

PAGAN, OR CHRISTIAN?

OR,

NOTES FOR THE GENERAL PUBLIC

OR

Our National Architecture.

BY

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"The Arts are founded upon principles insusceptible of change. Fashion may, indeed—nay often does—change the prevailing taste of the day, but first principles remain the same; and, as in a cycle, the planets after a period of wandering in the heavens return to the places which they occupied ages before, so in the Arts, after seasons of Extravaganza and Bissareria, a recurrence to Sound Taste is equally certain."

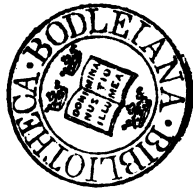


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INTRODUCTORY.

THESE NOTES

Are dedicated to the General Public—not merely to professional and amateur architects, and Members of Parliament, but to those also whose pursuits do not naturally lead them to an interest in the struggle which is going on, between the reviving spirit of Gothic Architecture and the effete energy of the Classic Forms. The palpable evidence of this struggle is in the spontaneous springing up, over the whole country, of structural modes which are either reproductions of our mediæval art, more or less pure, or strongly tinged with its peculiarities; and in the fact that these modes manifest themselves in circumstances where, only a quarter of a century ago, no man would have dreamed of executing anything which was not in flunkeylike conformity with the stereotyped patterns—one cannot

in conscience call them designs—which have been handed down to us, with gradually corrupting tradition, from Inigo Jones and Christopher Wren. Marked prominence is given to this struggle by the controversy upon the designs for the new Government Offices, and the philippic of the Premier against Gothic. It is all but universally acknowledged that the Houses of Parliament are by no means what they should be, or might have been, and the Public is naturally somewhat concerned to know whether their Forced Contributions are to be devoted to a repetition of that ornate blunder.

But the considerations of special instance are included in the great question of our National Architecture, and special difficulties can only properly be resolved by a reference to some General Principles. The object of these Notes is to evolve certain facts in the psychology of Architecture, which may serve to conduct the mind of the untechnical public towards definite conclusions on the general controversy between the advocates of different architectural styles. Some aid of the kind is needed

surely enough, for what with the element of artistic dogmatism on the one hand, and of a miserable *odium theologicum* on the other, this controversy has become a confused entanglement and mass of contradictions, from which the mind is fain to turn in disgust.

And yet the subject is one of deep interest and import. The General Public is beginning to see this. But not clearly enough. There is yet much misapprehension as to the true bearings of the question—the result of ignorance. You would do well to satisfy yourselves that this matter of Architecture has a far higher significance than what attaches to questions of abstract taste, and mere amateur pedantries of archæology. Though you are doubtless bent upon not believing it, it is bound up closely with our Religiousness, and our structures afford an infallible indication of our moral status. The polished scepticism, which is the fashion of the day, may laugh at this, or complacently ignore it. But it is a broad, tangible fact, nevertheless, to the man who even only superficially lends his

thought to these things. There are many high reasons why the General Public should seek to know more about Architecture as an Art, and about its relations to Human Life. If it be true—which it undoubtedly is—that the Architecture of a people is one of the chief features in the expression of their national character, surely the General Public should be chary of its character, and have an eye to the estimate of it which will be transmitted to its children. It would be well if we could abstract ourselves sometimes from the commonplaces and mill-horse tread of every-day life, and wander a little amid the higher region of Art and its influences. Of an Art, especially, which affects our eyesight so much, and has so much to do with the education of our perceptions. Every citizen is the better, in himself and in his relations to society, according as he interests himself in such matters as tend, in their measure and sphere, to elevate our mental condition, and contribute to the glory of our country.

The fact is, that we are so given up to the getting of Gold, and the worship of it,

so delivered over, bound, to the Genius of Business, that the cultivation of Taste—the perception of Fitness, Beauty, Grandeur—is not even thought of by us. *It does not pay*—recurring to our paltry economics. We shall one day discover that we are in error.

And again, to the many, this science of Columns and Pediments, of Plinths and Abaci, of Mullions and Hood-mouldings, is “caviare,” and the dryest of all imaginable topics. And yet, for the ordinary appreciation of the artistic merits of a building, it is by no means necessary to labour through octavos of technology, or quartos of examples, or acquire the professional elements of construction. It is not necessary to be a mason in order to appreciate the delicacies of a sculptured chapter. Nor a painter, to recognise a good picture. Nor a cook, to enjoy a well-served dinner. It is true, however, that the more of technical knowledge one has in any department, the more qualified one is to criticise what belongs to it. As a man who has a knowledge of Music can better

understand the works of the higher Masters, than one to whom A Minor and F Major are so much Greek.

But though technical knowledge may be dispensed with in reference to Architecture, *some* knowledge of the general subject is requisite, to enable one to enter into the merits of an argument on the relative values of different forms of the Art, and their bearings upon our National Life. It is necessary to have a general notion of the distinctive features of the various Styles; some idea of what is due Proportion, and Congruity in a structure; some inkling of the reasons why certain styles are more adapted than others to certain climates; and the general relation between climate and style. This is a kind of information casually arrived at in general reading, and by the special reading of any of the various popular manuals on Architecture. A man with some degree of natural Taste needs go no further than this. His own judgment will supply the rest. And if a man have naturally no Taste—that is, if he have no care for the Beautiful, and no sense of it—

he had much better leave alone all this. Pearls are too precious for the maw of the Unimpressible, quadrupedal or other.

Apart from weightier considerations, and taking the lowest ground, it would afford to the many a varied, and indeed unfailing, means of relaxation and home-converse, to know something of the principles by which we should determine the merits or faults of celebrated edifices, ancient or modern, at home or abroad; and to be able to speak of them with some dash of the freedom which is the offspring of knowledge. For, after all, people *will* talk about these things, but with what a lamentable plenitude of ignorance!

The Uninitiated will find in these pages what doubtless the Initiated will pardon—a careful avoidance, as far as is possible, of unfamiliar technology.

Where it is necessary to illustrate the argument by examples, these are taken generally from amongst such as exist in London; not by any means because they are *better* than many in the provinces, but simply because they are more likely to be

generally known. And the author has not hesitated to criticise the works of dead or living artists, freely, and with honesty.

Finally, the reference is confined to *English* Architecture, because though it would be easy to establish the same conclusions with regard to Scotland, historical reasons would necessitate a somewhat different line of argument. Besides, Scottish Nationality has so contentedly merged itself, that what is English is Scottish also.

PAGAN, OR CHRISTIAN?

FAITH.

A DEFINITION. The commentary and illustration of which would of themselves expand into a book.

The World is a great Picture. Containing within itself an infinite variety of subject and of treatment; from the intangible and unfixed Ideal to the homely and hard-outlined Real. And its colouring—whether in atmospheric mountain-tints, or in the shaded hues of a flower—is such as no mortal pen or brush can reproduce with perfectness.

Or it is a great Poem. The theme and

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the versification of the song changing ever from the sublimely epical to the sweet pastoral, to the wildly lyrical, or the impersonated dramatical.

Or it is a grand Musical Composition. Now a harmony of overwhelming diapason; now a simple, but deep-touching melody; now a strain in unison. One while welling out in triumphal bursting swell; and another while hanging upon trembling cadences.

Or it is a Mansion. The floor of it is parqueted with mosaic, whose tint and pattern never repeat themselves. The walls of it are the everlasting hills, curtained, and fringed, and festooned with the living upholsterer-work of branching trees and tender flowrets. The roof of it is curiously wrought with rafters of cloud, many-coloured—now roseate and gilded, anon orange and silvery, and anon grey and gloom-stricken. Lighted it is by the sun, brightly; or by the dotted stars, dimly; but beautifully ever. Replete the Mansion is, with all imaginable furnitures of delight or service. No palace-pleasance but what is there. No lack of cotter's need.

Is it not the imperfect compendium of that wider palace which we call Heaven?

But the World, whether as Picture, Poem, Music, or Mansion, is the careful and well-finished handiwork of the Divine Artist. It is, therefore, the Best, the only Perfect Archetype—in Painting, Poetry, Music, Architecture.

The Artist—gifted withal with skill and insight—who believes this with the strongest and the deepest Faith, will produce the nearest to the Best in his special Art, whether as Painter, or Sculptor, or Musician, or Poet, or Architect.

But the merely intellectual belief of it will hardly serve him for the full rendering of his mission. He must even *feel* it, in the very depths of his soul. But he shall never feel it, if he know not and feel not also this—That the Divine Artist is implete with an infinite Love for every touch and lineament of his handiwork, from the star-dotted firmament to the twining tendril. Love is the primal attribute of God, and is greater than his Omnipotence; for it contains that. When the man's human heart is filled to the

brim with a like Love, and his belief thereby becomes a living Faith within him, Power will be his, and he will be an Artist indeed.

The Artists of the Pagan time had the intellectual Belief, but were elevated by no knowledge or feeling of this Love. Hence Egyptian, Assyrian, and Grecian Art, lack much of the redundant life and inspiration of Holy Nature. The Roman had neither the Belief, nor the Love which elevates belief into Faith.

The Artists of the Mid-Christian time lived in the grey early dawn of what, in our splendid pride, we call Science. But they were lighted in every hand-tracing of their work by strong, loving Faith; beautiful as strong.

The Italian Artists of later time relapsed into the scepticism of the Roman.

If you will read on, you will find an application of this extended Definition; the commentary and illustration of which, as an abstract matter, would fill a book.

REMINISCENCES.

EACH of the great nations which has left a notable signature on the page of the world's history, produced a form of architectural art which is distinguished from other forms by special characteristics, and marked by an unmistakeable idiosyncrasy. The truth of this, as a general proposition, is not affected by the fact that there are points in common between some of these forms. For example, the difference between Egyptian and Greek art is not the less distinct because each is essentially Columnar, and devoid of the arch. Nor could Roman Architecture ever be confounded with Grecian, though the Orders were used in both. These points in common between a given national form and another national form preceding or succeeding it, are simply the links in that chain of connexion which runs through all the higher

forms of Architecture, from the temple and palace at Karnak and Louqsor to the works of living Gothic artists. Just as there is a series, or connecting chain, of facts, broken sometimes, but still more or less consecutive, in every department of civilization; by which we trace our present possessions in Science, Art, or Politics, through a succession of defined epochs to their remote origin in early time.

The Architecture of each of these archaic nations is so intimately woven with the history of its whole Life, that it is inseparable from it. So when the historic student looks back upon them through the intervening ages, he sees them always, in a mental picture, moving to and fro amid their palaces and temples. And he finds always a consonance between their structural art and their habits and manners; and a concurrence in the epochs of these. So that the advance or recession of their civilization declares itself in the progress or decline of their art. Civilization and Architecture approximately inter-indicate one the other. So that where we see the remains of a

city, fairly preserved—like Pompeia, for example—we can, without necessarily knowing anything of the history of its inhabitants, form a sufficiently clear notion of their habits, tastes, and progress in practical science. On the other hand, having a knowledge of the history of a people—as of the Hebrews—but possessing no remnants of their structures, we are justified in picturing their Architecture as in conformity with their degree of civilization. Israelitish Architecture, when it grew out of being tent-like, would doubtless struggle to be somewhat Egyptian; and a house would probably be a rectangular enclosure, formed by massy walls carrying a flat terrace. Heavy, lumbering columns would here and there be found, curiously disposed. This until the Romans taught them better.

The local influences of climate materially affect the forms of architectural art. For example, in southern regions, where rain is unfrequent, temples are open to the sky, and dwellings have flat roofs. But as we go northward, and the frequency of rain increases, the roofs rise to a ridge, until we

arrive finally at the high-pitched roof of Northern Gothic.

Another point of importance and interest in connexion with climate, is the fact that a striking feature in all Southern Architecture is the quantity of Flat Surface which extends over the whole structure. This was usually covered either with brilliant colour, or with sculpture in low relief or intaglio, which was "picked out" with colour—mostly running in horizontal bands. In the North, on the other hand, the amount of Flat Surface is very much reduced; until in the best period of the Gothic it is broken up by projections and recesses of all kinds, porches, buttresses, canopies and niches, statuary. Even in the Italian, which is half-way between extreme southern and extreme northern forms, the architect seems to aim at getting rid of as much flat space as he conveniently can, by pediments and balconies to windows, by pilasters, by string-courses. But the Northern Artist, even in the interior disposition of his design, thinks of the rain, the damp, the fog, the mist, and does not care to trust to Colour only for the adornment.

of his building. That he knows will fade. He rather chooses to beautify it with boldly-sculptured stone, with that perennial lithic foliage which fades not, but envelopes itself in ever-increasing charms under the hands of moisture and of time. He uses Colour in a subsidiary sense.

Some historical reminiscences will serve to prove and illustrate these general observations, and thereafter lead us to some particular suggestions, which may enable us better to understand and appreciate our own position in reference to architectural modes.

I.

The earliest authentic accounts, of sufficient extent, which we possess of any people in reference to this matter, relate to the Egyptians. There exist the memorials of a civilized race anterior even to them, memorials older than the pyramids and the records of the first dynasty. But the most we know of this race is, that they really walked upon the earth. Their annals are shrouded in the "hades of forgotten

things." We may assume that they bestowed the elements of their art and science upon their successors in the possession of the mystic land.

There are some points in Egyptian character and life which are to be specially noted. First, as to Religion. Though their creed and ceremonial assumed, exoterically, an idolatrous form, we know that the worship of animals and the images of them was, in the mind of the priesthood, only a symbol of the adoration due to the Highest Being. And there is strong evidence that the esoteric doctrine of the hierarchy was an elevated, and even sublime rendering of the splendid Pantheism of the antique world. The very fact that the mysteries of Religion were hid from the common people—apart from the dominant influence which the priesthood would humanly expect to acquire—is sufficient to show that there was about them a Height, a Breadth, and a Depth, which were piously deemed by those whose life was spent in the contemplation and elucidation of them, to be too grand for the imbecile compre-

hension of the illiterate herd. We must remember, further, that the priests were not merely the ministers of Religion, but that they were an inviolable confraternity, set apart for the cultivation of the whole range of then-existing science and philosophy, from politics to mechanics.

Next, as to General Science. This, with the Egyptians, was more of a speculative than of a practical character. It was natural that it should be so, in view of the fact that, as we said, there was a class specially set apart for the cultivation of it. So that their notions of Construction were simple and primitive in the extreme, and confined indeed to the mere art of laying stones one upon the other in a comely manner.

Lastly, as to Climate. There is no winter in Egypt, at least not in any sense approaching to our northern notion of it. Rain is unknown over a great portion of the country. The atmosphere is dry, inconceivably to us who live in perpetual mist. The sky is resplendent with a brilliant light; and the hazy clouds, which

sometimes rise at sunset, lie upon the level horizon like bars of fiery colour.

The Architectural Energy of this people tells the tale of their sombre mysticism in a truly marvellous fashion. In temple, in palace, in pyramid, in obelisk, in sphinx, there is a solemnity and a grandeur which touch the spirit with awe, as if of something supernatural. The calm dignity, the unbroken repose of these structures, well represent the majesty of a people whose primæval civilization is the basis on which rest all modern achievements. The quietness of outline, and the strange feeling of *compression* one has in contemplating their works, seem to be akin to the stern Silence which barred the vulgar from participation in the arcana of Religion and Science. The leaning lines, and the immense dead weight of their enormous edifices, are singularly indicative of the dense materialism which, after all, imbued and weighed down their loftiest religious aspirations—whose purest elements were but the abstractions of human intelligence. There is, however, a primal sublimity in their works which is

eminently typical of their conception of the eternal and imperturbed Rest of the Creator, whose only Action is Will. Indeed, the artist seems to have come direct to his labour from the contemplation of the awful attributes of God.

That the physical science of the Egyptians was of a speculative rather than a practical kind, betrays itself in the fact that though their priesthood were cunning in the working of divers miracles, the Vocal Memnon to wit, whereby to thrill the heart of the multitude, yet in Masonry they were incapable of more than the massing together of huge blocks. And though this was generally done so as to produce a well-disposed and harmonious design, there was yet an utter lack of attempt to save either material or labour.

If you have been rich enough in opportunity, you may have observed that there is much more of demonstrative gaiety amongst northern than amongst southern, or oriental, races. The all-pervading brightness of a southern sky seems to chasten noisy mirth. So in Egyptian art

we are struck by a singular gravity, and complete want of the frolic which peers from out the eyes of Gothic Gargoyles. And whilst speaking of climate, we must not fail to remark that it is in Egypt that we find the greatest extent of Flat Surface in Architecture. It is covered with flat historic, or hieroglyphic sculpture, made distinct by vivid colour, running along in level bands like the clouds at eventide. Here was a people with an Architecture special enough.

II.

From Egypt the Greeks derived the rudiments of their civilization, with some hints in Architecture. The type and origin of Egyptian structure is in the cavern, and the agglomeration of granite-blocks. Whilst the type and origin of Greek structure is in the gradually-refined timber pavilion. There is a remote resemblance, however, between the general outlines which are distinctive of these two great archaic forms of art. But as there was an essential difference in the character and pursuits of the

two races, so there is a marked contrast between the details of the two Architectures.

There was an impassable gulph between the creed and ceremonial of Egypt, and the Mythology of Greece. This latter was a great epic poem, veined with exquisite riches of fanciful imagery and deep insight. It was a symbolism, but of an altogether different kind from that of the Egyptians. For it sought to divinise the attributes of humanity. And therefore it did not satisfy the speculative souls of the antique giants in philosophy. Wherefore to quench somewhat their great longing, and inaugurate an immortal era in metaphysics, they rose aloft over the priestly lucubrations both of their native Greece and of elder Egypt.

The idealizing of the Actual, on the one hand, and the realizing of the Ideal, on the other, were the great features of Greek mind. So their poetry is even yet fresh and beautiful; and so with all our anatomical knowledge to-day we can hardly surpass their statuary. A warmth of feel-

ing, and a lively exuberance of imagination, shone out in their whole life.

They had made some progress in mechanical arts, yet their Science was, like the Egyptian, more speculative than practical. They knew much more of theoretical Mathematics than of their application. Politically, they had little national unity. Their country is of diversified aspect; and its climate, though varied by rains and snows of winter, is warm, bright, and genial.

Their Architectural Energy was a notable one, unique, complete in itself as the perfect impress of national habit and thought. The ponderous materialism of Egyptian art is hardly visible in this. Though the columns taper, and are at first cumbrous, there are some perpendicular lines which give elegance of outline. There is an evident struggle to rise higher, to be rid of unnecessary weight. We breathe freely in looking upon a Greek temple, and feel that the architect was happy in his work. There is a tendency to lightness in design, there is a beauty of composition, and a chasteness of ornament, which please the

eye and generally satisfy the poetic sense. And the cultivated mind is not shocked by the grim aspect of uncomely monsters, as in the Egyptian, which have not their likeness in heaven or earth, or in the waters under the earth. There is an air of general refinement and elevation. There is still the greatest simplicity of construction, but no lavish piling-up of material. And there is an altogether higher style of workmanship, rendered necessary indeed by the peculiar character of the ornamentation. Architecture is made a science; and we meet now, for the first time, the phenomenon of regular proportions between the different parts, and between the various members of these. The diameter of a column has a fixed ratio to its height, and the depth of the cornice to that of the architrave and frieze. This system is, indeed, carried to an excess, without producing a correspondent result of real artistic power. Then, in accordance with the varied tastes of the different communities, and in keeping with the diversified nature of the country, there are different styles, which we now designate The Orders.

In what concerns climate, we perceive the introduction of a slightly raised roof, instead of the perfectly flat top of Egyptian buildings. The Pediment, or gable, of this roof forms the crowning member of the front of the structure. And upon the due proportion of its pitch, or height, depends the whole beauty of the composition of the front. This is a fact to be borne in mind when we come to consider the modern adaptations of this form of art. And, finally, there is still a great extent of Flat Surface, covered with historic and mythologic sculpture, and with colour. But the sculpture is in higher relief. We are coming further north.

The Greek Architecture may be summarily described as evincing perfect finish, both of design and workmanship; and a general mathematical, rather than truly artistic completeness and elegance.

III.

The Romans borrowed from Greece their Religion, their Philosophy, their Science

and Arts, even their Manners and Costume, and much of their Language. Yet they were eminently unlike the Greeks. They were inferior to them in refined taste and elevated mental culture. But they were altogether superior to them as a practical people. The civilization of the Greeks was rather scholastic and artistic than experimental, whilst that of the Romans was much more utilitarian than speculative. The salient features of their character were a restless activity, an indomitable courage, and a military ardour which history has hardly rivalled. They superadded to the elements which they derived from Greece great knowledge and skill in mechanical arts and material appliances. Their craving appetite for conquest made them the masters of the ancient world, and they covered it with the monuments of their progress and industry. Previous to the decline of their empire, their wealth and resources were prodigious. It was at this period that their more elevated characteristics shone out in their brightness, casting a halo around their magnificent vices. Their literature was of so elegant a cast,

and so fascinating in its grace and freedom, that it has impressed its influence upon every page which has been written in Christendom up to the present day. The perfection of their laws, their political independence, the personal dignity and freedom of the citizen, are matters not to be overlooked in relation to our subject.

Of course we know all this perfectly well. But reflect one moment, whether what we have indicated was not wrought out in their Architecture, in a special manner, and whether there was not a notable Energy in that also. After the Roman conquest of Greece, the Greek architects had an extensive practice in Italy. So that the early Roman structures were almost purely Grecian, having impressed upon them such modifications as grew out of the differing habits and requirements of the people, and the necessities of climate. Among these latter, was the *increased pitch* of roof, and consequently of the Pediment. The perfect balancing of parts in the Greek front was disturbed by this, and we can already perceive, in some examples, an

appearance of too much weight on the columns.

But the Romans soon discovered that this merely trabeated Architecture was not the thing for them. It was all too strait and confined for their multiplied wants and expansive ideas. They must needs be out of it, and find something more elastic.

The leap from Trabeated to Arcuated Structure was like the transition from the stage-coach to the railway-train. It revolutionized its special department. Architecture became now, more than ever, an Art. There is nothing new under the sun. Most great inventions or discoveries have been hit upon in one shape or other in earlier times. A kind of steam-engine had been several times in motion before Watt made the thing itself. And so in the archaic ruins of pre-Roman structures there are some examples of the arch-principle. But as an Element of construction and design it was unknown to the earlier ancients. The Romans had the honour of first applying it in this sense. The *man* who first made use of it deserves an immortality of

memory—if we but knew his name. For to the Arch are due all the manifold beauties and life-like expression of those higher forms of Architecture which have grown into being since the Christian era. It has been suggested, and with some show of reason, that the necessity for spanning the numerous rivers of Italy for the great roads of the empire, first led to the general introduction of the Arch as a constructive element. However, the extensive use of it is the great distinctive feature of Roman Architecture, as compared with anterior forms. The Greek Orders are used only in a subordinate sense, to fill up and adorn the spaces between the arches. The Colosseum is the most familiar example of this.

And here we may remark on the decreased amount of Flat Surface. We are coming still further north. What there was of it was greatly covered by these Orders, converted into pilasters—and what not—projecting boldly; instead of the *bassi-rilievi* we have encountered hitherto.

The civil edifices of the Romans, their palaces, baths, theatres, basilicas, were not

distinguished by any pre-eminent attribute of beauty. The absence of true artistic life and force is fully revealed. Their very conquests seem to be typified in the ornamentation which they adopted from a foreign source. And as the dishonest invasion of our neighbour's right brings the penalty of a destruction of symmetry in moral character, so a want of Truthfulness, of Realness, is immediately manifest in structural art as the result of this *putting-on* of an extrinsic garb.* For, as these Greek Orders are used in Roman Architecture, they form no intrinsic element of the building. You might very well cut them away, and still leave a solid wall, a substantial, and not ineffective structure. There is, however, some compensation for this unquestionable feature of Sham, in vastness of dimension and grandeur of composition. It is worth while also to note the perfect adaptation of the buildings

* It would be well if the General Public would read what is said about Truth, and about some other very vital matters in Architecture, in the *Seven Lamps of Architecture*, by the maligned Mr. Ruskin. Really, notwithstanding your economics, the book is worth somewhat more than its price.

of the Romans to their special purposes. Then, as an indication of practical attainments, there is admirable solidity of construction; more the result of a scientific balancing of weight and thrust, than of mere mass of matter. Material is economized; and there is a praiseworthy perfection of workmanship. Masonry has by this time become a Craft, and achieves something on its own account. They knew how to make mortar too; mortar that lasted longer than the stone sometimes. And we still call our best efforts in this particular—"Roman."

In their domestic Architecture, as might well be anticipated, we encounter what is more peculiarly akin to the literary refinement of the elegant patrician, and the inviolable personality of the *Civis Romanus*. I should say that a Roman House was as near perfection in that kind as could well be conceived; keeping in mind the tempered mildness of the Italian climate. Whilst the exterior attracted the eye by a noble simplicity, or sometimes chilled by a cold and cynic stateliness, the interior was delight-

fully arranged and richly adorned. There was not unoften a redundancy of luxe, and lavish display of costly properties. You can understand the conventional meaning of the word "classic," when you get a glimpse of the square court with its fountains, statues, and flower-vases; its central opening to the soft blue sky; its surrounding suite of richly-appointed rooms; its marble pilasters, mosaic panels, and bright frescoes. The Citizen was Emperor here. This was his Domain.*

IV.

Upon the disruption, and subsequent subdivision, of the Roman Empire there occurred a pause in that gradual development of Architectural Art through a succession of forms, which we have traced thus far. This was the result of the temporary overthrow of Order, and the bar which was, for a time, put to all progress by the incur-

* This word Domain, by-the-by, comes from the same root as the word *domus*, the name he gave to his house—both from *δωω*, to build. And *domus* comes much nearer to our word "home" than the corresponding term in any of the languages cognate of the Latin.

sions of the Barbarians. But presently in the Eastern Empire, and in a portion of Italy itself, so soon as there was some approach to a settlement from the widespread confusion, there appeared the signs of an altogether new life in Art. For some six centuries—say from the fifth to the twelfth—the manifestations of this renewed vitality were varied enough. As there were now several empires, lesser and greater, where heretofore there had been but one, so there were several new forms of structural art corresponding to them. As all of these were developed out of the later Roman, they are generically termed *Romanesque*,* an appellation which may be taken to include all the Architecture of Europe up to the end of the twelfth century, and which is distinguished by the semi-circular arch.

On the one hand was the Byzantine mode, marked by many interesting peculiarities ;

* Mr. Fergusson (*Illustrated Handbook of Architecture*) wishes to restrict this term to the brief transition from proper Roman to early Venetic and Lombardic. I think he is wrong. We want a *generic* appellation for the Architecture mentioned above ; and the very termination of the word *Romanesque* marks it as appropriate to be applied to all modes which had their proximate origin in the Roman.

and bearing out the first general principle which we wish to establish—That each of the historical nations had an Architecture especially expressive of its idiosyncrasy.

