# SOME LIVERPOOL STREETS AND BUILDINGS IN 1921

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# Preface

It needs some little courage, not to say temerity, to put into more permanent form the efforts in journalism which comprise this little book. However, there have been so many requests that these impressions of Liverpool Streets, as they appeared to me from day to day, should be re-issued that the proprietors of the *Liverpool Daily Post and Mercury* have agreed to re-print my articles. To these I have added an introductory chapter on Character in Modern Architecture, which formed the subject of a more serious lecture delivered to the Liverpool Architectural Society last November.

I am very anxious, however, that it should be clearly understood that this short survey of some of our principal streets and districts, with a view to determining their character and that of their chief buildings, does not pretend, in any way, to be an exhaustive view of the architectural achievements of Liverpool at the present time. One has only to remember that neither the New Cathedral, nor any of Liverpool's fine churches, old and new, are mentioned to see that a whole aspect of the town's architectural effort has been omitted. There are churches like the new one designed by Mr. G. Gilbert Scott at West Derby, and of that of St. Agnes', by the late J. L. Pearson, in Ullet Road, both inspired by the enthusiasm of Mr. Douglas Horsfall, and built out of his generosity; there is the Catholic Church of St. Clare in Arundel Avenue, Sefton Park, designed by Leonard Stokes, and many more which count among the finest modern ecclesiastical buildings in the land. Even on the side of Civil Architecture I have missed by the selection of streets dealt with some of the best commercial

buildings, such as the Cotton Exchange and the Adelphi Hotel, both of which, in their way, have set a new standard, not only of external design but of general elegance, and the dignity which comes from a good architectural plan. There are, too, the great cotton warehouses in Bootle, and the very expressive small granite buildings which adorn the older docks. Indeed, the list of omissions might be indefinitely extended. What is included must stand, therefore, for what it is worth, as the personal view of how portions of Liverpool appeared to one architect in 1921.

C. H. REILLY.

# Contents

# Introduction

## CHARACTER IN MODERN ARCHITECTURE

The main sources of character in architecture would appear to be the same as in the individual human being. They may be divided in both cases into the categories—racial, individual and acquired. To these some would add the dictates of fashion. Architecture, or the best architecture, however, suffers less from the vagaries of this tyrant than do the other arts. The man who will design a permanent structure and trick it out with fashionable detail, not to answer any need for expression, but because he has seen some such detail in the building papers, is not a serious artist. He is a *poseur* as much as the man who has a special cut to his clothes in the hope that thereby he may be thought to be a person of some distinction. It is not the work of such men that we would wish to consider. That there is a great deal of it to be seen no one will deny. Every competition reveals it, our streets overflow with it, yet, nevertheless, we know that in the long run it is negligible.

Let us take, then, the main ingredients in order and consider first the racial contribution. All through the history of past architecture building forms have been among the most distinctive national products, and the older the buildings, the more distinctive do their forms appear to us. As intercourse between nations has increased, shapes, and the ideas they embody, have been gradually assimilated until they have taken on the tones of the native architecture, and in the end have

become inseparable from it. It was in this way that the architecture of the Italian Renaissance permeated French and English work. In all the earlier importations no doubt the French or English architect thought he was building something entirely Italian in the new and fashionable manner, but local tradition was always in the end too strong for the innovator. The result was a French or English variant of an Italian theme. Take even an extreme case like the Earl of Burlington's villa at Chiswick. This was indeed supposed, at the time of erection, to be a copy of Palladio's similar villa at Vicenza. We now realise how anglicised a version it is. Inigo Jones's Banqueting Hall, although it marked a departure in England almost as bold as Brunelleschi's Pazzi Chapel in Florence, is a very different building from one which Palladio himself would have erected in Whitehall. Even the imported Italian architects, when it came to whole buildings and not merely monuments, were at once under the same sway of local feeling and methods. Leoni's Italian front to Lyme Hall, Cheshire, is not so very different from the many other so-called Palladian buildings erected by Englishmen at the beginning of the eighteenth century. But this power of absorption, whether based on national conservatism or sheer ignorance (sometimes its equivalent), is less powerful to-day, and on the whole I think we would have it so. Where the practical conditions are similar a good modern building might now be almost equally at home in any European capital, with, perhaps, the single exception of Paris. Paris is more distinctively national in her new architecture than any other capital city. All nations, however, feel her influence, and especially those across the Southern Atlantic. Through her highly organised and centralised Ecole des Beaux-Arts she still wields an immense power, but against her a new competitor has arisen. America is the new power in world architecture, and she is a power which

makes for cosmopolitanism. Just as she herself is the product of many races so is her architecture. Her great designing groups, like the firm of McKim, Mead and White, draw their inspiration from all classical and post-classical sources. They are Roman when they want to express power, as in their great railway stations; Greek when they want to express refinement, as in their art galleries and museums; Italian or Georgian when they want to express the domestic comforts or virtues. The great American architects are the heirs of the Old World, and well are they using their heritage. Further, the wealth and potentialities of their country mean that their architects have had to tackle and solve such problems as the high building and the giant hotel before those of other nations. We shall all come to such things, but they have reached them first. The result is that in such matters they have already largely settled the type and character. The influence, therefore, of America, as her work is more and more known, is likely to make for a decrease in nationalism. Through her example we too shall become heirs to the world's architecture, unless, indeed, the rank growth of nationalism, which is one of the unfortunate effects of the Great War, reinvades the domain of art and each nation is thrown back again on its primitive forms. On the other hand there is this danger in this new cosmopolitanism, which even so good a building as the Cunard Building, Liverpool, exhibits, that we shall have in one and the same building a mixture of conflicting detail. French, Italian and Greek may be found together imperfectly fused. That may be the necessary concomitant of any transitional period. It is one, however, which greater knowledge should gradually overcome.

Let us look at the matter from another angle. The history of the architecture of any nation since the Renaissance may be considered to be a gradual absorption of foreign elements. Our own Renaissance architecture,

since the immature early period, has been ably divided into the following divisions by Professor Richardson; the first Palladian period, including the rough Palladianism of Wren and Inigo Jones, the second Palladian period when Palladio's ideas were more completely absorbed, the Roman Palladian period when men like Adam went behind Palladio to Roman sources, the Græco-Roman phase when Greek detail was gradually brought in, the pure Greek phase, and finally the Neo-Grec and Italian phase, when for a time our architects, like Charles Barry and Cockerell, proved themselves worthy inheritors of the complete classical and post-classical past. This evolution, if looked at as a whole, amounts to clarifying the stream and getting back to its true sources. French architecture went through a similar evolution. What I take to be happening now in America, and what I hope will happen to us too is that this same process of absorption and clarification will be applied to all modern classical architecture, and that as a result a new international architecture will arise in every country. In our hearts, even if we have a little natural jealousy, we see no incongruity in the great American building which is in the course of erection at the present moment at the bottom of Kingsway, London. Most of us really welcome it as a building which will influence our own work for good. It is interesting to recall how we have, in our time and in Liverpool, seen this process of absorption and clarification carried out. In the last twenty years we have recapitulated, as it were, the history of the last two hundred. Twenty years ago most people were doing the kind of work with which Sir T. G. Jackson and Sir Aston Webb won their spurs; that is, small scale Early Renaissance work in which the Orders, if used at all, were used as ornaments to structures essentially Gothic in spirit. That corresponded to the Elizabethan and Jacobean stage. One example in Liverpool, not more than twenty years' old, is the façade

to St. John's Market. Then in natural sequence followed the Wren stage of fat unfluted columns and somewhat heavy detail. The Dock Board Offices and Technical School, Liverpool, are examples of this. Then followed the Neo-Grec movement, which was pushed by certain of our schools of architecture with the quite definite intention of purifying detail and adding elegance to design. Of this stage the West African Bank, Liverpool, and the interior of the Cunard Building are conspicuous examples. The difference in refinement and strength from the buildings of the preceding stage is obvious to anyone, and yet the buildings are by the same architects; for instance, the Dock Board Building and the West African Bank, the University Club and the Cunard Building. The exterior of the latter indicates the next and present stage, when to complete classical proportions and scale are added contributions from the Italian and French Renaissance. Gradually, then, in Liverpool, as in America, the best architects have again re-conquered the whole field, just as Barry and Cockerell had, for another generation. They have done for Liverpool what America has done for the world. The great post-classical styles are now consciously used according to the programme set for the definite expression each can convey. As nothing in art stands still, let us hope that the same high standards will be applied to all future buildings whatever their use, and that we shall have no more harking back to imitations of those past periods when knowledge was not so complete as it is to-day, or if it has to be done at the whim of some client, let it be done as Professor Adshead has suggested, consciously, as a definitely planned anachronism complete in all its parts. If we have to put up an Elizabethan building it should be done thoroughly as a conscious exercise in a past style.

Let us now turn to the element of individuality in modern architecture. This is a much more difficult

and debatable point. During the last fifty years I should say we have suffered from an excess of individuality. We have had too many secessionists. Certainly we have in domestic work, and their influence has been unsettling. It is a great relief to me to see in the numberless housing schemes of the present time that the influence of soberer men like Ernest Newton and Adshead is, on the whole, prevailing. The work shows a return to tradition, instead of a violent break from it. But after all architecture is effected from the top, not from the bottom, and the trend is determined by monumental buildings, not by cottages. Can an ordinary man working in the modern universal monumental manner already mentioned show the individuality, say, of the late Mr. E. A. Rickards? Rather, is it right that he should? I should a little hesitatingly say no. If he does express his own individuality to that extent, so far, however great an artist he may be, he is not in the main stream; he is not advancing the architecture of his age. I realise this will seem a hard saying, and it certainly requires some justification. No one was a greater admirer of Rickards's work than myself; no one had better opportunities of knowing how strictly in his case the work was the man. At his death a famous critic said, "What a pity that Rickards, with his special gifts of rhetorical architecture, was never commissioned to build a theatre or a picture palace, but had to be content with town halls and churches." To this an architect friend replied that that made no difference; he never built anything but picture palaces—and there was a great deal of truth in the answer. Whether it was the Wesleyan Hall at Westminster or the Town Hall at Cardiff, Colnaghi's Gallery in Bond Street or the Third Church of Christ Scientist in Half Moon Street, we have the same Baroque detail, the same extravagant, yet vital, Baroque spirit. It is not so much that these buildings do not express their varied purposes—that

they sin against Mr. Ruskin's dark lantern of truth. That is, to my mind, a comparatively small matter. The great Jesuit Churches of the Baroque period in France and Italy would to-day make marvellous cinemas, and are thereby none the less fine works of art. The point is that these buildings of Rickards's are so entirely personal to the man himself. They can have no real successors. We may have, and we probably shall have, a few feeble imitations, but Rickards's art was a personal art, and died with him.

The great buildings of the world have always belonged less to the individual architect and more to the age in which they have been built. In the same way the architect of to-day must be willing to sink himself in a greater whole; to lose his soul to find it. This is the history of all the great periods. We talk of Ictinus and Brunelleschi, of Inigo Jones and Mansart, but we think of the whole phase of buildings for which these men stood. Liverpool, perhaps, offers one of the best or worst examples in the world of excessive individualism in architecture. I refer to the group of the three big buildings at the Pier Head. No one looking at them as a group, whatever their respective merits or demerits, can fail to realise their gigantic disharmony; a disharmony in the main brought about by the excessive individualism of their designers. Although these buildings were all built within the last fifteen years, and all for similar purposes, the architect of each was practising at the time in a different phase of the post-classical tradition, though I am not quite sure whether even that phrase can be stretched to cover the Royal Liver Building. Let us take this building first and try to analyse its character as it appears to the ordinary man. For the architect, of course, it is a mass of incongruities, but to the man in the street it is rather a romantic pile. A mass of grey granite to the cornice, it rears into the sky two quite unnecessary towers, which

can symbolise nothing but the power of advertisement. It is only your hard-headed business man who can waste money in this light-hearted way. It appears that if you promise him a clock that is bigger than any in the world he will build, not one, but a couple of unnecessary towers in which to house it. Yet this building, towers and all, with its coarse and commonplace detail, has a certain brute force combined with its romantic character. In place of elegance and refinement it offers to the world a bold sentimentality not unlike some north country types of people. It seems to say, "I am a great awkward sentimental creature unused to civilisation, but I have strength, and whether you laugh at me or not I shall get what I want."

The Dock Board building at the opposite end of the group is of an entirely different kind. Its great and finely outlined dome, with four subsidiary domes, follows closely the composition of the Belfast City Hall, which preceded it by a few years. Its character, by the association of ideas which a central dome calls up, is civic rather than commercial. The detail of the building, with its numbers of large unfluted columns, seems to emphasise this. Such a building should, of course, have had a central site. A great dome raised on a drum should always mark a focal point in the city's plan, and should be reserved for its most important building. In America such a dome connotes the City Hall or Parliament House. In the Old World, except for Belfast, it has generally been reserved for a great cathedral. Here, therefore, we have a totally different character to that of the Liver building.

