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CONTENTS FOR DECEMBER 1943

THE SPANISH MASTERS: EL GRECO, VELASQUEZ AND GOYA, By Lord Harlech	295
GREEN VALLEY, CONSTANTIA, CAPE. A Country House for the Architect, Professor L. W. Thornton White, F.R.I.B.A.	301
EGYPTIAN ART AND ARCHITECTURE, By A. Axelrad	305
BRITAIN'S VILLAGES FOR WOMEN, By Courtesy of the High Commissioner	310
PROFESSIONAL NOTES AND NEWS	311

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THE AGONY IN THE GARDEN. EL GRECO



THE SPANISH MASTERS

El Greco, Velasquez and Goya.

BY LORD HARLECH

A LECTURE DELIVERED TO THE ARCHITECTURAL STUDENTS' SOCIETY
UNIVERSITY OF THE WITWATERSRAND, ON SEPTEMBER 15th, 1943

In the past forty years I have written or lectured on many aspects of the arts but, it so happens, never before said anything on the subject of Spanish painting. This has not been because I have been unfamiliar with it or have ever passed it by, but because I think it is more difficult to bring into any unity, shape or synthesis. The continuous and triumphant pageant of five centuries of Italian painting from Giotto to Tiepolo; the almost complete and varied expression of a single nation's genius revealed by the 17th century painters of Holland; the persistence throughout the centuries of the clash and rivalry of the classical and romantic tendencies in French painting; the sanity of English portraiture and English love and gift—especially in water colour—for depicting the essence of England's own peculiar landscape—all are easy to present in lecture form in comparison with any adequate review either of Spanish architecture, Spanish literature or Spanish painting. The fierce mountains and fierce sunshine of Spain, the stormy history of the country where Celt and Iberian, Latin and Carthaginian, Visigoth and Moor and Jew have all left even till to-day their mark—a country of extremes, of cruelty, of passion, of courtly manners and romantic deeds and still more romantic yearnings, a country of closely contrasted poverties and luxuries makes all Spanish life, literature and art a story of individuals—and intense individuals—rather than the story of a national school or style. Of all European nations the Spaniards are the least sympathetic to the ideal of Aristotelian man. Moderation in any matter is alien to their experience and temperament. Spain produces saints and mystics of the most extreme austerity and spirituality. It also produces sinners and libertines who out-Herod Herod. The national sport is the still bloody arena of the bull fight. The only politicians who seem at all times excluded from public life in Spain are liberals and moderates of any kind. It is commonly said that the only successful attempt to synthesize Spain was that of Cervantes in *Don Quixote* which stands for Spain as Shakespeare for England.

My lecture to-night is, therefore, mainly on the achievement of three individuals—the great high lights of Spanish painting—El Greco, Velasquez and Goya. Curiously enough El Greco was a Cretan, trained under Titian in Venice, who lived the last forty years of his life in Toledo, and there became more Spanish than the Spaniards themselves and the greatest artistic genius of the counter-reformation in Europe, the most brilliant revealer in visual art of the ideals of St. Ignatius Loyola and St. Theresa of Avila. Velasquez, for forty years Court painter to King Philip IV, in Madrid, was a Portuguese. Only Goya was a Spaniard by blood.

Before the arrival in Spain of El Greco, about the year 1575, Spain had produced little painting of first class importance. Only one Spanish primitive—and his work is very rare for he died young—is among the high lights of 15th century European achievement, and that is Bartolomeo Bermejo, who lived and painted near Saragossa in Aragon in the latter half of that century. I have only seen three of his works (never having visited his home district where there are a few more). One is in a private collection in London, one in the Lisbon Museum, and one in the Isabella Gardner Collection at Boston, Massachusetts. This last picture shows me that Bermejo was a very great and original artist. It is one of those masterpieces that take one's breath away. It is the tall, elongated figure of a female saint, St. Engracia, whoever she may be, with a white, wan, exquisitely delicate and haunting face, her body clad in angular folds of dark green and black against an exquisite gold background with Gothic crown and ornaments. I can best describe it as "essentially Gothic." It is one of those pictures that have no progenitors, no connections, no successors—the work of isolated genius of the highest order. At that time Spanish churches were being filled with elaborate painted retables for late Gothic and early Renaissance altars in the Flemish style—all pale imitations of the traditions of Van Eyck, Rogier, van der Weyden, Memlinc and David. Bermejo alone struck out a line of his own as did his slightly

earlier contemporary, Gonsalvez, in Portugal.

