

The Angle Orthodontist

VOL. II.

No. 4

OCTOBER, 1932

*A magazine established by the co-workers of
Edward H. Angle, in his memory.*

The Inspiration of Beauty*

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We have, heretofore, discussed rather freely, the processes whereby the mind arrives at certain conclusions. We have tried to make clear the fact that our lives, to a very large degree, are directed by our thoughts. Perhaps I had better say molded, for thoughts do change the form of things as quickly and as permanently as the fingers of a sculptor. We are aware of the avenues of approach which lead to the higher planes of living. We have discovered that there are such planes and that, largely, we ourselves are responsible for the selection of the plane upon which we wish our lives to function and that our thinking is dependent upon the elevation of the plane we shall select.

We have seen that beauty is a vital force in the development of our lives. Let us, therefore, consider more specifically, the power which beauty wields over the destinies of mankind.

It is a curious thing, as we think back upon the evolution of mankind, to note how some small, apparently trifling events and acts changed the direction in which a groping, blind, and helpless creature was finding his way towards an unknown goal. The attainment of this goal meant the

*This is the third of four essays written for Orthodontists by Professor Wuerpel. The first two were published in the April and July numbers of The Angle Orthodontist.

final transformation of a blundering animal into a reasoning being; the greatest type of animal that has, thus far, inhabited this earth of ours. We may easily say that the superior wisdom which man has garnered throughout countless ages, could not have failed to result in the culmination which it finally attained. That is an easy way to relieve our reasoning powers. We say "It could not help but happen." Well, let us assume that this trifling incident had not happened. Where, then, would the human race have been today; what would be the story of man in the light of today? Who can tell? Would resourceful nature have chosen another way? Of the countless turns she might have used on the road towards evolution, would all of them have reached the same goal? I think it extremely doubtful. Shall we content ourselves by saying that it was an accident? Would a scientist, today, be satisfied to affirm that he had arrived at a certain result altogether by accident? How could he? No one would have faith in his integrity. If nature had not finally succeeded in evolving *Homo Sapiens* would she have chosen another medium of expression? We cannot well conceive of a being who, in intelligence of purpose, in the application of that intelligence to given purposes, could possibly excel mankind. But that is because of the limitations placed upon our vision. We cannot, somehow, imagine a being who could have achieved what man has achieved. Think of the great number of experiments in which nature indulged before, finally, man issued to answer the challenge of intelligence. A wrong turn in the road and man might easily have been just another one of those futile experiments; a long, slow, costly and fruitless experiment destined, as those that had gone before, to inevitable failure had it not been for some trifling, apparently insignificant, little thing.

That little thing was the very crux of the whole matter without which man would undoubtedly have remained on a plane of intelligence not far removed from that occupied by his neighbor, the anthropoid ape. In reality he, in the very beginning, differed very little from this grim, ferocious and awe inspiring neighbor of his. He looked a good deal like him, lived like him, acted like him and carried on his existence with similar lack of purpose. This continued to be so throughout countless generations.

But gradually a change took place within him, a change so slight at first that it can hardly be measured,—but it was there; a difference which was to awaken within him a consciousness of the place he was destined to occupy in a very remote future and which was to carry him into realms that even today the ape can not grasp.

One day this creature, in some remote degree a descendent from the same stock which developed anthropoid ape, paused in his humdrum, stupid,

vague career, broken only by the hazards of battle, the struggle against the elements, and the inevitable and relentless competition constantly going on between the different denizens of the primeval forests. This pause was the turning point of his career; nay, not only of *his* particular career, but of that of the countless generations which were to succeed him. Something happened one day which might very well have happened long before or even long afterwards. That it happened at all was due to that very gradual change which had been going on within him for untold generations. When the culmination point was finally attained, this creature paused because something puzzled him. Nothing had consciously puzzled him before. Instinct had made him aware of certain consequence and he followed these instincts in an utterly unconscious or automatic manner because he was born with them. He was not aware of this infinitesimally small change that was growing within him and when this thing I speak of happened, when he paused in a puzzled manner, it was this small change within him that was beginning to show fruit. The same occurrence had happened myriads of times before but he had not been aware of it, it had not caught his attention. This time, however, it puzzled this uncouth creature and he stopped to wonder. Think of it! He had never before done this; the occasion had not presented itself. Now, since such a thing had never before occurred, it is easy to surmise that this wonderment, if we are allowed to call it such, did not result in a concrete thought. He had not developed the faculty of reasoning and so nothing resulted. But the fact remains that he paused to wonder. The seed of thought had been planted. It was slow in developing. It required ages to mature and to reach the light in a living form. It did not flourish at once. Perhaps nature had learned a lesson and therefore allowed this one little act to be dominant, to incubate so that man might not altogether lose it. Think of the patience and the infinite courage it must have required to bring this seed to germination. The wonder is that it would ever have developed. It was not nature's way to hurry things; there had already been so many failures,—and time was infinite.