In the central building, the Cunard Block, we have a character differing from both, though, like the two others, it is a commercial building, designed in the main to house the offices of a single big company. Here, however, we have a sober solid block, simple in outline, which, on closer inspection, reveals a great amount of

fine detail, varying a little, perhaps, between Italian and French, but expressive and sincere enough. The whole gives the impression of an Italian Palazzo well suited by historical association to a city block. If one may venture on the comparison, the Liver Building is as obviously plebeian as the Cunard is patrician, even if a little doubtful of its descent, whereas the Dock Board, because it appears to use clothes which belong by tradition to another walk in life, one might, perhaps, without offence, call *nouveau riche*. However, the point I wish to emphasise is not the character of any one building but the diverse character of all three, and the way the town as a whole suffers by it. Obviously, if there had been any great restraining tradition, as in the culminating periods of architecture, no such diversity would have come about. It may be replied that the three unequal sites helped to bring about the three unequal buildings—to which I should answer that if we had been under the thraldom of a really vital tradition, the unsymmetrical division of the sites would not have been possible any more than the individualistic character of the resultant buildings.

This brings me to my last and final point. In the absence of tradition how, for the general good, are we to restrain the individualism from which we are suffering ? Abolish it we cannot, and would not. If we did, the architect would cease to be an artist and become a machine hack. The answer, I think, must be the answer a parent or schoolmaster would give with regard to the character of a child. It is comprehended in the one word, " training." It is the boast of our public schools that whatever sins of omission they may commit in education they do at least train character. They do it, too, by placing the boy in certain obvious predicaments, such as membership of a team, or being prefect of a house where a definite standard of conduct has been laid down. Now in the complicated and self-conscious

art of modern architecture, it is only by a knowledge of the precedents established by past forms for certain predicaments that the ordinary architect can hope to give the right character to his buildings. It is a knowledge hard to obtain in these days of eclecticism, where so many possibilities are open to him. One cannot any longer be content with blindly following the work of one's contemporaries, as in the ages of tradition or faith, for that in itself now derives from all sources, and is as varied and heterogeneous as the colours of the kaleidoscope, without, too, the remarkable faculty the pieces of glass in that instrument have of falling into a definite pattern. If you shake the kaleidoscope of modern architectural forms you are at present, as likely as not, to get a group of buildings like the group I have described at the Pier Head, Liverpool. In the days of faith things were, of course, different. Tradition made the various pieces come together. One forgets how recent those days were. Think of Rodney Street, Liverpool, or Regent Street, London; of the London squares or the Liverpool ones. But in architecture, as in other spheres, faith to-day must largely be replaced by knowledge. Knowledge cannot give the same sublime confidence, but it does prevent blunders. It provides in architecture an alphabet and language of immense range and pliability ready for use. It is a language rather like Chinese, in which a separate symbol stands for each word or phrase, which is consequently rather difficult to learn. The complete range of it in modern times has only been mastered by a very few, for it is a language, too, which is always growing. The group of artists, numbering by now several hundred, counting their assistants and pupils, known as McKim, Mead and White, of New York, are amongst these few, as the great monograph of their work, recently published, shows. They not only know the complete language, but themselves have added many

phrases to it, such as the Boston Library, which, ever since its erection, has helped to form the true library character, just as the Opera House at Paris has formed the true opera house character. Perhaps modern conditions of architecture will tend towards the establishment of similar groups in England, as that of McKim, Mead and White, whose work goes on with equal success, although McKim and White are long since dead, and Mead is now an old man. Schools of architecture certainly will; if so, it will be a reversion to the ways in which the great cathedrals were built. In those days the architect, as a separate personality, had hardly emerged. In the future his personality may again be merged in that of the group, though he will now have to know a great deal more. While he may lose something as an individual, not only the world but he himself will gain a great deal. For the world the gain may be that the violent contrast and clash of the modern city may, in time, disappear. For the architect, instead of shutting himself up in his own office, jealously guarding his ideas from his colleagues until executed, he will have the stimulus and criticism of a number of his equals. Of course, occasionally the brilliant personal note, like that struck by the late E. A. Rickards, will be sounded. But on the whole I think the complexity of the business side of modern practice alone will tend to amalgamations among architects of similar knowledge and tastes, and these amalgamations will of themselves lead to a higher technical accomplishment, just as they have already done in America. In the days of ignorance, which in architecture followed the days of faith, it required little courage to be an individualist. Fools rushed in and built foolish buildings. In the days of knowledge, which are to come, the individual will not be so anxious to exploit his own personality. Having the standards of all the past to go by, his first thought will be not to fall behind those

standards. This, alone, is a sufficiently difficult task to make him feel the need of colleagues for help and criticism. It is a far happier and a more profitable state for most men to know that they are part of a great movement than to be isolated prophets crying in the wilderness, and using a language which no one understands.

# BOLD STREET

What is it that makes Bold Street the pleasantest street in Liverpool? Why, in most moods, would one sooner walk there than anywhere else? Why, in order to get, say, from the Adelphi or the University Club to St. Luke's Church, does one instinctively avoid the direct route of Renshaw Street, and go round by the Central Station? I think it is that the one street is in essence vulgar and noisy, and the other civilised and intimate. Moreover, most sane people would do their best at any time to escape the sight of that terra-cotta gim-crackery—known as the Central Hall—surely the strangest monument ever erected to a really good man.

But to return to Bold Street; it commences well as one goes up the hill. The Lyceum Club on the left hand, Greek yet gracious, is followed closely by the Palatine, Italian, reserved, and rather noble. These give one at once the air of Bath in the fifties, an air of crinolines and cravats. It is the right air, too, for promenading, and even suggests the right pace. But more than the positive value of these two good buildings in setting the note of the street is the absence of the worst kind of traffic and its accompanying noise. Few streets are big and strong enough either to absorb or rise superior to that rushing house on wheels—the modern tramcar. Bold Street would be destroyed by much less, as Bond Street has been by its motor omnibuses. You can still cross Bold Street at any time, in any place, with moderate safety. Indeed, to taste its quality one should be constantly crossing, for the street is a bazaar or borough high-street, where the display of goods tempts one from side to side. Because of its intimate

bazaar-like character one regrets that so soon one comes, on the left-hand side, upon a great store, with plate-glass windows running through two storeys. The windows seem out of scale with the street. There is a rococo front, too, with glazed tile interior on the opposite side, lower down, which also transgresses the character of the street, bringing to it the very air and manners of Church Street. These things seem a pity, but for some reason one does not resent in the same way the great height of Messrs. Cripps' shop front. The scheme in black and gold has a certain dignity and reserve. Messrs. Woollright's, with its curved sheets of plate glass, is not so happy, though a strongly modelled façia board above the shop windows, in red and gold, surmounted by a golden eagle, tries its best to hold in check its too expansive embrace.

Nearly all this part of the street above the shops, with the exception of the fine stone façades of the two clubs, is in plaster. It is a very appropriate material, especially if the owners of the shops would combine to repaint it every spring, as was the good custom in Regent Street some twenty years ago, before the little milliners in the upper rooms were imprisoned in Norman Shaw's massive, and totally unnecessary stonework. Bold Street should be bright and clean above the shop fronts, as well as at the ground level. The silks and velvets would look all the better for it.

Perhaps Messrs. Bacon's premises, which we soon come to on the right as we wander across the street, form the finest individual block. The scale is big, yet not too big; the lines are simple, yet not too severe, while the whole building has the advantage of a good return flank to a cross street. I am told this building was once the old concert hall of Liverpool, and that sedan chairs were unloaded at the portico in the rear. It has a magnificent row of windows on the first floor, very suggestive now of a great hall of fashion in the

interior. A finely modelled frieze and cornice crown the block, and the whole, being in plaster, can be refurbished when the Liverpool soot begins to lie too thickly. But why have the occupiers painted the ground storey green? Green paint, with its suggestion of garden-suburb artiness, is surely out of character, not only with the street, but with the elegance of Messrs. Bacon's own wares.*

On the opposite side one can see that Messrs. Litherland are occupying premises which have been partially rebuilt. One so rarely looks above the shop level in these hurrying days, but if the air of Bold Street is taken aright, one will notice that the new portion of Messrs. Litherland's shop is a fine and rather monumental composition (unfortunately in stone already very dark) culminating, appropriately enough, in a couple of large faience vases. Further up, on the same side, one comes to the Yamen Café front, with its row of large well-proportioned first-floor windows, badly undermined, however, by a curving and recessed shop front. The next to catch one's attention are the premises of Messrs Morton's, the decorators. The façade here is in the form of a dignified composition of Greek columns and pilasters, to which the firm have added an excellent series of shop fronts, with a row of semi-circular fanlights over them. If these latter are not quite Greek in spirit, they suit very well the handsome English furniture so often to be seen in the windows.

But we have forgotten Lloyds Bank. I think rightly in such a street it only displaces the shops by an important door with a conspicuous head to it, though there is a good strong façade above. When shopping one does not want to be reminded too forcibly of

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* *Since this was written the green paint has given way to a more appropriate grey.*

financial considerations. The Liverpool Savings Bank, higher up on the same side of the street, forces its rather dull dignity a little too strongly, I think, on one's notice. It seems to have lost its way, and to have strayed here from Castle Street. But we have gone too far, and are missing other good things. The shop front which is really more in the character of the street than perhaps any other is the late eighteenth century one of Messrs. Jeffrey's, the framemakers, half way up on the right hand side. Notice its pair of carved wooden columns, and its carved wooden frieze. The columns are Ionic, and the frieze Doric, but no matter; so much for the rules, the result is good. Near by, on the same side, is Messrs. Sissons' new café, with two granite columns now isolated, so as to give dignity to the entrance. The interior, too, has been recently redecorated in a manner worthy of the street and its best dressed habitués. Bold Street should welcome such a newcomer.

Crossing over again, there is the small but highly discreet shop front of Messrs. Clay and Abraham's, in red and gold, surmounted appropriately enough by a finely carved Royal Arms. This shop-front has just the right reserve for a chemist who really deals in medicines. With such an appearance alone, one could have absolute confidence that one's prescriptions would be correctly made up, and what more does one want? On the opposite side one has nearly missed the most interesting thing of all, and how easily does one do it. Above the combined shops of Messrs. Bartram Orchard and Frederick Ash is a delightful little composition full of the most delicate Greek detail, such as "Greek" Thompson used in Glasgow, and like his work there, too, all black with soot. If it had only been in plaster instead of stone, and painted annually, what a success it would have been. There is even a belvidere under the roof where the artists in hats and robes, who ought to live, or at

least to work, in Bold Street, might sit on a sunny day for the good of their health and the happiness of all.

But one has forgotten, in walking from side to side, the commanding feature of the street—the tower of St. Luke's Church. Who, returning at night from the make-believe of our theatres, has not appreciated its far greater theatricality ? With the right moonlight and the chimes of twelve, one can forget an everyday world. But in daytime, too, it has its use ; it adds a cathedral close-like atmosphere to the street. In its shadow one feels no shopkeeper will ever overcharge, or show you the second best for the best—a really valuable business asset. One wishes, however, that it would encourage some of them to rebuild the upper portions of their premises in a worthy manner, and remove, or cover up with plaster,* the dilapidated brick-work which disfigures so large a portion of the street. The shopkeepers of Bold Street should form a league, or club, to maintain and improve the character and standard of what might be, not only the pleasantest street in Liverpool, but one of the best in England. On gala days they should beflag it as New York does Fifth Avenue. Its narrowness lends itself to such treatment. Its slope, too, is at all times in its favour. You either walk towards St. Luke's tower, fine in mass and outline with its great flight of steps in front of it, if poor in detail (though one does not see that till close at hand), or you walk down the hill, with a not unromantic view of high buildings in the distance, while in the foreground you see before you the cars and carriages, and pretty ankles of our shopping citoyennes as they cross and re-cross the street. In either direction, it is pleasant enough picture on a sunny day.

**Since this was first published a few months ago a number of the old decayed brick fronts have been covered with plaster with excellent effect.*

# CHURCH STREET

Coming from Bold Street, Church Street starts in a very irregular way. There is a triangular space in front of you based on Bold Street and the Central Station. On your right is a row of rather insignificant but very varied buildings, while on your left towers up the large new Portland stone block over Messrs. Boots' premises, with the finer and equally tall brick block of Messrs. Crane's behind it. If you walk a little way down the street, and then look back you will see that the base of the triangle is a confused muddle of buildings. The Lyceum Club sets forward, while the Central Station sets back, Ranelagh Street slopes away to the left, and the very Mary Ann flank of the fine new premises of Messrs. Lewis's overshadows the whole. No doubt this will shortly be re-built to match the rest of the block, which has so much improved the Adelphi corner. I think the foresight of the city authorities in restricting private rights of ancient light, by which, in other towns in England, the height of buildings has been kept down, should be appreciated. It is solely due to this foresight, I believe, that the new scale set by buildings like the Adelphi Hotel, Messrs. Lewis's and Boots' premises has been able to be realised.