Perhaps in no direction is this fact so powerfully illustrated as in the unique and wonderful Architectural Energy of the Mohammedan nations. Their Art arrived at its perfection after the establishment of the Arabic empire in Europe, and had its elementary foundation partly in the traditions of the Asiatic modes, and latterly in the then modern examples of the Byzantine which fell under the Arab dominion. As it belongs to a series which is not immediately connected with this portion of our subject, except in so far as it enforces the truth of the principle just enunciated, it must be dismissed for the present with a brief mention. It attained its greatest refinement in India; its greatest splendour in the voluptuous climate of Andalusia, where the Moslem Khaliphs reigned for upwards of seven centuries over perhaps the most brilliant—and yet the saddest—passage of heroism, learning, refinement, and luxury,

ever recorded in history. Its distinctive features were—First, the various and eccentric forms of the arches; and, Second, the abundance of Flat Surface; which was covered with a slightly-raised diaper-work, of an infinitude of patterns, and richly coloured. We have here another proof of a fact to which we have several times adverted;—that in travelling southward the Flat Surface increases in extent, whilst the sculpture on the wall-veil decreases in the boldness of its projection. And the proof in this case of the Moresque—referring more particularly for the moment to the Spanish mode—is the more striking, because though founded in great part on a style which had its seat in a more northern latitude, it yet manifests a kindred character in this respect to the styles which prevailed on the same parallel, or to the south of it.* We shall have occasion to recur to

* Here are the approximate latitudes :—

Cairo	30
Athens	38
Rome	42
Constantinople	41
Granada	37

this Architecture, and consider some of its peculiarities more at length.

To return to the series which is to conduct us to our own art-manifestations. Taking the Roman as the point of departure, we have, on the one hand, as we said, the Byzantine. On the other, there are the Venetian, the Lombardic, and the Norman.

Now that these strong-handed, untamed Northmen have come down upon the Southern Plains, we must look for something amazingly different from what we have hitherto seen, or might have imagined. This northern iron will sure enough strike out of the classic flint some bright scintillations of human thought and fancy. As it was not ordained that either Greece or Rome should be eternal, so it could hardly be supposed that their Architecture should be. It would but ill accord with the great immutable Law of Progress, that art should be everlastingly straitened and bound up in Orders. At least, so thought these new Masons, in the fulness of their caprice and passion for freedom.

The early Venetian and Lombardic styles

are different inflexions of the same mood. There is a hardly appreciable difference due to the separate origin of the two peoples. The Venetians were of the old Italian stock, whilst the Lombards were of the northern lineage. So in the early Architecture of the former, there is a somewhat nearer relationship to the later Roman models: though in each the capitals of the columns have a corrupted Corinthian character, and the mouldings have the squareness and rigidity of the classic originals. The Orders, however, are altogether got rid of. Beautiful as they doubtless were in their day and generation, we leave them behind us now, for the present. We shall espy their resuscitated ghost by and by, nearer home, making both day and "night hideous."

Here at Venice, not without truth, we cleped the Beautiful, there subsequently arose, in the Gothic period, an Architecture whose grandeur of design, richness of detail, and independence of thought, made it a veritable index of the character of a people

who, through many struggles without and within, attained to an elevation of political dignity and commercial splendour which has immortalized their name.

V.

We perceive the dawn of a New Life, as we said, in these Western Romanesque modes. The mathematical formalism of the Grecian, and the mendacious ornamentation of the Roman, are not the elements of expression which seem to suit the hearty mirthfulness, the wilful imagination, the redundant physical energy, of the now settled descendants of those northern marauders who broke up the effete polity of the City of the Seven Hills, and these later Teutons who, in this tenth century—in and about it—poured into Lombardy a fresh stream of strength and manliness. The memories of the old boar-haunted forests, with their sombre shade, their gnarled and knotted trees, their bosques thick-laced and beautified by climbing flowers; the traditions

of Elf-king and Faëry-queen, with all their long procession of curious and grotesque kith,—

“ Nisses, Noks, and Kobolds, Kelpies, Norns, and Trolls,”

have travelled down from the chilly North and met the Genius of Architecture wending her way up from the South, with measured step. She is to be crowned with garlands from these old forests, and the skirts of her train dotted with fragments from these old legends. A wild poetry and all the concomitants of a deep pathos, have now to find their expression. These are something more than mathematical abstractions and mere utilitarianisms, and must have a freer and a higher scope.

But another, grander, and infinitely loftier influence has been gathering strength now for a decade of centuries. The Christian Faith has by this time supplanted the poor Human Paganisms in great part of the West, and some of the East, of the Old World. It has long been quietly moulding the forms of temple-structure into a harmony with its own spirit and requirements.

And it will be well to keep very distinctly in mind, that it is *to the Ecclesiastical Architecture of the nations of all time, that we must look for the full and unrestrained exposition of the principles and peculiarities of their Art.* The vast power of inspiration which Christianity imparted to structural art, in these middle ages, is pretty well inconceivable, and certainly altogether incredible to us who, in these later days,—notwithstanding our partial revival of Art,—are very much enveloped in the impenetrable shroud of an opinionated scepticism. This inspiration, however, did not declare itself in the Romanesque modes, even the latest of them, with that fulness of energy and richness of expression with which it manifested itself in the succeeding Gothic modes. But it did declare itself, and that in many unmistakable ways, in general composition, and in sculptured detail.

The whole Romanesque period is one of gradual transition, from the mythic creeds and barbaric civil polities of the Pagan Æra, to the monotheistic spiritualism and advanced social organization of the Christian Epoch:

And its Architecture indicates the slow, but sometimes fitful, progress and development of that transition. But it is yet marked, in the three principal styles into which it may be divided, by characteristics so distinct and full of meaning, as to render it a worthy object of study to the inquirer into the growth of modern civilization.

VI.

The Norman is the particular mode of this period which directly affects us, and brings us to the kernel of the matter. It had a twofold source. On the one hand, it borrowed its primary elements from the Gallic remains of Roman Art; and, on the other, it kept pace with the development of the Lombardic by direct communication with Italy. At the beginning of the twelfth century, however, it sprung in advance of Italian art, and, contemporaneously with German-romanesque, began to assume those features which ultimately produced the Pointed, or Gothic Architecture. And it may be observed here that:

this last never had a spontaneous development in Italy, and cannot be said to have existed there at all as a complete, national style; as it did in Germany, France, and Britain. It was unsuited, indeed, to the habit and feeling of the Italian people, who, in spite of the strong northern element which had been infused into them, began to absorb this foreign mixture, recover their aboriginal characteristics, and be once more what, indeed, they still are—Italians.

The Norman Architecture strongly expressed the Norman Race; who were no more Robbers than their neighbours, even if no less. They were sturdy knights, and good Christians too, as things went in those days. Saxon blood here in England is so spiteful about their hard practice in the matter of landed property, that one is apt to be made to forget how, judged by their own times, they were a people eminent for their robust manliness, their daring enterprise, their hardy heroism, their superior civilization, and their chivalrous dignity. Really you can afford to think a little charitably of them, seeing that they were your grand-

sires. Their structures, many of which are still erect in the midst of you, do they not speak nobly for them?

This style was yet in its infancy when it began to take root in England; which occurred a little before the Conquest. It was immediately after that event, however, that it became the national mode. The works were for a long time directed by Norman artists, and executed to some extent by Norman workmen. But you may readily imagine that the chief number of these would be of the Saxon race. This is evident, indeed, from the rude character of the masonry in early examples. But these Saxon craftsmen were in the way of educating themselves, and being deft-fingered and somewhat quick to learn, and having withal a certain love for the comely, they grew in good time to be tolerable adepts in their art.

For the present, this Norman style is distinct enough. It has all the general characteristics of the Romanesque period. But it has a power and force of its own. You know it at once by its largeness of outline,

its great breadth and solidity, its massiveness of construction, and, as it becomes developed, its great richness of detail—not devoid of elegance. In its bold, semi-detached sculpture, there is the commingling of the memories of the old forests with a venerative love for the teachings of the Christian Faith. Of the Orders, and other classic paraphernalia, there is no trace visible, except to the initiated and practised eye.

In the North of Italy the Lombards have considerably raised the pitch of their roofs, as compared with the Roman elevation further south. But in Normandy, and especially in England, the long-continued snows and the slow-searching rain render necessary a still greater rise. And as this style becomes nationalized here, and grows into English-pointed, we have the effective high-peaked roof. This resulted chiefly from climate-considerations, and partly from the need of harmony with the lofty arch. I say, chiefly from the former, because it becomes as universal in domestic structures, where the high pointed arch does not always

necessarily occur, as it does in ecclesiastical. This must be borne in mind.

A kindred question is that of Flat Surface; though, indeed, this is not so immediately connected with climate as with temperament, which is in a great degree the result of that. It may occur to the reader versed in architectural characteristics, that the principle we have laid down with reference to this point does not meet with its proof here. A little reflection will probably remove that impression. It is true that in *early* Norman buildings there is an overabundance of Plane Surface, indeed a baldness of bare wall. But it was in the nature of the case that it should be so. The style began, as we have seen, with a primitive copying of late Roman and early Lombard work. It was at first, therefore, little more than the putting up of a certain number of walls of sufficient strength, with a sufficient roof; some care of rude design being bestowed on doorways and windows. But as the style progressed, and grew, and came to have a life of its own, the invariable northern tendency to be rid of bald walls,

and even shallow and shadowless ornamentation, gradually showed itself; until at length arcades, niches, and the like, cover nearly the whole building within and without. It is important to observe carefully the development of this feature in Northern Art, for it eventually becomes, with its variform sculpture, as great a distinguishing peculiarity of that as the pointing of the arch, and the enrichment of it with tracery. And these two peculiarities together, elevate the Gothic into the very antithesis of all Classic Forms.

Before the introduction of the Norman style into England, there was really no Architecture here. True there were buildings enough, but of so rude a fashion that educated Art had clearly had no finger in them. It will be well, then, to record at this point the distinct avowal, that this style was wholly and entirely a foreign importation. But was that the only thing which was imported, and which was foreign? Why, there came along with it a foreign dynasty, a foreign aristocracy, a foreign

polity, a foreign population, a foreign language, and manners altogether foreign. And there happened to the Architecture precisely what happened to all the rest. It became a part of England. It grew to be national. It was grafted on to the old branchless trunk of Saxon primitiveness, and flourished like a green bay-tree.

VII.

We do not draw a sufficiently strong distinction between the two periods of our history, which are naturally divided by the Conquest. That great event was properly the commencement of proper *English* history. We have accustomed ourselves for so long to make high boast of our Saxon Enterprise, Saxon Energy, Saxon This, and Saxon the Other, that we have come at last to accept all this Saxon Cant as very gospel, when in truth it is simply historical nonsense. If these Saxons, in whose pater- nity we profess to glory so much, had been left to themselves, do you suppose that

to-day there would have been such an England as this? They were sorry adventurers, these. They found no civilization when they came here, and brought but little with them. They found themselves just strong enough to take possession of the country, and they settled down comfortably enough as they thought, I dare say. But even a few Danes managed to upset them. And they fell back before the conquering Norman like flocks of sheep. If they had been the Men we take them for, they would not have crouched to conquest as they did. By the way, their practice in the matter of landed property, on their first landing, was not a whit less hard than that of the maligned Norman. They had virtues. But they were of the Passive, not the Active kind. We inherit from them, doubtless, our sullen perseverance, devotion to labour, and all the *homely* beauties of our character. But it is our Norman blood which has given us Genius, and Enterprise, and indeed all those attributes of which we are the most proud. It is from the battle of Hastings

that we must date our existence as a nation, and the gradual rise and progress of our empire.

It was just as well that the Saxons were mastered by a mere Duke, with a scrap of territory on the mainland, to whom it occurred to be a pleasant, and altogether safer, arrangement to establish himself as supreme in this kingdom—as being more compact, and having a somewhat better-guarded frontier, than his own. Otherwise we may well believe that these glorious, rainy, misty islands would in due time have become an appanage of France. But Duke William came hither with his household, and his household gods; and not only them, he brought with him the better half of his tribe. And in good time the subject-race submitted to the dominant race, and this looked kindly on the other, for it was fair, and from the marriage of the two sprung that goodly English Nation, which has ever since set the world by the ears. So that, after all, this Norman Architecture—though foreign to the *land*, the mere *terra firma*—was rather native, it would seem, to the

new race which grew up and dwelt upon it.

It was towards the last quarter of that eleventh century, then, that this great Norman-saxon England was born into the family of nations. And if you will but clear your eyes from the soot and smoke of factories, and look back into the clear old time, you will be amazed to see what a strong, robust growth it had; and how the restlessness, and the proneness to daring adventure, of its earlier youth betokened the grand achievements of its maturity. War was then the Great Business of life, and vehicle for the diffusion of such civilization as existed—as Commerce now is. And our worthy forefathers did their duty in that state of life unto which it pleased God to call them, as the Catechism has it, with just as much thoroughness as we now attend to cotton-grinding and railroad-manufacturing. And doubtless the great need they had of fighting implements and harness, had much to do with founding that race of craftsmen so cunning in cutler and smith work, of whom we are now so justly

proud. Even War has its ultimate uses. But with all their fighting, the broad acres were not left untilled. Nor the making of many good laws neglected. Nor the schoolman's lore thought lightly of.

But there was one thing pre-eminently remarkable in their character, and which irradiated with a beautiful light their whole every-day life. This was no less than their thorough Religiousness. They *believed* the Creed which they professed, and they carried that Belief with unhesitating boldness into everything which they undertook. And if the Church of the day, which was the only teacher vouchsafed to them, winked at many of their old pagan superstitions, and, already clouded with error, led them into some new ones—what is that to you? What is it to you, that they divided their adoration between the immaculate virgin and the Immaculate Christ? They *had* a Faith, and, walking in such light as was given to them, they were not ashamed of that Faith. They built churches and monasteries, which you gaze at now with a kind of lack-lustre wonder, in honour of

their Faith. They put up crosses, some few of which the destructions of time have still left for you to stare at, as a sign of their Faith. They went to the Holy Land, which was further from them than you are now from the Antipodes, to rescue the Sepulchre of the Founder of their Faith from the pollution of infidel possession. Will you believe it?—they fought, and bled, and fell, for their Faith. We read this at school, truly, but it is very much to be doubted whether the actual, solid truth of it enters into our minds. The most we do is to pity their folly, and think to ourselves how extremely absurd it was of them, to give themselves so much trouble about so fantastical and unimportant a fancy as—Faith. We have arrived, now-a-days, at so elevated a Stand-point that we can look down upon all this with a proper, rational contempt. A man must be very far gone in delusion, a very insane enthusiast indeed, who can bring himself up to the point of bestowing more upon his Religion—as we call it—than exactly one hour and a half by the clock every Sunday. It is quite true

that our Stand-point is lofty. Perhaps it is a trifle too high. The pinnacle of Pride from which Lucifer was so ignominiously hurled does not come nearly up to it.

For more than three hundred years now, ever since the Reformers laid bare the unqualified rottenness and corruption into which the Roman Church had fallen, as into a slough, we have done nothing but revile the antecedent Middle Ages. We think, and speak, only of the denizens of those times, our forefathers with the rest, as men who wallowed in injustice, in oppression, in lust, in all the long category of debased animal vice. We think their whole occupation was throat-cutting, land-getting, retinue-marshalling, wickedness and folly; and that the atmosphere in which they lived was fouled and reeking, with the murky fumes of licentiousness and ignorance. An ugly picture! But it is simply untrue. Untrue, because this is only the one side of it, and that very much over-daubed. One may venture to think that Three Centuries of continuous abuse ought reasonably to satisfy us. Suppose we now put a term to

this rooted prejudice, by the reflection that we were driven into choler, and very righteously exasperated, by the apostasy and misdeeds of a polluted priesthood, and the interminable train of evils which followed in their wake. Suppose we take up our histories, generally fatuous and imbecile though they be, and re-read them. We shall discover much nobleness and virtue, indeed we shall, a plenitude of chivalrous truthfulness, a hearty realness, a frankness and generosity, a wide open-heartedness, a general *sense* of justice, a stern adhesion to given objects. I am not so sure that they did not excel us, their children, in the greater number of these admirable qualities. To say the least of them, they were men like ourselves, and deserve some sprinkling of charity. There are bad men in all times and places. There are a few even amongst us, hidden somewhat perchance under a conveniently elongated visage. I cannot think we outshine the Old Men in Realness.

We shall certainly find on re-reading our histories that their Religiousness, which we

spoke of just now, and which we doubt so much or think lightly of, was a great fact about them which cannot be gainsaid. And if we close our books, and stroll away into any one of the temples which they built, or the ruin of one, we shall discover another fact about them very much akin to this—to our astonishment perhaps, although we have had the tangible testimony of it under our eyes since we could see. This is no less than their ardent Love of Nature. The proof, however, will lack the better half of its efficacy with you; for, unhappily, not caring, you know very little about Nature. You “admire” flowers, no doubt, but what special admiration have you for *leaves*? The love of Nature in your favourite Greeks, even, was manifested in a very indifferent way. There are some leaves which are more exquisitely beautiful than three-fourths of the flowers which are petted and potted in your greenhouses. As you go to the old crumbling ruin of your forefathers’ church you may pass an orchard, and gardens with green hedges.

Forget Debit and Credit for a

while, and look narrowly at the clusters of leaves on the apple and cherry trees, on the rose-trees, on the hawthorn branches, but above all on the oak-tree, if there be one. Look at the leaves everywhere. And when you come to the ruin, look at the ivy leaves, the real green ones. Not unlikely you will find some done in stone, if you look for them, and as like Nature's ivy as need be; especially if the green moss-mould be on them. Foliage is a lovely thing, and you would soon learn to love it if you saw more of it, and less of paving-stones. It was made to be loved, I rather think. Look round now upon the sculptured chapiters, the bosses, the corbels, the vine-leaves cut on the angles of the bases, the cunning leaf-work running up the shafts and round the arches, beautifying the doorways and the windows. There are flowers, too; such as damask the grassy bankside and sedgy shallow—

“ Spreading herbs and flowrets bright,
Glisten with the dew of night;
Nor herb nor flowret glisten there,
But are carved in the cloister arches fair.”

Examine it all closely, and see with what

D

chaste delicacy the hand of the workman has wrought them out, with what loving tenderness he has traced the lineaments of the clustered foliage you saw a while ago. Put in your fingers between the tendrils, and feel how the stone is cut away carefully under the leaves they carry, as if by faëry-craft. How gracefully the stone stalks curve and bend, as if stirred by a gentle wind. No formal stiffness here. No measuring of modules with foot-rules; though that can be done too in its place. And see what a pleasant life is breathed into all this by those grotesque little heads—of squirrels, or some such tribe—peeping out here and there as if from the shadow of their own branches in the woods. The memories of the old forests again.

This is not Fancy, mark you, but a reality which you may feast your eyes on, and touch with your unbelieving fingers, any day of your life you choose to take the trouble. We speak of their churches here, because they loved most to adorn the temples of their Faith. But you will find the same feature, in a less degree, in their domestic

structures; even in the furniture of their dwellings. Can you think that these men would have spent so much patient labour, so much careful thought, so much educated skill, as we find here, if their love of Natural Beauty had not been intense and all-pervading? And there is not merely the Artist-architect who directed, and the Artist-workman who executed. Can you imagine that the Baron, your great cut-throat bugbear, would have given his land, and his rents, and his tithes, and his Ladye her jewels and trinkets, for the undertaking and accomplishing of all this if they had not loved to see it when done; if they had not been quite sure, indeed, that it would be done? I do not believe it.

In the old times, every man who was not a baker, a tanner, a smith, or a mere serf, was either a soldier or a priest, or both. And the *good* priest did good service in his generation. There were Monks in those days. Not yet many of your sack-drinking, obese-idlers, whose church was their refectory, and whose god was their belly. But

men devoted to works of charity and mercy, amid much lawlessness and oppression; to the cultivation of literature, amidst universal ignorance; to the preservation of the Archives of Civilization, amid the turmoil of that mediæval world; and last, nor least, to the culture of Art in all its forms. And it is chiefly to their care and industry, as the Artists of their time, that we are indebted for those goodly structures which yet adorn our land, and give a glorious lustre to the green landscapes of this old England. Honour to whom honour.

VIII.

Let us now go back a little to the history of Architecture in this kingdom; the history not of mere dates, but of principles.

In rather more than a century after the Conquest, the Norman style had taken root and spread itself over the country. It was far, however, from any approach to being a perfect style. There was a waste of strength in the weight and massiveness of its construction, a want of elegance in ex-

terior composition, and a certain ruggedness in its detail and ornamentation. It was at best, as we have already said of all Romanesque modes, but a transition to something nobler, more refined, and more skilful. It possessed, however, an inherent expansiveness; partly from the fact of its being transitional, but chiefly from the real artistic elements which it embodied. The variety of its ornamentation, unhampered now by classic formulas, and the combinations arising from the use of interlacing arcades and vaulted aisles, were features which minds gifted with a happy Insight could develop unlimitedly. And so in this last quarter of the twelfth century, we find a marvellous change effecting itself in the whole spirit and life of Architecture. A change truly more wonderful than had yet occurred in the annals of art-progress. The wings of the chrysalis had grown apace, and after being encased since the Beginning in material rigidities and unfeelingness, this the Mother and Mistress of the Arts soared rapidly upwards into the higher region of sentiment and spirituality, and presently

revelled amid the freshness of poetic fervour and beauty.

The first sign of the transformation was in the substitution of the Pointed for the Semi-circular Arch. The theorists have sought to account for the origin of this form in a variety of ways. Somebody, with more fancy than research, has wished to persuade us that it was imitated directly from the meeting of branches in the woods. The same sentimental genius* traces the whole origin of Gothic Architecture to huts made of wythes tied together, which afterwards bud and blossom, and so on. But this Aristotelian method of treating art is altogether absurd, and contrary to fact. It is just possible that the Pointed Arch had an Eastern origin; but this is open to grave doubt. The first *outline* of it is found in the intersection of the round arches in Norman arcades. But it is now admitted by all sound authorities that its first use in *construction*, occurs in certain cases where two unequal spaces had to be spanned by arches of equal height—the greater width

* Sir James Hall.

having the semi-circular arch, normal to the style, and the lesser the pointed. And this which came into use as a structural necessity, soon formed the leading feature in the new order which grew into being. For the Artist, endowed with the happy Insight, having once seen it, could not fail to be struck with its eminent beauty. This marks the commencement of the Gothic Æra.

One word about the term "Gothic." This was first applied, it seems, to Pointed Architecture as a nickname, as indicative of derision and contempt. Some say by Inigo Jones, others by Christopher Wren. It matters infinitely little. Both these men, whom it has been and is yet the fashion to laud as the founders of Architecture, forsooth, in England, had the same extreme delicacy of taste, and looked upon the benighted authors of the Pointed Style as simple Barbarians—Goths, Visigoths, and all manner of Vandals. But we accept the cognomen most cheerfully, not because, as you may think, there is now no help for it; but because it is the most accurate and appropriate that could possibly be adopted.

This is the Form of Art in which the great Gothic Family have manifested their peculiar character and attributes; just as the Egyptians, the Greeks, the Romans, the Saracens, in their forms. This is their special Architectural Energy. How can we do better than call it after them? And the question—Whether it be not superior to all other forms—is not so much one of Taste as you may imagine. I am persuaded that its *abstract superiority might be inductively demonstrated upon scientific and æsthetic grounds*. This is, however, beyond the scope of these Notes.

IX.

We have already admitted that the Norman Architecture was an importation into this country. But we saw that those who brought it here brought themselves along with it, thereby preserving its character of indigenusness, in the true sense. For Architecture does not grow out of the ground, I suppose, but out of the heads, and hearts,

and hands, of the people. It is very generally believed, however, that the Gothic was also alien, and never properly a natural, national emanation. We are told by no less an authority than Lord Palmerston, that "the Gothic is not an English style of Architecture, but was imported from abroad;" and again, that "it is not true to say that the Gothic style is natural here, either by original invention or existing examples."* Notwithstanding his lordship's various and high attainments, and his wondrous skill as a statesman, it may be easily shown that he is but a sciolist in the history of our Native Art. The real historical fact is, that *Gothic Architecture had its earliest development in this country, and that English Art kept constantly ahead of its cognate species in the rest of Europe, in France, Germany, and Italy.* You may probably be somewhat astonished at such a statement, and may desire some proof of so interesting a fact. We cannot do better than quote from a very valuable

* Speech in the House of Commons.—*Times* of 5th August, 1859.

book published at the instance of the Oxford Society.* There we shall find irrefragable dates of "existing examples," contradicting word for word Lord Palmerston's gratuitous assumptions.

The transition from late Norman to early Gothic occurred in England, it seems, between 1175 and 1197. Some of the chief "existing examples" which were built during this period, and serve to mark it as transitional, are — parts of Canterbury Cathedral (1175—84), the Hall of Oakham Castle (1191), Christchurch Cathedral, Oxford (1180), Byland Abbey (1177), the Temple Church, London (1185), and the Galilee of Durham Cathedral (1197). Let us now compare these dates with those of foreign buildings in the same transitional style. We will take the words of the authority referred to:—

"A very valuable foreign example may be referred to, which bears considerable resemblance to the Galilee at Durham; the church of St. Mary at Toscanella in Italy, consecrated in 1206, as recorded on a contemporary inscription still preserved on part of the building."

* *Introduction to the Study of Gothic Architecture.* By Mr. Parker.

So much for Italy; now for Germany and France:—

“The greater part of the churches near the Rhine are of this period, as has been ably shown by M. Lassaulx. The Romanesque character is preserved in those churches down to about 1220, a period subsequent to some of our finest *Early English* work, such as,” &c., &c.

Now mark here that this *Early English* is later still than the transitional style we are considering. Again—

“The choir of the church of Notre Dame, in Paris, was commenced in 1163 and completed before 1185.” “The capitals are very similar to those of Canterbury (1184). It should be noticed that the plain round pillars with capitals in imitation of the Roman Composite continued in use in France for a very long period; not only throughout the thirteenth century, as at Chartres and at Amiens, but in later work also; and the same idea seems to be continued even in the Flamboyant work of the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries, while in *England* we never find them after the twelfth century. The square abacus* also is continued in France in all the styles, while with us it is a mark of transition work.”

This will be admitted to be sufficiently conclusive, coming as it does from the highest antiquarian authority. Every year of additional research into the records of mediæval structures, brings forward additional proofs of the priority of *English*, as referred to *Foreign Gothic*, and also of its

* Also a remnant of Classic Architecture.

greater purity ;—by which is meant its greater freedom from classic reminiscences. We shall have occasion to revert to this point.

X.

Gothic Architecture, then, had virtually come into existence in this country by the end of the twelfth century. But it was yet in its infancy. It went on gathering fresh strength and beauty year by year until the close of the thirteenth century, by which time it had arrived at a condition of mature development. It is to this period of our Native Art, commonly known as Early English, that our attention should be specially directed. It will be well to understand, for the sake of avoiding misapprehension, that our remarks will refer chiefly to the latest portion of the Early English period, verging upon the appearance of the second, or Decorated manner. And further, this is not a History of Architecture;—recurrence is had to that solely for the purpose of enabling us to seize upon

certain facts, which will presently be shown to be of some significance in view of our present circumstances.

We have suggested the existence of three prominent attributes in the character of the Englishmen of this period:—

Religiousness,
Realness, arising out of that, and
Love of Nature, akin to both.

