

the public in architecture is the object lesson of good design.

All creative art must have a motive. Guadet, in his wonderful "Cours d'Architecture," reveals the basic influence which governs our art, in an illuminating phrase. "The great Architect of a period," says he, "is its social condition; the technician realises, but does not create, the aspirations of his time." Yet, while it remains true that architecture reflects, and writes in stone, the history of its time, the legend is no mere transcript, but a conception whereby the fertilising suggestion is transmuted vitalised, and perfected. Versailles owed its existence to the autocratic splendour of Louis XIV., but the minds that created it were those of Mansard, of Le Notre, and Le Brun.

The pageant of Versailles has passed into the Shades; there breathes no wind of life among the phantoms of that splendid Court; alone, the artists' work remains, immortal. To us—as it did to them—inspiration must come from the living world, from them that are nigh to us, from the resistless, limitless future. For good or ill, the old Order is well-nigh gone; the short retrospect of our own lives tells of a mighty social change, and in the fruition of the new State, Architecture must fulfil its glorious part. "Did you, O friend," said Whitman, "suppose Democracy was only for elections, for politics, or for a party name?" and, "To the men and women of a country, its æsthetics furnish materials and suggestions of personality, and enforce them in a thousand effective ways."

Admitting—as we must—the value of Art to Democracy, its intimate connection with the moral welfare of a people, we cannot but applaud the attitude of H.M. Government with regard to the national Housing Scheme. Despite political reasons for erecting houses with headlong hurry, despite attack by those without knowledge of the prodigious work involved in the preparation of even a moderate-sized scheme (and many are on a scale never before conceived in this or any other country), the Department charged with its administration has steadfastly insisted on standards of sound design and construction. Both the Prime Minister and Dr. Addison have made clear their determination that the land shall not be covered with the abominations of the old-time speculator. Their reward shall be an England of finer instincts, richer for a noble pleasure. Architects—to the surprise of many—are now officially recognised as those most properly fitted to design houses, to plan the lay-out and extension of our cities and towns. We are grateful for that recognition; I do not hesitate to say we are giving of our very best in return.

To those impatient for results, let me say that Economy in building is effected, not by the

omission of ornamental details—and, indeed, it is but a poor design which needs them—but, by minute study of the Plan, and Construction, upon whose importance I have already insisted. "Plan" means far more than the arrangement of rooms; it comprises the scrutiny of every foot of ground, its contours and subsoil, whereby foundation work is saved; it covers the economical disposition and grading of roads, the aspect of each house-site, the water-supply, lighting, drainage, and—in many cases—reasoned investigation of the general and local social problems incident to the formation of a town-ship. "Construction," too, may be but a small thing, in—for example—a cottage roof; but to perfect it, so that wood, slate, lead, and labour may be reduced in each of several hundred cottages, will perhaps need days of work and experiment. And the time lost in preliminary study is regained many fold in the end. To produce in bulk such comparatively simple things as shells needed months of preparation, but, when organisation was complete, they poured forth like water from a pierced dam. So, houses, far more complex constructions than shells, will presently arise as by enchantment; the process has already begun.

Like Religion, Architecture, if it is to profit a nation, must be part of its daily life. It is in Plan that lies the true economy—prevention of waste. Waste of time and energy, wandering about the tortuous passages of tube stations, where lifts are planned remote from trains, and fatuous stairs intervene between them and the platforms. Waste of property, in the squalid hinder-parts of mainline stations, untidy sprawling areas dotted with lamentable sheds, and linked by bridges whose building has darkened and desolated streets of houses; waste which defiles and depresses whole communities. I mention "backs," because Architecture is matter not only, as is sometimes thought, for fronts, but equally for backs and sides; for all, in short, that connotes orderly, cleanly life, and the beauty of efficiency.

My predecessor in this Chair has addressed you in time of War; to me, more fortunate, it is given to take up his arduous duties freed from the obsession of those dreadful days. In opening our first Session since the Declaration of Peace, I welcome and congratulate those members who have served their Country and returned in safety. If I do not at this moment dwell upon our losses, it is not that we are unmindful; we do not forget the gallant comrades who once sat with us. The Royal Institute has had its full share of bitterness.

War, like Architecture, is an Art, and is practised "according to plan." Its principles demand the same insistence on a leading motive,

(Continued on page 396.)