

FÜHRER ZÜR KUNST. By Heinrich Lützel. (Herder, Freiburg i. B.; RM. 5.20 and 7.—., bound; prices for abroad, RM. 3.90 and 5.25.)

He calls it a 'Guide to Art.' His desire is to help people to see a work of art, to understand its meaning, to feel its rhythm. He confines himself to three branches of art: Architecture, Statuary, and Picture. In each section of the book he follows roughly the same method. He begins with Technique, and the processes are described with good diagrams. Technical terms are explained, for the magic of jargon is no empty thing—it is like the progress from the nominal definition to the essential. First, he says, we must understand the mysteries of Material, of Stone, Bronze, Paint, and the ways that man can work it. Only then can we judge whether man has done it well. But once thus initiated, we pass on to close discussion.

Art is the affair of mankind, not of a small circle of connoisseurs. The author, being a Christian (a Catholic), understands the Ultimate Purpose of it all, and why the men of a medieval township all contributed to the building of their Cathedral at least by carrying stones: it was their house for their God. The whole book then really turns on the relation between these two extremes: heavy, hard stone—and God: with man in between, working the stone for the glory of God. This man is indeed ever restricted in this work, first by the material, and then by the thing he wants to express: but these limitations are not his weakness, but rather they are his strength. It is not a pity that stone is hard, and that certain things cannot be done with it—on the contrary, this is its strength (*cf.* pp. 24, 111). In each section are then discussed the possibilities of the material, what the artist can express in that material, and how.

And here we come to what seems to me perhaps the central thesis of the book. The author proposes (round p. 46) that (1) an 'artistic' work is one which really fulfils these possibilities, and (2) an 'unartistic' work fails to fulfil them (it is merely useful, or meant to be), and (3) a 'counter-artistic' (*widerkünstlerisch*) work exceeds these possibilities, *i.e.* tries to do more than the material allows. And correlative to this we have the possibilities of expression: (1) when the artist allows his subject in his material to express itself fully through the resources of the material, and (2) when he fails to express the thing, and (3) when he loads his material with unsuited or superfluous expression. Perhaps this idea is really at the root of the problem of good and bad taste, especially in the case

of excess. For is it not the Gothic pub (his example), that tries to express more than 'pub,' that revolts us? And the picture loaded with more sentiment than its composition allows, that sickens us?

In Architecture the bounds of expression are narrowest (greatest 'Gebundenheit'), in Statuary they are wider, and in Picture almost unlimited (*cf.* p. 38). For the architect is most bound by his material (even in the local choice of it), and by his function: for his object must always be to build a house for God or for man. The sculptor is freer, and can intend more, and the painter may choose to express the widest variety of things. The architect builds spaces: the sculptor makes solids: the painter models both space and solid, and his skill lies in their interplay. But corresponding to these degrees of restriction there is an inverse proportion, he suggests, in the artists' influence on the life of men. For men must have houses to live and pray in, and we know how much our minds are unconsciously formed by our parish church and by our home. But a statue may be rarely contemplated, and a picture may pass unobserved. For Architecture does not represent our lives to us, but it forms them for us.

These principles are very intriguing, and although the text is hard reading sometimes, they are worked out with a wealth of example illustrated profusely with excellent photographs—often fascinatingly juxtaposed for contrast. (The examples of bad art are most entertaining.) The arguments seem to me certainly convincing, in the universal, though sometimes the detail or the particular example may seem less so.

Perhaps the best section is that on Statuary (Plastik, including both carving and modelling): for here the canons are stricter. Sculpture must be solid. It is not of spaces, and therefore must be a unity. And because of this unity it must represent an instant, not a movement, unless that movement can be enclosed in the 'pregnant instant' (*cf.* p. 100). Good sculpture may represent a group (such as Bernini's Apollo and Daphne), but it is then a unity of rhythm. Good sculpture may represent a particular action (like the Boy taking a thorn from his foot), but then that action represents the whole grace and vigour of the person (here the grace of youth). Hence Sculpture tends above all to express a man; not things, which at once introduce complexity. Hence the suitability of the naked figure which is a single expression. Hence also the tendency of the statue to become a symbol (he cites Michelangelo's David), and not just reproduction. Transgression of these consequences

of the possibility of the material and the limits of expression produce sculpture in bad taste: bronze clouds, intricate groups, figures 'caught in the act,' and people in chairs and with baggy trousers on.

The argument in the sphere of Picture is similar, though the possibilities of material are more varied: painting, mosaic, enamel, glass, engraving, etching, drawing. Interesting are comparisons of the same subject etched and painted (*cf.* pp. 164, 200). Possibilities of expression are also more varied, with the elements of space and light. Expression in painting is derived from the relations of the things to the space, and so of the things to one another. Exact imitation of nature is no ideal at all, but may be a means of expressing the thing, or may not: hence strictly stylised painting, free from distraction, may sometimes be the right expression. The thing must not be sentimentalised—this transgresses the possibility of expression; nor barbarised—this fails to reach it. (The author has little patience with pseudo primitives 'supposed to be peasant-art, and made by townes').

And so on. Alluringly, possibilities are studied, with over one hundred groups of reproductions. I cannot give many references: for though the progress is orderly, the main threads run right through. The taste is classical, the thought is sane: the dignity of material and of man before God, and this human thing which is art, which it is human to appreciate.

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HISTORY

THE FERRAR PAPERS. By B. Blackstone. (Cambridge University Press; 21s.)

NICHOLAS FERRAR. By A. L. Maycock. (S.P.C.K.; 12s. 6d.)

The life of Nicholas Ferrar at Little Gidding has perhaps primarily a symbolic value. It is easy to over-estimate his significance for his contemporaries. He had lived impersonally, sheltered by a small group of intimates and protected by the rather distant patronage of the great; it is characteristic that the little that he published in his own life-time was anonymous. But to the non-jurors he came to represent a golden age, irrevocably vanished; the spiritual perceptions of Laudian Anglicanism and the serenity of the early Carolines. It was a rôle which *John Inglesant* emphasised for a wider public.

It is at last possible to compare the Legend with its source. For Mr. Maycock and Dr. Blackstone are the first scholars to