Of the arts and crafts movement [...].

IDEALS IN ART

OF THE ARTS AND CRAFTS MOVEMENT: ITS GENERAL TENDENCY AND POSSIBLE OUTCOME

Of the Arts and Crafts movement: Its general tendency and possible outcome

IT seems a strange thing that the last quarter of the nineteenth—or what I was going to call our machine-made—century should be characterized by a revival of the handicrafts; yet of the reality of that revival there can now be no manner of doubt, from whatever point we date its beginnings, or to whomsoever we may trace its initiation.

Indeed, it seems to me that the more we consider the characteristics of different epochs in the history of art, or of the world, the less we are able to isolate them, or to deal with them as phenomena by themselves, so related they seem to what has gone before them, and to what succeeds them, just as are the personalities associated with them; and I do not think this movement of ours will prove any exception to this rule.

Standing as we do on the threshold of a new century—which so often means a new epoch in

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history, if not in art—it may, perhaps, be allowable to look back a bit, as well as forward, in attempting a general survey of the movement. Like a traveller who has reached a certain stage of his journey, we look back over the region traversed, losing sight, in such a wide prospect, and in the mists of such a far distance, of many turns in the road, and places by the way, which at one time seemed important, and only noting here and there certain significant landmarks which declare the way by which we have come.

To take a very rapid glance at the phases of decorative art of the past century, we see much of the old life and traditions in art carried on from the eighteenth century into the early years of the nineteenth, when the handicrafts were still the chief means in the production of things of use or beauty. The luxurious excess of the later renascence forms in decoration, learned from France and Italy (though adopted in this country with a certain reserve), corrected by a mixture of Dutch homeliness, and later by French empire translations of Greek and Roman fashions in ornament, often attained a certain elegance and charm in the gilded stucco mirror frames and painted furniture of our Regency period, which replaced the more refined joinery, veneer, and inlaid work of Chippendale and his kinds.

Classical taste dominated our architecture, striving hard to become domesticated, but looking chilly and colourless in our English gray climate, as if conscious of inadequate clothing.

This Greco-Roman empire elegance gradually

wore off, and turned to frigid plainness in domestic architecture, and to corpulency in furniture, as the middle of the century was approached, when the old classical tradition in furniture, handed on from Chippendale, Sheraton, and Hepplewhite, seemed to be suddenly broken into by wild fancies and fantastic attempts at naturalism in carving, combined with a reckless curvature of arms and legs supporting (or supported by) springs and padding. Drawing-rooms revelled in ormolu and French clocks, vast looking-glasses, and the heavy artillery of polished mahogany pianos, while Berlin-wool-work and antimacassars in crochet took possession of any ground not occupied by artificial flowers, and other wonders, under glass shades.

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The '51 Exhibition was the apotheosis of mid-nineteenth century taste, or absence of taste, perhaps. The display of industrial art and furniture then, to judge from illustrated catalogues and journals of the period, seemed to indicate that ideas of design and craftsmanship were in a strange state. The new naturalism was beginning to assert itself, but generally in the wrong place, and in all sorts of unsuitable materials. Those were the days when people marvelled at the skill of a sculptor who represented a veiled figure in marble so that you could almost see through the veil!—but that was "Fine Art." Industrial art was in a very different category, yet it was influenced by fine art, and, generally, greatly to its disadvantage. We had vignetted landscapes upon china and coal-boxes, for instance, and Landseer pictures on

hearth-rugs—and our people loved to have it so.

These things were done, and more also, in the ordinary course of trade, which flourished exceedingly, and no one bothered about design. If furniture and fittings were wanted, the upholsterer and ironmonger did the rest.

Yet was it not in the "fifties" that Alfred Stevens made designs for iron grates? so that there must have been *one* artist, at any rate, not above giving thought to common things. Designers like Alfred Stevens, and his followers Godfrey Sykes and Moody, certainly represented in their day a movement inspired chiefly by a study of the earlier renascence, and an honest desire to adapt its forms to modern decoration. Their work, though suffering—like all original work—deterioration at the hands of imitators, showed a search for style and boldness of contour and line, touched with a certain refined naturalism which gives the work of Alfred Stevens and his school a very distinct place. It was mainly a sculptor's and modeller's movement, and represented a renascence revival in modern English decorative art; and through the work of Godfrey Sykes and Moody, in association with the government schools of art, it had a considerable effect upon the art of the country.

