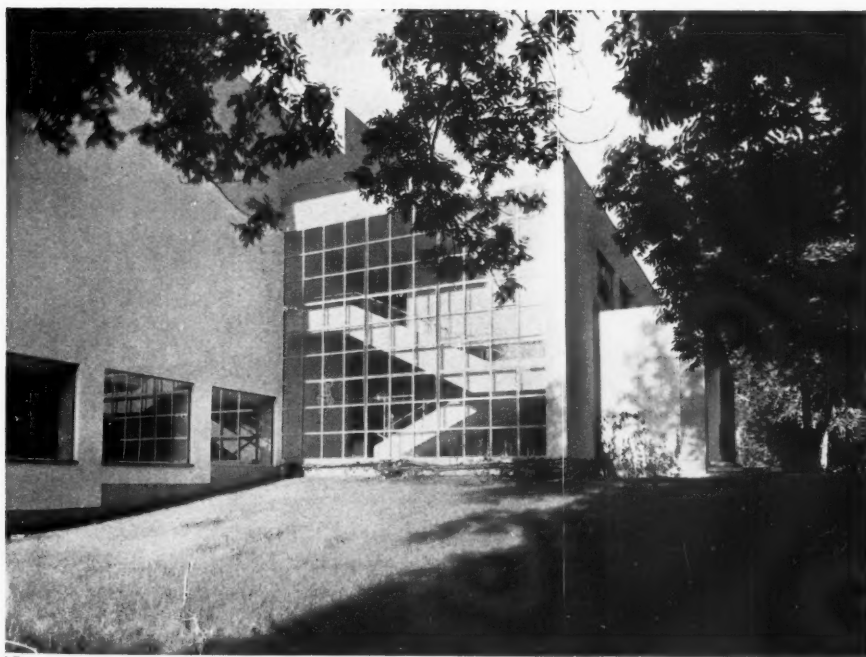
FIRST FLOOR : 1. Lending section. 2. Foreign literature section. 3, 4, 3. Offices, refreshment rooms and library direction.

UPPER GROUND FLOOR : 1. Control room. 2. Lower part and entrance to lending section. 3. Small kitchen. 4. Buffet. 5. Entrance hall. 6. Reading room. 7. Students' room.

V I I P U R I L I B R A R Y , F I N L A N D



14



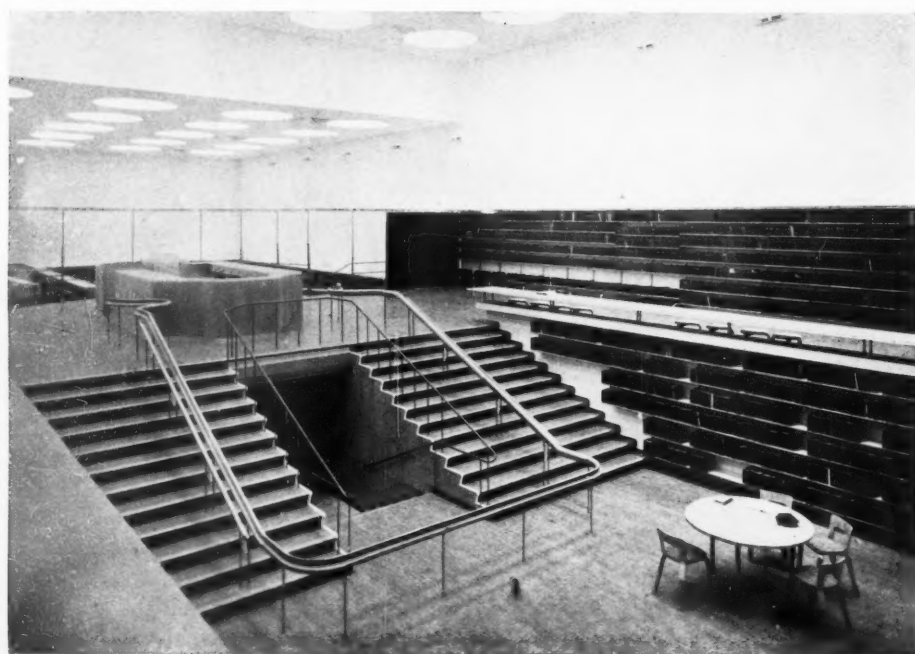
15

14 is an interior, and 15 an exterior, view of the main staircase framed within the huge rectangular window that forms the sunnier short end of the lecture-room block. This window's subdivision into ninety-nine panes suavely humanizes its scale, and also provides a sort of natural trellis-work background for the rows of hothouse creepers planted in narrow boxes along the landings.

V I I P U R I L I B R A R Y ,



16



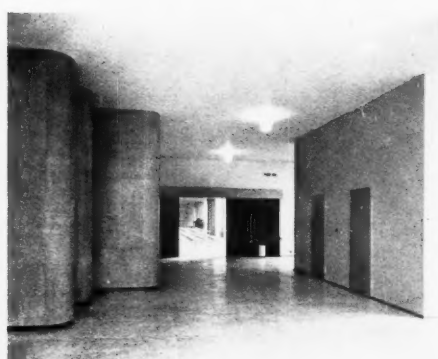
17



18



19

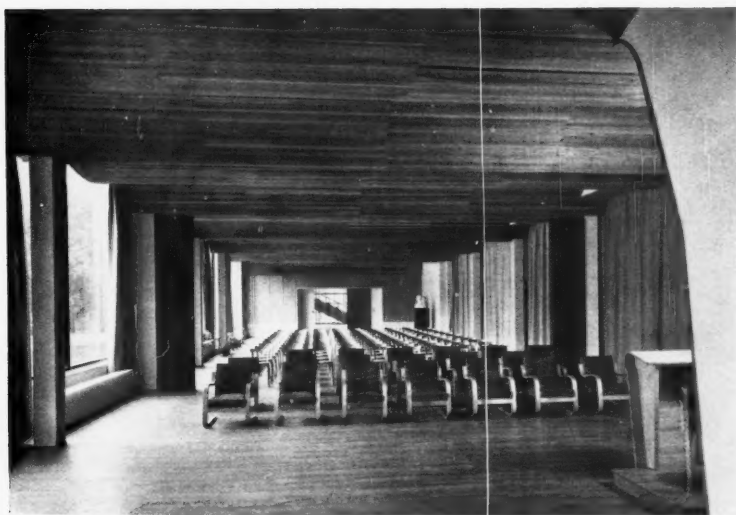


20

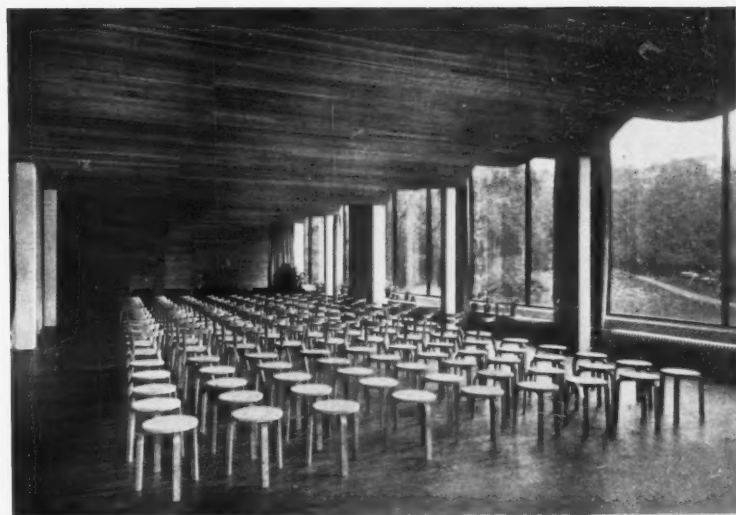
19 and 20 are different aspects of the entrance hall. In the former (which shows another indoor decorative use of creepers) the lecture-room is seen from an oblique angle, while the latter looks straight into it. The rounded walling partitions on the left of 20 are close-panelled in sycamore veneered plywood. 16, 17 and 18 illustrate the three different levels of the library proper, and the "spotted-dogging" effect of its stepped-up roof produced by the cones of its fifty-seven skylights. 16 and 17 are slanting views looking down into the "pit" of the landing section from two points on the wide open gallery surrounding it. 18 is a longitudinal view taken across the tables of the reading-room. At the far end of it, behind the rails, appears the raised podium of the supervisor's "control-turret." This is seen from the other side in 16 and 17 at the top of the twin flight of stairs leading up from the "pit." Under it is a tunnel connecting the reading and landing sections. All three photographs were taken by the indirect daylight diffused from the circular slots in the roof.



21



22

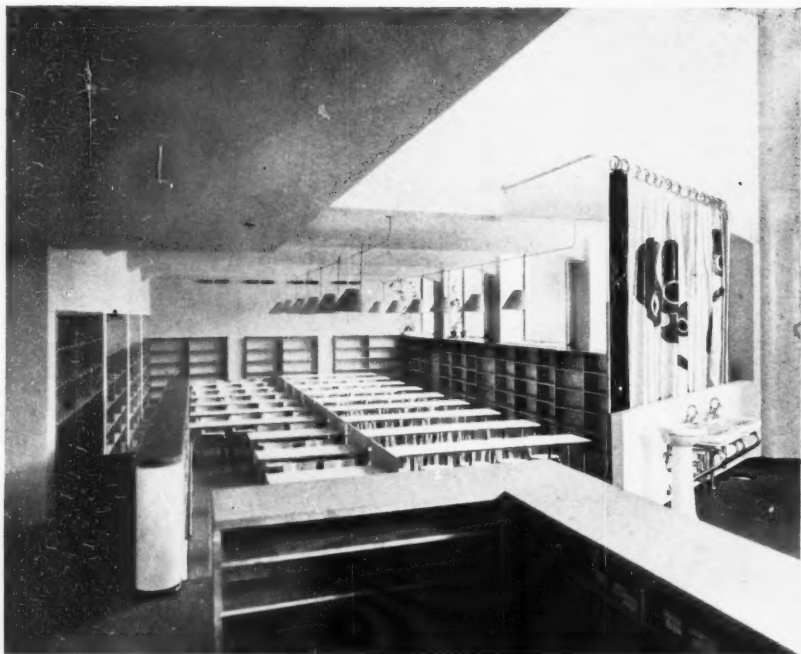


23

22 and 23 show the lecture-room seen from either end ; 21 being a close-up of the return of the acoustic timber ceiling, which is carried right down to meet the floor behind the chairman's desk in the form of an irregularly staggered end-wall. Silhouetted against the window in 23, the repetitive asymmetrical section of this undulating roof, though dictated purely by acoustic con-

siderations, inevitably recalls the florid curl of a typical Baroque moulding. The battalion of seats drawn up on the floor are all standardized models of Aalto's own design ; the first two ranks being upholstered plywood rocker-chairs, and those behind splice-jointed three-legged stools of solid birch, most of which have "typist-backs."

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24



25

24 and 25 are views taken in opposite directions from the middle of the children's library, yet another room planned on different levels. The first shows how the children's mouth - rinsing column and lavatory-basins are screened off behind the entrance from their own lawn ; and the second the story-telling and geography circles grouped round the chair of the children's reader and our old schoolroom friend the revolving globe. 26 is a close-range detail of the roof of the library block, with the cemented rims of the sky-light prisms standing up among the square concrete flags like draughtsmen marshalled on a chessboard.



26

THE ENGLISH TRADITION in The Town

By Thomas Sharp

III. Universal Suburbia



S Y N O P S I S

The essential idea behind towns and town life is that of co-operation. In the medieval town, however, that co-operation was instinctive rather than conscious, and, though often enough a strong group association was displayed in the wealth and pride of its principal buildings, the jumbled confusion and the meanness of the greater part of the town showed that men's association there was largely that of the mob rather than of an ordered society. There was not as yet any clear consciousness of man's relationship to his physical environment, nor an understanding of the collective basis of city life. These things came with the Renaissance. That great awakening brought the discovery of the Street, of the possibility of achieving an architectural unity in the town's buildings which reflected the co-operation and sociability of the urban way of life. In the development and perfection of the Street, the English people showed a marked genius, and during the course of two hundred years they developed a tradition of town building which took an individual line in that while most towns have glorified the autocracy that dominated them, the English town, in its charming domesticity, glorified the social order of its own citizens. By the end of the eighteenth century the English were showing themselves to be the finest town builders in the world. And then came the Industrial Revolution. The ill-balanced social code had been reflected in the physical form of even the finest eighteenth-century towns. Now, however, the enormous numerical increase with which the working-class population responded to the demands of its new master, the machine, reacted upon that social code to cause complete disaster. In the towns which were rushed up in those localities where the new industries developed, all the considerations of civic design that had hitherto influenced English town development were suddenly forgotten, the philosophy out of which they had arisen was overwhelmed, and within a few decades in the first half of the nineteenth century the nation that had been building the finest towns in the world was now, in the excitements of Empire-building and the acquisition of sudden fortunes, building the foulest towns the world has ever known. The natural reaction to this state of affairs came in the second half of the century. A series of Public Health Acts was passed to govern urban sanitary organization. But by now the idea of the town as a possible place of beauty, as the place where, in co-operative association, men might lead enlightened and happy lives, had passed completely out of mind. The Street had been debased till it symbolized not co-operation but tyranny. The town had become an object of hate: and all that its inhabitants now asked was not the opportunity to improve it but to escape from it.

THE condition of the Victorian town has generally been attributed solely to the social upheaval caused by the Industrial Revolution. It is, of course, very obvious that much of the evil of the mid-nineteenth-century developments, at any rate, must be laid wholly upon

that cataclysm. Yet the explanation must surely be too simple which attributes to the desire for profits and to social irresponsibility the whole long decline throughout the course of almost the entire century. The decline of architecture, that art which is so large a part of civic design, cannot, for

instance, be explained away in these simple terms of sociology. That decline arose out of a change and a confusion in aesthetic ideals. And so in some part at least did the failure of civic design.

It has already been shown how the idea of the Street, and through that a completely new conception of the town, arose out of that change in man's attitude towards his environment, that awakening desire to bring the material world into a satisfying human relationship, which was brought about by the Renaissance. Under those impulses the Renaissance builders had cast off the traditions which had developed down the centuries preceding them, deeming them incapable of bringing about the ordered beauty which they found alone to be satisfactory, and they had established in place of those blind and fumbling traditions a reasoned technique which, with a radiant unfaltering faith, they developed through a course of two centuries to that culmination which gave us the eighteenth-century town (and the eighteenth-century countryside also). But maturity seems always to have in itself the seeds of its own destruction: and by the time the Renaissance philosophy of humanism was being given its most triumphant civic expression, the very spirit which had created it, that direct, enquiring, scientific attitude of mind, had so extended men's knowledge and understanding that the clear vision became blurred, the serene confidence shaken, the fine singleness of purpose dissipated by a host of distracting interests and doubt-engendering influences. Thus eighteenth-century antiquaries familiarizing mediæval and oriental art and institutions which had hitherto been deemed merely barbarous, and eighteenth-century scientists explaining the mysteries of Nature, and poets softening with a seductive web of words her hitherto overwhelming austerities, had created that Romantic Revival which struck deep at the very roots of their own civilization.

It struck particularly at the expression of that civilization in the town. The renewal of interest in Gothic architecture as well as the new-found delights of informality in natural attributes led inevitably towards the destruction of so formal a creation as the Renaissance Street. Shortly after the turn of the century the beginnings of the reaction against Renaissance formality were already to be observed in occasional excursions into romantic expression by architects who normally still worked in the old tradition. Thus Nash could design the villages in Regent's Park (1824), as well as Regent Street and the rest of his admirably civic developments. Thus, too, could Decimus Burton build, in the neighbourhood of his own fine Calverly Promenade at Tunbridge Wells, a whole estate of detached and semi-detached villas (1828). Here were instances, and there were others, of a turning away from the Street long before it had been debased through unsympathetic handling and social callousness; a turning away, in fact, at the very period of its perfection.

These early excursions from the Renais-

THE ENGLISH TRADITION

sance town were nothing more than experiments with a new æsthetic formula. It was not long, however, before they were prompted by other motives and were given far weightier justification. Under the guidance of Ruskin, for example, moral indignation was added to æsthetic dissatisfaction to further the breakaway from the formal town. As the principal object of his indignation Ruskin chose no less an embodiment of the Renaissance spirit than Edinburgh New Town itself, and so great did his obsession with that place become that throughout a considerable portion of his long life he lost no opportunity of fulminating against it and all that it stood for. Even he had to grant that it had some attractions. "As far as I am acquainted with modern architecture," he admitted, "I am aware of no streets which in simplicity and manliness of style or general breadth and brightness of effect, equal those of the New Town at Edinburgh." Yet for him the "rudeness" of the Canongate was infinitely to be preferred to the New Town's "dullness, its deathful formality of street." He was revolted to the very soul to find that in Queen Street there were "six hundred and seventy-eight windows, absolutely similar and altogether devoid of relief by decoration." For such crimes, while he "would like to destroy and rebuild the East End of London" he would, he said, "destroy without rebuilding the New Town of Edinburgh."

But there was still another change that militated against the continuance of the old urban tradition. For this was the age not only of Romance but of *Laissez-faire*, of the individual-over-all—of the successful individual, that is. So the Street became doubly damned. Co-operation? When all-alone-I-did-it? To that the new towns and suburbs, which towards the middle of the century the railways made possible for the wealthy, returned the substance if not the form of Miss Dolittle's famous answer.

Bournemouth, 5, Southport, Ilkley, Harrogate and their counterparts were the Baths and Cheltenham of this new age. Bedford Park and Sefton Park were its Edinburgh New Towns. But whereas the eighteenth century had expressed its citizenship in Royal Crescent and George Street, these new places proclaimed Romance and Individualism in large separate villas all well set back from curving park-like roads among sheltering trees, wild rockeries and geranium-dotted carpet beds.

All these changes, these moralizings, these delights, were only, of course, for the powerful. Such subtleties were not for members of the insensate mob. These obviously had nothing to do with Romance or the expression of individuality, for they had neither. They were merely parts of the machine that turned out the profits. And all that was necessary for them, when they were not in use, was to pack them into the various compartments of a long brick box. For that, and merely that, was what the Street had now become. It was no longer an ideal. It was a mere convenience. The

possibility of its being anything else had, in fact, passed completely out of mind. So while it was being destroyed for the wealthy, the ignorance of its origin and a complete indifference to its essential nature were causing the Street to be debased to that final limit of degradation which led to a universal revulsion against it, and so to its ultimate destruction.

Before this general revulsion set in, however, the worker had already, in two special instances, been given his release. In 1879 at Bournville, and in 1888 at Port Sunlight, **3**, two socially-conscious industrialists had established for their employees places as romantic as Bournemouth or Bedford Park; places where little cottages, in imitation of the vernacular cottages of the countryside, faced on to village greens; where after factory hours an almost country life might be led digging in idyllic gardens under the benevolent eye of a philanthropic proprietor. Here were glimpses even for the dwellers in bye-law streets of an alternative to those grim places that had come to seem inevitable to them. Here especially were shining examples to social reformers of what might yet be done not merely for the rich or even for the comfortable but for the drab millions of the proletariat itself.

Thus, then, had the way been prepared for the revolt against the Victorian camp. Thus by the end of the century had the times become propitious for the acceptance of whatever ideal might offer the furthest possible escape from the beastliness of the various Batleys and Bootles, the various Mansfields and Middlesbroughs which now represented the English conception of the town.

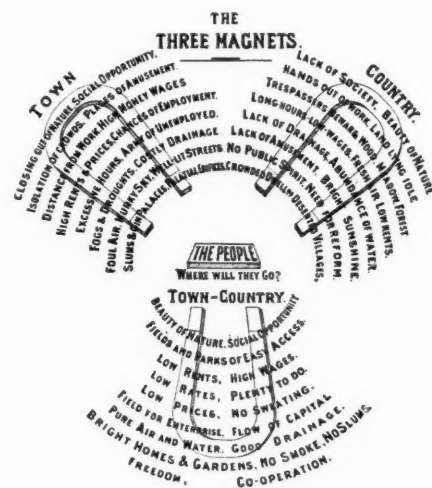
The finest possible ideal, from this point of view, was that which Ebenezer Howard now produced in his *Tomorrow* (1898). It was no very new Utopia. Some of its features had already been outlined by James Silk Buckingham for that "Victoria" which had failed to achieve reality fifty years earlier; and for the rest they were founded on that romantic philosophy which had already for so long been undermining the old urban tradition and which had been given material form in Bournemouth and Port Sunlight, and the rest. But though these instruments of Goliath's destruction were by no means new, they were wielded by Howard with a new cunning, their thrust was given a new twist which made an end at last not only of the Victorian conception of the town but of every conception of it which had prevailed since man came out of barbarism.

For Howard was not content with desiring to bring into the town the expression of the new romantic æsthetic. He preached its complete destruction. Even so late as 1848 it had still been possible for a reformer like Buckingham to accept the traditional idea of the town, to believe fervently in its capacity for beauty, in its progressive influence, in its worthiness to be the habitation of civilized man. That was possible no longer. Now to the romantic

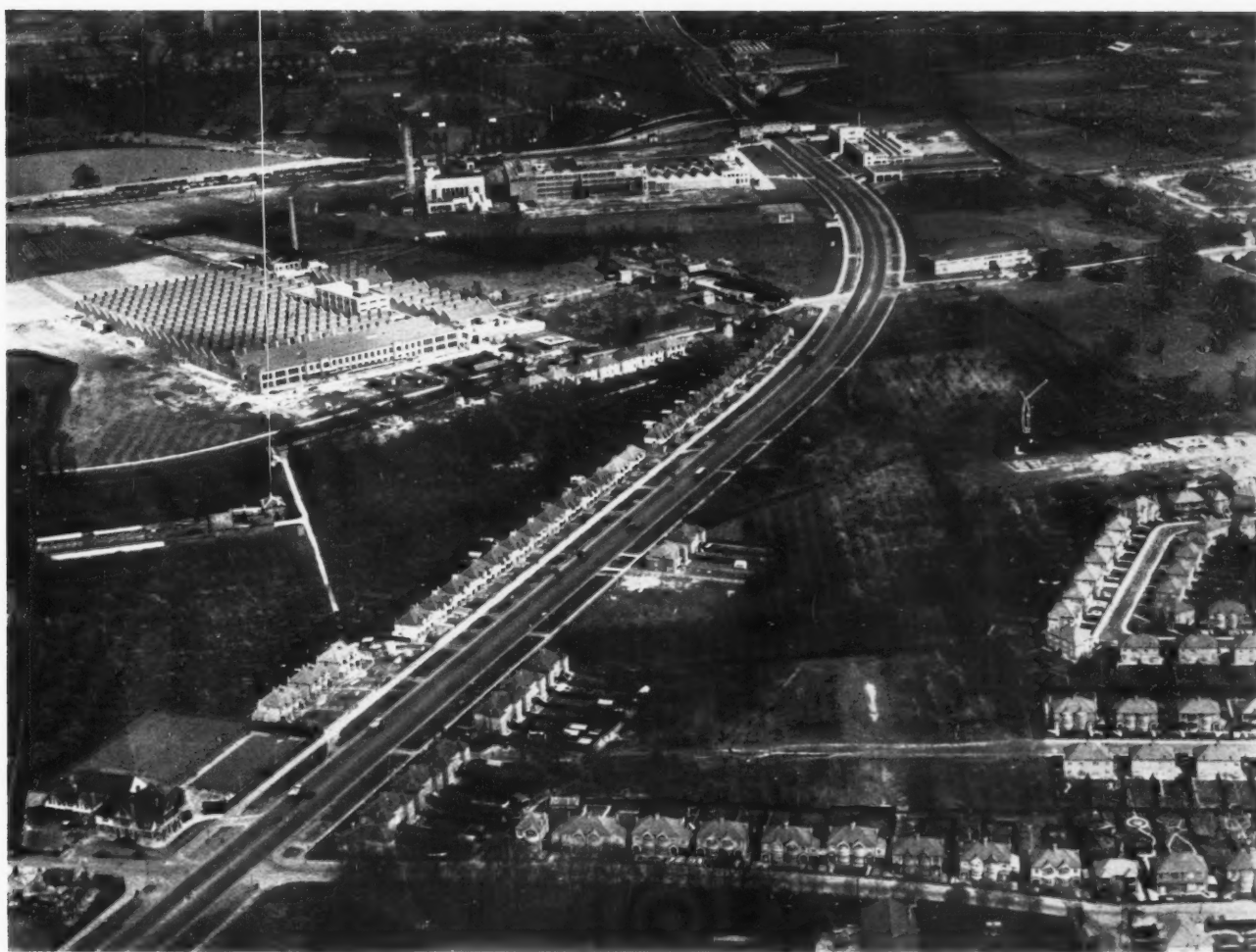
mind the town was essentially hateful, incapable of beauty, an evil thing to be destroyed. And the Georgian town being swamped and ignored, what better support could be desired for this contention than the sprawling camps of Tyneside, Clydeside, the Potteries, or even the Bye-law streets of a hundred towns still as yet comparatively immune from industrial influence?

