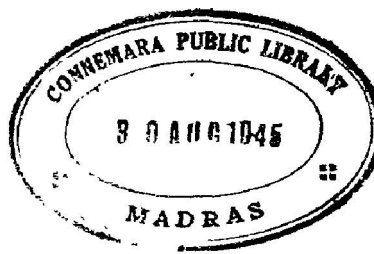
GOOD AND BAD MANNERS IN ARCHITECTURE



THIS BOOK asks the novel question, *How do buildings behave towards one another?* It contrasts the *selfish* building, the *presumptuous* building and the *rude* building with the POLITE and SOCIABLE building; and it invites the public to act as arbiter upon their conflicting claims.

By the same Author:

THE THINGS WHICH ARE SEEN

SIR WILLIAM CHAMBERS

STYLE & COMPOSITION IN ARCHITECTURE
(*orginally Architectural Style*)

GOOD & BAD
MANNERS
IN
ARCHITECTURE

by

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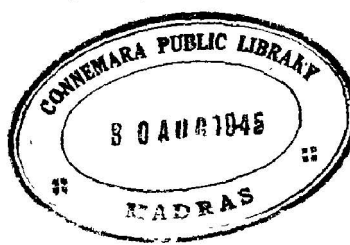

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PREFACE
TO THE
SECOND EDITION

THE CHOICE was presented to me either to re-write this book and to develop its main arguments in the manner which would be appropriate if the book were now being composed for the first time, or else to keep the original text and give it a new preface. My adoption of the latter alternative perhaps requires justification. It is a severe test of any book on architecture written over twenty years ago for it to be submitted verbatim to the critical attention of the present-day reader. Yet on the following grounds I am prepared to accept the challenge.

The major part of the book is an exposition of principles of design which, if they were valid twenty years ago, are still valid to-day, while the particular chapter which might be regarded as "dated," namely that on the demolition of the old Regent Street, has acquired a new relevance in the last five years. At a time when indignation is justly expressed because a great many beautiful buildings in this country have been destroyed "by enemy action," it may help us to judge the disaster in its true perspective if we are reminded that we have occasionally been required to sacrifice treasures of our national architecture by agencies other than that of the *Luftwaffe*. Moreover, I allowed the Regent Street chapter to stand because it is an essay, imperfect though it may be, in a

rather rare form of literature, namely *the architectural polemic*. To the worldy-wise school of writers on architecture that have come to the fore during recent years the sustained passion here exhibited may evoke a superior smile. Yet, on re-reading this polemic, I have decided to alter not a word. And I may record with melancholy pride that in an article, published in 1923, by the distinguished writer, now deceased, who signed himself "Londoner" in the 'Evening News' I was described as "Regent Street's chief mourner."

This second chapter had a certain influence in creating what was known, for a number of years, as "the Regency cult." In my critical appreciation of the work of John Nash, I was perhaps the first to acclaim him an architectural genius of the highest order. Needless to say, it was a matter of great satisfaction to me that ten years after the publication of my polemic there appeared an informative book on the life and work of Nash. On one passage in this book I here venture to make a comment. The author rightly remarks that "Nash embodied everything which the 19th century hated about the 18th ; so when the Victorians remembered him it was only to spurn him." And then he adds : "But taste slowly changed ; and as the real Nash was forgotten, and some of the things he stood for crept back into the ring of favoured values a new picture formed itself. Finally a noble ghost, a fiction of elegance, dignity and urbanity rose from the ruins of Regent Street and to-day the name of Nash is accorded more honour than his contemporaries would have believed possible." The author apparently suggests that this revised impression of the status of Nash was the result of some impersonal process of peaceful and inevitable evolution of public opinion. The impression, however, only became commonly recognisable after the dust of battle had subsided. As readers of the following pages will recognise, it entailed fierce argument to establish the fact that Nash

was a consummate master of large-scale street composition because he was the most brilliant practical exponent of the principle of good manners in architecture.

Needless to say, this principle has a far wider significance than it could ever have acquired if it were exemplified only in the Regency style, for in some degree it has informed all the historic styles of building and should surely find expression in whatever styles may be evolved in the future. It is related to a general æsthetic theory and, as was pointed out in the preface to the first edition of this book, it was given its natural philosophic setting in a previous volume entitled "The Things which are Seen." There I arranged the visual arts in what appeared to me to be their logical order of precedence. The first place was assigned to the art of the cultivation of human beauty, the second to the art of manners, the third to the art of dress and the fourth to architecture. At the end of the list came the "secondary" arts of painting and sculpture.

Architecture, in being thus dethroned from the supreme place which is accorded to it in the description, "The Mistress Art," might appear at first sight to have suffered an improper derogation of its status. Actually, however, the art of building can but gain in popular esteem if its function be brought into relation with the arts most intimately concerned with the human person. And by insisting that the visual arts should be arranged in this order of precedence we prevent any one of them from getting out of step with the others, or from showing anti-social presumption.

Let us consider the evil consequences which might arise if the art of manners failed to pay due deference to the senior art, namely that of the cultivation of human beauty. Obviously a form of prudery would result, in which the biological basis of society might fail to be adequately recognised, and the health of men, women, and children might suffer in consequence. Or else

social life might be so over-burdened with ritual that insufficient time was left for the numerous activities which require to be carried out if a people is to enjoy true prosperity. The critics who have tried to impugn the principle of good manners in architecture have invented the phrase "the architecture of gentility," implying, of course, a suggestion of effeteness and snobbery, and they have accused the upholders of this principle of neglecting the important hygienic aspects of building. But such neglect is seen to be impossible as soon as manners, and architecture as well, are recognised to be subordinate to the first of the visual arts. The cultivation of human beauty obviously includes that of health as the greater includes the less.

It remains to reply to another class of objector, namely to those people who urge that good manners are a spontaneous expression of an "inner spirit," and if the *spirit* be not present then it is useless to try to superimpose the *forms* of manners either upon a society of human beings or upon a society of buildings. Such critics often try to enforce this argument by making a sneering reference to a certain rather foolish type of book which affects to teach principles of "deportment" to "the lower orders," and they imply that it is equally foolish to try to lay down rules of deportment for buildings. Books which give instruction in manners, however, need not be foolish and it is a fundamental error to suppose that manners are not, in point of fact, continually taught not only in the home but also in the school, even if this subject is not formally admitted to the curriculum.

It is noteworthy that, at the time when architectural manners were practised in this country, in the 18th and early 19th centuries, for instance, they found no place in any systematized philosophy, they were the result, rather, of a general standard of good taste. The tragedy was, that when the theorizing began in real earnest in

the middle of the 19th century, the art of building was approached from the wrong end. In this period there were indeed histories of architecture galore. But it is notorious that in not one of these volumes purporting to describe so learnedly the general development of the art of building was there the slightest reference to the most mature of all architectural forms, namely *the street*, the arrangement of buildings in friendly contiguity, expressing by their mutual relationship the subtlest and noblest concepts of civic design. Here was a quite remarkable instance of intellectual obtuseness because the writers in question were living in a country which had produced the most charming and distinguished street architecture in the whole world. These professors laid great stress upon factors such as construction, craftsmanship and "the right use of materials" and in so doing they concerned themselves only with one building at a time to the neglect of the higher social of architecture.

The main purpose of this book is to define the principle of manners and to incorporate it as an essential element of architectural theory. By no other means could it be possible ultimately to prevent the spirit of vulgarity from manifesting itself in the design of buildings.

Before presenting to the reader the original text of "Good and Bad Manners in Architecture" as issued twenty years ago, I should refer once more to the still earlier publication in which its main argument was first developed. As had already been stated, in "The Things which were Seen" there was proclaimed a hierarchy of the arts in which human beauty, manners, dress, architecture, painting and sculpture were arranged in their natural sequence and interrelationship. In a subsequent part of the same treatise, however there were also developed certain formal canons of design, described as Number, Punctuation and Inflection, which are a necessary supplement to the social principles

expressed in the order of precedence of the visual arts. These canons, in so far as they relate to the design of buildings, are set forth in the companion volume to "Good and Bad Manners in Architecture" which is entitled "Style and Composition in Architecture." The relationship between the two books may be expressed in the following terms : the first relates to a specifically human element in architecture (for of all the members of the animal species only human beings have manners), while the second has to do with that attribute of organic *form* by virtue of which buildings may show a kinship with animals and plants and thereby partake of the beauty which appertains to animate Nature. The two books taken in conjunction are intended, in outline at least, to embrace the whole of what may be described the æsthetic element in architecture.

When I began to write this Preface it was my intention to add a concluding chapter or "Postscript" which would provide an opportunity to comment on architectural tendencies which have made their appearance during recent years. It is of course inevitable that such illustrations of good or bad manners in architecture as are included in the original text all date from the period prior to 1924. Since then we have had what is called the "modernist" movement which has given birth to a number of experiments of great interest and value. It is well to note that an approval of the principles here expounded does not imply an unreasoning preference for any particular architectural tradition. Buildings in a frankly twentieth century style can show a spirit of neighbourliness to one another, but only on condition that the theory which animates their design acknowledges civic values. Where, as has often been the case, this acknowledgment is not forthcoming, the innovations are far from pleasing and indeed often result in exhibitionism of the worst kind. On reflection it appeared to me

that such developments were too important and too complex to be adequately discussed within the limits of a single chapter. I was induced therefore to abandon the "Postscript" idea and contemplate the possibility of writing a supplementary book. A further reason for this decision was that a number of the arguments brought forward in the original edition could with advantage be expanded, notably those which refer to architectural *symbolism*, a matter of profound import for the design of buildings, which has not yet been sufficiently explored. Also certain practical issues touched upon in these pages merit further study. It is one thing to expound, in terms of logic, grand principles of civic design, but it is quite another thing to carry out these principles in the face of every kind of opposition which may arise in a rough and sometimes unsaintly world. An attempt should be made to enumerate the forces most likely to hinder the achievement of the social and aesthetic aims here outlines and to indicate how such forces may be combated. Detailed consideration will be given to all these questions in "Good and Bad Manners in Architecture, Volume II."

A word remains to be said concerning the illustrations which accompany the present text. Owing to the fact that some of the drawings and photographs originally reproduced, together with all the blocks, were destroyed by enemy action, it has not been found possible to show a set of illustrations identical in every particular with that which appeared in the first edition. My own diagrammatic sketches (which I dare say I could improve upon if I were to do them all over again) were allowed to stay, as perhaps they serve the purpose of my argument well enough, but great difficulty was experienced in the case of the pictures of Old Regent Street. I am indebted to my publisher, Mr. Alec Tiranti, for the diligent and enthusiastic search which has resulted in the assemblage of the prints and photographs included

with the second chapter of this book. In the case of two illustrations, namely that of the model of the original scheme for the Bush Building and that of the little-known house designed by Ruskin, it was impossible to obtain copies of the photographs. I have to thank my friend Mr. Alfred George for interpreting these subjects in drawings by his own hand. The actual text of the following pages, with the exception of a few short passages which have been omitted, is identical with that of the the first edition.

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Chapter I
CIVIC VALUES

CAN a haphazard assemblage of buildings, each conceived in isolation, and expressing nothing but its own immediate purpose, really be described as a city ? What attribute is it which makes a building urban ? My answer to this latter question may seem simple and tautological, but I am venturing to give it nevertheless. In order that a building may become urban it must have *urbanity*. I propose to analyse the precise nature of this urbanity. Now, urbanity, as everybody knows, is nothing more nor less than good manners, and the lack of it is bad manners. I think I shall have little difficulty in showing that there can be both good and bad manners in architecture.

There are several obvious ways in which buildings can show courtesy or discourtesy towards one another. Let us first consider the deference which shops, offices, and private dwellings may show to public buildings. This first drawing (Fig. 1) depicts an imaginary city of the old-fashioned type, in which the principal public buildings are given a formal pre-eminence. In the centre is a domed cathedral, and several church spires are in evidence. On the left of the place, before the cathedral, is a columnated building, either a museum or a gallery of some kind. In the middle distance a town hall is visible, and it will be observed that all the buildings of a private or commercial character are kept comparatively low, so that a social hierarchy can be maintained. There are to-day existing many cities,

towns and villages in which such a hierarchy still obtains and it can scarcely be denied that, from the pictorial point of view the effect of a few important structures presiding over a number of lesser ones, is highly satisfactory, and there is also something pleasing in the idea that a definite standard of values determines the relation of one class of building to another class.

Civic order, social stability, and a fine, conservative temper, are expressed by such an arrangement. This precious standard of values, however, cannot long be maintained when there is manifested a strong tendency for each building to display a spirit of selfishness, a profound disregard of its neighbours and of the city of which it forms a part.

We are often told that modern commerce is based not upon co-operation but upon competition, and therefore architecture ought to be made to reflect this fact. An analysis of such a statement would resolve itself into three inquiries. First, is the present age essentially more commercial than its predecessors ? Secondly, is it physically possible for architecture consistently to give expression to the paramountcy of commerce? And thirdly, if it is possible for architecture to do this, is it desirable? With regard to the first question, an obvious consideration that must influence our judgment is the degree in which other activities of society have expanded. Granted that the scope of industry and commerce has increased enormously, it is also true to say that municipal government and all the public services, notably that of education, have grown to unprecedented dimensions ; and there are surely more institutions which minister to the general culture of the community than ever previously ! Industry and commerce have indeed expanded at the expense of agriculture, but then agriculture never received any very distinct architectural expression ; in the towns, however, commerce had a great place both in the ancient world and

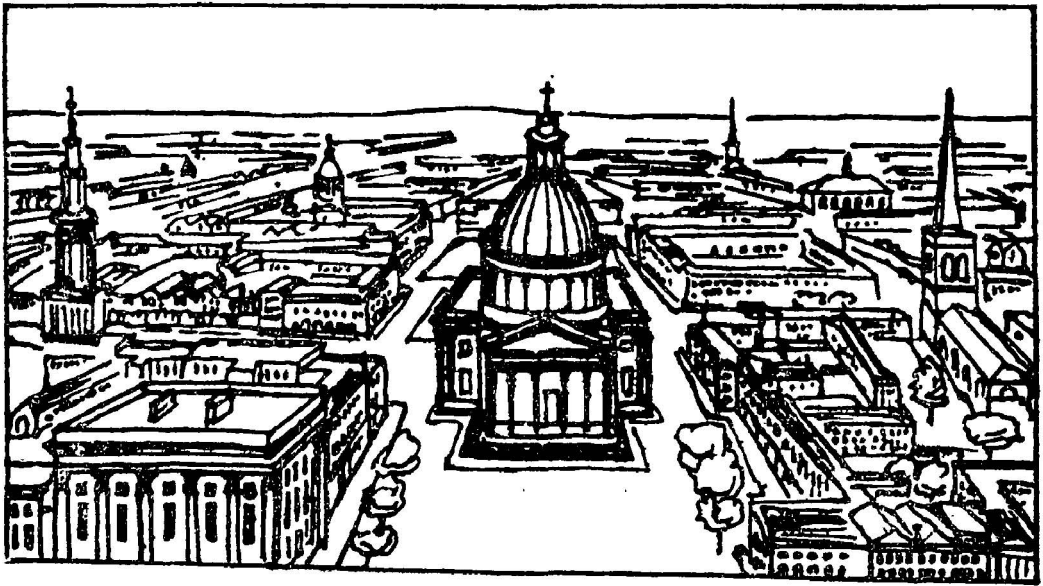

FIGURE 1

during the Middle Ages, and in the eighteenth century, long before the advent of industrialism, was not a certain people described as ' a nation of shopkeepers.' But this formidable influence of commerce has never until quite recent years threatened to lead to a modification of architectural values such as would justify shops and offices in vying with the temple or the capitol in prominence and splendour.

Let us assume for a moment that commerce is indeed supreme and that the tradesman has got the rest of society ' in his pocket ' (if one may quote this elegant and expressive phrase !) It will help us to visualise the architectural results of such a consummation if we glance at Figure 2, which shows the same city after certain modern influences have been operating for a number of years. Several very selfish commercial buildings have now arrived, with the result that the dome of the cathedral no longer holds undisputed sway. It has an ardent competitor in the shape of an immense drapery emporium which also has a dome not quite so large in girth (the site unfortunately would not admit of that), but of greater altitude. At night-time it flashes with illumined advertisements. On the left of the cathedral is a bank which is faintly reminiscent of the mausoleum of Halicarnassus. It says to the cathedral, ' I am just as good as you are, and don't you forget it.' Still further to the left we see the towering form of the office of some very prosperous illustrated newspaper. The gargantuan edifice on the right of the picture contains in its lower floors a retail store. Its owner, Mr. Jones, has given his name to the whole structure, which is known as ' The Jones Building.' On the upper floors are countless offices and residential flats which, being thus physically elevated, not only contribute to the architectural glorification of Mr. Jones but give to their fortunate lessees a comfortable feeling of pre-eminence. It will be noticed that the churches

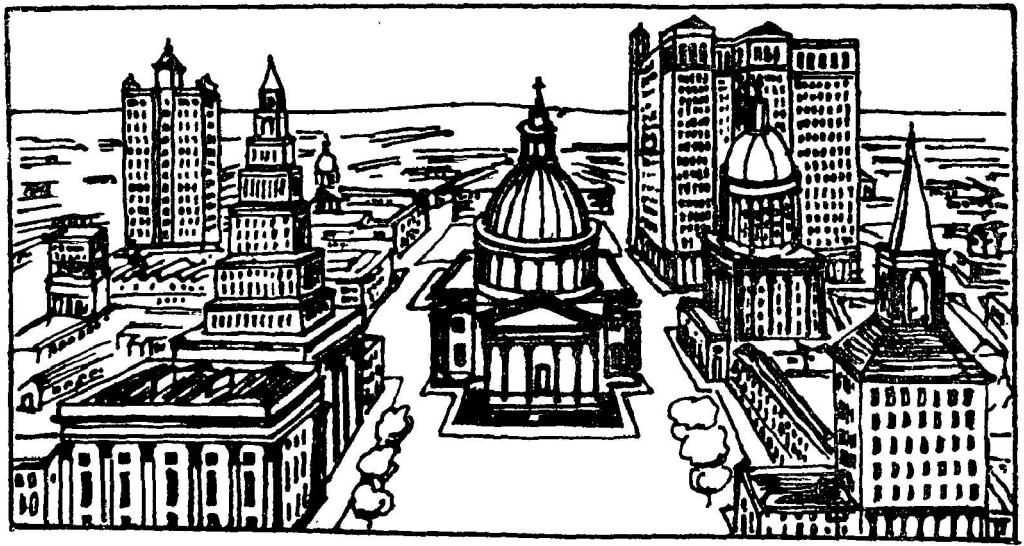

FIGURE 2

have gone. The sites were far too valuable and the ecclesiastical authorities have disposed of them. This they could do with an easy conscience, as their architectural advisers had expressed the opinion that the churches in question had no great artistic merit. We are compensated, however, in that the chemist's shop on the right-hand bottom corner of the diagram has taken to itself a spire. The cathedral itself, sedate, rotund, still looks at us with an air of self-confidence, but its appearance of stability is quite illusory, because economic circumstances necessitate that it should shortly be superseded by an enormous cinema of a much more ornate design.

As we live by commerce, why should we not give to commercial buildings the greatest prominence and adorn them with the most splendid architectural features? This argument is extremely plausible. The answer is that if the big drum is used too often it loses its effect and instead of an imposing volume of sound we have an orchestral disaster. Imagine in the future a prosperous provincial town which decides that its status entitles it to a Town Hall of some pretensions. An enterprising town councillor suggests a dome. The idea is ridiculed at once. How could the municipality afford a dome half so magnificent as the dome which surmounts Mr. Smith's haberdashers store across the way? Why not have a tower? That proposal also finds no favour. The municipality cannot afford to compete with the glorious campanile, five hundred feet high, which nightly advertises the virtues of Mr. Robinson's pills. There would be similar trouble when it was proposed to build a church. A suggestion to erect a spire would have to be ruled out at once because in the immediate vicinity of the site there might be a tall and beautiful spire adorning the offices of Mr. Evans' automobile shop, and a second one above Mr. Williams', the successful jewellers, and yet a third on

the premises of some company of co-operative grocers. The committee of the church will probably abandon their architectural ambitions and be content to hold their services in a commodious room in the basement of the great co-operative store ; and we can only hope that they will not quarrel with the dejected Town Councillors who have been obliged to take refuge in an adjoining compartment!

A criticism of a town in which time-honoured symbols, once identified with public buildings expressive of the highest aspects of civilisation and government, have been appropriated by shops and offices may best be directed to the resultant architectural configuration. To the advocates of the sky-scraper and the domed or be-steepled shop we may say, ' Very well, for the sake of argument we will grant you that the present age is more commercial than any other, and the man of commerce controls us all. The government, the universities and other cultural institutions, we may suppose, instead of being independent bodies, ever ready if need be to use their influence on behalf of commerce, are actually dominated by commerce and have their policies determined by commercial and financial considerations alone. We challenge you to produce a fine city giving logical expression to this particular social fact.'

When we consider the general consequences of this too vigorous self-assertion on the part of individual shops it will be clear that such an architectural policy would be disastrous to the appearance of our streets, and would eventually militate against the attractiveness and popularity of the shops themselves. The beginnings may be quite innocuous. Figure 3 shows a domed shop which, in conjunction with the comparatively restrained formation of its neighbours, makes a quite pleasing picture. It must be noted, however, that what makes the picture pleasing is the contrast between the silhouette of the dome and the simple curved lines of

the street. If you destroy these lines, an architectural discord is at once produced. The convention according to which one shop is allowed to have a dome cannot in

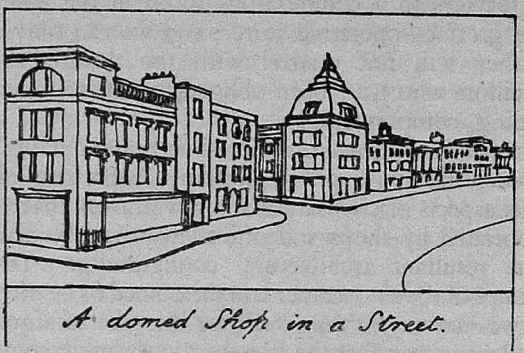

FIGURE 3

justice be limited to that single shop, for the owners of all the neighbouring shops will wish to emulate its example and in one way or another to assert themselves by appropriating some very prominent architectural

FIGURE 4

feature. The result might be something like the street shown in Figure 4. Not only do most of these buildings disregard each other, but they disregard the street.

It is obvious that the owner of the building next to the left-hand corner shop wanted to attract attention by erecting something as much like a Gothic cathedral as possible. Perhaps he had been reading Ruskin. On the right we have an edifice in the Dutch style and the new cinema with its barrel vault ignores the scale of everything else. An effect of restlessness is produced and this street, even from the purely commercial point of view, will probably not be too successful as an orderly thoroughfare such as old Regent Street used to be, where the shops by their restaint and harmony expressed an aristocratic spirit and formed an attractive background for a fashionable promenade.

The plain fact of the situation is that a generous estimate of the number of public and semi-public buildings would not allocate to them more than about ten per cent. of the whole. Thus the commercial and private buildings amount to at least ninety per cent. It may also be asserted that not more than one in twenty of these latter buildings could be a 'skyscraper' or could be decorated with dome, tower, spire, or large cupola without creating a 'furore' among architectural forms, a wild and most undignified scramble for prominence.

Even a quite plainly designed flat-roofed 'skyscraper' which lays no claim to a special architectural status will have several grave defects. The arguments against the skyscraper such as the traffic difficulties it involves, and the appalling inflation of land values which immediately results when the worth of every site and the ground rental demanded for it are increased at every increase of height of building permitted by the bye-laws (it being known all the time that it is only practicable for a small percentage of the buildings to reach the maximum height allowed) have so often been elaborated that one hesitates to mention them again lest truth itself be made unpopular by its wearisome reiteration. But the com-

mercial building which takes to itself a dome, a cupola, or even a very large Classic Order is not governed by commercial necessity, either real or assumed, but is expressing the desire of its owner to use certain architectural symbols as a means of advertisement for himself or his business. It must be noted, however that the efficacy of the advertisement depends entirely on the degree of restraint to which his rivals are willing to submit. It is perfectly clear that *all* the shopkeepers and other men of commerce cannot have skyscrapers, nor buildings with domes or steeples. The only logical expression of a dominant commercialism would be a universal and consistent superiority in emphasis of commercial buildings over all others, and this is not practicable. The utmost that can be accomplished in this direction is to give a quite arbitrary selected fraction of commercial structures an architectural superiority, which not only belies the equality of social status which other commercial buildings have with these, but completely prevents any public buildings from attaining to an appearance of dignity and importance. A large majority of things cannot be emphasised at the expense of a minority. On the other hand a distinguished minority of things can become physically prominent when set against a background of a less obtrusive majority. And this second arrangement was that gave effective artistic expression to the old-fashioned architectural hierarchy in which comparatively few public and semi-public buildings were allowed to preside over an assemblage of shops, offices and private dwellings. Any attempt to upset this balance, which is an essential factor in the ideal of civic architecture, is a sign of retrogression, of a profound decadence in the artistic spirit itself, and so far from being indicative of a freshness of outlook, or a laudable desire ' to move with the times,' it is born of a lack of imagination and of intellectual vigour. The innovation proposed can only appear tolerable in so

far as its advocates resolutely shut their eyes to the consequences of the general adoption of the principle involved.

That a deliberate short-sightedness in these matters may be to the interest of a limited number of architects and clients cannot be denied. The man of commerce himself may obtain an immediate advantage over his competitors if his business is housed in a buiding which boasts a campanile, and the architect also may gain a certain notoriety by being associated with such an enterprise. The architect in question may say in self defence that he could not afford to oppose the wishes of his client, and that it was not for him single-handed to enter into combat with 'the spirit of the age.' But fortunately for the reputation of the architectural profession this picture of the architect being compelled to stand sponsor for designs of which he secretly disapproves is not really true to life. It is not pleasing to suppose that the worldly wisdom of the individual practitioner should in any instance whatsoever degenerate into servility, or that the influence of the profession itself is so small that grave matters of architectural policy should be decided in a sense contrary to its declared convictions. Unhappily, however, we live in an age when even among architects themselves convictions with regard to the essential principles of civic design are not always securely held. It is not very long since we emerged from the Gothic Revival. During the period when this experiment was being made, attention was directed to every possible aspect of architecture except the civic aspect, which was wholly ignored. The results of this neglect have been disastrous and far-reaching, for many architects who have indeed reacted from the Gothic Revival, in so far as they now use the Orders and the whole repertory of Classic detail, have yet inherited a conception of civic architecture that apparently does not prevent them from

trying to give to their designs for commercial buildings a prominence and particularity of form which show little regard for the appearance of the street as a whole. Is it inconceivable that a modern architect should whisper to his shop-keeper client 'I have never yet had an opportunity to design a dome ? Do you not think that a dome would be a very attractive crowning feature to your emporium ?' And is it always the man of business who would first think of erecting a tower in association with a block of offices? Architects as a body have it in their power to encourage or to prevent these developments, and if the 'commercial age' is really to destroy civic architecture it will have first to produce the complete commercial architect and set him in authority over his profession.

There are many British architects who greatly admire the skyscraper form and would like to design skyscrapers for erection in England. Wistfully they look towards America, and they envy the fortunate practitioners of that country, who have an opportunity of giving such spectacular expression to their art. And what of the directors of great commercial houses, have they not also a secret yearning to emulate the example of their American confrères for whom architecture is fast becoming associated with the art of advertisement in its most sensational form ? The mere thought of the immense building for the Chicago "Tribune," for instance, must be sufficient to make some of our own newspaper proprietors green with jealousy. Put this commercial tower on the Thames Embankment, and what chance would poor little Westminster Abbey and Parliament have of asserting themselves against an architectural heavyweight such as that ? It is obvious that thay would appear hopelessly insignificant.

At present it is generally assumed that in London and other English cities we are not seriously threatened with the possibility of skyscrapers being erected there.

The Royal Institute of British Architects has declared itself to be opposed to them, and the London County Council has forbidden them on account of the difficulty in adequately safeguarding them against fire. Unfortunately this practical consideration carries more weight than any other, and it is questionable whether the social and æsthetic objections to the skyscraper have been apprehended by those who have the power to determine building regulations in this country. If new mechanical means for protecting buildings against fire are discovered (and this is a likely contingency), the position of the opponents of the skyscraper will be highly precarious, for the social pressure which is secretly and continually being brought to bear upon the London County Council by those interested in upward expansion is very great indeed, and the financial interests at stake are so enormous, that we may almost resign ourselves to the coming of monstrously tall commercial buildings unless meanwhile a strong public opinion is formed, capable of checking the tendency before it has gone too far. The appeal will at first be couched in moderate terms. 'Of course, we don't want skyscrapers, we should be quite satisfied with a modest building a hundred and fifty feet high.' This concession having been made, the next request is for a structure a hundred and seventy-five feet high, and so on.

The commonest type of commercial building cannot possibly be very high (for in such a case the problems of light and traffic would be insurmountable) so the greatest safeguard would seem to lie in the self-protective organisation of the smaller and more numerous business firms that have premises in the neighbourhood of the site of the proposed skyscraper. Why should this latter be allowed to obtain excessive prominence and an undue share of light and ventilation entirely at their expense? There is no reason why all the commercial firms in a city should not frame for themselves a self-

denying ordinance as much for their mutual benefit as is the rule which decrees that in a theatre the members of the audience must all remain seated. A few people standing up here and there might get a better view of the stage, but if they all stood up they would be not better off than before. If one or two attempted to infringe this rule they would be promptly told to sit down. Let a similar injunction on the part of their rivals restrain the eagerness of those commercial houses which would take to themselves an illegitimate share of architectural prominence.

What is wanted is that all the shopkeepers should construct in their imaginations the detrimental effects of their *neighbour's* skyscraper. But it would be an insult to the commercial community to suppose that its opinions upon architectural policy are determined by considerations of self-interest alone. The social and æsthetic instincts are common to us all, and it is frequently to be found that men of commerce and others engaged in practical or scientific pursuits respond more readily to a social or æsthetic appeal (provided that this is clearly presented to them) than do many of those who describe themselves as 'artists.'

Now, thé commercial skyscraper is all wrong. Whether it is safe or unsafe, well or badly planned, whether it truthfully expresses its construction or whether its form is decorated with every symbolic feature belonging to the historical 'styles' of architecture, whether it is Gothic or Classic, stone or concrete, plain or coloured, ugly or beautiful, the commercial skyscraper is all wrong. Does this judgment seem harsh and unreasonable? Yet there is one single consideration which will sustain such a judgment. We need only think of the most obvious principle of civic architecture, in order to be directed to the train of thought which leads to the conclusion I have just enunciated.

Architecture must be in a bad way, it must be in a

condition of great uncertainty and immaturity (an immaturity all the more unnatural and disconcerting because it comes late in the history of the art, and suggests its second childhood) if at this period it is necessary for anyone to assert that it is not sufficient that a building be both beautiful in itself and conveniently planned. Let us apply such a standard of criticism to the art of dress and see where we are led. Obviously, people are not allowed to wear any costume they please simply because the costume is both beautiful and convenient. If they were, utter confusion would result, and dress would be deprived of nine-tenths of its significance. Supposing, for instance, a man were to wear a gown of red plush exquisitely embroidered with lace. In criticising him we would not be calling into question the intrinsic beauty of his gown. In such a case we should not only ask whether the gown is beautiful, but whether it accords with the general scale and convention of costumes worn by other people. The red plush and lace embroidery separate the man from his neighbours in a manner that his position in society does not warrant. Who is he to assume such sartorial prominence ?. A still worse case of inappropriateness in dress would occur if a man were so lacking in a sense of realities as to wear a mayoral robe and chain, although not a mayor himself, or a general's uniform, although not in the army at all, or a bishop's clerical dress although he is not a bishop nor even on the way to becoming one. Such a demented person might say ' the mayoral accoutrements suit my style,' or ' the episcopal attire is most becoming to me,' or ' the full-dress uniform of a general is really exquisite. If you object to my wearing it, you must be one of those horrid Puritans who don't like colour.' But we should not be convinced.

