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## Book Reviews

The English Home from Charles I to George IV. By J. Alfred Gotch, F.S.A., F.R.I.B.A. B. T. Batsford, London, 1918. Charles Scribner's Sons, New York City. \$13.50.

This volume, as the author explains in the Preface, takes up the story of the house of the noblemen and aristocrats of England where it was left in a preceding volume on "Early Renaissance Architecture in England." It is an interesting story and of peculiar significance at a moment when the question of better houses for English workers is one of the great problems of the British Government. With that question, however, the work of Mr. Gotch has no relation whatever. His book is for the other professional man. In it there are developed many accounts architectural, with narratives of the professional careers of the architects who have left such a mark upon so large a part of the rural domestic architecture of England.

More than this, one catches a sweeping view of the architectural development of the home of England's "upper class," and perceives the action and reaction of those forces which first emancipated the home from its need of being a fortress as well, and then stimulated its enrichment and adornment, as well as its greater comfort and convenience. Thus we see that, coincident with the disappearance of the baronial retinue of fighting men and the development of government as a police power, England began to tap the wealth of the world. Her ships sailed upon every sea, and her merchants dealt with the products of every clime. Primogeniture and the law of entail were worshipped as the symbol of English solidity and respectability. The squire took his place in English literature, and, like others who had amassed wealth, would build him a new house, set in a spacious park. Great fortunes were made in trade, and greater ones in land, not only in the monopoly which has clung so persistently to English progress at home, but in the development of Colonial possessions.

The noblemen of England toured the world for their pleasure and enjoyment. The merchant went the same way on another errand. Both found much to admire in foreign parts, especially in Italy and France. Thus there began to drift across the Channel a small band of workmen who, invited by the returned travelers or by those who sought to

meet their wishes in the building of a new house, were destined to greatly influence the architectural traditions of insular England—of that England which was even then setting out on the road to Empire.

Mr. Gotch traces all of this in different places throughout his work, but, in pondering upon this era of almost riotous expenditure, we are left to wonder whether it was not founded upon a system which would exact a terrible price when Watts and Stephenson and Hargraves were to throw open the doors for the centralization of industry. Under that system the gulf between the luxurious and the inhuman home was to widen until it threatened to swallow the whole.

These reflections seem almost out of place in the presence of so scholarly a work as that under discussion, and yet they are inescapable to whoever thinks as he reads. But the book is a real joy within its sphere, for it takes one rambling through a past when good taste, exquisite proportions, and simple dignity combined to give us an inheritance of such rural domestic architecture as is not to be found elsewhere in the world, a thing which is at once so pleasant to come upon with its park and its plantations, its gardens and tree-bordered drives, that one worships at the shrine and forgets the system upon which it was built and the dismal hovels on the other side of the gulf. But the whole obligation of architecture is yet to be fulfilled, and out of this precious past of real beauty we must find the means of obliterating the gulf which makes all our communities a general hodge-podge.

If one lays down the book with a sigh, one picks it up again because it is too enjoyable to leave. Mr. Gotch throws new light upon the lives of Webb, Wren, Jones, Vanbrugh, and discusses their works and their professional careers in an interesting manner. There are excursions into the collateral fields of craftsmanship in all its forms. The illustrations have been selected with fine judgment and they greatly enhance the pleasure of reading. A useful appendix completes a book which cannot be ignored in assembling any library on domestic architecture. Its closing words are well worth bearing in mind: "Architecture, like other arts, is immortal; the qualities of proportion, ornament, and fitness can never long be disregarded, for no building is complete which is not beautiful to look upon."—B.

## Obituary

John Gaisford

Elected to the Institute, 1915

Died at Memphis, Tenn., August 31, 1918

Mr. Gaisford was born in Warminster, England, in 1876. He there studied architecture and came to this country at the age of twenty. Seven years were spent in Pennsylvania, which he left to locate in Memphis where he

has since been in practice. Mr. Gaisford was a citizen of the United States and was listed for service at the call of the Government. His brother, Mr. Harold Gaisford, was killed at the front in April of this year while serving with the British Army, while another brother also has been wounded in action.

Mr. Gaisford was the architect for a considerable number of churches throughout the South, as well as for numerous private residences in and about Memphis.