

THE SOUL OF ART

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(Continued)

After Nature's fashion, our traditions and basic ideals are for pattern and counsel, not for chauvinism and compulsion. No one perhaps has better shown the futility of bare tradition (as being any more than this: Fruode tried to trace its origin and eschatology) than the most indelicate of all the Pre-Raphaelites, with the possible exception of the apostate Carlyle. I refer to Wm. Morris, the socialist poet and interior decorator. Here was a soul-set champion of the rare credentials of being sane about Art and natural in one's expression of its unique affections. He clearly pointed out that we can entertain but few hopes for ever realizing an *earthly paradise* so long as we continue neglecting the highest aims of Art. Tradition is unable to effect any cultural progress; it is our own aspiration and courage, nobility and devotion, which bolster up tradition and bring about this spiritual meliorism of the world.

But nowadays, after the varying vicissitudes of over half a century, a new expedient appears necessary, even inviting enough to be dangerous. I refer to the recent assault of futurism upon the passé dignity of respectable Art. It is a challenge direct and a disgrace indirect. Even behind the bolster of commercial patronage it has the weakness of iniquity, the crudeness of sham superiority, the blindness of intolerance (of the past) and artificial aspiration (toward the future). Of course, it has the advantage of dispensing with the long weary kyrielles of 19th Century criticism, but it slumps on substituting aimless dynamic for purposive theoretic, it goes flop when it tries to replace the shrewd Victorian disquisition and dialectic with the blase sophistry of modern syncopation and motlibristic jazz. Mechanical subterfuge is a poor substitute for the technical and artistic fugues in classical tradition.

If we could only get this modern spirit to turn its magic wand toward purposive dynamic, which is active on the moral and cultural determinants of human life, then indeed might Modern Art be rehabilitated and modern taste redeemed from its slough of aimless doubt and decadence. It would be a realization of Croce's great desideratum that human aesthetic must be dynamically employed on the good things of life else it soon decay and vanish from the world; Nature maintains her beauty and beatitude by constant effort and rejuvenation, and man does well to know that he is not an alien, not altogether a free agent unamenable to the laws of Nature's world.

Be this as it may, we should always keep in mind that true artistic temperament, when its talents are properly and symmetrically developed, used and justified, is not disastrous either to the artist or to those about him. It does, we know, require a most rare fund of devotion which to others appears to be the utmost and most thorough selfishness; it requires among other things industry and inspiration, energy, clear vision and genius for realizing its ideals in tangible form or expression, and if the pursuit of these rare spiritual functions seems selfish to others, it is certainly not the artist's fault that his soul is consecrated to artistic creation, but his neighbor's fault that they would win him away from his only useful mission in life. And anyway, such genuine and votive genius is always recognized as an enviable power of faculty by all who love Art more than they fear any disaster to themselves.

Of course, there will perhaps always continue to be present in every community the least bit pretentious to Art, that class of gentle go-between known as the *frippier* who "will take care of a work of Art until better days should fortune chance to smile (upon the artist)". But the problem of more concern is not how to preserve the works of Art, but how to preserve Art itself; not how to civilize the artist, but how to save the face of connoisseurs and art-lovers whose appreciative taste holds token of intelligence and deserves acknowledgement of leadership in public opinion. These latter have a losing fight when set against a vulgar and materialistic world. The popular ignorance and vandal alienation of man's cultural affections, which are primary causes of the present precarious situation of Art and taste, are but the beginning moves of the vulgarian maneuver; if not forestalled they will soon lead on to the *niaiserie prodigieuse* which will spell the death of all things honestly aesthetic. But the loyal art-lovers who have vision both before and after impending

disaster, even tho they do lose in the fight, go down heroically trying to tell us not to let this spiritual disease confound and dishearten the higher hopes or aims of Art, not let total disaffection quench the all-too-uncertain fires of genius.

