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The Simple Life

By CHARLES WAGNER

Translated From the French by Mary Louise Hendon
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Yet what we now have most at heart is to speak of the ordinary aesthetics of life, of the care one should bestow upon the adornment of his dwelling and his person, giving to existence that inner without which it lacks charm.

For it is not a matter of indifference whether man pays attention to these superfluous necessities or whether he does not; it is by them that we know whether he puts soul into his work. Far from considering it as wasteful to give time and thought to the perfecting, beautifying and poetizing of forms, I think we should extend as much as we can upon them. Nature gives us her example, and the man who should affect contempt for the ephemeral splendor of beauty with which we garnish our brief days would lose sight of the intentions of him who has put the same care and love into the painting of the lily of an hour and the eternal hills.

But we must not fall into the gross error of confounding true beauty with that which has only the name. The beauty and poetry of existence lie in the understanding we have of it. Our home, our table, our dress, should be the interpreters of intentions. That these intentions be so expressed it is first necessary to have them, and he who possesses them makes them evident through the simplest means. One need not be rich to give grace and charm to his habit and his habitation. It suffices to have good taste and good will. We come here to a point very important to everybody, but perhaps of more interest to women than to men.

Those who would have women conceal themselves in coarse garments of the shapeless uniformity of baggy violins, nature in her very heart and mind understand completely the spirit of things. If dress were only a precaution to shelter us from cold or rain a piece of sack or the skin of a beast would answer. But it is vastly more than this. Man puts himself into all that he does. He transforms into types the things that serve him. The dress is not simply a covering; it is a symbol. I call to witness the rich flowering of national and provincial costumes and those worn by our early corporations. A woman's toilet, too, has something to say to us. The more meaning there is in it the greater its worth. To be truly beautiful it must tell us of beautiful things, things personal and veritable. Spend all the money you possess upon it; if its form is determined by chance or custom, if it has no relation to her who wears it, it is only tawdry, a domino. Ultra fashionable dress, which completely masks feminine personality under designs of pure convention, despoils it of its principal attraction. From this abuse it comes about that many things which women admire do as much wrong to their beauty as to the purses of their husbands and fathers. What would you say of a young girl who expressed her thoughts in terms very choice indeed, but taken word for word from a phrase book? What charm could you find in this borrowed language? The effect of toilet well designed in themselves, but seen again and again on all women indiscriminately, is precisely the same.

I cannot resist citing here a passage from Camille Lemonnier that harmonizes with my idea:

"Nature has given to the fingers of woman a charming art, which she knows by instinct and which is peculiarly her own, as silk to the worm and lacquer to the swift and subtle spider. She is the poet; the interpreter of her own grace and ingenuousness, the splendor of the mystery in which her wish to please arrays itself. All the talent she expends in her effort to equal man in the other arts is never worth the spirit and conception wrought out through a bit of stuff in her skillful hands."

"Well, I wish that this art were more honored than it is. As education should consist in thinking with one's mind, feeling with one's heart, expressing the little personalities of the innermost, invisible 'I'—which, on the contrary, are repressed, leveled down, by conformity—I would that the young girl in her novitiate of womanhood, the future mother, might early become the little exponent of this art of the toilet—her own dressmaker. In short, she who one day shall make the dress of her children, but with the taste and the gift to improvise, to express herself in that masterpiece of feminine personality and skill, a gown, without which a woman is no more than a bundle of rags."

The dress you have made for yourself is almost always the most becoming, and, however that may be, it is the one that pleases you most. Women of leisure too often forget this; working women also in city and country alike. Since these last are clothed by dressmakers and milliners in very doubtful imitation of the modish world, grace has almost disappeared from their dress. And has anything more surely the gift to please than the fresh apparition of a young working girl or a daughter of the fields wearing the costume of her country and beautiful from her simplicity alone?

These same reflections might be applied to the fashion of decorating and

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arranging our houses. If there are toilets which reveal an entire conception of life, hats that are poems, knots of ribbon that are veritable works of art, so there are interiors which after their manner speak to the mind. Why, under pretext of decorating our homes, do we destroy that personal character which always has such value? Why have our sleeping rooms conform to those of hotels, our reception rooms to waiting rooms, by making predominant a uniform type of official beauty?

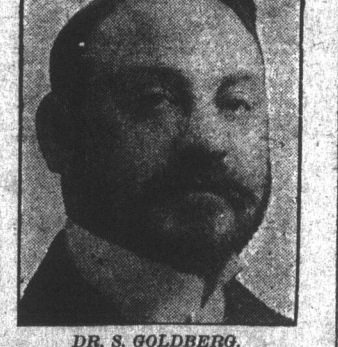
What a pity to go through the houses of a city, the cities of a country, the countries of a vast continent, and encounter everywhere certain forms identical, inevitable, exasperating by their repetition! How aesthetics would be more admirable! Instead of this luxury in job lots, all these decorations, pretentious, but rapid from fashion, we should have an infinite variety; happy improvisations would strike our eyes, the unexpected in a thousand forms would rejoice our hearts, and we should rediscover the secret of impressing on a drapery or a piece of furniture that stamp of human personality which makes certain antiques priceless.