Costumes have symbolic meanings, and only retain their significance (a significance which has a great

value because it emphasises and expresses certain important social facts and relationships) if their use is severely prescribed. The canons which govern the art of dress are on the whole very well understood. But architecture is practised by comparatively a small section of the community, and people in general are not at this moment sufficiently interested in it definitely to impose upon it the social standards which give to the art of dress its subtlety and its maturity. The designers of some of our modern commercial structures will gaily give them the attributes of churches, town halls, or other public buildings for no other reason at all than that the architectural features associated with such buildings are beautiful. Shops and offices with domes or bristling with spires are outside the pale of civic architecture and the commercial skyscraper, however well designed, offends most abominably against the social standards which belong to an advanced civilisation. One of the profoundest passages in Confucius' Analects is that in which he describes the ideal political state. He says, 'Where the father is father and the son is son, where the prince is prince and the minister is minister, there is government.' Similarly it may be said that where the church is church, where the town hall is town hall, where the theatre is theatre, where the bank is bank, where the shop is shop and where the private house is private house there is architecture. But the civic quality in architecture has been hopelessly compromised in those towns where all the public buildings are made to look mean and insignificant in the presence of commercial skyscrapers, which not only overbear the former by their excessive height, but actually appropriate to themselves the very features which traditionally belong to a select number of structures having special social consequence.

While a building of even moderate size, if designed without reference to its neighbours, can upset the

architectural balance of a street, a commercial skyscraper must inevitably upset the architectural balance of a whole city. And the Americans themselves, who have experimented so boldly with the skyscraper, are gradually coming to the conclusion that even on practical grounds it has been a failure. The appalling congestion in the streets when as many as five thousand people simultaneously emerge from a single building, and the utter impossibility of dealing adequately with the transit problem which is here involved, are alone sufficient to make the Americans cry halt. Theoretically if in architecture we are to have a regard for civic values the only satisfactory form of skyscraper would be one which constituted a city in itself, where the apex would be perhaps a cathedral with the municipal and other public buildings immediately beneath and commercial sections also duly emphasised at various parts of the total length of the structure. By some such means alone is it possible to bring the skyscraper form within the fold of civic architecture.

I have sketched on the next page in Figure 5 a purely imaginary example of such a 'skyscraper' city—utterly impracticable, of course—but it may serve to illustrate the present argument. This building starts perhaps a thousand feet below the bottom of the picture and, having ascended to a height at which it can peer above the precipice and survey the open landscape, it bursts into flower. The regular small-scale fenestration indicates private residences, while every part of the façade which has architectural emphasis is the outward symbol of some special function in the body politic. It is needless to say that the outbreak of fire in the bottom story might be attended by most unpleasant consequences for the twenty thousand inhabitants of this Utopian city! But perhaps it belongs to some future civilisation, when the inhabitants, mounted on neat little helicopters, will be able to pop out of the

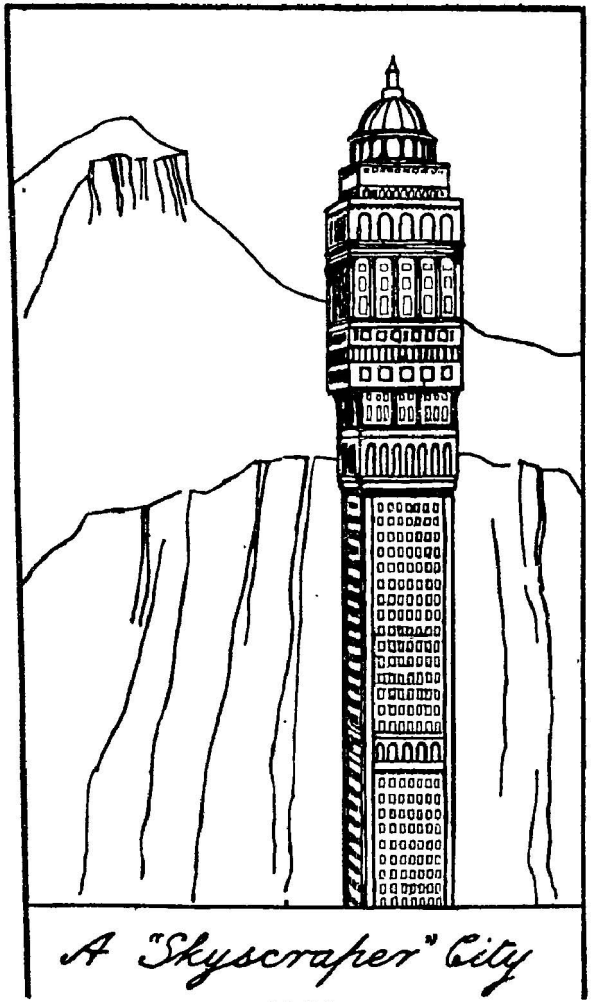

FIGURE 5

windows like birds. I hope, however, that no American commercial magnate will be inspired by this diagram to excuse the tremendous prominence of his skyscraper building on the ground that there is a Y.M.C.A. Hostel at the top ! The offices of a retail merchant may soar to great heights but even if the accommodation near the apex be devoted to some important public purpose, the fact will remain that the retail store will have a sufficiently dominating position in the city to upset its social and architectural equilibrium. In New York the Municipal Building is itself several hundred feet high, but it does not give the impression of presiding over the city ; it is only one skyscraper among many, and no one on looking at it would ever say, 'This is the Town Hall of New York.' Of course it may be urged that this equality of status in buildings, irrespective of their function, is the expression of the 'democratic spirit,' and that all the hierarchies and orders of architectural precedence which in the past have brought beauty and significance to the cities of the old world, really belong to an aristocratic or even feudal régime. But while democracy should bring equality of opportunity to all citizens, it cannot equalise men's intellectual stature and still less can it equalise the functions of society. Nobody questions the great and important place of commerce in the modern world. But because the stomach and the kidneys, the lungs, the heart and the brain are all necessary for the health of the body, they do not constitute a miniature democracy of an egalitarian type. Equality in respect of indispensability is not complete equality of status.

As far as the development of civic design is concerned the skyscraper is a cul-de-sac—there is no progress to be made in that direction. The skyscraper can only be the result of a counsel of despair. If employed in the manner indicated in Figure 5, the social proprieties are indeed observed but only at the expense of the com-

plete isolation of the building ; which may well be christened " The unsociable skyscraper." If the same building is monopolised by a single business firm and made to tower over innumerable other buildings set quite close to it, then the harmonies and decencies of civic design have not been observed and no matter how beautiful the structure may seem when judged as an individual unit its authors will not be able to disguise the essential vulgarity of its conception.

It has been said, however, that the skyscraper has a vast spiritual import, for it expresses the idea of aspiration. But aspirations are of different kinds. There is an authentic instance of a New York business man being informed by the directors of the firm which occupied a block adjacent to his own that they intended to erect a structure thirty storeys high. Such a development would have been so damaging to his prospects that he was induced to offer what to ordinary mortals would seem a very large fortune in order to prevent the intended building from going up. It was bribery on one side in response to blackmail on the other. The monetary offer was accepted, and the company had a great accession of worldly wealth. In this case, it may be noted that the architecture itself did not aspire, but the directors of the company aspired and this was quite sufficient for their purpose. Happy the men whose aspirations are so lucrative !

Unfortunately the clamour for the skyscraper is loudest in the very localities where its architectural effects would be most unhappy, in the centres of great cities where the most imposing and venerable public buildings are to be found. In a very large town situated on a plain it might be urged that at the outskirts utilitarian structures might be allowed to assume vast proportions without offering a challenge to a cathedral and town hall perhaps several miles distant. It must be borne in mind, however, that with the more frequent use of aeroplanes cities will

more often be judged as complete designs, and for that reason a higher standard of architectural comity may be insisted upon in the future. A utilitarian structure which happens to be very large *on plan* may be quite innocuous provided that it keeps comparatively low. In an industrial age such as the present it would be out of the question to attempt a scale of architectural importance based upon the size of the *plan*. A factory or warehouse may legitimately occupy ten times the area of a cathedral without in the least degree seeming to compete with the latter. But even one skyscraper in the City of London would be sufficient to deprive St. Paul's of its essential civic character. And not only great buildings but whole streets can be adversely affected by the unwelcome incursion of very tall buildings alien to the conception of the original composition. In several of the South of England watering places monstrous hotels have been allowed to break into the beautiful 18th century terraces facing the sea front, and the harmony of a whole promenade, in fact, of a whole landscape has been ruined by tall structures interrupting the horizontality of the grand architectural compositions which were originally designed to support and accentuate the natural alignment of the beach.

There are great difficulties, however, in making regulations to protect the public in this matter. The extent of the damage in each case is, of course, never realised until the damage is committed and the opportunity of protest has gone. In a well ordered community it would be ordained that every new building before its erection, should be represented pictorially by means of an *honest* architectural drawing not of the type now common, where the design is shown in isolation and framed in by a decorative border, but one which would display the building in relation to its neighbours. The composition would be portrayed from several points of vantage so that we could judge of its effect

upon the street in which it is situated and also upon a panoramic or birds-eye view of the city as a whole. Steps would be taken for these drawings to be thoroughly well popularised among the townsfolk who could then in the exercise of their function as citizens, express their considered opinion upon the project. There would here be no question of people being invited to lay down the law with regard to technicalities of building such as only architects themselves are competent to discuss. What the public will arbitrate upon is the social aspect, and it will be especially well entitled to insist upon those elementary considerations which have to do with the relative status of buildings. "*How* to build a dome" is a question for the expert. But "*When* to build a dome" is a question for the public.

Architects,would lose nothing by accepting and even encouraging the criticism of the average man on the most general aspects of their art. In fact, it can easily be imagined that the prestige of their profession would be immensely enhanced if new buildings were made the subject of popular debate in the manner I have just described. The exact form in which the interaction of technical and public opinion should in each case assume is a matter of organisation and each locality would use the instrument most ready to hand. A Civic Society would seem to be a suitable kind of advisory body which could invite lay comments and criticisms such as might be forwarded to the architects and building owners responsible for the new project. And where the criticism is captious and ill-informed the architect could easily be given an opportunity of refuting his assailants, or, as he would call it, educating them. Who can doubt that such a mutual interchange of views would be of inestimable benefit to architecture ? It would mean that for the first time there would be a real live interest in modern buildings. It is a well known psychological fact that people cannot acquire a proprie-

tary feeling with regard to persons or objects unless they are absolutely free to find fault with them! What is needed is that the public should have a proprietary feeling with regard to architecture. Ultimately it is a question of education. It must be confessed that at the present moment there is not the slightest attempt to interest the schoolboy in modern buildings. It is largely due to Ruskin's influence that for very many schoolmasters "architecture" is almost synonymous with mediæval church architecture. With a high sense of enthusiasm the conscientious usher will take the boys on a pilgrimage to the parish church. The dates and styles are all noted, how the nave was "Early English," and how the chancel had quite incontinently blossomed into the "Perpendicular." That is well and good. But would it not show an even greater appreciation of architecture if the students were invited to examine the streets of the nearest town, to exercise their critical intelligence not upon the archæological aspects of one particular type of building, but upon the most modern buildings of all? I suggest that such an examination would be particularly fruitful if the standard of criticism adopted was that of good manners in architecture; The boys would find a theme which required no technical nor archæological knowledge for its discussion, and which would be an admirable stimulus to their sense of civic order. Heaven forbid that all these boys should acquire architectural ambitions, and desert their other studies, but while the profession might gain some very useful and talented recruits through this early stimulation of interest, the general public also would tend to be leavened with a considerable number of critics who would keep a keen watch on architectural activities.

It is all the more necessary that the public should scrutinise architectural developments, and indeed exercise a strict censorship over them because momentous changes in the appearance of the modern city are now

taking place under our very eyes, and whether these changes be good or bad, it is desirable that the problems suggested by them should be the subject of prolonged and most serious study. The picture of the commercialised city (shown in Fig. 2) is not by any means a satire on present day tendencies, for unfortunately there are portents which make one believe that this picture gives an accurate indication of coming events.

The very pretty little model depicted by Figure 6 has excited much admiration. It represents the Bush Building, the great new structure at the end of the Kingsway, London. This building has been praised on account of its sympathetic attitude towards the little church at its side. It is argued that by presenting such a flat façade towards the church it performs the function of a background to the latter. This is true enough, and the building as it exists in its incomplete state (for it has not been carried above the platform which is the intended base of the gigantic cupola), has a certain quality of reticence. The Bush Building, when completed, will bid fair to oust the dome of St. Paul's from its proud position of pre-eminence, for seen from the river-side it will over-top Somerset House, and be the most conspicuous feature in the view. It may be recollected that a few years ago, when an American religious body proposed to erect a church in Rome about double the size of St. Peter's, this transpontine audacity was resented by the Italians with the result that the project never materialised. Whether our own national sentiment is stong enough to resist a similar assault is a matter for speculation.

The Bush Building represents the apotheosis of the commercial ideal, and unless we check the tendency of which it is an expression it will be the herald of our architectural bankruptcy. We seem to be entering the era of the big composite commercial building greedily absorbing to itself and corrupting by this absorption

all the greatest symbols of civic dignity. Is it too much to ask that shops and offices shall eschew towers, spires, domes and enormous cupolas, and that as far as possible they should keep low ? Such a restriction would not imply a denial of their right to architectural distinction. Some of the most refined, beautiful and *impressive* buildings in the world are comparatively low and are surmounted by flat roofs.

Modern British architects have designed some very beautiful public buildings. Their achievements in this field, however, will be rendered almost nugatory, if the legitimate pre-eminence of these buildings is in the future to be disputed by shops or offices.

The theory has been advanced that the degree of display permitted to a building depends not on its status or its function but upon its site. According to this argument, because at the end of a vista a tower would be a pleasing feature any building which happened to occupy such a favourable site, even if it were a laundry or a garage or a confectioners shop, would be entitled to have a tower. This kind of advocacy has been used in defence of the Bush Building. It may be admitted that the Aldwych site was a very special one, and presented excellent opportunity for an architectural climax. But for that very reason it ought to have been set aside for some great public building. Imagine how well a National Shakespeare Theatre would have looked in such a position ! The idea however, that the character of the site determines the architectural status of a building quite irrespective of its social function is quite subversive of all civic order, and is just about as logical as an assumption that the possession of a trumpet entitles a man to blow it in public.

The great architectural pretensions of modern shops and offices are in part due to the " monumental movement." One of the effects of the Gothic Revival in this country was the tendency to make the large building

an agglomeration of parts derived from the small building. Thus mansions became like glorified cottages. A reaction against this tendency was badly needed, and it took the form of a strong inclination towards "monumentality" in building. Architectural students were encouraged to aim at an effect of grandeur and a certain ponderosity in design. Such a movement was necessary in order to restore the dignity of architecture so grievously impaired in this industrial age. No city or township is worthy of the name unless it possesses at least one group of structures which are monumental in character, which look as if they had been built to last for ever. Even a few buildings expressing majesty and repose give additional stability and self-confidence to the community which has brought them forth and stimulate it to further architectural efforts. Moreover, every really noble work of architecture cries aloud for a setting which is worthy of it. But although this movement is indirectly helpful to the cause of civic design it has not up to now been under the control of men who have on all occasions valued the beauty of the city more highly than that of the individual building. There are certain latter-day manifestations of the "monumental spirit" which tend to a breach of the canon of good manners in architecture, for not every building is entitled to be "monumental." Of course, a cat may look at a king, but then the cat need not try to be regal. Designs in the monumental manner have been produced for every kind of building from a public house to an abattoir. It seems all wrong. Even the large utilitarian structure can assume beautiful shapes without putting on an air of great architectural solemnity. The Pennsylvania Railway Station in New York has a fine scale, but after all a railway station is merely a convenience of transport, and need not appear the grandest building in the city and the most solid in structure. There is much to be said for the

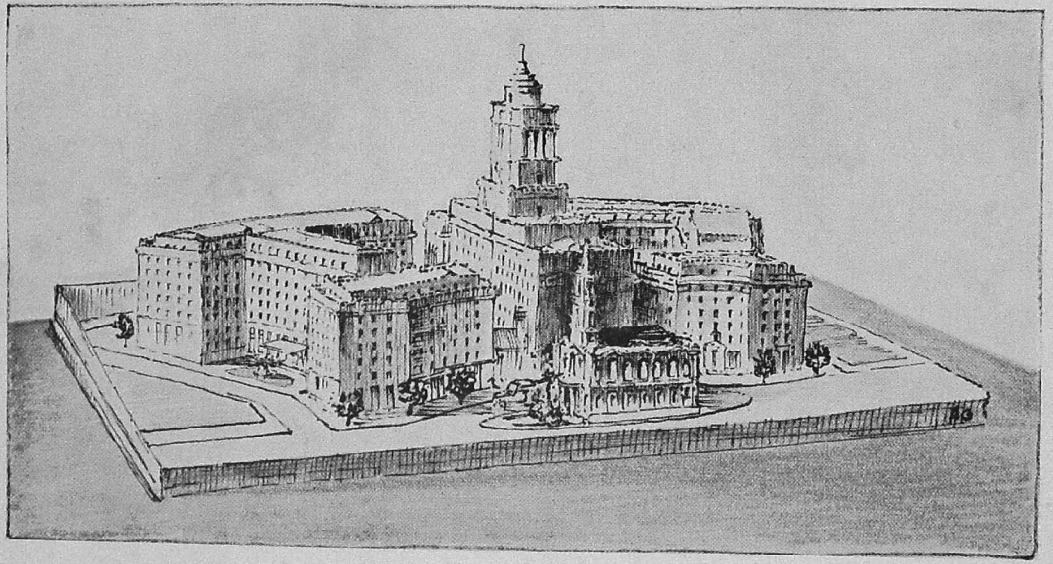

FIGURE 6. THE BUSH TERMINAL BUILDING, ALDWYCH.

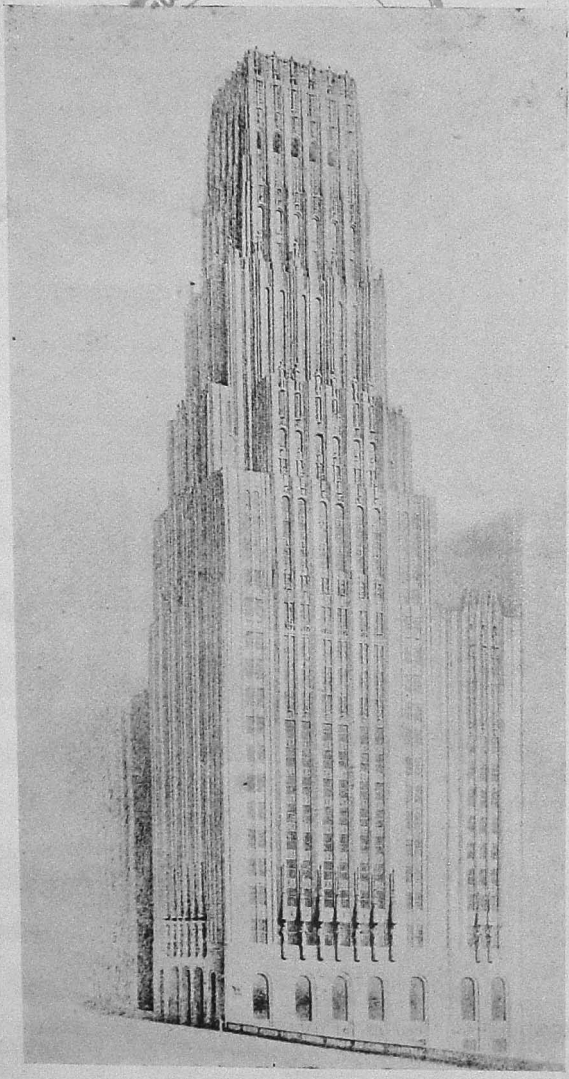

FIGURE 7. PROPOSED NEW STRUCTURE IN CHICAGO.

old-fashioned railway station with a façade of iron and glass, and there is nothing to prevent such materials being composed in an exquisite design.

The second criticism of the monumental movement is of a different character. Side by side with an undue exaltation of commercialism there is a straining after an impossible symbolic ideal that is derived from a too literal interpretation of the term "monumental." In our modern world of books and newspapers there is no place for any monument, that is, any building designed to commemorate something, which cannot be justified on aesthetic grounds, for socially such structures have very little significance. Histories, biographies and the running commentary of journalism prevent us from forgetting important events or persons. Triumphal arches, statues, and fountains, therefore, should be confined to those parts of a town where there is an appropriate setting for them, and naturally they must be severely restricted in number. Their function is far less educational than decorative. It is bad enough when the living offend against civic manners, but it is altogether too much to be borne that such misdemeanours are committed in the name of the dead!

The desire to commemorate things in stone may lead to most eccentric results, for it is often accompanied by a predilection for structures of an enormous size. The themes on which architectural students are invited to exercise their talents have an important influence upon the development of civic art. What judgment shall we pass upon an enormous fabric designed to commemorate the universal adoption of Greenwich meridian? Is it not obvious that there is not the slightest necessity for it? It would be just as reasonable to commemorate in stone the universal adoption of the decimal system, or the general acceptation of the Darwinian theory or the Mendelian theory, or any other theory. There would be no end to it. And how could

these quaint structures, so remote from all true social needs, take their place in the pattern of the city ? An alien and unreal element destructive of all true homogeneity would have been introduced. A subject in a French atelier was the design of a great building to commemorate the bringing of water to an inland town. Why not also commemorate the other activities of the municipality—the completion of its gas-works, the installation of electric power, the successful disposal of its sewage, and so on ? The town would then have a remarkable aspect. The aesthetic forms expressive of the real life of its inhabitants—the church, the town hall, the market square, the library, the shopping streets and the residential buildings—would all be made to look insignificant in the presence of mere phantoms, huge architectural bubbles of self-congratulation. Here is another opportunity for the exercise of public vigilance upon architectural developments. A roving committee of lay critics especially chosen for their harsh and unsympathetic minds should be empowered to visit all the architectural schools in order to catechise both staff and students who would thus be encouraged to explain in what precise respects the architectural programmes set and the technical solutions thereof were a contribution to civic uses and to civic manners.

There is yet a third danger lurking in the conception of a building as a monument. The original use of the word monument is to describe a solid structure which has an imposing shape but which is not itself habitable. Thus in buildings conceived as monuments, the symbols of habitability are apt to receive insufficient emphasis, unless this aspect of design be given special consideration. An example of such a disregard of an important architectural principle is shown on Figure 7 where a gigantic structure is seen to ape the character of a pylon. The scale of the whole is so great and the composition of the façades is such that the windows, the only visible

symbols of the building's human use, appear so small that they are unrecognisable. The fabric looks as if it might be the habitation of some species of bee that was content to multiply the unit of its home in a most uninteresting manner. There is no need for architects to seek inspiration from the honeycomb.

In another kind of building, equally reprehensible, the window is made to appear too large. In architectural design the size of the human unit must always be borne in mind. It is nowhere more necessary to observe this maxim than in the determination of the scale of shop fronts, for here not only is the tendency to an undue magnification of parts most strongly encouraged by those who seek to impress us with the importance of commerce, but the particular architectural scale adopted is immediately set in relation to a constant stream of pedestrians and vehicular traffic. As far as the scale of buildings is concerned the temptation to error is greatest on the very occasion when the error is likely to appear most flagrant. This might be counted a fortunate circumstance if a critical public opinion could be relied upon to check the error when it occurs. But where this public opinion is non-existent or inarticulate, the directors of commerce have complete licence to erect structures which in their contumelious bearing towards us poor ordinary human beings give the maximum of offence. Let me begin by contrasting two types of shop-front, one of which extends a delightful hospitality to the passer-by while the other seems imbued with a determination to make him look insignificant. The one says ' This is *your* street, here are *your* shops ; pray make yourself at home ; while the other affirms in strident tones 'I am Big Business, and don't you forget your subordinate station, you proletarian mouse.' A notable example of the first type of street was old Regent Street, which better than any other shopping thoroughfare expressed the spirit of geniality. The scale was

perfect, for while the parts were small enough to keep us in countenance, the composition of the street as a whole could not but impress us by its extraordinary dignity. But it was the kind of dignity such as only very great men have, a wealth of character which does not inspire awe but puts the humblest person at his ease. The aristocratic and democratic ideals alike for ever necessary to mankind, came simultaneously to architectural fulfilment in Regent Street; and commerce had far more honour from this circumstance than it is likely to gain by its present attempt to repudiate both these ideals.

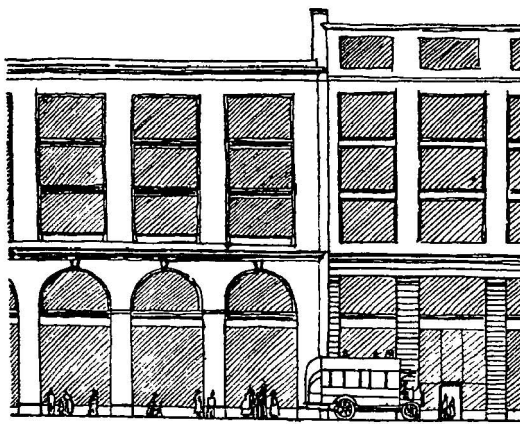

FIGURE 8

Figure No. 8 represents a type of modern shop front. Yet who will say that it is an exaggeration? Such façades exist to-day and they are rapidly growing in number. They succeed in being thoroughly unaristocratic and thoroughly undemocratic at the same time. It is scarcely necessary to point out the faults in this type of design. I have not troubled to show any ornament. In fact an addition of ornament to this framework would, if anything, make matters worse. The shop-

keeper here has the quite excusable ambition to show his goods as prominently as possible ; but he makes the mistake of increasing the size of his window openings to such an extent that all sense of the scale of the human figure is lost. Yet the building has so few sub-divisions that it does not give one the appearance of its real size until it is contrasted with the traffic of the street. This latter is made to look very small, as if some evil fairy had suddenly subjected all the people and vehicles to a compulsory diminution ; and one is reminded of George Morrow's picture of the farm where the poor little condensed cows produce the condensed milk. Not content with the already quite sufficiently formidable dimension of ground floor height, which even towers above a tall omnibus, the architect has incorporated the mezzanine into what must be considered the first *stage* of his building. It is this first stage, the façade up to the first cornice, or if there is no cornice, up to the top of the first obvious sub-division of the building which is inevitably contrasted with the human scale. The actual size of the panes of glass has comparatively little to do with the main effect of scale produced by the disposition of the window openings. In this particular instance small panes, or even leaded lights, might be substituted for the sheet glass and still the people would be made to look unduly small in the presence of the shops which are supposed to serve their interest. This objection to being belittled by a shop is not a sign of reprehensible ' uppishness ' on the part of the passer-by, for this same ' uppish ' pedestrian will probably be quite pleased to adopt a most deferential attitude to any really great building whatever its social purpose may be. For in deferring to what is great we are in a subtle manner elevated ourselves. To be humiliated, however, before very small-minded buildings, simply because they have been allowed to assume a large material scale, is extremely unpleasant.

Figure No. 9 shows another type of shop front in which the magnification of scale has been carried even further. The façade has just a simple frame round one immense aperture, which has horizontal subdivisions purposely designed to be of the same dark *tone* as the windows themselves. The first 'stage' of the façade has now definitely become the whole

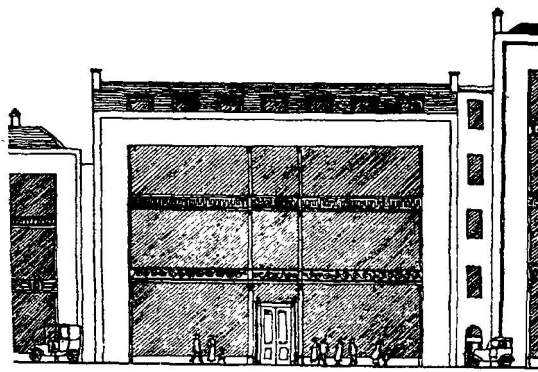

FIGURE 9

façade itself. The building is like an animal which has nothing at all but a mouth, and it must be admitted that it talks very loud. It remains to be seen whether it talks with success, or whether the real reason that anyone listens to its voice is nothing more than its novelty and the fact that at present its neighbours express themselves in comparatively well-bred undertones which are easily overborne. When we have seen a whole row of these animals bellowing in concert we shall be better able to judge whether they deserve to be held sacred to the temple of commerce. An obvious disadvantage in this form of design is that each individual façade can show very little sense of continuity with its neighbours and the effect of the juxtapostion of a number of these 'boxes' (for they are really nothing more),

especially if they were of different sizes, would be extremely crude. Figure No: 10 shows a more ambitious type of design ; and an effort has been made to solve some of the problems of the shop front. The general scale, however, is still excessive, and it is noted that

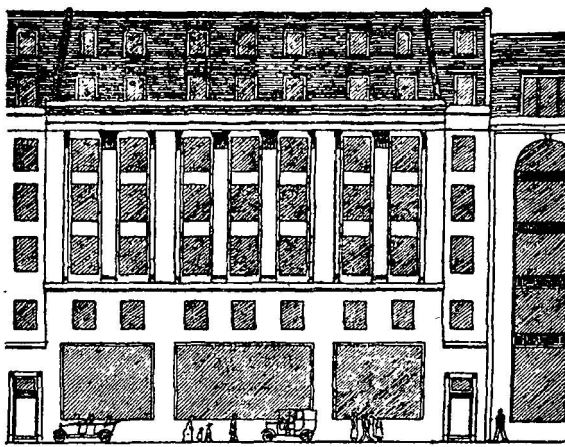

FIGURE 10

the pedestrians are measured against what is virtually the plinth of the building rather than the height of the ground floor. The grown-ups can just look over into the windows, but children are not encouraged to be inquisitive ! The window apertures above the ground floor, however, are of a reasonable size, and the arrangements whereby the mezzanine storey is treated as a large bressumer which, though punctured with windows, still appears strong enough to bridge the wide span of the shop front and to support the colonnade, has much to commend it. And architecturally the high plinth has the merit of joining the legs of the building by a horizontal member which prevents them from seeming to stick in the ground with a somewhat painful hardness. Yet one could not walk along a whole street

of such structures without eventually becoming aware of a sense of depression.

The right-hand bay of Fig. 10 has an even greater scale, and the tall arched openings, about sixty feet high, do certainly express a disregard of the human beings who happen to be placed in formal relation with them. In the case of an immense public hall a large doorway may be appropriate, because here the size of the aperture not only in a certain degree prepares us for the considerable dimensions of the interior, but it also suggests an invitation to a procession of people to enter simultaneously. And the large archways of a viaduct do not offend in the least, because they are not the symbols of habitility, they are incorporated in the landscape and very often form part of the background of a whole township. But if in any building the windows to successive storeys are combined to make one monstrous window of shape and proportion similar to the single windows which ordinarily belong to rooms of normal height, one is irresistibly compelled to imagine that this building is the home of giants. If we can retain our human dignity in the presence of St. Paul's Cathedral, there is no reason why we must be made to feel Lilliputian in front of a modern shop.