We should therefore take up their invariable watchword and shout after them if not with them: Away with the ugly, the mercenary, the repoussant, the works of pseudo-art, the banal and the risqué, the Sadist and the angular! Away with the questionable technique of suggestive nudity, the corrupt symbolism of a low vulgarian world! We have had enough of Marinetti's anti-music and erotic tactilism; we are almost dumb from so many syncopated variations of Russolo's motlibristic jazz; we have found that Soffici's futuristic aesthetic is too clownish and doctrinaire; we have seen that Nijinski's mechanical geometry of the dance is so exotic as to be almost a black art, it is superlative pantomime and false mumery.

We should accordingly understand that all such are in a manner poor imitations of the Pre Raphaelite revolt thrown into reverse gear—they get back to Nature alright, but without the proper underwear for the occasion. Their title to original anarchism may be all right but they lose all sight of our moral traditions in the atavistic flight. It is never a good idea to have an automobile accident when you are carrying contraband liquor; you risk a double penalty. But it is not a humorous situation by any means. They cannot even escape their own verdicts against our former dignified professionalism, for they offer as a substitute only an anti-cultural and instinctive play of emotions, not altogether lacking in a certain sort of symbolism, but neither do they take much pains that this symbolism, such as it is, should be noble and devout rather than merely sensual and worldly. Frenzy and raucous noises, discords and broken continuity, ugly angles and deformity overshadow all the serener works of faith and reason from the classical salons.

It is a treat then to just get back once in a while to Genée's gestural simplicity, Puccini's sweetly modest melodies, Ruben's generous lines and flowing colors, Thorwaldson's epic panels, and Michael Angelo's lifelike figurines. The intellect finds auditory charm in such mystic compositions as Debussy's "Pagodas," "Little Shepherd" and "Isle of Joy"; in Ravel's "Frolic of the Water" or Rebikoff's "Dans del'Odalisques." Visual delight is offered us in contemplation of such great masterpieces as Gainsborough's "Blue Boy," Raphael's "Sistine Madonna," Da Vinci's "Last Supper" or Sargent's life-size

portraits of Agazzis and Huxley. These are all great works indeed. But we do not experience a bathos in finding that both eyes and ears are soothed by Southey's sprightly poetic diction flowing freely in that fine specimen of homophonous verse, his alliterative rhyming account of "How the Water Comes Down at Ladore." Here was a prescient chansoneer fully the equal of the great Naudaud fifty years later whose pastoral themes have inspired many artistic musical scores.

A proper appreciation of the world's great masterpieces of Art is seldom seen to depend upon a certain uprightness of character in public and private conduct. It is the ground that truer realism which Plato claimed to be the essential attitude toward the beautifully good and true (*kalogogathia*). But human nature is so thoroughly given to automorphic judgments that Art Criticism, no less than theological, literary, political or economic criticism, is largely a plain mirror to the inner nature of our individual modes of thinking and living. Both form and complexion are faithfully reflected, be they tokens of ugliness or beauty, for mirrors practice no flattery or hypocrisy. Thus does it come about that both Life and Art share in the common vicissitudes of our personal characters, interest, talents, desires and inclinations. Be the special exigency what it may, the general trend of one's attitude toward Life and Art will still follow almost with the exactness of a tracing the quality of one's character and the scope of one's thoughts.

Modern Art, including as it does practically every sphere of aesthetic activity, appears to me to have a grossly decadent tendency in its outline of general principles. Far from keeping faith with the classical covenant of purity, simplicity and harmony, our modern effort seems mostly raucous fanfare of savagery and commerce. Both its purpose and its pursuit seem sadly delinquent from the high standard set long ago by Praxiteles, Phidas, Vitruvius, Giotto, Raphael, Durer, Da Vinci, Michael Angelo, Velasque and Rubens, Even the reminiscent technique of Sargent's six life-size portraits is now lost in the limbo of copyist neomania and anarchist vorticism. The pseudo-renaissance of contemporary effort is as good as totally inadequate to any durable or effective values, except as they are here and there hinged on and swing toward the square facing of the Masters' classical arch. It remains to be seen however just what the ultimate development of modern tendency will be, the contemporary era being apparently full of the follies and indecisions which

always mark periods of transition.