This restless wondering occurred again and again in the generations that followed. In them the seed finally came to fruition. We must not even attempt to imagine the numbers of generations that passed before this wondering pause became a thought. So long had it lain dormant, this wonderment, this potential thought, that it was difficult to devise a means of employing this power towards the development, the advancement of the human race. Let it suffice, however, that the seed of thought was there and that it required only some propitious circumstance to cause it to act. Just as the child grows in the mother's womb, so this thought was growing, awaiting

the moment when it should be born to serve a definite purpose, to bring this wonderment to a definite conclusion. But one day thought was born and its first efforts must have been as feeble as the first cry of the new born babe in its desire for its mother's breast.

No matter what it may have been, no matter what sudden, what vague and unmeaning process evoked it, real, concrete thought was born in the mind of this primitive creature, Pithecanthropus. Can you imagine the agony of that birth? Elsewhere I have said that unless thought is accompanied by pain you have not thought to very great purpose. Imagine, then, with what intense suffering this first thought was accompanied. This primitive, unaccustomed mind must have suffered such pain as it had never before experienced and it left its mark. Persisting, haunting, at first, unanswerable thought! Out of that finally grew reason. This ability to reason did not make the problem of thinking any the less difficult. It implied a goal and this goal was by no means easy of attainment. We, today, think instinctively, just as our prehistoric ancestors acted instinctively. Or had I better say we think automatically? Simpler acts, the result of reason, we perform without consciously going through the process of thought. But the thought is there nevertheless. In our remote ancestors' processes there was nothing automatic,—thought bore fruit in reason and it was by no means accomplished with ease or even with correct results. But, for that matter, even today our reasoning does not always result in correct accomplishment. So in the beginning there was more pain, greater pain, continued pain until experience came to the aid of helpless, blundering minds. Thought was like a lusty infant crying for food, for more and still more food and finally for a variety of food; and thus the most powerful agent in the development of the human race came into existence—not in a day nor in a year—but after many generations.

You probably will ask me how I know this was so. I can only answer that in some such fashion the thing must have happened. Somewhere, somehow it must have begun. When a barefoot boy stubs his toe, he runs to his mother sobbing in pain and the mother soothes and comforts him because she knows what caused the pain. But primitive man did not know. Mutely and patiently he bore pain because he thought it was inevitable, a part of life—as it truly is. How long, how much and how deeply he must have thought before he became aware of the cause of pain and could, therefore, in a measure avoid it. Facts, simple enough for our children to grasp without great effort, were stupendous problems to him and he struggled incessantly to discover the reason for things. But, like muscular exercise, the use of the mind developed greater capacity for thought and eventually man

came into his own. Primitive man had to discover all truths. Bitter and long experience went into the process, long and likewise exhausting. It is a wonder that he persisted. In some instances he was not able to persist with the same forcefulness as in others. Under certain conditions he could not persist and so the races did not grow in uniform intelligence and this condition still obtains today.

Such a simple thing as water collecting in a shallow pool became a challenge to his dawning intelligence. That dense treetops should shed water was not as simple a proposition to this primitive mind as it seems to our very children. But, with the constant use of his mind, his power of reasoning, assisted by the constant memory of former efforts with their resultant failures or successes, grew in logical order. Applying some of the lessons he had learned, man was enabled to circumvent the forces of his unreasoning enemies. Their cunning he was able to match with reason and, in the end, reason won. He was now able to provide food and shelter at less cost of time and effort than he had formerly expected, and hence he multiplied more rapidly than heretofore. He even acquired freedom from anxiety in which to develop this newborn sense of reason. He did things that were not actual necessities, something that the lower order of animals never had attempted to do. And, because he did them, they grew to become necessities. No longer satisfied with the crudeness of his first efforts he developed utilitarian things in a finer way and somehow he found them to answer better to his purposes. That was a discovery he made quite early in his search for knowledge and it has always remained with him. Thus, a common bowl, made with sufficient skill, so as to be useful, would always have answered his purpose and rendered the service for which it was intended. The crudeness of its shape would not materially have altered its usefulness.

