

Significant Architecture

Art & Modern Life.
Social Architecture

Turner Ulysses & Polyphemus } art of the 1890s & early
Turner Fighting Tenebræ. } Proclamation only

7 million Burne Jones Annunciation. He New Art of the Manufact-
44 million " " King Cephalus

Socialist Poet (and) Socialist (now accepted) Morris. Wall paper revenue to music arts
do pattern

Kelmscott Press Chance
do Golden Type

Chiswick Press 1899. do The beautiful book

The House of the Pope

Coneyhurst Webb

Slenden. "

Roymton Grange "

do do interior Burne Jones P.

1 Palace Green Kensington Dunsford

Clouds East Knays

Clouds Dunsford

The Hare Webb. not only buildings

Shaw Orangery

St Agnes Vicarage

Leather Lodge

Netherhall Gardens

Old Swan House. Chelsea

Old House Hempstead

Queensgate -

170 " "

" " " interior

Churches. Hoar Cross Bodley & gardens
Chamber

Eccleston St Marys

Cowley Towers

Brant Brongton

Sewdy Holy Trinity Sloane Sq.

do interior

do altar Frontals

do Crosses

Significant Architecture

"Beauty is truth, truth beauty, that is all
We know on earth and all ye need to know."

So says the poet, and by all the rules of modern aesthetic criticism, the poet is wrong. Truth is a moral quality, beauty is an emotional one and the two can have no connection with one another.

Yet the quotation points out a fact of importance, that beauty cannot, or at any rate, does not ever stand alone. It is always accompanied and emphasised by other qualities such as possibly, truth: there is no such thing as pure, abstract beauty.

~~Here I show~~

Many modern artists, sculptors painters and even architects, have attempted to produce pure beauty deliberately altering and distorting the human form, the natural landscape so as to escape from the otherwise inevitable associations of these things. So far as any appeal to the emotions of the general public they have failed. The forms they produce may to some be beautiful, but to ordinary human beings the disagreeable associations produced by aroused by a distorted resemblance to something which we know far outweigh any abstract grace of line or colour. So we call their products "ugly."

Now there are two arts which do not rely for their effects upon any resemblance to nature, music and architecture, and it is of the latter I am to speak this afternoon. Attempts have indeed been made to draw resemblances between a cathedral nave and an avenue of trees, but the resemblance is slight and there is no reason to think that we really admire the nave of say Canterbury because it may faintly recall the avenue of McMillan campus. X Ruskin indeed claimed that all beauty came from "Nature" and that the appeal of all architecture could be traced to its

Canterbury
Nave.

Live oak Avenue

Gloucester
Clarks.

resemblance to mountains, crags, avenues or leaves. He drew that curious distinction between the works of man and "nature", ignoring the fact that man is natural too and all his works are as natural as any other manifestation of the universe.

Nature is not always beautiful. It is sometimes perfectly hideous, for ugly men is a part of nature too.

The sensation of beauty is in fact a judgement of the human mind. We think things beautiful not discerning in them any abstract or absolute beauty but because they recall to us associations and emotions which we enjoy.

In Architecture we have come to associate certain forms with certain feelings and emotions, and, very often, these feelings almost completely smother any questions of graceful line, imposing mass or well-studied composition. A building has significance for us, quite apart from any question of beauty.

We say, "it looks like a bank, or a church - or a collage" and we would experience a very disagreeable feeling of disappointment if we found that the building with a spire and tracery windows was in fact a modern apartment block, or a hotel.

This significance has always been a very important part of architecture, but there is yet another manner in which architecture is significant.

We are told, quite frequently that art is good for us. We are told, more emphatically, that art is necessary for life - but we are not so often told what I believe to be the truth that art is a natural accompaniment of life. There has never been a civilized people without art, not even including ourselves, and this all pervading art invariably must show forth the qualities of the culture which produced it. In this way our architecture is a book in which we may learn to read our

Capitol
Washington - Pub.

St Pancras
Railway Sta
Conservative

3 Best Houses of
Parliament

Influenced
Ottawa.

3 Slides

own characters. But I warn you that the ~~reading~~ writing is sometimes very plain indeed and not always very complimentary. We have written our own characters without knowing it. Like the man in Hood's poem whose eyes were opened "When he looked upon his wife he saw her very plain."