Nevertheless, it is always extremely difficult to recognize the specious is not openly vicious principles underlying every radical departure from the Lines of Beauty in Nature and Human Life. The reason of this is the cold, unvarnished fact that we are always at a loss to know what is true, good and beautiful far more readily than we make acquaintance with the false, the wicked or the ugly. Our own inertia is against us in the struggle to develop and perfect our better natures. We seem to sense the existence of the former by anticipation and intuition, they are elusive intangible things and have to be grasped spiritually; but the latter are more worldly and material they come crashing in upon us when we least desire them and often when we are actually striving to exclude them from our world of action. Genuine Art is that mode of idealizing and expressing human values which inspires faith and love and good-will, as well as affording us a purified sort of sensula, intellectual and spiritual pleasure; while presenting human conceptions and values it also carries an undertone of subtle instruction in spiritual forces and eternal values. If it is creative or even suggestive of doubt, discord, bigotry, cheap aims or wickedness, it points to either of two things: either it is not true Art, or its would-be interpreters are false and degenerate. There is no such thing as ugly Art, no more than there is such a thing as false or inaccurate science, foolish or invalid philosophy. Rather could we find reasons for calling it pornography or anarchitecture, meaning some form of pseudo-art. Carlyle's sage remark that "the Fine Arts, once divorcing themselves from Truth, are quite certain to fall mad, if they do not die," is as applicable today as it was two generations ago.

Truth must be constantly revealed to the inward eyes of man, else he soon forgets her fair likeness. Goodness must be constantly illustrated by vicray or Art, else people relapse into self patterned creeds of woe and practices of vice. Beauty must be ever exalted and adored, else those putrid souls soon vindicate their rancorous claims of ugliness and moral deformity. These are the eternal adversaries in the perennial conflict between righteousness and wickedness, the conduct of the former being what I will here call the triple function of true art. And the artist who exercises the positive talent for this triple function, no matter in what field his labor is expended, is just that much redeemer of the groping world, and his soul will be immortal.

Life is a metal so easily fused that the base alloys are often boldly foisted into the crucible of our spiritual development. The leaden casket of our dreams shuts out all possible light and the tendency of our transmutation is indeterminable. Sensual perversion is as dross upon the jewelled girdle of the soul and has no rightful claim to be represented in honest Art. Where is the uplifting inspiration of strength and purity and innocent health if the so-called realism of Art portrays only the ugly features of impotence and culpable motive? How can anyone make reasonable argument for the vile pornographer's spoilation of Art? Any element of degradation or unwholesome influence is utterly foreign to the true significance and purpose of aesthetic creation. You can't have delinquency and aspiration in the same moment of aesthetic insight any more than you can have vulgarity and nobility in the same individual character. The genius of man's nobler spirituelle is never idiotic or half-infernal. The rudest hedonist will never admit that he is vulgar, however. He will lie and bluff and bluster, all in the desire to show that neither Art nor the feelings appreciative of Art can be even temporarily destructive or pejorative and still expect to make valid aesthetic claims upon his cross-eyed attention.

Therefore, I find both pleasure and instruction in announcing the fact, in its own right true but frequently requiring the bolster of psychological proof, that no spiritual portrait, no good book, classic structure, sweet melody or lovely statue was ever yet created except thru purity of vision, nobility of motive and constancy of creative effort. Such external tokens as what particular school or style of cunning the artist has been accustomed to may mark closely the vicissitudes of his life, but they are by no means the direct credentials of his claim to true artistic power and practice. And anyway, in judging the comparative merits of East and West, of ancient and modern in the world of Art, we find more difficulty in properly appreciating the material limits (not skill-limits) of their respective Arts and aesthetic taste. Da Vinci for beauty of line and color reigned supreme in Renaissance Italy; but has he any inherent aesthetic prestige over Ch'iu Ying (early Ming period) who is famous thruout China and Japan as a genius for intimate spirituelle in the portraits of his contemporaries? Much fame and fortune has accrued to Rodin for his statue of "Le Penseur," but does any essential feature surpass any one of the various manly characters which Phidias long ago chiselled on the frieze of the Parthenon? Even the new War

Memorial buildings at Chicago, eclectic or cosmopolitan as they are, do not improve on either the materials nor the skill which were necessary to overcome the usual optical illusions incident to columnar and entablature construction in ancient Egypt, Greece or Rome. The only field of Art in which we cannot make comparisons is that of ancient and modern music, the former not having any standard form of written expression before Guido's time. But if we had ears for such far-off retrospects of the Music whose melodies were surely both a subject of delight and of debate at Crotona, we would have just cause for ranking Pythagoras, Archytas and Philolaus fairly close to Bach, Beethoven and Greig.