But I think many and mixed elements contributed to the change of feeling and fashion which came about rather later, in which perhaps may be traced the influence of modes of thought expressing themselves also in literature and

poetry, as well as the study of different models in design.

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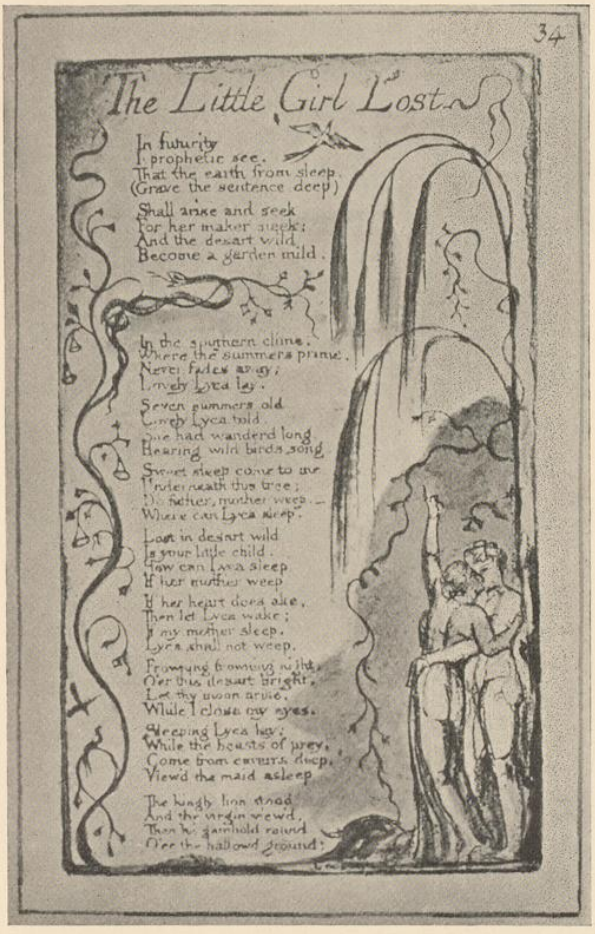

Page from Blake's "Songs of Experience"

One cannot forget that the early years of the nineteenth century were illuminated by the

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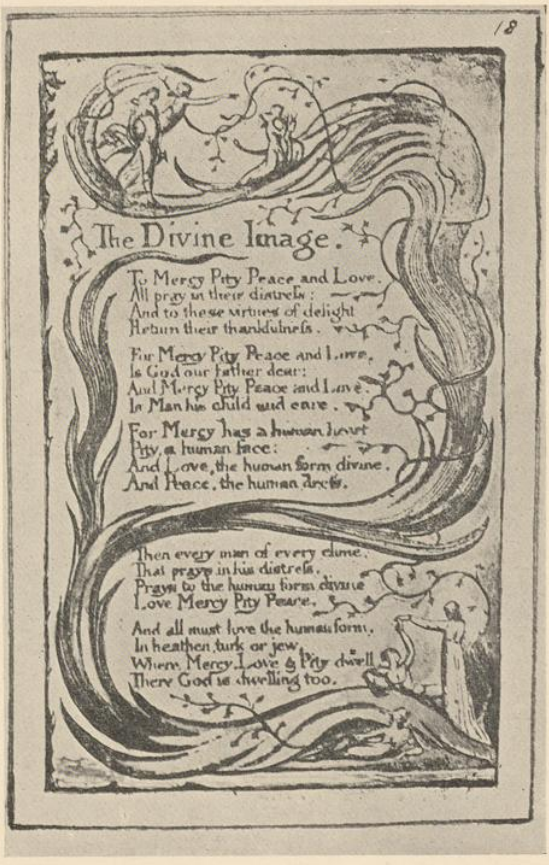
name and work of William Blake, whose fresh inspiration and clearness of inner vision were

Page from Blake's "Songs of Innocence"



expressed in so individual a form with such fervour of poetic feeling and social aspiration, both in verse and design, in the books engraved