But if the town was evil what was the alternative to it? There was, of course, the countryside; that English countryside whose green undulations lapped right up against the filthy frontiers of the towns to make them look the more shameful. There surely, in those clean paradisaical expanses was beauty and peace that all men should enjoy. "Back to the land" was already an old cry, and Howard raised it again. Yet even there there was a worm in the bud. Not without result had the prophet been born within the sound of Bow Bells. True Cockney, he found the country lovely but intolerably lonely. Here then was his dilemma. The town, though it once had been "the symbol of broad expanding sympathies, of science, art, culture, religion," is hideous. "And the country . . . the symbol of God's love and care for men . . . is very dull for lack of society and very sparing of her gifts for lack of capital." Which of these two age-old antitheses should provide man with his perfect habitation? Which, indeed, when both were faulty? Yet why either? There was, after all, for the romantic mind, a very simple way out of a difficulty like this. "The fullness of joy and wisdom has not yet revealed itself to man. Nor can it ever, so long as this unholy, unnatural separation of Society and Nature endures. Town and country *must be married*, and out of their joyous union will spring a new hope, a new life, a new civilization"; a marriage which "may be illustrated by a

[Continued on page 118]



2. In this diagram Ebenezer Howard illustrated his idea of creating a new form half-way between the town and the country. He first called it Town-Country, then Garden-City, but today we see it as nothing but universal suburbia.



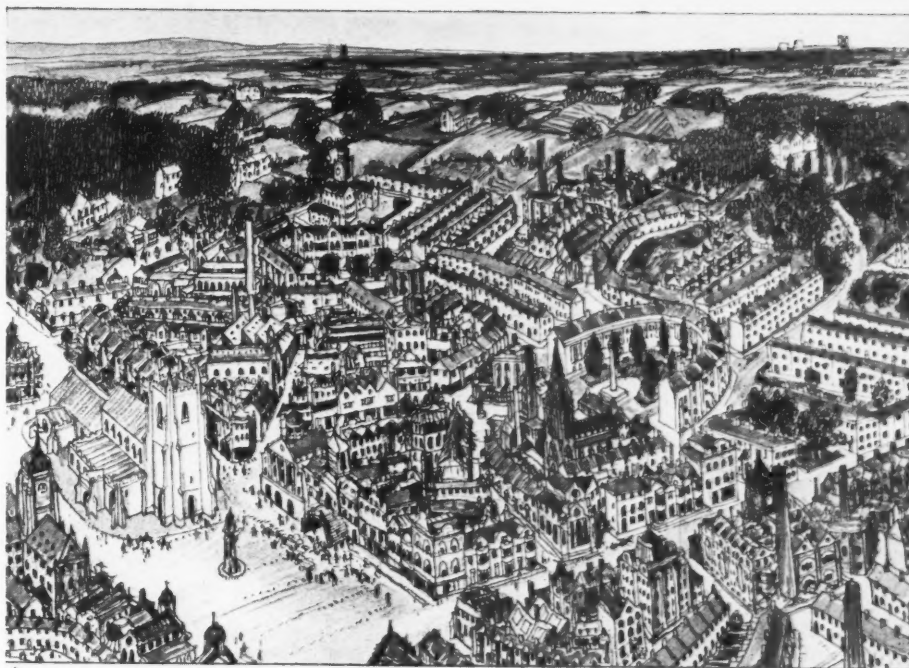
Before the advance of Town-Country the beauties alike of the Town and of the Country disappear and are replaced by a dull and sterile neutrality. London has reached out to the country and now the country is twenty miles further from London. Factories and houses in the vicinity of the Great West Road.

PLATE iii

March 1936

A. 1850. Industry Arrives—

- Factories spring up among the houses.
- Housing for workers in the factories.
- Middle-class villas in the fields.
- Municipal buildings, shops, dissenting Chapels haphazardly placed; confusion of architectural styles.
- A reaction from Georgian orderliness back to the mediæval jumble.
- Decline of agriculture as the staple occupation.



A

B. 1900. —and overwhelms the Town

- Workers' dwellings in bye-law streets; crowded, but more sanitary than the slums.
- The railway.
- More factories; gas-works.
- Acres of suburbs in unplanned confusion.
- The countryside is being pushed away.
- Tenement housing in the centre.
- Trams and motor-cars.
- Public lavatory in the market place.



B

C. 1936. Town Without End

- Motor transport supplants the railway; a new arterial road; the flight to the suburbs.
- Ribbon development along the arterial road.
- Suburban expansion right away to the horizon.
- Isolated blocks of flats (equally uncivilized if a little more sanitary) in a few slum areas.
- In the centre: piecemeal development on the old plan; architectural confusion among the buildings and traffic confusion in the streets.



C



3



4

In the revolt against the Street, the new houses of the workers were built in imitation of the vernacular cottages of the countryside. 3, Port Sunlight. 4, Hampstead Garden Suburb.

diagram of the 'Three Magnets' in which the chief advantages of the Town and of the Country are set forth with their corresponding drawbacks, while the advantages of Town-Country are seen to be free from the disadvantages of either," 2.

It was on pseudo-philosophical foundations like this that the New Jerusalems were built. The acceptance of such romanticism may perhaps be regarded as an indication of the desperate condition to which sociologists had now been reduced, but, be that as it may, the acceptance was there, and it was enthusiastic and sincere. Within a year or two of Howard's publication of *Tomorrow*, there had been promoted a company to translate Town-Country into actual fact; the First Garden City was springing up among the Hertfordshire meadows at Letchworth; a Garden Suburb was building at Hampstead; and Garden Villages were rising in different parts of the country at the bidding of various conscience-stricken industrialists.

In all these places the simple purity of the initial Town-Country form was much modified by practical considerations. In one place, indeed, in Hampstead Garden Suburb, 4, these practical modifications went so far that somehow or other a suggestion of the genuine town itself managed to creep in through one or two small-scale grouping effects which followed quite delightfully the eighteenth-century tradition of the Street. But such lapses were rare. Above all a country flavour must be achieved. In Town-Country the country must prevail. In Garden-City (which was, of course, the same thing) the emphasis must all be on the garden. So all the houses were country cottages set singly or in pairs along curving countrified roads diversified with hedges, trees and shrubs, herbaceous borders and green swards. Informality and romance was the key-note. In fact when all was said and done Town-Country arrived as but a popular edition of Bedford Park and the rest of the resorts of the Victorian upper-middle classes.

It reflected, indeed, precisely the same attitude of mind as those places had reflected. The artisan and the clerk who had for so long suffered repression in Victorian streets might now indulge their individualistic yearnings no less than their superiors. This in truth was one of the principal attractions of Town-Country. From the very beginning Howard had laid down the individualistic nature of his

Utopia. In it there was to be no reflection of the co-operative basis of community life. That "the fullest measure of individual taste and preference is encouraged" he had offered as a principal reason for its acceptance. In the building of the First Garden City the declared aim was that "each house will stand in its own garden"; while an instruction to developers stated that "ample frontage will be provided, and it is hoped that builders will not think of erecting those common unsatisfactory rows of narrow houses." Now, then, the Street was dead at last. And so that there might be no mistake about it the very word was forbidden in Town-Country even for the purpose of an address.

Town-Country might in actual practice seem to fall short of that great ideal which was to provide "a new hope, a new life, a new civilization." But despite this, or perhaps because of it, it did not for long remain, as so many Utopias have remained, the merely private panacea of a small band of enthusiastic dreamers. Before the persuasive eloquence of its advocates (whose propaganda, incidentally, was not always remarkable for its undeviating honesty) even the natural conservatism of Parliament itself gave way, and in the course of a few years not only had conformation to Town-Country ideals been made compulsory in the thousands of housing schemes which government itself was forced by circumstances to undertake, 6, but, so far had enthusiasm advanced, it was enforced (under what was ironically enough called a Town Planning Act) upon private persons building for private purposes. Here was a remarkable situation. Forced at last by the miseries of the Victorian town into active intervention, the government, for the first time in the history of England, was now taking a hand in the planning of towns. And the principles that were now being enforcing towards that end had been originally advocated for nothing short of the town's destruction. Now indeed Howard's hopes had reached a remarkable fulfilment. He had cried "Back to the Land" and had offered Town-Country as the instrument for producing that return. And now every dock worker in Liverpool, every cotton operative in Bolton, every clerk, every shopkeeper, every artisan in all the big and little towns in the kingdom must henceforward, according to law, and whether he liked it or not, live under conditions intended for part-time peasants.

All this activity arose simply and directly out of the only too natural desire of social reformers to create a better place than the Victorian town for twentieth-century Englishmen. It was an artificially created activity prompted chiefly by æsthetic ideals. But though the times were propitious for its success, not even Howard himself could have seen quite how propitious. Even before the foundation stone of Letchworth had been laid, there had come about changes which made Town-Country, or something very like it, almost inevitable, changes through which it would probably have materialized of its own accord.

The first, and perhaps the chief, and certainly most easily measurable of these changes was a series of mechanical inventions which threw down most of the historic barriers between town and country. Before the invention of the steam locomotive those barriers had been complete. The railways and later a few tramways had made sufficient breaches in them for the overflow of the manufacturing towns to spill out in short thin ribbons or gather into new groups within the fixed and narrow limits of their influence. But now the motor car, and later the motor bus, shattered the ancient barriers completely. They ran out from the towns into the countryside along all the strands of an intricate thickly-woven network of roads, Plate III, and with them they carried a million townsmen sick of their bye-law streets, wearied of their sordid towns; carried them out and set them down on their new door-steps, five, ten, fifteen miles away from town.

Another invention, the radio, afforded these people in their new places many of the social pleasures which only the town had hitherto provided. And while the townsman was thus brought into the countryside, the countryman himself, either indirectly by radio, or directly by bus, was brought far closer within the sphere of urban influence than ever he had been before.

And still another mechanical development assisted in the breakdown of the old barriers. It had been the localization of raw materials (in the absence of a really liquid form of transport), and of power, that had created the industrial town. Now not only was the first of these determining factors changed by the coming of motor transport, but the second also was modified by the development of widespread electricity transmission which made available even in the parish of Badger's Green a source of power as plentiful and as dependable as that in the city of Coketown.

These changes automatically brought with them changes in building practice. And these (so deep had the hatred of the town become) operated in a precisely similar manner to the changes artificially brought about by Town-Country ideals. It was not only that the population squandered out loosely into the countryside. The already discredited idea of the Street was still further discredited in the necessity for accommodating innumerable cars in their own little houses alongside the houses of their owners, 1 and 8. And so to the

social and æsthetic appeal of Town-Country there was now added the justification of practical advantage.

But added to all these mechanical changes and their results was a sociological change of profound importance (though there is no space to analyse it in any detail here). The cry of "Votes for Women" has left its effect on the English town almost as markedly as has that of "Back to the Land": and it may indeed be said that if the eighteenth-century town glorified man the Citizen, this place was built for woman, the Individualist supreme.

Here, then, by these various means, by the Victorian debasement of the town, by new mechanical advancements, by sociological changes and changing sociological ideals, but most of all by the change of mental attitude engendered by the Romantic Revival, we have arrived at the destruction of the traditional town. Ten million people have been housed and rehoused by the feverish efforts of authority and private initiative in the greatest period of intensive building the world has ever known. For these people and by them a new form has been created. Town and Country have been more than married, they have been mingled. Everywhere around us we see the fruits of this mingling. Are they, we may justifiably ask, the fine fruits that Howard promised—"a new life, a new hope, a new civilization"?

Town-Country has, alas, proved to be the reverse of Howard's hopes. While it has few of the "advantages" of either the town or the country, it has most of their "disadvantages" as well as new and grave disadvantages of its own. It is, in fact, nothing but a universal suburbia, an æsthetic void, a social wilderness. Some measure of its qualities is suggested in the number of societies it has produced for the preservation of the countryside. It has not yet produced a society for the preservation of the town, but that is merely an indication of how deep was the blow struck by the nineteenth century at the very root of the town conception.

So universal suburbia sprawls drearily on. Loosely (though sincerely) it was conceived: loosely and ever still more loosely it develops. At bottom a social and an æsthetic ideal (for, as we have seen, the later Victorian town had been made healthy, though none the less æsthetically repulsive), it displays ever more deeply as it grows the fundamental falsities of its inspiration. The "Town" part of it is but a straggling disorderly alternation of unrelated buildings and unrelated vacuities. The "Country" part is a childish sham where a privet hedge and a root of michaelmas daisies pitifully symbolize the now all too absent beauties of the countryside. With its formula of one plus one plus one *ad infinitum* it results in the covering of the greatest possible space with the least positive æsthetic result. Vague, wasteful, formless, incoherent, it slobbers over the counties. Before its advance the traditional beauties alike of the town and of the country fall away and are succeeded by a dull, characterless



5



6



7

Long before the final debasement of the town in the late-Victorian bye-law streets, the Romantic Revival and the philosophy of laissez-faire had destroyed the Renaissance conception of the city. At first it was only the wealthy who could express their individuality and indulge in romance, as they did at Bournemouth, 5, which was developed in 1850. But now under various influences this new town form has become available for all classes through both municipal housing schemes, such as Becontree, 6, and the development of private estates, such as Peacehaven, 7.

THE ENGLISH TRADITION

neutrality. Striving everywhere to escape from the towns to the countryside its inhabitants forever thwart themselves and each other, pushing the object of their desire ever further beyond their reach. London has stretched out to embrace the country, and now the country is twenty miles further from London.

And the dwellers in the suburbs are twenty miles further from town. And consequently they may be twenty miles further from their work—in which Town-Country displays its failure from a sociological as well as from an æsthetic point of view. For despite the operation of the so-called Town Planning Acts the growth of Town-Country has been even more a matter of blind chance than was the growth of the Victorian town. Then the limited nature of the transport facilities bound factories as well as houses within a limited circuit. Now, both being equally mobile and equally unorganized, these essentially inter-related necessities of modern living are set up separately where nothing but chance or a merely personal whim dictates. So ease of transport brings increase of transport. Criss-cross from one part to another, but most of all backwards and forwards upon the town centre, the ever-increasing traffic gets more and more congested, and time and money and energy are drained away in a colossal folly of unproductive movement till it has become a curious commentary on unorganized Town-Country that the inhabitants of it must not only spend considerable portions of their lives travelling to and from this "new life, new hope, new civilization," but must often deny themselves some of the actual necessities of existence to be able to do so.

The plain fact is that in Town-Country (at least in its present unorganized form, which, it must in justice be said, is far from what Howard and his associates intended) there is no new hope—nor any hope at all. For what hope in the modern world can spring from a chaos of individualism? And that is precisely what Town-Country is, 7. Semi-detached houses in a sham-rural street in a wilderness of semi-detached houses in sham-rural streets are, indeed, something more than a chaos of romantic individualism in themselves: they are the physical expression of the prime social evil of the age, an evil which not only affects the town but the nation and all the nations of

the world. Everywhere individualism is supreme; and the Street and the Town, those two units in which the quality of man's mass association has always been so clearly symbolized, unmistakably illustrate it—by their very absence.

It is individualism with a difference, of course. Not the crude Victorian individualism of the successful few, which involved the ruthless repression of the many. It is, in truth, the extremity of reaction from that: a romantic universal individualism, in which every man glories, and is encouraged to glory, in his self-sufficiency and separateness.

So there are no citizens of Town-Country. There are only inhabitants of it. There is no community. There is only a collection of separate units. The Individual, not the Citizen, is glorified here. And wider, vaster, ever more loosely his place develops. Blind, uncontrolled, drugged with romanticism, drunk with a false independence, universal suburbia sprawls wastefully on. Sprawls whither? Towards a new beauty and a new hope, or merely towards a dull dead-level of neutrality, a new and more tangled chaos? Well, we have Town-Country with us already to judge by.

And what, meanwhile, has happened to the town? While this new hope has been pursued down the highways and byways of the countryside, what has happened to that old symbol of despair, the Victorian camp, and what to that bright but overshadowed fulfilment that went before it, the eighteenth-century town?

Alas! that in cities more than elsewhere the evil that men do should live after them. Little enough has happened to the Camp. Despite all this activity in new building, the old core persists unaltered save by age, its earlier parts almost as foul as ever they were, as squalid, as congested; its later parts as grim, as sanitary and as dull; all darkened now by the years of smoke that have passed over them, made more melancholy by the dead lives that have dragged out in their vast hopelessness. The camp is very permanent.

Only the main streets have changed, for lately Commerce has grown both proud and powerful, and what cannot be accomplished for the dwellers in mean streets can be achieved by Business with the nodding of a head. Thus many an old drab street has been transferred into a tawdry glitter of

competing commercial palaces whose façades shout from plinth to parapet with a discord of unrelated design augmented by a cacophony of posters and electric signs which reduce the street, from whatever character it may once have possessed as a symbol of men's co-operative association, to a hideous Babel of individualism, 9.

And, more than proud and powerful, Commerce has grown arrogant. Not only does it create a more repellent disorder in already disordered Victorian streets, it now invades and destroys unities which even the Victorians left unharmed. It seems, in fact, to prefer such activity. Regent Street has gone at its bidding. The Adelphi is going. George Street has been raped. Carlton House Terrace has been married to a monster. And a hundred other of the remaining relics of the splendid towns that the English could once build are all similarly destroyed or debased.

But cynical as is the abrogation of civic responsibilities by Commerce, it is but an echo of the attitude of civic authority itself. Who cares for civic design now? Who, indeed, knows what it means? When Leicester spends a million pounds driving a new road through its central chaos, 10, who cares if the buildings lining it appear as ill-assorted, as uncivilized, as competitive as the captains of commerce who will occupy them?

This, then, is what we have come to. The old town, a repellent mass of dreary rows of mean houses crossed at infrequent intervals by streets of a frantic disorder and an even more sinister, if more tawdry, meanness. The countryside, that once was at its doors, now pushed away behind miles of vague and disorderly suburbs, and everywhere within a wide orbit fouled and filthied by their overflow. Everywhere disorder, waste, and a bitter meanness of spirit. Where once beauty was a quality that quickened men to joy, where once the glory of the town was the pride and the sacrifice of its citizens, now nothing matters any more save the day's profit, a night's pleasure, and then—escape for those who can. The Street has gone, and with it the whole conception of the town that it symbolized. The story has run almost full circle. And truly indeed might that tortured prophet, D. H. Lawrence, now cry: "As the makers of towns the English are more ignominious than rabbits."



8

Practical and sociological influences as well as a new æsthetic ideal, have assisted in the destruction of the formal street. 1 and 8, Houses with garages along-side; the "personal" house built for woman, the individualist. 9, High Street,



9

Uxbridge. New shopping streets as well as old display a riot of individuality in competing façades and a cacophony of advertisements: 10, Charles Street, Leicester: a new street driven through the centre of the town at immense cost.



10

THE ENGLISH SCENE: A VISITOR'S OBSERVATIONS

During last summer Herr Carl Hubacher, of Zurich, the distinguished Swiss engineer, paid a holiday visit to this country. He made an extensive tour of many parts of England and Wales, taking a large number of snapshots of places that interested him, observing chiefly the planning and architectural organization of towns, suburbs and industrial centres as he found them, and noticing the way these differed from their continental equivalents. A selection of his photographs is reproduced on this and the following pages, and underneath are printed the notes or observations, translated from the German, which Herr Hubacher himself made at the time of taking them. It is possible that the fresh vision of foreign eyes may help to reveal how much of the English Tradition in the town, as defined in Mr. Sharp's articles, is still a peculiar thing with consistent qualities of its own, how much or how little it has preserved of its old value, and what kind of efforts are needed to recreate it according to new conditions.



Dover: Industrial Romanticism. Has it been forced?



Dover: The Middle Ages, Victorianism, Modern Industrialism and the World Crisis. The appearance of these things in England to us continental is not so much a matter of historical sequence as of a logical unity. Is the reason for this Conservatism, or an actual superiority derived from a far-sighted Imperialism?



Bargoed: Landscape in the South Wales coal area. Peasant land and miners' cottages with kitchen gardens. In the distance pithcaps with mechanical conveyors.



Glynn-Taff: Rows of cottages. Are peasant-plots and industry antagonistic to each other? Is this a case of forcible subordination on the part of very indifferent powers that be, or discipline?



Merthyr-Tydfil: A medley of chaos, violence and romance. Is the spirit of South Wales, at once more distant and more sympathetic to us than that of South Africa, enigmatic because of its incomprehensible melancholy, or on the score of its overwhelming superiority?



Manchester: In the heart of a great industrial town synonymous with laissez-faire exploitation. Are there automatically operative laws for the acquisition of plots of ground like these?



Manchester: The modern English street—clean, clear, wide and open. Plenty of light and outlook in striking contrast to the Continent.



Birmingham: A street in an industrial quarter. In spite of chaotic planning and a lack of any co-ordination between working and dwelling areas, it is light and not unfriendly. In any case there is an absence of the high enclosing walls and the chasm-like impression of complete cheerlessness and hopelessness of industrial cities on the Continent.



