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To Godarth Jones,
in memory of a delightful evening at Taliesin.

Frank Lloyd Wright, Nov 30 34
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Frank Lloyd Wright, Nov 30, 34.
TALIESIN (Wisconsin), U.S.A.
A rugged boulder juts out of the wall; rocks surround the fireplace where great logs are burning; a magnificent Buddha is staring down upon me; through the spacious low windows I look out upon the Wisconsin hills and here and there I see the gleam of the birches; and at the other end of the corridor I catch a glimpse of a tall, dignified man with the flowing white hair of a bard and the calm, steady movements of a doughty, determined personality.

He is my host, Frank Lloyd Wright, architect and rebel against convention, insurgent against all the shams and phantoms of the world, the man about whom the leading literary critic of New York said: "If I were to suffer to apply the word genius to only one living American, I would save it for Frank Lloyd Wright." "Frank Lloyd Wright! When you mention his name, note the expression on the face of anyone with whom you talk in America. There is hatred, there is shock, there is disapproval, there is a profound respect, a profound love, a profound admiration, but one expression you can never find, and that is indifference." "He is a genius. He is a personality, and a hostile public opinion with whom you are unable will, and his story is a saga of experience," was the verdict of an American writer.

Fascinating Personality

Of Frank Lloyd Wright as an architect I can say little. I can only repeat what artists say, and that is that his personality as an architect in the nineties he freed it from its unconscious, imitative character and from its imprisonment in a fortress far removed from life, so that he is more responsible than any other individual for the emergence of new buildings in Europe and America. But of Frank Lloyd Wright the man I know through his piercing, witty, sparkling dark Welsh eyes, with the twinkle which is ever playing around his lips, with the deep sincerity of his musical voice, with the force and faith of his views, and with the charm which he radiates, he has fascinated me more than any man with the exception of Mr. Hitler, ex-President Hoover, and Mr. Baldwin, although their names are known to millions more people than that of Lloyd Wright.

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His Welsh Descent

The story of this rebel has its roots the Wales of the Victorian times, when there dwelt a Welsh elw, who on Sunday, preached the creed and opposed unpopular Unitarianism. The hatter's preacher married Mary Lloyd, and came to America, penetrating to the banks of the Wisconsin River, where they created the Lloyd-Jones family from which the child who was to change the architecture of the world was born.

Lloyd Wright considers himself a thorough Welshman, for all the Welsh samenesses which have moulded him were Welsh, the chapel where his uncle, Jenkin Lloyd-Jones, preached in the countryside was Welsh, and his motto which has guided him in his battles against a disapproving world is Welsh—it is, "Y Gwr yr Erbyn yr Byd." The name of his home, Taliesin, is Welsh, and carved in wood and chiselled in stone you see the Druidic symbol \( \mathbb{1} \) in different parts of the house.

From this Welsh environment arose the fighter and thinker who has so impressed me by his philosophy and by the calmness of his perfect personality, and who has instilled into me the idea of the young man's duty and faith which are characteristic of his work and thought and are illustrated by episodes in his troubled life.

Whistled Earthquake

Forty years ago he built on a high hill a windmill tower which looked so fantastic that his Welsh uncle laughed at him. "It's a bird down with the next squall of wind," they cried; and, when a storm came they would rush to the window, awaiting to see the crash of the structure. One by one the old folk died, but the tower stood firm against the tempests and the hurricanes, and I have now just returned from being rapped through the snow from my pilgrimage to the tower of "Romë and Juliet," as it is called.

Japanese many years later, hearing of Lloyd Wright's fame as a builder of sturdy buildings, appealed to him. He said, "Build us a great hotel which no hurricane, however powerful, can harm," and he built the most famous hotel in Asia, the Imperial Hotel, Tokyo. Soon after the great earthquake of 1923 went the most solid of Tokyo structures crashing to destruction, with the exception of the work of Lloyd Wright that remained unharmed, a monument to his genius.

Architect's Task

What lay at the foundation of his thinking about buildings? He explained to me that all architecture should be important, by which he meant that a house must be important to the soil, for the climate, and for the personality of the person living in it. As he said in his lectures, "an architect's task is to "eliminate combinations of materials in favour of mono-material so far as possible, and to use no ornament that did not do something to the building, to make the building clearer and more expressive of a place to live in and give the conception of the building appropriate emphatic meaning." Lloyd Wright also sensed the great part which the machine was to play in modern architecture, and he was the forerunner of the proper function of the machine in the buildings of the twentieth century. In this respect, however, his influence has been far greater in Germany and in Holland than in Great Britain, where the machine in construction in Russia are an imitation of some of Wright's earlier schemes.

Broadacre City

To-day Frank Lloyd Wright is still looking to the future. "The city of to-day is doomed," he told me, referring to the theme of his book, "The Disappearing City." "The day of centralization is over. The future lies with 'Broadacre City,' where the individual home of the individual family group will enjoy in the country a freedom, a richness of life no city ever gave.

He is now planning this Broadacre City, where each family, freed by the advances in transport from the necessity of living huddled together in millions, can be happy on the soil.

He is looking towards the future also, because the past has too much pain, too much tragedy for him. At the age of 40 he rebelled against the family and left his wife and his six children in order to gain freedom for his art, and the world condemned him violently. The very spot in which I am now staying is haunted by terrible tragedies.

Home in Flames

Twice has Taliesin gone up in flames. The first time it was set ablaze by a mad negro servant, who barred and locked the doors when Lloyd Wright's guests and closest friends were within, and seven perished within a few feet of the place where I calmly write.

Later, when Taliesin was a treasure store of the richest splendours which the poet-architect had gathered in China and Japan, fire stole upon it once more and a part of the wealth of Asia and a great part of Britisher's heart became within a few moments a cloud of smoke and a heap of ashes.

Tragedy has followed him, but it has enriched him and made him the philosopher he is to-day, a dreamer and a thinker who thinks in terms of centuries, who has drunk deep as an Asiatic wisdom and who has attained a "calm of mind, all passion spent."