But there must have been an instinct which urged him to make that bowl more symmetrical, and once it had attained a better shape, to decorate it. Perhaps a sense of ownership had something to do with this. In the beginning we may assume that all bowls were more or less common property. They were used for the common good, as were all the properties of the community. Communal life was a simple proposition so long as the community was not too large in number. But, with the expansion and growth of the tribe, it became necessary to separate and in this separation all property had to be divided. Under ordinary circumstances it would have been difficult to distinguish one bowl from another. But accident may have placed marks upon the bowl which would at once make it individual—a crack, a chip, a flaw of some kind. This accidental mark may have sufficed

for a while but it was inevitable that eventually the potter would introduce some distinguishing mark upon the bowl which would definitely identify it as the property of a certain individual. There would grow, in the mind of the potential possessor, a preference for one bowl over another—perhaps a better shape or a finer surface—two or more would desire a particular bowl and the potter, naturally, would study the reason for this preference and, having found it, could attract a larger clientele. Once having discovered that it was greater symmetry, finer form, more pleasing surface that attracted the would-be possessor, the potter would strive to improve these qualities and to introduce others. An accidental mark repeated at regular intervals became a decoration instead of a blemish. Thus the sense of design came into existence and the people had awakened to a knowledge of beauty and it moved them greatly. The search for the elements which constitute this beauty has continued ever since. The desire to satisfy that craving which, it seems, is inborn and the meaning of which we do not know, constitutes one of the forces towards progress.

We have many and varied evidences that such a condition arose in the minds of prehistoric peoples scattered over widely separated parts of the earth. These prehistoric remains reveal in many instances a fine and appreciative adaptation of natural design. Leaves, plants, reptiles, insects, clouds, mountains, the sun and the moon, and even stars have been used to enhance the beauty of weapons, pottery, utensils, furniture, clothing, and ornaments in metal, ivory, wood, bone and stone. The human mind has ever been active in a never ending pursuit of the beautiful. However crude and unsuccessful these efforts at design may appear to be they speak, often in eloquent terms, of the desire to beautify. When we at last reach the period of known history, the primitive, childlike and experimental form which this design had reached began to assume dignity, fitness, and those fundamental principles which only a cultured mind could evolve. There is order, rhythm, mass and line which is no longer attributable to experimentation but is the result of concrete thought and well ordered principle. In our self complacent egotism we, of today, who have not given the matter any thought whatsoever, are apt to look with disdain or contempt at these crude beginnings. We call some of them ugly. That they may be devoid of a certain amount of conventional beauty we may readily concede, but there are, even in these crude things, those elements which, if properly used, will make for great beauty. They should, at all events, indicate to us the struggle of the human mind to achieve and for this reason, if no other existed, we should glory in its success as in an heritage which our forefathers have left us. That their minds were able to control and direct thought, even in

the thousands of years which have passed since the human mind began to function, is one of the unsolved problems of the ages.

With the growth of intelligence and the logical pursuit of cause and effect, the mere necessity of establishing the identity of property through individual markings became subservient. There arose other means of securing property to the rightful owner. The use of marks and symbols did not, however, cease with their change of purpose. They continued and developed in the direction of beauty and freedom as they never could have done had they remained purely utilitarian. With the change of objective in the purpose of design, from a means of identification to that of pure ornament, a greater freedom was developed. Man was enabled to use his imagination and, instead of being merely a decorator, the artist became a dreamer, a creator. His work was created more by the impulse aroused within him through the sheer joy he felt in beauty. How utterly different was the objective and the ultimate outcome. The design became applicable to the form it was supposed to beautify,—it became a part of the object. It had often something to do with the purpose for which the object was used. Thus, in early Peruvian pottery, we see the duck used as a design because the decorator associated that bird with water. Not only was the form adopted from the swimming duck but the ornament became a conventionalized duck reduced to its most abstract terms. In furniture the tree-form became a unit of design, combining the material used in the making of the furniture with the natural beauty of the growing tree.

Thus the sense of fitness was cultivated and the satisfaction derived from the fitness of design to purpose became one of the sources of joy and satisfaction in the lives of these people. Again you will say, "How do you know this?" Can you imagine anyone voluntarily persisting in an effort they do not care for, that gives them no pleasurable return? It was not necessary to ornament these forms, they no doubt would have amply fulfilled their purpose without decoration. It must have been the joy such decoration brought, not only to the creative mind of the artist but to the appreciative mind of the consumer, that caused decoration to persist and to grow. It was because the mind was aroused to a greater joy in its contemplation that beauty persisted. That same influence is living today and we must not fail to take it into consideration. Now, satisfaction in any given condition adds materially to our enjoyment of life. Primitive people did not value life as we do because they had so little to lose. They had few enjoyments because they had but little satisfaction in existing conditions. So their leisure grew. As the precarious struggle to survive became less stringent, they began to look about themselves in search for enjoyment.