There can be no doubt that the modern man of commerce is pleased by the abnormal architectural scale of those shops which successfully belittle pedestrians and vehicular traffic. When the shop is really quite small its owner may perhaps be pardoned if, for purposes of advertisement, he displays a poster showing a picture of his 'emporium' apparently much magnified by association with some very diminutive people who are seen walking about in the foreground. This may be a quite innocent deception, and probably it is taken no more seriously than is the distortion of scale found in those fashion plates of dress in which ridiculously small feet are accepted as a common convention. But

the case is infinitely worse when the proprietor of some vast store, itself a massive and imposing structure that already dominates the street in which it is situated, gives instructions for the design of posters contrasting the scale of his own commercial house with that of a throng of possible customers unnaturally dwarfed. In this instance he has not the excuse of wishing to increase the repute of premises, themselves insignificant, for his building is already as big as it can possibly be. It is clear that the shopkeeper is here definitely aiming at his own aggrandisement at our expense. He himself, of course, would repudiate this and say that he merely wishes us to be duly aware of the importance and success of his business undertaking. It is conceivable, however, that by insisting upon such a representation of his shop he is damaging his own commercial prospects, because there is a natural psychological limit to the effectiveness of this kind of propaganda, and if the limit is exceeded the result of the artificial magnification of the scale of a building may be exactly the opposite of what is intended, and the public instead of being lost in admiration of the stupendous commercial achievement may become depressed and even critical of the pretentions of a merchant who so presumes to exalt himself. And it may be suspected that money invested in a business which is housed in a quite unpretentious and homely fashion often brings in a higher and more constant rate of interest than that derived from some of our more palatial modern stores.

Fig. No. 11 provides yet another instance of this modern tendency, to ignore the social and aesthetic considerations which determine the scale of buildings in relation to the human figure. Here the juxtaposition of the new style and the old will enable a comparison to be made between them. In the left of the diagram is a new shop of a type which is becoming increasingly common, while on the right is a remnant of the

aristocratic commercial building of the Regency period. It will be observed that the first stage of the new building is almost coincident with the top of the old.

FIGURE 11.

The crowded aspect of the upper half of the taller structure gives it the appearance of being raised on stilts as if it despised the passing throng. And its horizontal division into two almost equal halves puts one in doubt as to which is the more important. The lower half is so big that it defies its older neighbour, affirming itself to be alien to it and superior in scale, while the upper half, although in its smaller fenestration it has a certain kinship with the normal style of front, by being thus elevated shows a spirit of aloofness and a lack of sociability most displeasing. The building on the right hand of the diagram obviously belongs to the street, it has, as it were, come down into the street. Figure No. 12 represents a longer row of shops, also in the Regency style, which have the quality of geniality and friendliness. One does not feel when walking down such a street either that the top half of the façade is casting disdainful glances upon us, itself immune from the contaminating influence of the common thoroughfare, or that the lower half, while

indeed it treads the same earth as ourselves, only consents to meet us upon its own harsh terms namely, that we shall admit our own utter insignificance. On the contrary we feel here that between the shopkeepers and ourselves there had been established a relationship as flattering to us as it is to them.

FIGURE 12

The obvious solution of this problem of the shop front is that it should display a simple harmony of scale without any violent breaks whatsoever; the ground floor height should be of reasonable dimension (from 12 to 15 feet is surely high enough for all practical purposes) and the storeys above can then adapt themselves to this general scale by a gradation, if necessary, between a comparatively small height of room towards the top of the building and a more generous one lower down. It is notable that shops conspicuous for the height of the first floor level are greatly improved in appearance by an awning which comes down to perhaps eight or nine feet above the pavement, thus providing a smaller dimension for immediate contrast with the scale of the human figure. A shop such as Selfridge's, for instance, looks far more attractive when the awnings are spread. By this touch of condescension the building assumes a more hospitable air. Where, however the ground storey is united with the mezzanine with an arch as in Figure No. 9, it is not so easy to mitigate the

excessive scale in this manner, for there appears to be no horizontal member to which an awning could appropriately be attached.

Part of the charm of old Regent Street lay in the fact that the shops were on the average fairly low, but the shops of the Quadrant had six floors and some of the shops near the Oxford Street end were even higher, so it cannot be said that the Regency style was incapable of adaptation to the large buildings such as modern commercial conditions sometimes demand. What is open to criticism in some of our present day shops is not so much the size of the buildings themselves as the excessive scale of their parts, notably the first stage of the buildings. This is sometimes excused on the ground that very large windows are necessary for the display of merchandise. It may be urged, however, that ample window space may be provided without unduly raising the height of the storeys and without combining the windows of two storeys into a single unit, as is so commonly done nowadays. There is also a school of commercial opinion opposed to the too obvious course of "putting all one's goods in the shop window." Such a policy is invariably condemned when it is seen to regulate the conduct of individuals. A little reticence and mystery sometimes stimulate interest better than do the methods of the town crier.

We have seen that by increasing a window beyond a certain size the human unit is made to look insignificant. There is another way in which an undue magnification of a part of a building may offend against civic manners. I refer to the use of a colossal Classic Order. Certain means of architectural emphasis such as towers, domes and spires attain their highest significance when they are reserved for buildings which are specially important. This is because an assumption of its forms immediately separates a building from its neighbours and one is irresistibly driven to ask "Why has this building such

architectural prominence?" Now a Classic Order, detached and of large dimensions, is also a means of emphasis which has been traditionally employed to give civic dignity to a building. A structure like the British Museum, for instance, owes nothing to its height but nevertheless it succeeds in making us aware of its majesty. The reason of this is that the Classic Order when employed on such a scale is extraordinarily impressive. It will only retain this effect however if its use is severely restricted. The front of Selfridge's is undoubtedly a very fine composition, but if every large shop in the town were allowed to assume such architectural dignity, how should we be able to do fitting honour to our public buildings? If Selfridge's happened to be next to the Mansion House, the latter would appear quite insignificent in comparison. Admitting that the Classic Order is a most valuable and often an indispensable element in the design of a façade the town-planner would encourage the invention of numerous subsidiary Orders which, although maintaining the essential proportions of column and entablature, would be marked by various degrees of simplification. A comparatively plain Order might thus be reserved for buildings of a purely utilitarian nature. By the establishment of such a hierarchy the Classic Order would be endowed with new life and popularity, and would take its place as a stable institution. It needs no great knowledge of psychology to discern that if the same elaborate type of column, architrave, frieze and cornice were used everywhere in our streets, people would soon get tired of it, and there would be an unfortunate revulsion which might lead to all those kinds of architectural malpractice which very soon result when the Classic Order is no longer understood nor revered.

The most lamentable effect of bad manners in architecture is not so much the creation of ugly forms, although this is very common, but the spoiling of the noble forms

by their misuse, so that we are left with nothing at all which has not been sullied. Bad books cannot injure the good books, but bad buildings can do untold damage to the very finest architectural masterpiece in the world, for this latter, if it be situated in a town is not a self-contained unit. Its social status and civic character are dependent upon a correct demeanour on the part of its neighbours.

Buildings may show a lack of urbanity not only in their form but in their colour. There are many critics who interpret the slightest objection to the use of bright colour in architecture as evidence that the objector is a dull, incurable Puritan, incapable of appreciating the labours of those who are striving for a "brighter London." But the peculiar danger of applying an obtrusive colour scheme to buildings is that its proper formal emphasis may be disturbed thereby. A delight in colour irrespective of its resultant accentuation is entirely unintelligent. It would not be surprising if we were to wake up one morning to find that some of the devotees of 'brighter London' had stained Westminster Abbey a vivid green and painted St. Paul's pink. "You horrible kill-joys, you cannot appreciate colour" they would say if we protested. Yet one could answer, "I like the green of the trees, of the sea, or of an emerald ; but I cannot approve of a green Westminster Abbey ; similarly I like the pink of carnations, the pink of a sunset and the pink of my drawing room carpet, but I do not want a pink St. Paul's." The reason is that an urban building is a member of a society. St. Paul's is grey, or rather a mixture of silver and black, and it presides over a concourse of other buildings predominantly grey. The splendour of its form is sufficient to establish its headship over these other structures without there being any necessity for it to have the additional mark of bright colour. In fact, this colour would have the immediate effect of detaching St. Paul's from its context and thus

depriving it of the full value of its natural distinction. The other buildings, if one could assume them to be endowed with personality and speech, would labour under a sense of grievance. "St. Paul's" they would say "is taking an improper advantage over us. In addition to having a big dome, to which, however, we are quite reconciled, she insists upon being pink as well."

The truth is that a certain measure of uniformity of colour is absolutely necessary if groups of buildings are to form a mature architectural society. What we need is not so much more colour but a capacity of enjoying the abundance of colour that there is. In shopping streets, particularly, our eyes are given a very feast of colour which is supplied by the multifarious hues of the merchandise displayed in the windows. In one of Walt Whitman's poems, there is a pæan of praise to the beautiful reds and browns of the raw meat in a butcher's shop. It takes a poet and an artist to teach us to take delight in such things and to recognise not only the beauty but the dignity of colour when it is seen in its appropriate place. But how easy it is for colour to be deprived of both beauty and dignity! This degradation immediately occurs when instead of supporting the form and heightening its emphasis and significance it runs counter to the form and divides it in an unintelligent manner.

In the modern town there is colour not only in the shop windows but in the brightly dressed people who may frequent the streets, and in many of the vehicles. How entirely satisfactory are the scarlet London omnibuses and the brilliant yellow or green private motor cars which are now happily becoming so common! Here, however, the colour is subject to this salutary element of discipline in that it is confined to the lower part of the street and gives aesthetic emphasis to the common thoroughfare. Above this miscellany of movement and colour there should be a background which although

not absolutely uniform in tone should yet provide a reposeful contrast to the busy scene below. For this reason it is always to be deplored when shop-keepers think it necessary to display their goods on the upper floors as well as on the ground floor. It is questionable whether any substantial commercial advantage accrues from such a practice, and it does much to spoil the harmony of a street. Again the painting of urban façades in bright colours must necessarily isolate the individual shop in a manner which can only irritate the public. Moreover, it may be borne in mind that nature provides some very brilliant effects such as the blue sky and the lovely cloud scenery so peculiar to England, while in our towns there are often trees whose vivid green looks far better when set beside a grey or silvery building than it could possibly do if put in near some horrible parti-coloured structure. And for all great ceremonial occasions it is the long grey buildings and grey ground which provide by far the best setting for military pomp. In Horse Guard's parade when the Trooping of the Colours takes place, the only discordant note is pronounced by the bright red brick of the new Admiralty Buildings. Fortunately on the Whitehall side the gorgeous uniforms of the sentries are well framed in beautiful Portland stone. It is fortunate also that the proposal to plant beds of geraniums on the plots of grass abutting on Horse-Guards Parade was rejected, for a parade ground is very different from a recreation park. There are plenty of occasions for Nature to disport herself, but where a courtyard is the scene of ceremonial, it is well that the strongest note of colour should be provided by human beings.

In Oxford Street there is a shop which, in response to a call for more brightness in London streets, has been decorated with a pattern embodying all the hues of the rainbow. Needless to say, it adds nothing whatsoever

to the attractiveness of that thoroughfare and until its stucco is once more painted a decent white or cream it will remain a monument of tediousness and mediocrity. It is painful to reflect that the colour scheme for this façade is not a private freak but the result of an architectural competition most solemnly instituted. Actually in England there was recently erected a suburban residence in which broad bands of green tiles, that exactly match the grass, cry against blue, yellow and other colours. What if the next house is bright orange, pink and purple? But perhaps if we were to put this question, like Alice at the tea-party, we should be invited to change the subject!

Chapter II.
AN HISTORIC EXAMPLE.

THE QUALITY of our culture is expressed far more completely in the built-up common thoroughfares than in the detached houses which rich men may choose to erect in rural surroundings. The main school of good building has always been the town, for it is in the town alone that architectural manners can be studied and acquired. During the last twenty years far too great a proportion of architectural energy has been concentrated upon the country house, the detached or semi-detached "villa" both large and small, with the result that civic design has not received the attention it deserves. While in the eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries street architecture was held in great esteem and perhaps reached its highest stage of development in this country, detached houses also were being designed in large numbers not only in the vicinity of the towns, but in outlying districts, and it must be confessed that in point of style, if not in practical convenience and economy, these examples are superior to the vast majority of the country houses which have been built since the Gothic Revival. A training in urban values will help the architect to design a dignified house which is fit to take its place in a rural landscape, but if he makes the detached building his first and principal study it is extremely improbable that he will be able to contribute worthily to the architecture of a city.

Though modern architecture is tending towards a greater urbanity, there are circumstances which seem to forbid an excess of optimism. In 1923, a year, which

for reasons I shall presently show, will be considered by Londoners to be one of the blackest years in the history of their city, a prominent architect, in introducing to the public an exhibition of designs for modern buildings, expressed the view that British architecture was at that time healthier, stronger and nearer to the unattainable level of pure art than it had been for a hundred and fifty years. If this statement were really the indisputable truth it was just as well that it should be uttered for there is no need for us to be unmindful of Goethe's dictum that "only fools are modest." The public would naturally be impressed by such a statement and while looking at the designs exhibited it would share the optimism of the old lady who said "These articles must be good, for the advertisements speak so well of them." But the author of the phrases so congratulatory to modern British architecture can scarcely be unaware that there is a skeleton in the architectural cupboard; and, alas, a skeleton that has not been allowed to remain in obscurity. Only two words need be uttered in order to destroy all justification for his complacency. Those words are "Regent Street." Noble buildings in isolation this generation of architects has produced, but the horrible secret is coming out that they cannot yet design a street which is in any sense comparable to the work of our forefathers of a hundred years ago. Yet as nine-tenths of the architecture of this country is in the towns, and as again nine-tenths of the architecture of the towns consists in streets, there is no need to labour the point that it is important for architects and the public to unite in providing the conditions which are necessary to the creation of beautiful streets. "Man is a political animal" says Aristotle, and buildings are also in a sense political inasmuch as their true character is only fully revealed to us by their mutual association.

A description of the nature of street architecture and of the difficulties which attend the birth and the

preservation of a noble street can best be undertaken if we make a detailed study of a most illustrious example. I propose, therefore, to treat of the rise and fall of Regent Street. This is a profoundly significant chapter in the history of art. Now, Regent Street was the supreme instance of good manners in architecture. An account of Regent Street, therefore, is a convenient form in which to comment upon some of the most important aspects of civic design. Yet a mere analysis of the architectural qualities of this famous thoroughfare will not meet the purpose of the present inquiry. We must study not only the aesthetics of architecture but also its *politics*. A noble street is set in the midst of a city. It is subject to all the buffets of the great world and from the very beginning of its mortal career its integrity may be assailed. A leaf of a book, a dainty piece of china or a frail mummy in a case has a greater chance of survival than has an architectural masterpiece if this latter be not nursed and coddled and praised and well treated in every respect. The fashioning of the masterpiece is art, but its preservation is likely to entail arduous social and political activities. It may be observed that as street architecture has not only its friends but its enemies the following discussion may occasionally assume a somewhat polemical tone. There is scarcely need, however, for me to make apologies for this, as everybody knows that the service of architecture in modern world is not merely a study or a learned profession or an indulgence in the æsthetic instinct but also a continuous battle.

Let us consider what we have lost in Regent Street and why we have lost it. Then we can measure the new street with the old and see if our possession of the one will be an adequate compensation for being deprived of the other. An element in the tragedy of old Regent Street is the fact that only in quite recent years has there been any wide realisation of its outstanding architectural

From a lithograph by T. S. Boys, 1842

FIGURE 13. PICCADILLY CIRCUS LOOKING SOUTH

FIGURE 14. PICCADILLY CIRCUS AND THE QUADRANT.

merit. I speak now of the "educated" and "cultured" portion of the community. Of course, the general populace of London, without perhaps knowing why, have always loved this thoroughfare and have yielded whole-heartedly to its fascination. To them it has always been the beautiful West End and the social status of all other streets has been accurately measured by the degree of their proximity to Regent Street. No city in the world possessed a more glittering magnet, a focus of such astonishing attraction.

Before discussing the economic circumstances which were, if not causal, at least concomitant to the fall of Regent Street, it may be well to estimate the influence of those factors of public appreciation which have more to do with the life of a building than many people suppose One may begin by asking whether Regent Street would have suffered its present fate if the original designs had been executed in Portland Stone. This is a significant question because the degree of compliance with which the public, both lay and professional, regarded the destruction of Regent Street is largely due to the quite erroneous doctrine, propagated so successfully by Ruskin and his school, that stucco architecture must necessarily be something second-rate. Thus the power of resistance, the conservative sentiment which can immediately be mobilised as soon as some ancient stone edifice is threatened, could not be counted upon to cause delay or even a moment of artistic introspection when golden walls composed in an architectural formation of wonderful subtlety and refinement were ruthlessly pick-axed before our eyes. Regent Street was the most beautiful street in the world. In its quite perfect scale and rare delicacy of Classic detail, in its expression of a spirit most urbane yet intimate and hospitable it had surpassing merit. An assemblage of buildings designed to serve the commonalty was here imbued with aristocratic grace. Moreover, the sensitive texture of the façades

enabled them by day to respond to every evanescent change of light or atmosphere, and at night-time to stand radiant against the background of "Darker London." No mean skill is required to design a palace, a cathedral, a town hall, or any other important structure intended for a position of eminent detachment, but it is immeasurably more difficult to combine into an harmonious whole a group of purely commercial buildings belonging to different owners and demanding the satisfaction of a great variety of practical conditions. But in Regent Street, by an extraordinary piece of good fortune, likely seldom to come again in the history of any city, this architectural miracle had occured. Here Genius was enthroned in the market place. Regent Street lent distinction to the very idea of commerce.

Without discussing the historical origins of this thoroughfare or attempting to name the architect of each separate block, let us subject some of the buildings to a brief analysis in order to describe the precise qualities which gave to Regent Street its pre-eminence over all other streets in the metropolis. There is one particular view, Figs. 13, 14, which to the present writer has always seemed to be a street picture of remarkable beauty. It will not remain when these words appear in print. Standing at the corner of the pavement near the Criterion Restaurant let us glance at the approaches to Piccadilly and the Quadrant with Messrs. Swan and Edgar's shop as the centrepiece. It is difficult to conceive how the convergence of these two thoroughfares into a public "place" could have been more skilfully treated. The first thing to notice is that Swan and Edgar's shop forms a perfect joining member, it reconciles the separate characters of Piccadilly and the Quadrant, and this feat is accomplished by the strict avoidance of symmetry. The left-hand curved portion of the façade (itself a most noteworthy composition in that the ribbed vertical members are a bold and original variant from the pilaster

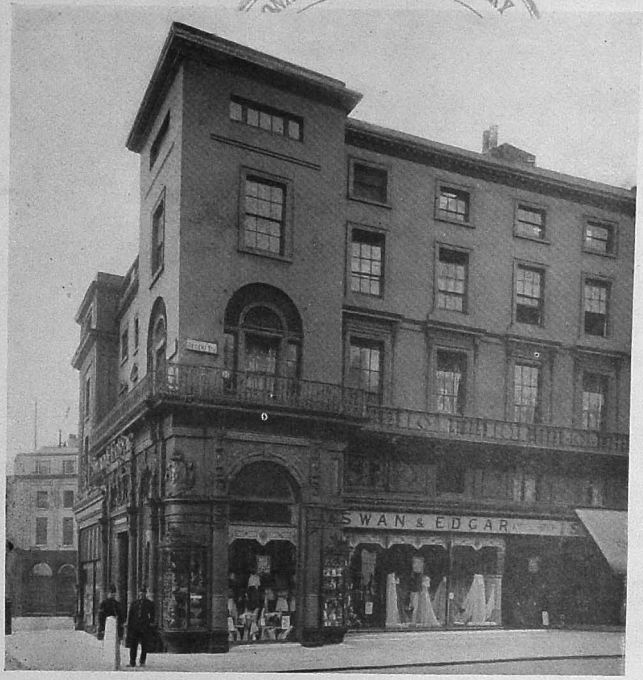

FIGURE 15A. SWAN AND EDGAR'S SHOP.
FIGURE 15B. EAST SIDE OF PICCADILLY CIRCUS.

treatment and eminently successful) answers the opposite side of Piccadilly and is, or, rather, was, again repeated on the left hand side of the approach to Lower Regent Street. The right hand side of Swan and Edgar's is devoted to the formation of a punctuating feature for the Quadrant itself (see Fig. 15a), the cornice over the mezzanine taking up the level of the balustrade of the Quadrant; the small tower-like projection is just sufficient to end the broad sweep of the curve, while each long row of windows in the crescent is stopped by an aperture in this tower, which is of comparable scale yet suitably different in character. The middle row of windows with its conspicuous line of brackets needed a more forcible punctuation than the others, and this is provided by the elegant arched, three-light window with shell-pattern inset, while the large semi-circular pane in the mezzanine performs a similar function for the decorated series of alternate bracket and window beneath the balustrade. The opposite side of the Quadrant is terminated by the County Fire Office, which, though by no means the most original of the Regent Street façades, makes a complete conquest of the imagination by its charming repose and simplicity, and is rightly famous on account of its perfect setting. It may be noted that the transition between this building and the crescent façade has been achieved by means of a small but necessary abutment which effectively prevents the two types of fenestration from conflicting with one another. It would take many pages to enumerate the separate excellences of design (all expressive of a spirit of courtesy, of a desire to avoid all jars and discords such as might offend the eye) which were to be found in the expanse of stucco architecture formerly visible from Piccadilly Circus. Photographs cannot do this spectacle justice because the composition has the true architectural quality of being essentially three-dimensional, that is to say, it is only by turning one's gaze from the left of the

entrance to Lower Regent Street right round to the County Fire Office, and remembering the inter-relationship of all the buildings included in this survey that one can judge of the vigour and distinction of thought which has here found expression.

"Just escaped being first-rate" is an estimate of Nash I heard not long ago, and of course, one is only too familiar with the description "sham Classic of Nash." Presumably it is called a sham because it is faced with stucco, but it is no more justly called a sham than is the silver bark of a birch-tree which covers but does not disguise the organic structure underneath. If Nash was not first-rate, who on earth was ? I believe it is now time to declare that Regent Street and especially the West and South sides of Piccadilly Circus comprising the unique street picture to which reference has just been made show the maturest accomplishment in urban building and, as far as architecture is concerned they represent one of the topmost pinnacles of British genius. If our successors can truthfully say of us that without the urge of an overwhelming necessity we deliberately cast aside this most positive triumph of our past national culture, whether such an act was due to commercial short-sightedness or the ignorance and bad taste of our rulers or whether it was occasioned by the general laziness of the public who rejoiced in the old Regent Street but who had not spirit enough to preserve it, we of this generation are alike covered with disgrace. Our achievements in domestic building, our gables and dormers and pretty little ingle nooks and the profuse multiplication of the "country cousin" type of building will not compensate us for the loss of our one perfect example of what street architecture ought to be. The remnants of old Regent Street were a rebuke to the vulgarity of our modern commercial buildings. In the quarters where this rebuke was most needed it was the most resented. "We can do better than Regent Street"

From a drawing by Thos. H. Shepherd, 1828.

FIGURE 16. THE QUADRANT, SHOWING ORIGINAL COLONNADE AND VIGO'S CORNER.

say some of our modern designers. Perhaps this claim will be more firmly established when old Regent Street is out of the way!

In its material, its scale, and its solution of the difficult problem of the shop-front, old Regent Street must ever remain a classic example of commercial building worthy of the closest study. Yet the records of this street are woefully deficient. The architectural schools have never sent bevies of students to measure up the exquisite detail and ornament here displayed with such wealth of invention, with a sense of such mature accomplishment in the decorative arts. The detail has the *maximum* of refinement which can suitably be employed on the exterior of a building, and it is remarkable what striking results can be obtained by moulded projections in very slight relief. The range of vision is made to include not only the long vista of orderly arrangement but also what is comparatively microscopic so that one has the satisfaction of using to the full all one's faculty of vision. In the new shops the detail is generally so coarse that it seems too near when one stands on the pavement opposite it, while the more distant view of the thoroughfare as a whole fails to satify one's natural interest in large compositions.

It is seldom recognised that in point of scale, using this term in the sense of mere size, the old Regent Street was many times larger than is the new, for the latter, with the exception of the Quadrant, is made up of a series of self-contained units, which though taller than the buildings they displaced have a lateral dimension quite insignificant in comparison with the majestic stretch of stucco architecture which formed a single harmonious composition over a mile long. Those who come after us must content themselves with a few engravings and photographic views which will at least enable them to judge of the general character of the

From a drawing by Thos. H. Shepherd, 1827.

FIGURE 17. ST. PHILIP'S CHAPEL.

design, but many of the minor subleties will inevitably be lost to human memory.

In the previous chapter I have referred to the perfect relation of the façades to the human figure, the air of geniality that made it a pleasure to traverse a street where one's person and the persons of others were set in an environment especially designed to exalt the human worth. The rare combination of diversity and order is elaborately contrived to rest the mind and yet stimulate it at the same time. These shops do not seem to be even attempting to aggrandise themselves, they are doing their very utmost to please *us*. Wherever the eye turns it is rewarded by a vision of unities, groups of shops puctuated adequately but not with such great emphasis that any one group is improperly isolated from its neighbour. Each separate composition resembles a phrase in a piece of music in that it has sufficient unity to give a certain satisfaction to the mind but yet its significance is heightened and sustained by what precedes and follows it. The transition between phrase and phrase is admirably managed and whether we consider the complex junctions of Swan and Edgar's shop with the approaches to Piccadilly, and the Quadrant or other places where tributary streets run into the main thoroughfare, we are alike confronted with harmonious solutions of each separate problem presented. Everywhere is an admirable smoothness, and where there is an arresting feature this is set against a background of classic repose. The little domed shop at the corner of Vigo Street shows how great an effect can be obtained by giving a particularity of form to a very small fraction of a composition, if the place of emphasis is wisely chosen. It must be noted that here the dome is so diminutive (it is no higher than the neighbouring low pitched roof) that it does not come into the category of those presumptuous domed shops which compete with town halls and cathedrals. It is just a decorative element

FIGURE 18. UPPER REGENT STREET AND ALL SOUL'S CHURCH. *Copyright Frith*

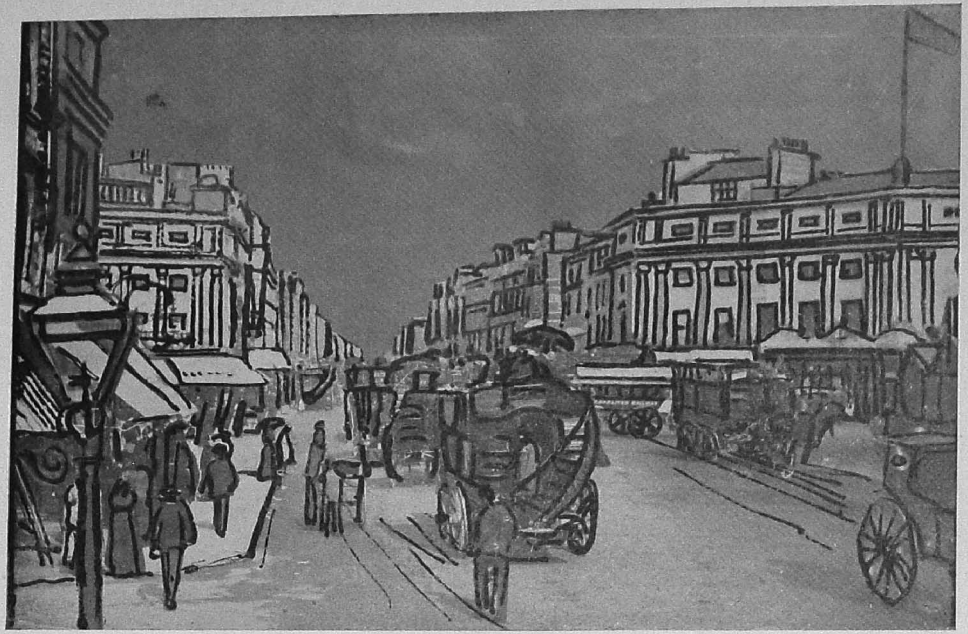

FIGURE 19. OXFORD CIRCUS (NASH'S REGENT STREET), LOOKING WEST.

which in this good-mannered society of architectural forms is, as it were, by common consent and for the common weal encouraged to display itself. Fig 16 shows this little shop with the Quadrant as originally designed. Again where there happens to be a church this has a legitimate pre-eminence over its flat-topped and reticent neighbours. St. Philip's Chapel (see Fig. 17) which with the buildings adjacent to it was long since pulled down was a delightful example of civic architecture. The church of All Soul's at the head of Upper Regent Street, that formed the climax of a long street view fortunately remains (Fig. 18).

In trying to analyse the charm of old Regent Street, the secret of its satisfying repose, one must consider the characteristics of this street as a background, for it is in this respect also that the street had such a remarkable superiority over all other thoroughfares in the metropolis. In fact, it may almost be laid down as a basic principle of street architecture that the façades should have the quality of a wall. The walls may be punctured with windows and may occasionally be broken by the junctions of other streets with the main street or by decorative features designed to emphasise certain parts of the façade, but these interruptions and modulations should never be so frequent or so obtrusive as to overbear the wall surface and make it subordinate to something else. This surface performs an important function ; it establishes the main configuration of the street, the norm with reference to which all protrusions and recesses must be measured. In order that the wall may sufficiently proclaim its predominance, it is necessary for it to be in area well over half the total area of the façade. Part of the success of old Regent Street lay in the satisfactory determination of this proportion. Nothing is more worrying than a façade in which the two elements of void and solid are of exactly equal value, so that one is left in doubt whether the windows must be regarded as

holes in the wall or whether the wall is regarded as a series of piers and the windows mere intervals between the supporting members. It may be noted that this defect is extremely common in the New Regent Street shops and, in fact all over commercial London. The point is quite relevant to the subject of urbanity in architecture, for even in the proportion of wall to aperture the buildings of Regent Street were displaying a kind of courtesy.

One can imagine Nash, either consciously or unconsciously being influenced by the following considerations. The streets are full of moving traffic. A throng of vehicles and pedestrians never ceases to distract the eye. One can only become reconciled to such a miscellany of sights if it is set against a background of wallage with the maximum of plane surface which the circumstances permit. Once again it becomes apparent that he is concerned to *please*. Every spiritual and psychological nuance seems here to be directed towards this end. The curved façades of Piccadilly Circus at the approaches to Piccadilly and Lower Regent Street formed agreeable resting places for the eye. Similarly at Oxford Circus (see Fig 19) the four quadrants constituted a complete unit which altogether dominated the traffic. These façades had the advantage over their successors in that each curved columnated portion was considerably wider than its height, so the sweep of the cornice was strong enough to make, as it were, an imaginative stretch across the intervening spaces and the idea of a circus thus received formal expression. In the present larger structures the columnated part is so much taller than it is broad that we are confronted with four insignificant sectors which fail to establish their ascendancy over the "place," and the result is merely a junction and not properly a "circus."

It is a most instructive study to take all the blocks of old Regent Street, one by one, and analyse the pro-

From a drawing by Thos. H. Shepherd, 1828.

FIGURE 20. PART OF WEST SIDE OF REGENT STREET.

portion of wallage to window. Let us first consider those cases where the wall surface is obviously larger in area than the sum of the window openings. Here, provided that the composition is otherwise satisfactory the chances of the attainment of the desired repose are favourable.