The building containing Messrs. Boots' shop is well worthy of study. It follows the American precedent for a high building, concentrating the interest at the top and the bottom, and leaving a plain surface between. Here, as often in the States, the rich top part is obtained by grouping two or more storeys under a colonnade—in this case a range of strong square piers. Unfortunately in this building the plain surface below has been largely

used, regardless of windows, for huge gilt lettering. Not content even with square letters, which do, at any rate, follow the vertical and horizontal lines of the building, the occupiers have written their names in handwriting across the centre of the façade. It is as if some giant out of a children's story book had been playing with the toy efforts of mortals, and had scribbled his absurd nickname across the front.

Next to this building, but of so different a size that it is almost ludicrous beside it, is a new branch of the Bank of Liverpool. It is a picturesquely designed building, but, with its domestic detail, suggests a country town rather than the metropolitan manner with which we like to think Liverpool carries herself. Following this, on the same left-hand side, comes jutting out some twenty feet of blank walling, showing that Mr. Brodie has on hand here one of his bold widening schemes, to which in after years Liverpool will owe a very great debt. I hope, however, whatever he does with the next two buildings, which, as architecture, do not deserve much consideration, Mr. Brodie, and the owners between them, will save the façade of the Athenæum Reading-room, either by rebuilding it, stone by stone, on the new street line or by re-erecting it somewhere else. The Athenæum front, by Thomas Harrison, is really one of the treasures of Liverpool. There is no more elegant piece of design in the town. Notice the beautiful central window on the first floor, and the row of five balconies at this level. I wish, however, the owners had thought less of the pleasure of looking at the traffic from the ground-floor windows than of the scale of their fine façade. At some time or other they must have removed the sash bars and substituted the present great panes of glass, making these windows thereby large blank holes in a front where all else is delicate and refined. On the opposite side, up to Parker Street, there is not very much to which to call

attention, except a charming shop-front in bronze, belonging to Messrs. Barker and Dobson's sweet store.

On the far side of Parker Street we have a long straggling block, embracing five shops, in terra cotta and brick, very much ornamented and very irregular in its outline, the sort of erection a child would make with a box of German bricks. It has four turrets and four gables of varying height. These are stretched out too, round one of those convex curves which the tramcar has introduced. Sheep walks adjusted for tramcars are about as far as town planning has gone in English towns, except for a few squares and circuses left to us by the eighteenth century. In strong contrast to this nondescript building, we have recently had unveiled for us the direct, simple, and strong Portland stone front of the Bon Marché. There is no great delicacy about it, and the motifs of its decoration come indifferently from modern France and ancient Egypt. Nevertheless, one is glad to see great firms, and their architect, realising the value of simplicity and restraint, together with squareness of outline. The same architect is obviously responsible for the still better new building of Messrs. Henderson's, a little lower down on the same side. While keeping to the same standard of directness and suitability to the purposes of a great store, Mr. Fraser has, in this building, taken more pains with his window divisions. It is worth while remarking that both these fronts have been executed while the ordinary business of the shops has been carried on, and in one case, I believe, a deep basement has been formed at the same time—no small feat of engineering. Both buildings, nevertheless, have the common failing of appearing to stand on sheets of plate-glass, a failing which, too, is emphasized by placing a canted sheet under the strong stone corner piers. Messrs. Cooper and Co.'s new building on the opposite side must also be by the same

hand, though in this case he has used local stone instead of Portland, and it is already quickly darkening.

But we must return on our tracks. Mr. Fraser's activities have made us miss two interesting buildings of very different types. One is Russell's romantic Gothic structure at the corner of St. Peter's Churchyard, and the other the finely-balanced composition of Compton Hotel and House. This latter is a good example of the value of a strong composition. The detail throughout is sufficiently ordinary, yet the well-shaped towers at the corners, making a triangular composition with the large central entrance, the high roof, and the general mass of the building, would make this block, if it were white instead of black, one of the most noticeable in the town. It is finely placed, too, facing St. Peter's Churchyard, though that, unfortunately, is probably a vanishing advantage. Beyond it are buildings again of varying height, and of no great interest, and even if they were of interest the mass of lettering in a variety of colours would destroy them. Beyond Messrs. Henderson's, however, is a quiet little picturesque Dutch building, which the excitements of Messrs. Salmon and Gluckstein's shop below might lead one to overlook. It is an interesting and well-composed little front, with a single gable, though too domestic in character for the street.

Lastly, we come to the famous toy shop at the corner, about the architecture of which the best thing one can say is that its twin Teutonic towers, with a showcase window between them running up into the second storey, somehow give it a very toy-shop air. If it were only painted vermillion and white, one would expect the roof to take off and the front to open with a hinge. The decorations of Christmas trees between the first-floor windows provide at Christmas-time a happy touch, and quite in the right toy-shop spirit.

Turning round for a final glance, one sees that Church Street, with its slight bend, its many towers and varying types of building, its old church jauntily placed at an angle to it, its glimpse of green grass, is in essence picturesque and romantic. Lord Street, straight and wide with a slight upward slope, is sober and dignified in comparison. Church Street, therefore, should live up to its character. It should have bright kiosks for newspapers and advertisements; it should encourage the old gentlemen who sell balloons and other cheerful absurdities; and it should hang out flags on the slightest opportunity. But more important still, it should shed its sombre clothes and change to Portland stone, as the Bon Marché has done.

# LORD STREET

Lord Street, while maintaining a higher level of uniformity and even of respectability than Church Street in its architecture and general appearance, is, on the whole, not so interesting. It has few good modern buildings, and its old plaster ones have either been cut into to increase the height and importance of the modern shop fronts, and so have lost their proportions, or the plaster work has not been painted for years. Now, plaster is a material whose old age is not beautiful. It requires to be continually concealed by re-paintings; but when this is done it has many advantages over brick and stone in a smoky town like ours. As you walk towards the river most of the buildings on the left-hand side are plastered, while most of those on the right-hand side are in stone. Now, the right-hand side is generally supposed to be the more popular, and, consequently, the more valuable; but, apart from the shops, it is really rather black and dreary. I suggest to the shopkeepers on the left-hand side that they have only to re-paint their plaster fronts and add a few more looking-glasses to their shop windows, and the crowds who parade on the other side will soon cross over.

The most noticeable building, as we start walking up the street, is that occupied by the Don Clothing Association at the corner of Paradise Street. It is a building in which curves predominate. There are semi-circular arches to the first-floor windows, semi-circular balconies to each of the windows above; there are a great number of semi-circular cornices running round the semi-circular corner, and the whole is surmounted by a semi-circular dome. From all this you

would expect, if you did not know the building, something joyous and baroque, such as delighted the builders of the Jesuit churches in Italy. Instead, we have a distinctly English product, very prim and pincushiony, though the intentions, at any rate, were good.

The next building, Stonier's, is interesting for an early solution of the problem of the big showcase window on the first floor above the shop. Here it is very well managed by grouping a number of windows together with slim piers between, and crowning them with a cornice and central pediment. A similar solution on a larger scale, very effectively used, is to be seen on the plaster front of Messrs. Frisby Dyke's premises. Contrast with this the modern shop-front of Messrs. Woodhouse and Sons, still further down on the same side. Here, frankly, the old building has been cut away for most of its height and two great storeys of plate-glass inserted, the original pilasters looking out rather sadly over the top, with about a quarter only of their length left. Nevertheless, this new shop-front, though it has killed the building it belongs to, is, in itself, a good and straightforward piece of work. It makes an admirable showcase for furniture, and in a street of the width of Lord Street a showcase of this size is not so out of scale as it would be in Bold Street.

There is one noticeable break in the plaster work of this side of the street—the Church House buildings at the corner of South John Street. Instead of Regency plaster we have here Victorian Gothic in its hottest and hardest red-brick and terra-cotta. How well do we know it on the heights of Brownlow Hill! In both places, too, it is accompanied with glazed and lavatory-like interiors. Can it be, when they erected their own building, the dignitaries of Church House were desirous of paying a subtle compliment to our own sanitary, though thoroughly unsectarian, University? If so, I much fear no one has appreciated their generosity till

now. On the other side of the street there is another large Gothic structure difficult to escape from. It is a big striped building in red brick and white stone in alternate layers. It is interesting for a moment to consider why this building seems so out of place among continuous street fronts. I think it is that its proportions conflict with its surroundings. The main arches, which are generally at the first-floor level, are here raised to the third; and the centre one, under which is the Lord Street Arcade, is very deeply recessed, which gives the building the appearance of being on two legs. Above the arches, however, is a well-detailed arcade, which might come from the triforium of a church. Such a change of style from its neighbours becomes, however, almost ludicrous when we find at the base a tea shop in Messrs. Lyons's peculiar version of Louis Quinze.

Further down the street there are some excellent shop windows if no great buildings, and noticeable among these is that of the Palatine Café. On the opposite side of the street there are one or two emblems over the shops which add interest, and suggest that such things might be in more general use. Every barber should boldly project his coloured pole, and no chemist should be allowed to open his shop unless he has provided himself with the traditional green and red bottles. But other trades might follow with their signs, and most streets—certainly Lord Street—would gain in attractiveness thereby. Therefore one welcomes such things as the boldly-modelled Phœnix rising from the flames above the shop of Messrs. Milner's, the safe makers; and even Mr. Frank Sugg's strings of footballs are worth something to the public, whatever they may be to him, if they make, as they do, for a little additional picturesqueness and gaiety. These forms of advertisement are infinitely preferable to indiscriminate lettering. St. George's Crescent, into which Lord Street emerges fairly symmetrically, is very badly

scribbled over with vertical letters and others sloping in every direction. No architecture could stand such treatment, least of all the quiet old plaster work of the beginning of last century. I am afraid its very gentility and quietness has in this respect been its ruin. It has formed too tempting a surface to the signwriter.

Lord Street ends with the Victoria Memorial. One meets it almost full blast; not quite, however, for strangely enough it is not quite central with Lord Street and St. George's Crescent any more than it is with Castle Street. It looks as if it had been gently pushed aside to make way for the tramcars. The dome, half on and half off its columns, adds to the illusion, as does Sir Oliver Lodge struggling with his young men to keep his precarious seat. It is a pity that so much fine modelling has been expended on such a poorly-placed and poorly-conceived whole. Even Lord Street deserves a better finish.

# CASTLE STREET

If Bold Street is our pleasantest street, Castle Street is certainly our noblest. It is of a fine width, with good broad pavements on either side, and its length is not too great. It is a great disadvantage, as one notices in America, for streets to go on endlessly. Castle Street is definitely closed and presided over at one end by the Town Hall and its dome. That this is not quite central with the street is unfortunate, but it is sufficiently so, and the building, with its bold portico, is sufficiently strong to make one feel that the street is a definite approach to the Hall. We have, therefore, somewhat the effect of a town *place* or square before the principal building, and it is a very pleasant one. At the other end the street closes with the crescent and a distant view of the finest dome in Liverpool, the strong and massive crowning feature of the Customs House.

With such a setting the buildings should be simple, massive, and of height suited to the street, and one may say at once that this, on the whole, is the case. Fortunately too the main buildings are banks and insurance offices, the shops here being subsidiary to them. Generally, therefore, the façades are not disfigured with the large gilt lettering and other advertisements which retail traders so often think necessary. The majority of the buildings, too, are in stone—the only material suited to the dignity of the street. One would not welcome painted plaster here as one would in Bold Street. Even the resultant blackness of the buildings gives them a sombre strength, though one might suggest that the example of painting the window frames cream colour, as set by the Town

Hall, might, with advantage, be followed ; it would help to articulate the architecture. To see how wrong, tawdry, and out of character with the street a mixture of brick and terra-cotta is, one has only to contrast, when standing with one's back to the Town Hall, the buildings second and third from the top on the left-hand side with those immediately opposite.

Keeping one's back to the Hall, then, and walking slowly down the left-hand pavement, let us look in turn at the chief buildings on the opposite side. First there is the one at the corner in which, till recently, the ground floor was occupied by a silver-smith's shop. It is a most refined building, one of the best in the street. The detail, which is drawn from François Premier and Italian sources, is rich but concentrated, with plenty of plain stone-wall surface between to give it value. The arabesques on the window jambs, and the balconies on the Water Street front, are well worth study. The shop-fronts below, consisting of a series of small show-cases, and the reserved and reticent shop windows in Castle Street, admirably suggest a dealer in silver-plate and other valuable ware. Next, however, we have a very common-place building of no particular character, called the Edinburgh Life Buildings, which may well be contrasted with it. The next block of buildings, No. 14, of a later Italian type, has a much more definite character, and but for a very broken skyline and two rather obtrusive shops, is a real contribution to the street.