(To Be Continued.)

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THE DEADLIEST POST ON A BATTLESHIP.

In all the battleships to be built in the future, the British Admiralty have decided to abolish fighting tops and heavy military masts, for the reason that these structures are now considered more dangerous and cumbersome than useful. In a naval battle the position of the topmen would be the most unenviable on board ship. As a rule there is nothing but this sheet of iron, only that strong enough to resist rifle bullets, to protect them, and exposed to the full fury of the enemy's fire they must realize that their chances of returning to the deck safe and sound are remote indeed. There is a possibility, too, of the great iron masts being brought down by a well aimed shell, and as the mast with its fighting tops weighs, on a battleship, as much as forty-five tons, it can well be imagined what an awful catastrophe the fall of one of these monsters would be. Men would be killed, big and little guns disabled, and in most battleships the masts are hollow, and the men climb to the platforms up ladders in the inside, but the difficulty of getting wounded men down these narrow ways cannot be exaggerated. In all probability there would be nothing but dead men to bring down, for with modern rapid fire guns it is thought that all exposed parts of a vessel will quickly be cleared of the living occupants, and heavy armor will be the only protection.

The fighting tops of the warships of to-day correspond with the ordinary tops of the old wooden warships. Nelson was killed by a shot from the fighting top of the French ship Redoubtable nearly a hundred years ago, and it has been the custom from the earliest times to put platforms high up on the masts in order that men could be stationed up there to hurl down all sorts of projectiles on the enemy's decks. The military masts of to-day are used to carry guns and searchlights, and the design is very different from the ships, and had to be removed. The idea of the French naval designers has always been to completely close in both masts and guns, but the majority of navies have declared for the open top, the argument being that in an open top shells might harmlessly pass over the heads of or between the men in it working the guns and searchlights, but in a closed top the shells would burst on impact with the iron sides or cover, and kill and maim the men, and smash the guns inside.

Open tops were for so many years in favor to the U.S. navy, but lately there has been a desire to follow the French fashion. The open top has this advantage, too, over the closed top, it allows of a free sweep for the guns, in such ships as the French Cruiser *Deputé de Loue*, the guns are poked out of small squares in the first fighting top on the mast, and their range is consequently limited. German favorers of masts, very wide in circumference, with spiral stairs and ammunition hoists inside. These masts are far heavier than those in the British battleships, but the shells from the biggest guns in use at sea could hardly bring them down.

No mention has yet been made here of the man who works the searchlight from the top platform of the mast. The light would probably be the first thing the enemy would attack, because of the assistance it gives the gunners at night, and the man manning the light would receive the full force of the small quick firing guns, so that at night he would be in even greater peril than the gunners immediately below him.

LENGTH OF LIFE IN EUROPE.

Of European nations the Norwegians and Swedes are the longest lived, the Spaniards the shortest. According to a foreign statistical return recently issued, the average duration of life is as follows: Sweden and Norway, fifty years; England, forty-five years and three months; Belgium, forty-four years and eleven months; Switzerland, forty-four years and four months; France, forty-three years and six months; Austria, thirty-nine years and eight months; Prussia and Italy, thirty-nine years; Bavaria, thirty-six years, and Spain, thirty-two years and four months.

Y-Don't

you have a neat Photo of yourself taken at the

GIBSON STUDIO,

Cor. King and Fifth Sts.



It is just a common cold, people say, there's no danger in that. Admitting their statement, then there are uncommon colds which are dangerous; for many a fatal sickness begins with a cold. If we could tell the common cold from the uncommon we could feel quite safe. But we can't. The uncommon variety is rarely recognized until it has fastened its hold on the lungs, and there are symptoms of consumption.

At the first symptoms the careful person will heed the warning by taking a mild laxative, some vegetable pill that will not disturb the system or cause griping. About the best is "Dr. Pierce's Pleasant Pellets." If the cold starts with a cough, and it persists then some local treatment for this condition should be taken. A well known alternative extract, which has been highly recommended by thousands of users, is Dr. Pierce's Golden Medical Discovery. This tonic compound is composed of an extract of roots and herbs and has a powerful effect upon the mucous membrane, always the irritation and at the same time works in the proper and reasonable way at the seat of the trouble—the stagnated or poisoned blood.

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When musical instruments were first used in the services of the Scottish churches many strict Sabatarians objected to the iniquitous proceedings. One of these persons, on meeting the minister some time after leaving the "kirke" because of the introduction of a harmonium said with a sneer, "Well, and how is your fanner getting on?" (A fanner was a winnowing machine resembling the bellows of an organ in its working.) "Oh," splendidly answered the reverend gentleman, "It's just keeping the good corn and blowing the chaff away."

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