Greco has been recently rediscovered by artists and critics. The city of his choice, Toledo, still contains literally hundreds of Greco's. We know that he was a Greek born in Crete in 1541, who spent some years in Venice and a few in Rome. He carried everywhere with him a library of the Ancient Greek classics. He loved music, wealth and good living. He caused some scandal by never marrying but having a devoted son and assistant in his painting, Jorg Manuel. Before his arrival in Spain he painted in Italy several pictures that survive; they are rather second rate Venetian pictures, closely related to the work of his fellow pupil in the aged Titian's studio Bassano. It is clear that he saw and studied his *Corregios* in Parma, and the mediaeval *Angelos* in the Sistine Chapel. But from the moment of his arrival in Toledo the Greco we know to-day developed. His painting did not please King Philip II, but aroused intense enthusiasm and patronage from the ecclesiastical hierarchy. One of the most brilliant and searching portrait painters, who ever lived, he has bequeathed us a gallery of these clerics from the Cardinal Archbishop Guevara, Grand Inquisitor of Spain, downwards. The heir of the Byzantine Mosaicists and of the later phase of his master, Titian, he was a superb technician of oil paint, and as both designer and colourist an original, daring genius of the highest order. Toledo, with its amazing collection of mediaeval buildings, Christian and Pre-Christian, is one of the most awe inspiring cities of Europe. But after two or three days spent there hunting out with some difficulty and looking at Greco pictures I can remember little else but the overwhelming and cumulative effect of his vast work upon my sensibilities. Outside Toledo there is the same memory of his Resurrection and Pentecost in the Prado at Madrid, of the Martyrdom of the Theban Legion, the Dream of Philip II (a peculiar vision of the Last Judgment) and the tall episcopal saint in mitre and blue green chasuble in the Escorial, the Portrait of Guevara and the Landscape of Toledo in thunder and lightning in the Metropolitan Museum, New York, but the bulk of Greco's work remains in Toledo. The high spots in Toledo are the burial of Conde Orgaz in the little Church of San Thome, the Espolio or disrobing of Christ of his crimson robe without seam in the Cathedral; the Assumption of the Virgin in San Vicente, and the Baptism and Holy Family in the Hospital of San Juan Talavera. Over and above these masterpieces are dozens of portraits and pictures of saints, and biblical scenes. He made many versions and replicas of some of his pictures. In America alone there are three genuine and all slightly different versions of his "St. Martin and the Beggar," and there are about a dozen genuine versions of his St. Francis with the Skull.

I have only time to say something of the Burial of Conde Orgaz, by common consent the peak of his stupendous achievement. The lower part of the picture depicts the Count in full armour being buried by Saint Stephen and St. Augustine of Hippo in full and brilliant canonicals surrounded by his friends and relations—all brilliant portraits, clothed uniformly

in black. The upper half of the picture is filled by the Trinity with the Blessed Virgin and all the heavenly host of angels and archangels. Nothing like it, either as a composition, in the extraordinary range of its colour, the brilliance of its draughtsmanship or the comprehension of reality in oil paint, has been found in Europe. It belongs to his middle period. His later period saw the development of his peculiar mannerism, and of this the Assumption of San Vicente may be taken as a fine example. The figures are more and more elongated and ecstatic, the colour becomes more steely like the colour of Toledo sword blades, the rhythm of the ascending composition becomes flame-like. Greco strove to impress upon us his yearning sympathy for Spanish mystical religious ecstasy. He was a great artist with a genuine passion for that type of religious emotion and experience which was most characteristic of his age and adopted country. In the burial of Conde Orgaz he juxtaposed and succeeded in uniting this objective world of mortal pain with the heavenly vision. In his later work he became more and more bent on the realization in form and colour of the latter. Greco has done for the Catholic religion of his age what the ageing Rembrandt in his later etchings and religious masterpieces (the Prodigal Son, for example) has done for Protestant Christianity. Greco's is not the semi-classic Catholicism of Rome herself or of French Catholicism revealed in her Romanesque and 11th century Gothic. It is the Catholicism of the counter reformation in Spain and it is Spanish rather than Roman in its character and intensity. Nothing in the whole realm of painting is more remarkable than Greco's treatment of hands. The human hand and its significance in expressive form and gesture was more closely studied and understood in all its vital possibilities by Greco than by any other artist. His rare nudes, too, in the great picture of St. Maurice and the Theban Legion, in his Laocoon and the Serpents, are lambent forms of arresting rhythmic significance. Greco is a dazzling portent—perhaps the most vivid and overwhelming in the experience of all who respond to the captivation of great painting. His vision was not normal vision by contrast to the eternal normality of the vision of Velasquez. So Greco will remain a controversial figure while down the centuries Velasquez will be more easily comprehended by all humanity. In my own view Greco was indeed the greater artist, a unique, exceptional, vital figure of tremendous power and achievement whom you either respond to or rebel against. He challenges us to define what is art. Bernard Shaw, in his play "The Doctor's Dilemma," brings on the stage the dying moments of a young artist whose lips close for ever with the utterance of a striking creed—"I believe in Rembrandt, Velasquez and Michael Angelo, in the might of design, the mystery of colour and the passion of Art that have made my hands blessed." It would be difficult to improve on this creed as a statement of the "faith" of art. But it is arguable that the three great objectives deserve the addition of Greco to the Trinity of Great Masters—and for myself I would add Titian, too.