In the majority of the Regent Street façades, the distance between the windows is appreciably greater than their width, and the area of the wallage is further increased by a substantial band both below and above the openings. It is far too common for modern shop fronts to dispense altogether with a parapet and immediately above a somewhat flimsy cornice to break out into little dormers which form a quite inadequate termination to the façade. This also is in its essence bad manners, for it is comparable to those incomplete actions in ordinary life which cause so much annoyance, such as when a man departs from the room and leaves the door wide open, or when a conversation has begun to be interesting, and has acquired a certain impetus, he suddenly interrupts it or allows it to die away in irrelevancies. The formal *completeness* of these Regent Street fronts is most noticeable (see Fig. 20). One's glance may linger upon them and remain satisfied that they are unities, that they are neatly crowned by a proper boundary in the shape of parapets and occasional balustrades which often have the support of an expanse of wallage between cornice and topmost windows. In a few instances it must be confessed that the proportion of window to wall is smaller than could conveniently be accepted in a modern shop, but a comparison between the old and new buildings of Regent Street will show that while the new façades provide numerous examples of the requisite priority of wall over window, the former is so torn with meretricious decorative features that the desired repose is not forthcoming.

Nash's façades were by no means bald (in fact, the

plain rectangular reveal is here scarcely in evidence at all) and an enormous variety of architrave, bracket, and other ornament was employed to lend distinction and grace to the window openings. The decorative adjuncts however, were never allowed to encroach too much upon the expanse of smooth stucco surface which was to be the form and symbol of repose. Where, however, in the old Regent Street designs it was found necessary for the window area to be in excess of the wall area contiguous to it, care was taken either to express this fact logically by a columnar or pilaster treatment which gives the façade the needed strength, or else to surmount the fenestrated portion with a broad expanse of wallage. The little domed shop at the corner of Vigo Street is an example of this, as is also the house in Lower Regent Street here illustrated in Fig. 21. The front of the bay is here nearly all aperture, yet it has sufficient solidity, while the three large windows on the floor above have a substantial mural top-piece. It will be observed that in Nash's designs the columnar treatment is sometimes also applied to façades where the proportion of wallage to window area is most generous, as in the County Fire Office itself. In this instance the columns are needed not so much to give the appearance of strength but to give emphasis and importance, to form a pronounced punctuating feature to the sweep of the Quadrant.

Another virtue of old Regent Street often commented upon was the perfect proportion of the street itself. There are certain elements of composition, certain modes of disposition of buildings which influence one's judgment of them just as much as the individual designs of the buildings. Now, the proportion of a façade depends upon the character and respective dimensions of the parts of the facade itself; the proportions of a street, however, depend not only upon the height of the buildings, but upon the distance of one

side of the street from the other. A street of good buildings may nowadays be almost ruined by the bye-law which determines the proportion of width to height. It is all the more necessary, therefore, that we should have *aesthetic* bye-laws. What attempt is there in the design of the ordinary thoroughfare to see that such a proportion is good? Does anyone, in fact, agree as to what constitutes good proportion in a street? Is it some abstruse mathematical formula which determines these things? The answer must necessarily be that no simple mathematical formula can ever be of the slightest use in fixing architectural proportions, because art is not a branch of mathematics. I should rather say that mathematics belongs to one branch of logic and art belongs to another. The right proportion of a street is indeed determined by logic, but not by the particular branch of logic which deals with numerical relations. I shall divide streets into three main classes of proportion; first those in which the height is appreciably greater than the width; secondly, those in which the height is appreciably less than the width, and thirdly, those in which the height is approximately equal to the width, *i.e.* where the section of the street is almost square.

The first kind can be generally described as tall or narrow streets, the second as low or wide streets, and the third as streets of square section. The latter class lie uncomfortably between the first two, they are neither one thing or the other, neither broad nor narrow. In this latter class the emphasis is wrong, the inflecton which the subject demands has not been established. It is demonstrably wrong that the height of the building should be equal to the width of the street, because the building and the roadway have separate functions and in the square section there is no differentiation between the height of the façade and the width of road, which the entirely disparate character of these planes

From a drawing by Thos. H. Shepherd, 1838.

FIGURE 21. WATERLOO PLACE AND LOWER REGENT STREET.

demands. A square section has no recognisable top, bottom, or sides, and could be revolved round its centre indiscriminately. But a section of the channel of the street should indicate clearly that in a sense it *knows* which is its side and which is its base.

When this inflection has been expressed the street is endowed with a certain sensitiveness, an elementary degree of vitality which necessarily gives pleasure to the beholder. I invite any reader to test the truth of this assertion by comparing for himself the respective amounts of aesthetic satisfaction he derives from three streets, old Regent Street which was "broad," Bond Street which is "narrow," and Kingsway. And the distinction is apparent even in the slum streets, for none of these will seem so mean, so lifeless and mechanical as the ones which are of square section, where, in a plane normal to the street the line adjoining the top of one façade with the bottom of the opposite façade makes an angle of 45 degrees with the horizontal. In the case of Kingsway this angle was determined by a modern bye-law, and the street will not have been built in vain if it leads to a more intelligent consideration of the aesthetic result of bye-laws. In this instance a formidable architectural effect has partly failed in its purpose because of an ill-conceived regulation on the part of functionaries who with the best intentions in the world have adopted a measure ignoring one of the most vital of architectural values. If, instead of fixing the maximum angle at 45 degrees, we actually exclude that particular altitude and declare that on no account may a street be designed in which this angle is between 40 and 50 degrees, we should insure that all streets would then be either recognisably 'broad' or recognisably 'narrow,' and a proper degree of inflection would have been achieved. Such a regulation would be no hindrance to the policy of those reformers who quite rightly insist upon the desirability of securing for each building an adequate amount of

FIGURE 22. REGENT STREET. *From a colour print by Ackermann, 1845*


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sunlight, for the smaller of the two altitudes of street gives actually more sunlight than the L.C.C. standard allows, while in the narrower streets it would be quite possible by increasing the space at the back of the buildings, to get all the light required.

In Regent Street Nash was in the most fortunate position of being able to determine the relation of height of building to width of street by architectural considerations alone, and in this as in other matters he took careful steps to arrive at a form which would be most acceptable to the people using the thoroughfare. The proportion chosen (see Fig. 22) was not only good aesthetically, but it resulted in one of the most cheerful and sunny streets in all London.

One other excellence must be touched upon here. Even at the risk of being controversial, I may affirm that the material of Regent Street was perfect. Once during the period when about a third of Nash's buildings were still standing, I happened to be in the company of a gentleman from the country who, having heard a great deal about the work of reconstruction in Regent Street was most interested to survey the scene himself and to form his own conclusion. To my surprise he professed himself unable to understand all the pother that had been made about Regent Street. "Why, the new buildings are charming. I can't think how anyone can be so captious as to find fault with them. How bright and fresh they look when contrasted with the nasty dull grey stone buildings in their vicinity." I was obliged to enlighten him on the matter. "My poor benighted friend." I said, "the qualities which you have been praising, the brightness and freshness belong to the buildings which were erected a hundred years ago but still maintain their youthful appearance with but slight attention, while the dull grey façades you condemn are none of them more than thirty years old."

Now, stucco is a *polite* substance. It is often used to

cover things in which nobody need feel any great interest, such as joints of brickwork in the rooms of a house. We may grant that certain naked materials have a charm of their own. Yet a prejudice against all coverings to floors, ceilings and internal walls leads to most peculiar results. To visit the houses of people who have this prejudice is a somewhat depressing experience. In the midst of barrenness and beams one feels like a rat ensconced between the rafters. But beautiful as is a stucco cornice and moulded ceiling, useful as stucco is as the background for wallpapers of all kinds, it is in its external use that its greatest and most imposing effects can be obtained.

Painted stucco is an ideal material for street architecture. It has an ivory surface which responds in a very sensitive manner to varying conditions of light and atmosphere. No other texture, either natural or artificial, is productive of such delicate harmonies in cream and in white, in gold and silver and gray. One of the most beautiful sights in the world used to be the West side of Piccadilly Circus midday in April after a shower of rain. In a smoky city, almost the only buildings which can be made perennially clean and fresh are the stucco-fronted ones. Of course, Portland stone in exposed positions where it is well washed by the rain as in the river front of Somerset House, for instance, is a delightful material. In the architect's rendered drawings new stone buildings are represented as snowy white, but neither architect nor client ought to be deceived by this, for in the ordinary London thoroughfare a few months after their erection they become black just like the Piccadilly Hotel.

A stucco-faced building is apt to express not only politeness but intellectuality. This is because a composition in stucco is a question of form rather than of craftsmanship. If it is praised it is not on account of its cost or the labour expended upon it, but for its beauty,

for the degree of subtlety and refinement expressed in the design itself. Nothing is more conducive to vulgarity in architecture than the idea that an imposing effect is going to be obtained by the use of expensive materials. There was more grace, more actual civic worth and dignity in the least of Nash's Regent Street frontages than in many a modern building that flaunts its fine ashlar and to which the rarest quarries have paid tribute. Too great concern about the value of materials is very often shewn in the design of jewellery. A person of discernment would far prefer to wear a beautiful design in paste than an ugly one in real diamonds (which latter is often an excuse for mere boastfulness of the pecuniary worth of the article) and a nicely chased bracelet in silver gilt expresses a far more aristocratic spirit than does a coarser one of pure gold. The incomparable advantage of stucco is that it is cheap, the materials for its construction are abundant, and it can be manufactured in a uniform texture. Moreover, it makes no appeal to the false pride of the vulgar rich, it is susceptible of being worked to exquisite detail, it weathers splendidly and is an ideal surface for paint. The search for coloured materials, themselves destined to become a dirty black, seems utter waste of time, when a fresh coat of paint on stucco will give a good and even far better effect. Besides the sense of moral righteousness which caused Ruskin to condemn stucco as a sham was the attitude of William Morris who seemed imbued with the obsession that the chief function of a building was to provide health and happiness to the operatives and craftsmen. Apart from the fact that a plasterer is as good a man as a bricklayer any day, this insistence on the importance of the art of craftsmanship tended to direct attention away from the civic qualities of a building, its shape and character, and its relation to its neighbours.

This question of stucco is a crucial one, and in accord-

ance with the judgment of critics with regard to it they may be divided into sheep and goats. Everyone who decries the value of stucco may immediately be suspected of belonging to that large class who concentrate their attention upon the *minutiae* of architecture and have but an imperfect appreciation of the more important aspects of this art. If a particular building erected in stone or marble is held to be admirable, the same building faced with stucco would also have great merits. In fact, it is even true to say that in the modern city there are occasions when the stucco edifice is architecturally superior to its stone counterpart. This will be manifest as soon as one considers the elements of definition and contrast on which an architectural composition must always depend. In general, it may be affirmed that the windows of a building are a series of rectangles of a distinctly *dark* tone. Granted that reflections of light may occasionally make the windows shine brightly, or that the presence of white blinds give them a light tone, it is true to say that windows nearly always appear dark holes in the wall. Now owing to the smoke of modern towns the wall is also dark ; hence the windows fail to assert themselves and the shadows of the mouldings and ornament are scarcely visible with the result that the decorative forms so carefully chosen by the architect are not properly articulated.

It is an act of self stultification and even shows an attitude of surliness towards the public for an architect obstinately to cling to the principle that it is wrong to use a medium which can be ever kept clean and bright. The *desire to please* has not been developed in such a person. Moreover, there is one very important advantage in stucco which has not been, as far as I know, sufficiently emphasised. As we do not live nowadays under the dominion of the curfew, it stands to reason that a great deal of urban architecture is viewed just as much by night as by day. All the old-fashioned stone

and brick architecture of the past was exclusively *day* architecture, that is to say its true quality was only apparent in sunlight. At night-time, it is true a silhouette was sometimes visible and the outline of buildings on a hill would be clearly expressed. But all the internal detail of a façade would be cast in obscurity.

A lesson in the value of stucco could be acquired by anyone who cared to stand at Piccadilly Circus and look up towards the Quadrant. It was a fairy scene. But beautiful as this view was by day, it was lovelier still by night. A gentle glow pervaded the face of the Quadrant while every scrap of detail received its full value and the outlines of the whole stood in most brilliant contrast to the indigo sky. Turn round and look at the monstrous exhibition of vulgarity on the East side of the circus. In the dark masses of buildings the fenestration is pratically invisible and emphasis is directed to the glorification of port wine, pills and soap by illuminated signs the repetitive motions of which show us to what depths of futility it is possible to descend. Do these advertisements even serve their purpose, one may be tempted to ask. Any right minded man would surely say "Port I will drink but never *that* port. Pills I may indeed be induced to swallow but never *those* pills. Cleanliness I will pursue but by any other means than through the agency of *that* soap." Yet country cousins come and gape with astonishment and even admiration at this degrading spectacle. Of course, in excuse, it may be said that these stone buildings are so dull at night time that there must be a little relief, if only an attempt at comic relief. The answer to this is that the means of making the streets of London beautiful by night is ready to hand. The genius of Nash has shown the way.

Some time ago there was a movement in favour of creating a "Brighter London." What have the advocates of this "Brighter London" to say to the obscuration of

the brightest spot in all the metropolis ? Is it not now time to protest against the assumption that every new big shop or block of offices must necessarily be faced with stone ?

A sprinkling of stone public buildings in specially chosen sites contributes to civic dignity, but social values are not properly upheld and the spirit of lightness and geniality which should have a large and legitimate place in architecture will not find expression if stucco is henceforth to be banished from our streets. Yet there is a prejudice against this material, and the idea is prevalent that it cannot be fittingly employed in noble buildings. The source of the prejudice has already been indicated. To Ruskin the stucco frontages, so pleasing to us, were a symbol of deceitfulness, a lying cloak to the good honest brickwork underneath. It may be regretted that to him who held up to us the lamp of truth there was not vouchsafed a vision of the Lamp of Grace or the Lamp of Manners or any other kind of lamp which would have directed attention to those supremely important aspects of architecture which concern the large composition, the street and the city.

By the time these words appear in print "Brighter London," nay "Brightest London" will be no more. Is there no room then for good-mannered architecture in the metropolis? Was this catastrophe really inevitable? There are some people whose temperament is such that they suffer a series of rebuffs and even make discreditable blunders without benefiting by their experience in any way. Unpleasant thoughts of failure and remembrances of personal disgrace they try to banish from their minds as quickly as possible. Such an attitude is bad enough when it concerns the incidents of private life, but when extended to public affairs its consequences are infinitely more injurious. When Nash's Quadrant finally disappears there will be brief comment in the press, a few photographs of old Piccadilly Circus will

perhaps be reproduced and, ever after, our daily attention will be claimed by a multitude of other matters. The temptation to forget will assail even those of us who loved the former Regent Street. We shall feel not only grief and disgust but also a sense of shame, because we shall have an uneasy consciousness that we might perhaps have done something to prevent a consummation which can only be described as an architectural disaster of the first magnitude. But in order that some slight spiritual benefit may yet result from this misfortune, it is necessary that, instead of thrusting aside all recollection of it, we should, on the contrary, ponder over it and drink the cup of our humiliation to the dregs.

Let us first turn for a moment to imagine the fair picture of Regent Street as it emerged from the hands of its creator. According to contemporary testimony it was "A truly magnificent specimen of modern London which, within a few years has arisen to beautify and exalt the town. What would be the wonder of our ancestors, even those who lived so recently as the early part of George III.'s reign, could they look upon the grand view before us, with its spacious circus in front or the avenue of classical buildings branching from its terminations or the stupendous column of granite "pointing to the skies" in memory of the Duke of York ? The scene altogether is a noble one, worthy of the capital of a great nation." And another writer of the same period says "who that remembers the narrow, dingy, dirty thoroughfare called Swallow Street, with its adjacent poverty-stricken alleys, can forbear to rejoice on seeing the wide, noble and decorated vista of costly shops and other buildings which, in the improvement of London has arisen on its site ? Regent Street is the depository of foreign excellences and luxuries and the refinements of home manufacturers ; it is the mart whence Fashion derives her ornament, the favourite lounge of 'men about town' ; the region where Architecture

does not disdain to lavish upon shops her columns and entablatures and porticos; the glory of the trading section of the West End, the assertor of the pride and wealth of retail dealers. Though this noble avenue of edifices built for and devoted to trade, is of very recent origin, a thing comparatively of yesterday, already have numerous shop-keepers realised ample fortunes in it and retired to enjoy their independence in country villas and gardens."

There are critics who cannot refer to Nash without a certain note of apology, and if they deign to praise him there is timidity in their praise. Yet the apology and the timidity, always unnecessary and indeed unseemly in this context, can to-day be dispensed with altogether, for Nash is coming into his own. Just when his greatest masterpiece lies before us in a state of pathetic disintegration his repute rises higher and higher, until at this moment the name of Nash is one of the most illustrious in the history of architecture. Who were the two greatest English architects? Were they not Wren and Nash?

Some things are never really appreciated until we are deprived of them. Then we realise how dull, how obtuse we were, not to have valued them sufficiently. It is certain that such feelings of poignant regret will find expression before the end of this year, when one of the chief architectural glories of London will be but a golden memory. At the time when these words are being written most of the buildings of Nash's Regent Street have already yielded to the blows of the house-breaker—Liberty's building, Verrey's Corner and old Oxford Circus including Jay's Corner have now departed. Yet up to yesterday between dark, smoke stained buildings there was still a substantial remnant of the glistening stucco of Nash which almost made one cling to the fond illusion that the spirit of old Regent Street, although hustled and slighted and constantly told "to move on" still remained to cast its grace upon modern London,

But when not only the Quadrant is down, but the whole of the West side of Piccadilly Circus, Englishmen all the world over have occasion to mourn the disappearance of a very famous architectural landmark. Not Westminster Abbey nor St. Paul's itself has been the background of such streams of humanity, nor is either of them familiar to such vast numbers of Londoners, provincials and foreigners.

Yet how utterly useless it is to praise a noble street and to hold it up as an exemplar if in the modern architectural world it is an aristocratic alien that must not remain with us even on sufferance? This good-mannered street, we are told, was not *practical.* Here we must enter the troubled waters of architectural politics.

Could Regent Street have been saved? That is an unpleasant question. Why rake up these ancient matters? Regent Street is gone irrevocably. So might a man fence with his interrogators after he had committed a murder, "The thing is finished now. The man is dead for I have killed him. You cannot bring him back to life. In fact, if you will excuse my saying so, you are wasting my time by purely academic discussions. I beg you to change the subject." But what of the judgment? Is architecture alone of all the activities of men to be immune from judgment? Are ill-deeds committed here to go without punishment or even without that verbal condemnation which it is the function of criticism to pronounce? But who in this instance is to be the accuser and who the culprit? It will perhaps be found possible to obtain answers to these questions. The other day I had the temerity to speak to a building operative, "a British working man," who was engaged in picking with his axe the gentle stucco from one of the Regent Street façades. "What do you think of it all?" I said. Accompanying his words with an oath he replied, "It is a shame to pull down these lovely buildings. And

look at the things which are being put up instead. They are just like prisons." A Daniel has come to judgment. Let him, then, be the accuser. I do not propose to comment upon the latter half of his statement, although this was made with profound conviction after a contemptuous glance at the Piccadilly Hotel, but shall content myself with translating his observation upon the old Regent Street into the form of a question; "Why have you pulled down these lovely buildings?" Let the question be considered a peremptory one, as coming from a typical representative of the populace who is indeed entitled to express an opinion upon the essential qualities of civic architecture. The judgment of this "British working man" has been confirmed by countless other judgments I have heard from men and women of many types and occupations. It is, in fact, the mature opinion of the "average man" who has always been swifter to recognise true genius than has the cultured doctrinaire blinded by his own half-truths. But who, in this instance, is to be called upon to answer the stern and peremptory question? Surely not the nominal agents of the outrage, the maligned officials of His Majesty's Office of Woods and Forests, who administer the Crown lands upon which Regent Street is situated? They are indeed agents, but they are agents with professional advisers. Shall we call the professional advisers the sole culprits, then? That also would be unjust because these same advisers in their tender years may have been subjected to cultural influences too strong for them to withstand. Is the general public, perhaps, responsible? The answer is, of course, that all of us share in the responsibility. Even if we have not instigated the destruction of Old Regent Street, we have at least permitted it. Passive agents, in some measure, we have all been.

Unfortunately, some of the defenders of this vandalism have been bold enough to declare that the buildings

of Old Regent Street were not beautiful. Of course when once they have arrived at such a belief they can proceed to the work of reconstruction with a clear conscience for obviously nobody is under any special obligation to preserve buildings which are not even beautiful. If the agents of the Crown and their architectural advisers had said "We most profoundly admire the work of Nash and his collaborators, but unfortunately utilitarian considerations make it necessary for these buildings to be superseded" it would have been possible to accept their decision with a better grace, for it would then have appeared that the aesthetic factor had been given due weight. But when the defenders of the demolition policy publicly sneer at Old Regent Street as "second-rate architecture" one is justified in suspecting that the fate of this remarkable composition of buildings has been decided by men who have little reverence for what they have destroyed.

Why are we required to suffer such a loss? The whole purpose of the present argument will fail unless we stay to answer this question fairly and truthfully. Not much present benefit is gained by extolling architectural virtues which under modern conditions can be proved to be quite unattainable. If it be true that *economic* causes have made impossible the retention of old Regent Street an examination of these causes comes well within the scope of our enquiry, for if in this instance economic causes have brought low one of the noblest works of man they will have a similar effect again and the whole future of civic architecture would appear to be at stake. Now Regent Street is on Crown land. The leases are falling in and the agents of the Crown at His Majesty's Office of Woods and Forests have decided to exact the maximum of rental from the property. This legally they are entitled to do. The maximum rental is determined by the amount which can be squeezed from the owner of the tallest structure the building

regulations allow to be erected upon the site. Two courses are open to the shopkeeper. He can quit and perhaps ruin his business by so doing. Or else he must re-build. A few of the shopkeepers in Regent Street, notably those who have the larger retail stores, are quite ready to adopt the second alternative because they can utilise all the floors for the display of their merchandise, but the vast majority are quite differently situated. They occupy perhaps one or at most two floors, and sub-let the higher storeys. These people are placed in a very difficult position and it is known that many of them look to the future with great anxiety, for it is by no means assured that they will be able to sub-let the more numerous upper floors of a very costly new building at such rentals as would enable them to recover the interest on their capital expenditure and at the same time to pay the vastly increased ground rent demanded by the Crown. For the debacle of Regent Street, not one tittle of blame attaches to the shopkeepers. Only quite recently a number of them joined in a protest against the Crown regulations that their new buildings must be faced with Portland stone, an extremely expensive material. Presumably they had carefully weighed the cost of the upkeep of the stucco and had come to the conclusion that it was appreciably less than the interest on the additional outlay which the purchase of Portland stone would entail. Moreover they had the good taste to perceive the suitability of stucco for a shopping thoroughfare, and they realised that the brightness and gaiety of old Regent Street (see Fig. 23) which qualities were in part due to the pleasing freshness of its painted walls, were a source of attraction to the public, and consequently a commercial asset to themselves.

Most of the Regent Street shopkeepers were doing remarkably well as they were and not all of them are going to be gainers by being housed in the heavy, forbidding, gargantuan style of architecture which

From a drawing by Thos. H. Shepherd, 1828.

FIGURE 23. REGENT STREET FROM THE QUADRANT.

apparently finds favour with officialdom. Of the new Regent Street it will be sufficient to say that in most respects it will be quite indistinguishable from Tottenham Court Road. The Quadrant alone will present a certain show of formality, but even that will be transformed into a bleak, ill-proportioned channel of practically square section, which has already in anticipation been compared to a drain-pipe. Meanwhile "high-class" shopping will tend to migrate to Bond Street. The Exchequer will benefit to the extent of a few hundred thousand pounds but the metropolis will have shrunk in spiritual content and will be noticeably less metropolitan.

There is a quite reputable school of opinion which denies altogether the "inevitability" of the destruction of old Regent Street. Granted that the former rentals which were fixed in the first quarter of the nineteenth century were, according to modern standards, absurdly low, they could yet, with substantial advantage to the Exchequer, have been increased to a scale commensurate with the present value of the original buildings. If this had been done the lessees would have been able to retain the immense commercial advantage of being housed in the most attractive shopping thoroughfare in the world, while we should be free from the reproach of having needlessly sacrificed what is one of London's chief claims to architectural distinction.

There is no need to labour the point that the buildings of old Regent Street were not large enough to house the premises of an immense retail store such as Selfridge's or Harrod's. Every kind of structure has its own natural purpose, and when any question arises as to the advisability of retaining or destroying any particular building, the standard of judgment should be not whether it is suitable for a function quite different from that which it at present performs (if we are to adopt such an illogical basis of policy as that we should pull down St. Paul's Cathedral because it was not suited to be a garage,

and somewhere else we should pull down a very useful garage because it was not suited to be a chemist's shop) but whether the building still has a living purpose, whether in the modern city, and in that special part of the city there is still need for such a type of building. Suppose we ask ourselves, is there still a place in London for the very aristocratic shop of moderate size which is devoted not to selling every article under the sun, but to the selling of one separate branch of merchandise? Will any single person in the least conversant with modern London deny that there is still abundant need for this kind of shop? And is there not plenty of evidence that in the commercial community the owners of such businesses have careers not merely distinguished but also lucrative? Granted that the larger shop has its uses to-day, but why need it have invaded Regent Street? Moreover, there is this important consideration. When a business grows, a very obvious result of such development is that its owner may proceed to open another shop, or ten more shops or a hundred shops in different parts of the town. We are not in the least cramping business enterprise if in a thoroughfare that was renowned for its beauty, and of which the beauty itself was without doubt largely contributory to the prosperous condition of the shop-keepers, we lay it down that this common commercial advantage should not be sacrificed by allowing any one member of the group to build high or otherwise impair the architectural merit of the street. If Mr. Jones of Regent Street is doing such a wonderful trade, let him open up another shop in Kensington or Bayswater or Streatham, and that other shop will itself enjoy a reflection of the aristocratic repute of Regent Street. But in its great eagerness to increase the value of its property, the Crown has forced many of the shopkeepers to build even against their better judgment, and those who declined to rebuild have been ignominiously turned out; and businesses which generations of

industry have created have had to take to side streets and in some cases have been obliged to migrate as far as Hammersmith.

A few shop-keepers will gain commercially by the destruction of old Regent Street, but many more will have been put to a very great loss and inconvenience. And to such purpose the lovely Regent Street has been destroyed! If this act of vandalism had been committed at the bidding of a private landlord it would not have been fraught with such painful significance. The private landlord in question might have beeen a somewhat irresponsible person, who happened to be in financial straits; he might have had losses on the Stock Exchange, or perhaps contracted enormous debts through gambling or riotous living, or again he might have been struggling to meet the liabilities incurred by a very extravagant wife. Many excuses could be found for him. After all it would be said he had but human weaknesses or was the victim of human misfortunes, and if he had acted improperly the fault lay not so much with him who fortuitously had become the agent of the wrong done, but with the imperfect social system which had placed such powers in the hands of a private individual and had failed to make him realise his high responsibilities. But here, however, the State itself through its own accredited instruments has committed such an offence for the sake of a financial gain representing an extremely minute fraction (a decimal figure with many noughts in front) of the total revenue of the kingdom. But these official instruments and their predecessors from whom they inherited their policy with regard to Regent Street are also mere agents and are not the real culprits. The guilt ultimately rests with everyone who helped to formulate and uphold the false standards of value which led to the desparagement of an architectural possession most precious in itself and utterly irreplaceable. The agents of the Crown property

in this instance naturally take shelter behind the technical experts whom they had called into consultation. It is instructive to note that a similar phenomenon has occurred in the case of the City churches. At the recommendation of a committee of ecclesiastical economists a considerably number of City churches, including some of the noblest works of architecture ever produced in this country are apparently doomed to destruction. The economists themselves are, of course, entirely exempt from blame. According to their own statement they have been informed by their architectural advisers that the churches in question have no great artistic merit. What we encounter in both these cases is not the vulgarity of a populace that cares not for its architectural heritage but a Bœotian spirit among a particular section of the people described as "cultured."

The present generation may now be paying the penalty for not having successfully assailed the authority of Ruskin, who has moulded the architectural opinions of almost the whole class of "educated" Englishmen now arrived at middle age. As everybody knows, Ruskin coined the phrase "The foul torrent of the Renaissance," and were not the works of Wren and Nash part of that foul torrent? The enthusiasm of the adherents to his school of thought is always more easily aroused by matters of archæological or romantic interest than by considerations of art. Ruskin laid it down that "the greatest glory of a building is in its Age and in that deep sense of voicefulness, of stern watching, of mysterious sympathy, nay, even of approval or condemnation which we feel in walls that have long been washed by the passing wave of humanity—it is in that golden stain of time that we are to look for the real light and colour and preciousness of architecture." Was ever the noble English language so abused? The trouble about Regent Street and the City churches is that they are not ancient. The City of London Church Commission declare that

they would not dream of touching the Gothic Churches which survived the Fire. Nor would any public body presume to lay sacrilegeous hands on the half-timbered Elizabethan shops left standing in Holborn. But Regent Street had not the virtue of great age. It had nothing to recommend it except incomparable beauty. And with the offence of being comparatively new it combined the still worse offence of being faced with a rather delicate material. It positively invited the pick-axe! How different the history of Regent Street might have been if the learned agents of the Crown and their architectural advisers had never read "The Stones of Venice"!

It will hereafter be a question of considerable historical interest how it came about that the stucco masterpieces of Nash fell into disrepute and only received public appreciation when the work of their destruction was well-nigh complete. Surely something could have been saved from the wreck, if it were only the Quadrant and the County Fire Office. Thus might our successors argue. It is commonly believed, and there is substantial truth in the belief, that the building of the Piccadilly Hotel (see Fig. 24) sealed the doom of the Quadrant. When an integral portion of the design was wilfully compromised with the obvious approval of the most influential architect of the day it appeared as if the fates were against Regent Street. The part which Mr. Norman Shaw played in this tragic affair has never been described with sufficient emphasis and candour partly because of the great prestige and popularity which this architect enjoyed during his life-time and partly because the true nature and consequences of his destructive deed are only now becoming apparent to large sections of the public. Professional etiquette, however, does not decree that the actions of even the most eminent practitioner should be immune from comment, when such actions intimately concern matters of public policy.

FIGURE 24. THE QUADRANT AND PICCADILLY HOTEL

The place of the architect in the modern state needs greater definition and I may outline two opposing conceptions of the architect's function which are widely held at the present day. In the first place those whose temperament is somewhat *academic* (using this word in its best sense) and who have exalted ideas of the professional office consider that an architect, and especially an architect of acknowledged distinction, should not only be the devoted servant of the public, but in one cultural field he should be its leader and guardian; and they like to assume that an architect of integrity would not willingly contribute to the destruction of any work of acknowledged merit. The other view which is advanced by a school of critics and practitioners who pride themselves upon their contact with reality, upon their knowledge of the conditions of the modern world, is that the architect's first duty is to express the spirit of his age. Such theorists would almost have us believe that the architect has now ceased to be a public man, and that his authority does not extend beyond the range of his assistants crouching at the desk. Should any commercial or administrative body ask him to do a certain thing, to design a building, for instance, in a certain manner, he has such a very vivid conception of himself as a creature of his age that he will be a complacent instrument. After all, say these pragmatical philosophers, the business of an architect is to perform as well as he can the tasks which his clients impose upon him, and he exceeds his function if he himself attempts to determine the direction of their desires.

To which of these two points of view did Norman Shaw subscribe? Now, it is obvious that he was not anybody's complacent instrument, for he was a man of great independence and with a high sense of public duty. We cannot affirm, therefore, that, realising the beauty of Regent Street, he was prevailed upon by stronger minds than his own to commit an act of vandalism.