Heretofore there had been too much uncertainty. The element of danger from enemies was ever present. How could there be leisure and, lacking leisure, how could there be enjoyment. All tender plants need nourishing and care. Beauty is a very tender plant and it develops and thrives only with exceeding care. Until such a condition came about beauty could not grow. With the establishment of some degree of order in communal life, with the lessening of danger from external forces, certain opportunities arose for the enjoyment of life and mankind began, among other things, to respond spiritually to an awakening desire for beauty. In a sense it was an intoxication and there arose periods where beauty became almost an obsession. Thus, for instance, the Mexican and South American Indian cultures were the result of over-stimulation in the direction of decoration. Simplicity, the very heart of beauty, is often absent from these stupendous works.

This would lead us to inquire into the nature of beauty. Why, you might ask, should over-emphasis destroy the very purpose of beauty? If it is correct to beautifully cover a form with decoration, if this decoration enhances the beauty of the form, why can too large an amount of it destroy beauty? You will recall that food is essential to life. But too much food creates havoc with the digestive apparatus. So, too much beauty or rather too much decoration within limited areas, may likewise create a species of indignation and thus decoration, because of overloading, destroys beauty.

Beauty cannot be sold in the market. It has no standard or fixed price. It cannot be purchased by the pound; it is not a commodity—yet it enters into the selling value of almost every commodity on the market. Even in fruit and vegetable markets it is found profitable to make the display of commodities as attractive looking as possible. Surely the man who displays his wares in an attractive manner has a greater chance of disposing of them than the man who does not go to the trouble of favorably displaying them. Why is it that so many people choose to go into the most attractive markets, stores, banks, theatres, restaurants and what not in pursuit of their quests? Is it not because the element of beauty unconsciously enters into their selection. They are even willing to pay a higher price for the things they purchase. Surely beauty pays; and it pays in more than the value of dollars and cents. The satisfaction derived from order, cleanliness and selection, not to mention color and related things, cannot be measured in terms of money. Yet it has a very decided influence and bearing upon the question of sales. Why are we willing, no matter what our station in life may be, to pay a greater price for some thing that is attractive, beautiful,

than for one that lacks this element? Because it appeases that craving for beauty which is latent in the spirit of all mankind.

It has been said of a certain manufacturer that he had no sympathy whatsoever with art education. He could not see that an artist had any definite or material place in the economies of today and he thought it a waste of time to educate him in the profession of art. Yet this same manufacturer, in order to meet the competition of his rivals, was compelled to engage the services of a competent designer to revise the design of his merchandise. The only manner in which he could meet stiff competition was to add the element of beauty to his article of manufacture; for without it, he could not comply with the demand of an exacting public.

Again, why is it that we are more willing to pay a higher price for an article that is more beautiful? It is not at all a question of utility, for we must take it for granted that its utility has not been lessened through the addition of beauty. That must ever be a prerequisite. What, then, should constitute this difference in appeal? Is it a tangible thing; knowing that it exists can we definitely discover it; and, having discovered it, can we not, if we so desire, acquire it? But I have already said that it can not be bought. How otherwise shall we be enabled to acquire beauty? Surely we can acquire things other than by purchase. And is it not true that the things we acquire in another way than through purchase, become more valuable by reason of this very method of acquisition?

These are some of the questions which we shall ask ourselves in our search for an understanding of the influence of beauty. No doubt they were questions which arose in the minds of many peoples and races long since vanished. The Egyptians, the Assyrians, the Greeks and the Romans must each in turn have puzzled their brains in an endeavor to find the reason for beauty; the content of beauty; the growth of beauty and, finally, the influence of beauty. Every vanished civilization which has left behind it any evidence of its existence, tells us the same story. We invariably measure the race's degree of advancement into the realm of civilization by the beauty of those evidences which time has not destroyed. We must ultimately conclude upon the evidences of these remains, that beauty has to do with the mind. Beauty is not a single element. It must be composed, in varying degrees, of all elements that move the mind. What are these elements?