Wood Engravings by Edward Calvert

The Return Home

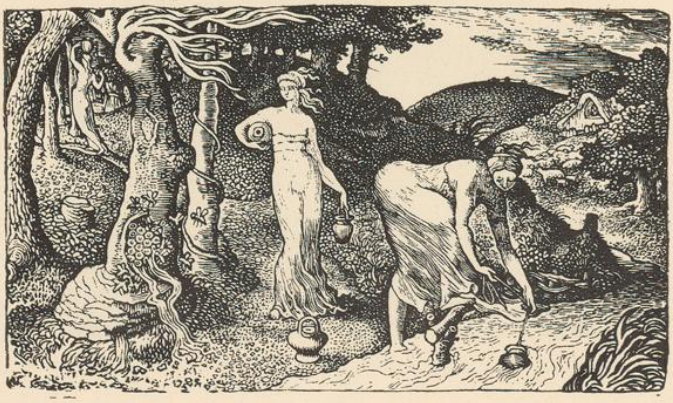
Ideal Pastoral Life

The Chamber Idyll

Wood Engravings by Edward Calvert

The Flood

The Lady and the Rooks



The Brook

and printed by himself which remain the remarkable monument of his neglected genius.

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The group of artists associated with him, too, such as Edward Calvert and Samuel Palmer,

Illustrations to Tennyson

"The Ballad of Oriana." By Holman Hunt

marked an epoch in English poetic illustration, associated with wood engraving and printing, of very distinct character and beauty, the influence of which may be seen at the present day in some of the woodcuts of Mr. Sturge Moore.

The more conscious classical designs of Flax-

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man and Stothard were colder, but graceful, and mark a period from which we seem more widely separated than from others more remote, yet seemingly nearer in sentiment.

Quite a different kind of sentiment was fostered by the writings of Scott upon which so

Illustrations to Tennyson

"The Palace of Art." By D. G. Rossetti

many generations have been fed, but they had their effect in keeping alive the sense of romance and interest in the life of past days, still further enlightened by the researches of antiquarians, and the increased study of the Middle Ages, and above all of Gothic architecture. All these must be considered as so many tributary streams to swell the main current of thought and feeling

which carried us on to the artistic revival of our own times.

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The poetry of Tennyson, with its sense of

Illustrations to Tennyson

The Bride (from "The Talking Oak"). By Sir J. E. Millais

colour, sympathy with art and nature, and the romance of the historic past, its thoroughly English feeling, and its revival of the Arthurian Legend, and its association (in the Moxon edition of 1857) with the designs of some of the

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leading pre-Raphaelite painters must be counted if not as a very strong influence upon, at least as an evidence and an accompaniment of that movement.

The names of Ford Madox Brown, of Dante Gabriel Rossetti, of William Holman Hunt, at once suggest artists of extraordinary individuality, remarkable decorative instinct, and carefulness for, and scholarly knowledge of, beautiful and significant accessories of life, of which all have not only given evidence in their own craft of painting, but also as practical designers.

The name of another remarkable artist must be mentioned, that of Frederick Sandys, contemporary with the pre-Raphaelites, imbued with their spirit, and following their methods of work. A wonderful draughtsman and powerful designer, who in all his work shows himself fully alive to beauty of decorative design in the completeness, care, and taste with which the accessories of his pictures and designs are rendered. His powers of design and draughtsmanship are perhaps best shown in the illustrations engraved on wood which appeared in "Once a Week," "The Cornhill Magazine," and elsewhere, which were shown with the collections of the artist's work at the International Society's last exhibition at the New Gallery, and at the Winter Exhibition at Burlington House in the present year (1905).

In some quarters it appears to be supposed that the pre-Raphaelite movement consisted entirely of Rossetti, and that to explain its development you have only to add water—or cari-

Manoli. By Frederick Sandys

From "The Cornhill Magazine"

cature. It is extraordinary to think in what uncritical positions professional critics occasionally land themselves.

I cannot understand how any candid and fairly well-informed person can fail to perceive that the pre-Raphaelite movement was really a very complex movement, containing many different elements and the germs of different kinds of development in art.

If it was primitive and archaic on one side, it was modern and realistic on another, and again, on another, romantic, poetic, and mystic; or again, wholly devoted to ideals of decorative beauty.

The very names of the original members of the brotherhood, to say nothing of later adherents, suggest very marked differences of temperament and character, and these differences were reflected in their art.

The stimulating writings of Ruskin must also be counted a factor in the movement, in his recognition of the fundamental importance of beautiful and sincere architecture and its relation to the sister arts: in his enthusiasm for truer ideals both in art and life: in the ardent love of and study of nature so constantly, so eloquently expressed throughout his works.

