

NOTES ON FOUR STAINED
GLASS WINDOWS IN THE
GREAT COURT OF JUSTICE
AT THE PALACE OF PEACE
THE HAGUE

Notes on Four Stained Glass Windows in the Great Court of Justice at the Palace of Peace, The Hague.

PECULIAR to every art medium there are subtleties of expressiveness and significance which are its very own. With the majority of people, interest in this plane of expressiveness, inherent as it is in the technical methods of the Art, grows out of a clear understanding of the subject matter dealt with.

Following the suggestion that an "Argument" might be found useful, these explanatory notes on the subject matter of the windows have been put together.

One subject, the Evolution of the Peace Ideal, is developed throughout the four windows; beginning with Primitive Man at the N.W. angle of the Court of Justice, and ending on the E. wall with the Achievement of Peace.

The treatment of the subject is based on belief in a World-Force greater than man, who indeed is but one of its instruments; a Force which, ever seeking to achieve expression, compels man to do, to produce, to realize. The gradual development of human intelligence under the continual pressure of this Force has resulted in the various stages of civilization, each inevitable: the Primitive Age when Force-expression reached only the level of self-preservation: the Age of Conquest when it overflowed in crude manifestations of Power: and in the Present Era, where it takes the form of a struggle for Industrial supremacy. Each stage in the development has produced its constructive spirits—poets, seers, prophets—who, voicing their vision of a further stage of development, have prepared the way for its realisation. The present age has produced a consciousness that war, as a mode of settling disputes between nations whose spheres of action interfere with one another, is monstrous folly: and that the Great Force must ultimately de-

mand the cessation of War in order that its fullest expression may be achieved.

Before proceeding to deal with the windows individually, one technical point may be referred to. The proper lighting of the Court of Justice required that the stained glass should be as white in key as possible. This necessity has been turned to use in relation to the significance of the windows, by adopting white as a symbol of Peace; each period, expressed in colour-schemes that vary with the mood of the periods, is seen against, and judged in relation to a background of White.

Window B

THE PRIMITIVE AGE

Panel I. contains the figure of Mother Earth; a rock-like mass set against the First Dawn. In the foreground is the Hunter.

Panel II. contains the Keeper of Sheep, marking the huge intellectual stride made by the man who first realised that in order to live it was not necessary to kill.

Hunter and the Shepherd are placed here also as prototypes of the Warrior and the Pacifist of later developments.

Panel III. represents the Tiller of the ground, and the Harvesters of the Fruits of the Earth. The mid-distance of Panels II. and III. forms one composition, illustrating the Return of Foragers to the cave-dwelling, and the Discovery of Fire. The landscape behind contains an indication of the early Cultivation of naturally terraced hillslopes.

Panel IV. introduces Metal-working, one of primitive man's most significant achievements. Migratory Movements, resulting in strife and slaughter, are indicated in the mid-distance.

The little ship at the base of Panel II. symbolises the spirit of adventurous wandering. The representation of a bird fashioning its nest in the corresponding position in Panel III. typifies the House-builder. The Signs of the Zodiac at the top of the main panels throughout, link man's progress on the earth to the larger progression—the passage of the earth onwards through space.

The upper lights in each window contain representations of the mental outlook of the Age dealt with in the panels below:—In this window, the Terror and Worship of natural phenomena, wind and rain, sun, thunder, frost: which typify also the Cycle of the Seasons,—spring, summer, autumn and winter: and of Life,—breath of life, noon-tide of strength, the stroke of fate, death.

Window B

THE AGE OF CONQUEST

Panel I. contains the Conqueror, the supreme expression of energy of his time.

Bloodthirst and Greed occupy the lower part of the composition.