Colwyn Bay (Llandrillon-yn-Rhos): A colony of retired business men's small villas set down in an industrial area of North Wales.



Siransea: A street in an industrial suburb.



Manchester: The breadth of the street, the width of the grass margins, the distances which the house-fronts are set back from traffic are consistent with the dominant tradition of the whole of England—dignity.



Birmingham: A speculative-builder's housing estate of the 1935 model. The legally prescribed intervals and assimilation to the landscape, as also the foliage of the trees, do much to relieve the bad orientation and cramped appearance of this lay-out.



Manchester: Parts of these English industrial towns assume a chaotic enough character, and it is precisely on to these that additions are still being built. The globe-trotter on the Continent has the crisis brought to his attention in the cafes. There what used to be "Café-crème" has become "Café-au-lait." Is the English tradition likewise attenuating into skimmed milk?

THE ENGLISH SCENE: A VISITOR'S



Bristol: "The Friendly City": a compendium of all conceivable good and bad urban characteristics. Much that is chaotic wears an innocent enough face and, though quite unmasked, hardly seems to be noticed.



Birmingham: A characteristic stretch of a Birmingham street and a typical part of central Birmingham. Is Birmingham a Paradise, or a Big City?



St. Helens: Industrial housing of the 1935 pattern. Modern land speculation. Cheerlessness puts in an appearance. Light and air begin to be at a discount.



Birmingham: A better-class district. Sterile respectability where no heed is taken of all too near neighbours.



Manchester: On the fringes of the City. The continental becomes so sentimental that he can scarcely perceive the desolation of a big English industrial centre.



Manchester: The city's outskirts. The outer rows of houses bar the inhabitants from a sight of the landscape. Nature morte?



Fernilee: Industrial housing in the open country. Nature at their door makes these bad types of cottage endurable, but the opportunity for much more widespread building has been neglected.



Derbyshire, cement-works: In spite of the free choice of site the little houses have been placed far too close to the kilns. All the same they are in many ways far more presentable than they would be on the Continent.



Liverpool: Admirable adaptability of the standard unit to local configuration, in this case accompanied by good architectural effect as well.



Birmingham: An arterial road. Regulated traffic and co-ordinated industrial buildings.



Central London, Craven Street, Charing Cross: Urban yet not metropolitan. Not exactly an ideal street to live in, but at least better than its continental equivalents.



Stockport: A "respectable" residential street. The desire for a more dignified architectural style has necessitated a reduction of the much greater window area that had become technically possible at a much earlier date.



Swansea: Old Housing. The one-storeyed tape-worm wriggles about with a decent and human enough air. The breadth of view from every window, the direct insolation, and the greenness of its immediate surroundings make even the most primitive embellishments endurable. The only blot on the scene, and a bad one, is the shum in the valley below.



Ammanford, South Wales: A small mining town with shops that are Mid-Victorian — which was at least one of the most consistent styles of the last century.



Bath: Standardization in the eighteenth century—not then (as now) considered a sign of limitation or inferiority, but rather of distinction and dignity.



Bath: A back view of standardized eighteenth-century houses.

Birmingham and in the hospital of fact and houses extend from

Stockport roofs with of distinction of the

Bath: Bath ran along what the feudal castle. At windows

S O B S E R V A T I O N S



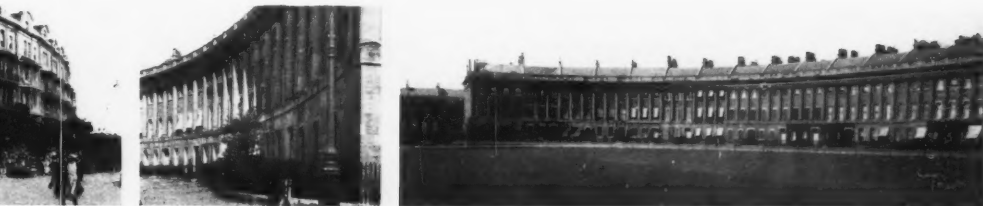
Liverpool: An old residential district. Light, air and verdure.

Birmingham: An industrial zone: canals, railways and in the background the new building for the hospital standing among wide meadows. In point of fact this zone lies in the middle of the town, and housing estates, factories and traffic arteries extend from it for many kilometres in all directions.



Stockport: The restless forms of higher-pitched roofs with their "spreading eaves" as the cachet of distinction. This is the type of house which has served on the Continent as a model for all imitations of the "English Domestic Style."

Bristol: The "Europeanized" quarter of the "Friendly City." Church spires and factory chimneys mingle amicably and on an equal footing.



Bath: But when no street originally ran along the back we find this was what the rear elevations of that feudal colonnade architecture looked like. All the same the size of the windows commands respect.

Weston - super - Mare: Old lodging houses on the sea front. Good and deliberate utilization of the advantages of the site.

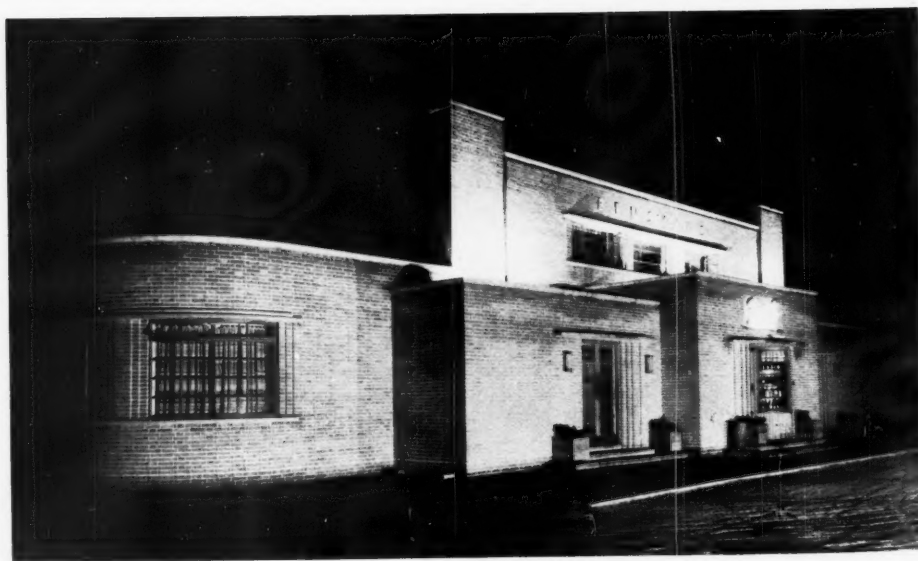
Bath: Eighteenth-century lodging houses.

Bath: Consummate dignity in domestic architecture and yet bona fide construction in series.

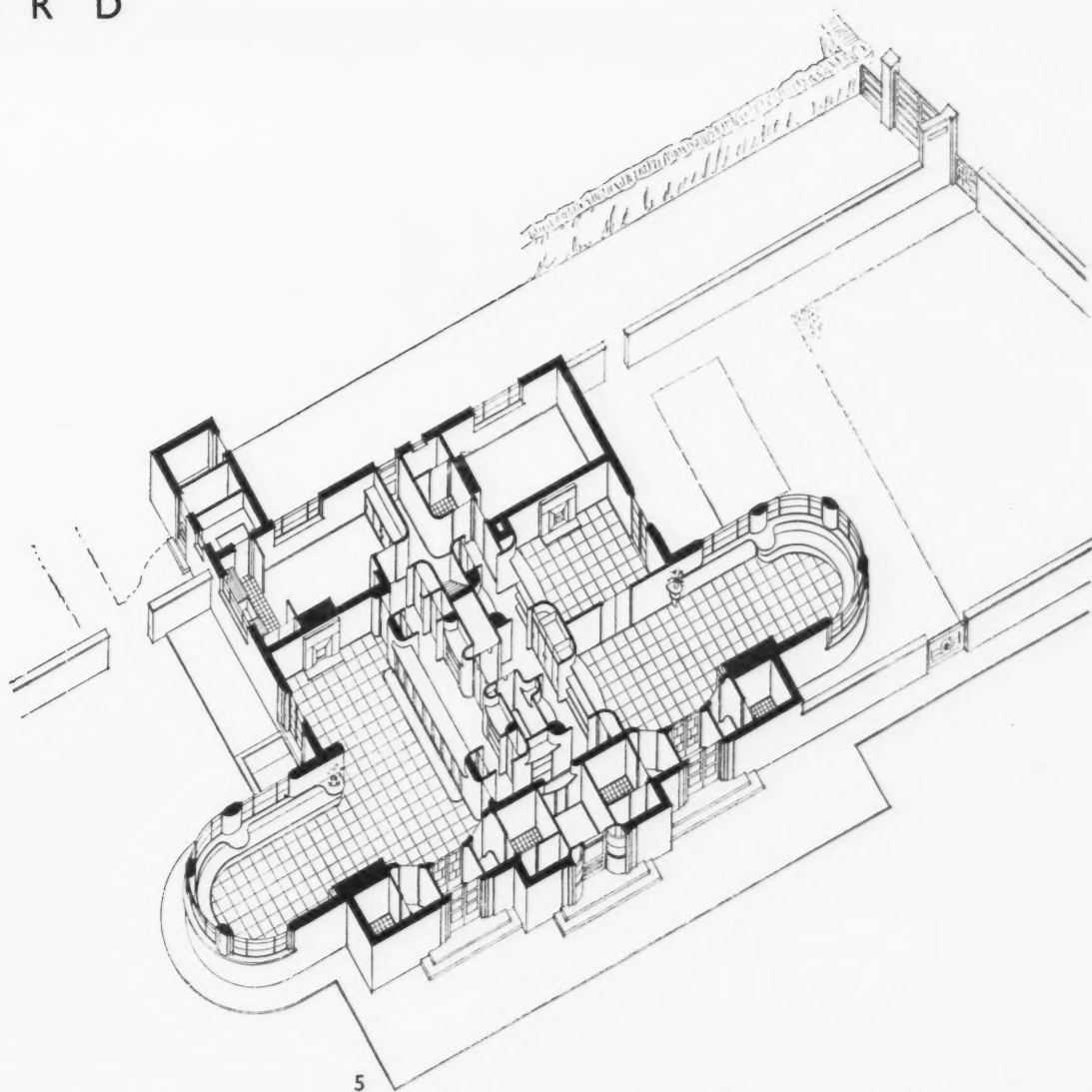
"THE NAG'S HEAD," BISHOP'S



This is a new public house at Hockerill, on the outskirts of Bishop's Stortford, constructed in 2 in. bricks of a mixed purple and red colour. Copings and door and window heads are in cast concrete with exposed glass aggregate. The windows are metal casements painted blue. 1 shows the off license entrance, with the concealed lighting in the show windows on either side, and the teak doors. 2 and 3 are different aspects of the exterior from the entrance forecourt, the former showing the sign. 4 is another exterior taken at night with the building floodlit.



E. B. MUSMAN,
ARCHITECT.



The Up-to-Date Pub.

By R. Ross Williamson

This comparatively small building, standing on the outskirts of the town on the Dunmow Road, is an attempt to introduce modern principles and an enlightened use of materials into contemporary public-house design. That is to say, not only has the fullest use been made of light and of air in the design, "new" materials employed (rubber on the floors, hard woods, *other than* mahogany, for the fittings), but the clients, Messrs. Benskins, of Watford, have allowed the architect to exercise his complete control over the design throughout the house. Thus, co-ordination of every detail has been ensured; the decoration, the furniture, the curtains—even the flower vases—were his responsibility; the extravagant lettering and the unnecessary advertisements which one had supposed inseparable from pubs. have been eliminated; and the architect was allowed to choose his team of artists to execute the decorations: Eric Kennington for the carved stone panel above the centre entrance and Cosmo Clark for wall paintings inside.

The old idea of ornament—another too common failing of this type of building—has been entirely jettisoned; simplicity and restraint of dimension are relied on for effect. A practical, as well as an æsthetic, principle has been observed by a consistent rounding of everything that would bear it: the big windows in the bars, the cabinets, the counters, and dirt-collecting angles and corners. There are no cornices and all the doors are flush.

Colour has been given a lot of attention. Flower boxes of brick, lined and drained, border the low balcony parapets of the front elevation and these, filled with a succession of blooms, will

provide an important foil to the uniformity of the brickwork. Inside, all the walls and ceilings have been painted the same pinkish-apricot colour—another attempt at uniformity—against which Cosmo Clark's paintings look very well. These consist of a panel over the hearth of either bar and a frieze, showing the history of brewing, over the cabinet.

Special care has been taken for the proper provision of pub. games. The architect has designed the dart-board in the public bar and fitted it with a lighting system of its own.

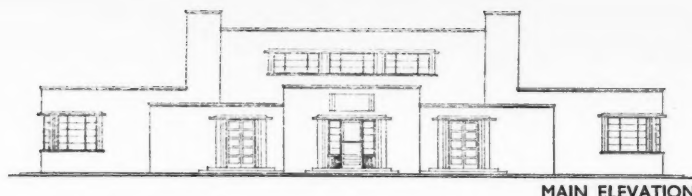
Eventually a tea-room is to be added in the rear of the building. This, the architect considers, is just as necessary to a house that has an eye on road custom as is its fine-weather counterpart, a small garden.

Public-houses today may be roughly divided into two classes: those whose chief source of custom is derived from parties traveling by road and those that serve in the traditional capacity of the inn as the local centre of social forgoing. The object in the case of "The Nag's Head" was to supply a compromise between the two. It replaces an older house and inherits an established local clientele; hence the private bar, with its entrance towards the direction from which these patrons come. This room uses, in my opinion, space which might with profit be included in the saloon bar next door, but the architect had to satisfy a local condition.

By the provision, on the other hand, of large car parks and a beer garden (and then there is the imminent tea-room) the house is well equipped for sudden invasion by char-à-bancs.

It is interesting to notice that the sign of the house, a traditional feature of the inn, is treated in a very revolutionary manner, but that the beer "pulls," symbols as well, remain as they always have been. Patrons don't mind, apparently, what happens to the sign, but there must be no interference with those sacred levers.

A This part of the public bar may be shut off from the remainder by a roller partition. So can the service counter. Thus a small room is made for slate club meetings, etc. Separate service from kitchen.



MAIN ELEVATION

B Tenant's quarters self-contained with an independent entrance. The first floor plan (see below) is remarkable for its simplicity.

C The architect's policy of avoiding all waste space and allotting as much room as possible to the public use is illustrated by the small space taken up by the staircase.

D Central service. This is the kernel of the whole design. No secret corners. Complete supervision of every department: the public, saloon and private bars and "the shop."

E Ample provision made for "the cabinet," i.e., shelves for bottles, etc., so that it forms an integral part of the bar. In too many cases this is a point which is overlooked.

F The provision of seating as an essential part of the design. The tables and chairs, also designed by the architect, are in sympathy with the scheme of decoration.

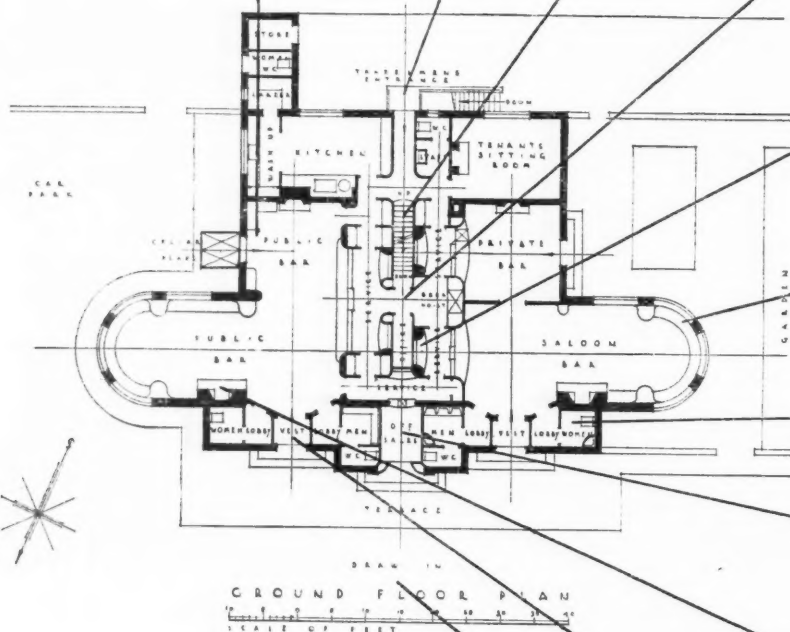
G Cloak-rooms, for men and women, in their logical position near the respective entrances to the public and saloon bars.

H Should the "jug-and-bottle"—even when addressed as "Off Sales"—be allowed a central position in the elevation? Not in theory, perhaps, but in a small house, such as this, it doesn't matter so much.

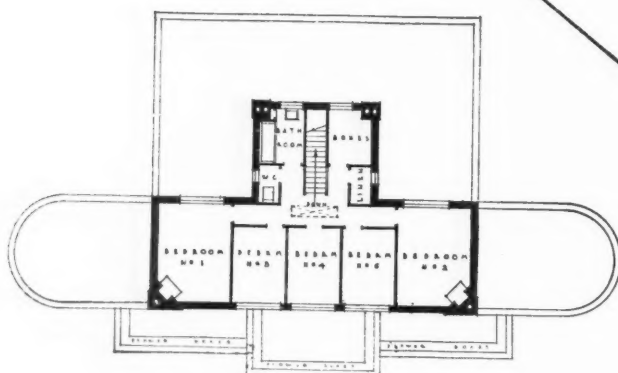
J Proper open hearths. Coal fires universally condemned in 1936, we are well aware, but pleasant, all the same, to find them in places where people come to relax and stretch their legs.

K Double doors in the vestibules to exclude draught.

L House set well back from the road with plenty of space for car park. Essential where catering for char-à-bancs is a speciality.



GROUND FLOOR PLAN
SCALE OF FEET



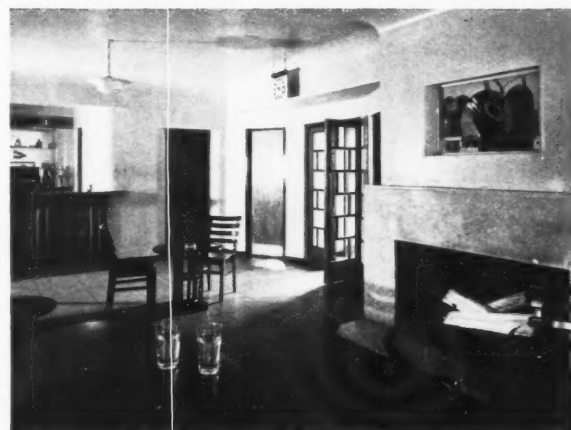
FIRST FLOOR PLAN

"THE NAG'S HEAD," BISHOP'S STORTFORD



9

9 is taken in the public bar and shows, behind the bar itself, the figured teak flush doors and the painted frieze by Cosmo Clark depicting scenes in the manufacture of beer. 10 is a more general view of the public bar. The fireplace and hearth are in polished Portland stone, with over them a design painted on glass, also by Cosmo Clark. The floor is of natural colour cork composition squares with black joints and all the furniture is cellulosed black. 11 is the saloon bar. The fixed seating along the wall and beneath the curved window is in natural coloured teak, wax finished. The tables and chairs are cellulosed black, the former with bakelite tops and the latter with red leather upholstery. There are radiators under the window seats. 12 is a stone panel, carved by Eric Kennington to illustrate the history of Bishop's Stortford, which is placed externally in the centre of the main elevation. Its position can be seen in 2 and 4.