For the evidence of this last we came, awhile ago, to this very Architecture. We shall discover in it the proofs of the other two also. And without much care of search. They are written on every stone of it.

The general characteristics of the Architecture of this period are singularly distinct, and, to some extent, unique. The first and most striking feature is the Verticality of composition, as directly opposed to the Horizontality of all anterior structural modes, including the Romanesque. Instead of the eye being carried *along* the building, it is led *upwards*. All the principal lines point skyward, and tell of Aspiration.

These men seem to feel as if they could never be high enough. It pains you to look aloft, up to the 'groined roof. You cannot help thinking of the sky above that, and how near they must be together; and for the time you forget the every-day world. The tall spire, the acutely-pointed roof—now, by the way, at the highest pitch it has yet attained, or is likely to do—the lancet-shaped arches, windows, niches, all are in harmony of upwardness. Then, the manner of construction is altogether advanced as compared with the previous period. We do not now depend for strength upon sheer mass and thickness. There is an accurate, scientific appreciation of difficulties to be overcome, and of the most graceful modes of overcoming them. Stone and handicraft have a certain value now, and must not be wasted. In the form of the various members, and the details of ornamentation, there is an entire, radical change from the semi-barbaric habit of the Norman period. Instead of the stolid massiveness of that, there is an unrivalled elegance and refinement, combined with the greatest nobleness and

dignity.* Finally, the amount of Flat Surface is reduced to the smallest extent, compatible with the due measure of relief requisite to give prominency and boldness to the projecting decorations. In some instances—the West Front of Wells Cathedral, for example—the wall is covered with a luxuriance of chastely-executed sculpture; statues of saints, martyrs, kings, enoused in richly-canopied and foliage-covered niches. The sculpture now is not merely in low, or high, relief, but is boldly detached from the face of the structure. The artists of these days found that there was not light enough from the English sky to bring out the features of basso or intaglio decoration, and so not being able to obtain effect by strong light, they strove to accomplish their end by deep shadow. Besides, being a bold, decided, outspoken race, how could they put up with a timid scratching of the pliable material under their chisels. *They* found it pliable, the hard stone, and they must needs show their mastery over it. This is

* Westminster Abbey is the most familiar example of this period, though not in all points the best.

part of the secret of the *undercutting* of the leaves we told you of. The rest of the secret is the delight they had in Nature; and the love they had for their Faith, which constrained them to adorn the Temple with the highest products of their genius.

But do not suppose that these observations have reference only to their ecclesiastical Art. We seem to refer chiefly to this because, as we have previously said, it is to the ecclesiastical Architecture of nations that we are to look for the full and unrestrained exposition of the principles and peculiarities of their Art. There is, however, a multitude of "existing examples" of the civil and domestic Architecture of our Fathers.* And to these the general principles which we are endeavouring to evolve apply with equal force. Indeed, the only difference that can be affirmed to exist between their ecclesiastical and civil edifices is, *that the former are incomparably richer, finer, and more costly than the latter.* Will

* See Mr. Parker's invaluable books—*Some Account of Domestic Architecture in England, from the Conquest to the Tudors.*

you inwardly digest this—if it be not too obdurate a morsel for you whose theatres, and concert-halls, and free-trade halls, and what not, shame the penurious niggardliness of the churches you pretend to patronize with your paltry florins.

Note well also that in these days they had not one style for churches, another for civil edifices, and another for mansions and dwelling-houses. They had One Style for all of these. And if they had had railway-stations they would have built them precisely after the same style, or *manner*, as their churches. With their One Style they possessed a variety of general effect in their streets and thoroughfares, a difference of design in their various structures, of which we in the present day—with even our multiplied infinity of styles, but utter lack of One—can form no remote conception. Unless indeed we have been in the good old towns of Flanders, which will amazingly help our imagination; though even these are infected with the eternal Orders. But our worthy ancestors reposed in that perfect Ignorance of classic modes, which to us

now-a-days would be supreme Bliss and a heaven-born relief. For our great Wisdom herein has brought us to the lowest depths of Folly.

It may be remarked, in passing, that we have few "existing examples" remaining to us of the dwellings of the Burgher-class of these centuries, simply because they were built for the most part of Wood and Lath-and-plaster, materials not over-durable.

We have suggested that their ecclesiastical structures were superior in all points to their halls, colleges, and castles. One can hardly credit the number of years they took to build some of their cathedrals. Longer than the New Palace of Westminster, some of them, and like that some of them are not finished even yet—the Abbey of Westminster, to wit. Indeed, they were often conceived on so grand a scale, that even the gigantic efforts of the devout of those times were insufficient for the completion of the design. But these superb piles, with their avenues of columns and arches, their groined roofs, their towers and spires, their flying buttresses, their

traceries and many-coloured windows, their niches and statuary, their exuberance of costly and fanciful decoration, could not have been erected without the expenditure of untold wealth. Indeed, they seem to set at defiance the considerations of Cost. The work, besides, was paid for as it was executed. There were no burdens of debt, and no need of the ingenious contrivance of Pew-rents to pay the usurious money-lender. So that, on the whole, the people of these thirteenth and fourteenth centuries must have been singularly impressed with the reality of their Faith, and their unequivocal bounden duty to do full honour to it. It was ill they could spare their lands, too, and goods, and money; for their outgoings were somewhat heavy in the items of Fighting and Pageantry. But they did spare them.

You of the supercilious nineteenth century are ready, however, with your well-worn, threadbare sneer,—All this had nothing to do with Faith. It was mere Good Works. Men thought by building churches, and paying for memorial-win-

dows and carved crockets, to save their miserable souls from perdition. Well, but if they *believed* that, that was their Faith surely. And these works were the Sign of it. What do you believe? And where are the signs of that? But your poor argument fails you again. For these wretched, superstition-haunted progenitors of yours conceived such a delight in the glowing beauties of their temples, and came to have such an affection for them, that they would needs have them copied in their public places and in their houses. So that, you perceive, their Faith and their Works, despised and barbarous, reacted upon their every-day life; and Religion was really and truly the Soul of Art.

XI.

Ornamentation is of two kinds, each broadly distinguished from the other, but sometimes converging.

1st. *Structural*, or that which cannot be disengaged from a building without disturbing the stability of any portion of it, or

affecting the proper fulfilment of its purposes.

2nd. *Accessory*, or that which is separable from construction without positive injury.

One may venture to say, that exactly in the proportion that any given Form of Architecture is distinguished by the former, in that proportion will be its claim to be considered as approaching High Art. In other words, that Architecture will be highest, and best, and *truest*, which is most marked by Structural Decoration. The ornamentation of the trabeated Architectures is almost entirely Accessory. If you remove the columns around a Greek temple, the virtual *building* remains intact. All the exterior decoration of Roman Architecture was Accessory, as we saw when treating of that. But in the interior of later Roman edifices we perceive the introduction of Structural Ornamentation. For example, the basilicas are divided into a nave and aisles by rows of columns carrying arches, which again carry the central roof. This is the elementary notion of structural ornament. It may be said that

the arrangement here described was the result of necessity, seeing that they had not the means of covering the vast space between the outer walls without intermediate support. The origin of the arrangement is, however, beside the question. What concerns us, is the *fact* that these columns and arches form the chief beauty of the building, and are at the same time inseparable from its completeness.*

If we go along through the Romanesque period up to the Gothic, we shall find on careful examination that the Structural gradually displaces the Accessory ornamentation, until finally it occupies by far the chief place; and the latter, becoming altogether subordinate, serves only for the enhancement of the special properties of Beauty which pertain to the former. The ornamentation of English Gothic of the close of the thirteenth century, the period to which we are purposely devoting extended attention, was pre-eminently Structural.

* The Roman basilica is the primitive Type of the Gothic church—not Sir James Hall's Twigs and Sticks.

And herein lay the great element of the Truthfulness, the Realness, of this particular phase of Art. Indeed, you could not say of any of its decoration that it was *put on*. It was not a Sham, in any sense. The Accessory is so interwoven with the Structural Beauty, and grows out of it so naturally, that it is hard to separate the one from the other. If it be true that, if you pull down the triforium arcade of a church you bring the roof about your head; or if you cut away the moulded arches and interlacing groins in a mansion you leave the building a sightless wreck, maimed in its vital members; or if you strike out the foliated pierced-work* of the windows you destroy

* The application of the term "plate-tracery" to the foliated pierced-work of early Gothic, originated by Professor Willis, is, I think, unfortunate. It is inaccurate, and, therefore, perplexing. This pierced-work is the *transition* from the unpierced Tympanum, over a doorway or window, to Tracery properly so called. The word "tracery" conveys the notion of something continually curving and flowing. Why not continue to restrict its application to the foliated work which is either a continuation of the mullions, or homogeneous with them in mouldings; and find another term quite distinct for the early work which is *not yet* Tracery. Why not call this simply *Pierced-work*?

the windows; it is also true that if you annihilate only the sculptured foliage which adorns the whole, you mar the perfectness of the whole, and leave the structure as if it were stopped in its growth under the loving and prolific hand of the Artist. Even the statues and their accompaniments—which were the effervescence sometimes of his patriotic, but more frequently of his religious, sentiment—even these, from the manner of their disposition, strike one with a naturalness and propriety, very different from the effect of the sculpture in the tympanum of a Greek pediment.

It is worth while to observe that no atom of this Gothic ornamentation, either Structural or Accessory, was *false* as to its ostensible material. The architect had not yet learned to paint Plaster the colour of Stone.

XII.

The admirers of Grecian Hecateism, and the mathematical exactness of a fixed series of ratios in the proportions of a struc-

ture,* are apt to conceive contempt, or at least indifference, for Gothic Architecture, because they fail to find in it any dominant manifestation of their favourite principles. They complain that it is not governed, in the relative adjustment of all its parts, by any Law which is reducible to figures.

Would you then degrade Architecture into a mere mechanical process of clever arithmetic? Surely we are something too much mechanical already; already quite enough bound and hemmed in by formulas. Let us have freedom here at least. There are the Mechanical, and there are the Fine Arts. Building is a mechanical art. Keep your figures for that. But Architecture is a Fine Art, and subject to other and much higher laws. You think this, no doubt, a fanciful distinction. It is one certainly not "dreamt of in your philosophy." But it is no less real than that existing between

* It is satisfactorily shown by Mr. Watkiss Lloyd, that the proportions of the entire design of Greek temples were ruled by fixed ratios, based on "the *hecatompedon*, 100 Attic feet in the breadth of the front." So that certain great dimensions being given, the whole of the rest can be supplied. Just as we find all the particulars of a triangle from any three of its elements.

Thought and Action, or between the premises of a syllogism and its conclusion. Building is the physical embodiment of Design. Architecture is the Art of Design, and is hyper-physical. An Architect, or Designer, must be conversant with the principles of Building, but it is by no means necessary that he be practised in the actual handiwork of it. Just as the musician who composes an opera, whilst he must be conversant with the principles of instrumentation, needs not to be an adept at all the instruments of the orchestra. If he be master of his violin, which is his drawing-board, that is well enough. But heaven knows you have only to look out of window, to see that a Builder is usually an entity utterly ignorant of the primary elements of Design, and therefore of Architecture in its real sense.

It is hard to classify the modes by which Human Thought expresses itself in the Fine Arts, and confine them within the limits of definitions. There will always be a flaw in your analysis. Everything human is necessarily homogeneous. And therefore it is

difficult, in most cases, to separate one human manifestation from another, and say—this shall be A, and that B. Yet sometimes, for the sake of analysis, one must have recourse to classification. If, then, we arrange the Arts in a series, thus:

Sculpture, Painting,	}	Music,
Poetry. . . .	}	Architecture,

we shall perceive that the first three possess in common their leading characteristic; and that this is wanting in the last two, which are distinguishable chiefly by another feature. The first three may naturally be described as *Imitative*, or *Descriptive*; and the last two as *Ideal Arts*. You will at once see that there is very much of the Ideal in the first three, and some approach to the Imitative in the last two. But this does not affect the *general* accuracy of the division; and that is enough for our present purpose.

Sculpture, then, is the Imitation of the human form. Painting the Imitation of that, but with a higher pathos, and also of the multiplied aspects and features of ex-

ternal nature. Poetry, rising yet higher, superadds to Description of the human form and external nature, the Imitation of the human passions. The Imitation is in all three, of course, strongly idealized. And the higher forms of Poetry overlap, so to speak, the purely Ideal region of the second class of Arts.

But Music is not the Imitation of anything known to human sense or conception. It is an *Ideal Expression of Passion*. And what, then, is Architecture? It is, in its highest development, an *Ideal Expression of External Nature*. The Idea of the great World-house, in which man lives and moves, is metaphysically typified in a highly-developed structure. Reflect upon this, and see if it be not so. Your reflection shall be aided presently. In the meantime we must consider this question of law.

Each of the Arts has its special Laws. Sculpture is governed by the laws of Proportion of the human frame. Painting by the laws of this proportion, together with those of Perspective and Colour. But in Painting the imagination of the artist is less

trammelled by law than it is in Sculpture. Poetry is subject to the law of Rhythm. But the Poet has more licence than the Painter. Music must obey the laws of Rhythm and of Harmony. Yet the fancy of the Musician is left free as the very wind. Then there is the law of Congruity to which they are all alike subject. But in none of these is the Artist fettered by any Mathematical Law. A student in Sculpture might be tempted to use the callipers to measure the thickness of an arm; but the true Sculptor may be as innocent of the fifth book of Euclid as the marble he works upon, for all the help he could get from it. And the Painter, must he have recourse to the rule-of-three before he can paint a picture? The Poet scowls at Mathematics, and the Musician may never have heard of them.

Architecture has, like Music, its Rhythm and its Harmony; not of sound, indeed, but of sight;* and being, from the very terms of the definition we have given to it, the con-

* I think it was Madame de Staël that called *Gothic Architecture*, "frozen music."

crete representative of the three Imitative Arts, it is remotely governed by the laws which they obey. Congruity requires that the artist should treat his structure according to its subject; for example, he will design a sepulchral monument in a sombre manner, and a summer-house in a joyous manner. Rhythm in Architecture may be generally defined as—The imperceptible gradation from strength to lightness, and the converse. For example, in a Gothic church, after the eye has reposed upon the substantial sufficiency of the lower portions of the structure, it is led gradually upwards to the lighter and more aërial features, and laterally to the multitude of decorative charms which are disposed around the principal points of support. Just as when looking at an oak-tree, you dwell first on the strength of the trunk, then on the fantasticalness of the branches, then on the rich foliage; or the converse. Harmony, as refers to the general design, is the justness of relation between the leading straight and the predominant curved lines. As refers to detail, it is the proper combination of deco-

ration, so that comparatively unimportant points shall not outweigh, by a superabundant richness, such as should be distinguished by greatest prominency. The special law, however, which governs Architecture is that of Fitness, or adaptation to particular purposes. Now, how can it be shown that for the due and complete fulfilment of these laws, it is necessary that there should be a fixed series of absolute ratios in the proportions of the length, breadth, and height of a structure, and its divisions and members; or, in other words, that every part should be some multiple of a radical unit? It may be very well for the artist to adopt given mathematical proportions for certain general divisions, where that is compatible with his means and the intention of the building. But if he carry such a system through his entire work, it is perfectly clear that he will hamper his purely artistic effort. The wholesome freedom and playful waywardness of his Fancy, will be constantly over-ridden and trampled upon by the abominable tyranny of his Arithmetic. If you will untie his hands and let

him go, you will see what he will achieve. Let us turn and see what he did achieve when his hands were not tied. We shall find here the promised aid to your reflection upon the typical expression of Nature in Architecture.

A landscape is beautiful according to the predominance of some of the features which compose it, and the subordination of the others. But there is no such thing as a strict rule of proportion between these. If there were, it would go far, I conceive, to destroy rather than enhance the beauty of the prospect. We must take this analogy with reference to Architecture, because it arises from our definition; and because the analogy between the human form and a building, which some have drawn, is altogether a false one. Else, why are not all buildings towers, having their height much greater than any lateral dimension? The true analogy, then, is between the world-house and these other houses which man himself builds. Now, in this the best period of English Art, which we are considering, one of the chief beauties is the absence of any

empirical limitation, either of form on the one hand, or of invariable proportion on the other. The ichnographical licence is so wide that the ground-plan of a structure may have any conceivable form, so that it be not contrary to Fitness. And there is no limit to the variety of composition which may be adopted in the superstructure, except the law of Congruity; which demands, besides what we have already indicated, a general correspondence between the plan of a building and its inner and outer elevations. So that here, the Architect works in his Art with the due meed of freedom which pertains to the Painter and Poet in theirs. And being born, like them, with a happy Insight into Nature, gifted, that is, with the quick nervous sense which recognises the Right and the True in the twinkling of an eye, he has produced immortal monuments of human genius compared with which the Parthenon sinks into puerile insignificance. He has partly accomplished this by embodying in his work the *Idea* of the landscape; whether with pre-pense intention or not, is not to the question. There

are many most exquisite musical compositions which were not *intended* by the composer as the idealization of particular passion, but which you cannot help *feeling to be* the Ideal Expression of Passion. In analysing the peculiarities of ancient Art, it is necessary to bring to bear upon it the *ex post facto* reasonings of our advanced philosophy, or knowledge of the relations of things. The Gothic Artist of this period, then, so disposed the general effect of his work as to give marked prominence to certain divisions and features, subordinating to these such as were of less importance; not with the rigid strictness of Arithmetic, but with the graceful freedom of Nature.

Thus, in a church, the height of the nave is divided into dimensions approximately proportionate, by the piers and arches, the triforium, and the clerestory. The nave grandly predominates over the aisles, without there being any unital element common to both. The choir, which is the cynosure of the constellated beauties of the whole, dazing the eye with its ornate richness, is so proportioned to the rest that it shall not,

by too great size, detract from the vastness of the main design; whilst it has yet such dimensions as serve to endow it with the importance of a great feature. But it may be questioned, whether it would be possible to find two churches in which the choir bears the same proportion to the rest of the church—even where nave and choir have been built at the same period. Could it in anywise add to the perfectness of the effect of these various portions, if they were compounded exactly with the ratios 1:6, 2:7, 3:8, &c., or any other such abstract fancy? Then, again, with reference to details, if the old Gothic Artist had bound himself to ratios he would have left to us, instead of the infinite variety of beauty in shaft, cornice, and moulding, nothing but the eternal repetitions of proportion which characterize the Greek Architecture. But, happily, neither three, nor thirty, Orders sufficed for the workings of his genius—no Order, indeed, but that of Nature.

It may be objected, That the Rhythm of Music is nothing other than a system of multiples of a simple unit, and that, accord-

ing to our own classification of the Arts, the Rhythm of Architecture should correspond to that. This, however, by no means follows.

It is perfectly true that a regular measure is essential in Music. Indeed, that is but the idealized refinement upon a peculiar characteristic of the natural expression of passion. In lengthened outbursts of lofty passion, whether of enthusiasm, grief, or anger, the educated ear will always detect in the cadences a singular wave-like regularity, which is, in fact, the primitive vocal type, first of poetical, and then of musical rhythm.

But Architecture is not the Idealization of Music; and it is by no means a consequence of our argument that there shall be a strict analogy between the two. Architecture is the Idealization of External Nature. And it has already been indicated that in this there is no appearance of the element of multiples or ratios.

Do not for a moment harbour the notion, that we desire to find in this Gothic Art anything approaching to the *imitation* of a

landscape; because, if so, you altogether misapprehend the nature and intention of what has been advanced. Keep in mind what has been suggested as being the relation between Music and Passion. There is nothing at all akin to *imitation* in that. That is precisely the relation between Gothic Art and Nature. As in Music, you may discover a forcible analogy between a particular passage or entire composition, and the outcome of a particular passion; so in Gothic Architecture, you may draw striking analogies between the great features of Nature and the great features of a perfect structure. I say in Gothic Architecture, because the simple fact is, that you cannot do this so thoroughly and readily with any other form of the art, excepting perhaps the Saracenic modes. And this is the great reason why this Form is superior to all others, and quite beyond them. The reason, moreover, why we are enabled—with this Gothic development under our eyes—to include Architecture in the same category with the Arts, and speak of it, as of them, as being intimately

woven with the metaphysical part of man.

Did you ever stand at sunset in a little glade, where the tall trees stand round, throwing out their branches till they meet overhead, and between whose trunks you catch a glimpse of long vistas of arching foliage; did you note how the many-coloured clouds and the red sun shed a broken beautiful light through the twisting branches, and were you not perforce reminded of some old cathedral, with its splendid perspective of towering columns, its curiously-arched roof, and its traceried windows gleaming with the radiance of colour? Or have you been in a like scene by moonlight, and were not reminded of the glories of some Gothic ruin when lit by the same sad beam? Or, again, have you ever groped under the arching canes over which the vine is trained in the Peninsula, and not thought of the low vaults of some cloister or crypt? Throwing aside all "classic" prejudices, are not these just such analogies as are likely to occur to the mind of any one gifted with the most ordinary insight? Do they not, in fact,

occur daily to the minds of thousands? Are there not a hundred such in the writings of your poets? And as for the romances, why they are full of them.

Again, you cannot fail to observe that the all-pervading Idea which characterizes external nature, is that of up-looking to the eternal heavens. Mountains and rocks, trees and flowers, lift their heads skyward. The winged tribes do their best to get away from the earth, and soar toward the upper air. The very waters rise in vapour to the cloud-region; and if they sometimes fall in rain, or return in grateful dew, it is but like the death of a flower—the prelude to another resurrection. Every created thing, except the lowest brute beasts and the mean reptiles—symbols of Evil—looks aloft toward the sources of life and heat. Now is not this Idea most marvellously typified in that Verticality we spoke of, as being the most striking characteristic of the Gothic of this period? Is not this entire Upwardness of composition truly an Ideal Expression of External Nature? And it is even more than that. It coincides with

the direction of the Better Thoughts of the human soul; and is therefore in harmony with his whole nature, psychical and physical. The spirituality of Verticalism is so positive and manifest, that it is hard to believe that the pious Architects, of whose genius it was the emanation, had not these things ever in their mind.

Did you ever see anything in Nature which reminded you of a Greek peripteral temple? Or did you ever walk under the colonnade of the Royal Exchange, and be struck with an analogy—ever so remote—between *that* and anything in Nature?

XIII.

We have said that Architecture is the concrete representative of the three Imitative Arts. So far as concerns Sculpture and Painting you may, after following our argument, readily admit this. It is in fact easily deducible from what we have said. But it may not be so evident to you as regards Poetry. Yet one might easily classify the forms of Architectural Art as

Epic, Lyric, and Melodramatic. All that we have to do with, however, is the fact of the existence of poetic feeling. There is a certain kind of poetry in the Greek form of the Art. But it is like the Latin hexameters and pentameters that boys manufacture at school—all Rhythm, and uncommonly little Pathos. But between true Poetry and true Gothic Architecture there is a marked, unmistakable community of conception. There is a great likeness to the deep meaning and varied passionateness of the writings of Shakespeare—greatest of English poets,—Rhythm, but chiefly Pathos.

You know what Gargoyles are. Those leering, scowling, wicked heads and faces of little devils, tacked on to the fore-quarters of abortive quadrupeds; and which serve to eject the collected rain-fall of the roofs from their wide-extended, unearthly-looking jaws. I think it is Mr. Ruskin who traces a connexion between Gargoyles and Indigestion. It is very true that the Sculptors of these times were robust, hard-favoured men, who lived most of their time in the open air; unlike the pale and sickly craftsmen of the

present day. And bracing air and exercise doubtless gave them appetite for fabulous consumption of victual. So one can very easily conceive some of these grotesque creations to have been suggested by the nightmare of hideous dreams. But they had a *meaning* ; not to be explained thus. The thoughtful Architect, who gave the general instructions for their execution, intended that they should image forth the fanciful notion that the fallen spirits, the spirits of the lost, and the spirits of the infidel Paganims who desecrated Christ's Tomb, are condemned to the performance of services which redound to the honour of God, whom they set at nought. And so here they are set before the eyes of the multitude as the miserable slaves of the Tabernacle, compelled to do its meanest offices. But this is not all. Though you may occasionally find a grotesquish face on a corbel or the point of a cusp, you never by any chance encounter these Impish Creatures *within* the Temple. That would be a desecration of the Holy Place. To this are admitted only Angel-forms, Saints, Martyrs, Holy Men

and Women. Do you not perceive in this a world of deepest pathos, of truest Poetry? We might have attributed this to their Religiousness. But that you would not have liked so well.*

XIV.

We have already seen that the early Gothic developed itself out of the Romanesque somewhat earlier in England than

* Dr. Hook (*Church Dictionary*) says, "Those who have given the slightest attention to ecclesiastical architecture, must have observed how frequently the Gargoyles assume the most hideous forms. Some have attributed this to the rudeness of our ancestors; a notion utterly inconsistent with the extreme beauty of the very works of which these hideous figures form a part. The truth is that the Gargoyles symbolize the evil spirits and ghostly enemies of man and the church, fleeing away from the sacred edifice within which the worship of God is celebrated."

The symbolism which we have suggested above will be found, however, on closer examination, to be more accurate. For these sculptures are, in early work, invariably made *to do something*, either as Gargoyles, or Corbels—when they support a shaft, or a rib, or a hood-mould. On the other hand, it is only *sometimes* that, as Gargoyles, they are represented as "fleeing away."

The passage just quoted from Dr. Hook is omitted in the editions of the Dictionary after the sixth. The Doctor probably thought it unnecessary to enter into such matters in a book more canonical than æsthetic.

abroad; and *not* either simultaneously or later. We have seen that Lord Palmerston sets up his own personal fancy against the facts of history, when he says that "the Gothic is not an English style of Architecture, but was imported from abroad;" and that "it is not true to say that that style is natural here, either by original invention or existing examples." It savours of the pervading Untruthfulness of the times, this proneness of public men to hazard important assertions, for a momentary purpose, without ever dreaming that it would better comport with their dignity first to examine the facts, and make themselves sure that they are right. The "existing examples" was probably only an accidental rounding-off of the sentence; for to say that Gothic Architecture is not natural in England by existing examples is simply absurd. There is the palpable contradiction of such an assertion in every town and village in the kingdom.

Let us see if we can collect some additional proofs that this Architecture was "natural here by original invention," and

that, therefore, it could not have been "imported from abroad." Proofs having a special reference to the works of the end of this thirteenth century—besides those already adduced to show the English "invention" of the Gothic Form, as such, at the end of the twelfth century. And for this purpose we shall again have recourse to the Oxford Lectures. It is worth while here to give your special attention.

With reference to the beautiful "double arcades" which run along the base of the interior at Lincoln Minster (begun in 1195) and many other places, we are told that—

"It is remarkable that these double arcades do not occur in France, or very rarely."

Of Wells Cathedral, consecrated in 1239, we are informed that—

"It is scarcely possible to overrate the value and importance of the extraordinary series of sculptures with which this west front is enriched. They are superior to any others known of the same period in any part of Europe."

As a conclusive proof that our Gothic structures were executed by *English* workmen, read this—

"The records of the cathedral (York—north transept,

1250-60) clearly prove that it was the regular practice of the Chapter to keep a gang of workmen in their pay as part of the establishment. The number varied from twenty to fifty, and the same families were usually continued generation after generation. To their continued labour, always doing something every year, we are indebted for the whole of that glorious fabric. This practice was by no means peculiar to York, but appears to have been the usual custom."