Then we come to Parr's Bank, by Norman Shaw. There is certainly no passing it by unnoticed. The colour scheme of the striped marble wall with red terra-cotta window dressings alone prevents that. But it is, nevertheless, a fine upstanding pile, with its two lower storeys in granite and a strong cornice. The passage of time, however, does not reconcile its strange materials to the street. They are too insistent, and, to be frank,

too coarse. The red terra-cotta dressings to the windows have alone involved this. You cannot get mouldings of the quality, say, of those of the Bank of England in such a material. In the businesslike reserve of this street, Mr. Shaw's building looks to me as some handsome but overdressed woman might who had strayed there by mistake, and the fact that her clothes are slightly soiled, as the marble facing already is, does not really add to her respectability.

The next block, containing two large shops with arched soffites, is a quiet and good enough building, entirely spoiled, however, by giant gilt letters across its front. Whatever we allow elsewhere, surely Castle Street might be protected from this. Then follow two banks on either side of Brunswick Street, both with corner turrets and a great quantity of small doll's house detail. One has only to glance over one's shoulder at the massive strong façade of the Bank of England, or at the Corinthian elegance of the Norwich Union building, to see how trifling these structures really are. But, hidden away in the entrance lobby of the left-hand one —the Lancashire and Yorkshire Bank—there are two bronze doors, full of finely-modelled little figures, by, I believe, Stirling Lee. What, however, the meaning of Rolands and Ollivers, knights and maidens, on a bank door may be I cannot tell, though certainly they go well enough with the doll's house architecture above.

The rest of the buildings on this right-hand side that we are looking at are not very interesting in themselves. Victoria Chambers have a wide, straggling front, with a high central gable and a large non-central door. The Scottish Life building is a good, quiet Italian front, and the Scottish Provident, next door, has a small, well-designed ground floor, but above it is the bay window of a suburban villa.* The street ends on that side with

**Since removed.*

a large nondescript block in an early Victorian French manner, if such a term can be used, massive and big rather than distinguished. St. George's Crescent, into which the street opens, is a simple plaster composition, which must have been pleasant enough when it was complete and before the Victoria Memorial descended so heavily upon it—surely, the most Victorian of any memorial. Let us turn our back upon it and walk up the other side.

The first structure which catches the eye is, unfortunately, a glass and gilded iron cage called Hellewell's Buildings, than which it is impossible to imagine anything less monumental or less worthy of the street. Next, and in contrast to it, is a quiet little building over Chadburn's shop, and then a big but rather dull block with great pilasters running up its face, No. 41 and 43, dignified enough to suit anyone. In it are to be found a pair of very handsome iron doors of excellent workmanship and design—the best doors in the street. Then across Cook Street we come at last to Cockerell's great work, the Bank of England. It is a building which alone would give character and quality to the street. Although not larger than its neighbours, it is bigger in scale—that is to say, bigger and stronger in its parts—than any building in Liverpool, save St. George's Hall, and like St. George's Hall it combines strength with refinement, as all good work should do. Architects know how original is its composition, particularly that of the façade to Cook Street ; but all must be struck with its nobility. Next door is the lady-like Norwich Union building, but except for that, and perhaps the carved brick building over Messrs. Mansfield's shop at the end of the street, there is nothing further of any great interest, though there is a good deal of flippant and less worthy work. Let us leave the street, then, at the Bank of England, where in its architecture the expression of financial strength and reserve reaches its highest point. Fortu-

nately, in spite of all the good buildings on the other side, it will be that side which will have to be re-built, if ever the street is again widened to bring the Town Hall into the centre of the vista. The Bank of England will be spared, and, like a great ship with her boats, she can carry all the less worthy buildings with her.

# WATER STREET

Water Street is more like a ravine than a street. It is a steep place running down to the sea, and the inhabitants of Liverpool, like the porcine ones of Gadara, use it in much the same way. They either bolt down to the ferries or plunge into the hole leading to the Mersey Railway, or pour up it to their offices. It is really too narrow for its traffic, particularly for the double line of tramcars. It is too narrow, also, for its buildings, and when these are raised to the new height set by those at its foot it will become a sort of sloping Wall Street. It is a pity, because some of its buildings are very interesting.

It starts at the bottom with two extremes, one, one of the best new buildings in the city, and the other one of the worst. Let us take the Tower Building, the bad one, first. One would think it would be impossible to achieve a more clumsily-detailed building than the Liver Building, yet the same architect has beaten his own record with the Tower Building. To do so, in addition to the same coarse classical detail as the Liver, though in this case with an incongruous admixture of equally bad Gothic, he has had resource to a veneer of white glazed ware. It is no longer white. It is black, but black in a sticky, streaky way. The granite of the Liver Building has taken its soot in a comparatively gentlemanly manner ; it has absorbed it into its texture like an honest working man. The glazed face of the Tower Building is dirty in a bedraggled way. A building so clothed is very much like a man with an indiarubber collar. It is a poor thing to wear anyhow, but the excuse for it has gone if it is never washed or only washed by the rain in certain parts.

It is extraordinary that such a building should come to be erected on such a fine site. I imagine buildings like this come about by a man who is really more of a financier than an architect, introducing the idea of them as a speculation to his clients, who, in turn, look at them purely as an investment, with little or no thought of the debt every man who builds in a city owes to his fellow-citizens. Everyone must have noticed that when a big firm like the West African Bank builds in the first place for its own occupation how much better the result generally is than when an anonymous owner or group of owners build as a mere speculation. Let us turn, then, and look at this building on the opposite side.

The West African Bank has all the good points the Tower Building lacks. It is strong and simple in outline, graceful and delicate in detail, and of a material —Portland stone—which is beautiful in itself, and which with time in our atmosphere takes on a fine pearly colour. It is a building which will well repay study. By the same architects as the Dock Offices, it shows the advance in scholarship which twenty years have brought. The architectural base of the building is particularly happy with its great Doric columns running through two storeys. Notice the interesting sarcophagus *motif* used in the space between them at the ground-floor level. Then the doorways, especially those at the corner of the street, are models of finely-moulded and enriched work. The only details which seem at all out of scale are the pendant wreaths at the sides of the columns. They are thick and heavy, as are the similar ones used by the same architects at the University. The upper portion of the block above this rich base is wisely left plain, and is then crowned with a finely-enriched and crested cornice, below which a row of windows is embedded as a frieze. The whole is a serious and valuable addition to the architecture of the town.

For the rest of the right-hand side of the street, going up the hill, there are a series of sober rectangular blocks of buildings, some in plaster and some in stone, but all suited in appearance to the firms of solid worth established there, like the buildings, at the beginning of the nineteenth century. Let us hope when they are rebuilt, as they will shortly be, that this chief quality of a town block will be maintained. Perhaps the best, though of a later date, is the Bank of Liverpool and Martins, towards the top. In detail it is more French, while the others have been Greek or Italian. It has an interesting circular corner to Fenwick Street. For some unexplained reason we love circular convex corners in England, but they are very difficult to treat architecturally. This one is set in between two projecting rectangular masses, and is not carried up to the full height of the building. Compare it with the bulbous corner of the India Buildings immediately opposite on the other side of Fenwick Street, and the advantage of the solution will at once be seen. Beyond this bank the street ends on this side with the Manchester and Liverpool District Bank, a quiet and effective Italian building in only two storeys. It gains by its quietness and its lowness in something of the same way that Mr. Morgan's bank in Wall Street scores over its adjacent sky-scrapers by its mock humility.

On the opposite side there is a series of brick buildings with stone dressings like Africa House, very dirty and depressing. Brick in such a street as this has the same poverty-stricken air that it has in Castle Street. After the empty site, where the old Cunard Building was, comes the oddest building in Liverpool—Oriel Chambers. It is a sort of honeycomb of numberless plate-glass oriel windows held together by a stonework skeleton frame designed to look like cast-iron. One feels sure it obeys in every detail Mr. Ruskin's lamp of truth—it is at once so logical and so disagreeable. But I hope it won't be

destroyed for many years to come. Its humour as a cellular habitation for the human insect is a distinct asset to its town. Colonial House follows. It is also by the Dock Board architects, but is not nearly as successful as the West African Bank. It is in a sort of romantic classic, which is not reposeful, and the great polished granite columns make too sudden a contrast to the sandstone front.

Looking up the street for a final glance, one sees a picturesque view of the projecting portico of the Town Hall and a glimpse of its dome, with the tower of the Royal Insurance Building in the background. But looking down the street one finds the right-hand side and, indeed, the whole street, is entirely over-weighted by the strange domes and towers of the Liver Building, which waits at the foot of the hill like some Brobdingnagian establishment for Turkish baths, into which, if one ever dared to enter, one feels certain one would never come out alive.

# DALE STREET

Dale Street, as its name would seem to imply, is a street of the lesser crimes. It possesses no such monstrosity as the Liver Building or the Tower Building, but it has plenty of strange things. Taken together they are rather amusing and picturesque; singly they show the height or depth to which our individualistic character has led us. But the street commences well at the Town Hall, and a fine strong block by the master who has done so much for Liverpool, the elder Cockerell. His building is the Liverpool and London and Globe Insurance office on the left-hand side and flanking the Town Hall. Without being such a dominating composition as his main front to the Bank of England, it is strong and powerful, and has the only originality worth the name in architecture, that which comes from the reflection of strong personality combined with great knowledge. There is no more original, and at the same time satisfying, public doorway in England than the main entrance in Dale Street. The building is held together by a strong row of columns on the top storey. Adding an additional storey to it, as is now the task of one of our leading firms of architects, is a difficult problem, the solution of which will be watched with interest. I hope it will be kept within the roof, which by a convention in England we have come to feel is not part of the building. To extend the stonework of the façades would be like adding a couple of feet to one of Augustus John's portraits, as difficult a task as cutting them off.

On the opposite side of the street is another insurance building of about the same date, called the

Queen. This is a long, straggling composition of Greek columns with coarse imitations of Greek detail. It is instructive to contrast Cockerell's closely-chiselled detail, such as his interlacing guilloche band of enrichment over the first-floor windows, with the loose detail of this building. The Queen Insurance Building itself is spoilt by having shops on the ground floor, especially by the white and vermilion sign of one which stands out garishly against the black mass of the whole block. From the Queen Insurance we pass to the State, and from black Victorian Greek to white, but wiry, Edwardian Gothic. Most people, I think, will find more dignity and satisfaction in the former. Further on the same side is the old plaster block in which the Angel Hotel is situated. One cannot help being sorry that this landmark is doomed, though the building itself has no particular interest beyond a good cast-iron balcony running its complete length immediately above the shops, and a rather charmingly-designed porch which gives it its old-world air. Under the balcony are pleasant little shops, the right size, I suggest, for shops in a street devoted to big business : one does not want vast emporia for a city man's needs.

Across North John Street the most prominent object in the whole street is the Royal Insurance block, rich and impressive at first sight. Afterwards one sees that it is rather like an overgrown child. It has the details of a small picturesque building raised to a large size. The general outline of the building is that of Norman Shaw's White Star Building, which in turn was suggested by the old German warehouses of the Hanseatic League. To this general shape has been added, on the Dale Street front, small corner turrets as if for defensive purposes. It is a strange conception, part of the lingering romantic sentiment of last century. The entrance is emphasised by the tower we all know so well with its gilded dome. It is not a good tower ;

the various stages do not combine into one whole, nor do the little columns seem an organic part of it. Still, the building, by its bulk and richness, and largely through its being built in Portland stone, and therefore generally white instead of black, is a very striking mass in view both up and down the street.

In strong contrast to it is the next building, by Sir James Picton, called The Temple. To what rites it is a temple one hesitates to think. Its mixture of coarse Roman and Low German detail do not suggest anything very pleasant. The tower however—nearly all buildings in Dale Street have towers—is well shaped and composed, better than that of the Royal, and is well set forward over the entrance. Sir James appears, from the beautiful reading-room named after him, to have been a better chairman of a building committee than architect on his own account. The Prudential Building follows in the usual Prudential Waterhouse manner—red, hard, and forbidding—and with the inevitable tower. Buckley Building is much the same, but is brightened in this case by the glazed front of the Kardomah Café, which is an instance of glazed ware which is occasionally washed. Then follow two dull blocks, and we arrive at the Conservative Club, which is a reminder that one has missed the very interesting Reform Club on the opposite side—the only really good building thereabouts on that side of the street.

It is amusing to contrast the two clubs. The Reform is a strong, severe building, as a club with such a name and tradition should be. It is built—and this is a great advantage—in specially made small bricks, which give it massiveness. The Conservative Club, on the other hand, is a florid, rather licentious building. The same contrast is to be found in the Reform and Carlton clubs in London, and if clothes betoken the man, there must be more in this than meets the eye. At any rate, the architects of the Conservative and

Carlton clubs have each gone to Sansovino's work at Venice for inspiration. Unfortunately, the scale of the Conservative Club is not sufficiently large to carry off the richness of its prototype with ease. The little fat, naked, male figures over the arches to the first-floor windows have had to be reduced from life-size, and in their rotundity and repetition suggest the shades of past members who have enjoyed the generous fare within. The building, however, has a couple of good corners, and a general mass and outline which is not unpleasing.