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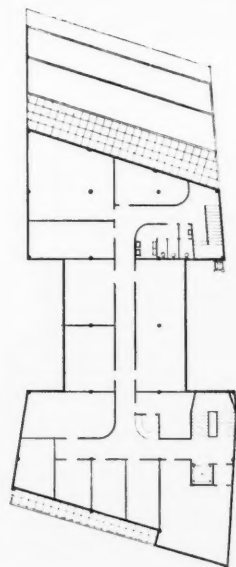


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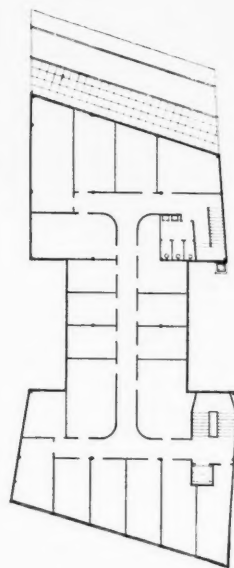
CASTLE CIRCUS HOUSE,



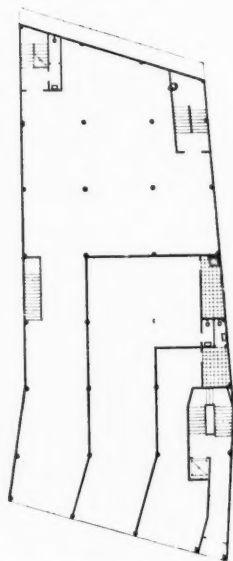
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3 THIRD FLOOR

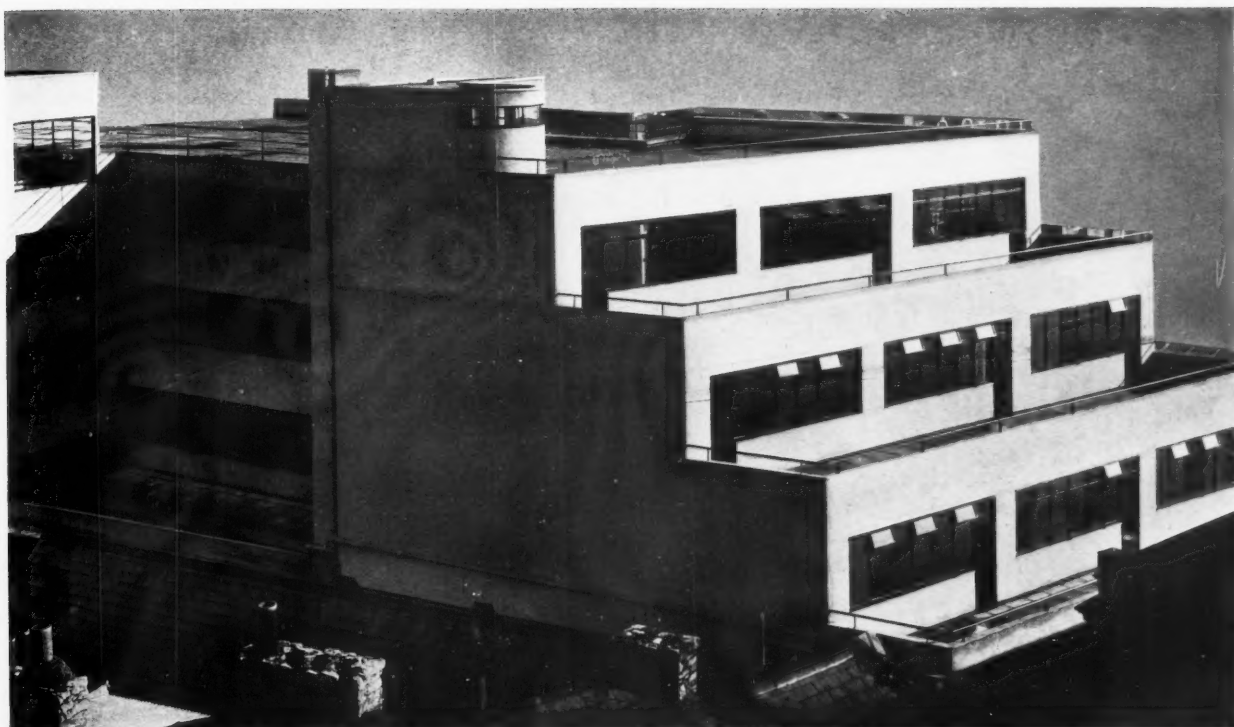


4 SECOND FLOOR

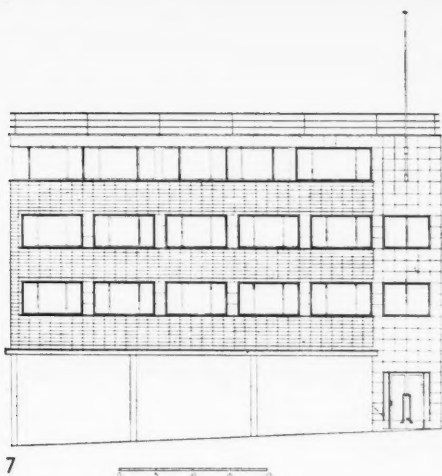


5 GROUND FLOOR

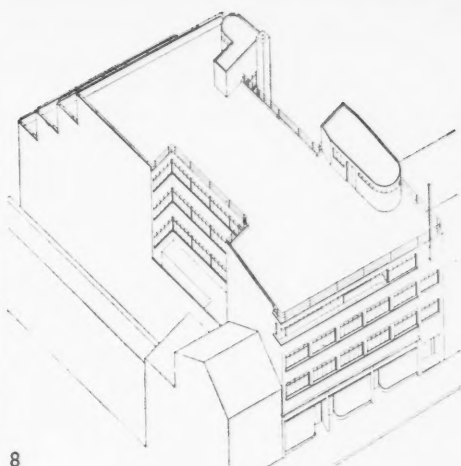
T O R Q U A Y



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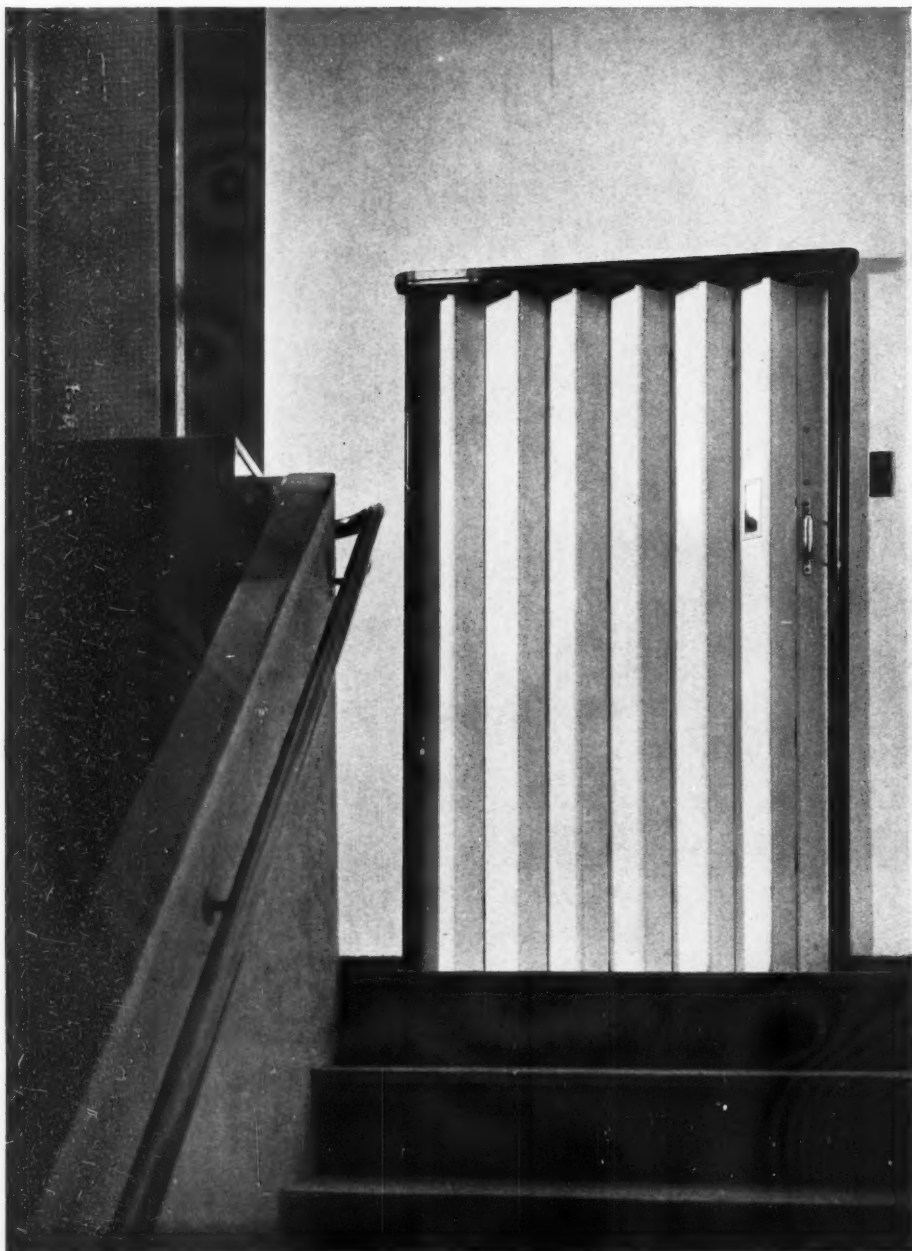
STEWART THOMSON, ARCHITECT

This is a block of shops and offices situated in the principal shopping and business street of Torquay. The requirements for the building were a maximum shop-window area on the ground floor along the street frontage and three floors of offices above with a separate entrance. Construction is of reinforced concrete, with completely standardized columns and beams. Cork insulating board on the inside served as permanent shuttering to the external walls. Probably the most interesting point in the building is the external finish, the walls being faced with a stopped and polished Travertine marble veneer tile, only $\frac{3}{8}$ in. thick, secured to the concrete with a specially prepared mastic. 1 shows the exterior to the street, and 2 the open gallery on the same front at third floor level. 3, 4 and 5 are plans respectively of the third floor, the second (which is the same as the first) and the ground floor. 6 and 9 are a general and a close-up view of the back. 7 is a drawing of the street elevation and 8 an isometric drawing of the whole block, showing the office lighting from enclosed courts.



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CASTLE CIRCUS HOUSE, TORQUAY



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10 is an interior view looking up the main staircase towards the lift doors; the frame to the latter is in Ashburton Marble. The treads and risers are in Hopton Wood stone and handrails in bronze. 11 shows a typical corridor on one of the office floors. The floors are of cork, and the internal partitions of pumice concrete. An unusual feature in the offices is that double glazed windows have been provided of a specially designed sliding type in pressed steel (see photographs 1 & 2). 12 shows the enquiry counter in the entrance hall with glazed screen in bronze.

MINOR MASTERS OF



The Tattlers Circle.

Mrs. Corset, Oh, Mr. Capon! do, Mr. Warrwood, support me—I shall faint! I can scarcely stand!

Art. I. Jones.

THE NINETEENTH CENTURY

Notes on some lesser known architects

II. Samuel Beazley—

A VICTORIAN VANBRUGH

By Dudley Harbron

In the atmosphere Victorian values engendered it is not surprising to find that so worldly a man as Samuel Beazley went unrecorded. Only a few shrugs of the shoulder; upturned eyeballs, indicated at his death that he had not been as other men professed to be. For he was a man of flesh and bone, cheerful and kindly; moreover his buildings had qualities of straightforward honesty. Even the critical comment on his character that he was—"a man of pleasure" (a phrase often used in his plays) and upon his work that it was "adapted to its purpose," are today matters for congratulation rather than the condemnation which was intended. He was a man and not a mummy. Like Vanbrugh, he was a soldier, a playwright, a builder of theatres, and, as will also appear—knew a Duchess.

Beazley was the nephew of an architect. His uncle Charles had been a pupil of Sir Robert Taylor, the sculptor architect to the Bank of England. If he had not been established in London as an architect, it is

very unlikely that his nephew would have adopted the profession. Samuel Beazley was born in Westminster in 1786. There is some uncertainty about his parentage. He grew to be a precocious little boy. When only twelve years old he wrote a comedy which was performed by his schoolfellows at Acton, upon a stage, against settings designed and built by the young dramatist. Thus, as has occurred in the lives of many afterward celebrated men, he unconsciously summed up when a boy his future career as a man. In due course he was articled to his uncle.

From the very first his thought centred round the dramatization of life. His architectural apprenticeship was subservient to this end. The theatre was to be his business and his recreation. He united profession and pleasure as a single whole. When he was twenty-five, the earliest of the theatrical compositions to be written by this bizarre man was produced for the first time. It bore the breezy Regency title, *The Boarding House, or 5 Hours at Brighton*.

In the nineteenth century few architects were thought of enough consequence to merit a memoir. Their friends appear to have wished them to be forgotten. Nor had many of them sufficient pride in their attainments to write about their own lives.

This lack of interest in architects is a silent commentary upon Victorian values. They were not forgotten because there was any dearth of biography or autobiography in those times, but for the reason that an account of their lives had not sufficient moral appeal for the reader. Popular taste was for saintliness and success: "With these ample materials before me, I have attempted to sketch such a memoir as would be a faithful picture of her journeying heavenward, in faith and hope, amidst the joys and sorrows of domestic life"—was ample provocation for an extended history. What architect could stand up in such company? Even that paragon in the profession who wrote two thousand hymns, some of which we still sing, was altogether neglected.

"There pounded like cattle,
we list to the tunes
Perform'd by the band of
the Prince's Dragoons.
And gaze at the dome
of his stables."

The piece was an operatic farce that proved to be to the popular taste. It was often revived afterwards. But Beazley was not satisfied to write only about life; he wanted to live. The Continent was now in a state of turmoil and the restless young man was impelled to volunteer for service in the Peninsula. He soldiered there for some years and when hostilities ceased remained abroad to study architecture. It was then that events afforded him the opportunity to reveal the resourcefulness of his mind; to act in a dramatic atmosphere in which he was instinctively at home.

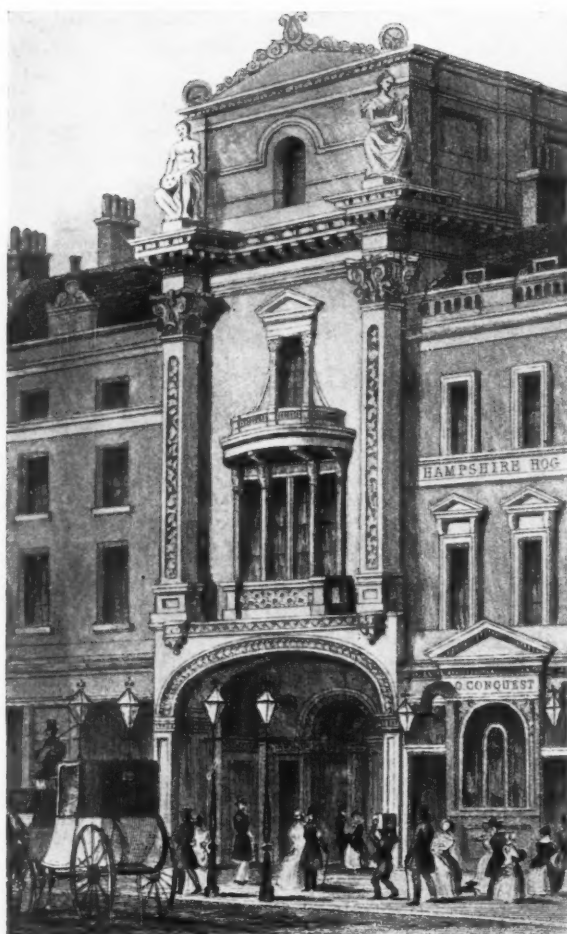
Like Vanbrugh, he encountered a Duchess. Early in 1815 he was in the extreme South of France. When in some remote village he heard rumours that Napoleon had escaped from Elba. As it was said that the royal Duke and Duchess of Angoulême were in Bordeaux, he hastened to that city to offer his assistance to them. On reaching Bordeaux he learned that the princes had been told, when at a ball given in their honour by the merchants of Bordeaux, of the Emperor's return. The Duke had left for Nîmes. The Duchess was still in Bordeaux.

As soon as possible in the confusion then prevailing, he obtained an audience of the Duchess, to whom he was presented under the assumed name of Jones. He told her of his impression of the sentiment in the immediate country; warning her that it would be necessary to consider the need for flight. The Duchess replied that she did not want to leave Bordeaux or France,

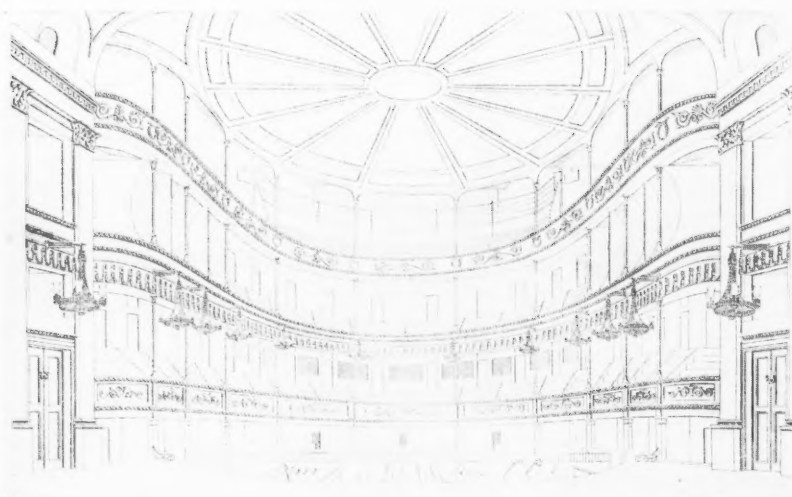
except in the last extreme. A few days later the troops in the fortress mutinied and the governor surrendered it to them. They were excited to this act by the rapid advance of Napoleon on Paris, and the rumours of the enthusiasm with which his return was being watched by the rest of France.

When Beazley heard of this treachery he hastened to the Palace. It was with much difficulty that he managed to edge his way through the mob. It was not that his right to see the Duchess was challenged, but that everywhere disorder reigned. The corridors of the Palace were blocked by people none of whom had any particular business there. At last he gained admittance to the salon. The royal lady was seated at a table, "she was dressed in a green silk pelisse, and a white hat and white plumes." About her were her advisers. Without preliminaries Beazley addressed Her Royal Highness. He told her that the people were loyal to her family, adding that she had nothing to fear from them. "Only the leaders," he said, addressing the courtiers present, "are inactive and paralysed." The men about her shuffled uneasily but made no protest.

The Duchess replied that she would try the effect of speaking to the troops of the line. If they showed themselves apathetic, she was willing to place herself under his protection and seek safety in flight. Beazley bowed and withdrew. He immediately mounted his horse and set out for the little port of Pauillac. He intended to arrange that a vessel should be in readiness for the Duchess to embark. On the road he examined all the bridges he passed over, made notes of the most simple way to destroy them, should it



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be necessary to delay pursuers after the fugitive had crossed. When he reached Pauillac he interviewed the commander of the English ship then in the port. The captain told him that the enemy had armed boats out on the river, on the look out for any vessel that might have refugees on board; he added that if the Duchess hoped to escape, no time could be lost. Although he was wet through and fatigued by his long ride, Beazley decided to return to Bordeaux. It was a dreadful night of wind and rain, and with difficulty he kept on the road in the dark. At several cottages he asked for shelter, but the occupants were too nervous to admit him. They made every excuse for not opening the door on such a wild night. Failing to get shelter he tried to persuade anyone who knew the country to act as his guide. Eventually he succeeded in inducing an old man, with a squeak in his voice, and a horse in his stable, to get up, come out and saddle up for the road.

Stirrup to stirrup they

plodded along through the pitch-dark storm of wind and rain. From time to time stray troops challenged them—"Qui Vive?" To all these demands Beazley called loudly—"Jones."

At Blaye, about half-way back, they met six carriages surrounded by some few National Guards with civilians bearing lanterns. Beazley recognized at once that this was the caravan of the Duchess. He made immediately for the royal carriage to engage himself in conversation with the occupants. His one concern was that there were no beds on board the vessel. "N'importe, M. Jones, nous pouvons notre mettre là!" exclaimed the lady.

The procession then moved off in the dripping darkness. It was dawn when they reached Pauillac, dawn, but still raining. Regretfully, Mr. Beazley explained to his charge that the captain of the vessel would not be able to give her a royal salute, as his cannon were charged with bullets! Some posts on the quayside made it impossible for the coaches to

reach the boats. The ladies had to get down. Beazley seized an umbrella from one of the spectators, held it over the feathers of the Duchess, led her to the rowboat and thence to the ship.

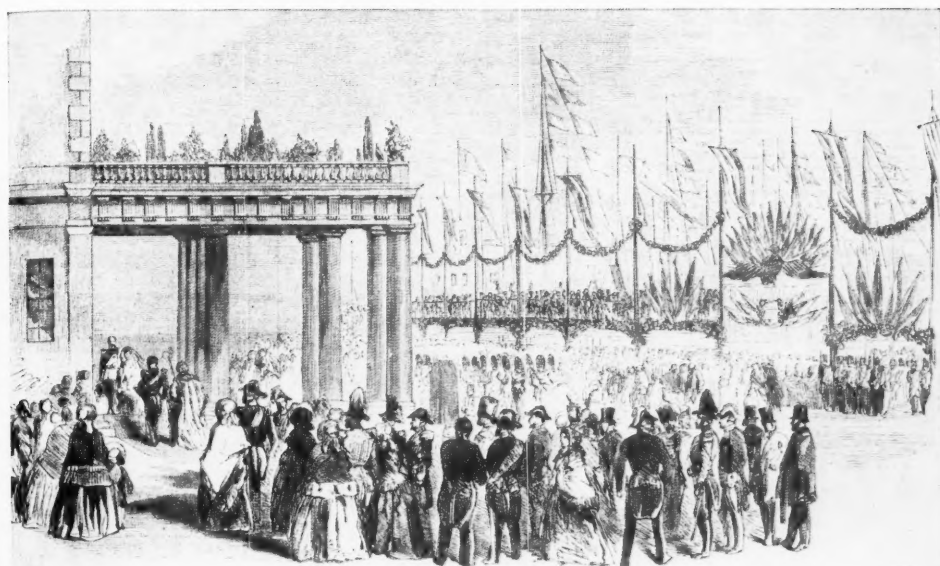
Then for the first time during all this trying ordeal the fugitive broke down. She wept. The bluff English captain remarked in an attempt to comfort her: "She is as safe now as if she was in England." The sailors were less sympathetic. "Fighting is better than crying," they protested.

The architect led the lady to her cabin. Here she recovered her composure. Was the captain under her orders, she asked her guardian. Beazley assured her that within limits the captain of the *Wanderer* would answer her requests. Then, she said, she would like to examine a chart. One was found showing the coastline. It was dedicated to Napoleon. The two men were troubled as to the effect this omen would have upon their passenger. As it happened she took no notice, but fell at

once to discussing where she should direct the captain to make for—England or Spain.

After some argument Spain was chosen. This was as Beazley wished, for he thought that the Southern French would rise on behalf of the Bourbons, in which event it was advisable that one of the family should be near at hand.

This decision had hardly been made when another problem presented itself for solution: Some of the National Guard who had escorted the party to the ship were in boats about the side of the vessel clamouring to see the exile. She came on deck with her companion. When she appeared the soldiers shouted requests for some souvenir of her. Beazley, suggesting bits of ribbon, dashed down to the cabin to search the baggage. He could find nothing suitable. The soldiers were growing impatient; suddenly he be-thought him of the feathers in her white hat. The Duchess obligingly removed her head-dress and handed it to him. Without pause he plucked the



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Architectural works by Samuel Beazley: 2, the Old Adelphi Theatre in the Strand (from a drawing in the Crace Collection, British Museum); 3, the Royal Lyceum Theatre, or English Opera House, London, a view from the stage (from Britton and Pugin's "Public Buildings of London"); 4, the South-Eastern Railway Station, London Bridge; 5, "Reception of the Emperor and Empress at the Lord Warden Hotel, Dover" (from the "Illustrated London News," April 21, 1855). 6, the Pilot House at Dover; 7, the Lord Warden Hotel at Dover, a photograph taken from the Admiralty Pier before the building of the new station.



7

feathers in handfuls and passed them to her for distribution. The troops were delighted.

Much as if nothing out of the ordinary had interrupted his education he was back again in London later in 1815, where he recommenced forthwith the composite life as playwright and architect that has never been equalled by another. It is true that Charles Mathews wrote and produced forty of his own plays, but that was after he had given up architecture. Whereas Beazley wrote and staged a hundred pieces, all the time conducting his practice and living the life of a fashionable man about town.

Next year his farce *Is He Jealous?* was staged. It is in one act. There are four characters. The incidents take place in the drawing room of Mr. Belmour's house. The principal character, Belmour, is an absent-minded mathematician who forgets his wife's need for his society. The action is directed to awaken his interest in her by arous-

ing his jealousy. The plot succeeds.

Further, Beazley's first substantial commission was given to him, the design of the Royal Lyceum Theatre, London. The building cost £80,000. The only extant view of the then interior of the theatre is shown in Britton and Pugin's *Public Buildings of London*, where also the whole is described. Singularly the next play by him was entitled *Fire and Water*: it was performed in his own theatre in sinister anticipation of the fate of the building in 1830, when the Lyceum was destroyed by these elements. (He was the architect of the theatre built in 1834, to replace that destroyed.)

During the following years he was continuously employed as architect and author. To inspect his buildings, to rehearse his plays and to entertain and to be entertained were each a whole time job. Yet this man had time to spare.

In 1820 he rebuilt the Theatre Royal, Birmingham. In 1821 he designed the Theatre Royal, Dublin, while in 1822 he re-

vised the interior of Drury Lane. This last is still substantially as left by Beazley.

Now a man of such wide experience of the Theatre from both sides of the curtain was naturally looked upon as an authority for their design. He was a special specialist. As an author he realized the importance of presentation, and as an architect knowing what was necessary, he was able to provide a suitable structure from the available materials and knowledge of their use.

