

leave no room for what is modern. However many new houses may be built—at once the dealers in antiquities move into the new premises and the dealers in antiquities in Paris are legion. The foreigner who has just arrived in an aeroplane and driven up to the shop in a modern car, will find things in the shop-window which date from the days, when people were borne through the streets in a sedan chair or driven in an elaborately decorated carriage.

In Paris it is impossible to flee from the past. The inhabitants are perfectly familiar with bygone epochs, not perhaps in every detail, but certainly in a larger sense. This is why the Parisian is so willing to buy actual souvenirs of this past. This is why we are again and again astounded to discover how living this history still is. Even when an artist makes concessions to modern taste, the *spirit* of the epoch in question still remains vital.

This tradition, this feeling for things national is the real indestructible basis of French art—especially of applied art.

A foreign artist will find it almost impossible to comprehend or express the French style, simply because he will have been educated under different conditions. However powerful his impressions or his gift of observation, there will always be gaps in his memory. There is a remedy for this, but the way is long. The way leads through the nursery—past all the old playthings, the old children's books. This became especially clear to me on the occasion of my visit to a large box factory. The proprietor, Mr. Tolmer, showed me a collection of his wares. I saw pleasant, jolly objects, which reminded me of far-off days. Every grown-up feels the romance of his own childhood.

"Women are the principal buyers," said Mr. Tolmer. These wrappings are made to appeal to women—these boxes with illumination and music, these toys for a nursery inhabited by grown-ups. "The public likes to buy things which may be described by the word 'aimable'," explained Mr. Tolmer.

All of a sudden it became clear to me: French style in French wrappings will move and please only those who completely realize the fascinating charm of Paris and the true significance of the word "aimable".

Trans. by E. T. Scheffauer.



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