Nor can it be said that he was unduly influenced by the prospect of obtaining a lucrative commission. The fact is Norman Shaw had not the faintest idea that the old Regent Street had any special architectural merit at all. To him it was just "the sham classic of Nash" and he had no compunction whatever in smashing up the delicate stucco forms so lacking in that hardness and heaviness which to him were the hall-marks of good building. How did it come about that without public protest of any kind this particular bull, such a matchless prize bull, was allowed to play havoc in this particular china shop? The blame ultimately rests with those who first propounded the doctrine that stucco architecture was anathema. Norman Shaw has been praised for his services in leading men away from the Gothic Revival back to the Classic style. In one very important respect, however, he remained under the Ruskinian influence with the consequence that his quite insensate prejudice against a certain material blinded him to the unique civic qualities displayed in the famous group of buildings of whose fate he most unfortunately was invited to be the arbiter.

A perusal of Norman Shaw's drawings for the new Regent Street, now to be found in the Library of the Royal Institute of British Architects is sufficient to dispose of his title to act as censor of the great Nash. Everywhere perfect solutions of difficult problems are set aside for treatments which represent a meaningless departure from the forms which Nash in his wisdom had established. I may mention only two features in Shaw's design for the new Piccadilly Circus, which show a conspicuous falling away from architectural grace. In the first instance, the beautiful curved façades at the approaches to Piccadilly and Lower Regent Street are done away with and we have two awkward re-entrant angles which, instead of presenting a "face" to the new Piccadilly Circus (alas, no longer a circus) present a

shrinkage. Yet where so many roads converge to a single point, in order that the junction should have the character of a "place" it was essential that the boundaries of the "place" should be emphasised not by sharp corners or open vistas along thoroughfares but by the greatest possible length of façade. In obliterating the three sectors of the circus, the gracious and reposeful surfaces which lent such pleasant relief amidst the surge of human and vehicular traffic at this most populous centre, Shaw had not even a utilitarian motive, for by this treatment several feet of very valuable window space has been sacrificed. Again, the complete symmetry of Shaw's design for Swan and Edgar's shop, wherein he shows another departure from Nash's example, belies the entirely disparate character of Piccadilly and the Quadrant and would only be justifiable were there two thoroughfares at all comparable in their general disposition. Norman Shaw's proposed new County Fire Office and his scheme for the Quadrant show the same innovating spirit, and it is clear that so far from experiencing any pangs of regret at the disappearance of Nash's work, so expressive of urbanity and mature accomplishment, he was itching to substitute for this his own rustic interpretation of the theme, his steep roofs and dormers and row of aggressively tall chimneys.

Could it have been otherwise, could he, one may ask, with any prospect of success have given such advice to the agents of the Crown as would have stayed their hands and caused them to preserve both for the present and for the future an example of noble building, a rare and incomparable pattern of civic architecture? Had he chosen to exert his influence to this end, he would have earned lasting gratitude and his name would have been one of the most honourable in architectural history, even if he himself had created nothing of permanent value. Imagine the effect upon the rank and file of the profession looking for guidance to the leading practitioner

of the day if the latter had taken advantage of his outstanding position to inform the Officers of His Majesty's Woods and Forests that their project to pull down any portion whatsoever of Nash's quadrant was a thoroughly unwise project and, if persisted in, would cause untold and irreparable damage, a corrosion in the very heart of London; if he had told them also that as nearly the whole of the metropolitan area was covered by buildings either ugly or mediocre, to make a destructive raid on that little bit of ground where beauty reigned supreme was a short-sighted and barbarous act which would bring neither profit nor glory to the city which countenanced it. He might have ended this injunction to his administrative chiefs by saying that perhaps another architect more venal than himself might be found to do their bidding, but professional honour would not permit him to take part in these measures. Assuming, of course, that the learned spokesman would put the case for Regent Street with far more eloquence than the present writer can command, that he would muster the arguments with greater persuasive force, does anybody doubt that in those of us who occupy obscure positions in the profession we have chosen and who look to our superiors for guidance, this action in defence of our architectural heritage would cause no mean elevation of spirit? Even the rumours and the echoes of such advocacy would sound like music in our ears.

The most painful circumstance connected with the fall of the Quadrant is that the doughtiest blow levelled against this precious fabric came from the hand of an architect who viewed the destructive operation with good will, and even showed an indecent haste to produce alternative designs not only for the Quadrant but for the whole group of buildings in the west side of Piccadilly Circus. The supposition that this cultural disaster was primarily due to the shortsightedness of men of commerce or of the general public would undoubtedly be pleasing

to a professional self-respect, but unfortunately such an idea cannot in truth be entertained for the evil was caused by a corruption of mind within the architectural citadel itself. Mr. Norman Shaw's design was by no means an expression of the commercial ideal, for the shopkeepers who were condemned to inhabit the rebuilt section of the Quadrant were loud in their protests against the paucity of window space and the harsh and forbidding aspect of the new façades. The juxtaposition of the Piccadilly Hotel with the other shops in the Quadrant enables us to recognise yet another superior virtue of stucco architecture which may perhaps be mentioned in this context, namely its extreme suitability for commercial building on the ground that where the maximum amount of window space for the display of merchandise is required, this result can be achieved with far more architectural propriety when the superincumbent wallage has an appearance of extreme *lightness*. It was the airy grace of the Regent Street façades that enabled us to look at them without any great sense of discomfort even when the original shop fronts had been done away with to make place for gigantic sheets of plate glass. Norman Shaw desired the shopkeepers to ape a municipal splendour most unbecoming to their station and which to do them justice was quite undesired by them.

Can the spirit of old Regent Street still live? This is only possible if there is a resuscitation of the *forms* of Regent Street. A statement very often made with regard to architectural tradition is that one may revive the forms of bygone styles without reviving their spirit. This is in a certain measure true, for the forms may be misused, as was very largely the case in the Gothic revival when the attributes of ecclesiastical architecture were given to secular buildings. But the obverse of the proposition, the theory that it is by some means possible to revive the spirit of a culture without its forms is a palpable error, and involves a complete misunderstanding

of the very nature of "form," as this word should be used in the visual arts. At the time of the Renaissance the great artists in recovering part of the culture of the ancient world naturally adopted the forms of the ancient world, by which I do not mean exact copies of ancient buildings but copies or variations of the *elements* of ancient buildings—the Classic Order, for instance. The spirit originally created the forms and a similar spirit will create similar forms which although born under different conditions obviously belong to the same family as their prototypes.

What will be the proof then, that we have been able to absorb the spirit of Regent Street? Of course, an obvious proof would have been if we had been able to preserve Regent Street as a living example of a great tradition. But failing this we must revive the *forms* of Regent Street. The first sign of grace would obviously be the erection of a *stucco* street. This would be a sign of grace because it would be apparent that we had put aside the false dogmas which were the precise cause of the act of vandalism we now have reason to condemn. It would also be a sign of grace because it would show that commercial architecture had definitely set aside the ambition to play too ponderous a part in the architectural world. And the liberal use of painted stucco would immensely improve the appearance of all the black industrial cities of England.

Next, it would be quite possible to recapture some of the charm of old Regent Street by designing façades (it does not matter in the least whether these façades are somewhat taller than their prototypes or set in a very different environment) where the qualities of scale—the just relation of the ground floor storey to the human figure, the just relation of the wall surface to aperture and the just relation of shops to public buildings, which latter is an affair of civic conscience, were fully maintained. The shopkeepers would then be encouraged

to recognise that their common prosperity is best served by designing an attractive *street* rather than a miscellany of competing units. Within the limits of the polite formal code exemplified in old Regent Street an infinite number of variations in street architecture are possible. This urbane tradition can quite well be recreated, and especially if we take pains to preserve those examples of it which, even after Regent Street is gone, will still remain to us. In the Strand, for instance, there is a stretch of stucco architecture, including the beautiful Morley's Hotel and Barclay's Bank (see Fig. 25), also a charming composition, and in many other parts of London (and in provincial towns as well) there are good examples of the delicate Regency style. All "sham classic," we are told, and quite unworthy of preservation! For the last fifty years stucco has been the special butt of the most ungracious critical minds. Often I lie awake at night and imagine that I can hear an odious grating sound, and that I can see a still more odious sight of ugly little teeth, crooked, self-righteous little teeth—the Ruskinian rats are gnawing, nibbling and picking away at masterpiece after masterpiece of our national civic art.

If London had been subject to a foreign conquest preceded by bombardment it is difficult to conceive that the architectural products expressive of the highest genius of the English people could have fared so ill as they have done at the hands of our own native vandals our most literary and artistic vandals, who have shown themselves to be in several important respects culturally *beneath* the commonalty they profess to instruct. Have any of our wonderful eclectic painters deigned to give us even one passable picture of old Regent Street? Preferring the sunny South they have wandered in the streets of Florence and Verona to find themes worthy of their skill. But it need not be seriously proposed that men of such gentle nature ought to have taken station

From an etching by Lawrence Bradshaw

FIGURE 25. MORLEY'S HOTEL AND BARCLAY'S BANK.

with their easels in front of the Quadrant. The flower-girls at Piccadilly Circus might have laughed at them or, worse still, a silver cloud might have appeared in the incontinent English sky and threatened them with a few drops of rain! But perhaps at this very moment some of the hardiest of them are already hurrying home in order to paint Regent Street. They never realised before that there was any money in it. But they will be too late. What they will see will be the new Regent Street, and there will not be a farthing's profit in painting that!

When the last glitter of Nash's Quadrant has faded away we shall understand the true nature of the influences which have produced a result so shameful and so catastrophic. Some critics may hold that I am here exaggerating the effects of philosophic *theories* upon events in the architectural world. Yet these effects are far-reaching and profound. A wrong theory propounded with great eloquence and embraced by the leaders of thought at any given period will gradually filter down and corrupt the judgment even of the most illiterate, who may be quite ignorant of the source of their opinions. It is these erroneous doctrines with regard to street achitecture, or, rather the propagation of doctrines actually *ignoring* all the vital considerations of civic art which have been the real cause of the disaster of Regent Street. That disaster is in its nature quite without parallel, and the heart grows sick at the contemplation of it.

Other architectural opportunities will perhaps arise which will find us better able to derive advantage from the unique example of urban building by which for the space of a hundred years the most popular centre of London was distinguished and adorned. If we are untouched by that inspiration it must sorrowfully be admitted that Regent Street was too good for us, we were never really worthy of it. We lost Regent Street because certain people did not appreciate it, but its

end was also hastened by the fact that those who loved it, while it still stood, regarded it as so natural and perfect that it belonged to the nature of things and they could not believe that it had this element of frailty. And it seemed almost an impertinence to praise it. A work of architecture, however, is not like a great poem which can undergo long periods of neglect and then still quite intact come back to fame. Next time we are fortunate enough to possess a supremely beautiful street, if we would preserve it, we must be most lavish in our praise, we must praise it often and praise it well in picture, in book and in conversation.

Chapter III.

THE BUGBEAR OF MONOTONY.

WHERE in the modern town there appears to be a complete lack of concord between neighbouring buildings, this is sometimes due not so much to an ill-mannered individualism as to a fear of *monotony*. This fear is apt to become an obession which ultimately warps the architectural judgment. Yet the desire to avoid monotony is a praiseworthy one and we must consider how it can be satisfied without a breach of civic propriety. The champions of diversity could contend that they are animated by a polite wish to please and that the really boorish people were the creators of those horribly dull repetitive architectural forms which induce in the mind of the spectator a sense of great depression.

"We do not want a long monotonous row!" This sentence sums up the aesthetic philosophy of many of those who are now interested in housing reform. In fact, one can scarcely attend a popular lecture on this subject without being told that we ought to make a departure from the style of building which is expressed in long monotonous rows. Needless to say, the dictum is invariably greeted with applause, for "monotony" is objectionable in itself, and we unhesitatingly condemn it whether we find it in architecture or anywhere else. And as it must be admitted that the meaner quarters of our towns largely consist of these same monotonous rows, a housing reformer is doing a service in protesting against them. Yet the aesthetic judgment which he here delivers is a negative one, and its implications are by no

means clear. He may merely wish to single out for his disapproval those particular kinds of row which happen to be monotonous, making a mental reservation that there are other rows which are free from this defect. Or else he means that the epithet "monotonous" is descriptive of all continuous rows of houses and is employed for the purpose of emphasis rather than for qualification. I think it will be generally agreed that the ambiguity which has just been pointed out most seriously detracts from the value of the simple statement that it is undesirable to build long monotonous rows; for this statement, although it has the appearance of a platitude, can be so construed as to lend support to the quite erroneous view that all rows—that is to say, all lines of houses erected in continuous formation—are necessarily monotonous.

I shall now attempt to prove by illustration that monotony is not confined to terraces, but may equally be present in a series of detached or semi-detached dwellings; while on the other hand architectural interest and diversity can often characterise even a long elevation of continuous building.

The first illustration, Fig. 26a, shows a street of small houses. Nobody could deny that they look indescribably mean. Let us consider what is really wrong with their composition. In the first place, of course, the group is mean because the unit is itself mean. Moreover, the design is bald. It has no punctuating features, no plinth nor cornice, no parapet wall. The façade has the great fault of being an "unresolved duality,"* as the fenestration is in two conspicuous rows which cannot possibly comprise a unity. But besides having these formal blemishes the houses are socially objectionable in that the individual occupants do not seem to be sufficiently differentiated from each other.

**The meaning of the terms "punctuating features" and "unresolved duality" is further explained in "STYLE AND COMPOSITION IN ARCHITECTURE."*

Suppose we detach the houses as in Fig. 26b. The result is even worse. The houses look meaner still, and their assemblage is just as monotonous as in Fig. 26a. It is apparent, therefore, that whatever was the fault in the first formation, it did not consist in the element of continuity. Fig. 26c shows another variation, in which the uninterrupted row is maintained, but each individual dwelling is elaborated by the addition of a gable and a bay-window. This appears a somewhat ludicrous design, yet the builder who perpetrated it was not entirely ignorant of human nature, and had grasped at least one of the essentials of domestic architecture namely, that when houses are grouped together in a single architectural unit, there must be a definite and recognisable formal emphasis which separates one house from the next. Granted that the formal emphasis has here been attained in a wrong way, the existence of this emphasis would sufficiently account for the fact that the houses in Fig. 26c, although exactly the same size as those in Fig. 26a, would undoubtedly command a higher rent.

An occupant in street No. 26c feels that he is at least somebody, whereas his poorer neighbour in street No. 26a knows that as far as his individual social worth is expressed by the form of his habitation, he is of very small account indeed. Yet the blemishes in street No. 26c are grave. The delimiting features which have been introduced in order to set a boundary to the extent of each separate dwelling are of a shape that does not bear repetition. The procession of gables and bays is restless and fussy, and it is obvious that the resultant façade could not be a contributing factor to an attractive street view.

Let us see, therefore, whether the repetitive element rather than the continuity is the cause of the monotony in street architecture. Fig. 26d shows a street where each house is different from the next, and the general

FIGURE 26A

FIGURE 26B

FIGURE 26C

FIGURE 26D

effect is not altogether displeasing. The fact that these buildings all toe the same line and are of approximately equal height and have their façades in a common vertical plane gives them a certain measure of sociability. This type of elevation would look best if seen from the other side of a river. The marked horizontality of a quay and the water surface in front would act as foils to the rather complex silhouette of the buildings. It will be observed that certain disruptive elements are present—namely, the gables and hips which I have introduced in order to show the effect of these features on the appearance of a continuous street. In so far as the façade is tolerable at all, this is due to the fact that the gables have not been allowed to become too obtrusive. The high-pitched one nearest the right is obviously an intruder, but the stepped gable towards the left-hand side accords better with the dominating horizontal lines. But even if street No. 26d were quite the best of its kind, it could not be multiplied and continued indefinitely without becoming tiresome by reason of the too pronounced indivduality of its units. And this criticism applies with even greater force to street No. 27a, where we have complete detachment and a multiplicity of the very forms which are least suited to be put in alignment.

This particular configuration is a very obvious consequence of the architect's failure to take into account the picture which results when his own building is seen in conjunction with its neighbours. It is, in fact, architecture entirely uninfluenced by thoughts of civic design, for the social qualities which should distinguish the individual members of an architectural community are absent. If these houses were isolated in rustic surroundings they might take their place quite appropriately in the landscape, but being set closely together, as they are, they really belong to the category of urban architecture, and they ought to show by their shapes that they are conscious of each other's existence and

form a *society* of buildings. It is true that in such houses there may be degrees of unsociability. For instance, if each façade is of a material different from that of its neighbour, and bright red tiles alternate with blue slates, the result is very much worse than if the composition has at least the virtue of homogeneity in tone and colour. Seen from the distance, a village of red-bricked and red-tiled houses, even if their individual shapes are faulty, may constitute a group having a certain mass and simplicity which enable it to contribute to a pleasing composition. Where there is discord both in form and colour, this is seldom the result of carelessness or chance, but is due to set purpose and a wrongheaded principle. Who are the folk responsible for these architectural atrocities? I think they may be found among those whom with the utmost conviction, would join in the chorus "we do not want a long monotonous row." In their hatred of continuity and uniformity in architecture they would insist upon a universal diffuseness and diversity which ultimately become just as monotonous as the dull streets they condemn. Acres and acres of houses such as those depicted in Fig. 27a could not fail to weary the passers-by, even if not one design were repeated, for in spite of the variety in the individual dwelling the general character of the street picture would remain unaltered.

This is not so say, however that the principle of detachment should never be adopted in a town. There exist many rows of detached houses all different from each other, which yet exhibit a social or civic quality. In Fig. 27b this quality has, in a certain degree, been attained by means of the dominant rectangularity of the elevations. The designs here shown are based upon a recollection of numerous examples erected in London suburbs such as Richmond, Blackheath and elsewhere during the 18th and early 19th centuries. There is a considerable variety in the styles of the façades (in fact,

it is possible to contend that there is too great a variety) but these houses are at any rate far more fitted to be set in congregation than are those of Fig. 27a. The absence of high-pitched hips and gables, the occasional use of flat roof and parapet wall, and the orderly arrangement of the fenestration tend to bring the houses into mutual harmony and to prevent any one of them from appearing to assert itself at the expense of its neighbours. Of course, a discord in materials and colour could easily ruin the whole composition, but if the members of such a group were distinguished by a uniform texture of white stucco, their collective appearance might be highly attractive. In this and the preceding figure I have purposely omitted to show trees, for in architectural drawings trees are so often a spurious device wherewith it is hoped to mitigate the effects of crudity in design. But whereas trees, if wrongly placed, can spoil our view of a good architectural composition, they can never on any occasion redeem a bad one, unless, of course, we are content to ignore the difference between redemption and concealment. If in Fig. 27a the houses were separated by a hedge so dense and so high that each was effectually isolated, then their unsocial characteristics would not offend, for they would no longer be placed in a position where sociability was incumbent upon them. But, in point of fact, such trees as normally would be present in the vicinity of the houses, while moderating their mutual discord, could not possibly effect between them the degree of harmony which unites the houses in Fig. 27b. As the principal objects of detachment, however, is that each dwelling should have a garden, the presence of a certain number of trees in the forecourts is obviously desirable, and it is pleasant to have glimpses of verdure in the intervals between the houses.

In considering detached buildings the question of size must be taken into account. Modern house design, in which the strongest tendency is a revulsion from

FIGURE 27A

FIGURE 27B

FIGURE 27C

FIGURE 27D

FIGURE 27

continuous architecture, shows too many examples of detached units so small that they are devoid of dignity. These small units if unelaborated appear mean, and, if elaborated, they are apt to be pretentious. It needs exceptional architectural skill to make a successful design of even a pair of workmen's dwellings, and most people find that a group of three is the very smallest unit which provides an opportunity for satisfactory treatment. It will be observed that in Fig. 27b, which shows more expensive types of dwelling, there are several groups of three, and these habitations are more attractive than they would be if made to stand alone.

So much for continuity. What of repetition? Now, an architectural feature, if it is to be repeated must not be possessed of an obtrusive individuality, such as would make difficult or impossible its subordination to a larger whole. Fig. 27c shows a group of seven blocks of flats, of which the two end members are larger and form punctuating elements. In this case the unity of the group is well maintained, because each of the five intermediate blocks have rectangular outlines, which form a simple pattern and can be regarded not only as wholes in themselves, but as fractions of another whole. The row of seven buildings in Fig. 27d, however, although the accommodation might be similar to that of the blocks in Fig. 27c, is of very inferior design. Each building appears to be asserting its own individuality at the top of its voice, and the spirit of social order is entirely absent. Such a form is not fit to be repeated once, much less five times. The composition is spoilt by the gables.

Of all architectural features the most liable to abuse is the gable. A complete lack of sociability seems characteristic of the gable because its effect is to accentuate a building or part of a building and to establish its formal differentiation from what lies on either side of it. Yet is has a certain popularity with designers

because it is the easiest method of making an architectural assertion, crude and elementary though this may be. A gable seems a very obvious solution of the problem how to imbue a façade with "individuality," how to flatter the building owner's sense of private property, and perhaps his pride in his dissociation from the occupants of the adjacent houses. But where it is thought desirable that buildings should take aesthetic cognizance of their neighbours, where, in fact, the con-

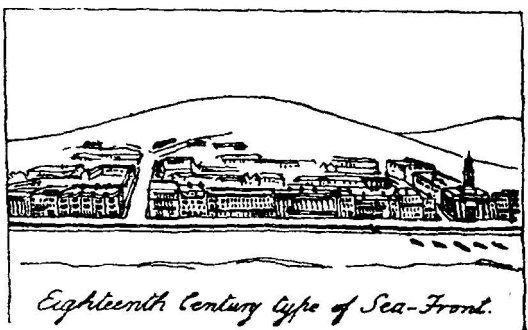

FIGURE 28.

ception of the civic quality in architecture has been developed, the disadvantages of the gabled form are immediately recognised. The gable as a constructional feature may occasionally be a necessity, but if it be gratuitously introduced to give "interest" to a façade which would otherwise naturally assume a plain rectangular form, it must be considered as a decorative adjunct. A kind of decoration, however, that nearly always makes impossible any close formal communion of one house with another and often destroys the sense of unity which should prevail within the limits of a single building may well be the subject of criticism.

When there is a high standard of taste in architectural matters the gable, if it does not tend to become quite extinct, is at least scarcely in evidence at all, while among

the habitations of those whose social sense is still quite immature the gable multiplies itself and flourishes exceedingly. Figures 28 and 29 illustrate this point

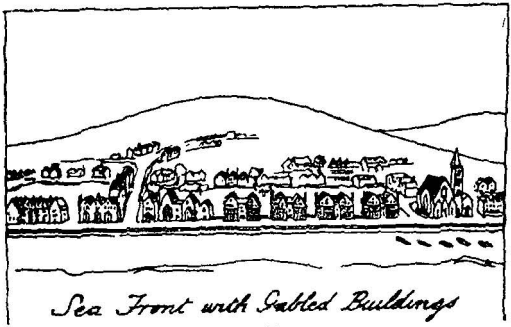

FIGURE 29.

very well. The first shows an eighteenth century type of sea-front, in which the majority of the buildings are in terraces with low roofs and parapet walls. The advantage of this treatment is that the individual blocks harmonise with one another by means of the continuity of their horizontal lines. A rectangular shape is fitted to be the fraction of a whole; but when a building is surmounted by one or more obtrusive triangles each

FIGURE 30.

with its apex pointed to the skies it is obvious that we have a multiplicity of separate and conflicting units rather than a single unit. In the second illustration the same basis of natural landscape is shown as the background of gabled houses. These are disposed in a way which is becoming popular in the modern development of sea-side fronts, and obviously they express a

far less mature urban conception than do their eighteenth century prototypes. In Fig. 28 the forms of the buildings cohere, they are, as it were agglutinative but in Fig. 29 they are frankly disruptive. In fact the latter illustration gives too favourable a view of the type of lay-out which now disfigures the shore in a very large number of English watering places. What really happens is that the houses often do not even face the sea-front but are disposed irregularly just as if they were in the depth of the country. It is a peculiarity that such a disregard of natural features is most marked in the case of the gabled style. Perhaps the reason of this is that it is of all styles the least sensitive not only to civic values but to any external consideration which would influence the design of the building.

In architecture the gabled house is "a country cousin" and strange results follow if it is allowed to disport its rustic soul in the precincts of the city. Figure 30 shows an example of such an architectural country cousin set in a most inappropriate environment. Such offences are both numerous and flagrant. Here is a case where a small gap in a street of urban houses has been filled in by a restless gabled edifice, of trivial design. It is just as if in a long passage of ordered prose one were suddenly to interpolate an excerpt from "Tit-bits." There can be little doubt that we see too much of this Tit-bit architecture intruding itself in those parts of London and other towns where the genius of our 18th century forefathers had established a great tradition or urban building. In this connection I may be allowed to introduce to the public for the first time a quite unique work which has the distinction of being the only authentic example of a design conceived and inspired by Mr. Ruskin himself. Fig 31 shows a photograph of this architectural curiosity, a building in bright red brick set in the midst of a row of highly respectable early Victorian houses which are faced with stucco and have

From a drawing by Alfred George

FIGURE 31. A HOUSE DESIGNED BY RUSKIN

the merit of having simple rectangular urban shapes. The features of the house proclaim that its author had a sentimental interest in mediæval forms, but it is also apparent from its composition that the art of civic design has here not yet made its beginnings. It is clear that the eminent political economist had not taken into due consideration the street picture as a whole, for anything more discordant than the juxtaposition of this florid gabled structure and its reticent neighbours could scarcely be conceived. Perhaps this is another instance of the effects of a philosophy of naturalism. The differentiation of type which in so marked a manner separates this house from the other houses in the street may be intended to be a reflection of the diversity of nature. But architecture must have a human quality and this quality cannot be better displayed than by the kind of good manners such as is expressed in a society of buildings having an interdependence and mutual regard similar to that which must distinguish a society of people. Moreover, it may be borne in mind that Nature herself does not eschew uniformity, for we may instance a row of human teeth where a regular formation is held to be beautiful. This particular gabled house in its particular environment may not unjustly be compared to a pointed and discoloured tooth in the midst of a pearly white row having the normal square-shaped tops.

While some gabled houses are unfit to be seen in a town there are other modern examples which are unfit to be seen even in the country. In Fig. 32, it is true the houses cause less offence when confined to their own company than they would do if planted in the midst of formal terraces in a town, but it will be observed that in the case of the first house from the left the gables not only conflict with the features of the houses on either side but they actually conflict with each other. For a sensitive mind such a building, if set in a prominent position in the country, has power to vulgarise a whole

landscape, for its obtrusiveness and utter disregard of all the comities of design seem most deliberate.

The modern passion of gables is sometimes traced to the Gothic Revival and the renewed interest in the cottage architecture of the Middle Ages. But a study of the mediæval village will reveal the fact that in the normal street of small houses the ridges of the roofs were parallel to the street, and such gables as were

FIGURE 32.

visible marked the ends of a row of houses, while only on comparatively rare occasions do we find a gable facing a street. For constructional reasons, it is true, our mediæval forefathers introduced the high-pitched roof to cover the vaults of their churches, and the ends of these roofs assumed the gabled form, but that form was modified and elaborated to such an extent that its crudeness was in most instances mitigated. Some of the complex and ornate forms of the great gables of the Gothic cathedrals have an extraordinary beauty, but here the gable building is entitled to a dominating position and the quality of reticence is neither desired nor needed. In the later development of Gothic architecture the low-pitched roof was introduced and with it the gable assumed a quite different character becoming in outline more like a pediment. The habit of introducing high-pitched gables on every possible occasion has not a vestige of support in mediæval tradition, nor can it be said that the high-pitched roof has any claim to be considered a climatic necessity. Between the periods of "Early English" Gothic and "Perpendicular" there is no record of the climate having changed. Nor are we told that

in the Georgian period the rain and snow penetrated the roofs. The high-pitched gable owes its present popularity to a common desire for differentiating buildings from each other as violently as possible. But with a renascence of the civic spirit it will be found that the policy of the close mutual association of buildings will meet with greater favour. Perhaps in our new suburbs it will presently be considered necessary not only to limit the number of houses to the acre, but also, the number of gables to the acre!

The pediment, which has sometimes been compared to a gable, differs from this feature in one important respect, for it has a horizontal member which brings it into relation with other horizontal lines in the compositon of a façade. Moreover, as the angle at the apex is very obtuse, the pediment has the effect of accentuating a certain part of a façade without dissociating this part from the remainder. But it is a special feature, nevertheless, and it should only be used on privileged occasions. A plethora of pediments would be nearly as objectionable as a plethora of gables.

Another form of roof-ending analogous to the gable is the Japanese and Chinese curved roof. This is vastly superior to the crude triangular form common in Western countries because the sides of the triangle here bend outwards, and at their lower extremities become almost tangential with the horizontal. This characteristic of the roof accounts for much of the elegance of oriental architecture. An alternative method of elaborating and "civilizing" the gable form is to surmount it with a coping which can either be stepped or given a curved profile, as in the style commonly called "Dutch." Mediæval German towns also show many examples of such treatment, but here the gables are subject to the restraint of being set in a single line of wall, and thus far conform to the spirit of continuous architecture. What we most suffer from in England, however, is the

riotous gable united with the riotous plan. In towns, where long streets and large congregations of buildings have to be harmonised and contained in a single civic conception, the parapet wall and low-pitched roof best accord with the style appropriate to the average building. Against such a background domes, towers and spires have their proper distinction. When once this civic order has been established it is possible to tolerate even in our street architecture an occasional gable—a highly disciplined, and subdued, and somewhat apologetic gable.

We have seen that a repetition of gables is apt to lead to discordant results, while rectangular shapes can more easily be contained in a unity. I have so far only dealt with the formal aspect of repetition, and the social aspect remains to be considered. It may be asked to what degree is it necessary to give to every separate person a habitation unique of its kind. Is uniformity in the pattern of the home an affront to the individuality of its occupant? Before answering this question, let us see if we can obtain any guidance from the art of dress, in which a similar problem has been solved long ago. Now, nobody would contend that in order to express his individuality a man must wear clothes cut in a fashion peculiar to himself. Putting aside the purposes for which uniform has been accepted as the appropriate costume, even on many civilian occasions it has been decreed that men should dress alike. The social function of dress is far more important than any personal or decorative object which the costumier may try to give it. Of course, within the limits of the convention determined by a particular social circumstance certain variations in costume are permissible. For instance, the ordinary clothes worn in the daytime by men engaged in sedentary occupations, while conforming to a very definite style, admit of considerable variations in texture and in the minor details. But at an

evening-dress function the uniformity of their apparel is very marked, but this does not seem to detract from their personal status. In fact, uniformity although, of course, it is not the only means of expression, is one of the most necessary factors in the social significance of dress.

The advantages which dress has over architecture is that the various degrees of conventionality can exist in temporal succession, whereas in a town their relation is confined to space—that is to say, the formal and repetitive in architecture must exist side by side with their opposites; we must in the same pictorial composition have both order and variety. It remains, then, to effect a suitable adjustment between these elements, beginning our argument with the assumption that the analogy from the art of dress has served to establish the propriety of an occasional row of dwelling places of repeated and identical design.