When he arrived, the ground was cumbered by the heavy artillery of the profession—Nash, Soane, Burton, Barry, Wilkins and Smirke left little room for other men. If Beazley was to find a place for himself it must be by way of his superior knowledge of the theatre, his friendship with the management and with successful actors or singers. Of the established architects only Nash had had actual experience of production. Before the latter had built any work of importance in London, he had

acted in Wales. Moreover, Nash had had the assistance of Augustus Pugin, who was not unacquainted with the mysteries of scenery. Even so they could not claim the experience of the theatre possessed by the newcomer.

With the advent of Beazley the pretension of these gentlemen wore thin; more particularly was this the case after he had been called in to remedy the errors of Wyatt at Drury Lane. Scholarship was discounted.

On the vexed question of acoustics, Beazley gave evidence before *The Committee of Dramatic Literature*. He was widely quoted as having said:

"In general the doctrine of acoustics are perfectly inapplicable, and if you attempt to build a new Theatre upon these principles, the object may be defeated at the last. It was the case with the Theatre at Lisbon, which was considered the best in Europe, yet after a short time they found the sound was lost, when it was discovered that it was in consequence of certain passages

having been stopped up; and when they reopened them the sound returned." Since his own theatres were acoustically successful, it is clear that he must have adopted suitable materials, volumes and distances in their construction and design, by some process other than calculation. Naturally his remarks were welcomed by those architects who had no time to study the science.

As has been said, he wrote a great many works for the Theatre. Many of them have a musical accompaniment. They embrace a wide range of such forms of art—Operas, Operettas, Operatic Farces, Comic Operas, flowed from his pen in an endless procession. Their artless titles reveal the light and popular character of his themes. Old Customs, My Uncle, Bachelors' Wives, The Steward, The Knights of the Cross or the Hermit's Prophecy, The Lottery Ticket,* The Scapegrace, The Divorcee, Everybody's Widow, Hints for Husbands, You Know What; and so on, and so forth were pretty bubbles in the limelight. They floated iridescent in the air, burst and are no more. Yet many of them are extremely competent and, notwithstanding their seeming triviality and humour, have a singular affinity with the work of Strindberg.

For any occasion he could be relied upon to provide the words and lyrics at short notice. When the Adelphi Theatre, at Christmas, 1829, wanted to show off the tricks of a Siamese elephant, Beazley wrote a sketch round the creature—*The Elephant of Siam or the Fire Fiend*. It was a huge success. Royalty and the nobility flocked to see the show. At the conclusion of the performance each evening the audience called loudly for—the Elephant—not the author. One of the most delighted spectators was Princess Victoria, who attended with her mother, the Duchess of Kent. She was so pleased that she fed the beast with sweets when the entertainment was ended.

Over and above an immense number of original plays, Beazley translated several well-known operas into English. Probably the most familiar of these is *Don Juan*, to the accompaniment of Mozart. He took great care over all he wrote, and adopted in some instances unconventional methods. In order that the words should suit her pronunciation of English, the script of *La Sonnambula* was written by the bedside of the principal

*One of the illustrations to this play, by Cruikshank, serves as the headpiece to this article.

singer—Madame Malibran.

Nor was play writing his only activity. He wrote much else in addition. He had invention to spare for two long novels. His first, *The Rouse*, in three volumes, was published by Colburn in 1828. The other, *The Oxonians*, followed in 1830. They are now forgotten except by students of the period.

In 1834, he designed the Soho Theatre, London, followed in 1836 by the St. James's Theatre, King Street, St. James's Square. This was a more ornate building than any of his earlier theatres. When the house was opened it was described as "the most splendid theatre in Europe." The interior was in the style of Louis Quatorze. The place was built for Braham the singer at a cost he could barely afford. Some sentimental interest attaches to this house, since one of the earliest plays staged in it was *Strange Gentleman*, by Charles Dickens, then a little-known man. A list of Beazley's theatres would be tedious, for he was employed to design them for England, Belgium, Brazil and India.

But theatres were not his sole work; he designed several large country houses. To the owner of one of these, he replied, when she asked him why the rooks in the trees near her house made such a noise—"They have caws for conversation." Indeed he could not help making such remarks. Mounting the stairs at Sir Henry Meux's house, he is remembered to have murmured: "Gradus ad Parnassus."

Towards the end of his life this actor added another character to his already many parts. He was selected as the architect for the South Eastern Railway. For the Company he made some considerable extension to the terminus at London Bridge, and designed most of the stations on the North Kent Line. At the other extreme he built the Lord Warden Hotel and the Pilot House, Dover. The enormous number of bricks required to complete these works caused the price of bricks and brickwork to rise in and about London. That was the sort of consequence which would appeal to his comic sense. In this work he was in tune with his age, a cigar in his mouth, his hat on the side of his head, he had entered a new world. But the end of this fascinating man was near. Late in the year of the Exhibition he was unwell. His usual cheerful disposition was so affected, that a friend who had a letter from him at this time, commented in his reply that it read—"like the first chapter of *Jeremiah*." To which suggestion the ever ready wag replied:

"You are mistaken, my dear fellow, it is the last chapter of *Samuel*."

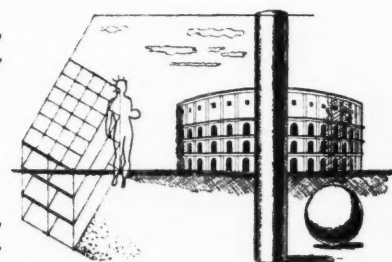
He made a further effort. A week before his death he attended a meeting of the renters of Drury Lane. He seemed then in his usual amusing form. From there to his office in Soho Square. Then he decided that he had best get to his home—Tonbridge Castle, Kent. Here he died suddenly on October 12, 1851. He was buried in the

old church at Bermondsey. But before he died he wrote his own epitaph:—

Here lies Samuel Beazley
Who lived hard and died easily.

Abroad, after the manner of a play rather than real life, the Duchess d'Angoulême passed poetically at the same time. She was laid to rest in the Franciscan Convent at Goritz—and now in the darkness and the rain they ride through the lanes of France.

Street by Street



A Critical Tour of Famous Thoroughfares

By Professor C. H. Reilly

II. THE STRAND (South Side)



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The south side of the Strand does not seem so gay and boisterous as the north. It alternates between the same stretches of small huddled buildings, some even genuinely mediæval, and the same great masses of semi-modern stuff; but, perhaps because the sun does not shine on it, one cannot so well enjoy its absurdities. After the northern side it is, indeed, rather like a pantomime that has gone on too long, when the beautiful ladies of the transformation scene, rising languidly from gigantic tulips, refuse to appear. One's childish glee at the absurdities of the wicked uncles or rapture at the sentimentalities of the principal boy, with her fine legs, is fast fading. They keep on appearing, but one's laughs and sighs are getting less hearty.

The street starts opposite the Law Courts with a lot of comic stuff, a muddle of small buildings apparently propping each other up. Among them, next to a very vulgar uncle, the Temple Bar restaurant, are two genuine-looking



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mediaeval houses which should be preserved, for it is clear the street gained its chief characteristics from such structures. Lloyds and the Westminster banks have each a pretentious, commonplace building side by side, to which the square-looking Law Accident one is a pleasant contrast. Twinings' little entrance, 1, newly painted with gay coats of arms and Chinamen, peeping out between the staid stuff, is well in character. Turning the corner, where the street widens to make room for the church of St. Clement Danes, is a house completely covered with posters, windows and all, 2, a not uncommon thing in the Strand. Then there is the Huddersfield Building Society's office, 3, a neat little brick building above a stone ground-storey in the Georgian mode, and then another house plastered with posters. Dying pays better than living.

As the street curves round the second church one comes face to face with the bold bad block of the United Kingdom Provident Society, 4, which Henry Hare designed just before the war, when he and everyone else was full of exuberant energy. We were all in a fine baroque frenzy, but only Rickards had any real knowledge of the right technique. Of course, the building had to have a range of fat unfluted three-quarter Ionic columns stretched across it, but to these Hare added not only a corner turret but a great elaboration of columns and pediments across his ground-floor windows, all crowned with highly-developed young women of colossal proportions straining their necks to see the Lord Mayor's Show. Stranger still, and to show how he was in touch with all the movements of the time, he crowned his building with a steeply-pitched roof covered in Gloucestershire farmhouse roofing stones. "Why not thatch our banks?" said a wit, which I like to think was the reason these stones have to-day given way to humbler zinc.

After this excitement come dull stretches of big but characterless buildings, such as the two at either corner of Norfolk Street, of indeterminate outline, but with any number of little pink polished granite columns to their windows. Then, again, another stretch of undistinguished buildings up to Somerset House, fine and massive and reposeful, like a great St. Bernard among a lot of terriers. Its strong rusticated arches, with columns above, seem real. They are part of a solid structure and not of one pretending to be solid. The arched entrance, too, between its silhouetted columns, gives a glimpse of a great and peaceful courtyard and another way of life. Beyond this, and as if to make the greatest possible contrast with the dignity of Chambers's building, are three houses entirely covered in posters and two almost equally so in gilt lettering. Under one of these, however, peeps out a gay little shop in bright green paint, full of pin-tables, where one can lose one's money in proper Strand fashion.

After these we come to Waterloo Bridge, the corner being turned by another



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14

of those gabled irregularly-shaped buildings full of small detail and large plate-glass windows with which our fathers compromised their consciences thirty years ago. This one is in terra-cotta. Set back beyond it, one sees the stage set of Pennethorne's rather florid front to Somerset House, 5; while, on the opposite side of the street, facing it, and turning a great rounded corner into the Strand itself, is an enormous block of vast length, 6, of plain heavy stonework with regular prison-like windows, all exactly alike and all small in relation to the mass of the structure. This is the "modern" building which Herbert Morrison claimed as an excuse for rebuilding Waterloo Bridge. Is it really modern at all? Does it accept the steel construction within it? Is it not merely hiding this construction under a plain holland overall rather than under the usual elaborate silk dress?

The fundamental test of an architectural style is how openings are bridged, by stone lintol, by round or pointed arch, by steel or ferro-concrete beam. (The lecturer will out!) These windows in a steel building still maintain the proportions dictated by stone. Such a cloak of plainness is like a beggar's tale of woe. If one has to deal in deceits at all, I confess I prefer a more embroidered variety.

After this we are close to the great hotel blocks, the Savoy and the Cecil, female and male respectively, but both clearly commercial. The Cecil, 7, with its air of the successful bagman, had no difficulty in adapting itself to the sale of oil, as its new courtyard, 8, proves. The two Savoy buildings, 9, with their cupolas facing one another like a pair of hats at the corners of the street, their vast array of small, meaningless, but highly-polished, detail, like artificial jewellery, suggest to one another kind of commercialism. Architecture by the very lies it practises, as well as by more reputable ways, is the most revealing of the arts. Between these ladies we get a view of a more romantic kind, a third Savoy block with a plainer façade and a glazed green tile roof rising above a figure of a gilded knight, below which are the clean silver sheets, 10, of Easton and Robertson's very welcome puritanism.

The Tivoli block, 11, which follows the Cecil, was never, I fancy, a great building, but whatever it was, it has now disappeared under a silly arrangement of neon tubes and the faces of film stars. Then there is a long low block of smallish detail, paying a rather uncertain compliment to the Adam Brothers, and then the tall Halifax House, 12, relying for its chief interest in the contrast of its many unnecessary window-bars with its plain walling.

After this there is again a mass of typical Strand houses, 13, but so scribbled over with advertisements that a building for Messrs. Hope Brothers, the hosiers, with three storeys of shop windows one above the other, ready, I suppose, for the time when we have three-decker buses, seems quite sane.



15



16

Beyond this the Strand begins to lose itself in the approaching Trafalgar Square. The courtyard of the Charing Cross Hotel, 14, breaks into the street character but, I am afraid, gives nothing valuable in its place. Lyons' Corner House, 15, with its air of an over-dressed woman, does its best to bring back the Strand feeling. Lastly, there is the great rounded mass of the old Grand Hotel, 16, pock-marked all over with crowded windows and small architectural detail, but now breaking out into a more virulent disease of Bile Beans and Zambuk, the latter stated in letters of fire to cure all skin troubles. Would that it would cure itself! I suppose these advertisements are the last effervescence of the Strand spirit, but, unfortunately, they face Trafalgar Square and the National Gallery. Human nature no doubt requires an occasional Strand for its relief, but such things, I suggest, should be kept in their proper place.

Book of the Month

cinema without tears

By Anthony Baerlein

DOCUMENTARY FILM. By Paul Rotha. London: Faber and Faber Ltd. Price 12s. 6d. net.

AT first sight the documentary film may seem to be a minor form of filmic expression; but in several ways it is the only important or interesting kind of film in existence today.

A documentary film is first and foremost a filmic statement. It is made with the intention of presenting a certain array of facts or point of view as clearly and acceptably as possible. Documentary film directors have something very definite to say. It is clearly of the first importance that they know how to speak. From a social point of view the value of their product is already considerable. From a filmic point of view it is largely through their work that the elements of film technique are becoming clear.

In its simplest form a documentary film is little more than a lecture illustrated by moving lantern slides. The *Secrets of Nature* series, for example,

consists merely of photographic reproductions of natural phenomena. But since the content is new to the audience, a certain selection of material and concentration of detail is required if interest and clarity are to be assured. And as soon as one passes to the presentation not merely of facts, but of facts interpreted from a particular point of view, the method of treatment naturally becomes all-important.

Hollywood has no message. Its motive may be said to be purely financial, with its chief propagandist intent to keep the public taste at a sufficiently low level to enable it to preserve its power of ministering to it.

When Hollywood realized that its product was too poor to stand up against any serious criticism or competition, a red herring was found in the Star System. By means of this decoy the public was persuaded to take little notice of the content or treatment of the film and to concentrate its attention upon the personality, or more properly

the physical characteristics, of the person whose photograph was presented on the screen. The Star System has been remarkably successful, but further defensive measures have been instituted from time to time. The most recent has been the usurpation of well-known stories from literature and history. This, too, has proved entirely successful, but it is a dangerous innovation. In their original form many of these works possess an epic quality which has not always escaped altogether in the transition. The public has been given a glimpse of "content" and found it pleasing. It may yet demand "form" and "treatment."

But at the moment film technique is confined to the documentary film. In these films alone may be found examples illustrating that the emotional power of the film does not lie, as Hollywood supposes, in what is being photographed, but in the way the various photographs are joined together. Each "shot" is the filmic equivalent of a word, or a musical note, and it is only when the photographs enter the cutting room that the composing of a film truly begins.

In this comprehensive and authoritative book Mr. Paul Rotha describes many of the problems and achievements that have occurred in the making of documentary films. His remarks on Sound are particularly illuminating. Holding a mirror to *Remembrance of Things Past* he says that "as soon as sounds are separated from their sources they become images or symbols of these sources... We may go further. When separated from its source, a sound will not only become a symbol of that source but a symbol of what that source represents."

Thus a sequence illustrating the bleak and wretched life of an industrial town, overlain with sounds from the country, or a sentimental sequence of the countryside overlain with the heavy rhythm of industry, produces in the mind of the audience a sense of discord and uneasiness. Such effects as these can be so striking that in this respect above all others the documentary film may yet have a direct influence on the technique of the entertainment film, where at the moment each movement is accompanied by its platitudinous and filmically inappropriate sound and each speech by its even more platitudinous mouthing face.

Nor does Mr. Rotha's generalization apply to sound alone, for in art all objects are divested of their natural forms and reduced to symbols. The photograph of a person in a film either

remains a reproduction in a different medium, and is thus no real representation at all, or becomes, by a process of creation, a symbol. When the symbol is simple, as in the Russian films of silent days, the created individual is a type, and when the symbols are sufficiently complicated a character is created.

But in discussing the problem of human portrayal Mr. Rotha is not so successful at presenting this important point. "If we have individuals," he says, "let them be typical and let them be real . . . The whole evil of the American Star System, which in its way is a kind of typage, is that it treats with types of a false economic and social superiority." But this is not the whole evil, for technique in art is not wholly a matter of class consciousness. Under the Star System film technique cannot be employed at all. Hollywood "types" are types *before* they are photographed. A filmic "type" becomes a type owing to the way he is photographed. Naturally one will photograph suitable subjects, but their "realism" will not come from their innate qualities, but from the way in which they are turned into symbols.

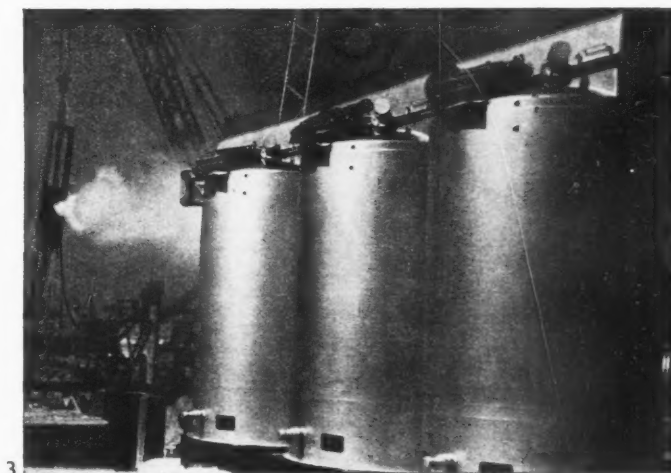
It is true that the point is clearly made that "whether he likes it or not, your actor is so much raw material." But while reading this book one frequently feels that Mr. Rotha has more interest in his social message than in his filmic means. In an admirable and stimulating preface Mr. John Grierson says that the great revolutionaries of our time were not Barbusse and Mayakowsky but Cézanne and Joyce. One would suspect Mr. Rotha of holding the opposite view. This tends to give some of his technical arguments a political taint.

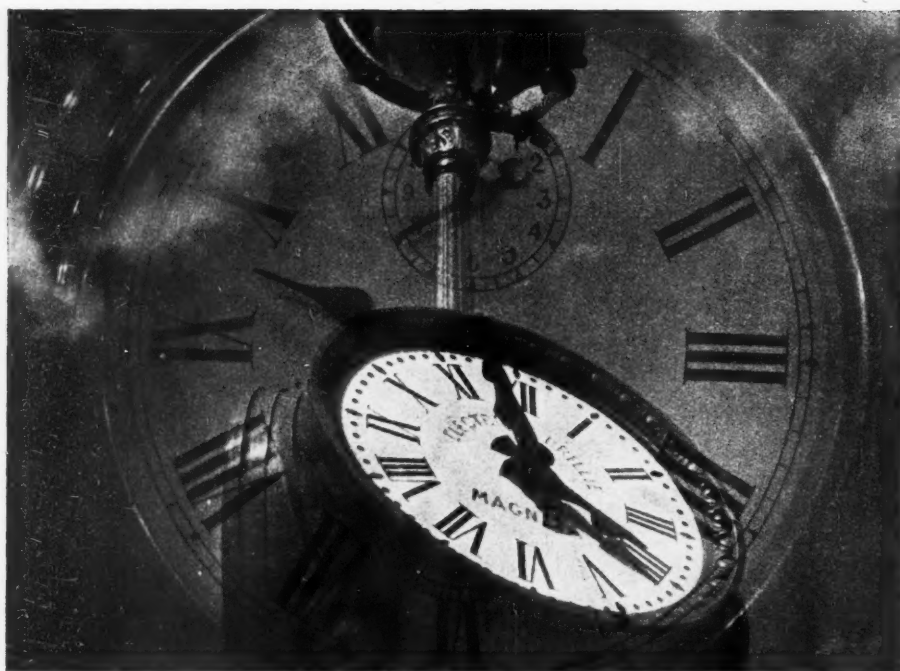
His view of the value of art is influenced by the same considerations. In his opinion, apparently, the purpose of art is strictly pedagogic. A work of art which does not consist of or contain some definite message is not worth considering. But although one may stand beside him in looking disdainfully upon those artists who speak so much without having anything to say, it is also true that there is a limit to the value of pedagogic art in general and the documentary film in particular.

The value of art lies in its power to increase the sensibility. The first necessity is a general awareness of the things among which we move and have our being and our own relationship towards them. The documentary film is particularly suited to giving us this awareness. But in dealing with the more subtle aspects of human



1 and 2, two stills from the B.B.C. film, *The Voice of Britain*, by Grierson and Legg; 3, a still from the Russian film, *Ivan*, by Dozhenko. From "Documentary Film."





4, a still from *Birth of the Hours*, by Greville. From "Documentary Film."

behaviour and human relationships a less direct method is required.

Since, however, the art of the film is unlikely to be capable of dealing with these aspects for many years to come, these criticisms are of no importance compared to the realization that the documentary film is today the most vital means of filmic expression. And taken as a whole Mr. Rotha's book is the most important study of the Film that has yet appeared.

The Architect's Book of Reference

SPECIFICATION 1936. The 38th year of issue. Edited by F. R. S. Yorke, A.R.I.B.A. London: The Architectural Press. Price 10s. 6d. net.

Specification has a time-honoured place on my shelf of reference. I was actually consulting the last issue when the new one arrived for review.

It became immediately apparent that the particular reference section to which I applied myself in the last edition revealed an improvement which may have been difficult to assess without having the immediate means of comparison.

The same improvement is true throughout the book. Type, lay-out, sequence and arrangement of subject material, make the usually dreaded task of reference-hunting a pleasure.

I can only wish that the major portion of advertisers, who so largely contribute to the book's value, had adopted the simplicity and elegance of statement and illustration of Mr. Yorke's editorship. Perhaps this weakness might be overcome in the future if Mr. Yorke succeeds in persuading all advertisers to accept

standards in type and dimension of illustration, etc., on the model of the R.I.B.A. "Everyday Things" Catalogue. As it is, the impeccable drawings and arrangement of Mr. Yorke and his collaborators are irritatingly interfered with more often than not by a facing page.

Outstanding examples of succinct statement and relevant illustration are:—

1. Flooring Section—where proprietors of patent construction are fully represented and have given every support for the production of an admirable set of drawings. I missed the mention of an insulated floor clip which recently appeared on the market, and which should be widely known, but after all a clip in all that profusion is a minute omission.

2. A special article on steel windows admirably done by Mr. Williams. I wish that the T.D.A. had conspired to produce an equally lucid article on wood windows to rescue these with all speed from the speculative slough of despond.

3. Heating by Mr. Norris comprises a series of admirably arranged diagrams of typical systems, with brief but all-embracing descriptive matter, which is characteristic of the whole work, and removes that "catalogue feeling" in all books of this kind treated with less thoroughness and sensibility.

I should, in all humility, like to make a suggestion to the Editor. Is it not possible to introduce, whenever subject matter allows, a final costing table, giving a list of materials and/or speci-

BOOKS

fication, with a column of approximate cost per yard, per foot, or whatever, for spot estimating?

This necessarily brief review would be incomplete without mention of Mr. Maxwell Fry's special article. Mr. Fry underlines a particular aspect of the building trade, which cannot be too widely known not only among architects, but more particularly in the trade itself. The old empiric method which served the trade pretty well until now, the application of old material to new purposes, and of creating new components in an old tradition, no longer holds good.