With reference to certain very important details, we are informed that—

"The general use of the circular abacus* is peculiar to England. Even in the best early French work the abacus is generally square; and as there can be no doubt that the round abacus is more consistent with pure Gothic work, the square one belonging more properly to the Classic styles, this circumstance is a strong argument in favour of the greater purity of English Gothic. Generally, also, the *Mouldings* are much more numerous and much richer in English work, than in foreign work of the same period."

The Tracery of windows is one of the most important features in Gothic structures. The gradual development and subsequent degradation of this feature coincide with, and indicate, the progress and declension of Gothic Architecture. There has been much discussion as to whether Tracery was "natural here by

* The uppermost member of the Capital, or Chapter, of a column.

original invention." The point is, however, now pretty well settled.

"One thing, however, is clear, that Tracery was of home growth. It was an *indigenous* plant, and *not an exotic imported* full grown. The same progress may have been made simultaneously in other countries, and particular ideas may probably have been borrowed, but we have no need to go abroad to search for its origin and progress. Like all other parts of Gothic Architecture, it appears to have grown gradually and naturally from the necessity of supplying a want that was felt."

And again—

"The usual *test of the importation of a new style, is a decided leap from one style to another*, and this was clearly not the case with the introduction of Tracery into England."

Again—

"A comparison of foreign cathedrals of well-ascertained date, with the corresponding work in England of the same period, does not seem to bear out the priority of date which has of late been assumed" (with reference to the former). "Dr. Whewell compares Amiens with Salisbury, and says that it is in a "more mature style." But although Amiens was begun in 1220, it was not completed until 1288, and it is in a particular kind of Tracery only that it is in advance of English buildings of the same period. A more fair comparison would be with Wells, the west front of which, built between 1225 and 1239, may challenge a comparison with any other building in the world of the same period."

And again—

"Professor Cockerell has satisfactorily shown that the English sculpture of this period was fully equal, if not

superior, to that of any other part of Europe; and has justly observed that the immense number of works carrying on simultaneously at that time in all parts of England, could not possibly have been executed by foreign workmen, as has commonly been assumed."

This series of evidences may aptly be concluded with a word or two from the eminent Professor himself*—no mean authority in such matters. He comes to the conclusion that—

"In the thirteenth century, as well as at most other periods of history, the talents of this country have yielded to none elsewhere, however favoured they may have been by a more accurate record of their merits."

And again—

"A candid consideration of the piety and learning of England through the successive ages, and under the blessings of a firm government, from the Conquest down to the thirteenth century, will be sufficient to show the high probability of a School of Art as illustrious in this country at that period as in any other of Western Europe."

It is perfectly fruitless, then, to attempt to persuade us that we have never had a National Architecture here in England. We had at least in the thirteenth, and also in the preceding and two following, centuries. But in the thirteenth, this National Architecture was the purest form of the

* *Iconography of West Front of Wells Cathedral.*

Gothic which has ever existed; and the most natural, and noble, and lovely Architecture the world has ever seen.

XV.

Let us continue our ancestral reminiscences. We have arrived at the fourteenth century; and it is meet that we should observe narrowly the general coincidence between social condition and art-manifestations.

In the previous periods, the bold independence and unflinching thoroughness of the monarchs and nobles declared themselves, in the struggles of the second Henry and the first Edward, against the growing arrogance of the priesthood, in the brilliant crusade-exploits of the reign of Cœur-de-Lion, and in the wresting of the Great Charter from the hands of John. But the fourteenth century is characterized by a partial decadence, and an incipient disorganization of the social polity, which reached its height in the distractions of the fifteenth. This partial disorganization was

chiefly the result of the Crusades. Religious fervour had been displaced by military enthusiasm, strongly tinged with fanaticism. The nobles forgot, in the wild excitements of Palestine, the delights and ambitions of their homely England. Their domains lay neglected. The resources of the country were beginning to run to seed, unhusbanded. The reins of the feudal chariot were thrown recklessly upon the horses' necks. Vassal and villein shook themselves, and looked around for their Lords. But these were afar off, content to relinquish the honourable duties and advantages of their distinguished position, for the immunities of questionable value which the profession of a Crusader bestowed upon them. For, as Hallam informs us,* "during the time that a Crusader bore the Cross, he was free from suits for his debts, and the interest of them was entirely abolished; he was exempted, in some instances at least, from taxes, and placed under the protection of the Church; so that he could not be

* *State of Europe during the Middle Ages.*

impleaded in any civil court, except in criminal charges or questions relating to land." The demoralizing effect of all this, told strongly upon the history of the fourteenth century. The fire of the Crusades was already extinguished, but the ashes of it remained to disfigure the land. It was not, however, all blackness and darkness. The fire had scorched the base of the feudal structure; and out of the ashes of the fire arose the Burgher-class, the embryo of that great, pseudo-almighty Middle-class, which now-a-days vaunts its supreme sovereignty in the eye of heaven.

But apart from this hopeful ground-fermentation, there was yet another manifestation of deterioration, concurrent with those at which we have glanced. The Christian Church had long departed from the purity of its early Faith, had begun to lose altogether the Spirit of its Founder, and was running headlong into those extravagant excesses which presently brought upon it the execration of contemporary and succeeding ages. It was still the Christian Church, however. There was always *some*

life in that. The Immortal Breath could never quite die out. Though there are now in the cloisters your Sack-drinking, Obese Idlers, who care little for either Religion or Art, choosing rather to leave the one to itself, and the other to the Freemasons.

We shall doubtless be assailed with heavy accusations of art-heterodoxy if we venture to suggest, ever so remotely, that the Architecture of this period began to show signs of decline, and was inferior in many points to the style which prevailed at the end of the thirteenth century.* This is the case, nevertheless, and, indeed, must be so if our previous exegesis be of any value. It is true that there is an advance in some particulars. This advance coincides with the gradual *intellectual* progress, the increase of mechanical skill, and the wider diffusion of that. So we find a more delicate ingenuity of construction, a more highly finished workmanship, and in some points of detail—as the sculpture of the foliage and relief-

* Known generally as Transition; from Early English to Decorated,

work—a greater freedom and mastery of the subject. But on the other hand, concurrent with the decay of Religiousness, there is an unmistakeable falling-off from the most important artistic features of the preceding period. The impassioned spirituality of Verticalism of that period now becomes qualified. The form of the Arch, instead of being acute-pointed, or lancet-shaped, is equilateral; that is, the width instead of being less, or even equal to, the height is something more than that.* So that the idea of Upwardness is much less prominently maintained. And in order to preserve the harmony of composition the pitch of the roof is lowered; and this is carried on gradually more and more until we arrive at the equivocal semi-elevation of the fifteenth century. Then, in the important matter of Tracery, the clear and decided *shape* which is given to the light admitted into the building by the Pierced-

* The Equilateral Arch is so termed from its being described about the sides of an equilateral triangle. The Acute Arch is described about the equal sides of an acute-angled isosceles triangle. The Obtuse Arch is described about the equal sides of an obtuse-angled isosceles.

work, or the bold effective mullions and foliations of early Tracery proper, becomes increasingly lost in the generalizations of the complicated running-work of the Tracery of this, which we call the Decorated, period. Beautiful as this Tracery is in point of design, you have only to compare two windows which are filled with stained glass, one of the former and the other of the latter character, to perceive at once that in the one the distinctness of the foliations is unimpaired, whilst in the other they are literally subordinated to the colours of the staining, and are only to be discerned by careful looking-for. Finally, in the Mouldings* there is a departure from the noble depth and strong light-and-shadow of later Early English. They are now altogether shallower, and less effective.

We are told by the learned Doctors in Art, that this fourteenth-century Architecture is distinguished by its greater Breadth of composition. Now Breadth is unquestionably a grand feature in design ; but

* The sectional contour given to the edges of the Arches, &c.

Height, I rather think, is yet grander. And the great secret of effective design, in buildings whose plan and purpose admit of it, is so to subordinate the Grandeur of Breadth to the Grandeur of Height, as to preserve unimpaired that verticality of expression which we have seen is of such close kin to the Meaning of Nature. We must scan very narrowly, then, and with much jealousy of insight, the *equalization* of these two properties; because it indicates a tendency to revert to that materialism of horizontality, from which we had so nobly freed ourselves in the past period, with so much earnest striving. And in doing this, we shall see clearly that we have already reached the Climacteric, passed the uppermost Turning-point, in our splendid ancestral Architecture.

XVI.

It is only left to us now to trace, with as much rapidity as possible, the constant and unequivocal declension from the high-toned inspiration and truthfulness of these times

to the miserable fatuities and hypocrisies of our own day.

The fifteenth century was cursed by the Wars of the Roses, the disorganization of the social structure which was the result of them; fierce family dissensions, and the setting of every man's hand against his neighbour's; the lust of power, and blood-blinded fighting for it. Cursed by the merciless persecution of the Lollards. Cursed by the consummation of the depravity which, like a strong man, had overtaken the priesthood and hurled it from the steps of the Altar of Purity, into an abyss of world-ambitions and prurient licentiousness. The Church, instead of being the medium of Spiritual Life to the truly faithful, and City of Refuge for such as sought to turn from bloodshed and foul deeds, was the reeking hot-bed of fraud, of lies, and of moral impurity, a great Apostate. It is to such influences as these that we must look for the decline of Art.

The Architecture of this period is often called *Florid* English, and very aptly so. The æsthetic life of the earlier times is fast

ebbing away, and the clear dignity of its resonant expression becoming a feeble whisper. The mantle of the Elders has fallen upon the Artist of this time, truly; but it is half-slipping from his shoulders. Lacking the inspiration which would lead him to an Ideal Expression of Nature, by a well-sustained loftiness, and harmonious balancing of parts in his structure, he seeks to captivate the eye by an overweening plenitude of meretricious ornamentation. He covers his work with enriched panelling, crocketed pinnacles, and curiously-conceived battlements. He gives you no time to dwell upon the want of due proportion in his building, but hurries you on through a wilderness of sculpture and foliage, through elaborate wood-carving, and still more elaborate fan-traceried vaulting. By the way, he finds the Wood more pliable under his hands than his Fathers found the Stone, and he takes great delight in it. But with all his ostentation of sculpture-craft, his leaves are not so like the leaves we saw in the orchard and the hedgerows, and on the oak-tree. He has a special fondness for

insane *fleurs-de-lis** and armorial bearings; so special, indeed, that he cannot for the life of him refrain from decorating his churches with them. There are churches newer than his by four hundred years, where you may see a revival of his ideas in this kind. As if the emblazonment of Human Achievement—savouring of blood and rapine—were a fit glory wherewith to deck God's Temple. Surely this is an impious sacrilege, not out of keeping with the character of the times. You remember the Leering, Scowling, Wicked Heads and Faces—you find those, too, *within* the Temple now. The Holy Place is desecrated.

The Arch now is not even equilateral, but obtuse; that is, the width is much greater than the height. And by and by the Artist, in what would seem to be his great anxiety to grovel, flattens it still more, and yet more, until it stretches out like the extended legs of an acrobat. This is the famous Tudor Arch—ugliness raised to the fifth power. The roof follows the Arch. Never heed the climate; you can pay men to shovel off the

* In Heraldry, the fleur-de-lis is an emblem of Royalty.

snow when that comes. There must be harmony, at least, in what you do. Never mind Verticality. It is bootless to strive heavenward the whiles you are so fond of the earth. The spire disappears altogether now. Tracery is really not Tracery, but so many straight bars, uprightly and across in the windows, foliated to hide the poverty of invention. The Mouldings are like much of the rest of the ornamentation, flat and unmeaning. The old spirit is fast ebbing away.*

XVII.

The sixteenth century was one of the most remarkable epochs in the history of our country; as it was of the rest of Christendom. Feudalism had gradually broken up like thawing ice. The power of the feudal Nobles was hemmed in and cowed by the power of the Monarch, and the rapidly-increasing power of the Burghers.

* Having quoted Westminster Abbey as a familiar example of the best English Art, we cannot do better than suggest Henry the Seventh's chapel, at the east end of that, as an example of this retrograde period.

Foreign war was forgotten in the stirring events of home. It was a period of transition both in Civil and Religious Polity. In Civil Polity, from a worn-out regime to the first principles of constitutional freedom, which cost so much blood in the following century. In Religious Polity, from the darkness of a constantly thickening superstition, to a mixture of cold indifference to Faith with the fervid enthusiasm of Faith, in which the former element predominated. The nation was banded about between Rome and Geneva until Creed became a mockery, and men forgot the terrors of Spiritual Law in the necessity they were under to turn Religion into an expedient for warding off the horrors of Temporal Law. Cranmer and the rest thought by reforming the Objects of Faith to reform Faith itself; but that was infinitely beyond the power of human enactment.

In the midst of all this it was impossible that there could be any manifestation of spirituality in Art. The architectural mode of the last century continued to sink into deeper degradation, until nearly the middle

of this; when the light on the altar of English Art flickered down into a helpless remnant of flame, which has struggled to live through three hundred years, flaring up ever and anon, to burn with some renewed brightness in these days of driving-wheels and hydraulic rams. All notion of Verticality was lost. There is nothing but a wilderness of level lines, over doors, over windows, over roofs. The pitch of the roof dwindled into simple nothing; and its perfect flatness made one wonder whether the architect had not mistaken London for Aleppo. The profuse luxury of intricate adornment had given way to hard, stiff, lifeless details.

In the last half of the century an altogether foreign element was introduced; one that had never yet, under any form or shape, darkened our independent England with its alien and blighting shadow. This was no other than a base and uncouth copying of the lately-revived Roman mode. I suppose no architectural mannerism—it cannot be called a style—was ever so distinguished by utter Unmeaningness as this which now sprung up, and which we call Elizabethan.

The high-peaked gables and roofs which it revived or retained, together with the mulioned windows, served to dignify it with a certain Gothic aspect. Whilst the resuscitated ghost of the Orders, in the columns of porticos and the pilasters variously disposed over the façade, together with a corrupt rendering of classic mouldings in cornices and the like, imparted to it a special stamp of pseudo-Italianism. But the twirling pargetry, the scrolls, the obelisks, the curiously-shaped shields, the grim faces of men and hybrids, the turrets and pinnacles, and the thousand-and-one other nic-nacs with which it was bedizened, gave to it a character essentially its own. But how to attach any æsthetic signification to all this heap of conglomerate lumber—that is the question. True there is some breadth and massiveness of general effect, and a peculiar picturesqueness. The English character speaks out in these with some sort of emphasis. But the law of Congruity is violently set at nought; the law of Harmony unheeded. And as for Truthfulness—as the whole thing does not pretend to mean any-

thing—there is neither Truth nor Falsehood, but simply Moral Vacuity.

You will readily imagine that this was not a church-building age. The Architecture of this, and indeed of the following periods, is almost wholly civil and domestic. Some of our grandest palatial structures are of the reign of "Bluff Hal." The nobles were casting off the character of feudal lords, to assume that of paternal landlords. And therefore it behoved them to house themselves in pleasant, unarmed mansions, surrounded by the delights of garden and of park; rather than in grim donjons, curtained by the fortalice of battlements and stagnant fosse. During the whole of this century, the country was being covered with halls, and manor-houses, and grange-houses. There was a fine opportunity for the Artist endued with a happy Insight to have turned to the works of his fathers, then in their freshness, and developed from them a domestic inflexion of Gothic Architecture which should have immortalized him. But Belief had forsaken him, and there was no light, no life, no hope for him. Christen-

dom was on the eve of reverting to Paganism. The sacred image of Christ was soon to be jostled aside by the profane image of Minerva, and the Parnassian Crew. We are here on the threshold of the Infidelity of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries.

It is important to observe here that the prevailing style of the period was applied to the additions to churches, and the repairs of them, then made. The idea of having an ecclesiastical style, and a secular style quite distinct from that, had never occurred to any people, in any age or country, until here in the nineteenth century.

It is also important to remark that as the Gothic Architecture had its earliest and highest development in this country, so it was here in England that its influence lingered the longest and faded away the last. The corrupted modifications of the old Pagan Orders did not find their way into English Architecture until towards the middle of the sixteenth century; and it was not until the beginning of the seventeenth that the Italian mode was fairly intro-

duced. Whilst the famous Renaissance, the Re-birth, of Art, as the connoisseurs delight to call it, occurred in Italy in the fifteenth century;* and by the middle of the sixteenth the style generally known as Italian had reached the fulness of its maturity. Michael Angelo began his work at St. Peter's of Rome in 1546, precisely when the Architecture of Palladio and him was beginning to be heard of in England. The old Gothic life was very loth to leave its seat.

XVIII.

It may occur to you that in this review of English Gothic we have laid too much stress on the *nationalism* of it; seeing that in France, Germany, and the Low Countries, there prevailed, up to this Renaissance period, an architectural mode which was essentially the same in structure and expressional character. There are certain important facts, however, which must be specially noted as serving to explain this, and to show that the existence of the Gothic abroad can by

* Hence the style is called Cinque Cento.

no means detract from its nationality at home.

In the first place, we had with the people of these countries a community of Gothic origin. In some parts of France the Celtic element predominates, as indeed it does in parts of Great Britain; but the prevailing character of the French people, particularly on the northern seaboard, is unquestionably Gothic. Germany and the Low Countries are entirely so. And as the English race had a common origin with these nations, so there was a marked likeness, during the early and middle ages, between English and Continental temperament and habits. This likeness was strengthened by the prevalence of the feudal system, and continued until the fall of that. During the feudal period the civil polity of the whole of the Continent was congenerous; and that of England was assimilated to it, from the Conquest to the Tudors—which was precisely the architectural period. Then, besides that there was a common origin, temperament, and law, there was in England and on the Continent a common Faith, which produced here,

during its several stages of rise and decline, nearly the same results which it produced there. It would have been most astonishing, then, if, with all this, there had not been a striking similarity between the architectural modes which prevailed here and on the mainland.

In the second place, there was a community of origin between the Gothic Architecture itself of England and that of the Continent. The point of departure of English Gothic was, as we have seen, the Norman Romanesque. We have seen that this was in its very nature transitional, and that it contained within itself the germs of Gothic Art. These germs could not fail to be developed in the natural course of things; which happened, indeed, nearly simultaneously here and abroad, but somewhat earlier here. And this development presented a community of character accordant with the community of origin of the races.

Lastly, although the Gothic Architecture of England is essentially the same in elementary structure and expressional character with that of the Continent, it is altogether

a mistake to suppose that there are not important points of difference. The differences are as great as those which existed during the middle ages between English and Continental temper and feeling. We have already adduced satisfactory proofs of the priority and greater purity of our Native Art. And no one who has had opportunity for a careful comparison of English with Foreign Mediæval Gothic, can have failed to be struck with the wide and marked differences between them, and the obvious distinctiveness of many of the peculiarities of each. The dissimilarity of tone in general composition is most palpable. For example, there is a *vapourishness* about the design of French cathedrals, and French work generally, which contrasts strangely with the severe dignity of English structures. The general and particular differences of design and detail reached their culminating point, however, after the close of the fourteenth century; at which period a complete divergence between English and Foreign Gothic took place. English Gothic of the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries has no counterpart

on the Continent; nor is there anything in England similar to the foreign Flamboyant manner of that period.

XIX.

The Decline of Art in these centuries, in Europe generally and in England particularly, is often set down as a result of the Reformation. They who do this surely betray either a wanton ignorance of the facts of history, or a bald impudence in wresting them to mean and bigoted purposes. We have seen that there were symptoms of decline in Gothic Art as early as the beginning of the fourteenth century, and that this decline was unequivocally established by the end of that century. Now the Reformation did not burst upon Christendom until two hundred years later than this. It was not until the middle of the sixteenth century, that the holy wrath of the Reformers was wreaked upon the ungodly corruptions and arrogance of the Church. Luther did not even take his degree of Doctor until 1512. The Reforma-

tion, then, could clearly have nothing to do with the decadence of Gothic Architecture. We must look elsewhere for the causes of that. We have already generally indicated those causes.

Again, the change from the Gothic Inspiration to the Italian manner was in itself a gigantic leap in the degradation of Art. For when Gothic Architecture had sunk to the lowest depths which it could reach, the artists of the time—instead of reverting to its elevated periods, and seeking to continue the onward and upward development of which it was unlimitedly capable—had recourse, in the faithlessness of their souls, to the Classic Æra; and sought to evolve from that an Architecture which should utterly uproot the Gothic Habit. That is to say, they sought to substitute for the Architecture which had *grown out of* the Christian Faith, which had been wholly sanctified by that, which had never been profaned by serving to shelter the polluted orgies of heathen worship—they sought to substitute for this essentially Christian Art an Architecture which was just as essentially Pagan,

which had grown with and out of Paganism, which was inseparably connected with Pagan life and practices, and which had been only accidentally touched, in the earlier ages, by the hallowing hand of our Holy Religion. It was a part of the universal setting-up of a Gilded Calf in the place of the Most High, which happened about those fourteenth and fifteenth centuries. Now, what had the Reformation to do with this? St. Peter's at Rome was begun, as we said, in 1546. So that the Italian style was in its full glory when the Reformation was in its infancy. But Michael Angelo was an old man when he began his work; and Palladio, the founder of the Italian mode, wrote in the fifteenth century, before Michael's name was known to fame. And the Reformation could have had nothing to do, one would think, with the introduction of the Italian into England; for Inigo Jones, to whom we are indebted for that service, was a Papist, and was subject to some sort of penalties under the broad-brimmed Oliver as a Malignant.

But assuming the introduction of the

Italian style to have been a step in the right direction, a real advance in Art,—the idea is sought to be disseminated that its legitimate extension was stopped, nipped in the bud, by the chilling irreligiousness of the Reformation. Now the Anglican Church separated from Rome in the early part of the sixteenth century—say about 1530;—but the present cathedral of St. Paul's, which is usually taken by the admirers of the Italian Architecture to be its grand, unrivalled exponent in this country, was not commenced by Wren until 1675, and was not completed until 1710. Surely, if the Reformation could have affected the progress of this style, its influence would have been visible before the end of the seventeenth century.

Again, it may be said that, if this Reformation was so pre-eminently a revival of Spiritual Life, how comes it that it did not impart a fresh impulse to Art; why did it not, for example, bring about a reproduction of the purer forms of this Gothic Architecture so much vaunted and celebrated as being verily Christian Art?

Now here we will join issue with established notions. This great movement of the sixteenth century was *not pre-eminently* the outburst of a renewed and wide-spread Spirituality. It is unquestionably true that the Great Leaders in the war against superstition and priestly deceits, were impelled to their mission by an Energy infinitely higher than any mere human motive. It is equally true that, scattered throughout the populations of Europe, there were bands of really devout-hearted men who gathered themselves round the Cross, newly raised, and clung to the feet of it, spurning from them the inane human inventions; who were imbued with an Influence infinitely above all mere earth-born passion. But if we will lay aside all unwarranted preconceptions of pious sectary-histories, and look closely into the facts of the Reformation, and its preparatory and concomitant events, we shall perceive very clearly that the *general* diffusion of reformation-notions was proximately due to causes partly social and political, but chiefly mental and intellectual, rather than to the *direct*

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action of an awakened Religiousness. The teachings and practice of the Church had become so radically contrary to Common Sense, so incompatible with social purity, that the people were naturally and necessarily seized with an irrepressible revulsion against them. The pretensions of Rome and the ostentation of the Clergy had grown so arrogant, that the Princes were alarmed for the safety of their own independence. On the other hand, the invention of the Printing-art, a hundred years before the Reformation, had imparted an incalculable impetus to the diffusion of literature, and the cultivation of Thought and Intellectual Power. The greatly-increased study of the Greek and Latin tongues, in which were transcribed the original Scriptures and the writings of the early Fathers, let men into the knowledge of secrets of which they had before but small inkling. They were astounded at the enormous discrepancy between the Church as they found it and the Church of Christ. The priesthood quickly saw, with their ferret-insight, that this new engine of civilization would be sadly inimi-

cal to their Indulgences and Peter-pence; for they made haste, as we are told by Lemoine, to attribute its invention to the devil, and to warn the faithful against using the "diabolical books."

The proof that the Reformation was more a political and intellectual than a thorough, faithful, religious movement, lies greatly in the facts that it did not, and has not yet, spread by any means over the whole of Christendom; that the great mass which, for a time, were stirred by it, reverted to the old order of things, changed but a little; and that it was followed by two centuries of pervading, lifeless, passionless Unbelief. Here in England, the great Act of the Reformation was preserved from being annulled chiefly by the inflexible love of independence, the stern hatred of hierarchic or other domination, the sterling sense and intelligence, which have ever distinguished the English character. All this would doubtless have been unavailing, if it had not been for the aid of a strong under-current of heaven-born Faith. But how soon this current lost itself in the abysses

of Stuart-pedantries and glorious-restoration impieties! You would surely not look *there* for a revival of Christian Art. The strong, beautiful Faith which gave vitality to Art in the early middle ages, and which was smothered under Romish rubbish-heaps long before the Reformation, was only partially revived by the Reformation itself, and presently lost its new fervour in scholastic disquisitions, general scepticisms, and Apollo-worship.

XX.

In the seventeenth century, then, we come to a pause in the history of the Christian, and recommence the reminiscences of the Pagan Architecture.

As early as the reign of Elizabeth, at the close of the sixteenth century, the study of the classic literature had become established in England. The Queen herself was known to be so well versed in the dead tongues, that a Westminster-boy replied to a question from her by a line from the *Æneid*. The devotion to the poetic and

historic achievements of Greece and ancient Rome, to their mythology, their philosophy, their tastes, went on ever increasing until it reached its height at the end of the seventeenth century; and continued to the end of the eighteenth, by which time it began to wear itself out and flag. The ardour of this devotion increased precisely in the ratio of the decline of the Religious Life which the Reformation had partially awakened. And precisely in the same ratio was the decadence of Artistic force and genius.

I do not mean to imply that the cultivation of classic lore is to be considered as incompatible, either with true Religiousness or with High Art. We ought to know that the reverse of that is true. But to bestow upon it its just meed of study and admiration is one thing; and to make it the Bible, not only of literature, but of morals and manners, is quite another thing—and altogether unnecessary, not to say profane. Yet this was done in these centuries unreservedly, and with the true abandon of indifference to results. The Universities

discussed the ethical systems of Plato and the rest, rather than that of Paul. Learned doctors wasted their mental vigour upon Aristotelian disquisitions; which were soon after to be crushed into inane nothingness by Baconian-inductions. No poetry was good which was not either veritable Latin hexameter, or toned in a classic key. Even the religious Milton had his brain full of Olympus-myths, and tuned his lyre to the stilted measure of Homer and Virgil. If instead of trying to be like them he had striven to be natural, the Paradise Lost would have been readable to-day. As it is, though one must needs be forthwith in raptures at the mention of it, it is perfectly well understood that nobody reads it. Few care to scan his inverted prose, for a similar reason; though it teems, like his poetry, with the most majestic thoughts. The boys at school were birched into Anacreon, and steeped in Ovid, until, as men, they thought there could be small harm in walking like the gods. So it became the fashion to swear by Jove and Bacchus, and write obscene stanzas to the glory of Wine and Women.

