

THE ROOM HARMONIOUS

by W. H. Gummer, F.N.Z.I.A.

THERE is one sphere in which every woman of taste is an artist—her home. For the harmony, the subtle charm, the soothing sense of refinement and of culture she alone is responsible. The presence of this harmony gives that distinction which is the final hall-mark of every gentle lady; its absence leaves the consciousness of dis-harmony and lack of ease, of displeasure.

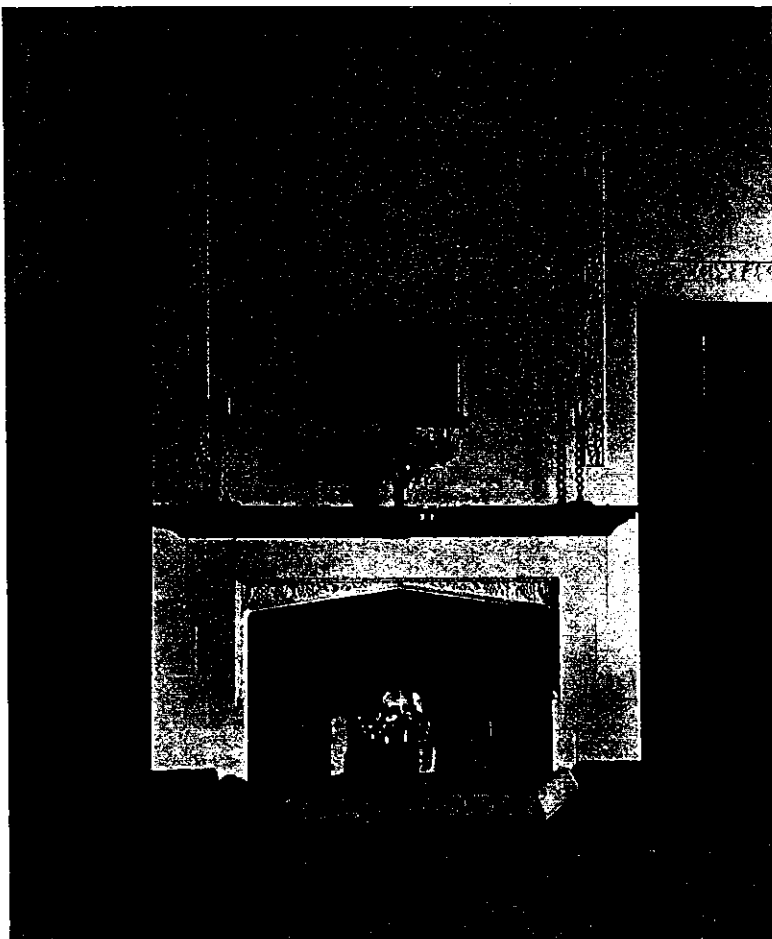
Harmony is achieved by the art of composition—the art of arrangement. The possibilities of composition—orderly, sympathetic, balanced arrangement—are boundless; the human desire for it is fundamental; but, alas, the considered application and satisfactory realisation are the exception rather than the rule.

Yet harmony is within the reach of all who seek it. It depends not on size of rooms, on costliness of furnishings or richness of hangings. It depends not on ostentatious display, but primarily upon judgment and taste, the possession or acquisition of which are within the reach of all. Who has not experienced that indefinable something that spells comfort and culture in even a modest home; who has not been jarred by crude dis-harmonies where wealth alone was rampant?

Only by conformity to artistic laws is the room harmonious made possible. The room itself in its shape, proportions and elements must be satisfactorily designed and worthy to decorate and furnish; there must be ability to select wisely decorations and furnishings and to dispose them so that they can best serve their respective functions; their shape and their position in relation to each and all the other objects in the room and to the room itself must make for harmonious association or arrangement; in other words, they must "compose" to the best instincts of the placer. This is harmony.

Design of the Room

EACH room must be considered as an individual problem—an individual opportunity. Good rooms do not "happen"; they are created. They are the result of thought, of plan,



The decorative idea of structure and function expressed fully. Emphasis obtained by contrast of form and colour, balance and repose of symmetry.

Cecil Wood, A.R.I.B.A., Christchurch.

ly the position of the bed; the position of the table in the dining-room and of the larger pieces of furniture in each room. "Plan" also determines the position of the windows, the provision of artificial light, and entrances in relation to the functional and aesthetic purpose of the room. In this planning of doors and windows, the

of these architectural features should be similarity of proportion and finish tending towards sympathy of line, rhythm and repose.

Selection of Furniture

UPON the broad canvas of that room the home artist must now

they are places to live in. The dining-room is designed for the partaking of meals together with happy social intercourse. Its chairs are designed for special comfort and convenience when seated at table. The decorations of this room should be so harmonious to its purpose as to assist mastication and digestion, and not retard those functions by crude or inharmonious pictorial suggestion. The function of this room is not assisted by two or three stag heads or a tiger head placed on the wall (their place is in the hall), nor by a sideboard piled tier on tier of "ornamental" china or bowls of dubious use and design, and which stand in the way of doors and other articles of daily use. Essentially, the purpose of a room should govern its decorative basis. In such a dining-room, in addition to the necessary furniture, the decorative features may consist of perhaps a few well-chosen prints, a cabinet and a little bronze figure, proper consideration being given to the setting of each object and the avoidance of such crowding as may prevent an object, decorative in itself, from performing properly its decorative function. In the well-designed room, scarcity of decoration in no way detracts from it, while redundancy of decorative effect does.

In the proper furnishing of other rooms it is essential to remember that "collecting" and "decorating" are not the same thing. The crowding together of a miscellaneous collection of articles is not art, any more than mere expense and crowding of features constitutes decoration. Once it was decreed that only objects of one period could be arranged together, but as modern design has come into its own, it has been recognised that with discretion objects of one period or design may be associated with objects of another period or design. But don't *jumble*!

Above all, be severe on sentiment. When Uncle John died and left us the many mirrored, shelved and turned spindled overmantel with the decadent carved marble clock in front, his intentions were probably good; but he may have repented since,



A modern library-living room, expressing through a well-balanced asymmetrical composition individuality and restraint, comfort and taste. Lines of structure reflected in all but the smaller movable objects.

(Reproduced from the "Forum").

Bigelow and Wadsworth, Architects, Dover, Mass., U.S.A.

of design for a particular function, the provision for which establishes "character," while appreciation of form determines the particular disposition and finish of doors, windows, skirtings and cornices, brings line and proportion—an intimate and attractive relation of parts—in short, achieves "design." Thus, the "plan" of the bedroom usually determines definite-

necessity is not generally recognised of always securing wherever possible a fair area of wall space at the side of these; this space should be at least as wide as the door or window concerned. Without such wall space each architectural feature has not the setting which its influence on the happy effect of the room dictates it should have. Another essential characteristic



Combination living-room and dining-room. Expression of function. Informality restrained by lines of structure reflected in the laying of the rugs.

Chilwell and Trevithick, Architects, Auckland.

build towards her ultimate effect by the selection of furniture and decorations. Care and courage are here required. Rooms are not museums;

and the spectacle of his gift grimly treasured "for his sake" and maintained in surroundings where it is but an eyesore may be causing the old