COMMERCIALISM in art commenced when art lost touch with commerce; when art ceased to answer the legitimate demands of the age in which it existed, decadence set in. Art degenerated into an aristocratic adjunct and was viewed with distrust by the people. It is difficult to determine the exact epoch in which the ideals of the Middle Ages were set aside and the new interpretation of art developed. The early part of the sixteenth century saw Titian, Raphael, Holbein, Angelo and Veronese, whose work is the culmination of ages of training and tradition. They are the lineal descendants of the craftsmen, the last exemplars of the old traditions; they were the last apostles of the belief that the result produced was more important than the method of production.

A new era followed. Art slowly but surely drifted from its direct contact with the working, living world. As long as art dealt directly with the patron or consumer, it prospered; but with the growth of the middle-man, competition was engendered, and competition was the death of art. The test of ability shifted from production to exploitation, and the artist sunk to the level of a machine while the man of commerce became the man of ability.

Art, instead of answering the healthy demands of the masses, pandered to the wants of the luxurious few. "Art for art's sake," became the cry. Class distinction was engendered until the artist constituted himself producer and consumer, defining the conditions which should govern both. Then, because what he considered to be ideals were not recognized, he bemoaned the lack of art appreciation in the age or country in which he lived.

From the seventeenth century to the present day, art, so called, has pursued a course which has slowly but surely drifted from the main line of the world's progress. No generation can successfully resist the influence of its age; nor can art prosper without the sympathy and support of the public. In framing our legal codes we recognize that no law can succeed without the consent of the governed. In art we have refused to recognize the same principle, until to-day
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the artist is no longer the bard, the minstrel, the historian, but, instead, the self-constituted arbiter of his own fortunes. Isolated cases may exist; but from Poussin to the present time there has been a gradual divergence, and to-day the artist graduating from the school with a knowledge of Claude Lorraine, Ingres, David, Couture, Bouguereau, even Baudry, finds himself versed in a language unknown to the age in which he lives, and at a loss how to learn that of his fellows of the new. The age that produced the varying styles from Delacroix to Manet, from Manet to Monet, must have sacrificed the purposes of art to the development of mere mannerisms. Inheriting our schools and deriving our education from the old world, we of the new stand aghast at the predicament in which we find ourselves. Where is help to come from? How is art to be revitalized by us? Certainly not from the countless exhibitions of easel paintings, each more tiresome than the last, for here is found but the endless change of fashion; not from sculpture, for the same influences have affected its progress as have governed painting; not from architecture, for architecture, as “practiced in modern times, is not a manual art, but is a combination of an intellectual but non-artistic study with science, and with artistic tradition now embodied in books.”

But we do find hope for the future in a careful analysis of the lessons of our expositions. Here, for the first time in ages, we note a tendency to again unite the aesthetic and the practical—to redeem art by making it real and vital. We find a desire to show in transient form the possibility of permanent improvements. Where we might expect a servile adherence to commercial precedent, we find a distinct desire to get the very best, and an effort in every possible way to advance and improve the real art interests, not only of the city, but of the nation. While in the earlier expositions, owing to restricted expenditure, we have but limited effort, in the later, we have most elaborate and grandiose attempts to solve difficult problems. The earlier expositions materially advanced and improved methods of construction, while the later have demonstrated the possibility of inter-artistic
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coo-operation and its beneficial results. All have endeavored to secure the benefit of the widest comparison of methods and products, but the later have demonstrated beyond discussion the advantages of a comprehensive plan, carried out with the aid and assistance of the best professional ability.

Thus, in the first great international exposition at London, the initial experiment in the use of glass and iron was made; and the Crystal Palace, still extant, was the forerunner of many buildings of a similar character. This was not the only benefit derived, for a careful study by England of her manufactures, led her to realize, in comparison with the continent, her inferiority in design. The South Kensington schools were the outcome of this realization, and art throughout the world has been distinctly benefited. The work of Morris and the school which has followed in his footsteps received much of its impetus from this opportunity to view at once the craft-work of the world at large.

