

ability of the personality with justice to the material was unknown until then and has since become a necessity. To moderate the given technical and social problems in an artistic way demands great imagination and reason.

What was the time like in which Josef Hoffmann was working? At the end of the 19th. Century, Architects, Sculptors, Painters and Industrial Artists were trying convulsively to escape in some way the epoch of Makart and were trying to find a new style, and hoped to have found it finally in the "Youth" style. One section took their style from the past and became fructified by the works of the past "Stylperiods". The other section wished to create at anyrate an entirely new style and tried Naturalism and Geometricism. In both of these trials the new impulse which alone can develop the form in an organic way according to the understanding of the times, was lacking. The time of reality had not yet arrived. The time of the technical epoch had only started on account of the war and became complete after the war. But before the war, the technique and more clearly the epoch of the machine had only just commenced. Towards the end of the 19th. Century and still later on, the nature of art was conceived as being absolutely contrary to that of the machine. As a matter of fact the technique tried to arrive at their goal by eliminating as much as possible all organic elements and replacing them by inorganic. With a work of art, the most important part of the work lies in speciality of language, in the brushwork or stroke of the chisel, namely in the pure 'Organic'. The machine presumes at its origin in absolute intelligence and tries to avoid anything acting instinctively. The artistic work on the other hand, reaches to the sensibility of the instinct and tries to suppress the intellect. Nevertheless, nowadays, no-one can emulate the alive and form creating relations between art and technique and none is able to escape their necessary rhythm. Decades ago, Hoffmann recognised the tendencies of the coming times even though it may seem that this is pure imagination. He understood how to make the ornament harmonise with the purpose of the forms. At an epoch when the purpose of the form itself had not yet the capacity of life, that demands both a clever grasp and a skilful wrist, and first of all a stylish feeling of tact and imagination that keeps away from anything fantastic. Hoffmann's nearly inexhaustible ability for invention is admirable. In 1900 in the "Sezession", among the group of most genuine and creative artists claiming to make the way for a new art, he was the only one who conserved his creative capacity and is giving in the same way as he has done for nearly 40 years. He is doing so in spite of all the trials from left and right; trying to gain the art by means of the reason and to put the apostulate of reality above the personality. He is aware that there is as sufficient scope for the architects as for the industrial artists imagination, even within the distinctly traced limits of fitness. Because there is no absolute fitness existing, it means there is no absolute limit to the technical possibilities which this demand has to serve. For the form of a chair for instance, there could be an inexhaustible number of varieties, which would persist before the most sober critic as being perfectly fitting. It is the artist's task to choose among these varieties in a creative aesthetic way. It is his part to seize the utter vision or inspiration as the visible