An educated man would tell you infinitely more about the deeds of Agamemnon than he could about the Acts of the Apostles. What we have managed to call, by some accident of truthfulness, the "Infidelity of the eighteenth century," sprung fungus-like, a necessary growth, out of the mental and moral corruption which resulted from this classic over-saturation. Altogether the Olympians had it very much their own way during these two centuries. Except when the slouch-brimmed Puritans rung the name of the Lord of Hosts upon the echoes for a while.

It was not conceivable that, with such a passion for everything Classic, the people of those times could pass by the Classic Architecture without seeking to accommodate it to their own life and wants. Sooner or later it must have been introduced here, under some form or other. That was an evident and absolute sequence from the circumstances of the age. So that, on the whole, it would perhaps be unjust to anathematize poor Jones for doing that, early, which some lesser genius might have done

later; and which certainly would have been done ere long.

The good man flourished at about the beginning of this great Classic Æra, and was duly imbued in his youth with a proper veneration for the denizens of Olympus and of that other Mount. Being a man of a certain taste, he was naturally disgusted with the coarse absurdities of the Elizabethan manner; and having heard of the new style which had sprung up in Italy as being a wonderful adaptation of the Greek and Roman forms to modern requirements, he went thither to master its peculiarities. And it cannot be denied that he succeeded. In the beginning of the seventeenth century, he introduced this Italian mode without modification into England. This is the Architecture which has held possession of the artist-mind up to this day; which has never gone more than a pace or two forward or backward, but generally for two hundred years has stood curiously still. The palace of Whitehall was begun in the year of Grace 1619; and Buckingham Palace, which is a

few shades less refined, was finished—
yesterday.

XXI.

We are asked to believe that this Architecture is “national” here. This which was dragged in bodily, imported wholesale, from a foreign country; and which is unchangeably the same now that it was then. Some men have a singular facility for turning a stout pyramidal fact completely upside down. You may try to balance it on its apex, but I should think it will hardly stand so. We shall, however, get the fact on its base again if we apply to this Italian, or Classic Architecture—call it what you will—the precise words which Lord Palmerston made use of with reference to the Gothic. We will give him the benefit of the “existing examples” of his favourite style, for the present. In the mean time—

The Italian is not an English style of Architecture, but it was imported from abroad. It is not true to say that the Italian style is natural here by original invention.

I should think not. Or why call it Italian? or Classic?

XXII.

In the reign of Charles the Second, the classic furor and the effects of it were at their height. Apollo and the Muses, Venus and Bacchus,—the Olympians were in high feather. Choice pictures of Venus and Adonis were much in request. The *monde* of those days—there was little to choose between Fine and Half-fine—spent their existence in the contemplation of these classic entities, and in copying the attributes of the former, if not the virtue of the latter.

A truly classic contempt for Truth and Soberness, Religion and Virtue, held unchecked dominion.

It was in this reign that the old cathedral of St. Paul's was destroyed by the Great Fire, and the present structure commenced by Christopher Wren; the next great apostle of the Italian style after Inigo Jones. There is a singular coincidence between the unbridled immorality of this reign, and the

building which we are taught to admire as the perfection of the modified Classic Architecture. This great principal church of the Metropolitan diocese is broadly branded by deceit, by huge and unqualified falsehoods uttered in stone and timber. Think of that when you look down on London from the surrounding country, and see Paul's dome rising like a vast leviathan from the sea of houses.

When you feast your eyes on the exterior grandeur of this edifice—which of course you do whenever you pass by that way—you will not fail to remark that it is in two stages, or stories. You will observe also that, instead of windows corresponding to those of the lower stage, the upper story has magniloquent niches with “engaged” columns, and pediments. You would naturally suppose that this second story, which forms fully one half of the composition, would bear an intimate relation to some equally striking feature in the interior. Nothing of the kind. Half-concealed in the lower portion of these extensive niches, or rather immediately under them, are small

and comparatively insignificant "lights," which you do not discover until you have looked a second time. Now these "lights" are the only part of that enormous semi-superstructure which has any correspondence with the composition of the interior, and they have that only by a kind of legerdemain. Your eyes are "fairly made the fools o' the other senses," for the great second story is simply *a huge mask set up to hide the deformities of the roof*. Such a mask must have cost something in money and in thought. One would fain hope it cost a twinge or two to the man's conscience.

Will you show me the English Gothic building where the Artist has been driven to a mean, degraded piece of trickster-work like this. Search well, and find the Dishonesty if you can. It is difficult to conceive how a Gothic Architect could perpetrate such a falsity if he were to try ever so. His style would positively not admit of its being done. When you look at the clerestory of a Gothic cathedral from the outside, your natural expectation to en-

counter something inside to correspond to that will not be disappointed. When you enter the building you will discover that the exterior was, indeed, only an indication of still more striking grandeur and beauty in the interior. Go to Westminster Abbey, and thence immediately to St. Paul's. Compare the natural and lofty eloquence of the one with the lumbering dulness, the labouring, un aspiring heaviness of the other. When you have said that the west front of St. Paul's, combined with the dome, is a tolerably effective piece of composition, you have said all that you reasonably can in favour of the great "Protestant" cathedral. Its vastness is its only salvation.

But this much-vaunted Dome is itself an unqualified Sham. The interior dome is much less than one half the height of the exterior Dome. The Lantern, which of course you naturally suppose to be carried by this exterior Dome, has in reality no connexion with it, but is entirely supported by a cone of brickwork, running up between the two domes. And, finally, the exterior

Dome is a mere covering of Wooden Boards and Sheet-lead, to give grandeur to the vast deceit !

We may perhaps be reminded of the long tale of Sir Christopher's woes—how he was sore pinched and fretted by the Dean and Chapter. It amounts, however, to this: that he sold himself to their bidding, conscience included, for two hundred pounds a year. One would have thought that so great an Architect could have done better, as all London was being rebuilt. Our Sack-drinking Idlers of the cloisters would certainly have been more liberal. But the Glory of God's House had come now to be a matter of very indifferent moment. The Dean and Chapter had their benefices; what need they care about God's House? Make it huge, and give it a huge Leviathan-dome of Wooden Boards and Sheet-lead—it will do very well so.

But the reverend Dean and Chapter compensated for the small price at which they purchased the great man, by giving him great honour when he died. Whilst at the same time they upheld, and recorded, the

entire Classicism and proneness to elegant blasphemy of their time. They apotheosised Christopher, and instituted a hero-worship for him by writing up in their church:—

SI MONUMENTUM QUAERIS CIRCUMSPICE!

That is to say—*This is not merely God's House; this is also the house of Christopher Wren, Knight. You do not come here to worship God merely; you come also to worship Christopher Wren. This monument was erected by him; in memory of himself, and the Dean and Chapter. Look around—for the second story.*

A fitting epitaph this, to be found in a church on which LIE is written in characters the size of half itself.

How deep we have had to dig, to discover the names of three or four of the Honest Architects who built our old truth-telling Gothic Minsters!

XXIII.

There is, however, one redeeming fact worthy to be noted in the history of Architecture during these two centuries. This

is that the Italian mode was adopted wholly and entirely, without compromise. As it was taken for granted that the Gothic was dead, as all unclassic and therefore barbarous emanations deserved to be, they built not only their secular edifices in the Italian fashion, but also their churches. They still adhered to the notion that if they professed a Religion at all, it was not quite necessary, or altogether becoming, to separate it entirely from their daily life. The Pagans were good people after their fashion, and they certainly kept their Religion very much connected with most things they did. They had an imposing Architecture for their temples, which they copied in a lesser way for their secular structures. Why, then, should not these scions of revived Pagandom do likewise?

There was a certain period of six hundred years, during which the Christians also here in England thought it no shame, and no desecration, to preserve the union between their Faith and their Life, by carrying their ecclesiastical Art into their civil and domestic structures. So that for eight hun-

dred years the union of Religious with Secular Architecture was kept unbroken.

It will probably be of some service to us, to glance summarily at the general conclusions which have arisen so far, rather by incidental suggestion than elaborate argument. And these conclusions may serve as a sort of Principles, to guide us in the inquiry as to whether it is possible for us again to possess a National Architecture. We have seen, then, that—

All the historic nations have had a distinguished, and purely National, Architecture.

In England we had an Architecture which was essentially National, for five hundred years; viz., from the middle of the eleventh, to the middle of the sixteenth century.

English Architecture was distinguished by certain high æsthetic qualities, which were—

Spirituality, or Religiousness;
Expression of the Idea of Nature,
Naturalness;

**Truth, Realness;
Poetic Feeling, Pathos.**

These qualities were embodied in certain
constructional features—

Verticality;

Due Proportion;

**Constructional Identification of the
chief elements of the Ornamentation
with the Body of the Structure.**

**Subordinate Ornamentation copied
directly from Nature; or, in some
cases, the embodiment of Fancy.**

There were other constructional features
which relate to Climate:—

High-pitched Roofs;

Small extent of Flat Surface.

The most important of these qualities,
and of the features which express them, are
not obvious in the Classic Architectures;
and the rest are more feebly manifest in
them than in the Gothic Form.

The Decline of English Gothic was coin-
cident with the Decline of Belief, and was
the result of that.

The Italian Architecture is essentially
Foreign, and came in with Pagandom.

In the Gothic Age, Religious Architecture reacted upon Secular Architecture; and before the Nineteenth Century there never was one Architecture for the Temple, and another for the House.

And, generally, that—

As Architecture is the Ideal Expression of Nature, that Form is highest and best which is most marked by this Ideality.

MOORISH EPISODE.

THE Principles which govern Art are universal and immutable. The Canons of Taste and Criticism are only good law so far as they are founded upon these.

It is worth our while to bestow some little consideration upon the Moorish Architecture. We shall discover in it a striking confirmation, and illustration, of the general conclusions to which we have so far come.

The Architecture of all the Mohammedan races, whether in India, in Persia, in Egypt, at Algiers, or at Granada, is imbued with the same spirit and distinguishable by congenerous characteristics. It is the common result of a unity of Faith.

The Mohammedan manner of India is unquestionably superior to the other modifications of Moslem Architecture. But we select the Moorish, as being the most familiar of these, as embodying in a high degree the eminent qualities which they possess;

and because the Moors have distinguished themselves above all other Moslemin.

I.

In the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries the Moors were at the climax of their civilization. The Arabic family has been remarkable from immemorial ages—since the days of the Patient Man of Uz, indeed—for its attachment to abstruse studies and elegant literature. The Moors of Cordova and Granada were far in advance of the Christian nations of the time in the abstract sciences, particularly in the Mathematics. And their Poetry, which it is a pity we know so little of, puts to shame the unvigorous and wordy rhapsodies which are now-a-days done into verse. Their every thought expressed itself in glowing and profuse imagery. Their every action clothed itself in the warmth of poetic feeling. Their veritable history was, indeed, one long Romance; infinitely more brilliant and startling than the lispings semi-octavos you borrow from the libraries.

The basis, the bone and sinew, of their character and life, was their Faith. The One True God was the centre of their Belief; and their greatest earthly ambition the extension and glory of Islam. Their creed was, in one sense, purer than the Christian practice of the times; for it sought to inculcate an abhorrence of the very possibilities of idolatry, by strictly prohibiting the use of living forms in their decorative arts. Their Sacred Book was the source from which they fed the aspirations of sentiment which were innate in their temperament. It was the Water of Life to them; though a little brackish perhaps. They wore its golden injunctions on their jewelled signets and armlets. They inscribed them over their gateways and doorways. They interwove them with the elaborate tracery with which they embellished the interior of their dwellings.

They were Pagnims, however, notwithstanding all this. Their very Creed was itself an Idolatry. For, with all its pretension of sternness and ostentation of purity, it was a poor human invention and born of

a Lie. There was no benison of the Hope of Israel upon that. So that, after all, their Faith could not get very far heavenward. There was a bar across the sky, made up of al-Koran fatuities, voluptuous animalism, and magnifying of Mohammed, which hindered that.

So in their Architecture we encounter an intermingling of beauty with shortcoming, of truth with falsehood, of refinement with vulgarity.

And as their Faith was, in a manner, the nearest approach possible to the Gothic Christian-faith, so their structural Art is—always with the great exception of the Indo-Mohammedan—the closest approximation to Gothic Art which has ever existed; and betrays the germs of those elevated attributes which were fully developed under the influences of Christianity.

II.

Their Religiousness was most notably manifest, as we have already suggested, in their covering their walls with the pious in-

junctions of their Creed, and the moral apophthegms of their poets and doctors. These "scriptures" are indeed so thoroughly and universally incorporated with the arabesque tracery, as to render it usually impossible to separate them from it without destroying its completeness. Their devotionism is further shown, as in the Gothic life, in the lavish splendour of their temples. Although these did not outvie their palaces in the profusion of embellishments, the materials employed in their construction were for the most part of a more costly nature. This little difference between their sacred and secular edifices is in consonance, however, with their material voluptuousness; which set up the enjoyments of man as only a shade below the glory of Allah. Besides, their secular art did not so much grow out of, and draw its life from, their sacred art, as was the case with the Gothic. The two were rather concurrent, and each reacted on the other.

But the perfect union between their Religion and their Life is seen in this—that the architecture of their dwellings was the same as that of their mosques; and at home,

they were ever reminded of the House of Prayer. A man's house and household were deemed as much a part of Islam as the temple of his tribe; and he would as soon wear the Cross upon his turban as divide the one from the other by any infidel-brand of difference.

The evidence of their comparative spirituality and elevation of thought, expresses itself in a partial Verticality of composition. The Moorish Architecture is, in this particular, the mean between the Pagan and the Gothic, or Christian, forms. As the Moorish Faith is a mean between Paganism and Christianity. This partial Verticality appears in the form of their arches, which are usually "stilted," and slightly pointed; in the general arrangement of the subordinate forms; and the diagonalism of the prevailing lines of surface-decoration. The pervading Rectangularity of the archaic modes nowhere appears, except in the circumscribing lines of occasional features. There is a general natural feeling of Upwardness. It is far, however, from possessing the power and force of the bold and

H

decided Verticalism of the Gothic. The Moorish arch is a feeble whisper to the full, out-speaking eloquence of the lancet-pointed arch. And, altogether, though the lines run generally upwards, they fail to point you still higher. They seem, not all at once, but gradually, to forget their mission; and mingle one with another in a maze of voluptuous obscurity. They lose themselves amongst the Koran fatuities. Again, if we look to the exterior, the human origin of their Faith comes out unequivocally. There, the vertical expression is suddenly cut short, and barred, by the long, deep, unbroken cornice, and the lines of the low roof. If you will believe in Mohammed, you must fain rest there. You shall not get higher with such a Belief as that.

The Prophet knew the weakness of man; and the impotence of his own system, unless he should add some safeguard to it, of a clever devising. So, to keep his followers from idolatry, he forbade them to study Nature overmuch. They must not *copy* her by any means. This is a somewhat curious invention, to bring man to the

Creator by instructing him to shun the Creation. Very unmistakably human is this Islam. But the irrepressible exuberance of Eastern imaginativeness could not so easily be bridled. The wild fancy of the Arabic race would perforce feed upon its natural food. And as their Poetry teems with flowery metaphor, so their Architecture is beautified and enlivened by that graceful leaf-like tracery we know so well as Arabesque-work.

III.

This peculiar ornamentation, being made use of to cover large spaces of interior wall, must necessarily—to please the eye and mind—be *abstract*; that is, the Natural Forms upon which it is founded must be treated ideally, or conventionally. You must not cover the walls of your apartment with copies of real creepers; for, by so doing, you offend against the law of Congruity. One does not readily conceive of creepers climbing over the inside of a house. And again, though you may legitimately

copy natural forms in certain minor details, where the mind is not shocked by an incoherence between those forms and the position assigned to them, yet you are not to indulge in a wholesale importation of Nature. Otherwise the mind is led altogether astray from the actual structure to something essentially apart from it. But the Moorish architect, having ever before him his fear of idolatry—poor weak soul!—carried this conventional treatment of natural forms into those subordinate features, such as the capitals of columns, which should properly be carefully drawn from Nature, and idealized only in the conventional manner of their *disposition*.

The distinction here suggested between the legitimate spheres of abstract and actually imitative sculpture of natural forms, may perhaps appear to be theoretically a close one. But in practice it clearly defines itself. It was thoroughly appreciated and carried out by the artists of the best Gothic period. We are told, however, by Mr. Owen Jones, that, “in the best periods of Gothic art the floral ornaments are treated

conventionally, and a direct imitation of Nature is never attempted; but, as art declined, they became less idealized and more direct in imitation."* Now a careful examination, unbiassed by preconceptions, of Gothic structures of the various periods will show precisely the reverse—that the general character of floral sculpture became less abstract in approaching the Climacteric, and gradually more conventional in receding from that, or as Art declined. The Gothic Artist of the end of the thirteenth and beginning of the fourteenth century invariably treated his sculpture abstractedly, or naturally, according to its use and position; but always idealized his natural foliage by a conventional disposition of the leaves. But in later work all is conventional.

It is further remarked by Mr. Jones, that an additional "charm is found in the works of the Arabs and Moors from their conventional treatment of ornament." This is true, of course, with reference to their diaper-work, but certainly not as regards

* *The Alhambra Court in the Crystal Palace.*—With some drawbacks, a valuable little book.

those other features to which we have referred. He will seek in vain to make us feel that there is greater beauty in the filling of their marginal mouldings, and their stiff, byzantine-looking capitals, or in the absurd conventionalisms and stupid tudor-flowers of late English, or even in the avowedly abstract sculpture of early English, than in the "vine, the ivy, the oak, and other leaves correctly represented from nature," in the capitals, bases, and so on, of the Gothic of the end of the thirteenth and beginning of the fourteenth centuries.

The invariable and entirely conventional treatment of ornament which is founded upon natural form, is a characteristic of all primitive art, of all later imperfect art, and of all still later degenerate art. And in each of these cases it arises from imperfect knowledge of nature, and imperfect skill in the true imitation of her forms. A boy will readily give you upon his slate an abstract representation of a man, by means of a large round, a small round at the top of it, two straight lines striking out laterally, and two more downwards from the large

round. By disposing his design horizontally, and lengthening his rounds somewhat, you will have—according to the puerile practice of art—a horse, or some or any other quadruped. But the boy must pass through years of tuition before he can draw a man or a horse naturally and artistically. So we find that the Egyptian sculpture, whether of foliage used architectonically, or of the human or brute form, is the most conventional; and in this sense of being imperfect, the most puerile—but in this sense only. Indeed, the Egyptians were capable of very little more than a primitive typifying, with a certain grandeur and dignity. The sculpture of the Chinese is, like themselves, coarsely conventional, and altogether out of the pale of Art. The Byzantine, Lombard, and Norman styles are each marked by an invariable conventionalism in their floral and faunal decoration; with infinitely less grandeur, but at the same time more refinement than the Egyptian. On the other hand the Greek, but especially the Gothic Artists, both of whom attained to a sort of perfection in their several spheres,

were so much masters of Nature and of their own hands, that they succeeded in producing those exquisite copies of her beauties which, apart from the Architecture they adorned, are sufficient to immortalize them; and which must ever be the acme of artistic effort.*

To treat ornament abstractedly, however, with design aforethought, is a matter of no small difficulty to the highly-cultivated Artist. And his very greatest skill is perhaps shown in doing that successfully, when the use and position of his sculpture require it.

IV.

Though the Faith of the Moors was founded in Falsehood, they were not generally a false race. They were naturally too noble, too chivalrous a people for that. Yet great deeds of perfidy and treachery, committed by their ambitious and restless

* For some idea of the perfectness of Gothic Sculpture of the human form, see Professor Cockerell's *Iconography of the West Front of Wells Cathedral*.

chiefs, often blot the brightness of their historic page. Generally they meant what they said. Or if they meant otherwise, cloaked their crafty intention under such specious guise that one was fain to believe them the soul of honour. It will be no great wonder, then, if we discover in their Architecture a general Truthfulness and Realness, with here and there an occasional lapsus.

What Mr. Owen Jones with great wisdom holds "to be the first principle in Architecture—to *decorate construction, never to construct decoration,*"* is obeyed in Moorish Art more religiously than in most other imperfect styles. There are no mendacious pediments, or gables, no hypocritical columns, no false windows or unmeaning niches to patch up a meretricious symmetry. But you do sometimes stumble upon a very clever deceit, so subtly blended with a modicum of truth that one is fairly drawn within the meshes of the deceiver. For example, you know that the groined

* The late Mr. Pugin was the first to suggest the clear distinction between "constructed ornament" and "ornamented construction."

vault in a Gothic structure is really as substantial a piece of work as it seems to you, that it really does effectively carry what weight may be superincumbent upon it; whether of roof, or floor of triforium, or pavement of upper story. But this is not so with what are called the "stalactite" arches and domes* of the Moorish; and which are a sort of equivalent to Gothic vaulting.† The cave-looking domes of the Alhambra, which enchant you with their fantastic dimness, and which seem strong enough to carry a whole tribe of Moors, are simply a conglomeration of ingenious little blocks of plaster, incapable of carrying the weight of anything in the world besides their own. They are an elegant contrivance for covering the nakedness of a real arch, which does carry a certain amount of weight.

Again, in looking at a colonnade—that

* So called simply because of their resemblance to stalactite caverns.

† In many Mohammedan structures in India, and occasionally in the transition-work from the Byzantine to Moorish, as at Cordova, real groined vaulting occurs.

for example around the Court of Lions in the palace of the Alhambra—you would very naturally be assured that the weight of the cornice and roof was really carried by the arches, as well as by the columns; as it appears to be. But it is not so. The arches merely carry a trellis-work of flat tiles with attached decorations, extending from the crown of the arches to the underside of the cornice. All the weight above that is incumbent upon beams stretching from pier to pier.* It is fair that you should know that this trellis-arrangement was intended as a means for the admission of cooling currents of air. You will naturally inquire, then—if these arches really do carry something which is useful, where is the deceit and impropriety of them? In this—that they do very much less than they make a pretence of doing; and are set to a work which is altogether below the dignity of so noble a Means.

* We are indebted to Mr. Jones's Folio and the book already quoted, for a sectional drawing and detailed description of these constructive features. Though he would doubtless be very far from educing the same inferences therefrom.

Had a Gothic Architect happened to be working under a heat of ninety-five of Fahrenheit in the shade, he would have accomplished the same end the Moor had in view with a higher truthfulness of method, and greater beauty of effect. He would have pointed his arches higher, and with much greater emphasis; made them do the work they seemed to do, and were worthy of; perforated their spandrels* without practically affecting their strength; and filled the arch-openings with intermediate shafts and close tracery. Indeed there are approximations to this, which indicate what he would have done had he thought it necessary, in the cloisters of some of the very fine quasi-Gothic convents of Spain and Portugal.

V.

The Moors frequently made great use of Plaster in their decorations; as at the Alhambra, where the chief portion of them is of that material. But you are not to

* The part of the wall immediately over the sides of an arch.

suppose that they descended to the uncomely *smearing* practices of the architects and builders of our own day. We are informed by the authority already quoted, that their ornaments were moulded in portions or segments, and afterwards fairly *builded* into their work. This was honestly carrying out the constructionality of their ornamentation. But you will perceive that it tended very much to reduce Art to a mechanical system. We cannot wonder that they treated nature in a conventional manner. The Sculptor had no inducement to practise his art; keeping his eye ever on the Book of Nature for his direct inspiration. His Art was, indeed, displaced by a system of Patterns, and a kind of upholstery-arrangement. And, besides, Plaster is an ignoble thing at best. Very well for Moors, with their Koran-fatuities and unabiding Faith. But not to be thought of by Christians, so long as heaven vouchsafes them Stone. The ever-duringness of their Hope should be expressed in the material they use, as well as in the forms to which they shape it.

These Moulded Segments suggest another point. Mr. Jones, the great authority* in this Moresque Art, says that these segments, or pieces, or bricks, must all have been "designed on a certain *fixed rule of proportion*, which appears to be that which Vitruvius ascribes to the Ancients, viz., that they determined always *that each part of a composition should be some aliquot part of the whole*, and it is evident that, in the compositions of the Moors, the whole assemblage of forms, and even each particular member, was a multiple of some simple unit."

This is nothing other than that hateful Hecatompodonism to which we referred in the Reminiscences, and which we shall have occasion to remark upon somewhat largely in our Notes on the Italian, or Pagan Architecture. In the mean time, do you not get a glimpse, from what we have just

* Whoever has seen the Folio on the Alhambra, with its plenitude of superbly-executed engravings, cannot wonder that after expending so much careful patience and immense labour upon the illustration of Moorish Art, Mr. Jones should be heartily in love with that Art. He has a greater right to be so than any other man. The engravings in Murphy's Folio, however, give a much more *effective* notion of what the thing really was and is.

said of the Sculptor's Art, how this aliquot-part system must have a direct tendency to the destruction of artistic freedom? A great Architect may, nay, indeed, often does, indulge in mathematical fancies of proportion. You will occasionally find such in the old Gothic structures. But what right of reason have you to tie the Multiplication-table round the Architect's neck, and bid him to work by that, whether he will or no? If the use of these moulded segments would naturally lead to a conventionalizing, and then to a stereotyping, and so to a general degradation of artistic detail, you cannot but see that the extension of that notion to the structure as a whole, by establishing a universal and irrefragable law of Multiples of a Simple Unit, must eventually result in the weakening and degrading of artistic feeling as applied to the composition of the general design. We have not seen the complete consummation of this degradation in the Moorish Architecture, because its authors were swept from their dominion immediately after their art-energy attained its

zenith. But from the signs of marked declension which were already manifest in their Art, it may certainly be assumed that such a consummation would have arrived. We behold in our own time the ruin of Classic Art from the self-same cause. This germ of self-destruction was inherent in the Classic Architecture; as we shall see presently. If you would have high, genuine, and ever self-developing Art, you must not hamper the Artist with such-like empirical methodizings. The true Artist has a delicate natural-sense of Proportion incalculably better than any Rules you make for him.

It may undoubtedly be peculiarly interesting to the connoisseur, who has the time, the patience, and the wish, to go over a structure and measure it piecemeal, jotting down in a book the figures he reads from his tape;—it may for him be most entertaining to go home and work out Multiples of a Simple Unit, Ratios, Aliquot-parts, and what not. Undoubtedly for him, fond of Arithmetic, the structure comes to have an additional charm when he can gloat over quotients without a re-

mainder. But what has this special, pedantic *after-interest* to do with the positive production of beauty in a building? Will the connoisseur lay aside the prejudicial conceptions with which he has filled his judgment, and tell us what necessary connexion there is, in the abstract, between Beauty and Aliquot-parts? He will find it a rare labour, and need some store of patience, to find multiples of simple unity running through the cathedrals of Westminster, York, or Lincoln. Yet you cannot match me the like of them for Beauty.

VI.