Upon consideration it must occur to us that if races in widely scattered areas, having no contact with one another, have achieved beauty, then beauty can not be dependent upon material things. Each of these races, in its own way, produced that quality which we designate as beauty regardless of divergent material conditions. Some arrived at beauty through metals,

others through wood or stone or glass or fabrics. But in no case was beauty achieved until the artist had interpreted his idea of beauty in terms of the material used. The same design does not apply to all materials, nor does the same technical treatment. Surely it must be conceivable that the same design will not apply equally to silk, to bronze or to wood. The softness and delicacy of silk lends itself to a design which flows and folds and introduces more a pattern than a form. If the pattern used to decorate silk is rigid and we become conscious of its incompleteness, as it follows the form it is intended to drape, then it virtually destroys the form over which it is displayed. To use a broad example: let us suppose that the design used on silk is composed of houses and people, which might easily be. In cutting and draping the silk, if it is to be used as an article of apparel, the houses and people may happen to be askew or cut into parts, the unity of the component elements of the design would thereby be seriously damaged. If, however, the silk is destined to cover a flat surface, such as a wall or a part of some piece of furniture, the design might be composed of rigid elements such as houses, trees, mountains, people or what not, provided, always, that the design fitted properly into the space for which it was intended. Therefore, a design might be eminently fitting for one particular place and purpose and utterly unfit for another. We might, for instance, conceive that a woman's head, as a medallion in a panel of silk or damask or tapestry, might be so designed as to be very effective as a decoration. Personally, I doubt if I would care for it and perhaps later on I will explain why I would not choose to use it. It is, however, conceivable that this might be done. But surely no one would dream of introducing the head in that wall panel into the design for the seat or even the back of a chair. It would just not do. You would not want to sit on a woman's head or lean back against it. It is, therefore, evident that appropriateness enters very largely into our acceptance of beauty. Here enters the element of taste and I am aware that taste is a very erratic and unstable thing. But, as I have already said, there is good taste and bad taste and good taste does not often err.

To know whether the beauty which we wish to achieve is in good taste or not we have only to ask ourselves the simple question, "Does it fit?" By that we mean are the elements of which the design is composed related to the purpose and to the material which is to be used? To say, indiscriminately, that a thing is beautiful does not always show discretion. It is in this direction that bad taste shows itself. We may pick out details in the design which are beautiful just as we say of a house that it has a beautiful door. But it does not follow that, because a floor, a door, a window or a

chimney is beautiful, the entire house conforms to the laws of beauty. If the door or window or chimney is beautiful it must be a question of proportion, relation, finish, detail or material. If they, however, emphasize by their completeness (and beauty is complete satisfaction) the lack of beauty in the rest of the house, then, by that very fact, they lose their claim to beauty.

We say that a voice is beautiful when it is unfailingly true, rich, resonant and in perfect control. Lacking any of these qualifications we may say that the voice has the elements of beauty but we cannot truthfully say that the voice is beautiful.

We might repeat these examples indefinitely for, unfortunately, they occur only too often. What must be clear to us is that a delicate proposition presents itself before us and we must endeavor to understand what beauty is in order to know just where beauty ceases and how taste begins. Our thesis being the influence of beauty, we must know what beauty is and yet it is difficult to define it in words. It is a conception; it is a feeling; it is an ecstasy, a reaction towards that which our senses convey to us. We can say that beauty cannot exist where discord lies and yet we might find a certain beauty in discord. What, then, is this term we are trying so hard to use properly?

Primitive races, past and present, strove in their own way to express beauty. Africans created types of design that are to many of us extremely ugly—to say the least they are uncouth and unmoral. If this is so, how can we affirm that these people were searching to express beauty? Yet that is exactly what they are and that is what they were trying to create. The difference between their concept of beauty and our own lies in the radical differences that distinguish us. Occasionally there are individuals amongst higher types of people who, in their spiritual reactions, are as crude and brutal as are those of very primitive races. We call them crude, they do not represent our status in the scale of culture, or their culture has reverted to that of a primitive race. The psychology of such reversions has been studied and classified and presents splendid fields for speculative philosophy. Fundamentally what interests us in our present study is why something that does not conform to our individual concept of beauty may still express beauty. Surely those lower races are quite serious when they make grotesque masks and are expressing themselves in doing so. The scale of their culture differs from ours.

“Beauty is the finest expression of the human emotions” we are told. But are all expressions on the same plane? Is it possible for every age, every race, every individual to conform to the same laws of feeling, of

emotion, of expression? Even in groups which we know as races and which have attained to a definite height in the cultural scale, there are great variations in the degree and intensity of human reactions. Therefore, how possibly could all of us be affected in the same manner by the same things? If we try to express our reactions towards color, sound, form, taste, smell, they may, in the main, agree. That is to say that, as a mass, we will generally proclaim the same things to be good or bad. This results in the creation of types of beauty and different ages produce different types of beauty. The expression of these emotions is merely an indication of the degree of sensitiveness of our five senses; the degree of fineness depending altogether upon culture, upon selection, upon sensitiveness. Is it not, therefore, conceivable that the bushman of Australia and the pigmy of Africa may be trying to express the finest thing that lies in them and that to them these hideous, vulgar, atrocious monstrosities *may* be an expression of beauty? Indeed, this has been so strongly affirmed by certain groups of artists and critics of today that a new notion of beauty is trying to force its attention upon us. There are philosophers who acclaim this new concept. They tell us that all we have created, since the time of the Greeks, for instance, is artificial, based upon conditions which no longer maintain. They say that we can lay no claim upon a beauty which no longer expresses us or our period. This may be true—let us examine this contention.