Building can at this stage profitably look to other industries for guidance, such as the motor industry chosen by Mr. Fry to make his point, if it is to go forward, healthy and energetic, to contribute to new architecture instead of slipping back into painful obsolescence. The importance of *Specification* lies far beyond the measure of the data it contains.

SERGE CHERMAYEFF.

British Heritage

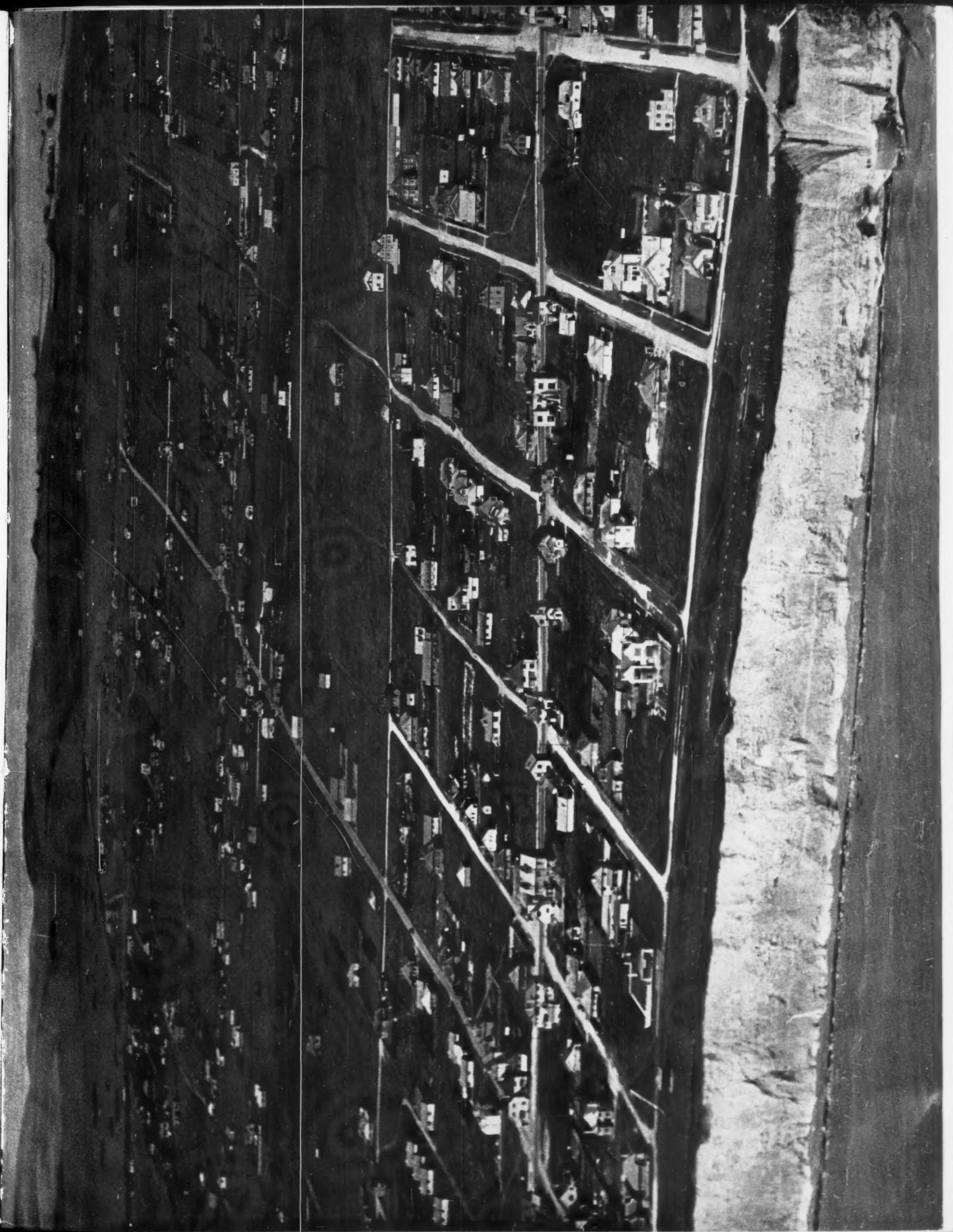
THE SPIRIT OF IRELAND. By Lynn Doyle. London: B. T. Batsford, Ltd. Price 7s. 6d. net.

It was inevitable that Ireland should be included in Batsford's "British Heritage Series." The present book, which consists of 138 photographic reproductions and 120 pages of text, certainly confirms the popular impression of Ireland started by the novels of Charles Lever and given so much point by the Irish humour of Mr. Punch, which used to be more appreciated before Ireland was said to have stabbed England in the back. Mr. Doyle's text is full of racy stories, poignant sayings and discursive anecdotes, many genuinely amusing and new. He describes the well-known parts of Ireland—Cork, Killarney, Galway, Dublin, Donegal and Belfast. He has a word of praise for anything be it Ulster or Free State. In fact his text is eminently readable, though he does not describe much scenery, and leaves the interior of Ireland with its Georgian mansions, ruined barracks and decaying peers entirely unnoticed.

The illustrations compensate for some of the absence of topographical description in the text. In fact they form an excellent corollary, for they show colleens, paddies, turf-cutters, mist on the mountains, rain in dirty old Dublin and all the popular conceptions of the most beautiful country in Europe. Some of its landscapes are extensive and fine. This is a book that those who go to Ireland to kiss the Blarney Stone will like very much indeed.

S.D.

A short memoir of the late Mansfield D. Forbes, of Cambridge, written by Mr. Raymond McGrath and describing particularly his architectural activities will be published in the next issue of **THE ARCHITECTURAL REVIEW**.



OVERLEAF, *AT CLOSE RANGE*
THE SOUTH DOWNS:
PEACEHAVEN

"PEACE: Freedom from civil commotion; public order and security; freedom from disturbance; quiet, tranquillity; freedom from quarrels or dissensions between individuals. HAVEN: A refuge; an asylum." (*Oxford English Dictionary*.)

PLATE iv

March 1936

DECORATION

13

THE ARCHITECTURAL REVIEW SUPPLEMENT

A REMODELLED
INTERIOR AT CLIFTON.
MARCEL BREUER AND
F.R.S. YORKE, ARCHITECTS

The architects' client—a West-of-England furniture manufacturer (in whose factory most of the furniture illustrated was made) was obliged to find a new house at very short notice within a few streets from his old house at Clifton. This precluded the possibility of taking one of the many fine eighteenth-century stone mansions or early nineteenth-century stuccoed terrace-houses that ennoble this quarter of Bristol. Inside the narrow area prescribed the only vacant house at the time was a detached, two-storeyed roughcast villa in a side road, indistinguishable from thousands of its kind built during the last twenty-five years. The involuntary choice of this semi-standardized type makes the experiment shown in these pages all the more interesting. It shows what can be done with a minimum of structural alteration by rational re-furnishing inside the skin of about as unpromising "elevations" as could be found. Beyond limiting expenditure to £1,400 (including remodelling, redecoration and all furniture and equipment), the client allowed his architects an absolutely free hand. That a provincial city should



3



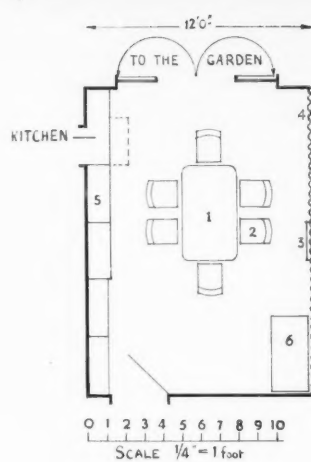
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2

1 and 2 show the outside of the existing house, the architects' raw material. As can be seen in 1 the dining-room window has been enlarged to give access to the lawn from that room. This was the architects' only modification of the outer husk except a general abolition of ye olde diamond panes for leading out light. 3 shows their first structural change in the kernel: the new side wall of the dining-room, made of corrugated asbestos sheeting painted dead white, put in to enlarge the hall into a garden-room.

have given such a bold lead is a matter for congratulation, but not for surprise. The steady progress of the formal ideology called the New Architecture is by no means confined to London's sphere of influence. Ancient centres of population that are rich in the evidence of a mature civilization are obviously the right soil for this movement to take root in, because in the past their intellectual life has found civic expression in an architecture, at once urban and urbane, which is the antithesis of the provinciality and snobbish suburbanism we owe to the last century. With rare courage Mr. Crofton E. Gane (to name the client) decided to jump at a single bound from the well-finished, semi-traditional furniture he had been making in his own workshops to the kind of simplified furniture a disciple of Gropius might be expected to design. Knowing it was while Director of the Woodwork Section of the Bauhaus in 1925 that Breuer had produced the first tubular-steel chair, he did not stipulate for a minimum of metal; and he was too wise in his own line of business to fall into the common pitfall of imagining that "modern" is a cheap substitute in point of quality for what is apparently mis-called "traditional" because it has long ceased to be so. Mr. Gane's object was to have a complete suite of "show" rooms that should be all the more convincing as a demonstration of the essentially reasonable design and craftsmanship of the best modern furnishing for being in daily occupation. His new house is neither a minimum nor a luxury dwelling, but (internally at least) a comfortable and elegant modern home.

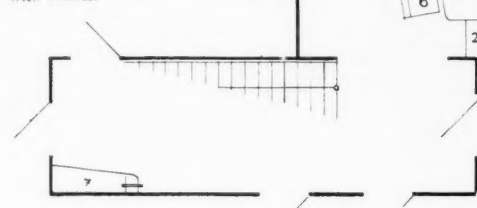


5. Dining Room :

1. Table. 2. Chairs, aluminium. 3. Electric fire. 4. Corrugated asbestos-cement panelling. 5. Cupboards hung on wall. 6. Buffet.

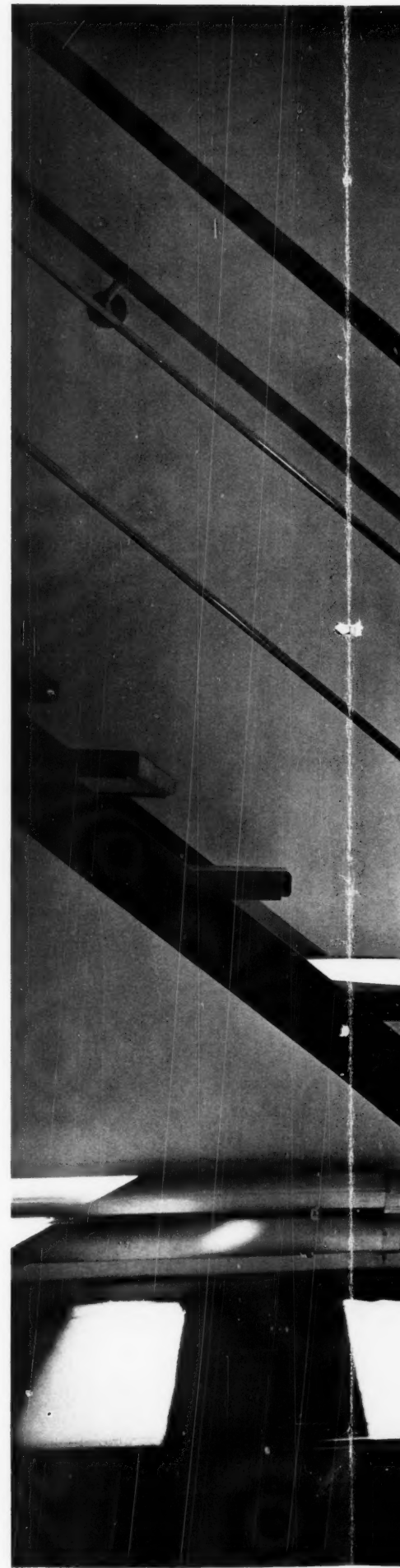
6. Garden Room and Hall :

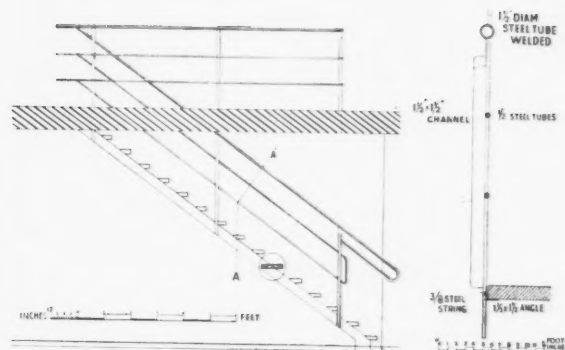
1. Desk hung on wall. 2. Bookcases hung on wall. 3. Electric fire. 4. Glass shelf. 5. Reclining chair, aluminium. 6. Chair, aluminium. 7. Cupboard, with shelves.



4 is another view of the dining-room, looking into it from the garden, and 5 a plan of its furniture. The glass-fronted cupboards and buffet are lacquered black, the upholstery of the aluminium chairs is in porcelain-blue stitched with broken lines of raised white thread, and the close carpeting Indian red. 6 is a key-plan of the garden-room and the staircase-hall, and 9 a corner in the former. In this room the fireplace wall is painted blue and the others white; the carpet is a plain grey Axminster and the curtains a dull cream. 7 and 8 show the

new staircase, which is the principal feature of the remodelling. This replaces a much steeper and narrower one that seriously darkened the hall. Its metal balustrading and risers are painted grey and blue (the lower rails chromium-plated), and the (now carpeted) treads are of unpolished oak. A bedroom-study on the upper floor, 10, has a collapsible plywood table, at which is drawn up a model of the new Breuer split-trail aluminium chair. Other models of this chair are seen in 4 and 9.





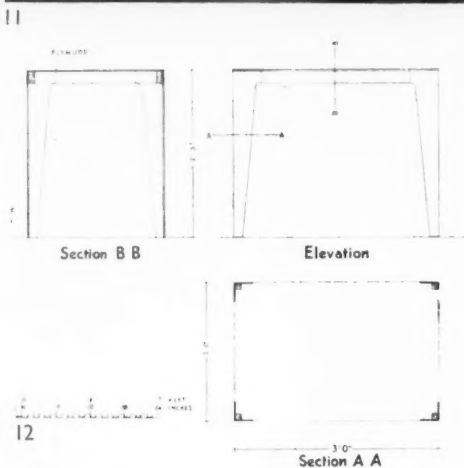
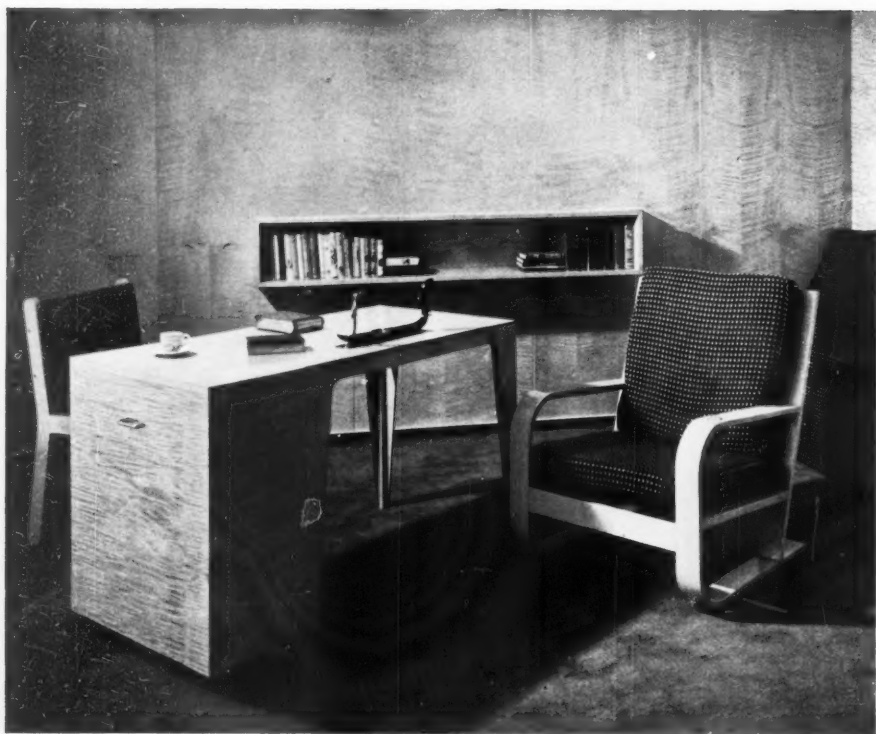
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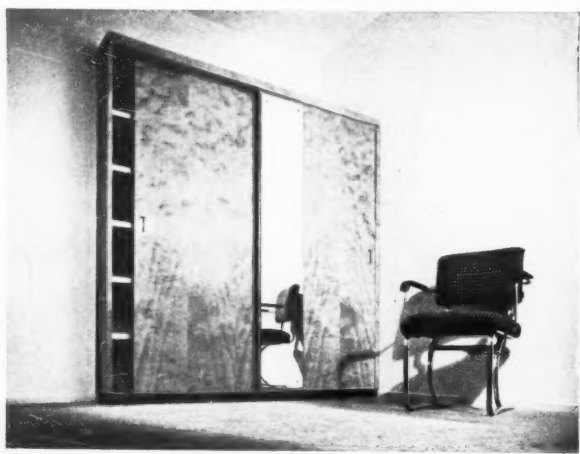
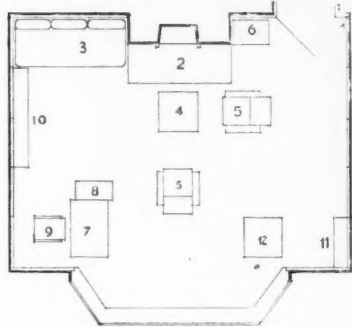


10



13. Drawing Room :

1. Sycamore panelling. 2. Wood fire. 3. Sofa. 4. Low table. 5. Armchairs. 6. Nest of tables. 7 & 8. Desk and drawer pedestal. 9. Chair. 10. Shelves hung on wall. 11. Gramophone record file. 12. Radiogram.

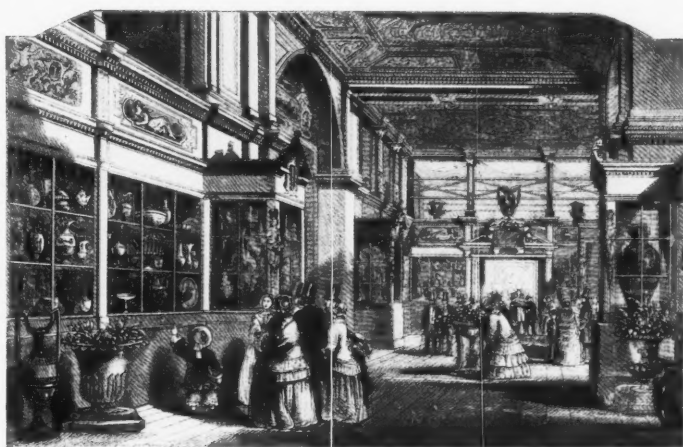


Two sides of the drawing-room are shown in 11 and 14, the arrangement of which can be read from its plan, 13. This room is flush-panelled in white sycamore, all the furniture being veneered with the same wood. As in the garden-room ordinary aluminium-coloured projectors of the type used for shop-window display, fixed upright in the walls like sconces, provide the indirect lighting. The construction of the little table seen in 11 is explained by the drawing, 12. 17 is an oblique view of the bathroom showing a corner of the

cement trough under the standing shower behind the wired-glass screen, and the electric heater above the window. 15 and 16 illustrate part of the furniture of the best bedroom, which is floored with compressed cork squares of a mottled reddish-yellow tint. The sliding-doored wardrobe, 15, is of steamed sycamore. Half of it is fitted with pull-out shelves that have strip-metal guides, the rest being hanging-space. The suspended dressing table, 16, has a tall central pier-glass, with a flush-bevelled strip-light slotted into its base, and adjustable wing-mirrors.

D E C O R A T I O N

There can be no question of the importance of the designer himself as a factor determining the standard of manufactured products, even in the case of those that are most simply the products of the machine. The responsibility of good or bad design should ultimately be his, either working as one who is also a technical expert, or in collaboration with technical experts. His status and the value that is put on his services are all-important. Much of the chaos in modern industrial design has been caused by unsatisfactory relationships between the designer and the industry he works for. Believing that the elucidation of the position of the designer in industry would be an important step towards resolving this state of chaos, the "Architectural Review" has asked Dr. Nikolaus Pevsner to write a series of articles, based on some extensive investigations that he has been making, on the status of the designer (or of whatever agent is used as substitute for an actual designer), his training and his way of working, in various industries. These articles will begin next month with one on the carpet industry. As an introduction to this series Mr. Herbert Read writes this month on the general importance of the designer, with special reference to the kind of training and education that would fit him best for his special function.



The DESIGNER in Industry

By Herbert Read

WE cannot altogether avoid this ambiguous word "designer"; at least I am afraid we do our cause harm in this country by insisting on the word "artist," for that word denotes, to the business man and industrialist, something quite hopeless and inefficient. Perhaps in time we shall disabuse the practical and therefore puritan mind of this age-long prejudice; we shall persuade it that when we speak of art we do not mean something adventitious and ornamental, some tremulous quality of craftsmanship or "sensibility," but precisely those qualities of form and finish, of precision, exactitude and efficiency which the practical man recognizes and admires when he sees them embodied in a building, a machine or a tool. And actually, when it comes to the routine of the factory or workshop, how are we to envisage the artist in industry? As an extra—not hand, but shall we say *eye*? Then again we shall have difficulty in convincing the industrialist of his necessity. That eye, it seems to me, must be inserted into an existing body, and, if so, then into whose body

but the designer's? Any sharp division between "design for function" and "design for appearance," however sound in theory, will inevitably lead to friction if reflected in personnel.

The cause of the present chaotic condition is due not so much to the exclusion of art from industry, as to its misapplication. There are very few factories in which no attention is paid to design; one wishes there were more. But generally the manufacturer is only too well aware that his product must possess some style which he can label; it must be Georgian, or Adam, or Classic or Modern (by which is always meant "modernistic"); or it must eschew all stylistic ornament and be stroked (that is "streamlined") into some grotesque exaggeration of its functional form. If you label an article it is so much easier to sell; it drops like a nice round peg into a nice round hole in the average man's mind.

