

**FARM HOUSES, MANOR HOUSES,  
MINOR CHATEAUX AND SMALL  
CHURCHES: FROM THE  
ELEVENTH TO THE SIXTEENTH  
CENTURIES, IN NORMANDY, BRITTANY  
AND OTHER PARTS OF FRANCE**

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Farm Houses, Manor Houses, Minor Chateaux and Small Churches: From the Eleventh to the Sixteenth Centuries, in Normandy, Brittany and Other Parts of France by Ralph Adams Cram

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**RALPH ADAMS CRAM**

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IN NORMANDY

Photograph by Walter H. Thomas, Philadelphia.

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OF FRANCE

*With a Preface by*

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## P R E F A C E

**A**S, DURING the last century, the "human scale" vanished from life and a kind of brutal imperialism took its place to poison and finally destroy the whole system of human associations left over from better times, so our standards of architectural judgment were transformed, becoming at last as degenerate as our architectural style was debased. Our whole system of architectural philosophy, architectural teaching, and architectural determinism, so dogmatic and secure, is a thing of mushroom growth; a century has seen it come into existence, though the first premonitory symptoms are revealed during the beginnings of the Renaissance. Under this system not only has the "grand manner" held as a standard of judgment as between one historic style and another, and in the controlling of all scholastic design, but its imperialistic scale has been applied to the determining of architectural philosophy and history to such an extent that a purely fictitious theory has been built up only on the basis of the "big things," to the total exclusion of the great mass of small work, whatever its period or its nationality.

It is probably true that the oldest styles—Egyptian, Greek, Roman, Byzantine—were styles of "big things," for until the Middle Ages freedom and an approximate democracy were unknown, the basis of Antiquity having been slavery. Therefore, whatever architecture there was, was official, whether secular or spiritual, and beyond the palace and the fortress on the one hand, the temple or church on the other, there was little of very great significance. It is rational enough, perhaps, to determine these styles on the basis of their magnificent ruins, or the records thereof, but with the advent of Medievalism, the status of society is changed and the method no longer applies.

The Medieval epoch was that period wherein was achieved for the first time a true democracy, under the only control that can insure





its existence, wherein this new and free system reached its full development, and when it extended itself throughout all Western Europe. The Renaissance is the time that marks the first assault on the well established scheme of life, and the years that follow, even to our own day, form that space of time wherein the "Christian Commonwealth" was beaten down and at last a close approach recorded to the servile state of antiquity.

From the first beginnings of the Middle Ages in the last quarter of the X century, the "grand style" in architecture develops side by side with the minor style, as, under the new social conditions, must have been the case. Great abbeys, cathedrals, castles, reveal themselves, growing ever more complex and gigantic, but art is no longer the possession of a favoured few, it is now the heritage of all, and for one great monument there are scores of little churches, minor priories, small castles, with somewhat later, town houses, chapels, farms, manors and chatcaux in ever-increasing numbers and infallible charm. To build up a philosophy of Medieval art and a science of Gothic architecture on the foundations of only such structures as the abbeys of Caen, the cathedrals of Chartres, Notre Dame, Rheims, Amiens, Beauvais, to the total ignoring of the work and the people as a whole, is absurd, for the art of Medievalism was essentially a communal art and to a degree never approached before. It was not the product of a few highly trained specialists expressing their own idiosyncracies, but the spontaneous and instinctive art of a whole people, or rather of groups of people acting under a common impulse, in accordance with varying conditions, to a common end.

For this reason it is impossible to form an adequate idea of Medieval art until full regard is given to the modest products of minor scale; such, for example, as those illustrated in this volume. Fortunately, this is still possible; it is true that myriads of priceless examples have been swept away through accident, war, revolution, ignorance, bad taste, but the original number was so great that in spite of all, enough remain to afford a fair idea of what the style was in itself, and as well of the extraordinary beauty that must have clothed the Middle Ages as with a garment.

The same is true of the Renaissance and after: the architectural