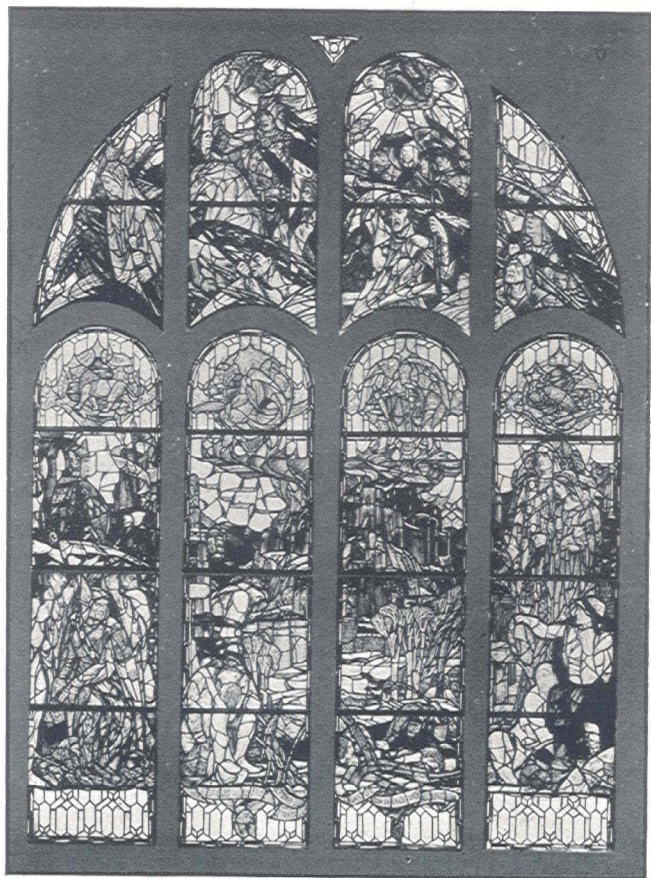
Panels II. and III. form one composition. The low walls, thrown up by primitive hillside workers for protection against the assault of the invader, have risen higher and higher until they have resulted in the fortified city—here under the cloud of Doom. Wintry death lies on the land; the plough is broken; Industry, Peace, and Love are in bonds; and the conquered are compelled, under the lash, to draw onward the battering ram which is to destroy the products of their labour.

Panel IV. Amid the briar-tangled wreck of broken architecture, broken loom and bell, and the silence of desolation, the Construc-

A



Non galeae, non ensis erant: sine militis usu
Mollia securae peragebant otia gentes.



Tu potes unanimos armare in proelia fratres
 Atque odiis versare domos, tu verbera tectis
 Funereasque inferre faces, tibi nomina mille
 Mille

C



Sensim vis efficit ipsa
Vivida naturae ut cessent fera moenera Martis.

D



Redeunt Saturnia regna.

tive Spirit become Prophet by his vision of Justice and Peace, rouses men to a new Hope:—to the Ideal of Peace.

In the upper panels, Bellona and her hordes, preceded by Hunger and Death, redden the heavens.

Window C

THE PRESENT AGE

Carrying on the development of Force-expression, this window represents Vital Energy making for Peace in modern life. The Industrial Revolution has diverted man's energy into a new channel, where the aim is towards Construction, production. In pursuing this aim he begins to realise that war is an intolerable hindrance to the achievement of his object: it impedes the full expression of Force. He is gradually led thereby to view international disputes as matters to be dealt with and settled between representatives, and not by the meaningless massacre of whole races.

Panel I. may be entitled Construction: with various races united on one object.

Panel II. Control:—Finance and Labour, the brain and the body that determine whether or not there shall be war. Finance scrutinises

the globe; and with finger on the telegraph machine determines whether given movements shall be checked or forwarded. Bellona, still dangerously alive, is held enchained by Labour.

Panel III. Enlightenment:—Science rendering the outlook more comprehensive: deterring war on the one hand, by the very dreadfulness of the engines of destruction which it evolves; and on the other, increasing the humane desire to alleviate suffering, and to save life.

Panel IV. Observation:—Philosophy and the Arts as Peacemakers, by reason of the Beauty they reveal in modern life. The fountain of crystal, ivory, and silver, which they have fashioned, expresses this idea: the crystal figure of Peace rising against the dark rock and wall of an antiquated fortress.

In the upper panels the four quarters of the earth are seeking for mutual understanding and Peace with each other: influenced in their

several attitudes by the Spirit of Peace—in the furthest panel on the left—and the Spirit of Distrust, on the right.

Window D

PEACE ACHIEVED

This window represents Peace achieved: not as a consummation, but as the real beginning of man's higher development.

Thoughts of the Immensity, Order, and Harmony of the Universe, wherein is hidden the mystery of man's destiny, are suggested in the upper panels.

The upper portion of Panel II. contains a symbol of Arbitration:—the four quarters of the earth having come together; North and South holding the balance; East and West abiding by the verdict. The upper portion of Panel III., represents Bellona dying of sheer inanition in the arms of Peace.

Below, the Peoples of the Earth are seen passing from the Ruined Fortress (surmounted by the Phoenix) in Panel I., to the New City (over which rises the Hippogriff) in Panel IV.

Panel I. contains also figures of the Sword-breaker and of Plenty: Panel IV, the leaders of thought in State craft, Science, and Philosophy.

In the foreground of Panels II. and III., Destiny at the loom weaves on; the pattern of the tapestry under her hand ever becoming more and more White, ere the web passes on, into the lap of Time.