Up to the end of the eighteenth century styles in architecture were unknown. One tradition of building governed all edifices from the church to the cottage, a tradition which indeed was constantly changing but which at any one moment was the same for all building. People did not build Gothic churches and classic banks. They built to one consistent tradition.

But in the end of the XVIII century knowledge took possession of architecture. Archaeologists delved into the past, resurrected the bones of Greek and Pompeian and Gothic architecture and, according to their tastes, proclaimed one or the other as the only artistic salvation. Pugin announced that Gothic was Christian, classic pagan and immoral, his opponents lauded the polite and dignified forms of classic and condemned all others as barbarous. The battle was fierce and eventually it was drawn, upon a curious compromise. Gothic was to be regarded as suitable for churches and buildings with a religious connection, classic as suitable for secular and public buildings, whilst mere small houses were not to be regarded as of any great importance and might be any kind of nondescript they liked. This is very much how many people look at architecture today. So long as a building is what people call "correct" we accept it. But what does this word "correct" mean? It is I think usually taken to mean that the building corresponds accurately in composition and detail to

Preston Grange
North Walsham
Church
Brympton House
near Yeovil

St Philips
Charleston
1733

Minticello
Jeffersons House

some old building, or buildings of the particular historic style. ~~A correct building~~ Correct architecture in fact may be a copy, or it may be a re-hash. What it cannot possess is originality.

But all the old buildings were original. The old builders rarely copied, and when they tried to do so copied very poorly indeed. ~~So that when we refer to a building~~ Old buildings then were never "correct". They were the fresh, original designs of their builders. A building today which is correct, as we call it in form must be very incorrect indeed in spirit. Correctness is a vice rather than a virtue and there can be no greater condemnation of a building than to say that it is "correct gothic". We might as well be accurate and call it "dead gothic".

Now let us see what our architecture today has to tell us.

Our public buildings, banks, insurance offices and libraries are mostly easily recognized by having large columns on the front. Usually Corinthian columns. Their large scale and their monumental construction in stone give dignity, the composition is well studied in mass and in detail and they are after all dull, as dull as they can be. No shade of human feeling animates them. "Business is business" they seem to say we have no emotions excepting pride and respectability. We are afraid to have any other emotions, they are bad for business. This dry classic & monumental building came into fashion about the beginning of the ~~XIX~~ century and they are just about a century behind date.

For, in England, France and Germany they were building this kind of thing at the beginning of the XIX century. The British Museum, the Bourse at Paris, the Brandenburger Thor at Berlin

Treasury, N.Y.C.
(The Parthenon).
Dubner

Columbia Univ.
Law Library

Penn Terminal
N.Y. Port

do do
Main Hall.

Brit Museum

Paris Bourse
Brandenburger Thor

The Stadium is in the Classic Greek Style. The Doric Columns closely follow those of the portico in the Temple of Athena Commonly called the Parthenon. Exhibition halls, under the stands are copied after some of the Hypostyle Halls in Greek Temples. The Doric columns and the doors having been modeled from examples in the Erechtheion. All details throughout the structure are adapted from authoritative Classic Greek sources.

are just the kind of thing which we might put up today in this country, and profess to be proud of.

Now, in 1820 Archaeology was a new thing in Europe. The Architects were rejoicing in this new knowledge of the old civilizations which they had unearthed - their clients were equally enthusiastic and so these buildings, and even such extreme examples as the Walhalla at Regensburg, or the Bismarckhalle at Munich were natural manifestations of this enthusiasm. They are copies of old buildings and they betray this enthusiasm for the old civilizations which inspired Europe at that date. Germany was a nation of scholars.

So in Edinburgh we find buildings like the Royal Institution, of pure Greek Doric, ~~the good~~ Edinburgh was at that time an intellectual centre ~~and her citizens~~ her geographical position on the firth of Forth seemed to recall that of ancient Athens, so her good citizens resolved that, as she was Attic in position, Attic in intellect she should be in architecture too the Modern Athens. She was about equally successful in all three directions.