Greco died when Velasquez was a boy of fifteen. Velasquez,



PORTRAIT OF A LADY. VELASQUEZ

as an artist, was a giant every bit as great as Greco, but of a very different kind. As a sheer technician, i.e., having the ability to render in paint on canvas exactly what he wished, he has perhaps no equal in the history of European painting except Rubens. Velasquez was born in the same year as Vandyke, and died four years before Rembrandt. Twice in his life he left Madrid on pilgrimage to Italy, once in 1629, and again in 1640. The first journey turned his attention, only momentarily, to Raphael and the Classic tradition, hence such odd and rather regrettable picture as *Vulcan's Forge*, and Joseph's Coat. But in truth he only had eyes for one teacher and that was Titian, and he had Titians enough in Madrid to learn from, and so to develop from the domestic genre of his early years in Seville to the grand designer of his later years.

Roger Fry has said most of what need be said of a general character about Velasquez. I quote: "Velasquez freed himself more and more than any other great artist of all traces of symbolism. He dwelt entirely and completely in the realm of pure objective vision; he seems utterly unconscious of and indifferent to the symbolic and emotional values of his figures or landscapes. His detachment from the meaning of things is complete. What nude was ever at once realistic, so perfect a rendering of the human body and its surface, and yet so remote from all desire or emotion as his *Venus* in London's National Gallery. Whoever faced Kings and Princes with so bland an indifference. In him exceptional capacity, rich sensibility and the intellectual clarity of the Spaniard came out freed for once of all that lumber of over-dramatic emphasis and subject idealism which the Spanish tradition has usually accepted."

Only about 90 genuine Velasquez survive, and of these no less than forty hang together in the Prado—the finest one-man show in Europe—the three great equestrian portraits with their mountain backgrounds, the two lovely little Roman landscapes, the *Dwarfs*, the *Drinkers*, the *Spinners* and his vast canvas of *Las Meninas*, of the little *Infanta*, her maids of honour, the big dog and his own studio, and its apparatus as the background, in its conception and handling is one of the most "original" impressionist pictures ever painted.

The little *Infanta* who was destined to become Empress of Austria was the inspiration of his last years, and the last picture he painted of her before he died—now in the Vienna Gallery—is perhaps his greatest tour de force—the large *Infanta* in green and silver with blue bows. If ever an artist has succeeded in making oil paint into a magical substance with intrinsic beauties of its own it is Velasquez. No wonder Manet, Whistler and such painters learnt from Velasquez the importance of "surface and brushwork quality." It has become the fashion to denigré Velasquez. But go to Rome and answer whether any picture in that city comes up to his staggering portrait of Pope Innocent X, in the Doria Gallery. But Velasquez was more than a portrait painter. In whatever he attempted, and his range was considerable, he had a genius for design and for arranging the subject of his picture in space and depth within the canvas frame. The French 19th century

impressionists acknowledged their major debt to Velasquez for teaching main lessons, and to-day when we rightly attach importance, both to design and to quality in, and a right sense of, the medium used in artistic creation we must acknowledge the supremacy, possibly shared only with Chardin, of this virtue in a painter.

The 17th century saw the activity of a very great number of Spanish painters. Murillo is the best known. He was most prolific and covered acres of canvas. Seville is as full of Murillo as Toledo of Greco—mostly religious pictures of the kind then liked and in demand—frankly sugary and depicting religiosity rather than any profound spiritual comprehension. They are still popular with many. Personally I rather like his compositions of Spanish beggar boys—the big set of them at Munich, for example, but I have no eyes for his many Immaculate Conceptions.

One contemporary of Velasquez is of far greater importance than Murillo or any of the other secondary Spanish practitioners, and that is Zurbaran. He was a remarkable, strong, austere painter, and no mean artist in temperament and vision. He was a fine craftsman. His work in the greater public galleries of Europe and America is rarely worthy of him at his best and one must go to Cadiz or to the Monastery of Guadalupe to see his noblest work. The set of individual figures of Carthusian saints in their white habits at the former city gives Zurbaran a most honourable mention on the list of European painters of importance.

Eighty years is the gap between the death of Velasquez and the appearance of the third giant Goya, who was born at Saragossa, in 1746, and died in Bordeaux in 1828. Goya, more than any other artist, is the bridge between the "Old Masters" and "Modern Painting," as the latter developed in France in the latter half of the 19th century. Goya was born of humble parentage in Saragossa. As a youth he sowed all kinds of wild oats and had to fly to Madrid at the age of twenty under the shadow of a charge of culpable homicide. After a few years in Madrid he ran the risk of undergoing, at the hands of the Holy Inquisition, a serious matter in Spain, a charge of heresy. He moved to Rome and then to Parma, in North Italy, but turned up again in Saragossa in 1771. He was soon back in Madrid where he fell under the spell of the recently completed ceilings and decorations of the Royal Palace, by the Venetian Tiepolo and his sons. Tiepolo greatly influenced Goya's early manner of painting and gave him an entirely new sense of colour values. In 1776 Goya secured the commission to design cartoons for the Royal Tapestry factory and this duty formed an appreciable part of his work for some years. These idyllic representations of Spanish life and costume are eternally delightful and far surpass the work of those followers of Watteau in France, who carried out similar genre designs for the factories of Gobelins and Beauvais. Early in the 1780's he was patronised by the brilliant young Duchess of Alba, of whom he did many portraits including some in the nude. Scandal accused him of having become her lover, and there was trouble. However, King