The Municipal Buildings are the chief pile on this side of the street and stand out boldly. They are composed on well-tried but satisfactory lines, and gain an impressiveness from a big order reaching to the ground. The detail, however, is very strange. The capital of each Corinthian column is varied, and the strong tower ends in a Gothic crocketted spire. The lower part of the tower is very fine; the spire is merely humorous. It has a wrought-iron balcony half-way down, like a skirt popped over the head (if that is ever done) and not allowed to settle into its proper place.

On the opposite side of the street there is only one noticeable building so far, and that is the old plaster one now occupied by the Manchester and County Bank. Its central feature is a couple of very finely modelled Greek Corinthian columns, with long elegant capitals forming a variant of those on the Lysicrates monument at Athens. But why has the bank done such an injustice to this building? It has recently put in a new stone ground storey in a style totally out of harmony with the graceful work above, and, worse still, has added a canted entrance which leaves the end pilasters standing on air. Everything is, no doubt, possible in these days of steel and to a bank, but even a bank should learn that everything is not desirable.

It is strange to note that opposite the Municipal Buildings are still to be seen some old brick residences

ot the early part of the nineteenth century, with shops built into them. Beyond, on the same side, is a large brick and stone block of nondescript detail called Prince's Buildings, and further down is Dale Street Police Court, more severe and demure than anything else in the street. There are, indeed, many buildings in Dale Street one would more readily connect with the results of the worship of Bacchus than this refined little structure where last night's inebriates are dealt with.

Opposite are some good Gothic blocks, but soon after the street, as a city street, ends. It becomes a curving tail of cocoa-rooms, public-houses, and shops confessedly devoted to artistic tailoring. It is all very irregular and rather mean, but if one persists one comes suddenly out upon a vista of one fine classical building after another, climbing a hill crowned by the inimitable St. George's Hall and the fine silhouette of the Wellington Column. This is, indeed, a view like to which few streets in Europe can lead.

# VICTORIA STREET

Victoria Street has to serve many diverse ends. It is at once the Fleet Street and Tooley Street of Liverpool, the home of our newspapers and our canned provisions—in short, the potted-meat centre for mind and body. But it is more than this. It is also our Whitehall and our Newgate Street, for it holds our Government buildings and our General Post Office. Further, it has two great railway goods stations. In these circumstances it will be obvious that it can possess no very definite character, though it may be, and is, sprightly and interesting.

It begins as one of a number of radiating streets debouching from an irregular open space at the end of the Haymarket. Between each of these streets is a bull-nosed corner, ugly on plan and difficult in elevation. These corners serve no useful purpose, that I can see, except to let the traffic cut round them to the danger of the pedestrian. If a vehicle waits at one it only provides a further projection. The reverse is the case in a concave corner or circus. This provides a recess for standing carriages, and offers a chance of good architecture. However, the London City and Midland Bank makes a good start with the left-hand bull-nose. It is a well composed building with a half-dome at the corner and interesting detail. But it is a thoroughly dirty building. It is built in faience made to represent stone, but failing badly owing to the way in which it retains its soot on its face in ugly patches. It is a pity a good design should be spoilt by so bad a material.

From this point until we come to the offices of the two chief newspapers, facing one another like waiting

heavy-weights, there are modern brick buildings on either side, but of no particular interest or character. On ground floors of these a number of the lesser papers have their offices. But what can be said of the "Post" and "Courier" buildings? We are precluded from saying anything, not obviously from any sense of decency to our paymasters, but because they themselves have hidden their blushing architecture under a veil of gilt letters. If we cannot discuss the buildings, let us discuss the veils. That of the "Post" is the more substantial, that of the "Courier" the more variegated. The "Post" uses a fount in which the letters are six feet high, correspondingly thick, and entirely oblivious of the windows behind them. The "Courier" letters are more graceful, but they are partly upper case and partly lower case—always a poor combination. Think of the poor architects drawing out their mouldings full size and spending thought and feeling on whether a fillet should be half or a quarter of an inch thick and then returning in a year or two to find it did not matter whether there were any mouldings at all. If large lettering is wanted on a building for commercial reasons, there is a very good example immediately following of how it may be used to enhance rather than spoil the architecture. It is on the return flank of the Midland Railway Goods Station in Crosshall Street. This is one of the best buildings in the town. Let us consider it for a moment.

The purposes for which a goods station exist are, I suppose, to receive, store, and forward merchandise. Great gateways, therefore, are essential, and high plain walls. There is obviously an opportunity here for dignity, and the Midland Railway has seized it. The main front, which is really the Crosshall one, has a slight concave curve which seems to suggest a readiness for reception. The cliff-like wall, in a good dark brick, is articulated with a row of fine round arched windows,

and is crowned with a strong stone cornice. Two great doorways, big enough to receive the most piled-up lorry, are placed symmetrically towards the ends of the façade, and are of good strong shape. The gilt letters referred to above run horizontally across the whole building, and form a sort of string course echoing the cornice and emphasising the length of the façade. It is altogether a very strong and pleasant piece of good building, proving again that architecture is not a matter of features but of proportion and expression.

Opposite this good building is another of a different type, which is equally successful. It is the Government Buildings, where one pays one's income-tax and is sued for one's debts. To such base purposes can high art be applied! It is a highly-finished block in Portland stone abutting on three streets. The cross streets here, Crosshall Street and Sir Thomas Street, are wide thoroughfares, which give a general air of spaciousness which the lowness, simplicity, and monumental quality of the building in question enhance. It is a great achievement that the highly-modelled finish of doors, windows, and cornices does not conflict with the main lines. There is enough plain surface to carry off the finery. The three great doorways to Victoria Street are particularly monumental and worthy of study. It shows the anonymity of good architecture in England that the name of the author of this fine building is so little known. With some difficulty I have discovered it is a certain John Williams, architect to the Commissioner of Works fifty years ago.

On the other side of the street is a chateau from the Loire in Portland stone, a great and picturesque pile. It goes in Liverpool under the name of the General Post Office. It has all the experimental architecture of the French Renaissance, columns which are not an organic part of the design, ornamental dormers climbing to the sky, which far outstrip the windows they contain;

lofty pavilion roofs, and figures perched all over the façades. When a renaissance chateau was built in the rolling plains of France in a fit of enthusiasm for new forms of expression such a building delights us ; translated into a Liverpool street, not for pleasant social intercourse, fêtes-champêtres, or stately minuets, but for sorting letters ; when, instead of gallants and ladies in stiff brocades and satins, we have our own humdrum selves on the humdrum business of stamp-licking, the thing becomes a little absurd. But absurdities, if on a bold enough scale, are sometimes to be welcomed ; and, on the whole, I am glad to see this brave waste of pre-war money rather than a strictly utilitarian building. If we cannot always have good buildings of our own period, as the income-tax one, let us go in occasionally for this splendid make-believe.

After the Post Office the street soon loses its directness. One side even is not parallel to the other. This end portion is, I presume, the heart of the provision trade. Let us congratulate the traders on their reserve. There are no gilt letters telling us the beauties of peach-fed Virginia hams. One or two names on enamelled plates of sheet iron nailed to the buildings are a little obtrusive, but on the whole the architecture is allowed to stand or fall on its merits. Some of it just stands like the building on the right-hand side where Messrs. Armour have their premises ; some of it, like the great block of offices over what was to be a Lancashire and Yorkshire goods station, falls rather badly. The Armour building has a good row of small granite columns on the ground storey, but has on the skyline a large curved pediment which springs from nothing and is crowned with a single remarkable garden vase.

The goods station building is a collection of all known *motifs*, and, like every indiscriminate collection, is a failure. It is a pity, for it is of great size, and, being on the sloping side of the street, is very prominent. To

mention a few of its *motifs*, it has a row of columns running through the second and third storeys, which is so widely spaced that at first you do not realise the columns have any connection with one another. Between them are bay windows. Above, on the roof, is a little circular Roman temple, like the Temple of Vesta, balancing a German gable. I say balancing, but you cannot really balance such incongruities; you can only collect them.

If you go on you get into Cook Street without knowing it, so indeterminately does the street end in this direction. If you look back, however, you see on a fine day a distant view of the dome of the Picton Reading-room and get a glimpse of the fine things with which it is surrounded. Such a reading-room, with such a library, is not a bad ending to Liverpool's street of adventure.

# RODNEY STREET

The doctors have taste, there is no doubt about it. They have chosen and made their own the one street in Liverpool in which we ordinary mortals would most like to live. Its character is at once definite and elegant. Though built mostly in the first decade of the nineteenth century, it retains the grace, charm, and reticence of the eighteenth. When we contrast it, say, with a street built fifty years later, like Prince's Avenue—to my mind one of the most tiresome streets in Liverpool—how are we to account for its extraordinary difference? Both streets appear to have been built in sections by an assortment of owners. There has been no great ground landlord to enforce continuity, as was so often the case in London. Yet the one street is as full of so-called architectural features as the other is free from them. Prince's Avenue has bay windows, porches, gables in different coloured bricks, galore. Rodney Street has none of these things. Instead it relies on the plainest brickwork, with simple symmetrical arrangements of windows, an occasional roof pediment to mark a centre, and small delicate detail to doors and balconies.

The fact is, Rodney Street was the result of a school of architecture, while Prince's Avenue, in spite of its name, was nothing more than the reflection of mid-century middle-class taste. The school of architecture which produced Rodney Street had by then disappeared under the stress of the Gothic revival. By school of architecture I do not mean a school in the sense in which we have one now in Liverpool, but a school of thought, though it is to re-establish such that our present School of Architecture exists. If to-day some beneficent specu-

lator would give to the University architectural students an opportunity to design a whole street, giving each house, or each block of houses, to a different student, I think the result would be, though not naturally another Rodney Street, a street of similar unity of character.

It is interesting to see with what economy of means the Rodney Street result has been achieved. Of what do the fronts consist ? A mere hole-in-the-wall elevation of the common brickwork of the period. Cornices the majority of houses have none, merely a slightly projecting stone course. The balconies we so much admire were stock patterns, ordered by the dozen. So probably were the doors and fanlights ; alas, too few of the latter are left. In what, then, does the charm lie ? It is in the proportions, and that can best be understood, I think, by the simile of a well-cut suit. The cut is just right and the detail, what there is of it, is in good taste. Thank goodness a tailor does not design new buttons for each coat, neither did the Rodney Street architects design new doors and windows for each house. Just as a suit should not be obtrusive so these essentially gentlemen's houses do not vary greatly from one another.

The insides are a different matter. The stairs may go up straight or at right angles, the main rooms may be on the first or ground floor, *en suite* or single. In all the houses I have been into, and I have had to visit a good many, I have been struck with the same refined, delicate reserve in plaster cornices, staircase hand-rails, and balusters, the same sense of proportion in the rooms. I must say I have not always been so with the furnishings. It is the duty of the doctors, having appropriated the best residential street in the town, to furnish it in the best taste. Many I know have collections of Hepplewhite chairs and eighteenth century engravings, which are exactly in the spirit of the street. On the other hand, I once had to wait in a beautiful room which was full of the heaviest and blackest carved oak, purporting very

naively to be of the fifteenth century. I ran away from that waiting-room. I felt that the person who owned it might be clumsy in his work, and might pull out the wrong tooth or the wrong appendix.

The same thing applies with greater force to the exteriors. They are a possession of the town which the doctors now hold in trust for us. Some have obviously tried their best to preserve and enhance them ; some, like the owner of the large house on the left-hand side as you approach Leece Street, and the owner of a similar house nearly opposite, have even tried a little too hard. They have added new doors, new fanlights, and new porches. Now, the doors and fanlights are in both cases excellent, but the stone porches are a little too sophisticated. The modern designer could not be content with the simple post and lintel arrangement of the older doorways. He had to show his skill in bending a pediment, and in so far as he succeeded, he failed. There is a long balcony, too, to the first of these houses, which is even more delicate than the best of the beautiful oval ones in the street. But it goes too far in delicacy. It is like lace on an overcoat. These, though, are defects from excess of zeal which can be tolerated. What cannot be is a rebuilding like that of the small house half way down on the right-hand side, which is merely conceited and ignorant. Its cocky little pediment at a much steeper angle than any in the street, its introduction of hard machine-made red bricks and terra cotta, are an outrage. The cement entrance pilasters and infantile head to the door nearly opposite are only less so because they are less obtrusive.

It behoves the medical profession to consider very carefully before they touch these fronts. Many of them have taken out the bars of their sash-windows, turning thereby a broken surface into a large black hole out of scale with the front. Some have even done it to half a house, which is worse. I do not understand the theory

under which this is done. No man's head, however swollen by professional success, is bigger than fourteen inches by eighteen inches, which is about the usual and average size of the old panes. Such panes are perfectly feasible, therefore, for looking through, and the old crown blown glass was clearer than any modern plate-glass if you stood near enough to it. Its slight curves only deflect objects from a distance, but, on the other hand, they catch the sunlight in various directions and light up the façade in a way dull pieces of plate-glass can never do. If you stand back, too, you can see your objects framed as in a picture,, by the dividing bars.