Let us glance once more at Fig. 27c. Here is a group of flats capable of accommodating about sixty families. If these sixty families were the only inhabitants, or even if they constituted a considerable fraction of the inhabitants of a town it would be monstrously absurd for them to be housed alike; for they would not have the chance of enjoying in domestic architecture the element of variety attainable by them in the domain of dress. But if we assume that this group of flats belongs to a great city in which there may be thousands of other streets, each with its separate and characteristic formal or informal arrangement, it is clear that the charge of monotony, in so far as this is directed to the repetitive element in the group, must be withdrawn, for this particular row of buildings is but a tiny fraction of a city which offers a most liberal choice in modes of habitation. Besides the narrowness of vision, which causes the individual house to be conceived as a separate entity having no relation to its neighbours, there

is another kind which leads to a preoccupation with an immediate street picture to the exclusion of what happens to be round the corner. But what happens to be round the corner may be necessary to the proper interpretation of tne social aspects of the street itself. For instance, the uniformity of the houses in one particular crescent may cease to be in the least oppressive as soon as we bring to mind the quite different formation of the houses in an adjoining road. In general, it may be affirmed that in a fairly large town a considerable proportion of its domestic architecture may legitimately take the form of large compositions, such as squares and formal streets, in which the sub-unit or individual house may be subject to repetition; it being understood of course, that each large composition be unique of its kind. But repetition should only be exemplified in those architectural shapes which are especially designed for it, and restless gabled fronts, such as those in Figs. 27d and 32 and even the houses in Fig. 27a are quite unsuitable for repetition.

In a village street, monotony is best avoided by mixing the formal and informal, as in Fig. 33a, where a short row of seven houses acts as a foil to shorter groups and separate individual façades, which are all, however, united, in a continuous terrace. A variety both in accommodation and in elevation is here suggested, and it will be observed that a few low-pitched gables have been introduced without detracting from the general effect of sociability which these dwellings are intended to produce. I have taken the liberty of giving some of the houses three tiers of windows, as this greatly helps the design. One of the disadvantages of the "dormitory" suburb consisting of small houses is that the architect is here asked to essay the almost impossible task of making an effective composition when he is confined to elevations of uniform height and having only two rows of windows; and very often in these

suburbs we are denied the relief which an occasional public building might afford.

The next illustration, Fig. 33b, shows a more advanced stage in civic design. Here an attempt is made to obtain architectural interest not by contrasting one kind of house with another, but by a definition of three types of building—church, private house, and hotel—which are united in a simple scale of social values. Such a composition is intended to give the maximum effect by a severe economy of means, and, in respect of both subject and form, to be an architectural statement, emphatic and succinct. The houses form a continuous row and rather a long row, but it would be an irrelevant criticism to describe them as monotonous.

This design raises two important questions which concern domestic architecture and the planning of a group of buildings. First we have to consider the domestic character of these and similar houses and afterwards the pictorial character. It would seem to be the easiest thing in the world to endow a house with its proper domestic character. While it is difficult to give the appropriate note to town-halls, post-offices, theatres, fire-stations, and other public buildings, the ordinary private house, if treated in a straight-forward manner, invariably reveals its purpose. One may meet with a few obvious absurdities, such as the mid-Victorian castellated villa, but most country dwellings are quite domestic in character—that is the disposition of their chimneys, windows, and front-door proclaim their domesticity. At least, nobody would mistake these buildings for churches, water-towers, granaries, abattoirs, or crematoria. But it does not follow, therefore that they are beautiful; they may consist of features thrown together anyhow, the top storey may have no connection with the lower ones, the juxtaposition of rough-cast, bright red brick and purple slates may produce an appalling discord. Private houses, however,

FIGURE 33A

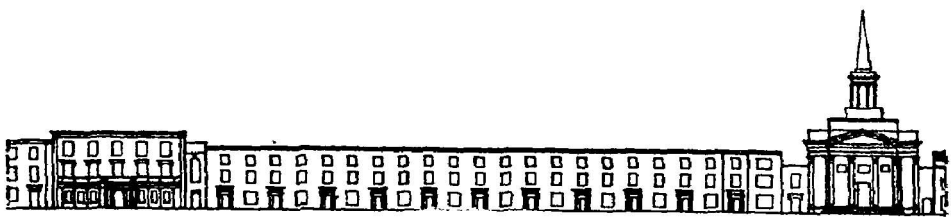

FIGURE 33B

they undoubtedly are. Few architects can endow a dwelling with beauty, but almost anyone can make it look domestic. When, however, one comes to design terraces or other large groups of houses in continuous formation a certain difficulty arises, especially if the unit of the façade is repeated.

The fact that each unit is the dwelling place of a separate family *must* receive formal expression. The symbol of the dissociation of family from family is the door, and if we give the doors a special emphasis the problem is on the way to being solved. Thus a very familiar type of terrace to be seen all over London and in provincial towns as well, the terrace of formal design having a series of classical porticos, is a complete success as far as the expression of the essential character of domesticity is concerned, for there is not the slightest shadow of doubt that the architectural formation is a dwelling place of families who while indeed sharing in a common street and being content to subordinate their façades to a single street picture have sufficiently asserted their separate social existence.

These rows of porches have been the subject of much ill-informed criticism and even sneers on the part of people living in fussy gabled houses which are greatly inferior to such terraces in all the qualities of urbanity. Some of these terraces are charmingly detailed and what strikes one is the tremendous variety of ways in which this kind of façade can be treated. Judged from the aesthetic standpoint the porches, having a horizontal terminal feature form a rhythmic series which combine into a unity. Of course, if every porch were surmounted by a gable the virtue of the composition would at once disappear. Let us imagine, for an instant, what is the effect of a long terrace in which the doorways are scarcely emphasised at all. Obliterate the porches and substitute quite unobtrusive entrances. If the façade is rather plain and the windows arranged in a kind of pattern

which may be described as "arithmetical progression" what is the obvious comment? Of course, people say "It looks just like a *barracks*." This is a true criticism, based upon an acknowledgment of the fact that here the tenants have not been properly differentiated, for the building might easily be the dwelling-place of soldiers, i.e., of an association of human beings which are not sub-divided into units of family.

In the design of terrace houses, it is always dangerous to allow the doorway to sink into obscurity. If the entrance is made very small and plain then we must find some other means of dissociating the units. A quite satisfactory means of doing this is to give each house a bay window preferably extending to all floors. Nowadays it is very common to find that people who like porticos do not like bays and vice versa. Of course, both of these features can be abused and nobody wants too many porticos in a row nor too many bays. Yet like the portico, the bay, apart from its pleasing effects when judged from the inside of the house, has an important formal significance and use. We look at the terrace and say "So many bays, so many families" and the fact of domesticity has found expression. The type of bay of which the plan is a segmental curve extending over the whole width of the frontage was a very favourite feature in 18th century and early 19th century designs. For instance, the beautiful houses in Park Lane display this characteristic. They have the urban quality in a high degree, they are in continuous formation and of approximately uniform height (I do not speak of the costly but atrocious red brick and terra-cotta rustic façades which are gradually going up as the leases of the old houses fall in), the bays are surmounted by parapet walls and the silhouette has repose. Yet each house is well differentiated from its neighbour. In this instance the designs are all varied. In Fig. 28 I have shown a short terrace where the curved façades

are repeated, and here also the domestic quality has been manifested. The necessary definition of the boundaries of each separate home might be obtained by means of the gable, but while such a treatment would adequately express the *social* fact of domesticity, it has the aesthetic objections which have already been summarised in the preceding pages.

It might be thought that the obvious way of giving expression to the diversity of the family unit would be to make every house different from its neighbour. As, however, comparatively few people live in houses which they have had built to their own designs, it stands to reason that the true expressiveness of each individual house would be confined to the life-time of its first occupant. And who would not prefer to live in a sensible normal house in a sensible normal row than inhabit a dwelling place expecially arranged to give play to the idiosyncracies of a previous tenant? Moreover, there are occasions when the eye demands a larger unit, some means of bringing scale and cohesion into the street.

The design of these larger units is the most ambitious task which the domestic architect can set himself. The difficulty here is that the building is apt to express a unity which does not exist among its inmates. In spite of the multiplicity of its entrances, it may easily give the impression that it is some institution whose members are bound together by a common tie. In reality, it is merely a domicile inhabited by a large number of people of diverse interests and occupations who live in the same town, it is true, but who are not associated in any other way. Again, it is possible that in a composition a part say the centre or an extremity, is so accentuated beyond the other parts that one would naturally assume that it was inhabited by somebody more important than his neighbours, whose superior status is expressed by the position accorded him in the group. Hence, to give

such a large building the character of domesticity it is essential that no part of it should be very much more conspicuous than any other part, although, of course, some slight accentuation is necessary if there is to be a composition at all. Many of our Georgian residential squares are admirable examples of this reticence in design, and numerous terraces have a similar quality. A typical one of this latter kind is the group whose central feature is brought forward perhaps a few inches and surmounted by a flat pediment scarcely higher than the parapet wall, while at the ends there are smaller projections.

It is a fatal error to combine two houses under a single pediment; the occupants are thus forced into a union which might be most distasteful to them, and they often take revenge by painting their respective halves in contrasting colours, so that their separate identity is clearly established. The architect may declaim against the lack of aesthetic taste that is here displayed, but in this instance his own ignorance of social psychology must be held responsible for the defacement of his design. It was not sufficiently domestic, so his clients had to take steps to improve it in this respect, even at the cost of marring the beauty of his façade. If a speculative builder were to erect houses displaying in marked degree the blemishes that have been mentioned here he might fail to find tenants, for the public would regard his work as eccentric and bizarre. Moreover, people prefer to live in a group which is not an isolated example of its kind, but supported on either side by other groups, different in design, perhaps, but still expressing the same spirit of subdued individuality. In places where there is only one single residential square, which shows up obtrusively in the plan of a town as if it were the abode of privileged or else peculiar citizens, it is never very popular. There must be a plurality of squares before such a formation becomes truly domestic in character.

Two things are necessary in domestic architecture—the individual dwelling place must have a formal differentiation from its neighbours and yet it must not on any account be obtrusive. The ordinary man likes the limits of his abode to be properly determined: on the other hand he likes to enter or leave it without any comment being made. There are occasions when this love of seclusion can be indulged to the full. So far as the general public is concerned, the character of a building is determined by what the public sees of it. Often, a hedge which obscures a house from view, or a high wall with a fairly small door through it, such as is common in Turkish and Moorish cities, is suggestive of mystery and a certain charm of seclusion. The ancient Roman town house, comprising interior courts surrounded by shops, was in its way a perfect solution of the problem that this type of architecture presents; for what could be more truly private than an abode of which only the entrance is visible? Some Americans are apt to sneer at our tall fences and the bushy screens by which our country and even suburban villas are hidden from view, and contend that we show a churlish spirit in thus putting a check upon the kindly curiosity of our neighbours, and they point to their own unobstructed house-fronts that greet the passer-by and show that even a private retreat can be a public ornament. The Englishman would probably reply that it is neither arrogance nor selfishness which sometimes causes him to conceal his dwelling-place, but merely modesty. His house is of interest to his friends who enter his garden gate, but he does not imagine that it could be a matter of concern to anybody else. In the midst of a great city, however, one generally seeks unobtrusiveness not by seclusion but by a discreet measure of uniformity.

Some people may contend that in praising formality in architecture one is liable to underrate the attribute of picturesqueness. It is assumed that picturesqueness

and formality are incompatible. Yet the picturesqueness of a work of architecture has nothing to do with the particular style in which it happens to be designed. Every work of architecture ought to be picturesque that is, it ought to be capable of becoming part of a picture. We must ask ourselves, then, what are the conditions necessary to the making of a picture, and how can these conditions best be fulfilled in the design and arrangement of buildings ?

In every picture there must be a unity, which is generally achieved by the creation of a centre of interest. All parts of the picture have a certain interest, but there must always be one simple form or element which gives cohesion to the whole and upon which our chief attention is focussed. A view can have unity, as the view of a single plain cowshed has unity, and it may have interest as the view of the miscellaneous array of buildings which comprise some iron-works has interest, but in neither case is it a picture, for a picture must have not only one of these qualities, but both at the same time.

Let us try to apply some of these principles to the composition of buildings. It is unfortunate that many of the devotees of what is commonly called "picturesque architecture" interpret the phrase in a narrow sense. To them it denotes prettiness and an assemblage of small features, such as gables, dormers, turrets, oriel windows, and so on. All these elements of composition can be very beautiful and have a distinct merit of their own. But the theorists whom we are now considering have this conspicuous defect: they have eyes for the small picture, but they have no eyes for the great picture, the picture which includes not merely one building or small part of a building, but a whole street or even a whole city.

Many of the most formal compositions are more picturesque, in the true sense of this word, than are the haphazard arrangements of buildings one often sees in

mediæval towns, for they comprise pictures which are nobler, of a higher unity and more significant. On the other hand, there are assemblages of houses which individually may be charming and even "picturesque" but which, considered together, by no means constitute a picture for they present an aspect of confusion and discord. There are more great pictures to be seen in the streets of Paris than there are in Nuremberg. The view of the Opera up the Rue de l'Opera, that of the Madeleine up the Rue de la Madeleine, of the Pantheon up the Rue Soufflot, are all beautiful pictures ; and what grander picture can there be than the Louvre as seen from the gardens of the Tuileries ? But not every formal composition is picturesque, and this is why formal architecture is disapproved of by some people ; they think only of the instances where a certain rigidity has been attained without either unity or interest. Long straight streets leading nowhere and city plans of the mechanical check-board variety bring the art of civic design into disrepute. A formal scheme that lacks the virtue of picturesqueness gives the maximum of offence, and one can sympathise with those who would keep the narrow, crooked streets of our English towns just as they are rather than run the risk of sacrificing the interest which they now have without securing the higher interest which belongs to such formal schemes as only great artists can carry out. It is very difficult to fight against such a prejudice, and the formalist must tread warily and not make too great demands upon his countrymen, or they will reject him altogether. If the citizens of every town can be persuaded to devote their energies to the creation of at least *one* great street picture, much will have been achieved. The beauty and dignity of our towns would be vastly increased and yet nobody would have any reason to fear that a dull and inartistic formalism would become universal.

The only way in which a town or village composed

of thoroughly 'unsociable' buildings can become pictorial in character is by the introduction of one immense structure, preferably a church which towers over the scene; thus the miscellany of units, which in themselves comprise a discord, are reduced to a certain kind of order and compose into a group by reason of their subjection to a single dominant motif.

The opposite of the monotonous building is the *pretty* building, the building which is a picture by itself and of which even the parts are pictures by themselves. Few criticisms of an important building are so galling to its architect as that which takes the form of an accusation of prettiness. There are faults that may spring from ignorance or errors of judgment; the detail may be unscholarly, the materials ill-chosen, or the design may fail to express the character that is appropriate to its purpose; but, however patent these shortcomings may be, they are seldom made the subject of such contemptuous comment as is the vice of prettiness, which seems to indicate an incurable smallness of soul.

We are dealing with a quality that does not altogether defy description and analysis. It may be said to consist in an assertion of the parts at the expense of the whole but in this case the parts are themselves beautiful. Thus it is not the lowest kind of artistic depravity, for one can see many instances of buildings, streets, and cities in which the parts are not only improperly related to the whole but are themselves exceedingly ugly. In spite of that, however, prettiness sometimes causes us greater irritation than the utmost crudeness in design, or even the entire absence of it, because our first glance leads us to expect an excellence which we afterwards find to be lacking. It can be exemplified in things of the most diverse character—in ornament, in the composition of a façade, or in the configuration of a large group of buildings. To see a street that is merely pretty, comprising houses that are merely pretty—whose decoration is—

merely pretty—this is the most nauseating aesthetic experience that is at all possible. Here we have prettiness raised to the third power, prettiness cubed, as it were.

Ornament has this attribute of prettiness when it is composed of features whose interest exceeds that of its main scheme. In this case there is a kind of spottiness which, nevertheless, appeals to people whose aesthetic sense has not been trained; for such beauty as belongs to it can readily be apprehended without the employment of any critical faculty. Everybody knows the patterns that consist of a spray of flowers here and a spray of flowers there, and perhaps a little scroll somewhere else; they can be seen in embroidery, carpets, wall-paper, and on plates and dishes. The Chinese dragon pattern, though it appears to be just as discrete as these, does not really belong to their class, for the interest of the separate pieces of the dragon never exceeds that of the complete design, which is an exceedingly beautiful one and a subtle composition.

A scrutiny of Greek motifs of decoration reveals the fact that they are free from the defects of prettiness. Comprising, as they do, forms well balanced and closely knit, in which variety has not been attained at the expense of organic unity, they express the genius and the clarity of mind of the men who created them. There is neither dulness nor confusion. The wave ornament, the fret (which is merely a rectangular edition of it), and the guilloche are perhaps the best examples of patterns that consist, as all good patterns must, in orderly repetition of points of interest which are themselves well bound together. In fact, they have so much vitality that it is a matter of great difficulty to break them off gracefully, to find adequate terminations to them. If we examine the various leaf ornaments, the scale motifs, or the egg and dart moulding, we find in each case that they cannot be broken off at random; if we steer clear of the dart we cut into the egg, and if we avoid the anthemion we

cut into the scroll that joins it to its neighbour. The lowest motif in the hierarchy is the bead and reel; this is on the verge of being prosaic, and for that reason it was always kept very small. The desire to introduce the quality of continuity is not peculiar to the Greeks; the Italian scroll and the Celtic type of decoration are both evidence of it, and the wave form itself has been used by savage tribes all over the world; in fact it is a misnomer to call it Greek, for it is cosmopolitan.

Quite beautiful ornament, however, when misapplied, might make a façade look pretty. The theory according to which a building is merely a background for sculpture and ornament is responsible for a great deal of what is trivial in the work of the Gothic Revival. But this fault is not confined to architects who adopt the mediæval manner; there are many who degrade the noble Classic forms into a vehicle for mere prettiness. When even the most excellent traditional motifs are used by an uncritical person they seem to lose their virtue and to take on a meretricious air. If, for instance, a very elaborate rosette is inserted within each fold of the wave motif, the fatal change has already taken place.

Whole streets and other large aggregations of buildings are liable to a similar corruption. The street can have the most exquisite façades adorned with faultless details, and yet be devoid of dignity, because the individual buildings have asserted themselves at its expense. Everybody admires the quaint little cottage on the country side, but it is an unbearable thought that this type of habitation should be multiplied indefinitely to form whole towns and cities. It is just as if we were asked to abstain from all meat and substantial food and subsist upon a diet of flummery, chocolate eclairs, and cream puffs.

Continuity, sociability, order, a fundamental respect for the thing which is next to it, these are the expression of the urbane spirit which should animate all the arts.

Whether we are dealing with a large architectural formation such as a street or the smallest piece of ornament, the principle is the same. Sometimes not only a continuity of form but a continuity of tradition is necessary. Just as we must not object to living in a house contiguous to our neighbour's house and of identical design with it if this particular arrangement happens to contribute to the amenity of the town in which we live, we must not be ashamed to repeat certain elements of architectural style belonging to our forefathers, if these same elements are permanently conducive to the dignity and good manners of buildings which are set in congregation.

The period of domestic architecture from which of all others we have most to learn is the Georgian. The essential modernity of the "Georgian" style should be widely recognised. If we do not derive full benefit from this tradition, the failure will certainly not be justified by the extremely disputable assertion that such a manner of building is unsuitable to our present social circumstances. The sedate and comely forms of the 18th century houses are a perfect embodiment of the social spirit. They belong to the community, they are born of the discovery that in domestic architecture individuality is most securely established when houses defer to a common cultural standard. Yet these houses are nearly all different from each other. Their variety is endless and most surprising. Moreover, the variety has character and interest because it is founded upon discipline. The buildings are *aiming* at uniformity, but they achieve diversity. The designers of many of our modern villas, however, aim at diversity, but they achieve monotony, not only a monotony of spirit but an actual formal monotony, for the variety of the nondescript makes no more impression upon the mind than does a heap of stones all cut fortuitously to different shapes.

It is notable that much of this "Georgian" architecture

can still be found in very many English towns and the building activity of the period must have been prodigious. We recognise the style immediately wherever we see it, for who can fail to be impressed by the innate distinction which even the most obscure 18th century builder seemed able to impart to his work. What were the main characteristics of these houses? Parapet walls, low roofs, a general rectangularity of outline, flatness of façade, an orderly arrangement of windows—these would appear to be necessary to the effect desired, and they undoubtedly secure the general harmony of the houses with each other and their uniform deference to the street as a whole or to any public buildings which may be in the vincinity. Their lack of gables and fussy protrusions helps them to become part of a larger artistic entity, while the domestic quality is shown in their reticence and their apparent determination never to ape the architectural splendour or individuality of form which is befitting to structures of greater social consequence. But within the limits here indicated what subleties of composition do we not find, what genius in the arts of decoration! Doorway, window, architrave, cornice, baluster, fireplace, staircase, ceiling—in fact all the details of a house seemed to have been designed with unerring judgment.

Is it not obvious that an architectural movement which seeks to imbue modern buildings with something of the same spirit is worthy of support? There are however, critics of such a movement, and in order that they may be the more effectively combated I am venturing to offer a suggestion with regard to a certain habit of phraseology which sometimes creates a prejudice against the revival of any of the forms of building invented by our eighteenth century forefathers. I propose that the style should no longer be called "Georgian." The point at issue is this. If we call it "Georgian" there are sure to be objectors who will tell us that it

belongs definitely to the past and should now be put away. But although the style is of a date before the industrial era, its qualities should not be held to be unattainable by us, unless we are to confess that urbanity and good manners in building belong essentially to a bygone age and that we can never recover these virtues for the architecture of the present and of the future. This is an unpleasant prospect to-day and vulgarity to-morrow!

Let us analyse the term "Georgian." The first thing to be noticed is that it is not an architectural term at all and therefore has no legitimate place in the vocabulary of architectural criticism. The term has been found useful because it has power to call to the mind certain qualities of building, but it wrongly connects them with a certain limited period of British history. The qualities, however, ought not to be related to history but to philosophy, for they were the product of that devotion to reason and propriety which earned for the period the description "the logical eighteenth century." In the Georgian era the attribute of urbanity in domestic architecture was more clearly expressed than at any other time. Let us, then, call this style not Georgian, but *urban*. The advantage of adopting this terminology will be immediately apparent, for we shall be enabled with complete freedom and confidence to endow our buildings with urbanity and at the same time to be invulnerable to the critical shafts of those who would shout "copyist" or "plagiarist." The style is distinguished by certain qualities of restraint and cohesion which enable houses to give artistic expression to the fact of their assemblage in a town. These qualities happen to have been previously analysed and actually manifested in a very large body of architectural work which stands to the credit of our forefathers of the eighteenth and early nineteenth century. We cannot in reason forgo our heritage of their intellectual victory

any more than a mathematician can decline to take advantage of Napier's theory of logarithms on the ground that the theory is three hundred years old. If a man of to-day studies the same problem that Napier set himself, and has the necessary mathematical ability, he will arrive at a result similar to that of Napier. And if we study the problem how to endow urban architecture with its appropriate character, we shall inevitably find ourselves again creating conventions of building which will cause our work in some essential respects to resemble that of the Georgian era. There is plenty of scope for novelty of plan owing to the constant revision in the standard of accommodation which may be considered requisite for modern needs, but the continuity, the dominant rectangularity and the sense of order which should distinguish the forms of urban houses cannot be dispensed with if the social spirit is to receive its proper affirmation in the architecture of to-day.

In the interiors of eighteenth century houses the detail also is worthy of the closest study but it has a greater element of particularity than has the urban convention which determines the arrangement of a whole façade or building. We cannot say with regard to it that it represents a final solution of any one architectural problem. A house can have the true urban quality and yet be almost bare of detail or be elaborated with ornament which, although belonging to the Classic tradition, is yet a variant from the decorative motifs characteristic of the Georgian era. These motifs, however, are of very wide range and provide a repertory of ornament consistent with itself and extraordinarily well adapted to the suitable emphasis or enrichment of all the features of a house. At a time when the appearance of our cities is undergoing a swift change, and in most instances a change for the worse, it would seem to be more necessary to concentrate effort upon formulating the principles and policies which have to do with the

conversation of the main civic properties, the big things of architecture such as the dignified arrangement of streets, and the nice adjustment of the degrees of prominence which various types of building, public, commercial and private, should be allowed to assume in the configuration of a town. It is easier for architects to devote themselves wholeheartedly to such objects if, as far as detail is concerned, they are content to make use of an excellent source of inspiration in the work of our Georgian forefathers; and by drawing upon this source they have at their disposal a cultivated architectural dialect, essentially English in character and capable of being used with simplicity and distinction.

The tradition of formal and continuous building has its roots also in mediæval times, for what is the Georgian square but a revival of the form of the beautiful collegiate quadrangles exemplified at Oxford and Cambridge and in various cathedral cloisters? In fact, the repetition of architectural units in order to obtain order and rhythm is to be found in all the styles of architecture and no new development of social conditions can deprive it of its usefulness and desirability.

One last but very important point must be touched upon here. Is the urban style of building more *costly* than the extremely individualistic style? This question cannot be shirked. Now, the nature of the roof construction has an important bearing upon costs. Obviously it is more economical to use slates at quarter pitch than either slates or tiles at a pitch of 50 or 60 degrees. For a low-pitched roof a hip is generally cheaper than a gable, but for a steep roof the gabled treatment has the advantage, assuming that the simplest form of construction be adopted in each case. The natural place of the gable, however, is either at the ends of the house or at the end of any projecting portion of it, and it is always an extravagance to place it as a decorative adjunct in the middle of the façade. In the latter case the gable

is a quite gratuitous expense for it entails additional roof-truss, valleys and brickwork and it is highly questionable whether the resultant artistic effect is a praiseworthy one. Of course, if the gable has a window giving light to a room inside the roof, its use may be justifiable. The custom of placing rooms in a roof, however, although it reduces the cubical contents of a house and may thus appear to be an inexpensive treatment, has many disadvantages. Dormers are always costly and they generally fail to give adequate ventilation to the rooms. The practice of having steep roofs and dormers is really far more often due to a sentimental admiration of the mediæval cottage than to the desire for economy. Moreover, the standard of bedroom accommodation has undergone an important change since the Middle Ages, and people are no longer content to sleep in lofts. The type of client who wants airy rectangular bedrooms cannot be provided for more cheaply than by building up the walls to the ceiling of the topmost storey of a house and by surmounting them by a low-pitched roof.

One of the most lamentable results of the fluctuations in prices is that lead has now become so costly that its use as a building material must be severely restricted. This has had a most unfortunate effect upon design, inasmuch as architects can now seldom venture to solve a difficulty of roofing by putting lead flats over small projections or irregularities of plan. Also, and this is more important still, the parapet wall which was treated with such success in the eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries has now become somewhat of a luxury. Where in domestic architecture an urban character is desired a parapet will do more than any other feature to impart dignity to a façade and to effect that subtle distinction between a "house" and a "cottage." If an inventor could supply a cheap and serviceable substitute for lead to be used for gutters behind parapet walls he would earn the gratitude of architects.

The flat roof has practical advantages over any other kind, and it is a matter of urgent importance that the constructional problem it presents should have an economical solution. Architects are often hampered in their planning by difficulties in connection with the roof, but with flat roofed buildings they could much more easily indulge in those terminal projections and formal modulations which are necessary if houses are not to be characterised by a tiresome simplicity. "They look just like barns" is a popular criticism of many of the cottages recently erected. This comment is a just one, and the fault is partly due to the limitation of design imposed by the present necessity to adopt a form of roof which is apt to be uneconomical unless it is applied to a building shaped like a barn. On the other hand, gables, dormers, and half-timbered work are costly and unsatisfactory devices for mitigating the crudeness of these designs. If a simplicity of unit is to be insisted upon, by far the cheapest method of obtaining a good architectural effect is by large group formations of houses which can be arranged in terraces, quadrangles or other dispositions. By this means the repetition of the unit of the house, which is an important factor in economy, will no longer lead to monotony, because the eye will find satisfaction in the variety of the larger formations themselves and in the occasional emphasis at special points of the long façades. And it is scarcely necessary to point out that a house in a large block is cheaper than one detached or semi-detached. There is an obvious saving in external walls and in the drains, gas, water and other services.

The advocacy of continuous building, with as much repetition of the unit as may be necessary to the attainment of rhythm and orderly composition, does not imply an acceptance of the ideal expressed in the words "standard house." The "standard house" is an architectural abortion, it is conceived in ignorance of the fact

that each individual building should have a relation to its environment. Moreover, common humanity is insulted at the suggestion that the homes of men should be cast in a single pattern as if we had now reached the stage at which industrialism had obliterated distinctions of personality. Standard joinery may occasionally be tolerated and of course, standard sizes for bricks and timber scantlings, for slates and tiles, are extremely useful and tend to economy in building costs. But there are strict limits to the possibility of standardising the design of a house or of any feature of a house. The golden rule for the repetition of forms in architecture is that we may repeat *nothing*—except within the limits of a larger unit.

Chapter IV.

TRUTHFULNESS, URBANE AND OTHER.

IN SOCIAL life it is obvious that good manners consist in expressing certain things, but they are also dependent upon the concealment of other things ; and a policy of expression alone, making this the dominant impulse of conduct, would soon make a man a social outlaw.

There are several ways in which buildings can become obnoxious through self-expression of the wrong kind. In the first instance we may consider the solecism which results when the elevation of a house has "just grown out of the plan." The fatal doctrine of the priority of the *plan*, the determining influence of the plan, has had the injurious effects upon the architectural work of a whole generation of students. It has been a corroding influence in our towns and has helped to disfigure the countryside of England. "Only make the plan right and the elevations must then adapt themselves thereto" is the fatal advice. But procedure based upon a catholic view of the purpose of architecture would lay it down that while the elevations must in several most important respects be determined by the plan, the plan itself on occasion must make concessions to the elevation. Moreover, the elevation must make concessions to neighbouring elevations, and the plan, where it is aligned upon an urban frontage, must in its main outline make concessions to neighbouring plans. It is easy to imagine that civic architecture would become quite impossible if each separate building assumed what may be

described as a "naturalistic" shape, a shape determined by the free satisfaction of every impulse of the planner.

Like all other arts the art of planning can only reach a high state of development when it is surrounded by restrictions, when the conditions for its expression are complex and severe. A detached country house free to extend a wing here and another protrusion there and a bay somewhere else may have a certain charm (though even in this case the informality of the plan will only lead to a pleasing effect if all the subdivisions of the building have an aesthetic relationship with one another, if the wings and protrusions and bays all belong to the same type and pattern of design and if the fenestration be harmoniously arranged), but when in the vicinity of this house are other houses stretching forth their limbs in the same spirit of ease and nonchalance, no matter how gracefully such freedom may be expressed there is bound to be a discord between the members of the group. What always makes it necessary for there to be an element of discipline in their arrangement is the presence of the *road*. The houses should take cognisance of the road, and if they make this first concession it generally happens that they take some slight cognisance of each other as well. In fact, highly informal plans each of which has a principal front facing towards a road and in a plane parallel to the line of the road, do not produce such a restless and unsatisfactory effect as will plans of geometrical simplicity if these latter are placed all awry.