Artists are usually persons of incorrigible genius. They have set ideas and sure methods of doing things, and yet their superficially separate manners of realization are theoretically the same. This identity is one of affective vision and metonymous expression. It is the result of what they love and how they love it; it results from the inspiration of what they are able to see and feel, and from the aspiration to make some worthy tangible reproduction or refined expression of that vision or perception so that the world may know and share their original experience.

To be constantly in the mood of creative ecstasy, to be ever in the sweet embrace of some fond recollection or clear conception—this is the artist's daily world of dreamy reverie and conscientious execution. We all know that very few of Earth's epochal geniuses have trod a soft undeviating path. That they have rather emphasized the temperamental dualism of genius and ability, inspiration and skill, is a stubborn and proverbial fact. But we should always discern that they love, not themselves in vulgar conceit and pretentious ease, but their Art with the undeniable and irrepressible passion of spiritual affinity and apparent selfishness. But it is an aesthetic egoism, rather than a true and rhyomistic concern for one's own welfare or advancement.

If they are truly wedded to their Art they will be scrupulous to a fault (sic) of their pilgrimage to Parnassus. They will be conscientious and industrious, not of their personal conduct regarding food, clothes or rent of course, but of the exact and stimulating expression of their genius. Debts and duns, rent and worldly ravinage are happily no concern of theirs, for the only world in which they recognize civil obligations is that of Morality and Art. They offer allegiance only to the divine sovereignty of the beautifully good and true.

They practice that first and only teaching of the Golden Rule—Give and Take ; but it is no cheap worldling's selfish creed of give as little as you can and take as much as you can ; they give generously of whatever treasure they have in store, and if there is any reward they take it and say nothing. The true artistic genius never grumbles about the material poverty of his life, he is too busily engaged with his spiritual plenitude.

Skill is the child of creative will and aesthetic passion. It is the timeless token of universal genius simply because it embraces the industry of creative effort as well as the immediate aperçus of moral inspiration. Skill and conceptional power are the primary credentials of representative art, and play an essential role in the rarer functions of creative art. They do not, however, go so far as to exhaust *all* the possibilities of artistic expression. For, after genius has developed to the point of representative perfection, its only avenue of further progress can be only thru the domain of unique discernment and original work. And any discerning artist will always see that his expression is upright, encouraging and true. He would not for a minute entertain the false notion that mere quantity of material or variety of detail can add one jot of merit to his work.

This is one of the critical points in the progress of all true Art. It is also the great climacteric sooner or later in the lives of all true artists. Who then is so earth-bound as to expect that Art can ever be really commercialized or rendered mercenary, when its very patent of nobility is conferred only upon the worthy and free? Why should there be people anyway who wish only to make shrewd exploit of mankind's only spiritual power? Especially when it, as Art, seeks to make original designs of Truth and Beauty, creating some little atmosphere of genial good and cultural delight along life's weary way. Surely the Art that master-souls conceive and master hands create cannot be debauched with the spoliators ravishing desire nor wholly vulgarized with the commercializer's demands for quantitative valuation. Surely no such fate is to mark the climax and finale of Art's varied career, else we turn back the pages of this world's historical epic and read in the preface that we are still savages under our skins. But, alas—*Quein Sabe?*

Literature is another field of combat where perennial tourney is held to decide which one of our moral and aesthetic antinomies shall carry off the daily honors. Notwithstanding the vast carnage of journalistic screeds and blurbs, a longer and more sober perspect-

ive will perhaps show that Literature is one of man's most exact forms of spiritual expression. No matter if it is conceived as a simple exercise in artistic composition or as an elaborate complex of intellectual analysis, it still remains a product of genius and taste, thought and culture, inspired ideas and aspirant ideals. Writers of books often give way to the mystic impulse of creation and joy, and their mode of expression is full of all manner of fantasy and fascination. But when they try to write anything outside of their accustomed temper, or when their Muse is dishabille, it results in little else than mere anxiety, the *nerf-fevre* of froward motives.