In the first place if we believe in individual freedom everyone has a right or a claim upon any thing achieved in the past—else there could be no progression. If we agree that art—which is the medium or the agent whereby beauty is expressed—is the expression of life,—then it is quite true that we are wrong in endeavoring to express ourselves in terms of yesterday. Yesterday's reactions, last year's reactions, the first century B. C. reacted differently from today. There can be no question as to that. But the art that was produced in the past has survived because, not only did it give expression to the lives of the people during the era in which it was produced, but expressed it in the highest, finest, most sensitive or sensitized manner possible. That is what made it art and that is what gives it that peculiar imperishable quality which we designate as beauty. The beauty that survives knows no limits either of time or place. It was created for all time and no one can rob us of it. We need not, indeed we cannot, copy it. But we can emulate it.

It is a foolish proposition to endeavor to keep alive words which no longer have a vital meaning. They have lost their significance, they have gone out of use. But the words which continue to express the things of today will survive and will influence and form the basis for new words

that we are to coin and that present necessities demand. Thus the beauty created in the past—that is the beauty which has survived—must ever be beautiful, must ever express, must ever be the finest utterance of the human emotions and will always inspire us in the loftiest sense possible. So the contention of these modernists is a fallacy and this particular portion of their controversy need give us no immediate concern. That we should try to discover newer, more modern terms of expression cannot be denied, but a reversion to primitive expressions, on the theory that they are the most free from outside influences, is just as fallacious as clinging to the period of the Greeks, the Romans or the Italian Renaissance. In justification they claim that these lower orders of beauty contain more purely the real essence of human emotions than the more cultivated forms. That also may be true to a certain degree; it does not, however, follow because they are less adulterated, less infused with a painfully acquired sophistication, that they are more beautiful or more pure. It does not seem to ring true; else were the crude drawings of an infant better as mediums of expression than the drawings of their skilled and highly trained elders. Curiously enough this is exactly what the modernists contend. Time, and I firmly believe, a short time, will disprove this theory. For, unless these things which they designate as art have within them those same imperishable elements of beauty which distinguished and preserved for us the art of past ages, past civilizations, they will not, nay, they cannot survive. To crudely imitate an uncouth, often bestial example of the art of an uncultured mind is not justifiable and does not create a new medium for “the highest expression of the human emotions”. That a new art may, probably will, result from this endeavor to free the artist from the trammels of the past is to be desired. For only in-so-far as the artist of today expresses himself in terms of today will he be creating, for those who are to follow, a true expression of his period, and this is eminently desirable. But in doing this he must not forget to put into this expression that quality which will make it live forever,—that is, the quality of beauty.

In the designing of new furniture for new houses it is well to endeavor to find something that is different from Colonial, Victorian or what not. To create heavy, box-like affairs lacking in comfort, in line and in utility, proclaiming them to be the outcomes of a mechanistic age, does not suffice. The beauty which might make them survive is lacking. When they can design furniture which will not only show us such influences as the age of the machine has brought upon us, but will combine with this expression that of beauty, then they will have created a new art, a beautiful thing in which we shall take pride and joy, and which will carry our civilization down to posterity.

I think that in architecture this has been more nearly approached than in any of the other arts. This is a mechanistic age, the age in which the raw material is thoroughly and with astounding directness and speed, converted to our uses. Steel, concrete, glass are no longer used in a disguised manner. They are bravely and boldly given the position they should always occupy. We recognize them instantly in looking at a building. They are structural and are given honorable recognition in the designing of the building. Furthermore, they are so splendidly necessary that they add to the beauty of the edifice.