In such a street as Rodney Street, another important effect in the street is given by the window curtains. They should be light, as most of them are, to throw up the windows against the dark brickwork. Nottingham lace ones, with their grey and rather dingy appearance, their slight suggestion of immorality, should be avoided. But bright paint on the outside is more important still. I notice the most effective windows are those where the whole window, frame and all, is painted white or cream ; and the next best those with white frames and black sashes. I suggest that the balconies, as often done in London, might also be painted white, so that the tracery of their patterns could be better seen against the brick-work. These balconies should be filled with flowers in summer-time. Rodney Street and all its balconies in flower would then rival Peckwater quad, Christchurch, in the May term. Nature in the form of trees already provides a bright and pleasant touch of greenery at intervals ; the doctors, with flowers, and doors glossy with varnish, should do their best to assist her.

But after all, Rodney Street is only the climax of such building in Liverpool, and it has its fellows in Dublin, London, Boston in the States, and elsewhere. There are numerous delightful little houses in the same style in the surrounding streets climbing the hill. There is

the little greengrocer's shop in Mount Street, with its trellis windows above the shop, which, when kept by two old ladies before the war, was a delight to every passer-by. The best Rodney Street house is really in Mount Pleasant, No. 68. It has all the good points of the best actually in the street, No. 35, carried a little further. Indeed, the houses towards the end of the street, such as Rodney House, and No. 29 opposite, are beginning to get dull and heavy, while the last of all, on the right-hand side, has a frankly Sefton Park bay window—after which no more need be said.

The opposite side of Leece Street starts a little tentatively with a bank and Messrs. Gilbey's premises. I suppose these are necessary even to doctors. Further on, too, there are some shops, but there are also several pairs of very charming houses, smaller and neater still. Neatness is really the note of the street, which ends architecturally with the sombre mausoleum-like mass of St. Andrew's Church. Beyond is certainly the Consumption Hospital, but it is so out of character with its surroundings, so hard in its materials and design, that one avoids looking at it. If one does, however, one will see, as a sort of phylactery worn in penance, a beautiful old window from the house it displaced, set over its main door at the first-floor level. It is like a piece of old jewellery on the breast of a coalheaver.

# A LIVERPOOL BLOOMSBURY

A Duke of Bedford is reputed to have said that but for some lodging-houses in Bloomsbury he would be a poor man. Ducal standards in such things, however, are not to be trusted. The real point is that but for the Bloomsbury districts in our great towns there would be nowhere else where the educated poor could live with any real comfort. Liverpool's Bloomsbury is a case in point. It is that area of substantial early nineteenth century houses, healthily situated on the rock, which is bounded by Gambier Terrace and Hope Street on the west, Grove Street on the east, and say Upper Parliament Street and Mount Pleasant and Oxford Street on the south and north.

Here, with a little searching, you can still get a couple of rooms and your breakfast for 30s. a week; and, what is more important, your sitting-room will probably have mahogany doors. You can live, too, within a walk of your work, whether it be down town or at the University. You are as high up as almost anywhere in Liverpool, and you live in an atmosphere of decayed gentility. It is gentility, however, which has lost its sting—no one inquires what his neighbour is doing. Altogether it is a very pleasant part of the world for the artist and brain worker who is not too punctilious to the nation's need in the matter of children. There are two good squares in it for the richer classes, Abercromby and Falkner; but it is hoped that the really rich will not return to them unless they are really educated, when, indeed, they will be doubly welcome.

Let us wander round this delectable district and note some of its characteristics. Gambier Terrace is its proudest piece of architecture. I refer, of course, to

the stone portion. It stands well set back from the road, with an inner road and shrubbery of its own. It is a fine upstanding mass of houses, with a small order of columns to the ground floor, and a great order to the end houses. From the composition one notices that there are columns at one end and pilasters at the other. This suggests, as does the continuation of the name to the block of brick houses beyond, that a large portion of the terrace has been pulled down, and that there was once a further corresponding wing beyond the pilastered central block. If this were once the case, and the commonplace yellow brick houses were built in its place, someone, whose name should be execrated by all good citizens, committed there the crime of the century for Liverpool. A double length of this fine stone terrace would have made an admirable foil to our romantic Cathedral, separated from it, as it is, by the valley of the shadow of death.

To descend into that old graveyard by its entrance, tunnelled through the rock, and walk along its winding path with the new Cathedral towering above you on one side, and the great quarry-wall lined with masonry and pierced with vaults approached by long sloping ways on the other, and with Gambier Terrace piled up above, is a romantic experience all should enjoy. In spring, when the trees are in feathery bloom and the fine domed monument to Huskisson stands out from a mass of greenery, it is a sight equal to the famous cemetery at Constantinople. I am not, as a rule, devoted to cemetery perambulations. Some folk I know find a melancholy pleasure in them. This cemetery, however, is one that I can thoroughly recommend to any sane person. It is beautiful in every aspect, whether you look at the Piranesi-like walls or at the little temple standing up on its acropolis—a permanent contrast to the great Cathedral —or whether you view in the opposite direction the long vista of respectable tombs and beautiful trees.

But our business is with the living, not with the dead, and there is now, owing to the conversion of the buildings into flats, a huge population in Canning Street, Huskisson Street, Catharine Street, and all the other dignified roads which cross and recross this area. Hope Street and Myrtle Street are the only ones which have been spoilt, though there are still a few pleasant houses left in the former. Commerce and good works between them have done the damage. Hospitals and dispensaries are too aggressively anxious to improve the species to care much apparently for architectural amenities. Nursing homes are different. There is a more human feel about them. When I lose a limb may it be in one of the homes in Mornington Terrace facing the cemetery temple. There is no more charming group of houses in the town.

If we penetrate a little further back we come to Percy Street, known to most people as part of the taxi-route to town. But it is worth lingering in, even stopping your taxi. It has two stone terraces of houses towards the Canning Street end which, while Greek in detail, are yet thoroughly liveable-in. The Greek detail is subdued and the outline of the blocks is not too hard. The doorways on the right-hand side as you walk from Canning Street are particularly good. First, however, you pass a Gothic block, but so obviously affected and insincere in its Gothic that you are not offended by it. Being in stone it is as black as the Greek work, and probably many people do not even notice the difference. The terrace on the opposite side is the more ambitious composition. It has good colonnades between the projecting blocks. These terraces both contain comfortable small houses for cultured people, and are strongly to be recommended.

Canning Street is, I should think, ten years later than Rodney Street, and Huskisson Street ten years later still. Each is a little more severe than its pre-

decessor, the last being chiefly in plaster, but with very good cast-iron balconies of Greek detail. Both Canning Street and Huskisson Street are of good breadth, with room for the sun to penetrate. The entrances are impressive, and most of the houses have beautiful mahogany interior doors. Bedford Street is a little too long, but the houses are varied. A good deal of it is rather dull, but there are some fine plaster houses near Abercromby Square with Chinese Chippendale balconies, often over a bay window, which are well worth study. Their compositions vary, but most of them are interesting. They have an intriguing St. John's Wood appearance, very pleasant to meet. Towards the Students' Union building, at the University end—a building, by the way, a little too tall for the street—there is a whole terrace of houses of a fine scale and composition, most of which are now occupied by different schools of the University. If these houses were painted alike, as could be done, and if the dividing garden walls were pulled down, the terrace would make by far the finest block of buildings the University possesses.

But we have crossed Abercromby Square. Let us go back and look at it. It is a square of very substantial houses, a little pompous in their rectitude. Dignitaries, like bishops and vice-chancellors, should obviously live there. Some of the houses are already in the occupation of the University, and the fortunate professors have rooms in them fit for Cabinet Ministers. A church, once, no doubt, fashionable, with a low dome, looks down benignly at the square garden from one side. This garden is in keeping with the square. A finely-modelled but lofty cast-iron railing keeps out the vulgar, while a little circular trellis building of charming design is set in the centre of the grass plot for the delectation of the elect. It is all very restrained and with an air of Victorian success. I hope, if any of the original residents still live there, they will not resent the intrusion

of letters among them. Let them take comfort. With its present high fees the University cannot any longer be looked upon as a charitable institution.

Falkner Square is a strong contrast to Abercromby Square. It is much gayer and brighter, the houses are smaller and less regular. You can even imagine an actress living there without loss of self-respect. Indeed, I have known one. Some of the houses have trellis verandas, and most being in stone or plaster are painted light colours. At the corner of Sandon Street is a very beautiful house. I hope an artist lives in it, or some one who can appreciate its lines and balance, and is sufficiently well to do, which the artist probably would not be, to furnish it with the few beautiful console tables and mirrors its long windows demand. All this district must be a little later still. Grove Street is obviously mid-century, rather dull and dirty, though one brave person has recently painted a house sky blue and yellow with light coloured iron work, thereby showing how gay and happy this plaster classic can be made. But I am afraid Grove Street is tottering. It is on the edge of the Smithdown Road wilderness. If Mr. Brodie's high speed cars do not come quickly and whirl the masses away to the outer suburbs, we may be inundated, and the artists who have had cheap studios and lodgings there may find themselves cut out by plutocratic dockers and day labourers. If that is what fate has in store for Liverpool's Bloomsbury, there will be this compensation, that the good old houses with their fine rooms will educate the masses in a way which no concrete pill-boxes and potato patches would ever be able to do.

# THE UNIVERSITY AND ITS PURLIEUS

The faith of the founders of University College must indeed have been as a grain of mustard seed. The site they selected for their enterprise lay midway between the workhouse and a lunatic asylum, was approached through the ghetto and the meat market, and was bounded by dull streets of, at that time, doubtful respectability. But they had their reward. Though mountains were not moved, the crown of Brownlow Hill became covered in a surprisingly short space with the strangest and most heterogeneous collection of buildings which ever housed a university. The growth was so rapid and unexpected that no comprehensive plan was conceived, much less laid down. Their success really lay in another direction. Even an architect may admit that men are sometimes more important than buildings, and the work of those early professors, Herdman, Bradley, MacCunn, and Mackay—particularly the last-named—led to extensions no pious founders could have foreseen. Who would have thought twenty years ago that the new University, laughed at in many quarters as a pretentious upstart, would, in a couple of decades, have been able to offer in some subjects a degree more valued than any in the British Isles? This being so, the University to-day can afford to look on the buildings of those early men with a lenient eye.

How did they start, and what ideals did they put before themselves? The Victoria Building, with its well-known tower, was their first effort, and Mr. Alfred Waterhouse was their first architect. Obviously and rightly they did not attempt to reproduce the Tudor

and Renaissance beauties of Oxford and Cambridge. Such things could not be copied or transported. The dull classic of the Mechanics' Institutes of the previous generation was equally inapplicable. It must, at the time, have been a difficult problem. The large-scale, inexpensive, Classical and Italian structures, which certain universities in America have used so successfully, had not then been built. They did not mean to do a poor thing, they were willing to spend money. What they did was to go to the fashionable architect of the time and accept his recipe: Gothic, because it gave a scholastic air; French—though less stress was probably laid on that—because it was different from the older universities, and allowed a greater number of storeys; but, most important of all, hard and sanitary, guaranteed never to show any signs of wear. That last must have been a very important financial consideration, however much they spent on the outlay; but it was, at the same time, an inhuman one. A wearless building is like an iron spoon; endless babies may bite on it, but it will never grow any thinner. The beauty of a silver spoon is often the reverse. In the same way a building through which generations of students pass, without leaving their mark upon it, is probably also a building which, in its turn, will leave no mark upon the students. They will return to it with no affection; they will, indeed, be a little ashamed to point out to their sons that this is where for them the world first expanded.

If the inside of the Victoria Building is hard and sanitary, with no impressive vistas and only one fine room, the Tate Library (though this, too, is fitted with varnished oak), the exterior has a certain sense of style. It leaps up from the pavement with many aspiring lines. In colours of mud and blood it struggles to reach the sky, out-Nuremberging Nuremberg itself in its efforts to be picturesque. It has towers and turrets, long oriel windows, and all the trappings of romance, however

expensive, and yet remains the hard prosaic thing we know it to be. The sad thing is that it will always remain the same. The soot from the railway cuttings will never penetrate its baked terra cotta. No gentle cloud from heaven will ever soften its outlines. There it is, for generations to come, the solid symbol of the nineteenth century sense of efficiency. Nevertheless, in spite of all this, and perhaps because of it, it has more style and character than the buildings which followed it. The Gothic revival at that moment had fifty years of experience behind it, and in many of those years faith burnt with a keen and pure flame. The Thompson-Yates Laboratories and the Chemical Buildings are by the same hands, and, though these hands appear here to have been slightly restrained by expense, the result is not very different.

The Physics Building, which came next in point of time—the engineering block being but an extension of the Victoria Building by the same architect—represents no tradition at all. It is a purely commercial building erected at that most unfortunate moment when the Gothic tradition was broken and the older classical one had not been recovered. It is, therefore, as formless as an embryo whose sex has not yet been determined. Its mullioned, though plate-glass, windows suggest Gothic, its round-headed door Romanesque, its little pieces of bronze detail, Greek. Unfortunately there seems to have been no single requirement in the building sufficiently marked to determine its character. To the casual observer it might be a steam laundry or a box factory.