Despite all controversial points, despite all contradictions—mistakes even—I think that every one who has at any time of his life come under the influence of Ruskin's writings must acknowledge the nobility of purpose and sincerity of spirit which animates them throughout.

It is the fashion now in some quarters to undervalue his influence, but at all events it was at its best a wholesome and stimulating influence, provocative of thought, and no man must be held accountable for the mistakes or misapplications of his followers—the inevitable Nemesis of genius.

It was an influence which certainly had practical results in many ways, and not least must be counted its influence upon the life, opinions and work of the man to whose workshop is commonly traced the practical revival of sincere design and handicraft in modern England—I need hardly say I mean William Morris.

It is notable that at the outset the initiation of that practical revival was due to a group of artists, including the names already mentioned, and although in later days the practical direction of the work fell into the hands of William Morris, the fact that the enterprise had the sympathy and support of the leading artists of the pre-Raphaelite School must not be forgotten.

Indeed, it is said that the initiative or first practical proposal in the matter came from D. G. Rossetti, and it must be remembered that originally the main object of the firm was to supply their own circle with furniture and house decorations to suit their own tastes, though the operations were afterwards extended to the public with extraordinary success. The work, too, of the group was strengthened on the architectural side by such excellent designers as Mr. Philip Webb, who, in addition to architectural and constructive work of all kinds is

remarkable for the force and feeling of his designs of animals used in decorative schemes, both in the flat and in relief.

The hare and hound in the frieze of the dining-room at South Kensington Museum are early works of his, as well as the woodwork of the room.

The study of mediaeval art had, however, been going on for many years before, and books of the taste and completeness of those of Henry Shaw, for instance, had been published, dealing with many different provinces of decorative art, from alphabets to architecture. The well engraved and printed illustrations of these works afforded glimpses even to the uninitiated of the wonderful richness, invention and variety of the art of the Middle Ages—so long neglected and misunderstood—while the treasures of the British Museum in the priceless illuminated manuscripts of those ages were open to those who would really know what mediaeval book-craft was like.

Then, too, the formation of the unrivalled collections at South Kensington, and the opportunities there given for the study of very choice and beautiful examples of decorative art of all kinds, especially of mediaeval Italy and of the earlier renascence, played a very important part both in the education of artists and the public, and helped with other causes to prepare the way for new or revived ideas in design and craftsmanship.

The movement went quietly on at first, confined almost exclusively to a limited circle of

artists or artistically-minded people. It grew under the shadow of the atrocious Franco-British fashions of the sixties, now (or recently) so much admired, crinolines and all, in some quarters, because I suppose they are so old-fashioned.

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Independent signs of dissatisfaction with current modes, however, were discernible here and there. It was, I think, about this time that Mr. Charles L. Eastlake (late Keeper of the National Gallery) who was trained as an architect, published a book called "Hints on Household Taste," in which he says somewhere: "Lost in the contemplation of palaces we have forgotten to look about us for a chair." This seemed to indicate a reaction against the exclusive attention then given to what were called "the Fine Arts."

Associations were formed for the discussion of artistic questions of all kinds, and I mind me of a certain society of art students which used to meet in the well-known room at No. 9, Conduit Street, the existence of which indicated that there were thought and movement in the air among the younger generation and new ideas were on the wing, many of them carrying the germs of important future developments. Even outside Queen Square there were certain designers of furniture and surface decorations not wholly absorbed by trade ideals, who maintained a precarious existence as decorative artists.

There were architects, too, of such distinction and character as Pugin, William Burges, and Butterfield, who were fully alive to the value of

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mediaeval art, and were bold experimenters as well as scholars and enthusiasts in their revival of the use of mural decoration in colour.

Mr. Norman Shaw's work, which has so much influenced the newer architectural aspects of London, comes later, and is more distinctly and intimately related to our movement, which it may here be said has owed much of its strength to its large architectural element.

There were, of course, builders and decorators in those days, but the genus "decorative artist" was a new species as distinct from the painter and paper-hanger.

While these, and the historic, the landscape, the animal, and *genre* painter had their exhibitions, were recognized, and some of them duly honoured at times, decorative artists and designers may be said to have had nowhere to lay their heads—in the artistic sense—so they laid their heads together!