In contrasting the unchecked extravagance and overweening voluptuousness of embellishment in such a building as the Alhambra, with the severely intelligent distribution of chaste decoration in the best Gothic edifices, the judicious mind is uncomfortably oppressed by the feeling that there is a certain want of matured refinement, amounting to vulgarity, in the former. The element of Power, the pathos of Tone,

are altogether absent. In place of these, there is something like the workings of the tendency of uncultivated minds to deck their bodies with a profusion of gaudy trappings. This uncurbed rioting in the luscious sweets of ornament, this lust of the eye, is the very Lasciviousness of Art. It is the out-speaking of the systematized sensualism of the Mohammedan. It is this which, most of all, annuls the claim of this Moorish Architecture to be considered as High Art. The true Artist may sometimes lose himself in an ecstasy of spiritual exaltation; but will never be prone to indulge in excesses of mere materialism.

Notwithstanding many grave faults, the Moorish Architecture betrays a real, vital energy; and is distinguished, on the whole, by those elements of Naturalness which will ever be found in the structural expression of a faithful and heroic people. If the Gothic reminds you of the sylvan gathering of the limes, the elms, and the oaks; the Moorish calls to mind the Eastern bowers of jasmine and heliotrope, with hyacinthine borders, where the high sun gilds the

flowers with unearthly brightness by day, and at eventide the nightingale sings his love-carols to them.

When you go to Granada, compare the wreck of the Alhambra—still lovely, though its glory be departed—with the coarse stolidity, the square unmeaningness, the engrained pedantry of the palace of Charles V., which has trampled out of existence much of the old Moorish paradise, and seeks to frown what is left into contemptuous annihilation. A contrast between a Natural Architecture and your Pagan-Italian Architecture, and a “commentary” on Taste.

Note.—The character of general truthfulness attributed to the Moors in the course of this chapter, does not accord with popularly-received notions. We are in the habit of stigmatizing that wonderful race with the epithets—“wily,” and “perfidious.” This is contrary to History. In their war-tactics it is true that they were given to stratagem; but in their commercial dealings they were celebrated—along the shores of the Mediterranean and the Levant, to which they chiefly traded—for their probity. It is sufficient, indeed, to recal the famous saying of Talavera, first Archbishop of Granada—“Moorish *works* and Spanish faith are all that are wanted to make a good Christian.”

P A G A N ?

OUR English Architecture is just now an Architecture of "shreds and patches." A general *pot-au-feu* of all known and possible Architectures. There are buildings with classic columns along their façades, profanely imagined to be like Greek temples. There are buildings with futile Italian fronts. Buildings with eccentric Elizabethan gables, and the ball and obelisk nic-nacs. Normanesque buildings. Feudal castles with the barbican and drawbridge left out. Ignorant reproductions of all the periods of the Gothic, from Transition to Tudor. Swiss cottages. The Egyptian Energy, rendered into English brick and abominable plaster. Buildings in the Moresque manner. Buildings in the Byzantine manner. Then there is the great Plate-glass-window and Two-columned-portico style. The Detached-Villa style. And the curiously unique Rail-

way-station style. And there are Chinese Pagodas in ridiculous back-gardens.*

This medley of structure-manifestation is an exact expression of the indefiniteness, and want of fixity, of our present social condition. In politics there is no Party; every man is his own Party. There are two Aristocracies—the Aristocracy of land, and the Aristocracy of cotton; each temporarily antagonistic to the other. And we are in a dubious state of uncertainty as to whether we should not establish a third, to displace the other two—the Aristocracy of the Hammer and File. Whilst pretending that the whole system of our Law is founded in Christianity, we have admitted the Professed Unbeliever to share in the enactment of law, and compel our judges to the daily violation of the clearest injunctions of the Divine

* Lord Palmerston dilated not long ago (Speech on the Conservative Reform Bill) on the complex nature of our Constitution, and explained how its conflicting elements do, in fact, make up its perfectness, illustrating his argument by the lines—

*Balnea, vina, Venusque, solent corrumpere vitam ;
Sed faciunt vitam balnea, vina, Venus.*

Perhaps his lordship would apply the same reasoning to our Architecture.

Code. What is our position in the matter of Religion? The very mention of Creed suggests a picture of strife, hate, and chaos. Uniformity is of course infinitely out of question. But how about the Unity? What a polyglot and hideous chorus of vociferous bigotry, chanting formalism, epic neology, ranting ignorance, and inane cant! Heart and sense sicken at it. And in the general, what a strange intermingling of extreme Wealth and extremest Poverty; of noble Virtue and detestable Vice, of dignified Patriotism and cosmopolitan Truckling, of hearty Generosity and despicable Meanness!

Since the importation of the Italian style, it has been until lately the dominant mode with us. But the past few years have brought a revival of the Gothic spirit; which has now assumed such an extension and consistency as to threaten the entire subversion of classic mannerism. It cannot be denied that the Gothic Feeling has so much gained ground as to give rise to a very grave question—Whether it shall be encouraged or not? Are we prepared to revert to National, Christian Art; or shall

we continue to record our existence in the hieroglyph of a Foreign, and Pagan, Art-language?

We are asked to believe that the Italian style is national in England by "existing examples." We have already—not admitted merely, but shown, that it was quasi-national here for a period of two centuries. But the matter at issue now is—Whether the characteristics of this style, as bodied forth in these "existing examples," are such as to render it a true expression of our National Life *now, and in the proximate future?*

I.

The Italian is nothing more nor less than an extended application of late Roman. You have all the characteristics of it in the Pantheon at Rome.

The first thing to be remarked in it, is the unbroken Horizontality of the dominant lines of the general design. This is occasionally relieved by the round arch, and in some grand structures by the dome. But

the round arch and dome have but a very remote relationship to pure Verticality. In following the semicircular contour, the eye after being led partially upwards is brought rapidly down again; instead of being directed, tangentially, still further upwards, as it is by the pointing of the two curves in the Gothic arch. The Italian is essentially, in its very nature, incapable of Verticalism; because all its outline and details are founded on an appreciation of the old classic forms, which were essentially rectangular. To illustrate this—suppose an architect were to attempt to make the roof a feature in the design of an Italian front, by elevating its pitch to a Gothic height. He would at once ruin the harmony and general effect of his composition. The mere suggestion of a high-peaked pediment in a classic structure is horrible. It follows, therefore, from our previous reasonings, that this Architecture is an imperfect Idealization of Nature; and, therefore, imperfect Art. Nor is it wonderful that it should be so, having been the profane offspring of Pagandom and Christian Faithlessness.

This Architecture is marked by an almost entire absence of Constructionality in its ornamentation. The chief decorative members are not identified with the body of the structure. We saw how the Greek Orders were used in the Roman Architecture. So are they continued to be used in the Italian. Now the Column is, under all circumstances, a decorative feature. But it was originally also an essential element of construction. It was intended to *carry* something; whilst at the same time it served to beautify the structure. But these semi-columns, and what are called "engaged" columns, which we see *stuck upon* the "existing examples"—the club-houses, the town-halls, the mansions, and Inigo Jones's great Banqueting-hall—what do *they* carry? What do they do? You are accustomed to admire them unlimitedly—what do you conceive they can possibly mean? The Buttress of a Gothic building does verily mean something, and a great deal. It carries the thrust of a groined vault, or of the roof, or of a flying-arch between itself and another buttress which holds up the roof.

These remarks will apply also, to some extent, to columns used in prostyle and peripteral buildings—in this latitude—where they are really detached from the wall, and carry a pediment or attic. For, as already said with reference to trabeated Architecture,—if you remove the outer columns the building, as such, still remains intact. Yet the columns around a Greek temple really had a purpose to fulfil. They supported an entablature, which served as a shelter to the people from a comparatively vertical southern heat; and a southern rain, which is nearly always vertical from the mere quantity and weight of it. Here, however, where the sun is slanting, even at midsummer, and where the eccentric wind blows the small fine rain round corners and into the very houses, these lofty columned porticoes are a mockery. For example, of what imaginable service can the portico of the Bank of England be? As a practical proof indeed that they are not intended by their architects to serve any purpose other than that of ostentatious decoration, they are frequently so hoisted up as to be alto-

gether inaccessible. A preposterous instance of this is the Town-hall of Birmingham. This is a large peripteral edifice, mounted upon a huge stylobate, or base. The top of this stylobate, upon which the columns stand all round the building, is about as impossible of access as the top of the colonnade at Hyde Park Corner—unless one climb through a window.

But besides that these columns are a mockery, they are an absolute nuisance in this country. In a southern climate it is an object to bar the entrance of too much of the glaring light. But in England one can never get light enough. One would give a kingdom sometimes for only a little more light. But these pests of columns outvie the tyranny of the defunct Window-tax, and stop Heaven's Daylight on her good errand. At the British Museum, one of the "existing examples,"—who has not been moved to anger by the cavernous gloom of the first room in the Gallery of Antiquities, through the windows of which you see the columns of the portico looming in their huge and intolerable dulness? One finds real shelter

in a Gothic porch; and it does not shut out Heaven's Daylight from the windows.

Another point of importance is the use of the Pediment. This was originally, in Greek Architecture, simply the ornamental covering to the *end* of the roof—the equivalent of the Gothic Gable. It was therefore essentially a constructional, as well as decorative feature. But it is in very rare instances that it is so used in Anglo-Italian. In nearly all the “existing examples” it is nothing more than a Triangular Screen, placed over the portico to preserve the “classic” character of the design. So far from closing constructionally the *end* of the roof, it covers accidentally a part of the *side* of it, and has no constructional connexion with it. In the very nature of the case it could not be otherwise; for in the crowded manner of building our towns it is seldom that we can so detach an edifice as to make its ends visible; or that we can command sufficient depth of site to enable us to place its length at right angles to the thoroughfare, so as to expose one end. The *side* of the building thus becomes the front,

contrary to the classic practice, and the ends are hidden by abutting against other buildings. The Pediment in such a situation is an indubitable Sham. You do not find Sham Gables in the old Gothic buildings.

Now turn to the instances where the Pediment is a real Gable, really closing the end of the roof; which are so few that one does not occur to me, proper to quote.* This brings us to the question of Pitch. The connexion between the Pitch of the roof and Climate is so intimate, that in travelling from the south, northward, there is observed to be a gradual and constant rise, from the flat roof of the north coast of Africa to the peaked roof of the North of Europe. Thus between Cartagena in Spain and Bergen in Norway, there is an increasing difference in Pitch of upwards of twenty-four degrees. A steep Pitch is absolutely essential in a northern latitude to throw off effectually the small searching rain, to drain

* The Pediment of the Royal Exchange is not an instance, because there is no roof to close. Sham unqualified.

away the still more searching melting snow-water, and to prevent the accumulation of a weight of snow. But the Pitch of the Italian Pediment is an invariable quantity, like that of the Greek Pediment, which always bore a fixed ratio to the hecatompedon, or number of measures in the width of the building. It is a Canon in classic Architecture, the infringement of which is not tolerated, that—

"The Heights of Pediments should be regulated by their Lengths, INDEPENDENT OF THE CONSIDERATIONS OF CLIMATE."

The Italian style, then, is not and cannot be suited to a climate like ours.

The entire series of our structural notions has been, however, so thoroughly Italianized that we have copied the pedimental slope in the roofs of our dwellings. It suits well with the screwing closeness of the speculative builder; it saves his Timber and his Duchesses. Besides, it is sure to bring him after-employment. When the deluded purchaser, or the unhappy tenant, sees the ceilings darkened by unseemly patches of moisture, and feels the drops of indubitable

water on his head, it is a profitable godsend to the Trade—

Impavidum ferient ruinae.

And when the snow grows deep and heavy, and hob-nailed men are sent aloft to clear it off with shovels, it is small annoyance to the inmates I suppose. And then, what with the hob-nails and shovels, the Duchesses get cracked, and that is another godsend for the Trade, and another opportunity for it to rejoice in the dependence of mankind upon its tender mercies. In the Gothic roof there is ultimate Economy as well as Fitness, and Beauty as well as Economy.

We now arrive at the question of subordinate, or accessory, Ornamentation—that which is not necessarily constructional in any style.

The essential characteristic of the Italian is Rectangularity. The curved line, as a prevailing element of composition, is unknown. Indeed as a rule, in the “existing examples,” it is unknown altogether. The round arch itself is usually as absent in these as it was in a Greek temple. Windows and doorways are perseveringly made square-

headed. The immediate consequence of this is that subordinate decoration copied directly from Nature, or only partially conventionalized, does not dispose itself naturally in Italian design. There is nothing that Foliage or Flowers would seem to grow along, or round, or out of, naturally. For as Foliage is not rectangular, it is essentially contrary to the conception of it that it should be disposed rectangularly. Here we see, by contrast, the power of Verticality; with which Foliage rhymes naturally, truly, and beautifully. For it is the Ideal Expression of that Nature from which the Foliage is derived. And here we perceive, at the same time, the imperfection of the Classic Architecture, which cannot by any conceivable method entwine with itself the luxuriant sculpture with which the Gothic is adorned. Even in the capitals of the columns the architect is bound to the everlasting Acanthus-leaf* of the Corinthian and Composite, or the ineffable Ram's-horn of the Ionic Order. The utmost he can do is to fill the friezes and unmeaning panels

* *Anglice*, Bear's-breech.

with sculpture, in low relief, of the vine and its grapes, hanging in festoons, mindful of Bacchus; or heads suggestive of Cupid and his clique, surrounded by roses and magnified forget-me-not. What should he do, then, but have resort to Colour, the true and natural embellishment of Classic Architecture?

Paint the walls with frescoes, and the ceilings with geometric intricacies in browns, blues, and gilt. Spend good time and good money upon them, as you have done, and see how the murky and undelicate atmosphere of London, Manchester, or Liverpool, "tones down" your brilliant hues with its soot-brush, blackens your browns and blues, and cruelly begrimes your gilt. Observe the ceilings of the British Museum, a year or two after re-painting. Take an airing in the colonnade of the Royal Exchange, that marvel of Art, twelve months after the brush has been withdrawn.* Without this painting on the coffered ceiling and on the side-walls the interior of the colonnade would be a blank, a mere dead wall and

* The colonnade, or ambulatory, has just been re-painted.

ceiling. And in order to preserve the effect of the painting, it should be renewed at the least every three years. What sort of Architecture is this, that requires a triennial renewal of its chief decorative feature? One cannot but think that the ribbed vaulting,—or if you must needs be costly, the fan-tracery,—the vaulting shafts, and the “engaged” arcade with traceried arches, of a Gothic ambulatory would be better than this. And in the end not cost so much. There are Exchanges enough on the Continent so decorated. They were built certain centuries ago; but their adornments do not even yet manifest much want of renewal.

One might exhaust a volume in reviewing the contrivances, born of Sham, for filling the Flat Space of exteriors; invented to satisfy our greedy northern eyes, which hate nothing so much as a Dead Wall. The nomenclature, too, would confound you; and you will do well to persevere in your ignorance of it. The best of them, perhaps, after those semi-pillars you know so well, are the unmeaning panels, and the niches

one sees on country mansions and other places, filled with the images of the Muses and nude gods of Pagandom. This Architecture cannot forget its origin, and does its utmost to preserve the enshrined immortality of its tutelary saints. The Virgin and her Child find no place in it. Your barbarous forefathers, however, who knew nothing of nude gods, loved to sanctify their dwelling-place with the likeness of the Virgin and her Child.

II.

We have been born in the midst of this Architecture. We have been taught from our youth up to look upon it as immaculate, as the Highest Art. Our love of the Natural has been warped. Our Taste has been moulded on the classic die; and it is very hard for us to find beauty away from the Orders and nude gods. It is inconceivably hard for us to turn our habitual admiration of these things into the intelligent scrutiny of abstract criticism. Very hard to be driven to find rational grounds for our admiration.

Lord Palmerston has quoted a long list of "existing examples" of the Italian style. It is difficult to know whether he intended them to be considered as choice examples.* The list, omitting buildings in Edinburgh and Dublin, is as follows:—

LONDON.—Bank of England, *Mansion-house*, *East India-house*, Royal Exchange, Somerset-house, *Custom-house*, *British Museum*, Banqueting-house (Whitehall), *National Gallery*, Greenwich Hospital, *University College*, *Post Office*, Chelsea Hospital, *Buckingham Palace*, and *Stafford-house*.

CAMBRIDGE.—Fitzwilliam Museum, Observatory, and several colleges.

MANCHESTER.—Free-trade Hall, Royal Institution, Athenæum, Exchange, Commercial Rooms, and the Museum.

LIVERPOOL.—St. George's Hall, Exchange, Custom-house, Town-hall.

OXFORD.—Queen's College, Radcliffe Library, Theatre, Museum, Printing-house, and the Observatory.

* As the National Gallery and the Manchester Exchange occur in the list, his lordship's secretary is doubtless more responsible for it than himself.

In the London category we have signalized by italics such buildings as are remarkable for special ugliness. The Oxford list is singularly unfortunate; for the buildings quoted are an acknowledged disgrace to the good city. They are, however, as good as most other "existing examples."

After quoting this triumphant list, his lordship ventures to remark that he "had stated *enough to prove* that it is not true to say that the Gothic style is natural here." The argument, then, is this—*These buildings are not in the Gothic style, THEREFORE the Gothic cannot be natural in England.*

Rather a weighty conclusion from so shallow a premiss.

But apart from the absurdity of such reasoning, — what rational grounds can one render for admiration of these, or other like, "existing examples"? The erudite hecatompedal Professors, who have spent their lives in providing us with them, will doubtless fall back upon the refinements of their mathematical formulism. It cannot be hoped that they will see beauty away from that. They will go on drawing the ever-

lasting Acanthus-leaf, and designing Sham Pediments in the ratio $a : b$, and generally doing that which any schoolboy of moderate gifts could do as well, to the end of their days. But you who care nothing that Art should be arithmetical, so it be beautiful, and who have still, one may hope, some capability of discerning between Beauty and Ugliness, if you would care to exercise it—why do you profess to be enamoured of buildings with Pagan Orders and roofs which belong to Greece or Italy? Retire for a while to the Abstract, look around and within you, and answer if it be not simply because it has been the fashion, as long as you can well remember, to be enamoured of them? Is it not merely because your neighbours pretend to admire them, and because you hate to be peculiar, and out of the fashion? Is it not because your eye is so accustomed to them, that you cannot readily rid yourself of the habit of unreflectingly accepting them as the Legitimate Architecture? “That monster, Custom, who all sense doth eat,” has gnawed into the very faculty of Reflection,

and left you satisfied with what you find set before you, without the trouble of a Reason.

It is natural to admire such buildings as Greenwich Hospital and Somerset-house, two of the best examples of Anglo-Italian, for their mere vastness and general effectiveness of composition. A building in any style, with these characteristics, commands admiration to a certain extent. A range of mountains is superbly effective at a distance; but when you approach them, and come to travel over them wearily and slowly, it happens not seldom that you discover them to be a piling up of wretched barrenness and bleak unwelcome;—mere stones. And so when you examine these buildings near at hand, and search critically for the warm Truth and Beauty, which are ever so lovely and so refreshing in the toilsome journey of life—why you find them not. Mere stones.

If you think there be some reason in the Principles we have striven—albeit undeftly—to expound, apply them here. Is the decoration which is employed identical, in

the true sense, with the structure? Or is it only grafted on, and an hypocrisy? Is there anything hereabout which savours in anywise of Nature? Can you perchance find anything to remind you of the Leafy Woods, the great Primitive Dwelling-place? When the eye has done with the vastness, and the general effectiveness, I know of nothing here to interest or enthral the sense, or conduct the mind to an irrepresible sympathy with the Humanity of the Artist. Truly, there is nothing but false Orders, false Pediments, false and useless Columns, the stale Acanthus-leaf, insane Frets,* and the unendurable memories of Pagandom. And so of all the rest. You cannot, indeed you cannot, attach any æsthetic meaning or expression to them—unless falsehood be æsthetic. But if you cannot do that, they are not High Art. Nor, indeed, Art at all; but mere pilferings from Athens and Rome, set in order according to the pandects of Palladio.

* The very name of this ornament (!) suggests the excessive discomfort to which it gives rise in the mind of the beholder,

Greek Architecture had a meaning for the Greeks, and Roman for the Romans. As we have shown. But we are neither Greeks nor Romans, but altogether and essentially different from both. There must be an Architecture, therefore, essentially distinguishable from this, which shall have a meaning for Us, and which shall express Us. You may seek to persuade us that the Toga is a fitting and right costume for us here in England, with precisely the same show of reason, no more and no less, as that the Toga-architecture becomes us.

The absurdity of the application of the Toga-architecture to English uses reaches its height, perhaps, in the St. George's Hall at Liverpool. This, as Lord Palmerston justly said, is a "beautiful structure." It is a masterpiece of its kind, and on the whole the finest example of the reproduction of classic art in this country. It is, moreover, truthful; so far as Greek Architecture can be made so when applied to modern purposes—which is not a long way. The unendurable dulness of the Royal Exchange sinks into unutterable contempt,

when contrasted with the dignified elegance of such an edifice as this. This is not the Italian style, however; not the style of Inigo Jones, and the great Dome to the memory of Wren. It is after the manner of pure Greek Architecture; necessarily modified, more than a little, to make it available for Liverpool Assize-courts and Violin-festivals. But it is unsuited, in every conceivable sense, to our Climate, and to our Nationalism. Will any intelligent Englishman, who knows the difference between a Greek temple and a Chinese pagoda, tell us whether in looking upon this building he is struck by anything about it which is expressive of his national character, other than the acknowledged element of absurdity? Does he not naturally and at once recur to the reminiscences of Olympus and the nude gods? Does it not necessarily occur to him that the men in swallow-tailed coats, who pass under the noble Athenian portico, would be more harmonious if clad in Pallium or in Toga? He cannot find any remote analogy between this edifice, modelled upon those of an

essentially different climate, and the productions of a people of an essentially different Faith, different tone, habit, and culture, and the complex idiosyncrasy of our English Life. We are eminently an original and independent race. Where do you find the utterance of that in this Greek Temple of Cotton-importers?

The strange passion for importing Athens and Rome, bodily, into our good and very sufficient England, is curiously illustrated in the habit of posting up over these classic structures some pseudo-philosophic apophthegm in a dead tongue, occult to the million. Why could not the ship-chartering denizens of Liverpool write upon this Hall some English Household-word, which would have meant something more to themselves, and the general people too, than a worn-out and unprofitable

ARTIBUS, LEGIBUS, CONSILLIIS.

It is, I think, undoubtedly true that a building in the Italian style must, to be effective at all, be on a grand scale. Translate the Temple of the Sybil into Italian, and what would become of its effectiveness?

All your interminable lists of "existing examples" in this style, erected for ordinary purposes, look mean and undignified. They want force, life, expression. There is absolutely nothing in the Spirit of them to compensate for their want of Extent. The very smallest building which is the embodiment of Gothic Feeling attracts your attention, speaks to you, really has force, life, expression.

III.

There is an important feature in the classic styles, whether Italian or otherwise, which, whilst it forms an absolutely essential element in the modicum of beauty which they possess, deprives them of the capability of expressing truly and fully the Idea of Nature, on the one hand; and at the same time of being accommodated with facility to the manifold wants of ordinary modern life, and the multiform sites for buildings in modern towns. This is their Regularity of composition. If you divide the front of a classic building by a vertical line through

its centre, you must have precisely the same design on the one side of that line that you have on the other; otherwise your building will be a patch, and a deformity. Now if you divide the landscape we were looking at, by a similar line, you will not discover much resemblance between the two halves of it, I should think; though you will find a perfect harmony and congruity between them.

In our previous notes of Principles, we have suggested that though a Gothic building may, if you so require it, be as regular as you choose to make it, yet it may also be as irregular as convenience or fancy may dictate. And this without disturbing its effectiveness, but rather adding to that. Nor need the harmony or rhythm of its various parts be the least infringed by any such irregularity of composition. The idealization of Nature, and the fitting-in the building to a many-cornered site, are achieved by the same act—by intelligently carrying out the spirit of Gothic Design.

IV.

One utters a very commonplace truism, which no man can help knowing, to say that everything in Nature is progressive. The invariable tendency of things, stamped into their very essence, is towards a Higher Condition. Original Chaos passes from one grade to another, until it settles into pervading Order. And the Order goes on in its development until the Last Destruction. Unwieldy Megatherium and Ichthyosaurus give place to higher and more proportionate organisms. The chrysalis becomes a butterfly, and the acorn grows to an oak. And whilst some species become extinct, others of more elaborate structure arise in their place. The mythic Phoenix idealized this. The progression is cumulative also. If the individual of the species die, it has served by its life to extend the species. In what relates to man, this cumulativeness of Progress is more extensively palpable. Barbarism gives way to feudalism, and that again to complex politics; and the attainments of one age are

added to those of younger time. So the great structure of civilization is ever a-building. And if the work be sometimes stopped for an age or two, by temporary darkness and tempestuous tumult, it is anon resumed at much about the point where it ceased, and carried on with renewed activity.

Science and the mechanical arts are constantly advancing to higher perfection. And, though the Fine Arts appear to stand still at times, the great law of Progression still holds its unshaken dominion over them. From a very primitive Hebrew-chant and early plain-song, we arrive at last at complicated operas of Norma and Ernani. From the stiff, typical drawing of Egyptian pictures, we go through Greek and Roman frescoes, pre-Raffaelle hardness, and Italian untruth, until we arrive at the Huguenots of Millais. From the log-hut and nomadic tent, we pass along all the gradually refining and progressive forms of lithic structure, until we reach the Gothic development. And, whether that be not in its very nature Progressive, we shall see pre-

sently. But Architecture in the abstract is no exception to the law of progress. We can never come to a dead-stop of perfection in that, any more than in any other outcome of human effort. There can be no such thing as a Perfect Architecture. So that the comparative merits of different forms or styles are, after all, only relative, and by no means absolute. But that form is best which is furthest on the road of Progress, and which harmonizes most with the progressiveness of Nature by its possessing, more than any other, the capability of unlimited development, without losing its specific attributes.

If we examine the elementary character of the Italian Architecture, or of any other Pagan form, we shall see very distinctly that Limitation is implied in its very nature; that it is altogether incapable of progressive development without ceasing to be Italian. This is the crowning-stone of its imperfection and general unnaturalness.

All the members of an Italian, or Classic, design, and their subdivisions, are proportioned according to a fixed arbitrary

rule. The height of a column is in invariable ratio to its diameter. The depth of the entablature* depends for its exact proportion upon the height of the column. The three members of the entablature, architrave, frieze, cornice, are relatively dimensioned from the whole depth. The pediment, as we have already seen, must have its height strictly regulated by its length. And so on, through all the smaller members, the capitals, the bases, the triglyphs. The minutest moulding or fillet has its thickness and projection assigned to it in fractions of the module, or measure of the diameter of the column; which is the standard to which the proportions of every part of the structure are ultimately referred. No architect, who values his name and fame, will venture to deviate more than a few hairs' breadths from this draconic tyranny of the Foot-rule. This is hecatompedonism.

It must be borne in mind that these proportions are no invention of the Italian

* The projecting portion of the structure which lies immediately upon the columns.

style, but are taken directly from the Greek Architecture. This is the Progress of Art, according to Palladio.