After this came the more frankly factory buildings which flank one side of Brownlow Street, the Botanical Laboratory, the Zoological and Electrotechnics. It is very arguable that a big university laboratory is a factory. If so, let it be a good one. Factories and warehouses can be as fine, architecturally, as any other type of

building, if they are true to type. These, unfortunately, are not. They make concessions to the amenities which do not really deceive. Their stylistic parentage, too, is doubtful. The Zoology Building has the most character. Its big hall, running through two storeys, was bound to give it that, but except from glimpses of the specimens no one would know it was a museum. The museum character is so well established by now, both here and in America, that it cannot be confounded with the factory character. This building represents a compromise, and art is the one branch of human endeavour in which compromise is unknown. If it is attempted, art disappears. Committees always find this a hard saying, and they generally learn its truth too late. Two of these buildings are by the same architects who have recently given the town its fine Cunard block. They afford, therefore, interesting evidence as to the advance in architectural scholarship which has taken place since they were built. The building for the School of Tropical Medicine in Pembroke Place is of the same commercial character. It is, however, set back from the street, modestly hiding its face, for the present, in a manner not usually connected with that institution. I believe it is only for a time. It will burst forth, and we shall see whether its completed exterior is at all equal to its very practical interior. From the part which is built I cannot profess to be very hopeful.

The most recent building of all of this commercial kind is that for Bacteriology and the School of Hygiene on a magnificent site at the top of Mount Pleasant. Of this University building one might quote Sir William Harcourt's words in reference to New Scotland Yard: "Of all our public buildings the most recent is the least decent." But it was, I believe, a gift from the city; certainly the city architect was employed. One must not, therefore, look a gift horse too closely in the mouth, though with so prominent a bulge in one

direction it is a little difficult to avoid doing so. You cannot quite be sure, however, which is the real face or whether the mouth is at the side or the front. It is a facing-all-ways building. Let us hope the search for truth, which goes on within its walls, is not affected by the spirit of compromise its architecture shows.

Lastly, we come to the New Arts Building, as it is familiarly called—that is to say, the fine new block for the Arts Faculty, which faces the quadrangle and Ashton Street. It is a tremendous departure in style and tradition, following a tremendous controversy. Having started on the wrong lines, was the University to go on for ever adhering to them ? Opinion naturally differed. A French architect, I believe, would have been amongst the conservatives, but the Englishmen of the University had the courage, once they had admitted their mistake, to pass to the other extreme. Adjacent to the small-scale Gothic we have, therefore, large-scale Classic. The exterior is by that excellent architect Canada has taken from Liverpool, Mr. Frank Simon, who gave us the Cotton Exchange. The interior is chiefly by Messrs. Briggs and Thornely, but so well did the two sets of architects work together, as architects can when they are working in a tradition they both understand, that most people would fail to find any evidence of dual personality in the building. The Ashton Street front, with its large flat, fluted pilasters, is the more satisfactory, though both fronts are bold and striking. Indeed, that is where they fail, if fail they do. For a building devoted to letters they are not sufficiently reticent. The interior is a great improvement on anything elsewhere in the University. The rooms bear some relation, at any rate, to the human figure. You can look out of the windows without standing up ; you can walk through the doors without feeling you ought to have stilts. But even in it the relationship is not so close as it is in the private rooms,

say, of the small old hospital, now the School of Architecture.

This latter is a little low Georgian building on the opposite side of Ashton Street, very insignificant at first glance, but with a certain reticence and character. Here the old administrative offices of the hospital form the private rooms, and the wards the school studios. The former are simple enough, but I would sooner work in them than in the teak splendours of the New Arts Building. There comfort is due, I think, to long centuries of adjustment. There is no struggle anywhere for effect; everything is of the right size and at the right level, even to the door handles. It is these minor things which endear rooms to you, and it is for this reason that the University is to be congratulated in now having one of its largest departments housed in Abercromby Square. A long tradition provides an atmosphere of comfort to the mind as well as to the body.

My own feeling is that the University would be very wise to go on extending round Abercromby Square, absorbing Bedford Street meanwhile. It might even build its Assembly Hall in the centre of the square and make of Bedford Street a processional way. Some donor might then give great gateways to that street to commemorate great events, like the gateways to the campus at Harvard. Lord Leverhulme once had such a dream even for Brownlow Hill. He set a problem to the School of Architecture to line that amusing thoroughfare with one fine University block after another, until it became a University street, with its portal at the Adelphi, and the exciting thing was that Lord Leverhulme was the one person in England who had the power, if he wished it, to make his magnificent dream come true. May it yet!

# LIVERPOOL'S CIVIC CENTRE

In any ordinary acceptance of the term St. George's Hall is a miracle, and as each year goes by the greater the miracle appears. When you look at the surrounding buildings, and especially at the work of the fumblers who were responsible for "the stoneyard," you have a feeling that the great building was the work of a different race with a different culture and a different outlook on life. It has a spaciousness and nobility, a dignity of outline and a subtlety of modelling, which even the group of public buildings on the far side of William Brown Street cannot approach. But this group, together with St. George's Hall, nevertheless make a civic centre —to use a modern town-planning phrase—which no other town in England can offer. If Liverpool, however, which, as a town, has created such fine architectural opportunities, had not also the fatal habit of staying her hand half-way and leaving untidy corners next to her best monuments, she might by now hold a city fame for beauty greater even than that of Edinburgh, Oxford, or Bath, and yet remain the great commercial centre she is.

Let us examine this collection of buildings a little, and especially their placing. There is, first, the St. George's Hall plateau between the hall and the London and North-Western Hotel, spacious and level between the buildings, but running off at either end into indeterminate spaces. One end, however, is steadied and, to a certain extent, closed architecturally by the noble Wellington Column. What the buildings are beyond it at first glance does not much matter. The great Doric column stands there as a sentinel nobly flanking

the mass of the hall. If, however, we look in the opposite direction, there is nothing to balance it. A number of hotels, of good enough outline and mass, run off at any angle in the far distance. Something is needed in the foreground, and I suggest another Doric column of equal height and size to the Wellington one should be placed somewhere near the point where Punch daily beats his wife. If Liverpool is to put up a memorial to her efforts and losses in the war, let it put such another great memorial column to balance the Wellington one. It need not have the figure of Earl Haig on the top of it, though I should not personally object to that. It could be crowned with a Victory or a figure of consolation and mourning, but the mass of it should be similar to the Wellington one. The pedestals and plinths about the base would offer opportunities for celebrating the deeds of the Liverpool battalions, but the point I wish to make now is that our wonderful hall would be greatly enhanced by the erection of such a second column. The hall would lie evenly between the two, and it would not then so much matter what the outlying buildings were like, as it does at present.

When we come to consider the plateau in detail we see with what skill Cockerell has laid it out, carefully levelling it with steps at one end and outlining it with the finely-modelled lamp standards, with twisted dolphin bases, simple stone pedestals and chains, the entrance being marked by the lions. We may notice in passing that the entrance to the hotel is not exactly opposite these, the hotel not being centred on the hall—it misses it by a few feet, the sort of botch inconceivable in Paris or any really self-respecting town. But to return to the plateau. Cockerell obviously kept all the lamps and pedestals on it low to enhance the height of the hall. We, in our generation, have added four tall electric light standards. The commonness of their design does not matter so much as their height, though it is instruc-

tive from the point of view of the deterioration of the race to compare their bases with those of the gas standards. It is small things like this that show the general level of taste better than big and important buildings. The equestrian statues of Queen Victoria and Albert the Good, especially the fine strong, virile horses, seem to me to be right in character and size. Disraeli is not so good, the pedestal is fussy, but he does no great harm there; nor does the gallant General Earle—he was a gallant general—leading a charge from a safe place on the plinth of the building. The latter is just ridiculous, but is too insignificant to worry about. The electric standards, however, should be removed. I notice the arc lamps have been, so possibly, besides being detrimental architecturally, the standards are redundant from a lighting point of view as well. Looking further afield, one is, of course, sorry that the hotel was ever built to the height it is, thereby doing further harm to the hall. The old railway station had a row of columns facing it, which must have given the plateau almost the fine effect of a Roman forum, and I suppose, too, in those days there was no train shed poking up its ugly head a little further along.

Of the range of Classical buildings running down the hill, the most beautiful in shape and detail is the Picton Reading-room, and next to it, perhaps, the Art Gallery. The County Sessions Court is a little too ornate and with too complicated an entrance for entirely good effect. The worst is obviously the Technical School. Though it continues the lines of the Museum, which itself is a little overpowered by its gigantic flight of steps, it departs from Classical precedent into private eccentricities of its own, such as its two inverted bay windows looking into the building instead of out of it, and its blocked columns from a box of bricks. But the whole range is something to be proud of. Such buildings, when in one style, gain by being massed together. The

pity is that we have such a sudden contrast directly we look in a slightly different direction. The Old Haymarket forms an anti-climax of the most ridiculous kind. Here one-storey buildings, cocoa-rooms, and public-houses jostle one another in the old familiar picturesque way, as if they were totally oblivious to the dignity across the street. We may think it amusing or natural, according to our bent; but to foreign visitors it must just appear grotesque, and we who allow it rather stupid. Surely our municipal or tramway offices might have been placed here, with a frontage to Dale Street as well. Perhaps some day we may have a municipal theatre or opera house. Here is the site.

St. John's Lane is rather better. It has more substantial buildings and is to have still others. Even here, though, there is one shop with nothing over it—a result, I imagine, of our extraordinary and unique law of ancient lights.

But these defects are, in a sense, negative. They will doubtless disappear in the course of time. The Old Haymarket will be rebuilt one day, and form the site for a great public building, and Commutation Row will form another. Even the sudden incursion of commercial advertising on either side of the Sessions House may, we hope, be removed as taste improves, but what I am afraid we cannot hope to see undone is the effect of the money and labour which have been gravely misspent on St. John's Gardens. I say gravely because I believe the Corporation took pains, had a model made, and consulted the experts. Unfortunately, they must have consulted the wrong ones, for the whole conception of the lay-out is in conflict with the hall. Instead of a series of terraces emphasizing the shape of the hall we have shapes and slopes which have no connection with it. While the hall has the rectangular projecting mass of that magnificent range of square columns with its vast lintel, which, seen against the sky,

as it can be by walking under it, is one of the most romantic and exciting sights in Liverpool, the garden scheme, instead of re-echoing and enhancing this projection, has a great semi-circular recess whose convex side fights with it. But everything in the garden is fighting. The stone piers of the railings fight with the statues, and the latter, to outbid them, have had to be perched on absurdly elongated pedestals. The detail of piers and the public-house railings between them are as coarse and clumsy as it is possible to conceive. You can see it best where they butt into the hall, the fillets of the mouldings being about four times the size of those on the great hall itself. Even after the experts' general mistake, how are we to account for the sloping pedestals, the common mouldings, and the general vulgarity of this very expensive work ? Can this be the secret ? A student once came to an evening class at the School of Architecture, and when I protested he was not good enough for the class, he boasted he had just drawn the full-size details of this very work for the masons. If he were speaking the truth, what an example of modern business efficiency ! The last and most important word in a most difficult and responsible job, that of adding to the work of a great master, was given to a young and quarter-educated draughtsman. Would a private architect, with his practice and name dependent on his work, have been so careless ? When bureaucrats can allow a thing like this to happen it almost convinces me that there is nothing in Socialism after all.

# SOHO OR LIMEHOUSE—I.

By this title I do not mean the Sefton Park foreign quarter, but the more interesting one which lies south of Bold Street, and is roughly bounded by St. James Street and Park Lane, Paradise Street and Berry Street. It contains a good many very charming minor Georgian buildings, some very fine houses, and the finest square in the town, Great George Square. It also contains that jewel in an ancient setting, Kent Square. Having these beautiful squares and eighteenth century houses, it is more like Soho than Limehouse, but, on the other hand, instead of little French and Italian restaurants, there are only Chinese ones. The whole neighbourhood, like so many other things, is rather under a cloud just now owing to the war. The foreign element, which used to give it interest and even gaity, is depressed. The names over the shops have been anglicised, there are less Orientals about the streets, and the Scandinavian emigrants seem to wear more ordinary clothes. But there is enough left that is strange and foreign, and the sloping streets are, with occasional gaunt warehouses, sufficiently picturesque to make this neighbourhood, on a sunny day, a very good substitute for the Wirral. You can walk there without meeting all your acquaintances, and in five minutes you can feel yourself a hundred miles away from the Church Street crowds without even the outlay of a twopenny car fare.