The immediate outcome of this sympathetic counsel took the form of fireside discussions by members of a society of decorative artists founded by Mr. Lewis F. Day, strictly limited in number, called "the Fifteen." This small society was in course of time superseded, or rather absorbed, by a larger body known as the Art Workers' Guild, which contained architects, painters, designers, sculptors, and craftsmen of all kinds, and grew and increased mightily; it has since thrown out a younger branch in the Junior Art Workers' Guild.

Guilds, or groups of associated workers were also formed for the practice and supply of cer-

tain handicrafts, and societies like that of the Home Arts and Industries Association organized village classes in wood-carving, pottery, metal-work, basket-making, turning, spinning, and weaving linen, embroidery, and other crafts.

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These efforts, mostly due to a band of enthusiastic amateurs, must all be counted, if not always satisfactory in their results, yet as educational in their effects, and as creating a wider public interested in the handicraft movement, and therefore as adding impetus to that movement, which in 1888—the year of our own society's foundation—even rose to the height of —or extended to the length of—a "National Association for the Advancement of Art in Relation to Industry" (such was its title) which actually held congresses in successive years in Liverpool, Edinburgh, and Birmingham—as if they were scientists or sectarians. Members of our society were more or less connected with these developments.

All this time we had, as we still have, a Royal Academy of Arts. But somewhere in the early eighties arose certain bold, bad men who —not satisfied with an annual picture-show of some two thousand works or so, always fresh— desired to see a national exhibition of art which should comprise not only paintings, sculpture, and architectural water-colours, but some representation of the arts and handicrafts of design.

Another plank in this artistic platform was the annual election of a selection and hanging committee out of and by the whole body of artists in the kingdom. This movement at-

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tracted a considerable number of adherents, largely among the rising school of painting, until it was discovered that several of the leaders desired to belong to the garrison of the fortress they proposed to attack.

The Arts and Crafts section of this movement, mostly members of the Guild aforesaid, seeing their vision look hopeless in that direction, then withdrew, and formed themselves into the present Arts and Crafts Exhibition Society, with power to add to their number. And I think they gathered to themselves all the artists and craftsmen of standing who were sympathetic and willing to subscribe to their aims.

We may note here that since the directors of the Grosvenor Gallery in its Winter Exhibition of 1881 arranged a collection of designs for decoration, including cartoons for mosaic, tapestry, and glass, no attempt to show contemporary work of the kind had been made.

We were, however, but few at first, and but few of us widely known, and with limited influence. William Morris and Burne-Jones did not join us until we had fairly organized ourselves and defined our programme, though their works from the first have enriched our exhibitions.

The initial steps were laborious and difficult and the process of organization slow, each step being carefully debated. Suitable premises seemed at one time impossible to procure, the demands of an ordinary picture-gallery being by no means suited to the mixed displays of an arts and crafts exhibition, so little so, indeed,

that it was proposed to hire a large old-fashioned London mansion in order to group our exhibits in better relation.

Time, however, seemed to help us somewhat, as, during the period of our formation the New Gallery was opened—emerging in marble and gilding from its whilom dusty chrysalis as an abandoned meat market—and here, in the autumn of 1888, as may be remembered, supported by a courageous list of guarantors we opened our first exhibition.

I think we were fully conscious that an exhibition is at the best necessarily a very imperfect thing, and should probably even agree that it was a necessary evil. An exhibition of such various elements as an arts and crafts show brings together has its own particular difficulties.

One cannot place fragmentary pieces of decorative art in their proper relation, and relation is of the essence of good decorative art.

We are driven to a sort of compromise, finding practical difficulties in the way of logical systems—such as the grouping according to *kind*, or the grouping according to *authorship*—and have resorted to a mixed method with a view to the best decorative ensemble with the materials at hand—with the result, I fear, of hurting the feelings of nearly everybody concerned—but that is the common fate of exhibition committees.

Having had the honour of being president during the first three years of the society's existence I had occasion to state its objects and

principles as far as I understood them, and as these are set forth in our Book of Essays it does not seem necessary to repeat what is there written, but a short re-statement of the chief points may not be out of place here.

We desired first of all to give opportunity to the designer and craftsman to exhibit their work to the public for its artistic interest and thus to assert the claims of decorative art and handicraft to attention equally with the painter of easel pictures, hitherto almost exclusively associated with the term art in the public mind.

Ignoring the artificial distinction between Fine and Decorative art, we felt that the real distinction was what we conceived to be between good and bad art, or false and true taste and methods in handicraft, considering it of little value to endeavour to classify art according to its commercial value or social importance, while everything depended upon the spirit as well as the skill and fidelity with which the conception was expressed, in whatever material, seeing that a worker earned the title of artist by the sympathy with and treatment of his material, by due recognition of its capacity, and its natural limitations, as well as of the relation of the work to use and life.