Then, as regards the nature and employment of certain elements of decoration. Here also the architect is limited by prescriptive regulation. According to the Order which he adopts, he is bound to the use of certain capitals, already drawn to hand. If Corinthian, the capital must be an acanthus-leaf. If Ionic, a ram's horn. If Composite—which is Roman, and not Greek—the acanthus-leaf and the ram's horn joined together. This is classic Congruity. If Doric, he is not allowed to have a capital, or at least what amounts to none. He is indeed a bold man if he venture upon anything other than these. The hideous nickname of Barbarian is forthwith assigned to him. In florid work, where the mouldings are filled with enrichment, there are stereotyped patterns which it is anathematized heterodoxy to depart from. For example, in one particular moulding he must use a certain Greek ornament, which is called the echinus, the egg-and-anchor, the egg-and-

tongue, and I know not what; but which is clearly an arrangement of spears and shields with one end cut off! In the manner of execution, and the disposition of such decoration as he is allowed to exercise his fancy upon, he is still bound by precedent and Palladio-pandects. Now where is the possibility of Progression with all this? How can a man walk if his legs be chained? How can your Architecture be progressive, like all else in creation, when you affirm that it cannot be improved, that it is already perfected? You complain that the Chinese find a barbaric delight in standing stock-still half-way to civilization, and that they will budge never an inch for either Nature or Reason. And yet you ask us to perpetuate, and everlastingly express ourselves in an Architecture which is as unpliant as Whinstone, and just as capable of growth.

You will tell us, of course, that these module-ratios and immutable prescriptions are the result of careful, educated Study; fine perception of the Beautiful; and a marvellously accurate knowledge of Just Proportion. And that they have been

accepted, practised, and eulogized by great Architects in many ages.

The latter portion of the statement is doubtless true. But the former is what we are very much inclined to question. Is there no Beauty, no Justness of Proportion, possible but with these? What was the special gift vouchsafed by heaven to the archaic founders of this ratio-system, that gave them a claim to dictate rules-of-three to generations of men with souls every whit as good as theirs, and perchance somewhat better? Who told you that there are not men, now living in what you stigmatize as this unartistic England, whose fervid art-inspiration, disdaining your arithmetic, could give birth to combinations whose grace and beauty should outvie your adorable formalisms a thousandfold? If you would but unchain their legs, and let them walk.

Suppose your Orders had never existed, and we were to begin now to devise some; do you think that we should arrive at any time at a coincidence with yours? It is hardly conceivable. The doctrine of chances

would give you but a poor chance. And yet doubtless our Orders would be every way as comely as yours.

Anywise, your Architecture is perfect, you say. It is, therefore, not progressive. And that is precisely what we had to prove.

V.

The first consequence of this want of progressiveness and unbending prescription, is the production of an unbroken, brooding Monotony; which dominates like an Evil Genius all edifices of this style. Even the variety of general composition is limited. There is that rectangularity of outline, and putting of pedimented porticoes in the middle, which you cannot escape from. In matters of detail, as we have seen, the same features are repeated in every building that we come upon. We are dragged through a dull reiteration of commonplace pilasters, and volutes, and modillions, and metope-fillings, all of the same eternal pattern, until the sense is palled and weary. We go from White-

hall to Greenwich, and from Greenwich back again to Somerset-house, vainly searching for some new interest. The most we find is, that what is left out at the one place is not left out at the other. And we go on, and back again, and from this side to that; but the sweet memories of changeful Nature nowhere vouchsafe their presence to us. Nothing anywhere but dull arithmetic, and volutes, and metope calves'-heads. Can you not, for pity's sake, release us from these tyrannous Orders and obdurate ratios of $a : b$ and $b : c$,

"Lest long same-seemingness should send us mad."

The next consequence of this prescriptive-ness and bar to progression, is the deadening of Artistic Feeling and the destruction of Inventiveness.

Art is governed by its appropriate laws; which are inflexible in their legitimate application. They may be completely summed up in one word—Naturalness. They have a characteristic which belongs to all other *natural* laws; which is that the methods and objects of their application may be varied unlimitedly. Like the ascertained laws which relate to Health, for ex-

ample; which are so changeful in their working as to appear even contradictory to the unscientific. So in Art, its very Law is replete with Freedom. When the Musician sets himself to the composition of a work, whilst he is bound to render an inflexible obedience to the laws of Rhythm and Harmony, he rejoices in an infinite latitude in the application of them, both as to manner and subject. There is no limitation, out of these, to the variform combinations of sounds which his genius and fancy may create. It would be very hard upon him if you were to fix these for him beforehand. Yet this is what you do with your poor Artist-architect. You prick down every note for him, leaving him free only in the *number of bars* in his piece. He is as truly an Artist as the other, and very much in the same sense; as we saw awhile ago. When the Architect sets himself before his drawing-board, square and pencil in hand, for the composition of *his* work, his every line must be directed by the requirements of Fitness and Congruity. But he should be free as air, with the Liberty which these very laws accord to him, in the

ever-changeable combinations of his lines. His Fancy should have its legitimate way. If his idiosyncrasy be stern and epic, let him express that. If genial and sunshiny, let him utter that. If fervid and passionate, by all means let him express that. We shall then feel the power of his Art. And when we look upon the work, we shall know the *man*. And our strong Human Sympathy will seize hold upon his Passionateness, and look it in the face, and love it. Just as we love the genius of any other Artist who touches the ringing chords of Pathos.

But you forbid this. You force him to sing in an everlasting monotone. You put his genius between boards, like the skull of a young Indian. You chain him to a rock, like Andromeda. You envelope him, soul and sense, in the rigidity of your module-system. You crush any spark of natural sentiment there may be in him, by binding him to precedents. You pretend to do for him all that he ought to do of himself. You degrade his art into a mechanical process of copying, and the Artist into the

machine. If he commit to memory the moduled-dimensions of your classic Architecture, from the stylobate to the cornice of the pediment, and if he have some sense of general effect, he should do very well for you. Your Art of Design is a mere Process, which one may learn by apprenticeship. If the man was not born an Architect, you can make him one. You cannot make Poets so, nor Painters, nor Musicians. Nature has nothing to do with your operations. Athens is your Nature. You go thither for Archetypes; not to the Woods. Creative fancy, inventive genius, are superfluities in your stock-in-trade. Dim, conventional glimmerings of Nature, let through a chink in the wall of Antiquity, are a plentitude of supply for you. Really, the only way for your Architect to be great, is to build a Great Building. Let him only have ground enough to cover, and he will show you the Power of Vastness. You shall forget his forgetfulness of Nature, in wonderment at the number of Bars in his Piece. If St. Peter's had been small, would Michael Angelo have been great?

If this Italian style be capable of progressive development, how is it that, for exactly two hundred and forty years now, it has shown no sign of that? The Banqueting-hall of Inigo Jones is quoted to-day as the perfection of this style. And all these Italian architectural-efforts still strive their utmost to be like that. Sometimes the semi-columns are made of marble, and there is an extra amount of conventional sculpture thrown in. But it is the Banqueting-hall still. The last new club-house, which comes like a periodical literature to illustrate Anglo-Italian Art, can never surpass that. Often and again, some daring soul has declared to the art-world the invention of a New Order. But these are all buried in the oblivion of unread quartos. The Italian manner will have none of them. And indeed the invention of new Orders is but forging new chains for the legs. You cannot infuse new spirit into Art by a mere variation of its modes. You might as well hold a transparent picture to the light, with its blank side next you, and expect to have a new picture so. You must embody a

new spirit. You must unshackle the man's legs altogether, and let him walk naturally; as heaven intended he should walk.

VI.

There are two directions in which the Italian style has been modified; these modifications still retaining most of its essential characteristics and general unnaturalness. The transparent picture with its back to you.

The first has been partially coincident with the existence of the style in this country, but has been most extended during the last fifty years. It is the progeny of Ignorance and Economy. It is the common Street-architecture of our towns. Its great examples are Drapery-shops and Gin-palaces. Its minor exponents are Paradise-rows and Caroline-places. The great material on which its genius loves to vent itself is Plaster.* Ignorance has taken possession of

* From the Greek *πλασσω*, to smear. The etymology is very much to the point.

the conventional ornamentation of the Italian, and twisted it into forms still further than ever from Nature. The Orders are altogether disordered; and no ray of artistic thought betokens itself to make up for that. The flat pilaster, which is the mean Italian excuse for the column, is converted into the most hideous shapes and uses. You see huge pediments half-way up a building. A gable twenty feet below the roof! The decorative details to which we have come surpass the powers of verbal description. If it accorded with the intention of these pages to give linear illustrations of their subject, one could provide you with sketches of concentrated Ugliness which would appear incredible to you on paper. And yet you pass daily by hundreds of such realities. If it be too irksome to raise your head higher, scan the doorways as you walk along. If you have a lawsuit in hand, you will find some exquisite *morceaux* in Chancery Lane and the Inns. This architecture flourishes marvelously under the shelter of the Law.

What you call Economy, but what is in

reality Niggardliness, has completed what Ignorance began. Where your forefathers used stone, you descend to an imitation of it in Plaster. One would think that where stone be inaccessible, there is Clay enough to mould into bricks of any form you may need for your decoration. But Stucco costs a little less, and so you choose that. You prefer cheap Falsehood to costly Truth, and besmear your dwellings and civil structures with lies. And these are uttered so cleverly sometimes that it is hard to know them from the truth,—whether they be really stone or plaster. This is the uttermost degradation of Architecture. If an Italian pilaster, or semi-column, mean nothing, or next to nothing, when done in stone, what can it possibly mean when done in cement? Would *that* carry the weight you make a pretence of assigning to it, if you took away your wall? And your plaster *ashlar-work*, how long does that last?

Now you will hardly assign to this modification of the Italian the attribute of progressive development. And yet it is the only development, in the direction of ordi-

nary Domestic Architecture, of which the style has shown itself capable. One cannot indeed conceive of any other. The capacities of the style have worn themselves out, in striving to accommodate themselves to our common wants. Through the sheer exhaustion of them we are brought into the uttermost depths of the Ugly. We have reverted to the original Chaos.

The second direction in which the Italian has been modified has only now, within this year or two, begun to declare itself. It is the offspring of the new energy which has latterly been breathed into English Art. It is distinguished by some very striking features which we shall do well to note. The conventional strictness and rigidity of the Orders are altogether departed from. Not ignorantly, but with a true intent to be rid of them, and reconquer some modicum of the Artist's birthright of Freedom. There is a real solicitude to consign acanthus-leaves and rams'-horns to the River of Oblivion. There is some sort of effort at veritable foliage in the capitals, and a desire to catch the turn of Nature's leaf. The sham pedi-

ment is annihilated. A flat segmental or a semicircular arch is used for the windows and doorways, instead of the unstable square-head. And instead of the window-architrave, there is a kind of hood-moulding which springs from engaged shafts, of a quasi-Gothic character. The Italian portico is transformed into an approximation to the English porch. Altogether there is a decided tendency to the adoption of partial Gothicisms, so far as they are found to be compatible—which is not a long way—with the Italian spirit with which this mode is yet essentially imbued.*

The adherents of proper Italian stigmatize this mode as a Bastard Architecture, having no legitimate connexion with any other. Upon the theory of the unalterable completeness of their own style, this is of course true. But by following out the tenor of our argument, it will readily be

* There are numerous examples of the modification here described in the neighbourhood of the Strand and Fleet Street. A remarkably fine example of modified Italian, though not possessing all the characteristics here indicated, is the superb *warehouse* lately erected at Manchester, by Sir James Watts.

seen that it is really only a modification of the Italian. For it is marked by all those features which we have assigned as belonging to the essence of that; with the exception of its arithmetical strictness of proportion and dogged adherence to Vitruvius-volutes. There is no hint of emancipation from entire Horizontality. The Italian roof-pitch is retained; necessarily, indeed, to preserve a harmony with the horizontalism of the principal lines. Again, the ornamentation is as strictly non-constructive as in its parent-mode. Though the Orders, as such, are ignored, they are substituted by other columnar arrangements equally factitious. The pilaster is indeed flatter than ever, and by so much more a sham than ever. Rectangularity is still dominant. And Regularity of front quite essential. Finally, like the Italian, it possesses *no fixity of Æsthetic Life*—no hyper-physical element which might carry it forward through ever more highly-developing forms, without changing its entire nature.

VII.

This last point brings us to our concluding Note, upon this Pagan Architecture.

Let us assume, for the sake of argument, that the modification of the Italian last spoken of, and the Italian therefore through that, really is capable of a progressive development, without essentially changing its nature. The tendency, we perceive, is towards Freedom ; feebly manifested perhaps as yet. But we suppose it to go on strengthening—"the increase of appetite to grow by what it feeds on." Now, having got clear of the arithmetic, in what particular direction can the next effort of emancipation declare itself? Can the pure, legitimate Freedom of elevated Art consist with Horizontalism, and its inseparable concomitant, Rectangularity? It surely cannot express itself unrestrainedly in level lines and squares. It is in the nature of Freedom to soar. Aspiration is in the very essence of it. And so it must needs, one

would think, break upwards through the barrier of the level lines, and carry them along with it. But in so doing it inaugurates Verticalism ; and attains almost at once to the climacteric of true, natural Architecture. Rectangularity, too, must be destroyed, for the upper sides of the squares become angulated—two lines going up to a point. Having arrived thus far, the necessity for Regularity of design, compelled by long level continuous lines of cornice, naturally disappears also. And, lastly, as Freedom is the sister of Truth, and cannot well subsist long without her, the whole pilaster-system rapidly evaporates ; and the principle of “constructional identification of the chief elements of ornamentation with the body of the structure,” reasserts itself. If work have to be done by a row of columns, they will be set to do it ; and if not, there will be no pretence for them. And as for Plaster—that will be left to line chimneys with ; its proper mission.

But the moment the Artist arrives at Verticality, in that moment his Art ceases,

absolutely, to be Italian; or any modification of it. For there is the inauguration of a great distinguishing principle which the Italian is essentially incapable of embodying. And the complete divergence is made more manifest, by the development of the features which necessarily follow upon verticalism of composition. So that here, again, we arrive at the conclusion that the Italian has no vitality of progressive growth; that it becomes extinct in the endeavour to give birth to a higher existence.

Again, in arriving at Verticalism and the natural accompaniments of that, we return to the Spirituality and eminent Naturalness of the Gothic. "First principles remain the same; and, as in a cycle, the planets, after a period of wandering in the heavens, return to the places which they occupied ages before, so in the Arts, after seasons of Extravaganza and Bizzareria, a recurrence to Sound Taste is equally certain." As the Roman-pagan Architecture, of which the Italian was an interpretation, led by gradual steps up to the Gothic-

christian Architecture, so the Italian, having slowly exhausted itself, brings us back again to the Gothic; and the great Art-cycle is completed.

If we have yet left in us any aspiration after Truth, any sympathy with Nature and any love for her delicate beauty, any faithfulness to the high inheritance of immortal Hope which has come down to us, we must seek some mode of Art, other than this Pagan-Italian, whereby to express these.

CHRISTIAN?

To the æsthetically-inclined, the lovers of Pure Art, it is peculiarly trying to perceive that so many respectable, and sufficiently intelligent, Englishmen are imbued with strong prejudices against the Gothic Architecture. On reflection, however, one might reasonably be surprised if these prejudices did not exist. They are the offspring of present circumstances. We are in a non-descript state of Transition. We have slowly awoke to the discovery of two great facts. The first is, that we have no Art. The second, that we are coming back to that Moral Condition in which it is imperatively necessary to have Art,—such Art as shall give adequate expression to the Tone, Feelings, and growing Aspirations, of our life. In search of some rudiments, some foundation-notions, for this, we have gone back to the only art-manifestation

native to these kingdoms—the Gothic Energy of our Fathers.

The first efforts of a Revival in Art are necessarily confined to the region of Reproduction. In order to discover a meet utterance for the renewed Spirit which is infusing itself into our modes of thought, we return to the Form which was heretofore the language of our national habit. But the old Form does not at first readily respond to our desires. After a long somnolence of artistic force, we are unapt at catching the true meaning of the ancestral art-phraseology. Unapt at discerning the natural relation between its idioms and the peculiar features of our nationality which they embody. It is as if we had been transported for a long season to some foreign land; and find on our return that the dialect of our youth is strange to ear and lip. The words do not come deftly to the thoughts. So in this revival of English Architecture, we stumble through an ungrateful process of reproduction, failing very much to do what we wish to do, and what we are well-assured we are capable to do,

—if we were only more practised in the method. But as the tongue becomes daily more glib, so the artist-hand grows yearly more master of its work. And as fresh light breaks in upon us year by year, and year by year our Faith goes on strengthening, the future becomes plain to us, and full of Hope.

I.

But, in the meantime, we have to fight hard with these prejudices; begotten of our own foolishness and want of skill. They are fed from four sources.

The first is the ignorant application of the Gothic to civil edifices; such as the Houses of Parliament. These, however, are not a reproduction of English Art at all; but a copy of continental mannerism. The genius of an original and faithful Artist has nowhere breathed upon them. Notwithstanding their immenseness, they fail to impress you with a grandeur of composition. Their great rectangular front has neither force nor eloquence. The dignity

and stateliness of purer Gothic Art—which would have so well expressed the objects of the building—are frittered away in a vulgar excess of extravagant embellishment. This is the Bathos of Art. And we are reminded, as in the Moorish, of the yearning of weak minds after gauds and finery. The Clock-tower is perhaps the only really good feature. But even that must be crowned with a sort of mule-bells and paltry gilding. Let us have an English Architecture, by all means. But no more of this.

The second source of prejudice is the ignorant application of the Gothic to domestic purposes. The Gothic, as we have seen, is capable of any imaginable irregularity of arrangement, even to the extent of being fantastical. But on the other hand its ichnography may be perfectly regular; as much so as in the Italian; though undoubtedly some of its effectiveness is lost thereby. But the architects employed—if any be employed, which is problematic—to furnish designs to the speculative Builder for his detached, semi-detached, and other species of Villas, understand neither how to avail

themselves of this freedom for the production of a graceful and pleasing structure, nor how to harmonize free composition with the rigid requirements of convenience; nor, on the other hand, do they so comprehend the capacities of Gothic Art, as to enable them to bring out its emphatic expression in those circumstances where Regularity is made to be a necessary condition—so that the impression becomes prevalent that a Gothic house is necessarily inconvenient, and a Gothic terrace necessarily repulsive. Whilst the truth is that there ought to be the greatest convenience in the one, and the greatest elegance in the other. For a Gothic building is never so beautiful, other things being equal, as when it fulfils literally and completely every purpose for which it was intended.

The third source of prejudice is the affected pedantry frequently displayed in the application of the Gothic to ecclesiastical structures. Instead of adhering to the high mission of true Revival in Art we are losing ourselves in this region of Reproduction. We forget that the great end before us is

L

to seek out the Roots of the old vernacular, which will most readily adapt themselves to our meaning of to-day; and we vapour and stammer amidst unessential inflexions and accents. These may be fit amusement, and a rare solace, to the antiquary, but are beneath the attention of the faithful revivalist of a pure architectural feeling. He has weightier matters in hand. We shall respect the traditions of the Elders where we find that they have a reasonable meaning for us, also; but we want no mere pedantries. We are not a pedantic, but a plain, blunt, out-speaking race. We do heartily attach ourselves to what really means something—even though the meaning be a highly abstract one. But we have a sterling contempt, nay disgust, for all these fancies which now signify nothing. These Rood-screens, Piscinas, Super-altars, and Monograms for AVE MARIA—what are they to us? Can you not leave alone these vanities, and, indeed, bury them in the Romish dust-heaps from which they sprung, and to which they most righteously belong? It is very hard that we cannot gather up the

reminiscences of the Greatness and Realness of our progenitors, but you must pester us with a return to their follies and superstition.

This pedantry—which in charity we call by no harder name—re-acts upon Art, altogether stops its development, and hinders us of our object. The artist who deludes himself into the fancy that he is inspired by Faith, when in fact he is only excited by Sentimentalism, will evince no genuine power in his work, no tender manipulation of his lines, no burning heartiness in his subject. We cannot wonder that so many of the churches recently built, fail to call forth the unreserved admiration which we bestow upon their great prototypes. Consider the animus which is in and about them, and which has dominated the form and setting of their every stone, from the bed of the foundation to the uppermost finial. Is it most Sentimentalism, or more Faith? By their fruits we may know them.

There is a singularly accurate illustration of these suggestions, in a church which has

latterly given rise to some sensation in the minds of people given to reflection. The wholesome generosity of those who have lavished their wealth upon it cannot be too much praised. Nor their hearty desire to make it the perfect model of a Christian temple too much admired. It is grievous that their generosity had not been more wisely directed, and their desire more effectually accomplished.

The proper object of a Christian Temple, you will readily admit, is not to excite and charm the senses, and thereby swamp the higher and more celestial self-communings of the human spirit, and drown the intelligent reflections of the mind. That is the clever Popish stratagem. Very well for those who are content to relinquish the custody of their immortality to men of like passions with themselves. But for us who protest against this easy-mindedness—our intention in entering a church ought to be, I suppose, to get clear of the senses and the world altogether, to lull the memory of sensuous existence, and elevate ourselves in worship to the All-wise and All-holy

Architect; to forget the Virgin for *that* time, and remember only her Child. Thus, that temple will be nearest perfection which, by its loftily-conceived structure, its chaste and simple ornament, and its freedom from salient embellishment, most effectively shuts out the world from us, and impresses us with a pure and unqualified feeling of devotional awe.

This church, however, that we speak of, so far from being near to perfection in this view, approaches very much to the antithesis of that. The mind, through the eye, is distracted by a whirling maze of variegated colouring and gilded pictures; and led wandering from this side to that, and to the other, until fixity of meditation becomes impossible. There is everything to make you look *around*, but little to direct you heavenward. The Object of worship is forgotten, in the gaudy luxuriousness of the Scene of worship. You may rest assured that this display of colour and paintings on the walls—however beautiful in themselves and in their legitimate place—is wholly incompatible with the severe

Majesty which should be the chief characteristic of God's House.* Remember, that in the *sublimest* natural scenery there is but little variety of colour.

We must be careful how we tolerate the sin of Excess. It will lead us into interminable labyrinths of error and contradiction. The beauty of temple-architecture may be sufficiently enhanced by the judicious use of different *constructive* materials varying in colour, so it be subdued in tone; by stained glass in the windows; so there be no Saints upon them; and by the writing of "Scriptures" upon the walls, so there be not too many of them; and generally by

* The whole structure is in strictest unison with the cold and deliberate formalism of the services which are *performed* in it. The fact of their being Choral—as all Divine Service ought to be—is the *only* feature which preserves them from being insupportable.

Will the patrons of All Saints', Margaret Street, let us into the secret of the connexion between Christianity and Scuttle-shaped Bonnets, and coat-tails of an unseemly and Popish length. It is well to mortify the flesh, by renouncing "vanity." It is well, also, that the priest's habit should distinguish him from the laity. But by what intricate process of casuistry do you arrive at a connexion between Christian Propriety and Hateful Ugliness?

the use of costly, durable materials, and by an invariable perfection of workmanship.

We said that pedantry reacts on Art, and hinders its development. We have only to turn to the Architecture of this church as some proof of that. Where do you discover the evidence of a keen sense of propriety and true beauty? Strip the walls of their unseemly colouring, and what eloquence of Art do you discern in the naked forms? This is the test by which to try the pretensions of ostentatious ornamentation. You will not find much beauty certainly in the tracery of the windows; nor in the hard, stiff outline of the niches and their canopies in the choir; nor in the absurd flying-arch at the end of the south aisle. You will not find much rhythm in the arcade at the side of the baptistry, between the slender shafts and the ponderous tracery they make a poor pretence of supporting; nor more than a mere inkling of spirituality in the equilateral arches of the nave. Do you see anything specially loveable in the foliage of the capitals? That is your *conventional* sculpture.

A pretty idealizing of Nature truly.* Compare this with the bunches of exquisite and truly natural leaves and flowers, roses amongst the rest, on the capitals in the new church at Stoke Newington (St. Mary's), and consider which you like the best. Glance, finally, at the two grim piles which hide the former church, suggesting more the entrance to a plutonic than a celestial region, and say whether pedantry does not merely react upon, but absolutely crushes, artistic life. There was probably never a pair of buildings palmed off upon the unsophisticated as an illustration of True Gothic, which are so unqualified an embodiment of inveterate Ugliness. Really we cannot wonder at the existence of prejudice against such an Architecture as this.

A fourth source of prejudice against Gothic Art, is the opposition to it of two

* Is the architect aware that the middle shafts of the clerestory windows appear to project *at the base* beyond the plane of the side shafts; from the clumsy manner in which they are stilted over the crown of the nave-arches? It is not without great difficulty and painful examination that you can convince yourself that they do *not* so project at least a foot.

classes of men who are at precisely opposite poles of human existence. Men of high station, whose pursuits do not permit them the opportunity to examine into the merits of conflicting schools, and who are therefore incapable of forming an accurate judgment on the matters at issue, enfold themselves in classic associations and college-memories of Greece, and sneer at what, in their one-eyed wisdom, they deem to have been a barbarous emanation of untutored savagery. As if, after all, the civilization of the Greeks was a whit better than that of the Middle Ages—if nearly so good. Then, on the other hand, there is your pretentious and fire-eating penny-a-liner, who haplessly rhapsodizes about “Gothic tyranny,” and stirs up prejudice to boiling-point by ridiculous diatribes upon “flamboyant spires” and “chancel-shaped servants’ halls.” You will do well to accept no man’s dogmatism, but satisfy yourself with Reasons. And remember that he is often most dogmatic who most inveighs against that very common fault.

II.

In spite, however, of these partial prejudices, it is beyond all show of question that there is a widely-extended and still growing fondness for the Gothic Architecture. You see the manifestation of it in every street of every city and town in the kingdom; at country-seats and on farmsteads. If a man make an addition to his house—though that may be anti-Gothic enough—he will fain have some kind of pointed window, or Gothic porch. Any young architect will tell you that, to succeed, he must have some knowledge of pointed styles. We never think now of building an Italian church, and few an Italian mansion. The very Nonconformists, who started in life as broad-brimmed Puritan-Iconoclasts, who stood their war-horses at livery in Gothic cathedrals, who cursed the Idolatry of Art, and banned it as belonging to Malignant Heathendom—why even they are smitten with the infectious love of Beauty, and think it a glory to house their worship in pointed nave and aisle. Even they begin

to forget the Three Centuries of Abuse. The evident tendency of the age, indeed, is towards a revival of Mediæval Art. The manifold accompaniments of Gothic structure, the jewels of its crown, are carefully studied, largely commented upon, and extensively reproduced. Wood-carving, Stained-glass, Monumental-brasses, and Encaustic-work, have become subjects of general interest. And apart from the range of these, there is the steady revival of Mediæval Music, and mediæval feeling in Painting. You like also your mediævalized furniture, and books with mediæval binding and red-letter embellishment. You discover a real, fresh, unwonted beauty in all these. And, for the life of you, you cannot do other than like them.