Let us begin at the top and notice in passing the fine Congregational Chapel of Great George Street, before we descend Duke Street. A Congregational chapel is not generally connected in one's mind with an atmosphere of cosmopolitanism. This one, however,

with its fine circular Corinthian portico and dome, is an elegant thing. It is one of the best Classical buildings in the town. Of course, it might be anything from a museum to a market hall, so that it does not offer too protesting and reformed an attitude to the surrounding very agreeable decay. It is just a pleasant object, which I hope, will long remain, though I never want to see inside. I know if I do I shall be disappointed. Let us get on to Duke Street. The upper part is practically untouched. That the Continental Hotel, at the top on the left-hand side, has recently changed its name to the Oceanic is quite à la mode. It is a thing hotels with the name Continental often do. It is a group of good Georgian houses and looks bright and clean. Next time the Adelphi is full I suggest anyone might go further and fare worse. From the appearance of its foreign habitués I am sure the cooking is good. On the opposite side of the street are a series of good old houses, each with a separate pedimented roof. These must have been fashionable residences once.

Below, on the same side, at the corner of Slater Street, is a magnificent house, finer than anything in Rodney Street. It was once, I believe, the judges' lodgings. It has a fine raised and porticoed entrance up a flight of steps parallel with Slater Street. On the opposite side is an equally good house, No. 78, now called York Buildings. This is a splendid mansion, at the present time used by a cork merchant to store his goods. It has a vaulted entrance hall and staircase, a magnificent dining-room with enriched coved ceiling and a fine apse at one end, and upstairs there is, if my memory serves me, an octagonal room which used to be occupied by the Gælic League. But, perhaps, about that one I had better say no more. It is a house to which romance will always cling. No great lady arriving in her Sedan chair was prettier than the Irish girl I met there among the cork. There is something more affecting in these

fine old rooms and staircases with their beautiful mouldings now that they are choked with lumber and covered with dust than when they were all gorgeous in new paint. They make now, I am sure, a keener appeal to the imagination. Further on, at the corner of York Street, is another mansion with a particularly interesting entrance. It has a double flight of steps on either side parallel to the house and a little composition of door and two side windows with columns and pediment, all in the most delightful and naive early Georgian manner.

Now it is a question whether we shall branch off to the left or to the right. To the right is Seel Street, Wood Street, and Fleet Street, all with their interesting things, including the glimpse of Italy you can get in Seel Street Catholic Church and garden. But we will take the left, and if we return on our tracks and pass quickly down Cornwallis Street, past the Corporation baths, which somehow seem very out of place, like necessary things so often do, one comes eventually into Great George Square. It is about the size of Abercromby Square, but much more elegant. It has none of the latter's self-complacency. It is refined but human, restrained yet lovable. All four sides are one architectural scheme. The centre house in each has a great pediment at the roof level and five fine first-floor windows each with a segmental balcony. The doorways have round arches over them, many of which still retain their beautiful fanlights. It has a well-kept garden in the centre, surrounded with a finer railing than its more fashionable rival. It is chiefly occupied by doctors and emigrant lodging-houses and hotels. One of these latter, before the war, always filled its balconies with flowers, and, further, had hanging baskets of them below. In those days it set an example to Rodney Street. May it do so again!

If you walk out of the square down the hill by Upper Pitt Street you pass at the corner of Cornwallis Street a very fine old lamp standard, and then, almost immediately towers up above your head the great Corinthian portico of St. Michael's Church, with, higher up still, its extraordinary tower and spire. This church, which was a tremendous architectural effort, starts very finely. However, compromise crept in, and a spire was added to the tower, and the whole thing was killed. We cannot leave it for dead without a little compunction. It was a noble effort probably done to death by the ecclesiastics. If we walk round its great churchyard, we find on the left a little street called Upper Surrey Street, and if we descend that we come to the most remote and one of the most charming things in Liverpool—Kent Square.

It is a tiny square, not really a square, but oblong, with a single narrow street entering the middle of each of the two shorter sides. The longer sides are continuous, and the centre of the square is an open space. It would really be an improvement to all our squares if the railings were pulled down and we could wander among the trees as you can in a French *place*. But this square is too small for trees. It is like a Cambridge court rather than a square, only it is Georgian, with all the elegance that implies. The houses are small and refined. The doorways are in pairs raised above the ground, and giving on to a stone landing. This landing has a flight of stone steps parallel to the houses on either side, and a fine railing towards the square. Each doorway is pedimented, and the entablatures have varying motifs modelled on them, some ram's heads, some urns, some flowers. Many of the doors—neat six-panel doors with raised panels—have even their Georgian knockers left. It is altogether charming. At present one wise decorator lives in it, and some Chinamen. If anyone, however, wants to found a settlement, and at the same time to

preserve a beautiful thing, let him buy up these houses. I am sure it would do the settlers so much good to live in them that in a short time they would do no harm to the neighbouring residents. But there is so much more in this delightful neighbourhood that we must return to it.

# SOHO OR LIMEHOUSE—II.

Let us return to this oldest part of Liverpool by a different route. Turning our back on the respectabilities of Castle Street, let us wander down South Castle Street, coming each step more and more under the influence of the impressive dome and portico of the Customs House, which dominates the street, and, indeed, the whole neighbourhood. We may notice on the right in passing the finely-modelled and appropriately-named Corinthian Buildings; but it is the Customs House which draws us all the time. Like St. George's Hall, it has the air of a more cultured and spacious time. The actual stones are about four times as large as modern masons are accustomed to handle, in spite of our boasted mechanical appliances. But the largeness of the stones is only in keeping with the largeness of the ideas which the building expresses. First of all, it is set out symmetrically and with dignity in the middle of an oblong *place* called Canning Place, into the centre of the longer side of which South Castle Street enters. A great octastyle Ionic portico faces you, through the columns of which you see the triple-vaulted hall leading to the opposite side of the *place*. On the main front the portico is flanked with two great wings, ending in porticoes in antis. Two other similar great eight-columned porticoes face, one to the river front and one to the Duke Street direction. It is the massiveness and strength of these three great porticoes, so unnecessary to the practical needs of the building, but so necessary to the civic idea for which the building stands, which help to differentiate it from a modern so-called utilitarian building. The dome, of course, is a similar feature,

and though we do occasionally admit domes nowadays, and generally put them on the wrong type of buildings, we do not do them with the restraint and dignity of the Customs House one. This great building was by Foster, the city architect, who earned undying fame in his profession by refusing, when pressed by the Corporation, to carry out the building of St. George's Hall after young Elmes had won the competition. Here in the Customs House he had his reward, and in it he has erected the second great building of the town. It is strange to remember that before the war there were silly and thoughtless people who talked of pulling it down. Now that the war has made all building operations so much more difficult, and still further removed from our puny power the work of these early nineteenth century giants, we shall probably hear no more of such vandalism.

The Customs House gains a little in its solidity and austerity by the pleasant squalor of its immediate neighbourhood. This is a sailors' quarter, and there is a picturesqueness about the public-houses, the shops full of oilskins, even the flatmen's bethels—quite correctly spelt—which contrasts admirably with it. We must not forget, too, William Huskisson in his supposed Roman costume of top boots and bathing wrap on a pedestal in front of it. His is really one of the best-placed statues in Liverpool, and, after the Nelson Monument on the Exchange flags, one of the finest. Away on the left, however, we have a great contrast. There is the tall Elizabethan block of the Sailors' Home, full of barbaric carving of capstans, ropes, and pulley blocks. I hope this prison-looking building is more comfortable within than its appearance would lead one to suppose. Passing this by on the right and making for Duke Street again, we may notice in Paradise Street the Eagle public-house, not because of its sham half-timber work painted on the bricks, but because of the truly truculent eagle

with a shield of the United States in its claws. It is really a fine piece of baroque carving which, in its swagger and boastful poise, must warm the heart of any American sailor who sees it.

But let us hurry on up Duke Street and to the right along York Street, only noticing as we go the charmingly-named Lydia Ann Street on the left, because of its picturesque mixture of tall grim warehouses and pleasant smiling little dwelling houses. Our real business is with a cathedral I have discovered hidden away in this strange medley of works and human habitations. It is the great workshop of the Phœnix factory, built nearly a hundred years ago. The firm, Messrs. Fawcett, Preston and Co., was founded on this spot in 1758, and the original Mr. Fawcett's eighteenth century house is still its offices. But we have not time to linger over it, charming as some of the windows and doors are. The great machine and erecting shop behind it is a cathedral—a cathedral of three great parallel aisles or naves, 80 feet high to the springing of the roof, with each aisle some 50 feet wide, and the centre one 250 feet long. In construction it is the purest Gothic, with great piers built of baulks of timber instead of stone, braced and strutted with other slanting timbers where you expect the lines of the vaulting ribs to start, and giving, therefore, very much the same effect. It has its clerestory windows, its long vistas, its deep and dark recesses, its rays of light trickling through an intricacy of piers which no cathedral in England can improve upon. Better still, it carries the romance of the Gothic cathedral further than even a religious building can do. Little men are to be seen high up above your head, attending to great travelling cranes. Suspended from these in mid-air huge masses of iron float down the naves, while all along the aisle-walls and piers hundreds of little buzzing wheels revolve. Vast hydraulic presses and the giant cylinders this firm builds for sugar refiners

are piled up to the height of ordinary houses on the nave floor. Yet so lofty is the structure that they no more impede the vistas than do chancel screens and subsidiary altars. If our own Cathedral interior has anything like the same dramatic sense of mystery and power, of the smallness of the individual and the greatness of what he is striving for, it will be a success indeed. Till it is built I advise every lover of the essential qualities of Gothic art to visit the Phœnix Foundry.

If when we come out into the prosaic light of day we continue in the same direction, we soon reach Pitt Street. It is a narrow, intimate thoroughfare of low Georgian houses and shops, running up from Cleveland Square, out of which it opens with a very good piece of town-planning, to the commanding St. Michael's Church. It is almost entirely inhabited by Chinese. In daytime it looks a little drab, except for the strange little half-caste children, like Japanese dolls, with straight black hair and rich cherry cheeks; but at night it improves. Through the deep, half-concealed entrances of the restaurants and clubs you see an occasional Chinese lantern or illuminated dragon. At some of these places you can get an excellent meal, as far as its taste goes. If you have an inquisitive mind, the host will politely take you into his kitchen, where you will find crates of live ducks and hens on one side and several Orientals stripped to the waist preparing the food on the other. What I can guarantee is that there will be a welcoming smile on every face. It is, perhaps, worth doing, though the glamour has rather disappeared since the war. There is one good building of the major sort in the street, an early Georgian meeting-house, with a fine bold Ionic porticoed entrance, with the usual Liverpool arrangement of a double flight of steps on either side parallel to the street. Beyond Pitt Street, and running in the same direction, you come across Frederick Street, which is really more charming. Its little early eighteenth

century houses are in pairs, with an entry to a court on either side. I must confess I did not venture down many of the latter, though one I entered was bright with whitewash, flower boxes, and a model ship in one of the windows.

But we must hurry back, for there are two things we have missed. Returning along York Street, we pass Parr Street on either side. If we turn down the hill to the left, we come into a little sloping backwater called Wolstenholme Square. Parr Street enters the little square in the centre of the top side, and but for a sort of overflow outlet at the bottom left-hand corner, called Gradwell Street, there is no break in the square. It must have been delightful, though never as exquisite as Kent Square, when the old houses went all round the four sides. Now only two sides are left. On the others are modern warehouses with tall stepped Dutch gables which do not seem to have roofs behind them to justify their existence. Still, the square is a quiet pool in the traffic, where lorries can be left standing in the middle with the horses taken out, and no one, apparently, will touch the merchandise on them.

From here we must pass by way of Gradwell Street and any of the streets running down the hill across Hanover Street, itself full of fine old houses, to the narrow School Lane, with the impressive mass and fine modelling of Crane's new building on our right, for here is a last and most beautiful relic of the eighteenth century in Liverpool, the court of the old Bluecoat Hospital, now called Liberty Buildings. One side of the court is not built up, and you enter the courtyard through a fine gateway with piers set back in a curved railing, itself a very charming feature. You then see round you three sides of early Georgian building—1717 is the date. Like the court of a Cambridge college, there are a series of doorways on either side, and the hall faces you, but the doorways here have each the distinction of a pyramidical

pile of steps, and the paving of the court is set out with flagged walks leading to them. The general scheme of the façades is with beautiful oval windows to the top or second storey ; under these are early Georgian windows with the sashes flush with the wall, and filled with the bright (when clean) crown glass of the period. The centre doorways are pedimented, and that to the hall has exactly the same detail as one of the four doors to St. Peter's Church opposite. In the days when the School of Architecture was fortunate enough to be housed here and the paint was new, when the window boxes all round on the first level were filled with flowers, and there were cut shrubs lining the centre walk, it was the happiest and most charming spot in Liverpool. Though saved for the town by the generosity of Lord Leverhulme, this beautiful retreat seems, for the moment, to be rather under a cloud. It badly needs painting and brightening up. The Dutch architecture, for such early Georgian work really was, should be spick and span. However, it is still mainly lived in by artists, and the Sandon Studios Society, if it cannot afford to look after the whole building, nevertheless provides a very suitable life within it. What happier use could a beautiful old building be put to than to provide studios for young and enthusiastic artists in the daytime and a place for their revelry at night ?

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