We sought to trace back ornament to its organic source in constructive necessity.

We asserted the principle that the Designer and Craftsman should be hand in hand, and work *head* with hand in both cases, so that mere redundancy of ingenious surface ornament on the one hand, or mechanical ingenuity in executive

skill on the other, should not be considered as ends in themselves, but only as means to ends, neither the one nor the other being tolerable without controlling taste.

But how assign artistic credit to nameless workers? One can hardly expect artistic judgement and distinction without artistic responsibility, and, according to the usual methods of industrial exhibitions, individual designers and craftsmen were concealed under the general designation of a firm.

We therefore asked for names of responsible executants—those who had contributed in any way to the artistic character of the work.

This seemed a simple and obvious request, but there has probably been more difficulty over this one point than over any other of our programme.

But here we encounter the sharp corner of an economic question, as is so often the case in pursuing a question of principle in art—a question touching the position and artistic freedom of the workman. A workman, one perhaps of many who contribute to the production of a piece of modern craftsmanship, is in the hands of the firm that exhibits the work. It is to the commercial interest of the firm to be known as the producer of the work, and it must be therefore out of good nature or sense of fairness, or desire to conform to our conditions, when the name of the actual workman is given, who so long as he is in the employ of a firm is supposed to work exclusively in that firm's interest. Complaints have been made that the workman whose

name is given on an exhibited work may be tempted away to work for a rival firm,—an interesting illustration of the working of our system of commercial competition.

Yet, if a workman is worthy of his hire, the good craftsman is surely worthy of due personal credit for his skill, and if superior skill has a tendency to increase in market value, we need not be surprised, either as employers or private artists, seeing that in either case *we* should consider it fair to avail *ourselves* of such increase.

I think the question must be honestly faced. As it is, owing to accidents, intentional omissions, or inadvertencies, our cataloguing in this respect has not been so complete as one could wish, and we are necessarily dependent in respect to these particulars upon our exhibitors.

Our exhibition for the first three years was *annual.* With the election of William Morris as President a change of policy came in, and it was considered advisable to limit ourselves to triennial exhibitions. This was partly because the organization of a yearly exhibition put a considerable strain and responsibility upon a voluntary executive, and consumed a considerable amount of the thought and time of working artists; partly also from the consideration that more interesting shows would result if held after a three years' interval, giving time for the production of important work. It must be said, however, that artistic production of constructive and decorative work was then in fewer hands, and it was impossible to foresee the increase of activity in the arts and crafts, or the steady

support of an interested, if comparatively limited, public which we have enjoyed.

Looking back at the general character of our exhibitions, it is interesting to note certain lines of evolution in the development of design and the persistence of certain types of design. Now even in the work of a single artist, the character of his design is seen to undergo many changes in the course of his career, as he comes under various different influences. Some are more, some are less variable, but a man's youthful work differs considerably from his mature work, as his later work will again differ from his mature work. While there is life there must be movement, growth, and change, let us tie ourselves down as narrowly as we will. But even apart from this, the process of evolution may be seen and felt in the conception and construction of a design before it finally leaves our hands. We get the germ of an idea, and in adapting it to its material and purpose it is necessarily modified. Even in the character and quality of its line and mass it is added to or taken away from in obedience to our sense of what is fit and harmonious.

If, then, this process takes place with the individual, how much more with many individuals developing either on one line or many? How much more shall we discern this trend of evolution in the sum and mass of work after the passage of years?

To the superficial observer the work of a group of men more or less in sympathy in general aim is apt to be labelled all alike,

whereas among that very group we may discern tendencies and sympathies in reality most diverse.

Now it seems as regards general tendencies in design in our movement that, after a period of a rich and luxuriant development of ornament, a certain reaction has taken place in favour of simplicity and reserve. It is probably a perfectly natural desire for repose after a period of excitement. And even where pattern is used the character of the form is much more restricted and formal as a rule. There is a tendency to build upon rectangular or vertical lines and to allow larger intermediary spaces.

