WHETHER or not M. Lalique has fully realized his ideal in becoming the architect of the house in the Cours-la-Reine to which he has just transferred his residence and workshops, the study of which this structure is the result, the character and talent to which it bears witness, are none the less impressive and imposing. Every work which issues from the hand and brain of a true artist ought to be valuable to us; since, beyond its own worth, it serves to increase and complete our knowledge of the artist’s personality; especially when, as in the present case, the work lies outside the province of his technical ability and of his usual labors. Furthermore, if there be an art which, without preliminary studies, can be practiced with originality, it is certainly architecture. For it is proven by the existence (alas, too durable!) of the greater number of contemporary buildings that what architects call architectural science is not only useless, but that it is actually detrimental to the production of a fine work of this order. Instead of teaching the architect to allow reason, logic and economic
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laws always to predominate, the schools burden his memory with old formulas, with rules and principles wholly at variance with the needs, customs and trend of the life of to-day. The fruits of this irrational education lie scattered all about us. We find them in Paris, in the Lyons and the new Orleans railway stations, the Grand Palais (Exposition grounds), and the Hôtel de New York. . . . But let us end here these general considerations!

The most serious reproach that can be addressed to M. Lalique is that he has not dared entirely to break with tradition in the conception of the façade. Whether the result shows on his part a lack of courage, a want of power to create a thing wholly new in an art other than the one in which he is a past master, or, perhaps, the love of a period and style whose productions are the most pleasing to
his eye and mind, it would be difficult to decide. How much it is
to be regretted that he did not abandon himself to the caprices of
his imagination rather than to have remained faithful to the Renas-
cence! He would certainly have produced a work more expres-
sive of himself, and, consequently, more interesting from all points
of view, more original and more unified. For here, in spite of the
decided style of decoration adopted, the greatest fault lies in the
architectural lines themselves. There is a lack of unity, of abso-
lute cohesion among the elements, of balance between the dif-
ferent parts of the work. I know, indeed, that the Parisian build-
ing inspectors are tyrannical and that they pre-
vent the free exercise of architectural imagi-
nation. But, neverthe-
less, it would seem that
M. Feine, who was the
collaborator of M. La-
lique, might have made
a wiser distribution of
parts in his façade. It
appears too high for its
width: which effect re-
results solely from the
manner in which the
surface is divided, and
it is almost certain that
the impression would
have been altogether
different, if, instead of
interrupting the pro-
jection of the balcony

Door: wrought-iron and glass
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of the first story, in order to reserve for the entrance door and all the part above it a special importance—(in itself a happy idea, but here unattainable), the same projections and the same lines had been allowed to dominate freely and fully. But certain architectural details are very successful: for example, the corbelling of the large balconies, the projections and the open work of the high dormer windows, the cornices, the fine contour of the five bays of the ground floor which indicate so clearly the purpose of the interior. The Renascence forms which here occur M. Lalique has decorated with fine logical and artistic effect; for this purpose choosing from nature the pine, in many species from the *epicea* to the forest variety, and thus giving proof of a rare practical sense. The decoration of this façade, if it is not absolutely incorporated into the architecture, at least harmonizes and associates with it most happily. One might, perhaps, desire a transposition, not to say a more decided conventionalizing of natural lines, and, in certain parts, a firmer accent-
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Detail of door: bas-relief in molten glass

uation, bolder relief, and, also, more ease and more pronounced modeling in the decorative scheme, together with a greater variety of interpretation in proportion to the number of materials employed. On the contrary, one observes with pleasure how every decorative motif appears in precisely the proper place, and is strictly justified by the structural forms. The door naturally has the greatest importance. Two pine trunks, one at either hand, flank the frame, and their branches rise and spread, displaying masses of fine ramifications above the opening, up to the height of the wrought iron balcony of the first story. The door itself is in iron and enamel, and, across the grill, the branches springing from the pine trunks and sculptured in stone, ramify into fine twigs rendered in enamel.