THE FIRING SQUAD

GOYA

Charles IV and his wicked Queen protected him, took him up and he became Court Painter. The large group of the Royal Family in the Prado was one of his first masterpieces. Then came the French revolution, followed by other revolutions and wars in Spain. The virile, satirical, naturally radical temperament of Goya took new turns and whether in the famous engravings of "The Disaster of War," the Capriccios, or in oil paintings of firing squads we get some of the most remarkable examples of Goya's savage genius. The cruel misrule of King Ferdinand VII, of whom we have an acid portrait by Goya after the fall of the Bonapartes, finally disgusted him and his last years were spent in France. In old age, like Rembrandt, his style developed a broader impaste and a new technique. Some of his last oil heads and sketches in the broad manner of the late Rembrandt are among his most significant achievements. Few great painters are so versatile as Goya. Till the age of eighty he was constantly experimenting. He sometimes entered into the realm of pure fantasy, filling the sky with goblins and human-headed bats, or creating fantastic landscape like the extraordinary "City on a Rock," in the Metropolitan Museum, New York. Friedlander, the

great German writer on art, once said: "Genius in Art develops from inner necessity, talent develops from reason or outside pressures." This is true of Greco, Goya and Rembrandt, who had peculiarly the quality of genius. Above all, he experimented with new colour harmonies. Occasionally we get from Goya a limpid opalescence and a rendering of the sheen of silk unique in European painting. But it is by some of his brilliant, also startling, portraits that his ultimate stature must be assessed.

There is a half length portrait of Senora Sabasa Garcia, painted about 1810, now in the new National Gallery of America, at Washington, which is one of the world's greatest and most brilliant portraits. Boldly handled it is one of the most subtle and penetrating presentations of a fascinating sitter. Its vitality seems to knock out all other pictures hanging near it.

Goya had no successors, and Spanish painting in the rest of the 19th century has little of significance to show. Two living Spanish painters have obtained international fame, Zuluoga and Pablo Picasso. Zuluoga is a robust and almost blatant painter of portraits and Spanish landscape. His

vigour is indisputable. Picasso, of Malaga, has been politically and artistically a revolutionary. A brilliant draughtsman, an extreme communist, he began by painting with great brilliance such things as flower pieces and designing remarkable etchings and lithographs of groups of nude figures. He passed to his haunting "blue period" of wan, spectral figures, and then switched suddenly to abstract painting under the influence of the advanced wing of contemporary Parisians. The Spanish Civil War produced from him the astonishing cartoon of riot and destruction called "Guernica"—a modern symbolist picture—a 20th century version of Goya's "Disaster of War." One cannot help feeling that his revolutionary fervour has led him to be more interested in shocking the bourgeois and the traditional than in serving the true cause of art in manners of which he is obviously capable. Picasso, the most gifted of the ultra modern of all nations, has succumbed to the bitterness of his own irony with the extremism of so many Spaniards. A perfectly orthodox vase of delphiniums in the Tate Gallery, London, by Picasso, is one of the loveliest and most straightforward, brilliantly achieved flower paintings in the world. I played some personal part in the acquisition and several of my colleagues on the board stoutly refused to believe that the painting had in fact been painted by Picasso.

It cannot be said that there is a Spanish School or a peculiarly Spanish tradition in painting. There have been some great painters in Spain, artists of the highest rank who, in the centuries have made outstanding contributions to the enrichment of the corpus of European art.

Of all the great picture galleries of Europe there is none richer in high lights than the Prado at Madrid, with its galaxy of Titians, Raphaels (including his finest portrait), Rubens', its wonderful Durer and many foreigners. But the Prado would not be the Prado without Greco, Velasquez and Goya. No one who appreciates pictures and the great artists can do other than pay a pilgrimage to Madrid, Toledo and the Escorial. It is a pilgrimage more worth while than perhaps to any city other than Florence. In England Velasquez is represented by about a dozen genuine examples, Goya by only a few comparatively unimportant works, and Greco miserably. Outside Spain the United States of America is now richer than any other country in its possession of works of art by Spaniards.

Any lecture on Art is bound to be dogmatic. One has not in the lecture form time to argue all the reasons for one's assessments and conclusions, which would require a volume. My assessments are inevitably personal and no doubt subjective, the residuum of many years of looking at pictures in many countries. I am always conscious that in studying the arts of mankind one is exercising concurrently both intellectual and emotional faculties. Knowledge, analysis, comparison and understanding are intellectual processes. But all these are but a small part compared with the development of one's intuitive and emotional response to works of art. Behind and immanent

in every work of art is not merely the mind or the craftsmanship of the artist but his whole personality. The artist cannot escape bequeathing to the beholder of the work of his hands something of himself in his totality. It is this that makes the study and appreciation of works of art so fascinating. Final assessments are, of course, impossible, and artists have their ephemeral vogue, their greater or less appeal to whole generations as to individuals. It is rash to dogmatize as to what is "quod semper, quod ubique quod ab omnibus." All I can attempt is to give you my own conclusions in this particular year of grace and to convey to you what I both think and feel about the painters of one particular country. Creative imagination combined with the technical ability to create is what we demand from artists, as from poets or musical composers. All art is one, and accidents of time, place, nation and medium are secondary. Works of art are material things but great art has in it one of our links with the intangibles, with the eternal creative spirit revealed in individual human genius. It is both of the earth and of the spirit. Art is more than mere representations, more even than any search for an ideal of the good or the beautiful. It is a self-existent revelation, the product of individual human skill and poetical imagination in some way connected with the music of the Spheres.