The same desire for severity and simplicity in a more marked degree is to be observed in furniture design and construction. In fact, throughout all the recent work in the larger kinds of decoration and craftsmanship, this aim at simplicity and severity of line and general treatment is pronounced. This probably reflects the same feeling observable in recent domestic architecture, wherein a search for proportion and style, with simplicity of line and mass seem to influence the designer, and an appropriate use of materials rather than ornamental detail. But in one direction richness and artistic fancy seems to have found a new field, and it is a province which in our earlier exhibitions had hardly any representation at all, I mean jewellery and gold and silversmith's work and the art of enamelling, which show an extraordinary development, and may be claimed as a distinct and direct result of the new artistic

impulse in the handicrafts. In these arts there is obviously very great scope for individuality of treatment, for invention, for fancy, and taste.

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It was in the year 1887 that, at the invitation of Mr. Armstrong (the then Director for Art at the Science and Art Department) a French artist-craftsman (the late M. Louis Dalpeyrat of Limoges [1]) gave a series of demonstrations in enamelling at the South Kensington schools. Among the band of interested students was Mr. Alexander Fisher, who took up the work seriously; his accomplishment is so well known and so many workers in enamelling owe their first instruction to him that he has been called the father of the recent English revival in this beautiful craft.

I ventured to say on some occasion in the early days of our movement that "We must turn our artists into craftsmen, and our craftsmen into artists."

Well, certainly the first part of the sentence has been fulfilled in a remarkable way, since the movement is chiefly notable for the number

[1] I am indebted to Mr. Armstrong for some interesting particulars as to this. It appears that M. Louis Dalpeyrat was employed to make copies of some of the pieces of enamel in the South Kensington Museum, which he did very skilfully, and these copies were used for circulation among provincial museums and schools of art. Mr. Armstrong obtained sanction for M. Dalpeyrat to give a series of demonstrations in enamelling to a class of twelve students from the National Art Training School (now the Royal College of Art), and these were given in the metallurgical laboratory in the College of Science, where the plaques were fired, Prof. Roberts Austen having given permission. There was no grant at that time for technical instruction.

of artists who have become craftsmen in a variety of different materials.

In the second, transformation has not taken place to the same extent, which may, perhaps, be more or less accounted for by the consideration of those economic questions before spoken of, in so far as they apply to the workman.

As a rule the workman has been specialized for a particular branch of work, or a particular subdivision of a branch of workmanship; he seldom can acquire an all-round knowledge of a craft, and is seldom able to take a complete or artistic view of his work, as a whole, as he never produces a complete whole under the conditions of the modern workshop or factory.

Then, too, English workmen have been trained to look upon mechanical perfection and mechanical finish as the ideal, and it is impossible to set up a different ideal in a short time.

It must be remembered, also, that, as a class, the modern workman is engaged in a great economic struggle—an industrial war, quite as real, and often as terrible in its results as a military one—to raise his standard of life, or even to maintain it amid the fluctuations of trade, and, as a rule, he is not in a position to cultivate his taste in art.

Let us hope that the new schools of design under the Technical Education Board will have their effect, as they undoubtedly offer new and better practical opportunities to young craftsmen than have been available before

Such schools as the Central School of Arts and

Crafts, under the London County Council, may be regarded as a direct outcome of the movement, and it is a remarkable fact that its teachers are composed principally of members of our society and committee, to whom the organization of the classes was due.

Besides, if the artist has learned of the craftsman, there must be a good deal of education going on quietly in the studios and workshops of those aforesaid artist-craftsmen, wherein the craftsman learns in his turn of the artist, and here again must spring good results.

Sound traditions of design and workmanship should be of enormous help in starting students on safe paths, and preventing that painful process of *un*learning from which so many earnest students and artists have suffered in our days. Such traditions, however, should never be allowed to crystallize or hinder new thought and freedom of invention within the limits of the material in which the designer works, for living art exhibits a constant growth and evolution; and though in some cases the process of evolution in an artistic life may appear to take rather the form of degeneration, the important thing is to preserve life with its principle of growth, without losing balance, and above all, sense of fitness and beauty.

If beauty and utility are our guides in all design and handicraft, we can hardly go wrong. If our design is organic both in itself and in its incorporation with constructive necessity—if it, springing out of that necessity, expresses the joy of the artist, and is truly the crown of the

work, making the dumb material vocal with expressive line and form, or colour, it must at least be a thing having life, character, sincerity, and these are important elements in the expression of new beauty.