From the threshold one enters the large vestibule of white stone
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without ornament, at the rear of which rises the great staircase; while, at the left, but a few steps, one may enter the exhibition hall and the studios of M. Lalique, through the singular door of wrought iron set with bas-reliefs in glass, which is here reproduced. The effect is charming: of exquisite simplicity and, at the same time, of the most subtle refinement. On the ground floor, which is fully lighted by the five windows with bold imposts giving upon the Cours-la-Reine, the large exhibition hall is most artistically treated. Engaged pillars divide the wall space into a series of panels, and continue, so to speak, above the bronze capitals composed of pine branches and cones, up to the ceiling, from which they again spring out in ribs to meet the pillars which separate the windows. The walls are draped with a serge fabric quite pronounced in tone and perfectly plain, while a frieze composed of pine branches completes the decoration. At the left of the entrance door a wooden staircase ascends to a small reception room raised a half-story above the exhibition hall, after the manner of a miniature loggia, from which the visitor may obtain a fine idea of the hall beneath. Here again, in the capitals, in the pillars of the railing, the pine furnishes the ornamental motif. The detail from the pillar, reproduced in one of our illustrations, shows the very original manner in which M. Lalique has treated this unit of decoration.

Four electric chandeliers, in bronze and molten glass, formed of serpents and chameleons, and suspended from the ceiling by heavy chains of wrought iron,
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are the means provided for the artificial lighting of the hall. Such is in outline the latest and most important work of M. Lalique, which unites architecture and decorative art. In many parts, it reveals the refined and sometimes singular taste of the creator of so many exquisite jewels, of so many marvelous pieces of craftsmanship in the precious metals, and the love of the artist for sumptuousness and costly materials. Thus, the door of wrought iron and molten glass, which he has placed between himself and the outer world, clearly denotes his strongest characteristics. M. Lalique is an austere hermit, who lives, without, it is true, despising life, in a kind of laborious dream. The solidity and, at the same time, the fragility of the barrier which he has decorated, as if symbolically, with a procession of nude youths emphatic in gesture, and apparently seeking to force entrance into his sanctuary of inspiration and labor, will appear to all imaginative persons to be deeply expressive of the idea of the artist, as it is gathered from his work and from intercourse with him. In this residence, built, no doubt, according to an ideal long cherished by him, he has chosen to live very near the earth and very near the sky: through the great bays of the exhibition hall contiguous to his workshops, he can study the ordinary realities of existence; while, leaning from the balconies of the high dormer-windows which light his private apartments, he can intoxicate himself with the blue sky, and see reflected, at evening, in the glistening waters of the Seine, the clouds in their slow passage.

However this artistic effort of M. Lalique may be judged, it will remain characteristic of his thought and genius. It will testify also to a progressive tendency upon his part toward rational simplification and logical construction. Ten, or even five years ago, M. Lalique would have built all otherwise; he would have constructed a fantastic palace peopled with disturbing forms and striking polychromy. Those who know his ardent love of nature, the rare qualities of his imagination, the infinite variety, the pliancy of his talent, those who have admired him without being blind to his faults, feel true satisfaction in seeing him modify and develop in the direction which we have indicated. The art of decoration is
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the one which demands the greatest tact and, consequently, the deepest knowledge of balance and logic. The mediaevalists and the Japanese are the most original, perfect and exquisite decorative artists only because they possess, in the highest degree, these essential qualities. Therefore, their works contain lessons of supreme beauty. And it is through the study of these incomparable masters that all contemporary decorators of merit have trained themselves, have acquired knowledge of their own powers, and have developed their personality.

The architectural effort of M. Lalique gives rise to the reflections which we have noted: a common-place and conventional work would certainly not have called them into being.

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A MAN IS CLOTHED IN THE GARMENTS HE WEARS AND THE HOUSE HE LIVES IN, FOR A HOUSE IS BUT HIS GREAT OUTER GARMENT. AND THE MAKING OF CLOTHES AND THE BUILDING OF HOUSES ARE THE MOST IMPORTANT OF ALL HANDICRAFTS

ARTHUR JEROME EDDY
DELIGHT THE SOUL OF ART

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IF YOU GET SIMPLE BEAUTY AND NAUGHT ELSE YOU GET ABOUT THE BEST THING GOD INVENTS

ROBERT BROWNING
FRA LIPPO LIPPI
The Cottage and Gate from the Street

The Doorway Path
Looking northeast toward the Tool-house

The Cottage Front