

THE SUN HAS SET

ART is dead.

Its present movements are not at all indications of vitality; they are not even the convulsions of agony prior to death; they are the mechanical reflex action of a corpse subjected to a galvanic force.

Yes, Art is dead. It died when the atmosphere which was necessary for its life became rarefied and exhausted. It died when pure faith died; when the passive fear of the unknown disappeared; when religious hope was dissipated. It died when the positivistic spirit proclaimed that Art was no longer necessary to humanity; when it convinced humanity that Science and not Art was the solver of the great riddles of the Sphinx. Pagan Art died when the gods died, and when God was suppressed, Christian Art died.

In the sociological movement of modern times, the principle of authority was substituted for that of individualism. Now individualism is being replaced by the principle of fraternity.

What relation can exist between these principles of sociologic science, and pure Art? Everything in the universe is linked, and Art is but one of the manifestations of the thought of an epoch, one of its facets. If it be true to say that every people gets the government that it deserves, then it is also true to say that every epoch develops its own particular Art.

The principle of authority founded the life of Nations on the rock of faith. In Religion, this faith showed itself as content to accept without questioning its dogmas. In Politics, it took the form of a superstitious respect for tradition. And in both Religion and Politics it was a subjection to force as a system.

That is why, during the long period of the Middle Ages, physical force took refuge in the Castle, and moral force or civilization found its home in the Monastery.

There, within the narrow limits of the Monastery, all intellectual and manual activities, the soul and the body of Art, found themselves. Paganism being dead, the new religion took upon itself the charge of maintaining and giving new vigor to the plastic arts.

Latin architecture was succeeded by Roman architecture, and this was followed by the Gothic. Raoul Glaber, a famous Benedictine from Bourgogne, explains how the architectural transformations permitted by the churches were not imposed by a material necessity, but were the outcome of the new idea that had appeared, compared with which the old seemed to be out of date.

This principle of authority prevailed in all its power until the appearance of Luther, who, unconsciously, sowed the seed of individualism.

It would seem that the principle of individualism ought to have killed inspiration, since it tends to eliminate the conception of the ideal. But this did not take place because the elimination did not occur. The Reformation was neither Atheist nor Rationalist. Luther, Calvin and Zwingli, appear to be as fanatic as the Pontiffs, Bishops and inquisitors of Catholicism. It was