So these buildings have a meaning, and an excuse. But why do we today do things so much the same. We are not ~~scholars~~, a nation of scholars or of antiquarians. but culturally we are simply a nation of copyists. The buildings of this type are usually cultural buildings. Institutions for social welfare, Libraries, or the homes of institutions which wish to be thought educated and respectable, such as banks. and then architecture shows that in America education and culture are regarded as foreign things, luxuries to be imported from Europe - as the architecture of the buildings is.

Walhalla -
Bismarckhalle -

Edinburgh
Royal Institution
High School.

T. of Scotland
Rite.

Alicamano's
restoration

You may object that in education at any rate America is independent. Well, here are some of the buildings of Princeton University. They are of that interesting and very charming style generally known as "collegiate Gothic" An adaptation of the English domestic Gothic of the XV century, with a good splash of Oxford or Cambridge.

That is where our higher Educational ideals come from too. The buildings are indeed quite beautiful, but just now we are not considering their beauty, but their significance. I had the pleasure about a year ago of wandering through these buildings. They were filled with undergraduates in gaily patterned sweaters, and checked stockings and exaggerated plus fours. whose style was as clearly derived from a contemporary personage as was the style of the building from an historic past. They looked very gay, very picturesque, they fitted their buildings to perfection and they were all very derivative indeed.

There are admirable sentimental reasons for building our Churches in a Gothic type, provided that it is a modern Gothic type and not merely a rehash of medievalism. We must acknowledge that when the ordinary citizen sees a pointed arch he thinks at once of a church and a building made of pointed arches, dark stained glass and varnished pine seems to produce ~~the~~ by association the required state of mind. We are in fact mesmerized by the building and ~~omit to~~ ~~ever~~ unable to exercise our judgement upon it. So, in Church building our architects, under the instructions of our building committees, build Gothic Churches. And the building committees usually demand that these shall be correct, that is that they shall be as nearly as possible copies of

existing English or French Churches.

We have in this country a great number of such purely derivative Churches.

Central Church. Boston Mass. Upjohn.

Trinity Church Boston. Richardson's attempt to break away. Failed! Why?

What is the significance of this? We know very well in religion the intense desire upon the part of many for authority, their natural need it may be for authority, implying in that a guidance upon which they may trust to the uttermost. This appears in such Churches in the desire for an authoritative and standardised architecture built solidly upon an unalterable canon. Is this not fundamentalism in architecture?

But we know also that humanity finds its own good is not always given such complete ~~and~~ authority. Many of us think that it is never given complete guidance but is left to pursue its own path in liberty. So we demand, upon a strict philosophic basis, that the architecture too shall be free.

Just now a great appeal is being made for funds to complete the Cathedral of St John the Divine in New York. This Church, I read in the press, is to combine the beauties of both English and French Gothic - in other words it is a strictly traditional Church.

A great Cathedral has just been opened in Liverpool, in England, built by a young architect Sir Giles Gilbert Scott. Whom some of us think is already the greatest living English Architect. It follows in its general spirit the old Mediaeval character, yet it is utterly modern, in plan and in detail.

Liverpool Cathedral plan (great congregational space -

English effort
to freedom
Siddons
Trinity Ch
Sloanes
2 slides

Liverpool
Design:
Plan
Exterior
Across transept
Chancel E.

It is in fact wrong, and in the technical sense incorrect, it is also exceedingly beautiful.

I am afraid that we must acknowledge that our cultural architecture, whether it is classic or gothic, whether it is civil or religious is all exceedingly derivative. It is copied from various European examples, & like all copies the buildings are out of date before they are built.

Is there then no life in American Architecture, no spirit, no independence.

Art rises from what people really believe in. To find genuine art we must first seek the genuine motive ideals of the builders, and the motive ideal of modern American life is commerce. Whatever place the fine arts, literature, science or religion may take in our lives, beneath them all is business as the real activity of our lives. And the only living art of America today is the Architecture of Commerce.

We do not, as a people, care, or prefer to care much about the fine arts, but if you were to ask the people of America to name the building which has really impressed them, they would almost certainly answer the Woolworth building. It has really captured the popular imagination.

Woolworth.

We are often told that the skyscraper is a painful necessity, brought about by the cramped site of New York on Manhattan island; but it has been realized that this is not the case, for skyscrapers flourish equally at St. Louis & Chicago where there is no lack of room.