Formerly, we required merely walls, a roof, doors and windows. They conformed to old ideas of what the building should be; to the needs and desires of the people who were to occupy them. It was an era in which concentration was not necessary. There was no competition similar to that of today. Business was not concentrated as it is now. Doctors have an office building all to themselves; so have lawyers, contractors, insurance men, all professions and occupations. This means that buildings must house, in the most economical method possible, a great number of people. Economy of space is required; spreading out becomes prohibitive. The skyscraper, for offices, hotels and public buildings, becomes an absolute necessity; it was a direct response to our modern economic needs. A new type of architecture came into use and the architect met the problem in a fine way. It was not absolutely new, but its adaptation from old ideas was new. Whether the inspiration came from Egyptian, or other sources does not matter. It may have been inspired by the Grand Canyon. It became necessary to build in such a manner that a maximum of light would at all times reach the streets below. Recessional building was a consequence of the upward soaring of the structure. Ornament of a delicate, minute nature would mean nothing ten stories above the ground. The building had to be a unit from bottom to top—it was the mass, the block of the building that counted and it was with the design of this that the architect occupied himself. He created elements that connoted strength, to give a sense of security. No one would occupy an office on the fifty-second floor unless he felt a certain security in the use of it. The thing that gave the building strength was its structure, therefore structural features were emphasized. Everybody became conscious of the frame, of the fine, strong material used, there was no attempt to disguise it. Wood was used as little as possible. Doors were of steel and the entrance doors, in their ornamentation, became massive and simple as the building itself. When the lower floors were ornamented it was done on a massive scale. If human figures were used they had to become immediately heroic; the building called for it. The lobbys and

entrance halls had, at once, to respond to the atmosphere of the entire building. The ornament was along structural lines; the material used was of the same nature as that used in the construction of the building. Glass, marble, stone, steel and cement were used to the utmost advantage.

Look at any public well organized building from the outside—bank, law office, apartment house, insurance building, post-office, what not—and note how it gives you the impression of a massive unit well proportioned, dignified, soaring and yet alive; nothing trivial or out of scale, all things considered in relation one to another and yet a beautiful whole. Step inside: see the floors, the ceilings, the walls, the elevator cages, the light fixtures. All speak in terms of strength, durability and a beauty which, while to a degree inherent in the material used, has been more emphatically brought out in the fine solid structural lines that have been used. That is beauty. That means that we are being spoken to in a language which belongs to the era we have produced and which, in the future, will possibly be designated as the steel, the concrete or machine age. They will tell future generations what we conceived, how we managed, how we dreamed and how we built. Yes, indeed, in terms of architecture we really have accomplished something and we should be proud of it.

Now many buildings even in the new style are not beautiful. The mere fact that they belong to the skyscraper group does not make them good. Just to emphasize structural lines will not do it. To make each division recessional may become extremely unfortunate, and frequently does. It is fine sense of proportion, a delicate adjustment of one mass to another that makes this thing an object of delight to behold. It is the awareness of these qualifications that makes this an artistic whole, a thing to be proud of and to which we point with pleasure.

If you can follow my reasoning you will see that in other fields of human expression, the same rules which governed the building art, governs them. I have repeatedly said that art is the highest expression of human emotions. Confusion is not by any means a high expression. Therefore where it exists there can be no art, no beauty.

Now in modern painting, sculpture, drama, music, and other creative expressions we are too often aware of the means employed. If, in an actor, we are more aware of his manner than we are of the thing he desires to express, then we do not call him a good actor. Mannerisms are the result of a lack of adjustment. An actor, to be great, must create in you the thought that he is the very impersonation of the role he desires to portray. If he forgets this for a moment he weakens and often ruins the artistry of

his performance; its beauty too, is ruined. It takes such a great deal to create beauty and so very little to destroy it.

Tolerance of mediocrity invites a lowering of standards. It is because we allow ourselves to be imposed upon that art often becomes a farce. Often, in the past, the pursuit of false idols has strangely diverted the direction and expression of peoples' lives. The forms that have been used to express this divergence from true life, have lost their significance. In almost every case of such lamentable deterioration we find that the cause lies in the ignoring of some of the fundamental principles of beauty. Oftenest we find failure to adjust the parts to the whole. With the over emphasis of parts the beauty of the whole disappears.