Books are objects of both creation and delight. Both genius and taste are necessary in their making, upkeep, and subsequent patronage. A good book is as dead without an enthusiastic reader as it would be without an inspired author; the genius and enlightenment which went into its making are used to no good end if it does not find at least a few who can bring some measure of similar culture to its study and appreciation. A library full of dust catchers is no library at all, or at least it will not be an active one supplying counsel and consolation to man's weary struggle through the world. While, on the other hand, if all the patrons of our public libraries were connoisseurs of good books and all our authors were classical protagonists of the sincere and beautiful, the shelves of circulation would not be so crowded with *mere bindings* to make idle pastime for lazy loafers, flappers and gallivants.

This is one of the things which shows our emphatic need for a more puritan and less provincial criticism. A stern sort of literary criticism which will weed out the fruitless and inane, and forestall the crass and often risqué popularity of the crude and culpable. Very few golden ages of Art and Literature can dispense with their Platos, Coryphaeuses, Plinys, Ciceros, Petrarchs, Dantes, Schlegels, Goethes, Lowells and Emersons any more readily than they can do without their Aeschyluses, Varros, Boccaccios, Schillers and Carlyles. Like any other dynamic Art-expression, Literature is a mad whirl of belletristic passion which always requires the stabilizing influence of criticism, be it ever so crude in technical taste or immature in versatile power. We should never be overwhelmed with the mere quantitative deluge of anything, for on closer examination it may be found very lightly laden with any actual moral content or spiritual significance.

Our literary *pensées onéreuses* may well be discarded after we

repudiate and abandon all manner of the false, decadent and mercenary; these being the invariable accessories to the treacherous seductions of the quantitative fallacy. We are always on the verge of doing something good for the sorrowing world, but the sordid and the wicked often obstruct and desecrate our better hopes and nobler aims. Nothing short of an outright repudiation will serve to carry us thru to an effectual consummation of our melioristic purpose. No one can be vulgar and aspirant, worldly and spiritual, wicked and devout at the same time. Happy indeed is he who can pass his days in an honest sober effort at improvement, a cheerful and hopeful pursuit of spiritual as well as intellectual enlightenment; and if Literature happens to be his *métier* he will surely write his heart and soul into it.

I cannot understand why so many people otherwise so intelligent and discerning still think it is quite all right that the small and large works of Art which grace the walls, shelves and pedestals of human life should be critically contrasted on account of their mere quantitative distinctions. They fail to see the fallacy of size, complex detail and unusual time-money-labor expense being emphasized as giving certain works aesthetic superiority over others. These are all material, worldly considerations and should not have such heavy bearing on anybody's critical appreciation because they have no more than a superficial importance in judging art values. It is the better part of critical judgment for us to look deeper, be more amiably moved to feel the more subtle charms of values and proportions not so easily measurable. For, judging anything by contrast (whether materially quantitative or not, makes little difference) means that we are looking for antinomies, conflicts, differences, anti-thesis; while if we aim to gain our understanding thru comparative methods we will have to start out on the ground that there is similarity, uniformity or affinity here and there amongst the *qualitative* values of inspired conception and efficient execution. We will be more anxious to find validity of purpose and adequacy of expression than to measure mere size and weight and temporal expense. Under the latter approach we will transfer our emphasis to considerations of ideality, symbolism and technique, knowing that mere numerical or material disparities make neither valid nor adequate argument in properly valuing one sort of artistic skill or achievement over another.