And we serve the average man, the industrialist is ready to point out! It would never do to make square pegs for all those round holes! But in this he ignores the adaptability of the

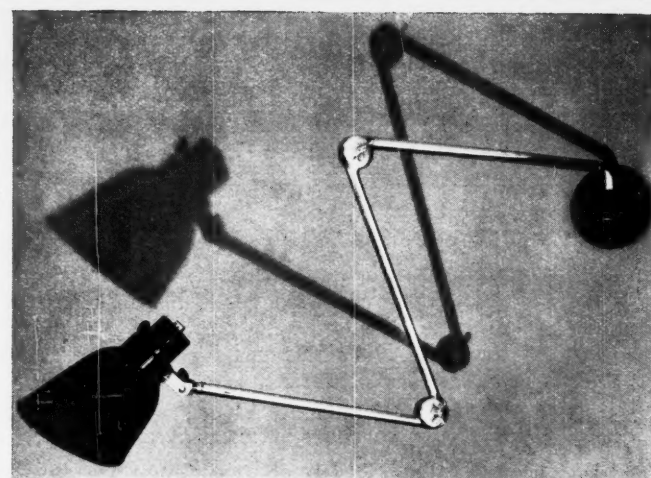
human mind—not merely its response to education, which is slow enough, but its instinctive appreciation of form when once form is achieved and put on the market at a fair price. The experience of one well-known radio manufacturer is decisive. The radio-set had aped every period piece from Gothic to Chippendale; that omnipresent voice had blared through fretsaw sunsets and stencilled lyres; and the "artist" had made his presence felt in industry. Then along came a firm which dared to dismiss the round-peg artist and to employ instead designers who used intelligence and invented a new form to suit the essential elements of this new instrument. The public accepted the new form with eagerness, and all they now ask is that the form should keep pace with new technical developments and new and appropriate materials.

If the place of the designer in such a specific instance as this could be analysed, his status and duties generalized for industry as a whole, then we should have arrived at a solution of our problems; or, at least, at the beginning of a solution of our problems. For a

With the illustrations on these pages begins a monthly bulletin of new standard designs and articles of equipment, planned to continue and to keep up to date the idea initiated in the "Interior House Equipment" issue of THE ARCHITECTURAL REVIEW for December, 1935. In that issue an attempt was made to provide an illustrated record of well-designed articles of furniture, house equipment, etc., selected from those available to the public in this country as standard products. With the purpose of making the selection of practical use as well as being a record of contemporary standards in design, the name of the manufacturer or agent responsible for the production of the article, the retail price and other relevant information was given in every case. In this monthly bulletin the same practice will be followed. The same reservations as were printed in the foreword to the December issue regarding THE ARCHITECTURAL REVIEW'S responsibility for the information must also be taken to apply.



1. Chair in beech, with seat upholstered in "Rexine" (colours, dark red or dark green), or in casement cloth (colours, blue, green, biscuit or brown). Price, 8s. 11d. Obtainable from John Lewis, Ltd. 2. Extending wall light fitting, No. 2675. Can also be used as ceiling light. Chromium plated; black metal shade and



INTERIOR HOUSE EQUIPMENT:

radio-set is perhaps too favourable a field for the designer—I mean that he is so obviously necessary that the industry cannot get on without him. In other industries we have all kinds of legacies of fashion and inertias of established rights to overcome. Carpets, for example, are almost inevitably "Turkey" or some other vaguely oriental type; and as such they have sold for perhaps three hundred years and will go on selling for another three hundred years; for the design has become so conventionalized that we no longer look at it as a design. A turkey carpet is something like a top-hat or a dinner-jacket which we never regard as something *designed*. It is a prototype, something made on the sixth day of creation and since then only varied in unessential details.

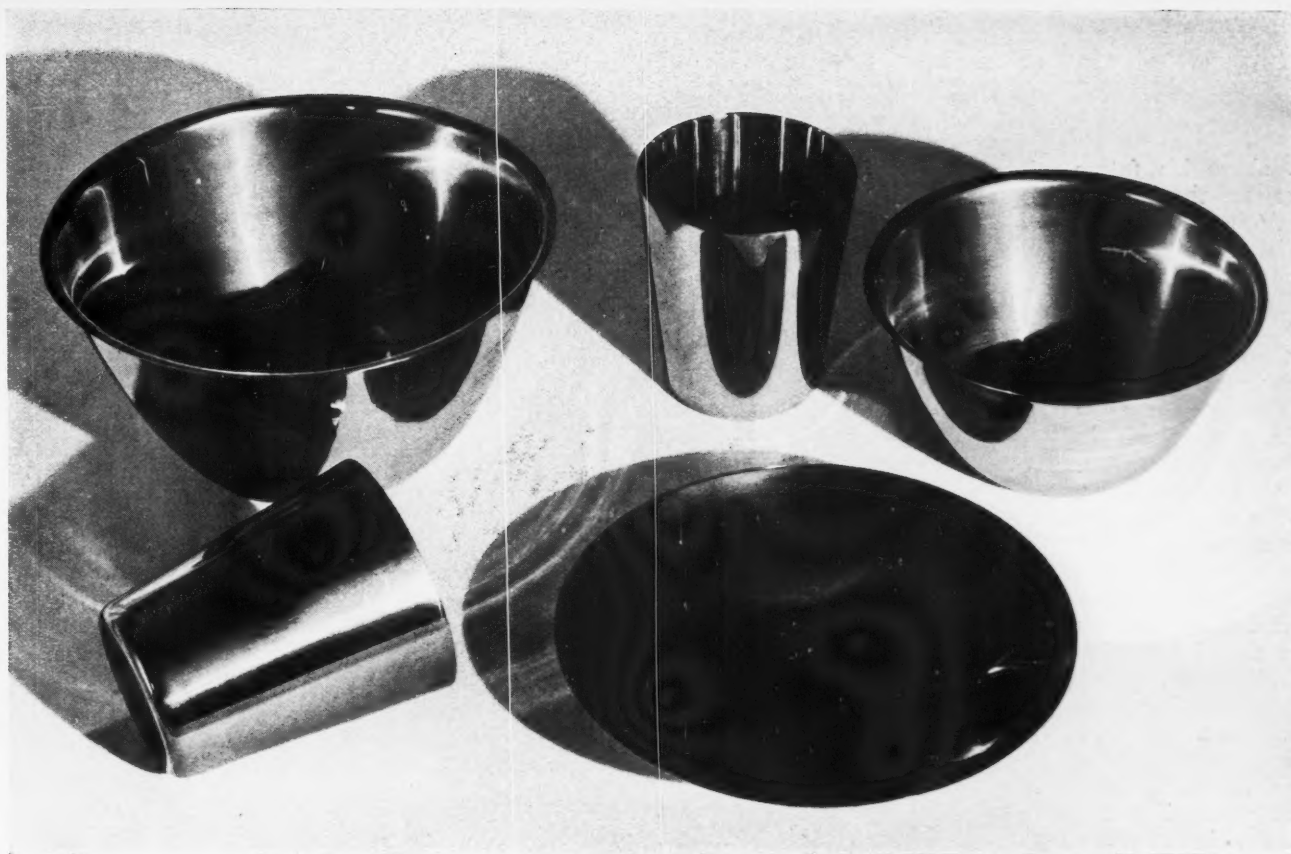
We can, of course, sleep through life surrounded by such dead things, our peace of mind never disturbed, our eyes never distracted from their endless rumination. But the experience of history teaches us that such deadness of sensibility only belongs to decadent

civilizations; that such deadness in the eye is really a deadness in the soul. This is the final justification for reform: for the reform of many things besides design in industry, but this reform is typical. We must so reform the structure of industry, in particular its personnel, that a place is made for a new element, which element, by reacting on the form and shape of things, will give them a new life, which is the life of all active growth and fruitful development.

We take it as axiomatic that there are really two elements which have to be introduced to each other, and in some manner reconciled. At one extreme there is that which we call simply "art," meaning those absolute principles of harmony and proportion which find a direct expression in the so-called fine arts of architecture, painting and sculpture; and at the other extreme there is that which we call industry, the manufacture of things of a utilitarian nature with the only object of making them useful and saleable. I propose to dismiss from the present discussion that

abstract doctrine which says that if an object attains the maximum of functional efficiency, it thereby acquires the maximum of aesthetic appeal. If we admitted such a doctrine, the problem we are concerned with would automatically disappear. We could close our art schools and concentrate on the problems of technical efficiency, confident that beauty would be born in the process. But though a certain amount of evidence for this simple faith might be found in the evolution of the motor-car and the aeroplane, most of us continue to believe that even when the maximum of functional efficiency has been achieved, there is still room (and therefore need) for aesthetic discrimination. It follows that there is still need for the artist in industry, and the problem is how best to educate him so that he can contribute his share to the product *in the process of manufacture*.

In this particular article I would like to deal, not so much with general principles in a theoretical sense, but rather with a plan for training and employing the designer which might be



back-plate. £4 15s. Troughton and Young, Ltd. 3. Desk is black walnut. £35. Gordon Russell, Ltd. 4. Stainless steel utensils. Beaker, 3½ in. by 3 in., 5s. 9d. Basins, 5½ in. diam., 1 pint, 10s. 2d.; 6¾ in. diam., 3 pint, 13s. 6d. Dish, 6½ in., 5s. 3d. London Metal Warehouses, Ltd.

BULLETIN OF STANDARD DESIGNS

accepted as a general system into which each industry could fit according to its needs. It may be that no such general system is possible, but it would still be useful to have some ideal plan in mind, and then to approximate to it so far as local and manufacturing conditions permit.

There are three distinct methods of education not only possible in theory, but followed in practice. Let us set them out schematically:

I. Educate your potential industrial artist in an independent art school along with other types of art students.

II. Make art a subsidiary subject at specialized technical schools confined to a particular industry.

III. Take your potential industrial artist straight into the workshops and teach him there.

Industrialists are generally in favour of methods II or III; educationalists, on the other hand, insist on the supreme value of a training in "pure" art. Bruno Paul, the successful director of the Berlin Kunstgewerbeschule, insisted, as Dr. Pevsner recently

pointed out in his address to the Royal Society of Arts, that the independent artist should be recognized as "the necessary pace-maker" even in the education of the industrial artist. In the end I think any unprejudiced observer will recognize the element of truth embodied in each method, and will therefore seek for an ideal system which in some way combines the advantages of them all.

Such an ideal system would begin with a broad basis of general art-education (drawing, modelling, and some such system of education in sensibility as that recommended by Moholy-Nagy in his book, *The New Vision*): an elementary education in the processes underlying all constructive industries. In this elementary stage students would be differentiated according to their abilities and evident tendencies. From that stage only a small number would diverge to pursue the fine arts. The rest would be drafted to technical schools where they would learn the processes of manufacture of the selected industry, and

continue, at the same time, their artistic education in relation to these processes. Finally the student, his education completed, would enter the factory with a junior professional status, and at once bring his training to bear on all questions of design.

To translate this ideal system of education into the terms of existing institutions is very difficult, but it is not impossible. It involves a general reform, and the breaking up of various vested interests. We will assume (though it hardly exists) a uniform elementary and secondary education in which a general training is given in the arts and crafts. Normally the industrial artist, like most of his professional colleagues, would complete his secondary education. The next step is the difficult one. He would have reached the age of eighteen and would normally be proceeding either to apprenticeship or to a university. As a potential industrial artist, he can now either proceed to a technical school and learn a little bit about art: or he can proceed to an art school and

learn a little bit about his future industry. In either case the result is not satisfactory. At this stage we need a college which is neither predominantly artistic nor predominantly industrial, but is in effect an art school equipped with workshops and machinery for all the standard industries (pottery, weaving, woodwork, metalwork, etc.). Though some of our art schools approximate to this type (Birmingham and the L.C.C. Central School) they are virtually non-existent in this country. The student would spend three years at such a school and then pass out to a post-graduate course in a specialized technical school. These would be regional and determined by the specialized industries of the region (pottery in Staffordshire, cotton industries at Manchester, weaving and leather at Leeds, steel and glass at Sheffield, etc.). Having completed a course at a specialized technical school, the industrial artist passes into the factory at about the age of twenty-two (the average age for the beginning of any professional career) as a fully trained and equipped designer with a salary worthy of his professional status.

The hierarchy, therefore, from bottom upwards, is as follows:

ELEMENTARY SCHOOL.—General education in arts and crafts.

SECONDARY SCHOOL.—General education in arts and crafts leading to differentiation of ability.

LOCAL COLLEGE OF ART.—General education in art and techniques with practical experiment in construction.

REGIONAL TECHNICAL COLLEGE.—Specialized education in the processes of a particular industry.

The main objection to the creation of such a system (apart from that of vested interests) will come from those industrialists who have been in the habit of taking a "lad" from the elementary school and giving him an education in the shops; they will accuse us of creating a wholly unnecessary complication. They may be willing to concede the Regional Technical College, especially if the apprentice can attend it in part-time, or as an evening school student. But what, they will say, does a pottery designer want with the equivalent of a university training? To such narrow and conservative instincts we can only oppose our belief in the essential unity of art. Whether he is designing a cup or a cathedral, an aeroplane or a fountain-pen, the artist is using the same instinct for form; and whatever the magnitude or importance of the object he is designing, that instinct is constant, and only fully effective when fully trained.

INTERIOR EQUIPMENT THE INDIVIDUAL SOLUTION: I



In a house in Paris, the interior of which has been remodelled and refurnished by Paul Bry, the Guest Room contains an ingenious piece of composite furniture. The table-cupboard, when the lid is closed as in 1, can be used for writing and other purposes. When the lid is raised, as in 2, the ready-laid table is exposed. This can be swung out, 3, for use with the divan and three chairs, which latter are normally placed underneath the table. The divan can be transformed into a bed, the bed-linen during the day being stored in the small cupboard in the corner. The table is of wood with a top covered with sheets of an artificial resin that is not affected by liquids, heat or acid.

ANTHOLOGY

Architecture as Sophism and Architecture as Ethics

American architecture is composed, in the hundred, of ninety parts aberration, eight parts indifference, one part poverty and one part Little Lord Fauntleroy. You can have the prescription filled at any architectural department-store, or select architectural millinery establishment.

Our student has been seriously taught at the school, and has been encouraged in this belief by the endorsement of people of culture, that architecture is the name of a system of accredited, historical facts as useful, as available, and as susceptible to inspection as the books of a mercantile house.

Yet there is a certain grim ghastly humour in it all: for instance, a banker sitting in a Roman temple: railway tracks running into a Roman bath: a Wall Street broker living in a French château: a rich vulgarian living in a Trianon: a modern person living in a Norman castle: a hive of offices built up of miscellaneous crippled fragments of ancient architecture, firmly fastened to a modern steel frame: university buildings with battlements and towers, but no crossbowmen: libraries that might be mistaken for banks, hospitals that might be mistaken for libraries, department stores that might be taken for hotels: the suggestion in general that if anything in particular is to be done it shall be done in the most unnatural way: in other words, like some other thing, some prior thing, that bears no traceable relationship to it. We see factories with Corinthian columns: domes upon "pure Greek" buildings: façades of Roman temples inserted in the middle of apartment buildings: Northern dwellings in the South: Southern dwellings in the North: buildings at variance with climate, or purpose—"architecture" lugged to buildings and pasted thereon wherever place may be found. And all these things meaningless, the real building always obscured, never revealed—all purposeless, all in essential bad faith, all masquerade, scene-painting, theatrical, presumptuous—all discordant, even riotous, inept even where quiet and "scholarly"—all inept—all an imposition upon honest intelligence.

I urge that you cast away as worthless the shop-worn and empirical notion that an architect is an artist—and accept my assurance that he is and imperatively shall be an interpreter of the national life of his time. If you realize this, you will realize at once and forever that you are called upon, not to betray, but to express the life of your own day and generation. That society will have just cause to hold you to account for your use of the liberty it has given to you, and the confidence it has reposed in you. You will realize, in due time, as your lives develop and expand and you will become richer in experience, that a fraudulent and surreptitious use of historical documents, however suavely presented, however cleverly plagiarized, however neatly re-packed, however shrewdly intrigued, will constitute and will be held to be a betrayal of trust. It is futile to quibble, or to protest, or to plead ignorance or innocence, or to asseverate and urge the force of circumstances. Society is, in the main, honest, and it will not ask, and will not expect, you to be liars. It will give you every reasonable and legitimate backing, if you can prove to it by your acts that artistic pretension is not a synonym for moral irresponsibility. If you take the pains truly to understand your country, your people, your day, your generation: the time, the place in which you live: if you seek to understand, absorb and sympathize with the life around you, you will be understood and sympathetically received in return.

LOUIS SULLIVAN

Excerpts selected from various addresses and essays written between 1899 and 1905. (From *Louis Sullivan—Prophet of Modern Architecture* by Hugh Morrison. New York: W. W. Norton & Co.)

MARGINALIA

Manchester

"I tried, from time to time, to walk for a few minutes in this stupendous city. But, in such weather, all the whimsies of the City Council, the rockeries built on islands in the traffic, the little Japanese temples and iris pools, seemed madness itself. A public garden, covered with dirty snow, on which the soot falls continually in a suffocating cloud, reminiscent of Bulwer Lytton's *Last Days of Pompeii*, constitutes in itself an unpleasant kind of mockery."

OSBERT SITWELL
in *Nash's Magazine*.

"Futurism in painting has no future. When someone in London tries to persuade me that the human frame looks like a set of organ pipes, I simply tell him that I come from Manchester and I know better."

HARRY RUTHERFORD
in SAYINGS OF THE WEEK in *The Observer*.

Without Parallel

Our National Treasure House

Sir Henry Buckland, at a meeting of the Trustees of the Crystal Palace, said that

"He had received many letters of congratulation with regard to the restorations on the art side. The Pompeian House, Architectural Courts, and statuary were now in fine order. The palace was unparalleled in its store of art treasures, which had been well worth the cost of restoration."

THE TIMES.

A Premium for Safety

"It costs about £7,000 to commission and erect an unmounted statue in London. That is the estimate of the Office of Works, whose First Commissioner is now considering with the Cabinet what form the memorial to Lord Jellicoe shall take.

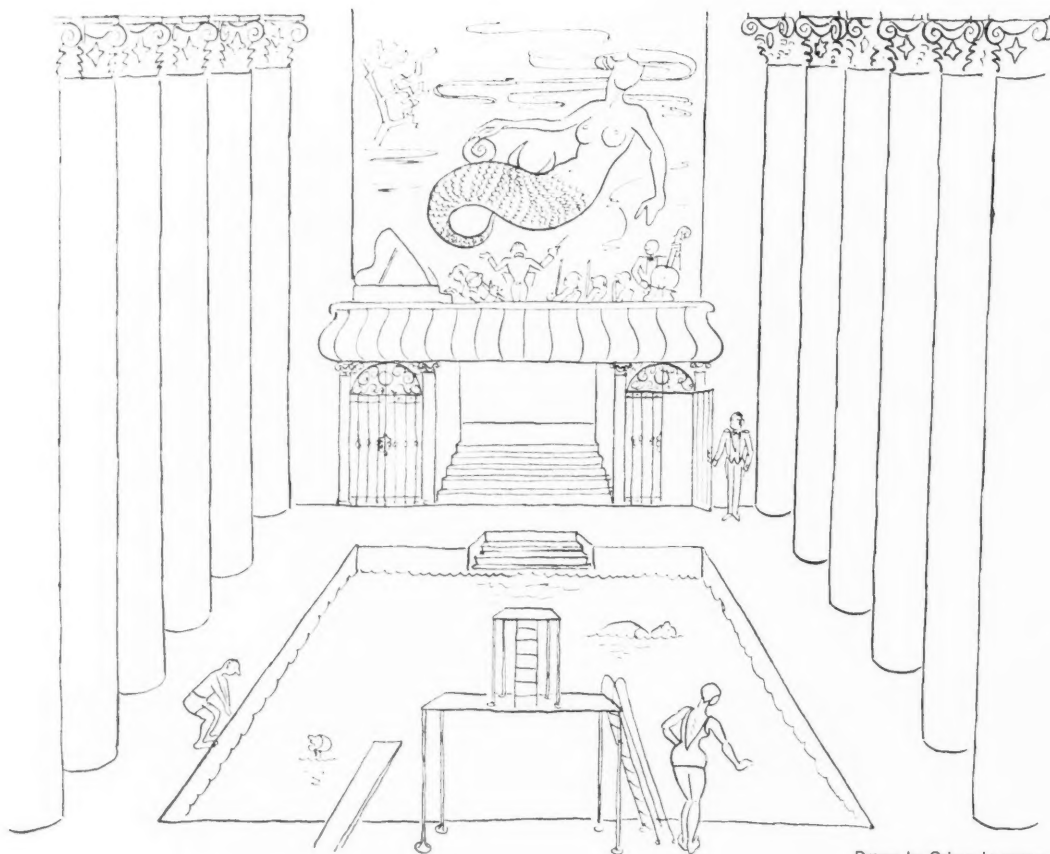
"The price is high chiefly because designs must be approved by the Royal Fine Art Commission, whose duty it is to protect the public from monstrosities, with which we have been too familiar in the past."

EVENING STANDARD.

Art in the City

"Mr. T. R. Ablett, in a paper on 'Art in the City,' after referring to London's treasures of architecture and painting, said that the City had for centuries been engaged in dispersing throughout the land beautiful fabric and manufactured goods of every kind. The effect of this con-

THE WOODEN WALLS OF ENGLAND



The Caracalla Swimming Pool on the s.s. "Pelvishernia" is of unique construction. No other swimming bath, ashore or afloat, has both a glass bottom floodlit from below and an artificial wave-making apparatus. Added to this by an ingenious gyroscopic device, the water in the pool is always kept calm (except, of course, when the wave-making apparatus is on) no matter how rough the ocean itself may be.

The bath itself is separated from the Nero grill room on one side and the Messalina cocktail bar on the other by colonnades of Corinthian pillars in porphyry, which despite their seeming solidity, are hollow and serve to mask the hot pipes leading up from the boiler room which ensure that the water in the pool is kept always at an even temperature.

The beautiful panel above the orchestra balcony, carried

out in sand-blown turquoise glass from a design by Aristide Plombière, whose work caused such a furore in the Salon of 1905, conceals a mighty Wurlitzer organ.

We had hoped next month to be able to show our readers the interior of the St. Cloud Restaurant, but owing to an unfortunate accident this will not now be possible; on its recent trial trip the vibration from the mighty engines which will convey this floating palace across the Atlantic in record time, had unfortunately been underestimated, and the speed of 25 knots had hardly been attained when all the lovely eighteenth-century plaster work on the restaurant ceiling crashed to the ground, smashing a quantity of genuine Louis Seize furniture and severely injuring five stewards and a trap-drummer.

tinuous stream of beautiful things upon the artistic taste of the people must be far-reaching."

THE TIMES.

Effect of Romanticism on Victorian Taste

Byron's influence was salutary and invigorating; but there is no doubt that his example did much to relax poetic

standards and had a share in the general decline of taste that became manifest during the course of the nineteenth century. One has sometimes heard it suggested that the utilitarian spirit of the new age was largely responsible for the rapid and appalling decay of aesthetic intelligence which culminated in the Great Exhibition of 1851. It is a curious fact, however, that the ills with which the Victorian age was chiefly afflicted were

caused by the very excess of Romanticism, and by the Victorian susceptibility to exotic influences. In 1822 the aspidistra (a plant which has the gruesome peculiarity of being fertilized by slugs) was introduced from the Far East: and a great deal of the exquisitely execrable ugliness, symbolized by the aspidistra's bouquet of liverish-hued, dust-collecting leaves, had its origin in our ancestors' cult of the foreign and strange. Only

THE JUDGMENT OF PARIS OR BLOOD WILL TELL



The inhabitants of Paris now have a splendid opportunity of studying the contemporary architectural taste of a large number of different countries by travelling no further than to their own *Cité Universitaire*. On a huge site within the boundaries of Paris a series of National Pavilions is now nearing completion, each one built for the use of students, resident in Paris, from the nation it represents: 1, Switzerland (by le Corbusier); 2, Japan (by P. Sardou); 3, the United States of America (by Leprince-Riguet); 4, Holland (by W. Dudok); and 5—unmistakably—Great Britain (by Pierre Martin and Maurice Vion).