Many still claim that the Centennial gave the first art impulse to the United States; but be this as it may, we know that the Art Gallery of Philadelphia was a permanent asset, and that from this developed the Fairmount Park Association, which has contributed each year more than any one other factor to the embellishment of that city.

In the Paris Exposition of '78 a grander scheme was tried. The exposition was not removed to a great distance from the city, but was kept as a component part. The Trocadero and its surrounding park still stands as a monument to its designers. A careful study of this building shows that a type of architecture was produced which would have been impossible under other conditions. While architects may try to classify it as Renaissance, every one feels the subtle touch of Eastern influence, and realizes the desire of the designers to perpetuate in lasting material that charm so beautiful, yet so elusive. The Trocadero, admirably placed, is not only a public museum of great value, but has acted in more recent expositions as a focal point for future design.

Thus, in the following French Exposition of '89, this building controlled the placing of that greatest of all experiments of steel cage
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construction—the Eiffel Tower; the Hôtel des Invalides, the Eiffel Tower and the Trocadero, forming the three marked points in the plan and controlling the location of other buildings and monuments. What finer vista could be obtained than that of the great sculpturesque fountain seen through the arches of the Eiffel Tower! This was the day of the engineer, and his, the greatest triumph. While the architectural effort was interesting, no part of it has been considered of sufficient importance to be retained in permanent form. The engineer's work, however, still stands and calls forth as much praise to-day as on the day of its creation. Yet when first projected it was considered an impossibility—a tower a thousand feet high was a wild dream never to be accomplished. And now that it is accomplished, it dominates the situation and still holds the imagination enthralled.

It may be of interest to notice that applied painting was not forgotten; a most able scheme was projected and carried out by that eminent master, Lemaire.

But all previous efforts in the use of applied sculpture and painting were to pale beside the masterly results obtained in the World's Fair, Chicago. So great was the success achieved, that even to-day the "White City" is spoken of with awe and admiration. Here for the first time in this country, architects agreed to conform to a uniform cornice line, and the Court of Honor was the result. The peristyle at one end showed a masterly treatment of a shore front, while the Administration Building at the other, with its surrounding plaza, columns and statues, demonstrated the possible dignity of a public building properly located.

American sculptors, fired with enthusiasm, seized their opportunity, and the Statue of the Republic, the Columbus Monument, the groups in the Court of Honor and the statues on the Lagoon showed the possibilities of sculpture properly placed in relation to architecture.

Mural painting, in a small way, was given a trial, and many artists now famous gained their first experience in the domes of Chicago. Nor was the use of exterior color forgotten, for in the Transportation Building, a daring, if not successful attempt was made.
Alexander Bridge and le Petit Palais, Paris Exposition, 1900

Le Grand Palais, Paris Exposition, 1900
Le Château d’Eau, Paris Exposition, 1900

Interior Court, Petit Palais, Paris Exposition, 1900
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Owing to the unfortunate fact that the location of the Exposition was at some distance from the heart of Chicago, little beside the Art Building was retained as a permanent tribute to the men who conceived and executed this work.

In the French Exposition, 1900, this mistake was rectified. An effort was to be made to design the exposition near the center of a great city. Competitive plans were called for, and the successful one proved a marvel of daring and ingenuity. It placed the buildings on either side of the Seine, starting at the Place de la Concorde and ending at the Champs de Mars. The old salon buildings, long antiquated, were removed, and their sites utilized. The open space on either river-side connected these buildings with the Trocadero, the Eiffel Tower and the great plaza of the Champs de Mars. A diagonal boulevard was created, a new bridge built, and as if by a touch upon Aladdin's lamp, a great Exposition City sprang up in the heart of old Paris. The main features of the '78 and '89 Expositions—the Trocadero and the Eiffel Tower—were retained as component parts; and the new factors were to remain as permanent assets to the city. Thus Paris gained the new Alexander Bridge with its noble pylons, the Grand Palais and Petit Palais.