The skyscraper is in fact due to two or three very simple causes.

1. The development of the steel industry made it possible
2. The desire of the landowner to get the highest possible

return for his outlay.

3 The willingness of the American to live in a crowd and 4thly and most important of all.

The Pride of the Merchant in his business.

Art does not ask for moral or lofty ideals, it asks only for sincere and strong ideals.

The Skyscraper is unsocial, it leads directly to congested traffic in the streets, it is uneconomic. It is an aristocrat in building and like many aristocrats uncomfortable to live with but beautiful to look at.

Equitable Building. Who can deny the beauty of the Skyscraper, soaring up in long slender delicate lines. Its manner of windows, like a dove's eye, or the hove of some new insect -

You can see the spire of Trinity Church. It occupies its real place here in American life. a beautiful old tradition.

These skyscrapers are I have said very unsocial. Broad Street N.Y.

They darken the streets as well as congesting them, so, to prevent this a law has been passed in New York and various other cities compelling the builders to set the buildings back in great steps, so as to allow the light to penetrate. This of course prevents the building of such towers as the Woolworth or even the C.P.R. at Toronto. But a lawyer never hesitates long over a new difficulty, it surmounts it with a new accomplishment.

Buildings are now being put up, such as the Standard Oil Building N.Y. which repeat in terraces. And the Architect is having new visions

Office Building 32nd Street N.Y.

Broadway Temple. A skyscraper apartment with its own church

The Skyscraper has indeed gone beyond the first stages. It has originated a new, and a living style in Architecture, it is not only applicable to large, but to small buildings. It is, in fact Crane building. Montreal.

The proof that America can take her place as an artistic and creative nation in the world.

The Skyline of New York.

The Skyscraper used to be condemned as ugly. Well it is always difficult to receive a new beauty, and it is even more difficult perhaps to receive a new ideal but more and more independent critics are coming to appreciate this Creative Architecture of American Commerce.

I am afraid I may have exalted what seems to you low, and thrown down what is high. I have only however tried to seek the significance of our Architecture today, ~~and it has brought me to these~~ ~~can this is the path upon which it has led me~~ It is not my intention to prophesy as to what changes may take place what ideals may rise, or fall, but merely to interpret what I see, and that interpretation may be entirely wrong. Perhaps only the old and the dead is worthy of respect, perhaps the new is merely fantastic revolution. Yet I cannot but think that once that old work was alive and modern and new. and wonder whether we are right to cling so tightly to the old bones when perhaps the spirit has left them and is now inspiring the new ~~for~~ creations of today.

In some parts of the old world they are certainly doing new things

Church. Beverwijk. Holland -

Stockholm Stadhus. The Golden Hall

Can we imagine this here today

Ramsey. Notre Dame.

A church in ferro-concrete. and beautiful
do do Detail

Hangars at Orly. This too is Architecture
and it suggests great halls which may some
day be built.

~~I did not go to wind up with a moral.
I have shown you some modern architecture & I
have given an interpretation, more I would not dare.~~

Yet we too have honest work. But it is not in our
Churches, or in our Public life. It is in our commercial
Buildings and - in purely utilitarian works -

U.S. Supply Base.

do do. "

Penn Station Concourse

Bridge Ohio

Quebec Bridge.

do do Detail.

"Beauty is truth, truth Beauty" I began
by doubting this, and many of you possibly differed from me
I end by proclaiming it. and many of you may still
differ from me. This is truth. in construction, and
is it not architecture and beauty.

I will not end with a moral. I have shown
you some modern architecture. I have given an
interpretation. I leave the rest to you

Significant Architecture

Art and Modern life

Crane Needlework — Waller Crane — Home
West Point Chapel — foodline
do interior
Brownville } Protestant + Manufacturing
Pat Sunlight }
do School }
do }
Selchworth }

Old Public

Washington Top Seal etc
Kalicarnavas Rest
Columbia University
Penn Terminal Trust
" " " Washington John
Princeton
do
do Graduate School

work of XIX century in England
Brit Museum
Paris Bourse

New influence (Commercial)

New York
Woolworth
Broad Street — Be Seismic badness
Equitable ~~or~~ ans. } X
Toronto CPR }
Standard oil
Office Bulders 3rd St
Broadway Temple Church