In Fig. 34 the central diagram shows a type of lay-out which makes impossible any true harmony between the blocks, however well designed these might be individually. This is an example of one of the very worst kinds of discourtesy which one building can show to another and it must be confessed that in modern housing development such an arrangement is extremely common, the lack of relation of the wall planes being generally

most noticeable at junctions and at the convex side of all bends in the roads. The crudeness of this lay-out has resulted from the idea that as long as the plan was all right, as long as requisite accommodation was provided in a satisfactory manner, nothing else was of much account. These houses might be of identical pattern and material, yet at the road junction the architectural discord is most distressing, because the end

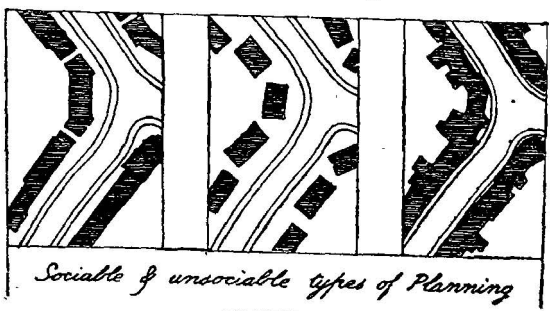

FIGURE 34

walls of two adjacent houses are in planes which have no relation either to each other or to the road, and the configuration suggests that its author was completely indifferent to the amenities of civic design. What is to be done, it may be asked, if we are using semi-detached cottages according to a standard plan and wish to align them upon a thoroughfare which happens to bend? In answer to this it may be said that the embarrassment encountered here is not an inevitable one, but it is certainly one of the penalties of adhering too strictly to the principle of detachment. In continuous architecture there is never the slighest difficulty in carrying buildings round the bend of a road, as the diagram in the right hand side of Fig. 34 shows. Here the backs seem carelessly designed, but the view obtained from the road might be highly attractive because it has the coherence due to a long stretch of wallage, supporting

and, in fact, creating the formal identity of the street. But where we have good reason to provide gaps between the houses, it is still possible to arrive at an orderly arrangement, as in the left hand diagram where the block facing the road junction has its extremities bent round so that the end walls are normal to the road and parallel to the end walls of the adjacent blocks. When the road has straightened out it would of course, become quite legitimate to break the continuity as often as other considerations might suggest. The planning of such a block would be a trifle more complicated than that of a plane rectangle, but it can scarcely be said that the difficulties are insurmountable, and the additional cost entailed in the construction of buildings specially designed for curved frontages need not be a very substantial item.

Even when we are dealing with a lay-out which is dominated by right angles, the arrangements of the blocks may give very great offence to one's sensibilities. Fig. 35 gives yet another instance where a preoccupation

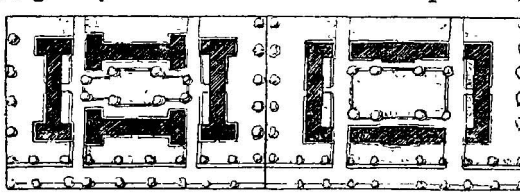

FIGURE 35

with the plan of an individual building may lead to a neglect of other important factors in design. Here, on the left hand side of the diagram, four blocks of flats of identical design are arranged in a simple pattern, but they show a mutual disregard in that they fail to bring their extremities into relation with one another. Each block seems to be saying to its neighbour "My own symmetry and internal order are quite enough for me and I am assuming that in your case also your symmetry

and internal order will be your sole concern." This is a disappointing attitude, especially as the blocks in question, by grouping themselves around a court, have raised in us great expectations of their sociability. The quadrangle on the right hand side of Figure 35 shows how by quite simple means these buildings could form a far more intimate and genial company, for here the extremities of each block are provided with terminal features which take cognisance of corresponding terminal features in the adjacent blocks. It is true that in this instance the same plan cannot be repeated four times, but so much the better both for the architect who has the opportunity of proving his skill in two directions instead of only one and for the tenants who are thus offered a greater variety of accommodation.

The expression of the plan may just as often fail through baldness as through complication. So the idea that in cottage planning we ought always to aim at a plain rectangular form is quite erroneous. A simple general disposition and a certain obviousness of lay-out will characterise the good plan, but a most subtle modulation of the parts is necessary if these are to be formed into an harmonious unity. Crude and bad mannered as may be a miscellaneous group of plans of irregular outline, it has been shown that the juxtaposition of the most elementary forms (such as the blocks of semi-detached cottages shown in Fig. 34) may easily result in a configuration which is cruder and worse mannered still.

Let us next consider the plan and elevation of the individual building. In house planning, as everybody knows, the greatest difficulty is so to dispose of the domestic offices that they do not become an eyesore. And the higher the standard of sanitation, the greater the number of bathrooms and privies and sinks, the more complex does the problem become. Some lovers of what is called "architectural truth" may tell us that

as sanitation is surely a good thing, there seems to be no motive for concealing it except a foolish and reprehensible prudery. Yet these theorists have not grasped the elements of civic design and it must be confessed that theirs is a vulgar philosophy. Bathroom windows and soil-pipes are indeed necessary for hygiene but they need not be the most prominent features of the façade. The functions of a house resemble the functions of the body in that they are not all equally suitable for public emphasis. Our eighteenth century forefathers had a clearer understanding of architectural propriety than is possessed by the designers of many of our newest workmen's cottages, in which appearance has been ruthlessly sacrificed to utilitarian expression of the crudest kind. These architectural creations may be compared to a statue to the surface of which the sculptor had been at pains to affix descriptive labels indicating the positions of the heart, the lungs, the stomach and the kidneys. It is not necessary to the expression which is proper to a building that every compartment of a house should reveal its exact location and purpose.

In the ordinary old-fashioned continuous street the problem was solved satisfactorily enough, for all the domestic offices were placed at the back and each house presented to the road a serene and polite exterior. To the people who traversed the streets the backs were entirely hidden from public view. These backs were not always works of art but there is much to be said for the idea that, in private, a house is just as much entitled as a human being to stretch its limbs and indulge in a little relaxation from formal discipline. When a man is sitting in his back bedroom in an urban street it ought not to irritate him very much to see the somewhat untidy elevations of the backs of the houses opposite, and especially is this attitude of tolerance incumbent upon him if he is aware that the fronts of the houses in question form a charming street façade exquisitely

detailed and distinguished by a row of pleasant classic porticos. If he grumbles at these backs, he may be reminded that he is not being urgently requested to gaze at them, and he should take note of the profound saying of Oscar Wilde that "No gentleman looks out of the window!" Of course, if an architect is so clever that in addition to designing a beautiful front, he can design a beautiful back as well, he has achieved something meritorious, but the true object of architectural expression would not be achieved if the back of the house became too much like the front. It may be observed, however, that the backs of many terraces of the Georgian era are really not ugly at all, for there is nothing intrinsically wrong with an orderly row of projections. The element of rhythm is present, the windows are of normal size (why it should be necessary that in some modern houses the bathrooms and lavatories should proclaim their presence by having windows the size of mediæval peep-holes has never been satisfactorily explained) and the soil-pipes are tucked away quite unobtrusively at the re-entrant angles. We recognise these façades to be the *backs* of houses and there is nothing offensive about them.

As far as the architectural treatment of the street backs is concerned, the abolition of the small projecting wing containing the domestic offices does not help matters at all because then the pipes instead of being collected at the corners are free to sprawl about the façades and also there is no possibility of placing some of the pipes unobtrusively at the *sides* of the projecting wings and thus partly concealing them. Fig. 36 shows an example of pairs of semi-detached cottages which show what a horrible eye-sore the domestic offices can become if their fenestration is given free rein upon a flat façade. In the design shown in Fig 38 an attempt has been made to introduce a little order into the back elevations of a row of cottages of modern plan. In Fig. 30 the gable

edifice in the centre presents towards the street a façade which has some of the worst qualities of the back of a house. Nor need it be supposed that the planning of this house is a wit more convenient or sanitary than that of its neighbours. It is merely an example of what

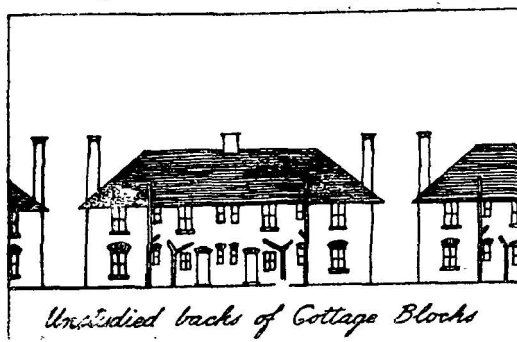

FIGURE 36

may be described as "sloppy" planning. The designer of such a building as this would do well to study the words of an old music-hall song from which I may quote the refrain :—

"Our is a nice house, ours is,
The front is at the front,
And the back is at the back."

not originally composed with a didactic purpose but nevertheless suggesting the important truth that a house is not a nice house unless its front has unmistakably the appearance of a front and unless its back has unmistakably the appearance of a back and that it is unwise to try to combine these two aspects in a confused façade which does not seem to know its own function or status. In the semi-detached blocks of houses which have been erected in such large numbers in recent years the sides of the blocks are generally visible from the road as well as the fronts, yet these sides often have the characteristics of very untidy backs. Instead of having, like the

terrace house, one front and one back they seem to have one front and three backs, and sometimes, when the tiny windows of lavatories and bathrooms obtrude themselves upon the façade abutting on the road, they may be said to have four backs and nothing at all which deserves to be designated as a front.

The question sometimes arises as to how far it is legitimate to *disguise* the windows of domestic offices

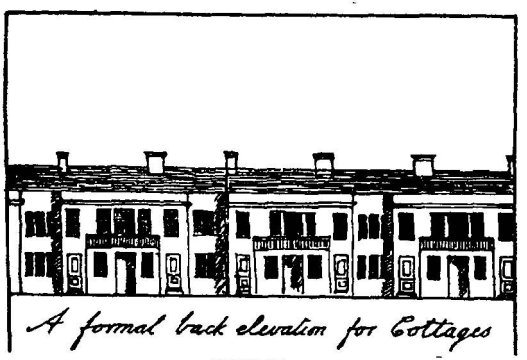

FIGURE 37

and make them balance windows of rooms of a quite different character, such as a library or dining room for instance. An architect of the school of Vanburgh would not scruple in a design of a country house to balance a great reception hall on one side of a court with a similar block sub-divided into kitchen offices on the other side, but such an arrangement is not really satisfactory, because here there is a deliberate deception which impairs the expressiveness of the composition. It is not necessary that such elements in a plan as are of little interest should pretend to be something other than what they are. It suffices if they acknowledge their subordinate status by assuming a polite unobtrusiveness. Of course, there are many occasions such as in large buildings on island sites where lavatory windows are totally concealed from public view by being put in a small interior court.

Where, however, a residential building is so placed that it is exposed to public view on all sides, a special effort should be made to mitigate the crudities of design which tend to mar the façades when domestic offices must reveal their presence. Figures 38, 39 show arrangements of grouping such offices around a recess. In one case a small suite of rooms belonging to a communal house or block of service flats has its own kitchen and lavatory accommodation and in the other two bed sitting-rooms have bathrooms side by side. All the pipes are carried down on the inside surface of the slight projection of wall forming the recess, and thus would be invisible from the outside. Such recesses admit of great variation in design and the corresponding elevations can be adapted to many styles of building.

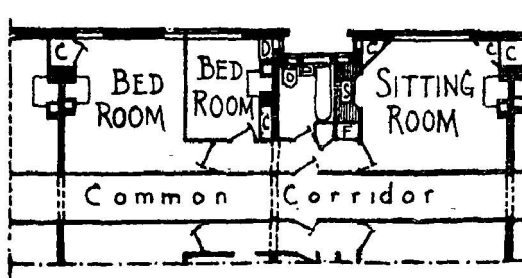

FIGURE 38

It may be conceded that in architecture we need above all things truth, but we must distinguish the truthfulness which is urbane from the truthfulness which is not urbane. It is only this latter kind of truthfulness which is being impugned in these pages. A peculiarity of the small truths is that they often obscure the big truths. The art of living very largely consists in the suppression of these small truths, for unfortunately many small truths do not necessarily make a big truth, and they may easily be added together to make a big lie. For instance, in architecture a façade may make a conspicuous

revelation of the domestic offices of a house. By so doing, the façade is telling a truth. But if it was so arranged that one might glance at it without one's attention being attracted to that aspect of the plan, the façade is expressing a still more important truth, namely that these particular domestic offices have a subordinate function which does not entitle them to great emphasis.

There is a similar suppression of a small truth in order

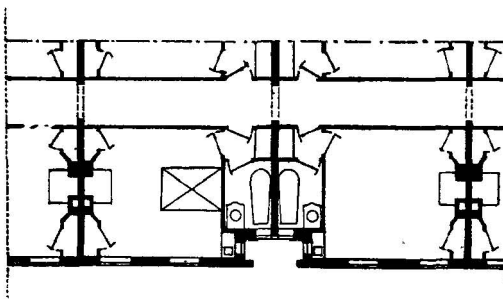

FIGURE 39

to give utterance to a big truth when blind windows are employed to give homogeneity to the different façades of a building or to complete a pattern which otherwise would be interrupted in a most unpleasant manner. The propriety of introducing blind windows as decorative features of a façade has often been questioned. The blind window has been described as a sham, and even to-day its advocates are sometimes accused of turpitude, as if in the domain of architecture they were guilty of some act of petty cheating. The subject cannot be discussed with advantage, however, unless we depart from the traditions of controversy which Ruskin established, for it is impossible to discuss it soberly in the heated atmosphere of a debate where the disputants on one side show so much moral indignation. We shall consider whether this particular offence against architectural propriety—if, indeed, it be an offence—is

confined to buildings in the style derived from Greece and Rome, or whether it does not occur to a much greater extent in those very structures which the Mediævalists call upon us to admire. Perhaps we shall find that the pot has been calling the kettle black; or we may discover a new application for the parable of the mote and the beam.

It often occurs that a corner house has windows on one side but not on another, but it hardly looks well for it to present a perfectly blank wall towards one of the streets which pass it; and if the houses adjoining and opposite the blind side are all of the normal fenestrated type it would almost appear as an act of discourtesy if any particular corner mansion chose, as it were, to turn its back upon a highway which is not an alley but a residential street of some pretentions. In such instances as this the problem is solved by introducing blind windows which by means of architrave and bracketed hoods can be made quite decorative. The more elaborate the articulation of the window the more successful is the result, and, of course, where the window apertures are plain rectangular reveals, as is so often the case in modern American architecture, this particular device cannot so successfully be employed. But it is a perverted sense of truthfulness which would forbid us to use blind windows, for while a blind window may indeed be a lie it is like one of those "white" lies without which everybody knows that social intercourse could never really prosper. The stucco quarters of London provide countless examples of this special kind of architectural good manners, and it is an unfavourable comment upon the present age that these sham windows have gone completely out of fashion, and that in our new town houses there is a complete disregard of such social amenities. Even worse than the blank wall suddenly intruding itself at the corner of a street is the wall of a house which is punctured by windows which are of

irregular configuration. Our eighteenth century forefathers would never have tolerated a façade in which there were seven windows in the first storey and only five on the second, leaving unsymmetrical blanks above two of the lower windows. It may have been necessary that the rooms on one floor should have more light than those on the other, but this is no excuse for the house presenting an aspect which irresistibly reminds one of a man some of whose front teeth have been knocked out. The obvious and correct thing to do is to complete the pattern by introducing blind windows which give the building the quality of repose and thus satisfy the eye.

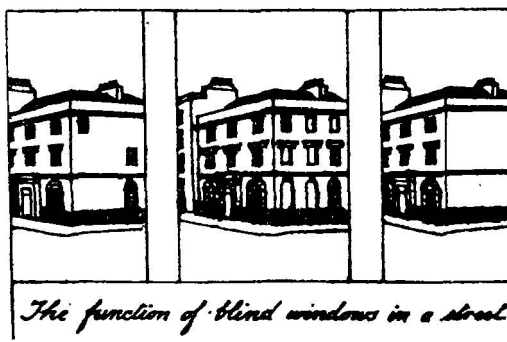

FIGURE 40

Figure 40 shows three different treatments of a corner house. The left-hand side of the diagram shows a building very much disfigured by the irregular arrangement of apertures. In the centre sketch the fault is remedied in the way here recommended, and the five blind windows are manifestly a great improvement of the façade. One might even pass it many times without noticing that the symmetry of the design had been compromised at all. Rather than have a blank wall facing a street as is shown in the right-hand sketch, the

eighteenth century architects would probably not have scrupled to have nine blind windows. This feature, like any other, can be abused, and even employed in the manner just described, it can not claim to be more than an expedient. It is nevertheless a *necessary* expedient and no good architect would shrink from using it when the occasion warrants. It does not in itself symbolise the highest kind of street architecture, but it certainly

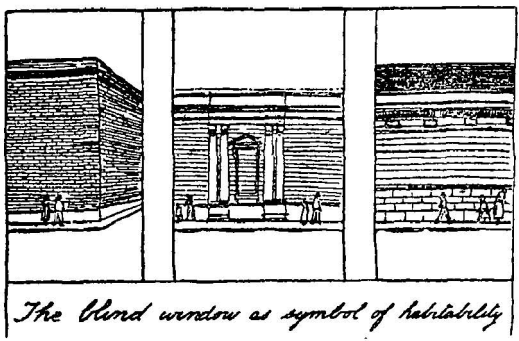

FIGURE 41

represents an attitude of mind, a delicacy of feeling without which the highest kind of street architecture cannot be produced. When the blind windows disappeared or fell into desuetude, architectural manners vanished from our streets. When the civic conception of building be once more held in repute the blind window will return also. It is like a very modest little plant that is pleased to be unnoticed. Yet this plant is of truly aristocratic descent and it will always be found not very far away from the noblest flowers of the garden.

Blind windows have also an important architectural function to perform whenever it is necessary to design a building which is top-lit or which for some reason or other does not need to be lit from the walls facing a street. If the façade were absolutely blank or even

decorated by a columnar treatment there might be nothing to show that the rooms behind were frequented by people at all; it might present the appearance of a granary or some great store-room.

Figure 41 shows three types of wall treatment; on the left-hand side is a perfectly plain box-shaped building which might serve quite a number of social purposes. We are right, however, in assuming that there is nothing very subtle about its air of secretiveness. We are not enlightened concerning the nature of its contents for the simple reason that these contents are not of sufficient social interest to justify their identity being proclaimed with emphasis. What kind of goods, if any, lie behind these walls, we are not invited to ask, and if indeed we are here in the presence of a house which has deliberately turned its back to us, we have no reason to complain of that either, as long as our view-point is in some back-alley in which it may be assumed that architectural proprieties are for the moment relaxed. On the right-hand of Figure 41 is a sketch depicting another kind of wall, also devoid of windows, but having a solidity and tone of self-importance which indicates that it has a rather special function. If we were told that this is a gaol, we should not be surprised. This is a habitable building which is not top-lit (the slate roof proclaims this), and yet the large windows usually associated with habitable rooms are absent. Obviously the inmates are confined to apartments where they are being deprived of the pleasure of looking at the view. Newgate Prison was an example of a building most expressive of its purpose. So solid and yet so decorative, it achieved an admirable severity. Soane's Bank of England, however has been compared unfavourably with Newgate on the ground that the façades of this bank are embellished with blind windows. This seems a most perverse criticism, for the blind windows are the very features which should distinguish a bank from a

prison. As it happens, most of the chambers of the Bank of England are top-lit, and there is an adequate reason for protecting the offices of the Bank from the disturbing sounds and sights of passing traffic in one of the busiest parts of London. Decorate these walls by well-known architectural devices, by arch or column or by the richest sculpture, yet they will not appear to belong to a habitable structure unless they also have a certain number of blind windows, which are here the only recognisable symbols of habitability. The centre sketch of Figure 41 shows such an architectural unit, which might be used in a bank, art gallery or market-place. In a bank, the feature may be associated with a completely fenestrated portion, as in Soane's building where a first-floor storey shows a row of ordinary windows ; in an art gallery the blind windows might be varied by niches for sculpture, while in a market building a greater length of plain wall between the decorated portions might proclaim its more utilitarian function. But the main principle to be established is that an inhabited building must not present an aspect of solid and dull impenetrability.

The present is a strange period in which it is necessary to defend a legitimate architectural device that has been used by the great masters of the past with the happiest effect. Unfortunately, many aesthetic theorists have inherited a body of doctrines propounded by men who, living at a time of great industrial expansion and scientific discovery, translated into the realm of art standards of value which belong by right to the realm of engineering. That is why they hold up for our admiration a species of building in which architectural forms have been determined by engineering necessities. But in praising the truthfulness of construction that they believe was characteristic of a Gothic church, they overlooked the one very common element occurring in such churches, an element in which a sad lack of

truthfulness is displayed. While they found it difficult too severely to stigmatise the "insincere" architecture which arrived with "the foul torrent of the Renaissance," they omitted to notice the appalling "insincerity" of the Gothic builder, who made a practice of employing sham windows not only on the flanks of churches and on their towers, but even on the solid buttresses. This may be considered to be one of the chief weaknesses of the style. The mediæval designer, having very few decorative motifs at his disposal and no columnar system which can be applied to give interest to blank walls, was compelled to reproduce *ad nauseam* forms which have their origin in fenestration. Many Gothic tombs and monuments are particularly offensive in that they are covered with tiny blind windows more appropriate to a toy model than to a serious work of architecture.

There are only two legitimate uses of the blind window. It may be employed to give symmetry to a façade which otherwise would appear incomplete or one-sided ; and it may also be of great service in helping to impart the proper social character to buildings which do not happen to be lit from the sides. In both instances, the point of reference is primarily a social one. A building must show a proper regard for the public. Certain architectural symbols are necessary to this end, and no theory of design which excludes these symbols from the repertory of architectural expression can be truly satisfying.

In the last century a famous writer upon architecture popularised the view that truthfulness of construction was the chief desideratum in a building and if this condition were fulfilled and the constructional members duly ornamented, great architecture would result. This theory has done much to encourage engineers in the belief that they are the true architects, for it is their profession to be experts in construction. A single building with vaults upheld by flying buttresses may be

tolerable and even admired, but one could not regard with favour a whole street of such buildings, for instead of thinking of their social function and their harmonious interrelationship one's attention would be directed to the particular manner in which the roofs are upheld. Let us apply this constructional criterion to the art of

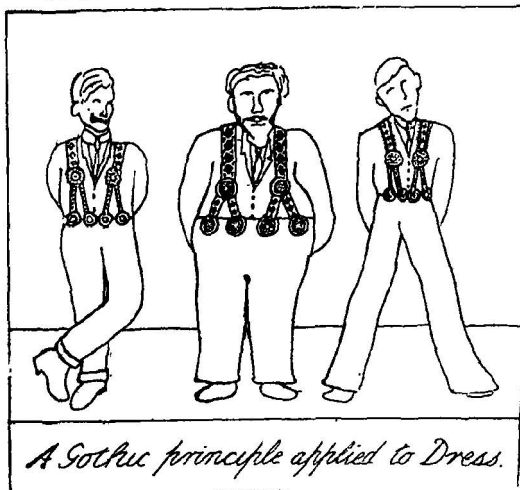

FIGURE 42

dress in which the nature of social values is more clearly understood. Here are three men dressed according to the strictest Ruskinian principles. It will be observed (see Fig. 42) that the constructional members are fully expressed and beautifully ornamented. To most people the result seems palpably absurd, because it is the appropriateness to the social occasion and not the mechanical means of its support which gives to dress its dignity and meaning. But this same principle applies to buildings also and those theorists who have tried to find the criterion of design in the emphasis upon construction have done an ill service to architecture. It is no more necessary to resort to deception in the case of

constructional members than it is in the case of the bathroom and lavatory windows on a façade. We need the truth in each case, but it ought to be the urbane truth, the larger truth which has for its subject the whole function of architecture and not merely a subordinate and instrumental part of this function. There are numerous occasions when the constructional members may with perfect propriety be *concealed*, as for instance when a steel truss is used to support a roof. From outside we see the simple ridge line and the orderly rows of slates, while from the inside our view of the truss is obstructed by a plaster ceiling. Can it be seriously contended that there is anything wrong with such an arrangement? Some truths are best unuttered not because they are unimportant but because they are trite. Everybody knows that the roof has inside support in the shape of a truss, but how unpleasant it would be if all roof coverings were transparent so that we could see the constructive members underneath! The building would present a picture like an X-ray photograph in which we see the bones through the flesh.

The example of Nature gives no support to this indiscriminating truthfulness which conceals nothing. Most of her processes are secret and the organic unity of her forms as outwardly revealed gives but slight indication of the complex mechanism which is necessary for their maintenance in a condition of strength and serviceability. Nature revels in opaqueness, in sheathes and coverings and teguments, in the expressiveness of the *surface* qualities of things and very seldom deals in transparency. A human skin through which the veins are too clearly visible is symptomatic of a disease. And who is not familiar with the kind of pity which is shown in such words as "Poor man, he is in a fearfully emaciated condition, you can count all his ribs . . ."? These words do credit to the person who utters them but they do not convey a judgment concerning the most

important qualities of the object of sympathy. The latter is convicted of suffering from a defect, and the result of this defect is that our attention is directed to a purely mechanical and subordinate aspect of his organic structure which Nature had never intended to emphasise in this particular manner. A statue may have infinite significance and a wealth of cultural value, but this significance and value is lost upon the person whose standard of criticism leads him to begin by counting the statue's ribs. And we are not appreciating the true meaning of architecture if we are too prone to count the ribs of a building, nor can the building itself properly perform the highest architectural function if its parts are so disposed that willy nilly we feel compelled to exercise our minds upon mechanical problems. In many a Gothic church if we happen to gaze upwards our vision is confronted with a bewildering complex of geometrical forms; in estimating thrust and counter-thrust and in surmising what time was spent in the drawing of such multitudinous circles, arcs and sectors our thoughts idly wander in a broad and shallow stream over stony acres of elementary mathematics.

Gothic is essentially the engineer's style, it is the most materialistic, the most dominated by constructional necessity. The remarkable thing is that the mediæval builders were never happy in this servitude to the engineer, and by every means in their power they struggled against it. Wherever it was possible to mitigate the crudities of the pointed arch they did so, until finally in the the fanvault they arrived at a form in which constructional emphasis was entirely resolved in pattern. This was not a case of *ornamenting* the constructional members, leaving them with their original degree of accentuation even heightened by such a treatment, for here was a reversion to rounded forms in which the element of harshness so conspicuously present in the broken segments of the pointed arch was scarcely in existence at all.

Even in their wooden roofs, as soon as they gained confidence in their ability as carpenters, the Gothic builders made use of decorative forms such as the arches and quarter circles which occur in hammer-beam trusses. These curved struts are primarily designed to soften the crudeness of the junctions between the sloping planes of the roof, and although to a certain degree they strengthen the structure they are not nearly as efficacious for this purpose as straight pieces of timber in direct tension or compression.

A weakness of the pointed arch was that it did not lend itself to lateral grouping. The virtues of rectangular architecture can easily be described. There can always be a unity in the repetition of rectangular elements, because each part is suited to be a fraction and can be placed in alignment with the fraction adjacent to it. When round arches are repeated there is a unity of an inferior sort because each arch, being so complete, is apt to assert itself at the expense of the whole : the result in this instance in not a unity but a plurality, and if we wish to bind the façade together we must frame the arches in an Order. The Romans knew this very well. But when we have to deal with pointed arches and we are forbidden to use an Order (as naturally we must be, since the top of the pointed arch, not being horizontal, will not accord with any entablature) it is quite impossible to obtain a unity. We must rest satisfied with the placing of fragments side by side. Such a system of fenestration reproduces within the boundaries of a single façade that unsatisfactory repetition of shapes which in the previous chapter we found reason to condemn when it was exemplified in a row of gables. A hundred square-topped windows may be so grouped as to make up an interesting and harmonious unity but a similar number of apertures crowned with pointed arches could not fail to produce effects both discordant and monotonous.

The fact is that, unlike the Gothic Revivalists, who were themselves unconscious *victims* of the industrialism they professed to combat, the mediæval builder realised perfectly well that constructional truth was not the whole truth—it was not the urbane truth. When he became acquainted with a more mature style of building in which the architect was enabled to be master in his own household, and a method of construction in which ease and simplicity took the place of fuss, with a sigh of ineffable relief he abandoned all the too elaborate ingenuities, the unsatisfactory compromises with his artistic conscience with which the Gothic manner of building had made him painfully familiar. Nothing could be more false than the assertion that the formal code which inspired the English race to such a glorious architectural development as marked the "Georgian" era was inspired from without and foreign to the national temperament. In Gothic chains our forefathers were never quite happy because the Gothic style could not give sufficient opportunity for the exercise of a very special talent which the English have shown themselves to possess in a marked degree, namely the talent for *urbanity*. The profound aesthetic instinct which eventually gave us the lovely streets of the eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries was struggling to express itself right through the Middle Age, and although the invention of the steam engine caused a vast social flux which temporarily upset our valuations, that same instinct is still resident in the English mind. The emotion displayed by the inhabitants of London at the loss of old Regent Street, the finest flower of the national genius in civic architecture, is a welcome sign that there are strong spiritual links between the present generation and that golden age of British art which immediately preceded the advent of industrialism.

It is noteworthy that the increase in the number and variety of mechanical appliances at first had no

deleterious effects upon the arts. The tradition of good taste was so strong that even the development of industrial works assumed an urbane form. For instance in the first half of the nineteenth century the typical building associated with iron works had not only great solidity but also a certain suavity which brought it well within the range of architecture proper. And in a period of tremendous expansion in ship-building, the utilitarian structures in the great dockyards often assumed simple and impressive shapes. The important fact is that in those days the dividing line between architect and engineer was not so clearly drawn as it is now.

The aesthetic reactions which marked the beginning of the industrial revolution were perfectly sane. Neither architects nor engineers lost their heads in the least and the conditions seemed extremely favourable to a complete cultural control of future developments. What was wanted then was philosophic guidance, the advent of a few great men who, recognising the inevitability of the fundamental changes about to occur, would have accepted them with a good grace and even welcomed them as providing a vast new field for aesthetic conquest. England was crying for a humanist, but in her hour of need she failed to produce one. Instead of a humanist there arrived a moralist who confronted the on-coming flood of industrialism with wild shrieking hysterial. He it was who did more than any other man to help to formulate those twin dogmas mutually contradictory but often held by the same person, which have done much to make architectural vulgarity triumphant and ubiquitous. The first dogma affirms that the buildings which serve the objects of modern industry ought not to be beautiful, need not be beautiful and cannot be beautiful because modern industry is itself the very devil and ugly by nature. The second dogma affirms that if a building but serves its utilitarian purpose honestly, if it truthfully expresses its own mechanism, then it already *is* beautiful

in fact, it has the highest artistic excellence that can possibly be imagined. No matter which dogma we accept, the practical results are identical. A man puts up a factory just anyhow and whether we judge it by the first criterion or by the second, it is equally correct. Thus the captain of industry is given "carte blanche" to do exactly as he pleases without any aesthetic restraint.

The art of civic design will fail utterly unless the engineer can be induced to join the architect in acknowledging civic standards. Yet if we have to compare, in respect of their capacity for mischief, the fanatics who say the products of engineering cannot be beautiful and the complacent utilitarians who say it need not be beautiful, it must be acknowledged that the influence of the latter is the more injurious to the cause of art. The first attitude leads to a statement concerning fact, and as the statement is demonstrably false no great harm is done by it; but the second attitude, having a show of tolerance, and being supported by the general laziness of mankind is more difficult to combat. The argument can be presented in a persuasive manner. "Do not attempt the impossible," we may be urged, "for the whole of life does not belong to the artist any more than it belongs to the poet. Our capacity for expression would be unduly limited if it were decreed that everybody must on all occasions express himself in verse. Similarly, men would be much hampered in their constructive activity if they considered themselves to be bound by a resolution never to produce anything which did not exemplify aesthetic principles." Are we to maintain then that while beauty and good manners are desirable qualities in some of the things we create, the vast majority of our products are completely outside the category of art? Such an assumption is quite unwarrantable. There could easily be a basis of agreement between the artist and the utilitarian if each could be

brought to recognise the legitimate claims of the other. For instance, it might be suggested as a compromise that if in any place the order, which is the condition of beauty and urbanity, be unattainable, there should either be a certain measure of concealment or else steps should be taken to make the scene more tolerable by putting great aesthetic emphasis upon the enclosures of the objects, and so present to the spectator an aggregate, still somewhat confused perhaps, yet dominated by simple guiding contours on which the eye could rest with satisfaction.

