

# Summaries in English

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What does the nineteenth century have to offer us?—Two currents are recognized as true and honest: first the technical executions of the engineers, second the return to handicraft. Is it by a kind of reaction that today the severe judgments on these styles arouse our curiosity? Neo-style, cast-iron and its use, the Basle town-planning of Stehlin, the new purposes, the railway stations, the panoramas, the work of the young Le Corbusier: these are all subjects that demand our careful attention.

#### The Phenomenon of Plurality of Styles

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by Reinhold Hohl

The history of art is generally written as that of a succession of distinct styles. In fact, one style encroaches on the next or is re-employed at a later time. The most striking example being the church of St-Eustache in Paris, in the Flamboyant style with Renaissance decorative details. In England in the eighteenth century the Gothic style subsists alongside the Palladian style. In Germany the medieval style is still employed, while Renaissance rubs shoulders with baroque. The nineteenth century employs its knowledge of ancient styles and adapts them to a new way of life: new political and social conditions, economic expansion. Very often a resort to historic styles has proved more successful than the hesitant pursuit of novel innovations. These various styles were employed in the nineteenth century for national, religious and literary reasons or as passing fads, whereas in the purely technological sphere engineers were seeking to embellish their creations with historical forms. The aim of architecture in the nineteenth century can be succinctly formulated in two words: Effect and Expression.

#### New Construction Problems at the Beginning of the Nineteenth Century

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by Bruno Carl

*Houses of Parliament:* The halls of the old town hall, integrating all governmental functions, give way to as many different independent buildings, as e.g.: the council chamber becomes an assembly hall with galleries, amphitheatre style, the courtroom becomes a palace, etc. The various proposals made for a Swiss capital, not being coherent, had a deleterious effect on general plans aiming at the homogeneous disposition of the squares or districts in question. Of the bold Osterrieth plan, only the residences of the functionaries were completed. Lucerne transformed into a national palace its Ursuline convent. Hemmann, at Aarau, executed for the first time a semicircular assembly hall. Important legislative buildings were erected in the Ticino, but there the building is grouped around an interior courtyard, surrounded by loggias on colonnades. *Barracks and arsenals* tend to be monumental, the essential expression of the nineteenth century. In St.Gall, Kubli, with his very large façades aspires to grandeur by way of monotonous repetition. *Schools:* It was left to Fröhlicher in 1827 (Solothurn) to give the school building its characteristic stamp. *Libraries, museums and theatres* were to realize the ideal of the nineteenth century, which sought to place everything in the service of public instruction. *Hospitals, asylums:* There was begun the construction of distinct buildings, adapted to the various categories of patients: sick people, the aged, paupers, the insane and the delinquent, who had up to that time been assembled under one roof. The Burgdorf orphanage is the standard nineteenth-century type, while homes for the blind and for deaf-mutes were original creations. Taken in its unity, the Burghölzli hospital remains the greatest building in Zurich. The *factory* records man's subjection to the machine, the handicraftsman's subordination to mechanization, but it retains the ascetic character of the nineteenth century. Towards 1830 there appear *big stores* offering a wide range of merchandise. Vaucher in Geneva in 1827 provided the city with an entire street, 170 meters long, the Corratierie, filled with "trading houses" with alternating fronts. *Railway stations* are typical creations, and original ones, of the nineteenth century as well as the post-office, which was tending to become a governmental function. The *Hôtel des Bergues* (Geneva) in 1830 was the first modern hotel to be erected on Swiss soil. *Apartment houses* became a necessity created by the increase in the population. The work of Matthey in Geneva in 1774 is a good example: four adjoining houses, each of five apartments; it was the first of its kind.

