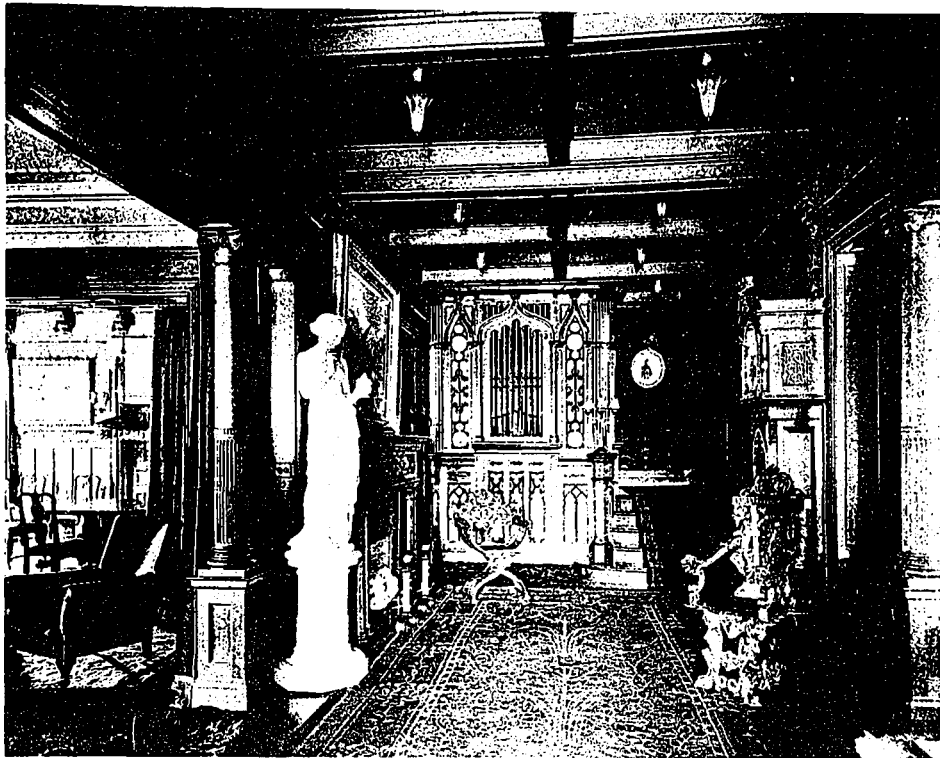


House Building—Past and Present

By M. H. BAILLIE SCOTT.

IN considering the houses of the past in this country, I want to pierce deeper than the mere external forms in which building expressed itself from time to time. I do not propose to speak of Early English work, or Decorated, or Perpendicular, or of tracery and pointed arches. All this morphology of the building periods is extremely interesting, but not of great value unless we can get from the work some conception of the spirit that informed it. The building art is, like other arts, the medium for the expression of the individual or combined group of individuals who produced the work. What they sowed we may reap, no more and no less, and the spiritual appeal of a building represents the sum of the spiritual energy put into it by its builders—the heart inspiring and the brain guiding the dexterity of the hand. I give this trinity of factors in the order of their importance. The most vital

matter is the inspiration, the divine spark in the work; the brain gives rational guidance, and the hand is the medium of expression. If



A GLIMPSE OF LIVING ROOM, BLINK BONNIE, HAMILTON, ONT.

some great thought is seeking expression, the readiest and simplest language is the best. The whole tragedy of the development of any art lies in the pride of knowledge and skill, in mere proficiency for its own sake, which reduces the whole art to the level of an acrobatic performance. The art of building in the past divides itself naturally into three periods:

First, the craftsman period, extending from the earliest Gothic times, through the Middle Ages up to the time of the Renaissance.

Second, the scholar period, dating from the Renaissance till about the end of the eighteenth century.

Third, the shopkeeper period, when the commercial ideals of the nineteenth century found their expression in building.

There is always some-



HALLWAY, BLINK BONNIE, HAMILTON, ONT.