Resurgent souls, and anyone else with the least spark of divine fire warming their hearts, will always be well and nobly companioned by the genius who seeks quality, not merely quantity, in the language

of his expression. They will flee the false, the ugly and inane: they will repudiate the sordid and risqué, the angular and discordant, knowing that these are the invariable vulgarities pursued by the debauchees of decadent art. They will have far greater respect and affection for the simple tho superstitious devotion to beauty and innocence expressed in the Chinese legends of porcelain, lute and jade, so charmingly pointed out and set to verse in Amy Lowell's "Legends" and "Paniters of Silk." At the same time taboo will strictly apply to the too intimate realism of Lezelle des Essiert's suggestive art, as the painting "The Mouse," which displays a novel situation of feminine physical pose and contrasts the several degrees of Sadist sensual interest.

Likewise, instead of hankering after the worldly craze for jazz and booze and swinish ooze with its bestial pandering and pornography (witness Charles Rumsey's immediate dash to fame for his risqué solution of the Sadist paradox of modern antigamic womanhood in his degenerate statue "The Pagan," which shows, along with Ben Hecht's salacious screed "Gargoyle", that public displays and near-discussions of the lewd, the brutal or obscene are quite as fashionable and financially successful in New York as Paris or Vienna ever wished them to be)—yes, instead of such vulgar hankering, the nobler souls of the present age will find far more sublime and innocent relish in Caucaret's problem picture, "The Scruple", which portrays a modest and beautiful woman in some dilemma of virtuous affection or conscientious deportment. They will even go back as far as the oldest oriental history can reach, seeking pictorial simplicity and unique moral inspiration, and find that the Rosetta Stone is the rule of proper procedure in marriage or discover that Chinese and Japanese Art is essentially grounded in the soft curves and stern angles of their early "grass" calligraphy.

And after all such foraging and research they will still come back to the modern age and announce that mere quantity of detail, labor, size or numerical production in Art is utterly overshadowed and annulled as a valid appreciative criterion by the qualitative values we place upon the works of all honest and aspiring genius. They will say that worldliness and vulgar sensual interests invariably go together with the fallacy of quantitative appreciation. So too would we do well in heeding their advice, if not having any similar principles or convictions of our own, for the vicary of noble minds and hearts is never cheap display or treachery. But being without their

high example or advice, we might very probably have to go back to classical days for our methods of proper conception as well as for the patterns of our ambitious technique, for our proper valuing and our honest interpretations: these being immortalized to us in the masterful heritage of Greek and Roman culture, medieval architecture and Renaissance Art. From the latter do we learn to treasure the rare anagoge of Murillo, the soft chiaroscuro of Vermeer and Rembrandt, Correggio and Van Dyck's lifelike complexions, and the chromatic poetry of Rubens, Da Vinci and Michael Angelo.

But nowadays we are swamped with the quantitative contests of worlds and atoms, proud urbanity and humble yeomanry; merely material differences of measurement such as contrasts between the eight-foot Oxford Bible and Prof. Scrogin's tiny inch-and-a-half Bible; spectacular open air pageants and slap-stick screen comedies: Mendelssohn's great oratorio "Saint Paul" as against his simple "Spring Song": electric signs 150 feet high are contrasted "for Art's sake" (?) against the microscopic letter recently sent to the Smithsonian Institute engraved inside the eye of a common needle; and the colonnade of the Vatican is considered more august and inspiring than the frieze of the Metropolitan Museum.

The true business of Art, which includes both its expression and its criticism, is to be honest and plainspoken, but yet not immoral nor defamatory of human character; to be intelligible and inspiring rather than sensually ambiguous and degrading. We have other avenues aplenty down which to drive and hear the jargon of unscrupulous dialect with occasional spices of profanity and irreverence. It is no fond resort for the elect, although they sometimes do "go slumming" just to see the coarser side of the social fabric and come back more joyously and full of nobler affection to their own comfortable studio or fireside.