Romantics could have exchanged the eminently reasonable domestic architecture of Georgian England for the eminently unreasonable and uncomfortable buildings in which our grandmothers

and grandfathers were condemned to pass their lives. A sideboard of Gothic or debased Renaissance form is not more practical or prosaic than a side-table designed by Heppelwhite. Indeed, while the

latter is prosaic (though convenient and beautiful), the former is an object recommended by its Romantic appeal, by its lack of modernity and by a richness of convoluted ornament scarcely to be paral-

EVERYDAY THINGS AT THE R.I.B.A.



The Royal Institute of British Architects has arranged in its own premises an exhibition under the title "Everyday Things." The exhibition has been planned to demonstrate that good design can be produced in mass-produced objects for household use at a reasonable price. The exhibits, which are limited in scope to objects produced in Great Britain and obtainable in the shops, and in price to objects suitable to the requirements of the man whose house costs no more than £1,500, have been selected by a committee of R.I.B.A. members. Luxury designs and specially produced exhibition designs have been excluded, and in the catalogue retail prices are given—an excellent, indeed an indispensable feature in any such exhibition. The photograph above shows a collection of kitchen china. The exhibition will, we understand, remain open until March 14, and then leave for a tour of various provincial centres.

leled save in the bas-reliefs of a Hindu shrine. The cult of the exotic, one need hardly add, did not begin with Byron: but the popularity of Byron's verse gave it a very powerful impetus. Moorish or sham-baronial knick-knacks were proper to a generation that delighted in *The Corsair*, *The Bride of Abydos* and *Childe Harold*. Just as Byron's effects were often showily successful, rather than produced with the patience and love that an Augustan poet would have devoted to his work, so Victorian taste aimed at an immediate effect. This effect is often sumptuous and romantic, but, examined closely, proves mechanical and mean.

It is true that, during Byron's lifetime, the process of deterioration had already gone far. To the Regency we owe some of the most charming small houses that England has ever produced: but the Brighton Pavilion, particularly when this excrescence of royal taste is set alongside the Chinese fantasies of an earlier epoch, affords a gloomy pre-

monition of future ills. . . . Nor was the decadence of English taste confined to the Pavilion (an edifice as obese and unwieldy as the owner himself), Pugin's east-iron conservatory at Carlton House or to the neo-Gothic mansions planned by Wyatt. We find a trace of the same decadence in details of furnishing: for it was during the Regency that curtains and hangings began to imitate those of the Near East, heavily fringed, made of heavy rich materials, red velvet trimmed with gold being especially popular. Rich . . . the word is evocative of the Romantic Age. "Un mobilier riche" was the dream of every Romantic poet and novelist—Balzac, who wore out his health preparing a Romantic background worthy of one of his own novels: even Baudelaire, whose early dandyism exhausted his patrimony.

The decline of taste and the spread of Romanticism went hand in hand: and in the rooms of many a young Romantic, with their Renaissance *bahuts*, curtained alcoves, inlaid tables, Turkish weapons

and pipes, and exotic plants, Byron's features glimmered down from a lofty pedestal.

PETER QUENNEL
in "BYRON." (Faber and Faber.)

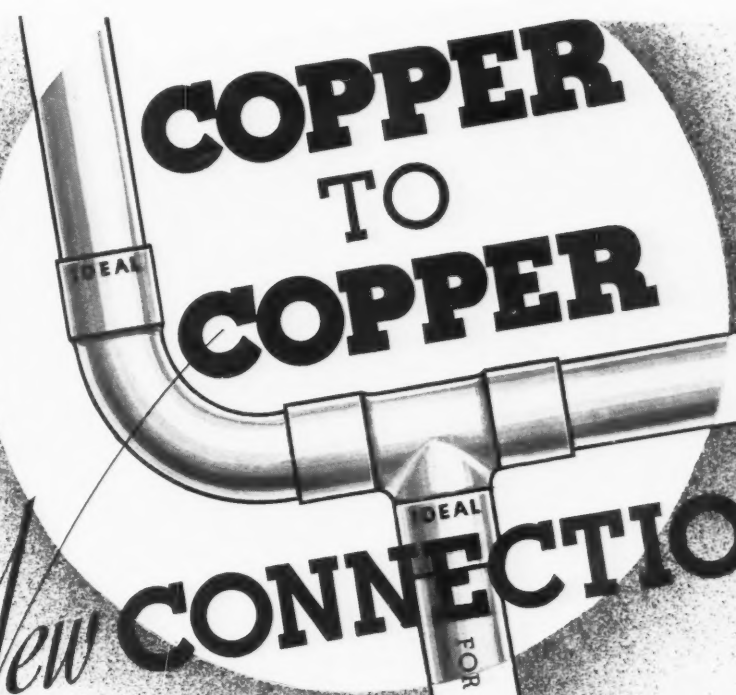
Sacrificial

If the shedding of blood was to be taken as a criterion of good architecture then the Church of the Nativity at Bethlehem and the Church of the Holy Sepulchre at Jerusalem would be among the greatest treasures of the world. Actually, if viewed dispassionately, we shall have to admit that neither of them takes first rank among the beautiful or architecturally interesting of the world's buildings.

But to have excited the more murderous passions of mankind consistently for sixteen hundred years or so, to have instigated the Crusades, to have aroused the anger and hatred of the Infidel, whether Persian, Jew, or Moslem, and to have set the Faithful—Greek, Latin, Georgian, Armenian, Jacobite, Copt and Abyssinian—at each other's throats, would be surely reasons enough if there were no others—which of course there are—for the British Government's wish to preserve these unique Christian monuments. With this object in view Mr. William Harvey undertook examinations of both structures, and his reports have been published by the Oxford University Press: one volume per church, 35s. each. From the photographs alone one can see that these buildings are in a mess and that something will have to be done about them pretty soon. But whether religious fervour in the Near East will allow anything to be done, without the assistance of barbed wire and machine guns, is another question.

Monumental

And since we are on the subject of antiquities we cannot allow the publication of Dr. Ashby's last work to pass unnoticed in these columns. Although *The Aqueducts of Ancient Rome* (Batsford) is necessarily a book for the initiated few, it is a monument quite as impressive, in its way, as the subject of which it treats. It is the kind of book which, in its exhaustiveness, its meticulous attention to detail, the cryptic nature of its footnotes, belongs more properly to the great days before the war when the scholarship of an author was a recommendation to the reading of his book. It is a little surprising to see that the date on the title page is 1935. 1907 would be more appropriate. The appearance of a book of this calibre makes one realize what we lost when we began to ask if such and such a building was "amusing" or not, and were content to be fobbed off with photographs in place of good solid matter.



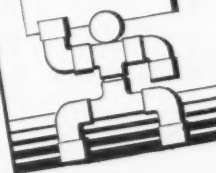
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Trade News and Reviews

By Brian Grant

Flats—and problems

The extensive building of great blocks of flats is in itself a solution to a problem—the problem of housing satisfactorily a vast population. But in its train it brings a new set of problems—problems that are crying out for immediate consideration and practical attention. How, one wonders, will the transport system of inner London (a system to which I doff my hat with respect and admiration) be developed to meet its new needs. What transport service is to be provided in the neighbourhood of St. George's Square, on the Thames Embankment, where one of the largest blocks of flats in Europe is being erected?

Radio reception in flats

Here is another problem to be tackled by architects and building owners if the new generation of flat dwellers are to share in

the entertainment and/or education meted out by the B.B.C.

However soundproof may be the construction of flats, windows must be opened and the mental picture of a block of flats inhabited by wireless enthusiasts all using different broadcast programmes at full strength on a hot summer's evening, is too fearful to contemplate. One solution to this problem recommended by competent sound engineers is the relay or rediffusion system of radio reception, such as was installed at Pullman Court, Streatham.

With this system the reception of broadcast

programmes is controlled from a central communal receiving set. The necessary loud speakers can either be "built-in" or otherwise made to conform to the scheme of decoration in each flat. The musical output provided is restricted so as to be of sufficient volume to serve each room, but not great enough to cause annoyance to other tenants, and the placing of the speakers



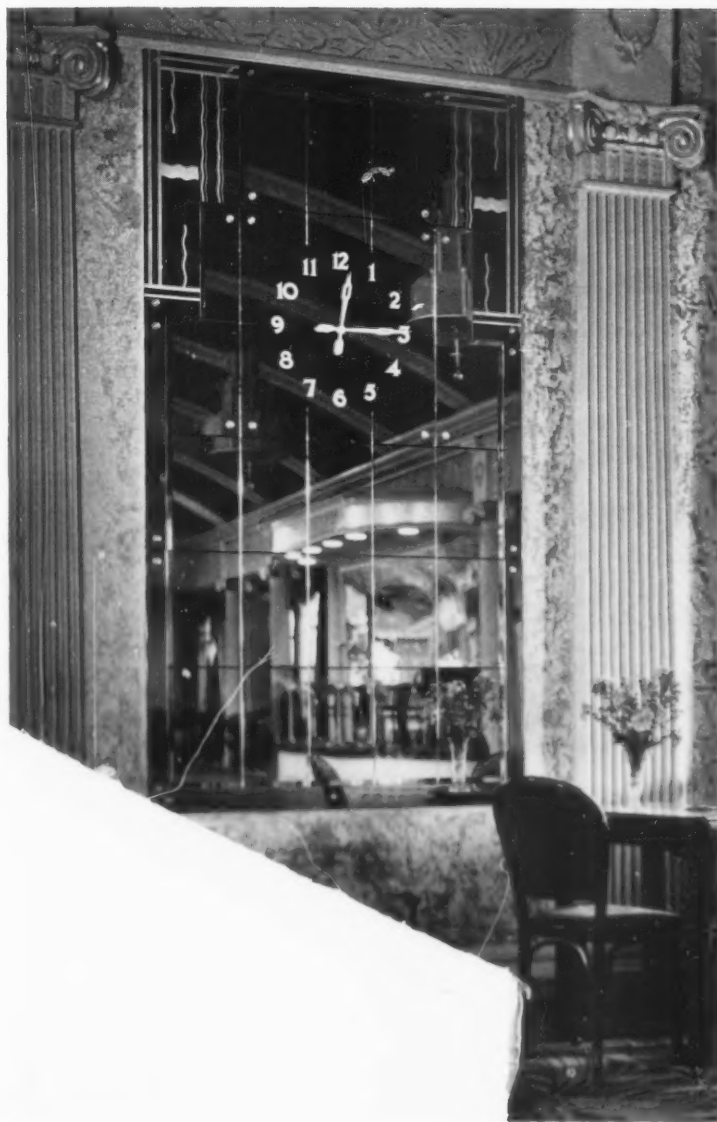
A typical example of rack-built equipment designed and constructed for the relay of radio reception. Engineers: Tannoy Products.



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TRADE AND CRAFT

(particularly when built-in) should be arranged to minimize any possible interference from one flat to another.

In principle the system provides a service of broadcasting to tenants very much as hot water and central heating are commonly provided—to be turned on at will.

If the best possible results are to be obtained then it is, I would suggest, quite essential that acoustical engineers and specialists in sound amplifying equipment should be consulted *before* and not after the plans have been drawn up.

Apart from the provision of entertainment this type of installation can be designed to provide additional services such as communication with porters, etc., from the estate office by means of a microphone, or with the garages, and the equipment can be utilized in cases of emergency, such as fire, to warn tenants by means of an external loud speaker driven with the full output of the amplifying equipment.

In the past the building owners and their architects have too frequently been content to leave each flat dweller to grapple rather forlornly with his own individual radio problem, but results have shown that this is not the way to merry music and peaceful reception. If the most practical results are to be obtained, then each block of flats should be regarded as a unit and architect and engineer must co-operate.

Neon Lighting

I am told that we may look forward to interesting developments in the application

Living room at Pullman Court, Streatham, showing the built-in loud speaker unit. Frederick Gibberd, architect.



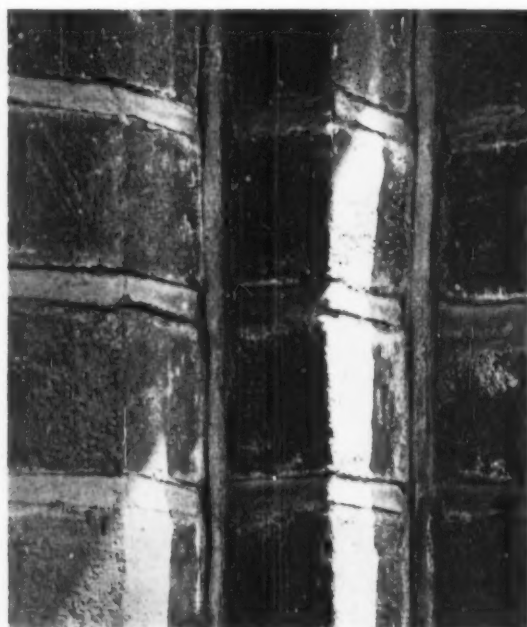
of "gaseous tube lighting" to the flood-lighting and exterior illumination of buildings. Well, indeed, it is high time that some such piece of good news should reach our ears—with ultimate benefit to our visual organs.

We are all familiar with the past applications of neon lighting, but this familiarity has, I fear, bred little more than contempt in the minds of most discerning people.

The truth is that we have (quite wrongly, I agree) come to regard this form of lighting as something devised principally for nocturnal advertisement. Dazzling letters in red, green

and gold are constantly reminding us that "SOMEBODY'S PILLS WILL CURE" that somebody else's cigarettes "soothe the sorest of throats," and every facade in the country is plastered with the names of famous Hollywood per-

It has always seemed to me that of advertisement has had the effect of retarding the proper development of pleasant and extremely adaptable illumination. For the advertisement message to convey it may, I claimed that this method of "publicity" is as good, if not



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TRADE AND CRAFT

any other. But that is another story. One can, however, well appreciate the bitter resentment of an architect who, having designed a very pleasant looking building, discovers shortly after its completion that

the whole of the street frontage has been converted into an illuminated blaze of bright and snappy slogans.

Most of the principal shopping and entertainment thoroughfares in many of the prin-

The Architectural Review, May

cipal towns have their general solecisms in neon. And why? some obscure reason, architects manufacturers have not co-op-

It is essential that certain things must always be "in the The proprietors of Cinema Department Stores and certain Restaurants and Hotels depend on their livelihood on the fact who recognizes this fact will find in neon a very valuable ad-



A night photograph of the Bon Marché Pavilion at the Brussels Exhibition.

Cle-ora Triple Lighting

is a development of neon lighting which appears to have much to commend itself to the consideration of the architect. The illustration reproduced is exact. It is a night photograph of the Marché Pavilion at the Brussels Exhibition. The main entrance is set between two large triple tubes and is flooded with light from three tubes; the surface of the tubes is approximately sixteen feet wide by thirty feet high. The even illumination obtained and the concealment of the tubes makes it difficult at first sight to see exactly from where the light is projected, and although the light source is of two colours its active value is white.

It is a happy example of the result of co-operation—co-operation between the architect and the illuminating engineer.

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TRADE AND CRAFT

The Architectural Review, March 1936.

Charing Cross and the Special Areas

I can never pass Charing Cross Underground station without first crossing its threshold to take a peep at the "display centre." It was a bright idea on somebody's part to organize these periodical exhibitions in miniature, thus bringing to the public notice in a personal sort of way some matter of public concern and interest. But, then, we have grown to expect "bright ideas" from the London Passenger Transport Board.

The "Special Areas" display was designed to call the serious attention of all who pass by to those great industrial areas in England and Wales which have suffered so lamentably from the contraction of overseas trade.

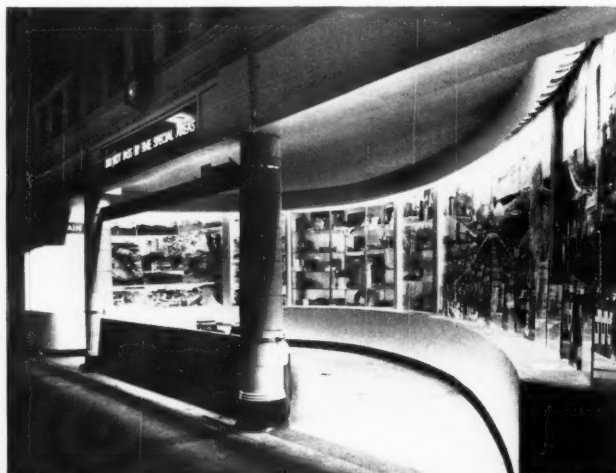
The "special areas" (in Durham, Cumberland and South Wales) represent only 7 per cent of the population of England and Wales, and yet nearly 20 per cent of the unemployed live in these areas. Greater London, with three times the population, has scarcely more than half as many unemployed. Durham, Tyneside and Haltwhistle,

with a total population of 1½ millions, have between them 164,000 unemployed persons—31 per cent. of the insured population. In West Cumberland and Alston just over 41 per cent. of the population are without work, 147,000 people in South Wales are jobless.

Such facts and figures as these were brought home to us with dramatic force-

fulness by the "Special Areas" display which was planned and designed by Pritchard Wood and Partners in conjunction with the staff of the Commissioner for the Special Areas of England and Wales, the Ministry of Labour and the London Passenger Transport Board.

We were shown in a number of striking photographs the areas as they now are—derelict factories with their great smokeless chimneys silhouetted against the sky: the beginnings of improvements—the work of the Government Instructional and Training Centres, and the developments of new industries: and "What the public can do about it"—showing how it is possible for YOU, if you are a manufacturer, an employer of labour, or simply a citizen with a modest income, to help place these "hard hit" areas on the road to recovery. The exhibition terminated on February 15th. May I suggest that you apply to the Commissioner for the pamphlets published outlining briefly and simply the problem of the Special Areas and giving an account of what is being done and what, it is hoped, will be done in the immediate future to provide a solution.



The recent "Special Areas" display at the Charing Cross Underground station.



Oak furniture in the General Office, Woolwich Equitable Building Society.

(Arch.: Grace & Farmer, FF.R.I.B.A.)

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The Buildings Illustrated

The remodelled interior of No. 24 Downs Park, W., Bristol.

Architects: Marcel Breuer and F. R. S. Yorke.

The craftsmen and sub-contractors were the following: Messrs. Carter & Co., Ltd. (bathroom tiles), John Elbo, Ltd. (cork flooring, bleached), The Bristol Gas Co., Ltd. (gas boiler), E. S. Osgood Co. (electric wiring and heating), General Electric Co., Ltd. (electric light fixtures), Stone & Co., Ltd. (plumbing), Gardiner, Sons & Co., Ltd. (bath and sanitary fittings and iron staircases), Dryad Metal Works, Ltd. and Oscar Kanter (door furniture), Henry Hope and Sons, Ltd. (casements), P. E. Gane, Ltd. (curtains, carpets and furniture), Synchro-nome Co., Ltd. (clocks), Embru Werke (aluminium chairs).

Castle Circus House, Torquay.

Architect: Stewart Lloyd Thomson.

The general contractors were Melville Dundas & Whitson, Ltd. Among the craftsmen and sub-contractors were the following: Cork Insulation Co., Ltd. (insulation and patent flooring), Macartney Ltd.

(special roofings), E. J. Elgood, Ltd. (partitions), Vitrea Drawn Sheet Glass Co., Ltd. (glass), Joseph F. Ebner, Ltd. (woodblock flooring), John Heeley (London), Ltd. (pavement lights), Benham and Sons, Ltd. (central heating), Smith and Hammond, Ltd. (electric wiring), Troughton and Young (electric light fixtures), George Jennings, Ltd. (sanitary fittings), Walter W. Jenkins & Co., Ltd. (marble, tiling and external travertine facing) N. F. Ramsay & Co., Ltd. (door furniture), H. H. Martyn & Co., Ltd. (casements and window furniture), Bolton Gate Co., Ltd. (folding gates), Haskins (rolling shutters), H. and F. Badcock (plaster), Stie B, Paint Sales, Ltd. (paint), Glasgow Engineers, Ltd. (lifts), Considere Constructions, Ltd. (consulting engineers).

The Nag's Head, Dunmow Road, Bishop's Stortford.

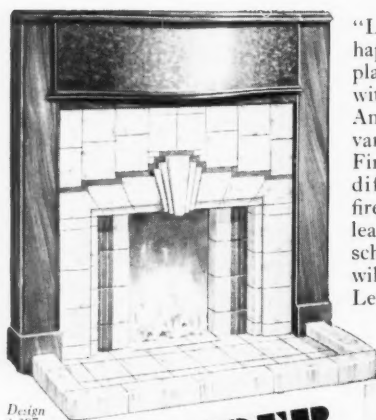
Architect: E. B. Musman.

The general contractors were Messrs. John Willmott & Sons (Hitchin), Ltd. Among the craftsmen and sub-contractors were the following: W. T. Lamb and Sons, Ltd. (bricks), Matthew T. Shaw & Co.,

Ltd. (structural steelwork), Helical Bar and Engineering Co., Ltd. (fireproof construction), Hemel Hempstead Patent Brick Co., Ltd. (partitions), Pugh Bros., Ltd. (decorative glass), Korkoid Decorative Floors Ltd. (patent flooring), Abbey Heating Co., Ltd. (central heating), Standard Range and Foundry Co., Ltd. (stoves), Rashleigh Phipps & Co., Ltd. (electric wiring), Galsworthy, Ltd. (electric light fixtures and metalwork), George Wright (London), Ltd. (sanitary fittings and mantels), Taylor Pearse & Co., Ltd. (door furniture), Crittall Manufacturing Co., Ltd. (casements), S. W. Francis & Co., Ltd. (rolling shutters), London Spray & Brush Painting Co., Ltd. (Stropol finish to plaster), Laminated Wood Products, Ltd. (flush doors, joinery), Cope & Co., Ltd. (tiling), Peter Jones, Ltd. (textiles), Thomas Parsons and Sons, Ltd. (paint and distemper; wallpaper), Lord Bros. (furniture), W. H. Heath, Ltd. (bar fittings), Express Lift Co., Ltd. (lifts), Smith's English Clocks, Ltd. (clocks).

Corrigendum

Messrs. Wm. Mallinson and Sons, Ltd., write to us in reference to their advertisement in our February issue pointing out that they inadvertently omitted to include the name of The Bath Cabinet Makers Co., Ltd., as contractors for the fixing of the veneered panels and joinery in the General Manager's office at the premises of The Cornhill Insurance Co., Ltd., Cornhill.



Design
S 397

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