Today, in painting, this discrepancy has arisen. The contention that there must be none of the old-time beauty, is a rock against which many a ship has foundered. Thus the modernist concerns himself with an exaggerated depiction or the attempted depiction of the psychology of animate and inanimate life. If we are merely interested in problems of psychology why not get them from the realm of written, spoken and speculative philosophy? Why allow our concept of beauty, which is simplicity, to be led astray? Is the art of painting, or of sculpture, which has as its primary motivation the awakening of the aesthetic emotion through the eyes, to become merely the medium for the exploitation of philosophic treatises? Is this their proper function? The first condition that should obtain, that of pleasing the eye, is absent. I am aware that many critics affirm that these abstractions are, in themselves, beautiful. If so it must be a new kind of beauty, a beauty which those of us who have been brought up on other theories cannot, as yet, grasp. Since we are agreed that beauty is purely emotional, it may be that people are moved ecstatically by these new forms and queer combinations. Let us give them the benefit of the doubt and see what will develop. Twenty years from now we ought to be able to tell just what the results will be or what has happened. That newer ideas, newer impressions, will have to be expressed goes without saying and it is merely a question of the choice of the medium used in the conveyance of these thoughts. But if we use the field of the arts, which is conveyed to us through the medium of the eye, to express the newer facts, we must surely consider form, line, color and volume. These cannot be ignored. If, then, the modernists have striven to introduce new forms, new colors, new lines which do not please our aesthetic sensibilities as conveyed through our eyes, then we cannot affirm that they are beautiful; they become merely puzzles for an analytical mind, a game for a curious mind.

Much the same thing is being striven after in the fields of music and sculpture. It is more an appeal to the philosophy of life than to the beauty of arrangement. Formerly, at any period or interval of a musical composition, a cross section of the score would result in what was then called a harmony. That is not at all true today nor do they intend that this ancient interpretation shall hold. It is obsolete and the harmony of today has nothing in common with the past. It is true that since this particular aesthetic appeal comes to us through the medium of the ear, since the emotion created is awakened by sound, it has a measure of excuse in the creation of new sounds to awaken new emotions. Very much the same color, form and pattern which greeted the eye of prehistoric man, meets ours today. These fundamental things have not changed; there may be new combinations but after all they remain intrinsically the same. Do you imagine that prehistoric man ever heard the roar of an aeroplane, the static of a radio? It is true that certain sounds in nature from sources with which he was intimately acquainted, like waterfalls, beasts of the forest, the storm in the tree tops sounded something like the radio, the aeroplane, the telephone, the motorboat, and the honk of the automobile. But he would not recognize either these forms or the sounds they emitted. If we are to be moved to aesthetic expression through sound and nothing more, we may say of it, as we did of painting, that it does move us, but the resultant effect is not that of beauty. These themes would require a special essay in order to properly present them. But it should be evident that, while form, sound, color, line may produce emotions and necessarily they must, it by no means follows these emotions result in that indefinable term we call beauty. What can we gather from all this? Do we have a clearer concept of the term "beautiful", and can we more easily surmise its source?

This, however, we should know. It materially affects our well being. If we can conceive the world as bereft of beauty, what would be the result; how would it affect us? What do you suppose this world is like to a deaf, dumb, and blind man? Take away from him these mediums of expression and how much has he missed? He does not see the glory of the light in a twilight sky. Thousands of emotions which we more fortunate mortals enjoy without giving them thought, are denied him. We pity him, why? If it is not because he is shut in, shut away from the beauty which we enjoy, then our pity is wasted.

Beauty complements life. Without beauty life is not complete. It affects us in our everyday relations. It enters into all things that we do. In our homes we should seek to establish beauty for it adds not only to

our enjoyment but it is a justification of life. It holds us to our environment and if we have visions and ambitions and finer instincts and desires it strengthens these. Beauty is not merely for the home. It influences us in our workaday world; in our relation to our fellow men and fellow women. Our streets speak to us just as individuals do. Shall they snarl and swear and evoke emotions which may spoil our day? If men insist on greeting you pleasantly there must be something fundamentally wrong with you if, eventually, you do not respond in pleasantness. The street speaks to you, too, and beauty is the pleasant greeting. It encourages you, befriends you, makes you stronger and better to meet the trials of the day. Try, for a change, to walk or drive through the slums; try it for a week, for a month, and go back the same way. See what a difference it will make in your daily point of view.

And, as for your office, it is not only yourselves you should consider but all the people whom chance or necessity leads into your presence. Beauty will make your contacts pleaseanter—it will make your agreement more cordial. Beauty is an asset which you cannot afford to cast aside. It must be cultivated with the greatest care. Ostentatious pomp is not beauty. It awes the ignorant, it places about you an icy wall which will not thaw even with the aid of pleasant words. Beauty is not the prerequisite of the wealthy. Far from it. With very little means environmental beauty can be created. Study effects, see that one thing does not crowd out another. If you have some choice work of art that gives you joy, show it gently, do not surround it with vulgar unfitting accessories. Let it, in its simplicity, speak for itself. There is always one splendid guide to follow and that is taste. Taste can be cultivated. When you meet people who set you at ease, when you enter into a room that gives you a sense of rest and peace, when you are in an assembly that gives you courage to assert your sense of right to live, then study these conditions and you will learn what taste is and you will find in this taste merely the highest expression of human emotions.