Whether the particular field of Art be architecture, sculpture, music, painting, literature, drama or decorative design, true genius always expresses itself in choice idiom not slang, in soothing melody not jangling jazz. Slang and jazz in artistic (?) expression may be peerless in matters of timeliness and emphasis, but in point of durable encouragement and cosmopolitan preservation much of the local color possessed by the impure expression is lost, and your plebeian artist will find no deathless converse with the Muses if he continues speaking in a vulgar and ephemeral tongue. He should love his Art too well for that. And even if he doesn't love his Art

that well, there is hardly any defensible argument why he should not consider Wyke Bayliss' advice in his "Witness of Art, or the Legend of Beauty", saying that: "The language of Art is not simply a dialect through which we transmit our own thoughts. It is the one universal tongue which has never yet been confounded. . . . It is the Logos through which the silence and the beauty of Nature speaks to us."

To be sure, there are many permissible patents of nobility and discovery to be acknowledged and admitted into the mother tongue of Art; and they should find no rancorous challenge or rebuff in the recognition of their valid use. In both Nature and human nature, in both the world of Reality and the world of Art, there is growth and expansion just as there is refinement and exaltation. There is amiability and helpfulness just as there is discipline and determined purpose. We do well not to presume to block the forward motion of anything which has the vital spark of Progress driving it on. The only point of prudence is to know when to encourage and when to thwart, when to listen and when to disregard, for it is not always true progress which urges some things forward. Artists and critics, dealers and exhibitors (even many of the panderers and spoliators on rare occasions) are human and subject to human measures and discipline and control the same as the attentive public known as "We". And if *we* would only repudiate and abandon the vulgar, false and ugly, the time would be short until art-mongers would be no more, and the sordid rouses would either die of inanition or have to limit their efforts to those expressions of the True, the Good and the Beautiful which stand forth courageous and immortal.

No one relishes false values after he has found them to be treacherous and vain. If *all* Art could be made pure and unprofitable there would be a great exodus of the undesirable element which contributes to its periodical delinquency. And anyway if the sober appreciation of Art finds some of its judgments futile and mistaken, the honest patron or genial connoisseur who cherishes the choice idiom rather than the slang in the language of this appreciation, will sooner or later get rid of the unworthy values. They will always have in mind the fundamental meliorism of Nature and human life which Emerson recognized when he wrote that "every thought which genius and piety throw into the world, alters the world". Of course the possibility of transformation includes the possibility of degeneracy and pejorim, but we must follow Nature's universal ex-

ample and try our best to exclude the latter by paying all our attention to the former mode of change.

Withal however, it is one of the perennial problems of our professional Art to discover how always to express one's conceptions and feelings in pure language, if possible in such universal idiom that the whole world will understand its meaning as well as the beauty of its expression. And it is likewise one of the most incorrigible difficulties of criticism to recognize and encourage that form of public taste which will facilitate this understanding and patronage, and spontaneously seek out the nobler works of genius without the constant urging and explaining of exhibitors. Surely it is nowadays a strange state of affairs which emphasizes creative values and yet makes the pursuit of commercial and journalistic values the primary interest of practically every effort which passes under the label of artistic expression. We might as well say also that our cultural functions are of primary interest only because they have commercial and press-agent values. It is to say the least an invariable indication of decadence and moral degradation when we begin to be more interested in commercial values than in creative functions.

One of the chief symptoms of our modern aesthetic demoralization is the fact that it is becoming more and more difficult for people to see anything real, true, good or beautiful any more without immediately considering whether or not it can be *sold*, commercialized or otherwise exploited in a vulgarian way. It is surely fast becoming an expression in the most grammarless slang when our truer affection for Art is alienated and ravished by such material worldly anxieties as greed for quantity, haste for wealth and luxury, or the vulgar unrest of minds grown weary of meeting the inexorable obligations of wisdom and virtue. It is high time we were taking some measure of the situation in its true light and try to bring a few moments of sobriety and enlightenment into these maddening years of speed and spoliation. We may be free to miss the proper discipline of experience but we are not by any means free to deliberately controvert the purpose of life; no one objects to us being fools if it so pleases us, but the whole world is against us when we try to be smart or roguish.

Still, for those who are neither fools nor knaves, it is timely right now for us to take some decisive steps in understanding and ameliorating the omenous fact that our modern geniuses number *more* than

ever before in the sordid ranks of commercial exploitation and *less* than ever before in the list of those who used to be *soigneux* noblement of the proper road to Helicon. We can at least take up that famous Sixtine watchword and shout "Away with the Barbarians who would despoil and vulgarize the world of Art!"