This exposition, possibly the last of the greater international expositions, tried every experiment in advanced architectural styles, even to the verge of the bizarre. The East was again drawn upon for inspiration, and the celebrated Chateau d'Eau was the result. Great vistas were successfully planned, and opportunity for comparison was found in the restoration of old Paris and the characteristic architecture of other countries as exemplified in their national buildings. Exterior sculpture was used even to excess, and exterior mural painting, as in the case of the Manufactures Building, was again an experiment.

But the interesting, novel note was found in the Manufactures. While the general classification was defective, in that it specialized too much, thus forcing the separation of work intimately related, and necessary to the proper exposition of the subject, there were still exhibits of which the proper study gave a presage for the
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future. The German section of the Manufactures Building may be cited as a case in point; here, dignity and beauty were given to a commercial display and craft-work seemed again to be regaining its lost position. The wrought-iron entrance gates had the true touch, and the general ensemble combines the best of the new with a recollection of the old.

Another interesting experiment was from the works of Sèvres. It was a combination of form and color for exterior effect—an experimental effort to combine in faience, sculpture and painting. While perhaps only a qualified success, it was still interesting as an indication of the trend of the times.

Grand in every sense of the word, the French Exposition of 1900 was so successful as to demonstrate the impossibility of extending effort further along these lines of classification. A new era must come—what will it be?

Our recent Pan-American Exposition did not attempt to compete in size or scope with the French, but still did not fail to apply and emphasize anew the advantages of points previously proven; and it added as well two lessons never to be forgotten. With a logical, comprehensive plan, with an American style of architecture, the California Spanish Mission, the founders of the Exposition endeavored to obtain, and succeeded in obtaining, the most elaborate and artistic exterior sculpture, color and illumination, yet attempted.

In this small Exposition the sum of two hundred and fifty thousand dollars was expended for sculpture alone; and no expense was spared to make the great electrical display an unqualified triumph. No one who has seen the twilight fade and the Exposition slowly come into illuminated life, each building silhouetted against the sky, with an infinite number of tiny lights, will ever forget the impression. No praise is too great for the engineers who achieved this success, or for the directors who made possible the experiment which will undoubtedly revolutionize all future systems of lighting. No one who has seen the "Rainbow City" fade imperceptibly from view but will have a fuller conviction of the possibilities of making the most common necessities beautiful and dignified.
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And so for fifty years have our expositions been bringing the best the world has to show, not only in products, but in ability, to the attention of thousands and hundreds of thousands. Millions have been expended each year, but the results well justify the effort. Careful analysis shows a steady, progressive development. Construction has here had its severest test; the use of iron and glass in the Crystal Palace; the highest tower at Paris; the largest building the world has ever seen at Chicago. Who can estimate what benefit in the planning of cities has been derived from such masterly results as the World’s Fair and the French Exposition! Architects have had opportunities to give us of their best and to try varying styles, impossible to attempt, if the results were to be permanent. What does it matter if many of the experiments failed? Why worry if some of the results were so hideous as to deserve immediate annihilation? The effect as a whole has been elevating and ennobling. Exposition architecture will soon die, but such creations as the Trocadero, the Alexander Bridge, and in our own country, the influence of the Court of Honor, will live forever.

In no other way could such results have been obtained. When one thinks for one moment of the difficulty of securing an appropriation, either national or civic, for even practical and essential utilities, we can see the utter impracticability of obtaining money for mere experiment.

Sculptors were no less eager to seize the opportunities offered by the expositions. While the Continent was less in need of these opportunities, this country has derived untold benefit from the dignified placing of sculpture in connection with architecture, as at Chicago. The beautiful statuary of the Lagoon and the Court of Honor was far excelled by the masterly disposition of sculpture and the logical sequence of subject at the Pan-American. Here, for the first time, the placing, as well as the enlargement from the preliminary models, was under the control of a Director of Sculpture. This Director was selected by the sculptors themselves, and all details of the enlarging and placing of the work were in his hands. A quarter-sized model was made by the designer. These
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preliminary models were carefully criticised in committee and forced to conform to the general scheme. By this judicious arrangement, not only variety in design was obtained, but a uniform scale and treatment in the enlargement. No more comprehensive or intelligent effort has as yet been attempted. Its success indicates the lines upon which the work of the future may be carried out.