Along with the formation of discussion clubs and societies of designers and craftsmen, the tendency to form Guilds of Handicraft, whether they are a new form of commercial enterprise, or consist, as they frequently do, in the first place, of a group of artists and craftsmen in genuine sympathy working together with assistants, must be noted as another sign of the influence of the movement; as also the influence of certain types of design upon ordinary trade production.

It is even asserted that—I quote from a trade journal on a recent Arts and Crafts exhibition—"the arts and crafts movement has been the best influence upon machine industry during the past ten years"—that "while we have sought to develop handicrafts beside it on sound and independent lines, we have succeeded in imparting something of the spirit of craftsmanship to the best kind of machine-work bridging over the former gulf between machinery and tools, and quickening machine-industry with a new sense of the artistic possibilities that lie within its own proper sphere."

Let us hope so, indeed.

Certainly we cannot hope that the world, just yet, will beat its swords into ploughshares, or its spears into pruning-hooks, still less that it will return to local industry and handicraft for

all the wants of life, or look solely to the independent artist and craftsman to make its house beautiful. The organized factory and the great machine industries will continue to work for the million, as well as for the millionaire, under the present system of production; but, at any rate, they can be influenced by ideas of design, and it must be said that some manufacturers have shown themselves fully alive to the value of the co-operation of artists in this direction. Those who desire and can command the personal work of artists in design and handicraft are now able to enlist it, and this demand is likely to increase, and therefore industrial groups or guilds of this kind may increase.

If such groups of workers, or workers in the different handicrafts could by combination in some way still further counteract or control purely commercial production, by raising certain standards of workmanship and taste, and in the special branches of handicraft look after the artistic interests of their members generally, their power and influence might be much extended, especially if such guilds could be in some sort of friendly relation, so that they could on occasion act together, combining their forces and resources, for instance, for special exhibitions, or representations, such as masques and pageants, of the kind recently presented by the Art Workers' Guild at the Guildhall of the City of London.

Such shows, uniting as they do all kinds of design and craftsmanship in the embodiment of a leading idea, are a form of artistic expression

which may be regarded as the latest outcome of the movement, and may have a future before it.

I think that by such means, at all events, artistic life would be greatly stimulated, and artistic aims and ideals better understood—especially in their relation to social life.

And, surely, art has a great social function, even though it may have no conscious aim but its own perfecting.

Even in its most individual form it is a product of the community—of its age, and it is always impossible to say how many remote and mixed elements are combined to form that complex organism—an artistic temperament.

Every age looks eagerly in the glass which art and craftsmanship hold up, even if it is only to find itself reflected there. But it not only seeks reflection, it seeks expression—the expression of its thought and fancy, as well as its sense of beauty, and the successful artist is he who satisfies this search.

It seems, too, that every age, probably even each generation, has a different ideal of beauty, or that, perceiving a different side of beauty, each successively ever seeks some new form for its expression. This is the movement of growth and life, the sap of the new idea rising in the spring-time of youth through the parent stem, bursting into new branches and putting forth leaves; the green herb springing from the dead leaves—the new ever striving with the old.

It is always possible for a society to narrow down, or to widen. It may consider its true

work lies in the exposition chiefly of the work of one school, and would be perfectly justified in so thinking, so long as that school maintained its vitality and power of growth.

On the other hand, it might determine to have no prejudices on the subject of school or style, but welcome all good work after its kind.

Such points are largely controlled by considerations of available space and determination of scope, and are usually settled by the effective strength of the view which has the majority. There might even be something to be said, given unlimited space, and security against financial loss, for placing every work sent in to such exhibitions, but keeping the *selected* work in a distinct section.

"*Here*," we might say, "is the material we had to deal with, and *here* is our selection, and so make the exhibition an open court of appeal. These are questions for the future. We have, as a society, even in our comparatively short life, lived long enough to see great gaps in the ranks of English design. Great names, great leaders have passed from the roll of our membership, but not their memory, or the effect and value of their work.

We are left to carry on the twin-lamp of Design and Handicraft as best we may. If we bear that lamp with steady hands, fully alive to the necessity of continual life and freedom of movement in art, while conscious of the value of preserving certain historic traditions, founded upon real artistic experiences, and the necessities of material and use, we may yet, I hope,

be of service in our exhibition and other work, if we succeed in comprehending within our membership the best elements of both new and old, in maintaining the highest standard of taste and workmanship, and in placing, so far as we are able, the best after its kind, in our honest opinion, before the public.