Auerbach is quoted as saying something to the effect that "music washes away the dust of everyday life from the soul and leaves her purified and more divine". But it is not only a prophylactic, it is also a subtle propaedeutic and a fascinating fashioner of man's choicest intellectual genius. Music is the realized harmony of the human soul as well as the agreeable auditory effect of certain permutations and combinations of homogeneous rhythm and vibration. It is a melodious language of spiritual expression fully as subject to the rules of cadence, sense and idiom as any dialect on earth. The dulcet magic of its concord sweetens the weary aftermath of workaday life. When sorrow and travail surround us, when moods of anger or rebellion stir up savage passions, Music then brings sweet relief, serenades our souls and stays our mad resort to stratagems and spoils. Happy is he who knows the soft sublimity of Song, for no bleak cynicism dulls his sense of helpful days of useful toil and quiet nights of sweet repose.

Emotion, action and thought find each their own unique expression in music. The masters knew the rare technique of blending these three elements into their immortal works. They gave balance and symmetry to their genius, and the taste of all their patrons has never been warped nor wearied thereby. No mutilation, no raucous fanfare nor discordant syncopation marked the pleasant sequence of their song. But a quiet story told in expressive melody was their only aim and ambition. And this was sufficient. Augmentation and restraint, aspiration and retrospect, inspiration and diligent work, all sorts of themes and manners of narration were held fit codes for their interpretation, their industry and art. There was no waste of time or energy worrying about what price to charge the public for being witness to their achievement.

And at any time no musical therapy ever soothed the savage breast, no compository melody ever calmed the insane mind, but surely was a masterpiece of intellectual and emotional expression. We know not why this should be so, but we do know that the emotional judgment is more ancient in its heritage, more pristine and fundamental in our nature than judgments made with the intellect

alone. Feeling and action are more closely knit than thought and action, for our motives, impulses, hopes and fears are always more often felt than reasoned, more often willed than merely contemplated and dismissed. Our affective nature is far older and more instinctive than our intellectual nature, whence what is dictated by affection and aversion usually fascinates and sways our judgment more thoroughly than cold rational analysis and interpretation.

Some people often wonder if Religion could ever have carried her flickering torch of spiritual culture and moral enlightenment so far among the dismal grottoes of this vulgar world, had she not made Music the handmaiden of her every service and solemnity. Surely the magnificence of tracery windows, frescoed ceilings, architectural splendor, majestic domes and doorways have never inspired the soul of man any more than the genius and holy use of Song. Whether our Music takes expression in the form of the primitive choral chant, the ancient harp and dance, the classical rhapsodies and oratorios, or the modern medleys and operas and concert symphonies, we always understand its meaning and its grace. In simple melodies or complex dramas on great and solemn themes, musical expression is equally charming and significant. While, to give one recent pierastic example, to sing the Doxology, the Hallelujah Chorus, or "Aint We Got Fun" in Chinese mnemonic, Spanish toreador, or Polish mazurka style indeed affords us a bizarre variety of musical expression.

But what can surpass the simple rhythm of that deathless cradle song "Rockabye Baby" for melodic grandeur and soothing tranquillity? And where is the exalted genius who would aspire to improve on such clear echoes of the Cosmic Harmony as are sampled in Liszt's softly encouraging "Consolation in E major" or Chopin's spritely description of the life of a butterfly in his "Etude in G flat"? But even more sublime and immortal are the operas such as Wagner's "Holy Grail" or "Lohengrin", Verdi's "Don Carlos" or "La Traviata", Mozart's "William Tell" or "Magic Flute", and the oratorios such as Handel's "Messiah", Haydn's "Creation" or Mendelssohn's "Saint Paul". Here was classical mastery at its best and it is not every cabaret musician who can intelligently reproduce any one of the works mentioned, although there are many in the galleries at operatic productions today who do take at least an *emotional share* in the grandeur of classical expression.

(To be continued)