#### Swiss Railway Stations in the Nineteenth Century

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by Adolf Reinle

The railway station, an unprecedented innovation, was the major architectural challenge in the last century. Sheds and warehouses remained strictly functional, but the station proper posed an architectural problem. It was generally situated far from the centre and its function, to serve arrivals and departures, suggested by analogy the idea of a city gate. The scheme of the "manor house with annexes" was adopted, then, after

traffic increased attempts were made to find a more adequate solution. The idea of "Roman baths" was a seductive one (illustrated by Semper's project for Zurich). Owing to its utility and the fact that it was so indispensable, the railway station, having become a focus, stimulated the creation all around it of all kinds of urban premises, which often even replaced the centre of the city as the main centre of gravity (e.g. Bahnhofstrasse in Zurich). The stations (French and German) of Basle and that of Lausanne are inspired by the plan of the seventeenth- and eighteenth-century manor house. The Zurich station (Wanner) puts the motif of the monumental gateway on the side, orienting it towards the street leading up to the station, this having become the principal artery of the city.

#### J.J. Stehlin the younger and his "Cultural Centre" in Basle

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by Lucius Burckhardt

Stehlin the younger did not participate in the neo-Renaissance style. After having hesitated between classicism and Tudor-Gothic, he chose or purified new-baroque for the execution of a group of four public buildings. Well-known example: the post-office. Large open spaces (on the site of old cloisters) were utilized by Stehlin as "cultural centres". His boldest project was the Art Gallery, finished in 1872. At that age of the monumental and of the picturesque, this complex of "neo-baroque" structures seems a happy solution.

#### Early Shed Constructions of Steel and Glass in London

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by Monica Hennig

Romantic classicism, with its tendency towards an architecture of pure shape, devoid of ornamentation, determined the emergence of great sheds covered with steel and glass. It was of short duration: from the Conservatory of Kew Garden in 1845 to the invention of Bessemer steel in 1855. The reduction of the cost of the raw material facilitated the use of decorative elements of steel. *Euston Station*, the most curious example, is the oldest of the European railway stations, dating from 1835. It is a complex construction: sheds of steel and glass, masonry façade, without any relation to the other elements. *Conservatories of Kew Garden* (Burton), executed by Turner. *Crystal Palace*, executed in accordance with the plan of Paxton—*Coal Exchange* in London (Bunning). On the inside only the graceful steel skeleton is visible. *Paddington Station:* cast-iron columns support a roof of wrought-iron. The renown of *King's Cross Station* rests on its two enormous brick archways. *St. Pancras Station* (Barlow, 1868) is a structure in which wrought-iron and cast-iron are combined.

#### Rediscovery of the Australian Veranda House

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by P. J. Grundfest

These houses, dating from the nineteenth century, have an English origin. They offered no amenities, because of lack of financial means, sometimes not even any kitchen in the proper sense of the word; the water supply and the sanitary facilities were in the courtyard. The house comprises a small veranda, a passage-way serving the rooms and one single window on the street. A cast-iron frieze is their sole ornamentation. Those intended for a more well-to-do class, very much sought out at the present time, are less primitive and are for the most part situated in the suburbs. They comprise an elevated veranda, frequently a balcony, at times the luxury of a cast-iron frieze. What makes this style unique is the employment of cast-iron for decorative purposes, pillars supporting the veranda and the balustrade closing in the balcony.

#### The Age of the Panorama

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by Paul Leonhard Ganz

The panorama, a characteristic creation of the nineteenth century, was highly appreciated in Europe and in the U.S.A. The panoramic painting or cyclorama tends to give the illusion of concrete impressions or contemporaneous events. For this, two things are necessary: a very naturalistic style of painting appealing to the sensibility of the naive observer and a kind of representation that annihilates the feeling of distance. To create the illusion, it is important for the foreground to be of natural size. The panorama was invented simultaneously by Barker, an Irishman, and Breisig, a German. Favourite subjects: views of cities, mountains or historic events. The first Swiss cyclorama, a view of Thun, which has fortunately been preserved, is at the present time the oldest example of the genre. It was created by Marquard Woher. At Lucerne there is to be seen the entrance of the Bourbaki Army, at Les Verrières, executed by Castres and his associates including the young Hodler. Outside Switzerland, where there are still four panoramas, there are preserved a dozen of these compositions. There is a revival of interest in these works which are now assuming a historic value.