The study and appreciation of art is one of the most important of all humanistic studies.

Greek Drama and Philosophy found analogous contemporary expression in the works of Greek sculptors and architects. Painting and sculpture were the vehicle through which the Italians of the Renaissance most peculiarly expressed themselves. No University is worthy of the name without some concern for the fine arts of mankind. Above all the study of the arts is the study of the great masters. There are remarkable analogies and correspondences between the development and expression of the genius of great artists. For example there is an extraordinary similarity in the story of the careers and development of Donatello in Florentine Sculpture, Rembrandt, the Dutch painter, and Beethoven, the German musical composer. In each case it is the story of the development, not merely of technical competence and greater capacities for expression but growth of spiritual stature.

The greatest works of the greatest artists are nearly always the works of their old age, the product of long experiment, long experience and self education. All Rembrandt's greatest work is the product of his last fifteen years. There is a great journey between the first sonatas of Beethoven and the Ninth Symphony. Art history is partly the study of an age, a nation and of an environment, but above and beyond all it is the study of the expansion of individual human personality. The study of art is not the study of any theory of aesthetics, it is the study of individual achievement.

GREEN VALLEY

CONSTANTIA, CAPE

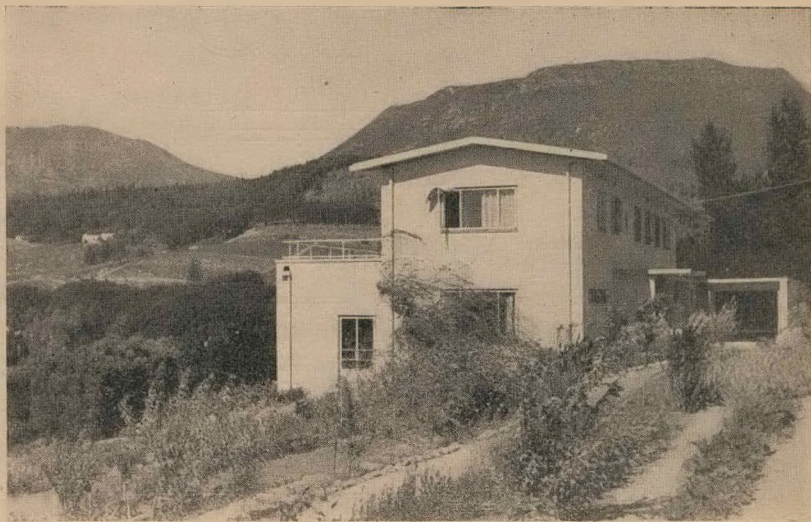
The problem was, briefly, to design a small house with a large living area on a one-morgen site of one-in-six slope down from north to south and with a magnificent view to the south.

The reconciliation of space requirements, cost, contours, prospect and aspect resulted in a long narrow plan with all the working parts of the house on one level, steps up from this level to the entrance and steps down to the lounge, with bedrooms and terrace on a first floor seven feet above entrance level.

To gain winter sun from the north, internal walls, stair risers and balustrade were omitted. Conversely, on the north wall a hood and the eaves were calculated in projection to prevent any sun whatever falling upon the plate glass during the five summer months.

Acoustical considerations were considered important, resulting in a structural isolation of the study, the kitchen quarters, living area and the bedrooms, each from the others, and the designing of the lounge to give optimum resonant and reverberation results.

The character of the building was not preconceived, but arises out of the aesthetic development of these practical factors into an architectural unity.



GREEN VALLEY

CONSTANTIA . CAPE

A COUNTRY HOUSE FOR THE ARCHITECT,
PROFESSOR L. W. THORNTON WHITE, F.R.I.B.A.

Situated on a steeply sloping site, the house overlooks the lush Constantia Valley and commands wide views over the Cape Flats and a broad sweep of the distant False Bay coast line.