The virtues of concealment are obvious. The lives of most of us are of such a nature that we do not wish to hold up, as it were, an open window through which every stranger could pry into our most intimate concerns. For while part of one's being may represent accomplishment and may be something complete and worthy to be made public, other parts may be indicative of an experimental stage which one does not desire to intrude upon the attention of one's neighbours. Such a measure of incompleteness and disorder is present not only in our minds but in our environment. For that reason, just as in speech we practise certain reticences, in the arrangement of our homes we are fond of putting all manner of things in cupboards and drawers. Of course the motive in the latter case may be to protect the things in question, but in many instances the objects are hidden from view for no other reason than that their open display would be unsightly. This fact has a significance for the engineer and town-planner. If for considerations of practical necessity some ugly feature must be tolerated in the midst of a city, we are fortunate if we can screen it from view by means of a high wall or a thick bank of trees. There are shrubs so hardy that they will thrive even in bleak and smoky places where there is great industrial activity. Such a method of using verdure is justified as a temporary expedient,

for if we cannot resolve a discord the next best thing is to mask it.

When the untidiness cannot conveniently be concealed then let us introduce large dominating shapes such as may constitute an element of rhythm in the prevailing disorder. In commercial exhibitions in which there is a display of multifarious objects, the resultant spectacle would be most tiring to the eye unless a degree of simplification is attained. The exhibits may be specimens of machinery which could not on any account themselves form part of an aesthetic scheme, yet by putting them under carefully designed stalls and by emphasizing the pathways between the stalls with coloured lines such as long straight carpets might provide, an agreeable effect could be produced. And even in the design of factories and large industrial works, without in the least interfering with such practical arrangements as might prove the most expedient, it is possible to show a becoming deference to the aesthetic ideal. Tall chimney stacks could easily be placed in some geometrical formation and be punctuated in a conspicuous manner, while a workshop might be crowned by a roof of simple but imposing shape forming a splendid canopy over the busy but disordered scene below.

If a measure of surrender be demanded of engineers in that they should acknowledge aesthetic standards, there must also be frank abandonment of a certain prejudice with regard to machinery which is widely current among those who describe themselves as artists. If we allow ourselves to be influenced by such a prejudice it means that all attempts to humanise the industrial age and to bring its products within the dominion of art are foredoomed to failure. But this melancholy conclusion fails to take into account an important aspect of architecture and the arts associated therewith. It is clear that if either a feature or an appurtenance of a building has been endowed with the attribute of manners,

if it takes due cognisance of what lies next to it, if it expresses its proper social status, it has an artistic merit that is quite independent of the particular manner in which its parts were manufactured. Of course, if the use of machinery leads to a standardisation of parts which militates against the possibility of good design, it is to be deplored. There are occasions, however, when a rhythmic repetition of elements is quite legitimate and any means of economising the labour involved in such repetition ought to be welcomed. The façade of some public edifice may have a long row of fluted classic columns with ornate capitals and bases. Much thought should be applied to the determination of the position, size and shape of the columns, but their actual setting up should be attended with dispatch.

If a particular contour for a cornice has been decided upon, no additional virtue accrues to the design because it happens to be established that scores of men have worked ten hours a day in order to cut the stone to the required shape. Two social pictures may here be contrasted. On the one hand we may imagine the manual labourer with interest narrowed and senses blunted by his long round of degrading toil. At evening with dissatisfied mien he will slouch away from his place of work, perhaps get drunk on the way home and beat his wife. On the other hand, suppose that the required architectural result could be attainted by the use of a mechanical appliance and that the length of cornice of the type specified could be cut or moulded in the course of a few hours. A person who directed such a machine might do more in a forenoon than the manual labourer could do in a week, and might be entitled to spend the rest of the day as he liked; he could devote himself to the further study of his profession or else follow pursuits not immediately connected with it. The artist looks to the mechanical inventor to make it possible for all of us to enjoy this additional leisure.

Urbanity in design is a product of leisure, of a condition of philosophic equilibrium. The age of machinery, if directed by men of imagination, ought to produce the greatest art there ever was.

Such a result, however, cannot be hoped for unless we can successfully combat certain schools of opinion which in their various ways are the cause of vulgarity in the arts. Of very great influence are the doctrinaires whom I venture to call "the materialists." These materialists will perhaps feel deeply insulted at being so described, for they consider themselves to be intensely spiritual. They hold the belief that good architecture depends on the human touch, "the spirit of the craftsman," and they are never tired of telling us "Get in touch with the materials, abandon the idea that architecture is an affair of tee-squares and drawing-boards." These modern educationalists will assure us that all will be well if only we rub our noses deep enough in the materials.

It will nearly always be found that the architects who have concentrated their attention upon materials are the worst offenders against all the major canons of taste, the canons which determine the proper character of a building and its relation to its neighbours. Of course considerations of practical expediency will make it necessary for an architect to become acquainted with the properties of the materials he proposes to use, but this is merely an elementary precaution and does not constitute even a minor article in the philosophy of architecture proper any more than an injunction to use a serviceable pen may be held to rank as a literary principle. Similarly constructional competence is essential, but here again any architect worthy of the name will naturally take steps to secure that his buildings will be stable. If a man weigh fifteen stone he must not walk over a slender plank supported only at its extremities, but the appreciation of this fact will never make a man an artist. The "materialists" have as their spiritual father William

Morris, who in reacting from the industrialism of his age announced the theory that the mechanical efficiency of the machine cut or moulded form was necessarily inferior to anything produced by "the craftsman's touch." This doctrine has been a prolific source of bad manners in architecture. The costly vulgarity of so many products of the "Arts and Crafts" movement has never ceased to bear witness to the fallaciousness of the "materialist" philosophy. Great manual exertion has been employed in the expression of the crudest ideas. What is needed, however, is the most rapid execution (by mechanical means wherever this is possible) of artistic projects on the conception of which long and profound labours have been expended. Such a preliminary study of the elements of design could scarcely fail to take into account the ideal of good manners in architecture and its accessories.

Perhaps it seems a harsh thing to say, but every precept concerning the practice of building, even if it has a measure of truth, may become a direct cause of vulgarity in architecture, and especially is this the case if the little truth puffs itself out and grows so important in its own estimation and in the estimation of others that the major truth, the aesthetic principle of manners is ignored and even treated with contempt. To the doctrinaires referred to in the preceding paragraph the shape and pattern of the stone means very little. The chief thing is that it shall have been "affectionately caressed" by the chisel of a man who takes pleasure in his work. This attitude is doubtless due to the feeling that an aesthetic form as such is something cold and unspiritual and must in some special manner bear the stamp of humanity before we can be expected to regard it with any real enthusiasm. Such a desire for an intimate human character in a work of architecture is praiseworthy and that is why the absurd glorification of the act of craftmanship has lasted so long. If we would attain to urbanity, however, we must think

of architecture not in terms of individual stone "affectionately caressed" or otherwise handled by craftsmen, but of towns. The Town-Planner takes away something from the craftsman, but what does he give him in exchange? Surely he provides the means of attaining to a far more profound spirituality than can possibly be expressed in terms of strokes of a chisel, a spirituality that manifests itself in the harmonious arrangement of all the elements of which a city is made up. It is needless to point out the degree of self sacrifice, the complete surrender of countless private interests, the cordial co-operation for a great end which the fulfilment of such a purpose demands.

It is just because of the tremendous effort which is needed for any general attainment of a standard of urbanity in architecture, that we are inundated with many cheap substitutes for an aesthetic theory so difficult to put into practice. What kind of criticism are architects most in need of, what are the peculiar philosophic weaknesses to which the actual practice of architecture exposes them? To this it must be replied that the commonest error in design is to concentrate attention upon a single building and to ignore its relation to the environment. In extenuation of such an offence it may be urged that an architect's attention must be devoted not only to the satisfaction of his clients' complex practical requirements but to a thousand details in connection with the preparation of drawings and the supervision of materials and contracts. Under these circumstances it is often difficult enough for him to create a composition which is coherent within itself and almost incredibly difficult if it is suggested that he should also harmonise his building with its neighbours. Yet it is precisely this additional effort that the lay public should demand of him. And a public which values architectural proprieties would enjoin upon the client also an equal measure of discipline, for otherwise the noblest projects

of civic design will be brought to nought by the obstructive individualism of the building owner. It should be the object of the public to give greater stability of purpose to those who practise the art of architecture, to help them to attain to a uniform langauge by means of which modern buildings, although differing from each other in every possible way in respect of actual shape and function, may yet defer to a common cultural standard. It is in moments of despair of ever achieving this, that the architect is most likely to take refuge in theories which ignore such a standard altogether and which tend to make him satisfied with himself if only he can give his buildings individualist qualities such as are expressed in convenient planning, truthfulness of construction, the right use of materials, and so on. As a last resort he may even have the hardihood to say that his buildings have at least the conspicuous virtue of suitability to our Northern climate. Here we enter another of those philosophic regions where the small truth is apt to be at variance with the big truth.

If there is one subject in the world which lends itself to sonorous platitude, the relation between architecture and climate is that subject. Now, a platitude is nothing more than an obvious truth, and so one would naturally suppose that a man who loved platitude would also be a lover of truth. But this is seldom the case, and it is a remarkable fact that the writers who above all others have been wont to indulge in platitude have by no means been distinguished for clarity of thought or honesty of statement. Of course, one cannot include in this category the authors of those compositions rare in the history of literature, which are made up of sentences individually so uninteresting that they can only be described as jejune, but which by virtue of their cumulative effect are endowed with deep significance. The mighty fabric of mathematics is an example of a similar kind of composition; it is from top to bottom built up of

platitudes, but then they are arranged in an intelligible sequence. In fact, the only excuse for saying obvious things is that by saying a great many of them one after another we may gradually arrive at conclusions equally true but not quite so obvious.

Let us see how a born platitudinarian approaches the subject of architecture and climate. In the first place he will tell us that the climate of the North differs from the climate of the South. This is indisputable. He will next give utterance to the profound generalisation that architecture is influenced by climate. Having shown such marked proficiency in geography and aesthetics, he will proceed to a still greater triumph in the realm of history and inform us that Classic Architecture had its origin in the South. If the matter ended there all would be well. Unfortunately, however, not content to rest upon his laurels, he is anxious to win his spurs as a logician, and with great self-confidnece he will exclaim, "Classic Architecture is not suitable for our Northern climate." The extreme inconsequence of the above statement will become obvious on investigation. It will be a profitable task to take each of the premises separately and, by elaborating them, see what is their real bearing upon the subject at issue.

"The climate of the North differs from the climate of the South." Of course it does. In the South of Europe there is less rain than in the North ; there is also more heat and the light is stronger. It is true that these conditions have certain effects upon architectural forms. As to what these effects are there is ample room for difference of opinion. In former times the windows of houses in southern countries were made small—to keep out the heat. To-day, however, in India and similar places large windows are preferred ; plenty of air is thus admitted into the rooms, while spreading balconies protect them from the sun. It is possible to contend that in England the windows ought to be fairly small—to keep

out the cold ; on the other hand many people tell us that in northern climes large windows are a necessity, for we want as much sun as we can get. As a matter of fact climate has little determining influence upon the dimensions of windows. It must be remembered that the purposes for which a room is employed have more to do with the size of its apertures than has the temperature of the surrounding air. Nowadays, moreover, we have artificial heating, so that a Norwegian, if he pleased, could live quite comfortably in a palace of glass. We must next inquire whether climate has any determining influence upon the shape of roofs. Long ago it had a considerable one, but in modern times it is quite within the resources of the builder to make low-pitched or even flat, roofs watertight. There remain to be considered mouldings, ornament and colour. It may be admitted that the strength of light in any particular region must certainly be taken into account by any architect who wishes to use ornament or colour with propriety, but there are only two respects in which there must be a different treatment in high and low latitudes. In the first place there is less reflected light in Northern countries ; the Parthenon frieze would not appear to advantage if disposed in its original manner in England. Secondly, buildings of bright hue are rather crude when seen beneath a grey sky, whereas, in places where the sun's rays beat fiercely, striking contrasts of colour are more permissible because an intense light does much to equalise the tone of all objects upon which it falls.

"Architecture is influenced by climate." We have seen that it is, though not to such an extent as is sometimes supposed. The actual forms of architecture may be influenced by climate, but surely not in style! For it is the nature of a style that it embodies a principle which can find expression in every possible type of structure. A "style" that could not be used in both

hot and cold countries, that was not equally appropriate for all buildings public and private, would not be a style at all. It would be just as ineffective and ludicrous as the butcher in "The Hunting of the Snark" who "could only kill beavers."

It is difficult to exaggerate the injurious architectural effects which may result, and in fact have resulted from an erroneous theory of the influence of climate upon the forms of building. The ideas, so sedulously propagated by the Gothic Revivalists, that no roof which is not of steep pitch can possibly be suitable for the English climate was largely responsible for the decay of the noble tradition of building which was established by our forefathers of the Georgian era. The steep gables and hipped roofs so characteristic of the domestic architecture ever since Mid-Victorian days are defended on the ground that their form is determined by considerations of climate. Yet during the 18th Century roofs of low pitch were universal and perfectly adequate for their utilitarian purpose. Moreover this treatment of the roof was a necessary consequence of the desire to give buildings an urban quality. And even in mediæval times the tendency towards roofs of low pitch was clearly manifested, as in the "Perpendicular" style. The Gothic Revivalists, however, took little account of this fact and seemed to be firmly of opinion that English architecture, national architecture, ought to be steep-roofed. New College, Oxford, provides an extraordinary instance where in restoring part of the structure they even raised the pitch of the existing roof, which, apparently was not in their opinion sufficiently "mediæval" in character. Needless to say, the alteration was gravely detrimental to the appearance of the building. Admirers of King's Chapel, Cambridge, may be thankful that this famous example of Gothic architecture escaped being the subject of similar attentions.

Even to-day there survives a curious prejudice in

favour of making the roofs of buildings as conspicuous as possible. Such an architectural policy is quite ruinous to street architecture for the buildings fail to subordinate themselves to the general scheme if each separate shop or block of offices as it were, gathers itself together under a prominent hipped roof or displays numerous gable ends and double rows of dormers. The parapet wall is the natural termination to an urban façade, and generally it should be accompanied either by a flat or low-pitched roof or else by a mansard. Any great departure from this treatment immediately gives the buildings an air of rusticity. Even if at any time it had been beyond the technical resources of the architect to render a low-pitched roof water-tight it would have been his urgent duty to leave no device untried until this had been accomplished, for otherwise the concept of urbanity could never have found complete architectural expression. But, as a matter of fact, provided that slates or pantiles are used, this form of roof presents no practical difficulties whatsoever.

The parapet has a great merit in that it is the means of preventing the chimneys from being too conspicuous. So successfully does it terminate a façade that its use renders it unnecessary for the chimneys to take much cognisance of the fenestration. In this instance an irregular disposition of the chimneys causes us no vexation at all, for in the first place they are kept moderately low and secondly they appear as a mere addendum to the building and not a dominating element in its design. Where, however, there is a tall roof of which the base, marked by gutter or cornice, rests immediately upon the façade the chimneys and the fenestration belong to the same pattern. Unless symmetry in the one is accompanied by symmetry in the other an obvious disord will be set up. Often the desired harmony can only be achieved at the expense of the convenience of the plan. Moreover, as the chimneys have

to be carried to a considerable height in order to overtop the ridge of the roof, they are apt to become almost like factory shafts, ugly and self assertive. In a street the fact that the fire-places are situated in a particular part of a building is not of general interest and belongs to the category of those minor architectural truths which is an urban society are best uttered in a whisper.

The new London County Hall is an example of a building which in spite of its noble row of classic columns and its orderly fenestration is yet made to strike a somewhat rustic and even domestic note. The most prominent features of the London County Hall are its great roof, its central cupola and the tall stone chimneys that rear their heads so aggressively against a background of terra-cotta. Now, in a mediæval church or a structure such as Westminster Hall a steep pitched roof has an obvious justification; for there it is used to cover a chamber which reaches up to a considerable height within the roof itself. A high stone vault or a decorative hammer-beam truss gives point and purpose to such a form, but in the London County Hall the crescent part of the roof, which is of enormous cubical capacity, appears to contain nothing whatsoever except the means of its own support, while the segments surmounting the wings have only a partial justification in the two rows of dormers. And these latter are suggestive of a niggling economy born of a recognition of the fact that it is cheaper to put storeys in the roof than to raise the façade.

A building such as this cannot be adequately judged without reference to its immediate historical source. As has been admitted on all hands, this design shows the influence of Norman Shaw. Now Norman Shaw spent the best part of his life in designing country houses. Being brought up in the traditions of the Gothic Revival he thought that a mediæval cottage gave a better inspiration for domestic architecture than an 18th century

mansion, although the houses he designed were often equal to a mansion in size. A detached mediæval cottage sometimes has a high-pitched roof and chimneys prominently disposed. Hence a Norman Shaw house has a similar roof and chimneys much bigger and still more prominent. And is not the chimney expressive of the hearth and is not the hearth the symbol of the home? What, therefore, could more adequately express the quintessential idea of domestic architecture tnan a large soaring chimney? Through the Autumn haze we look wistfully at the gently trailing smoke and our thoughts dwell upon hospitable fare. But may we not ask in all seriousness, Why are these conspicuous chimneys allowed to domineer over a great public building? In Somerset House, the Treasury, the War Office, and in the other buildings which house the Departments of State, I am told that quite adequate provision is made not only for heating the rooms but for the bodily refreshment of the civil servants. But in these structures in proper urban fashion the façades are surmounted by low-pitched or flat roofs and parapet walls behind which the chimneys are well nigh invisible or at least inconspicuous. In the London County Hall, however, the eight glorified chimney flues facing the river front strike a note of defiance, as if the occupants of the building were proclaiming to the public "We don't care in the least what *you* say and we *will* have our cups of tea."

Individual architects are generally the last people who ought to be held responsible for the qualities of their works. Not the men who design the buildings, but the men who set up the standards of architectural value are here ultimately responsible. Sometimes, of course, a great practitioner himself creates the new canons by which his works are to be judged and carries the public with him. But more often he but gives expression to ideals and prejudices first formulated by others. As has already been said, the roof of the County

Hall shows the influence of Norman Shaw. But its philosophic ancestry goes back much further than that. We owe this particular design to a prolonged re-iteration of the sophism that "Architectural style is conditioned by climate." The roof of the County Hall is, we may rest assured, a water-tight roof. But it is not an *urbane* roof.

A few analogies from the art of dress may help one to obtain sensible views about the relation of style to climate. Dress provides an excellent example of an art in which a sense of proportion must be preserved. One function of dress is not allowed to dominate unduly over the others. For instance it is admitted that the thickness and quantity of our clothes should be conditioned partly by their temperature. Yet the style is not so conditioned. When an Englishman goes to India he does not forsake the fashions of his native land, but carries all his sartorial conventions with him because these conventions are expressive of his civilisation. If the climate is very hot, he wears thinner clothes, but the cut of the clothes, the style is not necessarily altered at all. And even within the limits of a single style the actual forms of dress cannot be entirely conditioned by the temperature. On a very hot day one might like to divest oneself of nearly all one's clothing but other considerations supervene to prevent us. A soldier or a policeman on duty is not permitted to dispense with his head-dress, even if occasionally he feels its presence rather irksome. The few eccentrics who go about hatless and in sandals are really no healthier than anybody else, but they would sacrifice the most significant conventions of dress to their own fetish. Similarly, there are architectural "reformers" who would make a single hygienic condition dominant over the forms of architecture. Everybody would agree that our streets ought to have a sufficiency of sunlight, but the idea that the consideration of sunlight shall be paramount, that

the widths of streets and the distances between buildings should be entirely determined by mathematical rules is subversive of civic architecture.

From the hygienic point of view, the important thing is that the air we breathe should have been subject to the purifying influence of sunshine, and a room which is itself in shade, but which is well ventilated from a sunny street is quite healthy. Of course, it would be pleasant if every living-room could have direct sunshine at all times of the day, but to insist upon this would not be practicable. For indoor occupations, however, direct sunshine is not always an unmixed blessing. In factories and business houses it is often purposley excluded and even a kitchen is suppposed to be the better for a north light. Moreover, it must be borne in mind that a house is not a prison. When the sun is shining the proper place for young children is in the open air. It is all the more necessary, therefore, that there should be plenty of gardens and playgrounds for children. In the case of adults also, the practice of being out of doors should be encouraged by the provision of parks, and there should be easy access to the country. But as it is in the nature of walls that they cast a shadow, architecture becomes impossible if everyone demands a sun-bath in his home. Just as there are occasions when we must be dressed in a manner which is not wholly comfortable there are occasions when not only the convenience of town planning but a consideration of the beauty of architecture itself and the dignity of its communal expression dictate that certain kinds of building in certain quarters of the town should be comparatively close together and in a continuous formation which makes it impossible for them to receive the maximum of sunlight. This is not to neglect hygiene, but rather to safeguard its popularity by preventing it from being viewed in a wrong perspective. Hygiene is obviously much more important

than manners. But in our practice of the art of dress we do not allow hygiene to vanquish manners, nor ought we to allow it to do so in architecture.

As soon as one enters the domain of "Town Planning" it becomes necessary to study innumerable problems, most of which are not obviously related to that of urbanity in architecture. Experts in law and town planning procedure, administrative experts, traffic experts and sanitary experts all compete against each other in trying to fill our minds with the various facts, the truths which belong to their particular subjects. The Town Planner cannot afford to neglect any of such truths. The sum of such truths, however, is not the urbane truth. It is possible that these scientific interests may all grow so strong that the aesthetic side of town-planning will be woefully neglected. There is a danger that one day in the not very distant future we shall be confronted with an obituary notice writ in large and monstrous letters across the whole breadth of England "Here lies the art of Civic Design. It was killed by the '*Science*' of Town Planning."

There is one form of ordinance which is urgently needed, if we are to preserve such beauties as our towns already possess. The finest street architecture in the world is wasted if there be no control over signs and advertisements. In spite of that, however, it would be worse than useless to adopt a very censorious attitude towards them. Often they tell us necessary truths and all that we can insist upon is that they tell these truths as politely as the circumstances permit. As signs and advertisements are exceedingly complex in their social origin and purpose, serving not only the needs of commerce, but the convenience of the public, they should be the subject of delicate adjustment rather than of legislation framed in a harsh spirit. For instance, it would be absurd to make the same rules for all thoroughfares, broad and narrow, formal and informal,

metropolitan and suburban. We ought, rather, to permit the greatest amount of licence that is consistent with a certain minimum standard of aesthetic propriety; but it is not too much to ask that this minimum standard should be enforced by local authorities. Regulations clearly defined and logically adapted to varying circumstances, even if they constitute a somewhat elaborate code, are easier to administer than one crude enactment which, on account of its very simplicity, becomes a source of vexation to everybody. The by-law which relates to the width of roads, so mischievous because of its neglect to take into account their different types and purposes, is an example to be avoided.

Signs and advertisements may be divided into two classes—those that are necessary to the public, such as the names of shops, offices, and places of amusement, and those that are gratuitously thrust upon its notice—descriptions of the various brands of whisky, soap, and other merchandise. Obviously, the first kind is worthy of greater consideration than the second.

It would be a good rule if shopkeepers were forbidden to flaunt their names above the first-floor level. To spread huge gilt letters over the upper part of a façade is to destroy whatever artistic merit it may have possessed; besides this, the view of a street is most pleasing when the temporary and movable element, namely, sign-boards and letters, are confined to the lower part, so that there remains something solid, permanent, and architectural upon which the eye may rest. It has been contended that a shopkeeper would lose customers if compelled to observe this self-denying ordinance; and so he undoubtedly might if it were imposed upon him alone; but if all his neighbours were similarly treated there could be no injustice. It is a question of moderating the key all round, and the relative obstrusiveness of the shops need not be altered at all. Generally a façade belongs to a single proprietor, but in cases where

the upper rooms are sublet for offices it should be sufficient for the owners of these to have their names displayed behind the windows, as is frequently done, or else to have printed letters in the glass itself. This is infinitely preferable to the practice of putting large placards on the second, third, and fourth storeys of a building.

As for signs at right angles to the plane of a wall, such as clocks, flags, barbers' poles, pawnbrokers' emblems, and similar devices, they have their legitimate place, and nobody could wish to abolish them entirely; but they might well be restricted to the more informal parts of a city, and it may be added that they appear to better advantage in a narrow thoroughfare than in a broad one; for when there is room to step back and have a proper front view of a building it is wrong to introduce appurtenances which are only fit to be seen from the side On the other hand, the little village lane at Clovelly, so beloved by painters, is given an additional interest by the conspicuous signboard of the hotel at the top of the hill; in the typical Chinese town the silk streamers bearing the trademarks of merchants are an element of charm; and the beauty of Bond Street is enhanced by the coloured flags displayed from the various art galleries. In fact, a narrow street of no great architectural pretensions and without a culminating point, such as a tower or dome, is much improved by having features which partially interrupt the view and form pleasant halting places for the eye. But where there is a formal treatment providing a vista towards a terminal building the spectator would only be irritated if a series of objects were allowed to act like screens and to obstruct his vision of the most important thing in front of him.

A kind of advertisement which has become very common is the illuminated sign, and it calls for strict censorship. A particularly offensive type, and one that ought to be suppressed as soon as possible consists

in the flashing of names on to the pavement; to walk over brilliant letters is most unpleasant. Then the custom of forming words out of a large number of electric-light globes is apt to destroy the dignity of evening. The glare of lamps and shop-fronts is productive of a certain beauty; when the traffic and the pavements are lit up and the outline of dark buildings is visible against a sombre sky, architectural values are maintained; but when a gigantic name shines through the dusk, everything else in the view is subordinated to it. Every night the Thames Embankment and its environs are disfigured by this means, and it is an outrage that city and river are thus bereft of the grandeur that properly belongs to them.

Hoardings do not present a very great difficulty: in the immediate neighbourhood of a building of historical interest or of national importance it might be well to keep them bare, but in most positions a series of posters truly decorative in character and adequately framed cannot be objectionable. Some of the worst examples of the bad arrangement of advertisements can be seen in railway-stations, and it is to be hoped that the day will come when the designers of these will set aside definite positions for all pictures and notices, so that we shall avoid the painful jumble that results at present. The French, above all other people, are competent to give us instruction in these particular matters, for they know well how to protect their buildings from desecration. Two placards eighteen inches wide placed just outside the Opera House are considered sufficient to inform the Parisians of the entertainment that takes place within.

The proper disposition of signs and advertisements call for high qualities of public spirit on the part of the citizens, and the degree of good taste which is shown in this respect is an important index of national culture. Judging from the very rapid growth of gaudy and indecorous illuminated signs in our streets it would seem

that the virtues of mutual forbearance and of suavity are no longer held in repute. The only cure for this state of affairs lies in constant and unwearying propaganda on the part of those whose senses are offended by such atrocities. And above all in places of education both for juveniles and adults the principal of urbanity in its wide range and significance should be made the subject of most definite and formal instruction.

The real trouble is that the anarchical element is now becoming triumphant in all the arts. We are told that art is the expression of emotions. Most execrable buildings or pictures are excused on the ground that they truthfully represent what the artists felt. To which one can only say "If you really feel things like that, tell them not in Gath, publish them not in the streets of Askalon." Obviously it would be preferable that such ingenuous artists should deign to be hypocritical, for there are occasions when sincerity becomes a vice.

The doctrine that a building should proclaim the personality of its designer has been the cause of much vulgarity in architecture. Now, it is clear that if this condition is fulfilled buildings could only harmonise with each other when the personalities of their designers also harmonised. Such a state of things would indeed represent an Utopian society! Unfortunately, if we must wait for such a consummation as that, civic architecture would have to be postponed to the crack of doom. The difficulty is immediately resolved when it is recognised that architecture is not a personal matter at all, that the character of a building must be determined not by the temperament of its architect but by the requirements of its occupants, by the formal principles of composition and by the civic ideal itself which must embrace a concept of every individual architectural unit. To revert once more to a simple comparison from dress, would not any man be offended rather than pleased if a friend on greeting him were to remark "Ah, I see your

overcoat was designed by Mr. So-and-so," mentioning a well-known costumier, or "Your boots show the marked individuality of form which declare them to have been conceived by Mr. So-and-so"? A well-cut overcoat and a properly made boot do not draw attention to themselves at all, and similarly if architecture is ever to attain to a mature development comparable to that of dress, a well-designed house will not draw attention to itself either. In the eighteenth and early nineteenth century, when urban architecture reached its climax in this country, whole streets of houses were so harmonious in style that it would have been extremely difficult to pick out the designs according to their authorship. Yet the chief virtues of such houses would never have been expressed at all if their architects had been thinking of their own personalities rather than of the great civic proprieties.

Is there not one last cause of vulgarity in building, which has not been included in this list namely, the predilections of the client? Is it not common practice for architects to say that modern vulgarity is due to the commercialism of the age? I believe, however, that the accusation is unjust. The professional mandarins, the art critics and famous literary men who have undertaken to instruct the public in architecture, have themselves formulated the very theories that are the prime cause of nearly all the bad manners expressed in modern designs. If contrary doctrines, based upon an appreciation of the need for urbanity in building, are preached by architects for a generation and if after that interval the newest structures still show evidence of a vulgar spirit, it will be time enough to blame the client.

I have here outlined seven main doctrines, distinguished by various degrees of falsity, which have had power to divert men's thoughts from the profoundest and most gracious qualities in architecture. Alluring, fantastic, frivolous, yet strangely complacent and endowed with an

uncanny vigour these doctrines have come to us. I may call them the Seven Lamps of Vulgarity. They formed a magnet for moths and a special playground for professional dunces, who in company with a number of prosperous architects and much remunerated critics have lost their philosophic and artistic wings through contact with the hebdomadal flame. Undoubtedly we may look forward to some far off future when the Seven Lamps of Vulgarity will flicker and grow dim; but for the present we shall accomplish much if only we undertake that year by year they shine with slightly less effulgence.

Architectural criticism should concern itself with the personalties of buildings rather than with the personalities of architects; for the nature of the architect's creative act is revealed in the qualities of his design, a design now enjoying in three-dimensional space an existence as separate from that of its creator as the child is separate from the father who begat him. This independence of the child is the sign of its vitality ; and until the independence and separate personalities of buildings are properly understood and accepted there will never be any real public recognition of the *vitality* of architecture.

In the preceding pages the structures comprising a city have been personified ; it has been assumed that in a certain measure they are endowed with life and are or should be capable of taking cognisance of each other. If a building ignores its neighbours or assumes a false social status and thus by an act of insubordination upsets the orderly scheme on which the beauty and formal significance of a whole city depend I have described the fault in question as "bad manners in architecture." The types of bad manners analysed include not only the discourtesy which a building may show to its neighbour, but the discourtesy which it may show toward human beings, as when modern commercial structures ignore

the scale of the human body and make us feel insignificant. In both cases, however, the offender against the social code is assumed to be not a person but a building, which latter, when once created, has itself become an agent. And it is an essential part of the etiquette of architectural criticism that, while the critic may with the utmost freedom animadvert upon the social faults of a building, he is not permitted to assume that these faults are a reflection of corresponding faults in the mind of its architect. For instance, a building may be very vulgar and yet its architect be a most agreeable person. But perhaps in his youth this architect was taught by his academic masters that good architecture is nothing but the expression of purpose, truthful construction, and 'the right use of materials'! The public interest, however, demands that buildings be freely and honestly criticised, and it is all the more necessary, therefore, that there should be established standards of value which will enable this function of criticism to be exercised in a direct and simple manner such as causes the least personal offence. It suffices if the public becomes a severe critic of the social qualities of *buildings*. The reaction of this criticism upon the minds of architects can be trusted to look after itself.