The appreciation of color must always follow that of proportion and form, and it is therefore not surprising that mural painting, even in the Continental expositions, has had but a limited trial. Still, such opportunities as have existed in this country have been seized with avidity by our artists. The series of entrance-ways in the Manufactures Building at Chicago, the dome of the Government Building, the chaste decoration of the Agricultural Building and the New York State Building, all gave promise for the future, and made possible the work of the Congressional Library and the Appellate Court House of New York city.

The qualified success of the use of exterior color in the Transportation Building at Chicago undoubtedly led to that most interesting experiment, the "Rainbow City." Successful or unsuccessful, it has so placed the possibility of color before us as to make it obligatory upon those who follow to determine the exact relation of color to architecture. Color as a factor can no longer be ignored in exterior work.

And while these advances in architecture were being recorded, interest in the Arts and Crafts was slowly but unconsciously awakening—showing itself in the carpets and textiles in the Crystal Palace; in the furniture and wall hangings in the Exposition of '78; and the glass, faience and repoussé in the Exposition of '89. And now comes the good news from St. Louis that at the next World's Fair, in 1904, not only these crafts but many more are to be exhibited—not as at previous expositions in out of the way corners, as after thoughts, but as part of the exhibition of the Department of Art. A classification on a plane broader than that of any former international exposition has been established. It has been felt by those in authority that no distinction should be made between "what has been commonly considered as Fine Art and that
Machinery and Transportation Building, Pan-American Exposition, 1901

West Façade of the Liberal Arts Building, World's Fair, Chicago, 1893
which has been termed Industrial Art.” When the artist producer has worked with conviction and knowledge, his work is recognized “as equally deserving of respect in proportion as it is worthy from the standpoints of inspiration and technique.” It will be eligible whether on canvas, in wood, marble, plaster, metal, glass, porcelain, textile, or other material. All art work done in connection with the buildings of the Exposition may be entered in competition for awards if so desired. Special galleries will be provided for the models of buildings, sculptural decorations, mural painting, leaded and mosaic glass, mosaics, drawings and photographs of projects already completed. It will be the endeavor to have the exhibit comprise examples of the best work representing the schools of modern technical expression of every art producing country. It is the desire to give the fullest opportunity for the recognition of all those who are producing art work worthy of the name, whatsoever be its direction, and independent of the media of expression. Is it to be wondered that the projectors of the Exposition believe that it is “destined to have a great influence upon the artistic growth of the entire nation”? The action of the authorities at St. Louis has thus given official recognition to the craftsman. Here is a broader definition of art than has been believed possible. Four hundred years have rolled around and the craftsman is again to take his place among the artists, but with this difference: that he now has steam and electricity as his aids and his power is proportionately increased. To make beautiful the product of the machine has been the problem given to us, and unless solved, the machine will dominate the age to the detriment of the individual. The invention and imagination of the artist is appealed to. Let him, instead of answering unasked questions, meet the conditions of the times. Art is tempered and purified by use; by use it becomes real and vital. Art and labor should go hand in hand. “The emancipation of labor is accomplished by changing the character of labor.” No one wishes to be free from work, but it is the right of all that work should be elevating and not debasing. Industrial art is a misnomer. There is but one art and that, the science of the beautiful. Every effort to differentiate art,
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every effort to place it apart from and unrelated to the problems of the day in which it exists, must be a failure. History emphasizes this in every age in which art was a factor in the community. What architecture there is exists but as an answer to some legitimate demand. What finer combination of art and labor could be found than the cathedrals, when each workman loved his work! What age could desire finer paintings than those produced as wall paintings in the early part of the sixteenth century! All great art is public art, and as such, a great educational factor in the community.

This, and more, have our expositions been teaching us. Have we learned their lessons?