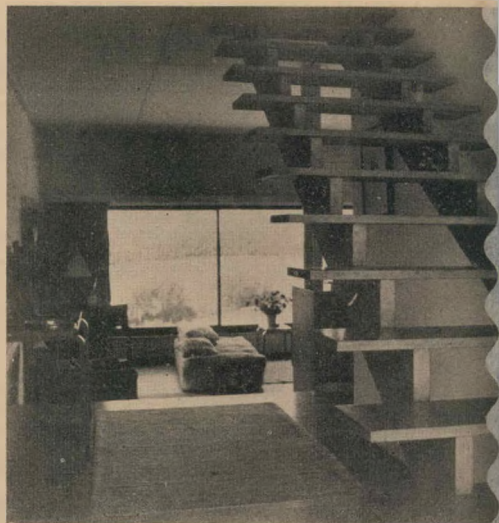
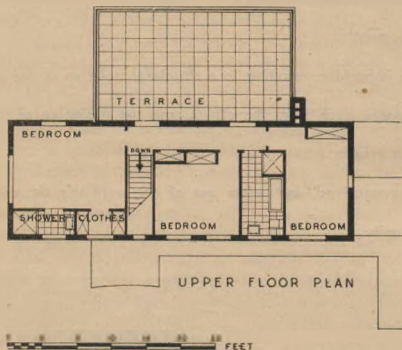
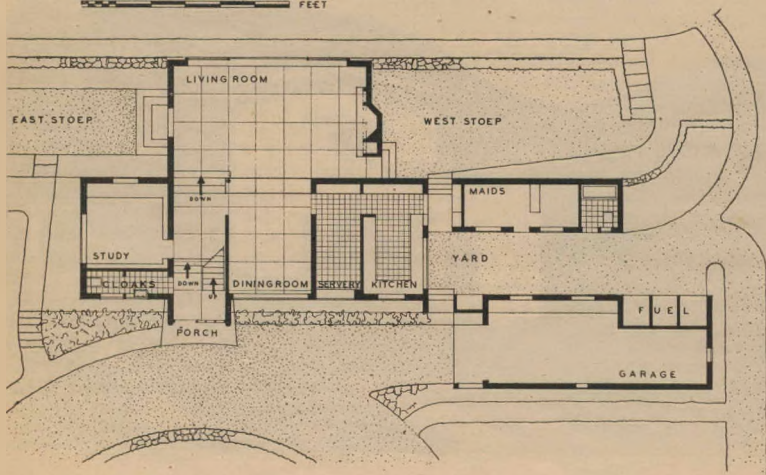
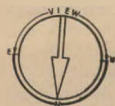
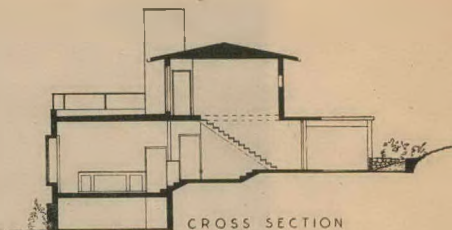


Photo : Constance Stuart.



A view of the main living space seen from the upper level of the entrance.



CONSTRUCTION AND FINISHES.

The structure is composite, because the high comfort standards demanded could not be achieved positively by the adoption of a single type of construction.

The main walls are of brick, plastered and/or painted. The main internal support is a steel column carrying a heavy and insulated R.S.J. The main ground floor ceiling is of fibre board in a flat plane, with inverted beams. This allows of a reinforced concrete first floor below the boarded floors of the bedrooms (sound and fire resisting), but this technique changes to wood joists asphalt and concrete tiles on the terrace (eliminating temperature cracks) and to steel Tees, boards and copper for the hoods.

Photo: Constance Stuart

THE LIVING ROOM

The living spaces of the house are linked by the continuous pattern of the fibre board ceiling and the pale blue face-brick wall stretching from the entrance to the living room window. The floor is of birch with maroon and white tufted wool carpets. The fittings are carried out in mahogany, teak and limba. The pale and deep maroons of the ceilings, walls and curtains, in contrast to the pale-blue surface and the grey-blue chairs, complete a colour composition in deliberate discord with the strong browns and greens of the external landscape.





VIEW FROM THE SOUTH WEST

The 8° pitched roof is of boarding and bitumen, ready to receive the copper sheeting for which it is designed. The windows are plate glass in steel casements, except the main lounge window, which has teak sashes sliding horizontally in a reinforced concrete framework.

The internal and external living spaces (east and west stoeps, the latter with direct kitchen service) are tied together by a rough stone retaining wall and a birch lounge floor of the same tone and colour values as the outside soil. On this floor colour internally, is built up a colour scheme deliberately discordant with the strong greens and browns of the Constantia Valley. A monochromatic harmony of pale and deep maroons for walls, ceilings and curtains contrasting with a pale blue face-brick internal wall from entrance door to lounge window (which, with the ceiling pattern, links the living spaces of the house) and grey-blue chairs over maroon and white wool tufted carpets. The colour range of the birch floor is extended into Alaskan birch and walnut doors, and mahogany, teak and limba (beetle proofed) fittings.

EGYPTIAN ART AND ARCHITECTURE

By A. Axelrod

In this paper, an attempt is made to ascertain the extent of the influence social conditions had upon Egyptian art, including architecture. It is my personal opinion, which I shall try to prove in this essay, that owing to the peculiar circumstances within which the Egyptian artist and architect found themselves, their creations were restricted by conventions which prevented personal aesthetic expression, and inhibited the growth of Egyptian art.

In art criticism, one has to establish criteria from which logical discussion can be developed. Art originates in some social need and is produced to satisfy that need. Let us draw upon poetry for illustration. The first poetry was the songs which were chanted by primitive people to invoke the seasons. For example, in the Eastern Mediterranean peasants used to sing songs before each spring to bring back the God Adonis, the God of fertility.

Having a limited scientific control over the material conditions, they controlled those conditions imaginatively by their religious chants.

Out of these chants which served a social function, the dance, painting and poetry arose. As scientific knowledge developed, the arts to some extent lost their early function, but never entirely became divorced from society.

The same process takes place more or less in all the arts. Art attained various degrees of independence from social needs, but in its most vigorous periods, retained its connection. In its decadent periods it was either divorced from society, or else too much under the domination of the latter. Many works of art were created in response to certain needs imposed upon men by the societies of which they were a part. Under such conditions, art can have both a utilitarian value, and an aesthetic value. The unhealthy conditions arise, when art has become entirely severed from society, or when society imposes excessively harsh restrictions upon art, or in other words, forces art to the status of propaganda.

There is another class of work, in which no such process takes place. That sort of creative work, we say, is the result of a spontaneous aesthetic impulse, in which the artist finds free personal expression, through the medium which he has inherited from society. This is the free activity which has produced works which are the most cherished possessions of mankind.

The art of Egypt, in my opinion, was of the former order, that is, almost entirely controlled by the state. Research has proved that the civilisation of the earliest dynasty was preceded by one still older which goes back at least 4,000 years. In the beginning their art was undoubtedly instinctive, like that of other primitive races. It expressed itself in personal decoration. From the earliest pictorial representation of human figures on pottery, and on walls of caves, it appears that men and women painted their own bodies with figures of animals and other symbolic marks. There is evidence to prove that their work then was naturalistic as opposed to the Hierarchic symbolism found in works of art during the Dynastic period. It was not until Egypt's dynastic rulers held sway, that Egyptian art began to take on its peculiar individuality.

The Egyptians believed more intensely than any other ancient race in a future life, hence the desire to preserve the latter forever. In consequence, for hundreds of years and particularly during the Fourth Dynasty (2900 B.C.—2750 B.C.) the material resources and labour power of Egypt were lavished on the building of the pyramids and temples.

The pyramid was a logical outcome of the Egyptian's belief in future life, but it was too purely utilitarian, too basically formed to express any complex aesthetic feelings. In other words it was not born out of the desire for beauty. The same belief in life after death, led the Egyptians to furnish the pyramids and tombs with the utensils necessary in daily life, and covered the walls with images of the deceased. But since these were of a purely practical nature, they only needed to be straightforward reproductions of the original. To give these paintings an aesthetic value would have been in their mind a waste of time. If for example we see that a king leaves ten identical replicas of himself in his tomb, it is ample proof to show how essentially commercial and non-aesthetic the result was.

The whole life of Egypt was dependent on seasons. Viewing the eternal and monotonous recurrence of the seasons, the Egyptians, therefore, conceived of life as being static, and of the same monotonous texture. Tradition therefore played a very important part in Egyptian life. And as he accepted tradition in his daily life, he also accepted it in his art. This psychological aspect, was canonised by the ruling class of Egypt, that is, the priesthood, and thus it is easy to understand the "Type" in Egyptian art as against the "Individuality."

It is granted that the achievement of mystery in the design of the Egyptian temple was highly successful. Starting with the avenue of sphynxes, entering the temple court through a small doorway, accentuated by pylons on each side of it, and then entering the hall which was like a forest closely packed with columns and terminating with the Holy of Holies. Granted that they achieved the desired



QUEEN NOFRETETE

Painted Lime-stone Bust, from the studio of the sculptor Thutmose at El Amarna. Dynasty XVIII, about 1370 B.C. Berlin. Egyptian Museum.

effect of increased darkness with the nearing to the Diety. Granted that a development of an idea takes place stage by stage along the internal axis, but was this axial unity expressed externally? All one sees externally, is a long blank wall, breaking back at indeterminate distances and becoming lower at each. The building therefore has not the external axial unity which is so successfully achieved internally. This very combination was highly perfected by the Greeks later.

As a result of the social structure of ancient Egypt the function of their temple was totally different from that of the Greeks. The people hardly took any part in the performance of the religious rituals. The performance of all the religious ceremonies was carried out by the priests, who were actually just a clique of professional politicians. This clique of politicians believed in the effects of propaganda, which imbued the people with mystery and fear, and it was that fear that kept the priesthood in power for thousands of years. It is easy then and logical to assume, that the priesthood would monopolise



SEATED FIGURE OF KING AMENHOTEP IV (AKHENATON).

Dynasty XVIII, about 1370 B.C. Paris, Louvre.

all the branches of art, and utilise them to suit its purpose.

Although history is full of the achievements of this or that Pharaoh, it tells us very little of these giant memorials, or of their builders. We may envisage, the skeleton-lined roads to the quarries, and hear across the ages the laboured panting of the men tugging at the ropes under the crack of the overseers' whips. It was that fear and tyranny that most probably influenced the Egyptian architects and particularly the sculptors to a very great extent in all their artistic creations.

Just for the sake of comparison, let us look at the social structure of the Greeks or even of the Early Minoans. Under their system although it was divided into classes, the multitude had the same rights as any of the upper classes. Everybody was allowed to take part in the Olympic Games, everybody was allowed to come and worship the Gods at the Acropolis.

From the vivid engravings and frescoes on the walls of the ancient Minoan palaces, and on earthenware statuettes, one can easily visualise the life of the early Cretans. Joyous and pleasure loving, the Minoans danced, sang, boxed and wrestled. On gala days, they crowded the bull ring that lay within the city and watched the tremendously exciting games. We do not really know very much of their religious ceremonies, but it is logical to assume, that there was none of the Egyptian mysticism. Everybody was free to take part in the social activities, and therefore everybody was free to take part in the religious ceremonies. Naturally, under such systems as mentioned above art would not be subject to the ideas of a ruling class, hence their creative works are free from any sociological aims and are entirely due to free aesthetic impulse.

Tradition and the rigid authority exercised by the priesthood could not altogether overcome the aesthetic impulses that spring within the human being, and a careful search will show that whenever favourable conditions occurred, it emerged to the surface. During the reign of the King Ikhnaton (about 1375 B.C.) a volcanic outbreak of aesthetic sensibility took place. By sheer conviction he succeeded in breaking for the moment the age long crust of convention, but unfortunately this bid for freedom in the artistic sensibility ended with the death of Ikhnaton. The two accompanying photographs are of sculptures of the king and of his wife. They possess a free vitality in rhythm unapproached elsewhere in Egyptian art. Here is a significant human characterisation. Here we can see a sensitiveness in modelling and a delicate aesthetic understanding of human nature, charm and poise.



Photo: Dell and Wainwright

ENTRANCE TO THE HOSTEL

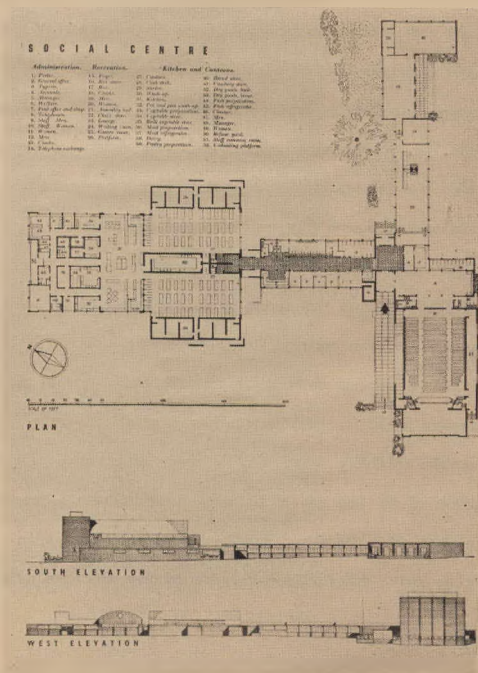
BRITAIN'S VILLAGES FOR WOMEN

"Far out in the country, miles from the nearest town, many new villages for women only, have lately been built in Britain. They house the workers in Britain's latest war factories. Nothing like them has been built in Britain before, since their nearest peace-time equivalent, the camps used by holiday-makers were not permanent homes, and were usually near some holiday resort with attractions of its own. The new Industrial Hostels,[†] as they are called, have to provide their own amusements so that the women workers who live there are happy and contented.

These pictures show how the problem has been solved. The first step was to plan a social centre round which life of the hostel could revolve. The centre includes a first-class theatre and full-scale cinema, canteens, library, shops, telephones, a bar and writing-room.

^{*} By Courtesy of the High Commissioner.

[†] See "The Architectural Review" of December, 1942 [Editor.]



PROFESSIONAL NOTES AND NEWS

RELEASE OF ARCHITECTURAL PERSONNEL FROM MILITARY SERVICE

The Hon. Liaison Officer wishes it to be known that as a result of representations made to the Adjutant-General, he is prepared to consider the release of architectural personnel from Military Service. Prior consideration will naturally be given to those members in the forces whose medical category is below A1, but even those who are fit for front line service will be given sympathetic treatment, if it can be established that their services in a civilian capacity will be in the National interest.

Members serving in the forces who wish to be released and Employers desirous of obtaining assistance are asked to make application for release in the first place to the Hon. Liaison Officer, c/o Cowin & Ellis, 603, Jubilee House, Simmonds Street, Johannesburg. The following particulars must accompany every application :—

Full name, regimental number, rank, age, medical category, where stationed at present, and detailed statement of reasons for release with particulars of nature of work to be employed on.

THE TRANSVAAL PROVINCIAL INSTITUTE.

All members of the Transvaal Provincial Institute are notified that the Provincial Committee is prepared, where necessary and in its discretion, to support and endorse applications from individual members to the Petrol Controller for the issue of supplementary petrol allowances.

Where members require such endorsement, they are asked to send supporting details to the Acting Secretary of the Institute before the meetings of the Provincial Committee, which take place on the third Tuesday of each month. The Petrol Controller has indicated that the support of the Institute will materially assist his Department and will lend added weight to applications.

GREETINGS

The Committee of the Transvaal Provincial Institute wish all Members the Compliments of the Season.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS OF ILLUSTRATIONS.

Frontispiece: National Gallery. Illustrations on pages 307 and 308 from "The Art of Ancient Egypt," Phaidon Press, Vienna. Illustration on page 310 from "The Architectural Review," (December, 1942).

ERRATA.

In the Review of the "South African Academy" in last month's journal the dates, August 3rd to 14th, 1943, were omitted, while the figure for the sales of exhibits should read "exceeded £400 and not "£4,000."

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