You need not to tell us that this Mediævalism is a mere Fashion of the day. It is very much more than that. It has a far deeper origin than the fitful phenomena which Fashion throws up. It has been increasing in vigour, steadily and regularly, for more than a quarter of a century. And so far from indicating any remote sign of

decline, it is trenching daily upon new ground, and striking its roots ever more deeply and firmly into the subsoil of national attachment. We are at last freeing ourselves from the incubus of pagan Classicism, its hypocrisies and pedantries, its alien and uncongenial spirit. We begin at last to yearn after the natural freedom and robust vigorousness which belong to us as our birthright. We grow tired at last of imagining ourselves to be encircled with the dignity of the Roman Citizen, and discover that the grandeur which begirdles the English Citizen is inconceivably beyond that. From the shams of the Toga, we come to the realities of Broadcloth. And classic Art, along with its kindred, palls upon us, and is henceforth unendurable. Broadcloth, not unnaturally under these circumstances, conceives a wonderful liking for what his Elders liked before him.

You are not to suppose that there is any incongruity between Broadcloth and Gothic Architecture. The very fact of the persistent and indomitable revival of this architecture in our days, is of itself a proof that

it is somehow intimately related to the renewed Tone of Feeling which is clearly rising, sunlike, upon our national life. There is, after all, a great likeness between us and the great founders of our race, and name, and fame. The sterling attributes which make a halo around their memory shine out in us likewise, with something less perchance of brightness. We are gradually coming to perceive that Religiousness, Realness, Naturalness, are not mere words, but do indeed signify something. And we are striving hard to realize their significance in a practical embodiment of veritable action. We hope the Heroic Age is not yet dead enough to be buried, but may presently renew its "mighty youth." We are not, after all, so blinded, choked, and infinitely dominated by Cotton-dust and Iron-filings, as to be quite insensible to the impulses of elevated sentiment. With all our pretended modern-contempt for the Herald's College, we yet entertain a certain marked respect for the high traditions of our descent; and cannot by any means escape from the truth that they strike deep

chords of sympathy within our own hearts. The pulse beats to very much the same time under the Broadcloth that it did under the Leathern-doublet and Chain-coat.

If we are resolved upon the cultivation of these three great attributes, just spoken of, and which are so closely connected one with the other; if we are resolved that they shall be the Historic Characteristics of ourselves and our children, we shall find nothing so apt to record them as revived Gothic Art.

III.

The applicability of the Gothic, or Christian, Architecture to ecclesiastical purposes is almost universally conceded. We may therefore leave that part of the question.

Now as to civil purposes. Are we to continue to institute a marked and unqualified separation between Religious and Secular Art? We must then have two Arts, the Religious and the un-Religious. And two classes of Artists, the Religious and the un-Religious. For as no man can serve two masters, so no artist can work successfully in two materially distinct styles.

And, further, we must have a Native Art and a Foreign Art. For we have no native domestic style except the Gothic.*

If we persevere in this separation we shall do that which has been done by no nation, and in no age, but our own. We shall proclaim to the world of the future, by tangible evidence, that the great characteristic which distinguished us from all the nations of the earth, Pagan and Christian, was the fixing of a great gulph between our Religion and the whole regime of our every-day existence. What other inference will posterity be enabled to draw from the broad fact of our Two Styles?

This definite demarcation between the Religious and the Domestic in Art is, in fact, the infidel invention of a faithless few. Their religious Belief forms so trivial an element in their daily concerns, that they cannot comprehend how there should

* You may very readily be convinced of the fact that we had a Gothic Domestic Architecture, by a perusal of the text and plates in "*Some Account of the Domestic Architecture of England,*" from the Conquest to the Tudors; a series of volumes published by Mr. Parker, of Oxford.

be any reasonableness in so wedding the one to the other, as that there should be no visible line of division between them. They cannot discern how Faith should be the very basis of Life, and the ever-during fountain of its refreshment. They accept the general propositions of our Creed as intelligent men. But if you probe them to the bottom of their bent, you shall find them steeped in scepticisms as to the Efficacies of Belief. You offend them, by suggesting that their worldly occupations and domestic habits would be the better for an infusion of a little more Religiousness, and for a close uniting of them with that.

They are very much assisted in their scepticisms, this faithless few, by our great proneness of to-day to set up another Faith in the stead of the true one. We must take heed of this growing adoration of Cotton and Gold-dust. It will be the perdition, else, of our worthy England. This worship has already a too numerous and devoted following. They hate nothing so much as to be reminded of Sunday in the middle of the week. Nothing offends them

so much in a Gothic house as that it puts them in mind of a church. The dream of their life is not unlike one you may read of in a book which is not yet quite obsolete, though proscribed. You will still sometimes encounter it enshrined amongst the glass and silver of the side-board. The dream was of a

Great Image, whose brightness was excellent, and the form thereof terrible. The head of this Image was of fine Gold, his breast and his arms of Silber, his belly and his thighs of Brass, his legs of Iron, his feet part of Iron and part of Clay.

The Image which fills the dream of these people, has, however, much more of Gold and Silver in its composition, and is all-covered with the magic hieroglyph—**L. S. D.** They are so enchanted by the beauty of it, that they fall down hourly and pay heart-worship to it. But their dream will one day vanish, and the Image be broken in pieces. Like the Image in the other dream.

Then there are the Anglo-classic Architects, who would fain compromise matters by admitting the appropriateness of the

Gothic to religious uses; but do not by any means wish you to be persuaded that it would be comely in you to sanctify all Art, whether secular or otherwise, by entwining with it the forms which they cannot hinder you from seeing are eminently religious. These are the Demetrian fellow-workmen, who are naturally very wroth that we should desire to see the silver shrine of their Pagan Architecture scattered to the four winds, and their handicraft abolished. Shall we, to please them, wear Chlamys and Pallium on week-days, and Broadcloth only on Sundays?

Again, there are those, much more worthy of attention, who deem it to be a profanation of Religious Art to apply it to domestic purposes. But these sincere souls must bear very distinctly in mind, that we cannot possibly build houses, or government-offices, or any other secular structures, like churches. The very difference of use necessitates a material difference of composition, and thereby of tone. The great spiritual element of Verticality cannot, by the very law of congruity, be so largely and forcibly developed

in a civil as in an ecclesiastical edifice. You cannot, in the former, very well have the whole interior open to a lofty roof, carried by rows of columns and high-pointed arches. Nor on the exterior, though you may pile up high towers, would you think of building lofty spires. In a dwelling-house there could be no approach to these general features. The whole character, indeed, of secular works must, from their very nature, be sufficiently distinctive from ecclesiastical works. And the truth and beauty of the Gothic as High Art is very strikingly evinced in this—that it moulds itself readily and naturally to all uses. And this without ever losing a particle of its pure idiosyncrasy and peculiar expression. Thus you will perceive that the highly-religious idea, of dedicating to the Most High the best and grandest part of our human efforts, may be here most fully accomplished.

If your houses be of the Classic mode, and your churches of the Gothic type, what have you at home to remind you of the Temple, and induce the reflection that the *highest* skill in the production of the forms

you see around you is sanctified by a holier use? Where are the Sermons in Stones, to remind you that God is not to be worshipped in his Temple only, but by the ingles also? But if your house be something after the manner of the Temple—if *the principal forms of the one be assimilated to the subordinate forms of the other*—you would not be so apt, one would think, to make of Cotton and Gold, of Iron and Silver, your Lares and Penates. For around you would be the eloquent monitor, Religious Art, to recal you to your true allegiance. This is not the profaning of Sacred Art, by carrying it into the domestic region; but the sanctifying of Domestic Art, by elevating it to the region of Religiousness.

I must confess that I am totally at a loss to understand, in the abstract, how that which is devoted to a sacred purpose can be profaned by our making use of its *kind* for common wants. We do not profane the Consecrated Elements, when we eat bread. Nor the Water of Baptism, when we drink from a fountain. This, however, is foolish-

ness, not to the faithless few merely, but to the faithless many.

In reference to the secular application of the Gothic, you may perhaps suggest Railway-stations, as a difficulty. Why, the most comely Railway-stations extant are in the Gothic style. And there are hundreds of them. Is there anything necessarily unreligious in a Railway?

IV.

† We have said that the Italian does not possess the natural element of Progressiveness. It will be well to note that the Gothic is pre-eminently distinguished by this attribute. We must keep in view, however, the very wide difference between *progressive development* and *radical change*. Any architecture is evidently capable of the latter,—capable of being subverted by another, fundamentally distinct. But we shall discover some higher capacity than this in Gothic Art.

The Gothic, we saw, has certain important æsthetic qualities—Spirituality, Idealiza-

tion of Nature, Truthfulness, Poetic Feeling. The natural, necessary effect of these is to endow it, as their structural expression, with what we have termed — Fixity of *Æsthetic Life*. They enter into it as a *hyper-physical element, to carry it forward through ever more highly-developing forms, without change in its nature*. They impart to it their own immortality and universality.

The radical physical elements of Gothic structure, which are the material flesh and bone around which cling the qualities just recapitulated, are Verticality, produced by the high-pointed arch and the features which follow with it; Constructionality of Ornamentation; and Adherence to Nature in subordinate decoration. So long as you preserve these, you preserve the essential nature of Gothic.* Still adhering unswervingly to these, the variety of combination and of expressional tone which may be

* Since writing this, it has been suggested to me that Mr. Ruskin has some remarks on the "essential nature of the Gothic," in either the second or third volume of his *Stones of Venice*. As I have only read the first, and part of the second volume, seven years ago, I regret that I do not know what his definition is.

evolved from them is unlimited. Thus, the Gothic is like a goodly tree from the Nature which it represents. From the sapling it may become an oak, and having flourished long years, and given sweet shelter to many generations, bear fruit which shall again become a sapling, and then again an oak. This is Fixity of Æsthetic Life. We are now, in these days, at the second growth.

The infinite variety of combinations of which the Gothic structure is, by its nature, capable, will be very readily conceivable if you remember that no two archaic Gothic buildings are alike, in the same sense in which any two Classic buildings are alike. If you are tolerably versed in the methods and mannerism of Classic styles, and in the special technology, you may form an accurate conception with the greatest facility of an edifice in any of those modes, from a well-written description of it, without the aid of pictorial illustration. But it is quite impossible to afford any approach to a faithful representation, in the mind's eye, of a Gothic structure, by any quantity of written detail. I am not aware that any man ever

yet attempted it. One might as well endeavour to give a faithful idea of a statue or a painting by such means. All that one can do, in this way, is to render a general, poetic notion of the effect. And that very dimly. Language is quite inadequate to fix the ever-changing fancies, and curious individualities of thought, which pervade the works of the Gothic Artist.

There is a greater resemblance between most cathedral-churches than any other kind of edifice. But these, even of the same period, differ so much one from another, that the same general verbal description will apply to no two of them. For example, Westminster and Salisbury are of the same period (about A.D. 1250). But there is a world-wide difference in their whole artistic character. A difference of another kind, and of an incalculably greater extent, than between the Royal Exchange and the Mansion-house. The difference between these, or any other Italian buildings, is very little more than that of *form*. And yet a highly-cultivated notability has

stigmatized this Gothic Architecture as "monotonous."

The spontaneous reproduction of this Architecture of a comparatively barbarous period in an age of consummate civilization, is a fact of no small moment. When we find, as we unquestionably have done, that the style can be naturally moulded to the perfect fulfilment of our present wants—this of itself is a very sufficient proof of its power of illimitable expansion. Though there be, as we have suggested, a gradually *decreasing* difference between the metaphysical manifestations of this age and of the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries, there is a difference in domestic habit as great as could well be. And yet we have already, in less than thirty years, extensively succeeded in finding the true method of modelling a modern house upon the type of those centuries. Commodious, elegant, and truly artistic mansions, parsonage-houses, and cottages, over the whole country, attest this fact.

We said that the æsthetic qualities of the Gothic impress upon it their own univer-

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sality. We mean plainly by this that it is applicable, not only to all purposes, but, with some modification, to all climates. This must be so, if it be the true and natural Art we have endeavoured to indicate. You find here an additional explanation of the fact that it has dominated more or less, in some shape or another, the whole of Europe. With some differences from our own special rendering, it has been national in France, Germany, and the Low Countries. You encounter it constantly in Italy. You find it in Spain and Portugal. It is, by its very nature, as Catholic as the Christian Faith from which it sprung. It would not be exotic even in the tropics. The Saracenic Architecture of Asia, and of Northern Africa—which is not a great way from Cancer—are really only inflexions of it. The difference between the two is precisely paralleled by the difference between the English oak and the Southern cork-tree.* Wherever the English race have made an abode, their National Christian Architecture will grow naturally to the soil, bringing

* Both of these belong to the order Cupuliferæ.

forth new, and before unknown, beauties in every latitude in which it may be planted.*

V.

It has, however, a special applicability to the climate of these islands, and the temperament of the people. For three reasons:—

The first is, that though it does not make the adoption of the high-pitched roof imperative in domestic structure, it yet derives additional power of effect from that.†

The second is, that from the peculiar character of its elementary and subsidiary ornamentation, it does not necessitate the use of colour to enhance its beauties, or relieve bareness. You may lay colour to an unlimited extent upon the interior of a Gothic building. And if intelligently and

* The Canadians have already discovered this, having adopted a very perfect Gothic design for their new Parliament-house.

There are some exquisite adaptations of the Gothic to a southern latitude in some of the Peninsular convents. As they are mostly of a late era, however, the details are what we should technically term "debased."

† See Appendix ii.

judiciously done, you will be well repaid by an increase of charms. But you would do well to be sparing of that, and expend your labour and florins upon the varied sculpture which is its true and best embellishment. The soot-flakes do not injure that. Your climate and your chimneys are foiled there in their love of destruction. All the malice of Fog and Smoke are thwarted; for they are indeed the greatest beautifiers of this sculpture which one can well conceive.

The third reason is the converse of the second. The Gothic does not readily admit of a great extent of Flat Surface. Whilst it does very readily admit of getting altogether rid of that. The great difference between British and Southern landscape is this—that in the latter there is greater breadth of feature, with little *projected* detail that will suffer close examination; whilst in the former, a multitude of prominent objects crowd upon the eye, and the more attentively we look at these the greater interest do we discover in them. It is worthy of remark that this peculiarity of Southern landscape is strikingly idealized

in Southern Gothic. And for this very reason it is that this mode of the Art does not so well please the eye of the English Artist. The church of St. Jerome, near Lisbon, is an example of this. In that structure there is great breadth of flat space both on the exterior and interior. The luxuriance of projected ornament is reserved for a few points of special interest. The Moresque Architecture is also, as we said, distinguished by great breadth of Flat Surface. But in this case the voluptuous habit and imagination of the eastern tribes drove them to cover it, so far as concerns the interior more particularly, with intricate decoration of vivid colour, or coloured bas-relief work. Even this was to some extent an idealization of Nature. For while the southern landscape has great breadth, and little contrast of light and shade, the brilliancy of the tints in the light is much greater than in the north. In these islands, however, green, greyish-blue, and grey tints predominate.* The play of light and shade

* It is curious to observe that the secondary colour, *green*, was largely used in the chromatic decoration of

is strongly marked and fantastic; and the whole vision is filled with a plenitude of prominent and engrossing details. Thus, in transferring our British eyes from the aspects of External Nature to the aspects of Structural Art, we unconsciously love to discover in the one something akin to the varied distinctiveness, and life-like fulness, which charm us so much in the other. This desire of the eye is by no means satisfied by the interminable monotony and shallow hypocrisies of the Italian. But in the rhythmical irregularity and multiplied projections of the Gothic, the inborn northern longing is amply consummated.

VI.

Are we to accept this modern Reproduction of the Gothic, which has grown up amongst us, as the complete and perfect response to our physical and metaphysical requirements? By no means. For it is, in many respects, faulty and imperfect.

English Gothic. (See *Sketches of Decorative Painting in English Architecture*, by Mr. E. L. Blackburne.)

The *green* does not occur at all in Moorish decoration.

We are still lingering in the bye-ways of Student-copying. Our best efforts amount, after all, to very little more than that. We have not yet come to be really Artists on our own account. We are hard at work upon our models, but we have not yet caught the spirit of the Old Masters. Having learned the Methods of the Gothic, we have to go still further back—to Religion and Nature, the two great fountains of inspiration—for real energy. We shall never have Art, else,—nothing but Reproductions and Student-copying. We have much to do yet. We have to elevate our own Faith, and develope the expression of that. We have to learn, somewhat more perfectly, how to harmonize Freedom of Composition with Convenience. We have to put some meaning, related to this nineteenth century, into our Corbels and Gargoyles. We must not by any means forget the natural progressiveness of our Art, and that Perfection is still in front of us.

It is not irrelevant to remark that, as we were the last nation of Christendom to relinquish Gothic Art, so we are the first to

return to the practice of it. Its revival has hardly yet begun on the Continent; though there are increasingly evident signs of such a revival there. So that now, as in the beginning, we do not go abroad for a Structural Mode; but revert to that which has been, and is, properly natural here.

It is a very striking fact in our Revival that, in the first beginnings of it, we took up the Gothic mode precisely at the point where it lost its distinctiveness, and was superseded by the Pagan Art. We commenced with the Elizabethan manner for secular purposes, and for churches with the flattest and squarest manner of the Tudor period. When we grew tired of Italian paganisms, we were sure that there must be something more Christian-like and English in our own Antiquity; and on commencing our research we seized on the first heir-loom of it that we came upon. Presently we discovered that we had not what it was morally necessary that we should have; that we wanted something higher and better than Balls and Obelisks, and Ugliness raised to the fifth power. Whereat we went yet further, and

came to what we call the Decorated period (14th century), with its equilateral arches. And we have persuaded ourselves that this was the perfection of English Art, and that we could very well rest here. So we linger about this, enchanted by the loveliness of detail; forgetting the grander elements.

We must go still further. We must make the Art of the previous period our Archetype. We want all the loftiness and dignity we can get, as well as all the refinement. We showed, in the course of our Reminiscences, that there were already signs of the decline of English Art in this fourteenth century. If you will refer to those, you will see that the chief feature of this incipient declension was the equalization of the attributes of Verticality and Horizontality by reducing the rise, or height, of the arch to less than its span. This of itself is a sufficient reason for our going back to late Early English (end of 13th century). It is, I think, unquestionable that the lancet-pointed arch of that period is in itself more beautiful, and imparts to the structure a much greater elegance and dignity than

the equilateral form. There is great hope, however, that we shall return ere long to earlier and more perfect contours. The leading Gothic Artists already begin to evince a liking for them.* When we come, as a people, to think more of Faith and less of paltry Florins, we may reasonably encourage the hope that these very praiseworthy Artists will be enabled to get rid of weak and shallow commonplaces, and throw more force and boldness into the tracery of their windows, and give greater depth and emphasis to their mouldings. But, indeed, you must give them more Stone, and more Florins.

It is imperatively demanded of the Artist of the present day, that he keep ever sternly in mind the great object he has before him,—the Revivifying of English Art. Not the Reproduction of it. He must in good time shake off all trammels of studentship. Let him become thorough

* Mr. Scott in one of his latest works, the church at Stoke Newington already quoted, has given full expression to this liking in the graceful tapering of the arches, and in other features.

master of the Principles of his Art; and then apply them in such wise as best suits with his Opportunity, his Judgment, and his Fancy. If he have the true Art-inspiration, he will do this much better than the Ancients can do it for him. If it be true that they were generally right, it is also true that they were sometimes wrong. As they had many imperfections as men, so their Architecture has its imperfections as Art. His extended knowledge and high culture must search out these. And having found, he must rigidly avoid them. It boots not to talk of Precedents, if a thing be unnatural, incongruous, or untrue. I have known men who, when told of some Ugliness they had perpetrated, would rave of Precedents by the hour, and quote them by the yard. If we do not of our own instance find beauty in a thing, what care we for the Ancients? Confess that they were wrong in that particular, and have done with it. Do not perpetuate their errors or shortcomings.

VII.

One thing in which they were wrong, was the extensive application of Colour as a subsidiary decoration of the interior of their churches. Extremes are on friendly terms everywhere. There is but a line between extreme refinement and extreme vulgarity. The want of mental discipline in the men of the brave old centuries comes out here, in this matter of gaudy colour. You would not like their cathedrals half so well if you saw them with the paint of many hues on the pillars, on the arches, on the walls. Let us thank heaven that, somewhere about the Reformation, they were whitewashed. We have lost many curious pictures, histories, and traditions hereby. But what right have men to come with their Paint-brushes into the Holy Precinct? And what *need* had they,—since their temples are so perfectly beautiful without that?

The Artist of the present day is fain to think, that as his Fathers were so generally right, it is a hard thing to believe them

wrong in so weighty a matter. But, as we said, he must be careful of the Majesty of God's House. And altogether this Colour is a subtle temptation for him to battle with. One cannot but think that the Apple which lost us Paradise pleaded to be eaten most touchingly by the raciness of its hues. Beware of Colour. Nature is more elaborately careful in the distribution of that than in ought else. Her deepest skill and most intricate mystery are here. And you must be wary indeed in following her. You can dissect a compound colour, but you cannot note every special hue of a landscape. They change momentarily. Be very wary then in your attempts even to idealize their general harmonies. Light is by far too terrible and too delicate a thing to be ignorantly played with. At all events, do not try your experiments in the Temple. Try them in your houses.

Doubtless we are in a fair way to some understanding of right principles in chromatic decoration. And those who have laboured in this department are highly-deserving of all praise. But much of this

chattering among half-informed Artists, about Harmonies and Contrasts, is mere scientific rhetoric. We must creep very cautiously in such a matter before we can venture to walk upright.

In all archaic Art we discover some vulgarity in the use of Colour; in the methods of its application, and the situations where it was indulged in. So far as we can succeed in recalling the manner of colouring of the Greeks, the Romans, and the Artists of the middle ages, there is manifest a certain grossness, and want of modulation, in tint and tone. And the painting of sculpture in high relief, or in the "round," which is a direct imitation, or only partial idealization, of Nature,—whether of foliage or of the human form—is altogether a vulgar procedure. There is a sufficiency of evidence to show that the Greeks really painted their statues. And this not merely in a conventional manner, as Mr. Owen Jones would persuade us;* but in tolerably

* *Apology for Colouring of Greek Court in Crystal Palace.* Mr. Jones's great error is in attributing his own perfect knowledge and correct taste in these matters to the semi-refined Ancients.

close imitation of Nature. They not unoften also coloured the acanthus-leaf, and such other little foliage as they used, *green*. This only proves, what besides there can be little doubt of, that with all their refinement in Art, and all the grandeur of their Platonic thinkings, these wondrous Greeks were in a semi-barbarous state of imperfect culture. How would you like to see the statues of the nude gods painted; ever so refinedly or conventionally? Neither Venus nor the Greek Slave would be much improved thereby, according to our present thinking. And we happen to be right, as critics in Art, this time.

Dannecker's exquisite statue of Ariadne, at Frankfort, has, or used to have, the light thrown upon it through a screen of a pink hue. You could not use Colour more delicately than so. Yet the effect is by far too voluptuous, and quite destructive of elevated admiration. One cannot but feel that the severe chastity and unspotted purity of the Ideal are cast to the winds.

The Artist should be careful not to imitate Nature too closely. He should not

trench upon her high prerogative, by attempting to produce another Creation in rivalry of hers. He may copy her Forms, in proper situations, as closely as he will. But he should stop there; leaving out their natural colours. On the other hand, having copied Forms from Nature, he should not seek to idealize them by adding colour which does not properly belong to them. That is simply contrary to Nature. The purest taste will be evinced, in conventionalizing them, by preserving them free of all colour, save that of the material in which they are wrought. Indeed there is very sufficient beauty in the hue of a goodly stone; whether it be kingly Marble, or more homely Free-stone. And he will do well, on the whole, to idealize the Natural Forms simply by this, and by conventional disposition.

However, as Abstract Typifying is a universal characteristic of primitive and imperfect Art, so it is a partial characteristic of advanced and more perfect Art. Extremes meet in all things. And—as we have already explained in the course of remarks on the Moorish—the intelligent Artist will

encounter his greatest difficulties in so typifying natural forms, where their situation demands that, as that they shall not be repulsive to the educated eye.

If he must needs have some chromatic brightness, let him reserve that for those portions of his structure which are purely the offspring of his human thought. Having something less of charm and interest, perchance, than what he culls from Nature, they may need that. And his good instinct will lead him to idealize the Northern Aspect of Nature, by adhering to two or three predominating hues of a sober tone.

VIII.

The odious unrelieved Square Top to windows and doors, the result of Italianism and an altogether mistaken economy, has become so engrained into our structural habits, that the adoption of the various Gothic forms is a great moot-point of difficulty. The Artists of the day have sought to meet this, by the use of the solid tympanum to fill the pointed arch; thus leaving

an ordinary rectangular opening. It is quite true that in this case the arch is perfectly constructional, as it aids in carrying the superincumbent portion of the wall-veil. And there is little question that it is eminently effective as ornamentation. Severe criticism might, however, pronounce it to be a somewhat doubtful procedure. All ground of objection would be best removed by invariably piercing the tympanum by foliations. If these were filled with deep-stained glass, no alteration would be necessary in ordinary window arrangements. But for general purposes, the whole method is too costly.

If it be absolutely essential to bring out the full emphasis of Verticality in ecclesiastical structure, it is evident that we cannot attempt to do so in our domestic Architecture. It is neither æsthetically necessary; nor would it be becoming. The Best should be ever reserved for dedication to the Best. The high-pointed arch may therefore be properly departed from in some cases; and in some instances even the square head,

with a modification, may be admissible. For example, in economical brick-structure, an arch may be used composed of two flat segments. This is a highly effective form. And cheaper too than your hideous plaster-architraves. The detestable Tudor-arch must, however, be religiously avoided. Then, where stone is accessible, the square head may be used; but always with the relief of Corbels under the angles. The Corbel so used is of course perfectly constructional, and by proper treatment may be made to neutralize altogether the squareness of the window-opening.

Verticalism is sufficiently preserved in domestic structures by the peaked gables of the principal roofs and of dormer-windows, and by other occasional features which creep naturally, and indeed necessarily, into a true Gothic design.

On the whole, perhaps, we might look a little more kindly on the labours of Mr. Ruskin, and take a hint or two in window and door heads from Venice. There could be no great harm in that, since Mr. Disraeli tells

us that we once borrowed thence some Constitution-notions.* Though we may be determined upon preserving the Nationality of our Architecture, we are not stubbornly to refrain from enriching it with the evidences of the Universality of our enterprise and dominion.

IX.

It cannot be seriously supposed by any man of ordinary knowledge in architectural science and art, that Iron can ever supersede the ancient elements, Stone and Brick, as a predominant material of construction. This has been attempted, however, in some instances in the Iron-loving towns of the provinces. But the fact that this material is a rapid conductor of heat, renders it especially unsuited for the purposes of exterior covering. It is nevertheless peculiarly adapted for many important interior arrangements, and for certain subordinate exterior features, of secular structure.

* In *Coningsby*. Or elsewhere. It is no great matter, since it is quite true.

The uncontrolled freedom with which the most graceful patterns can be designed in Iron, renders it eminently available for many features of decoration. And an additional proof of the inherent Progressiveness of the Gothic, and its power of assimilating to itself any imaginable novelty of civilization, appears in a very distinguished manner in the perfect ease and naturalness with which it develops all the structural and decorative capabilities of Iron. On the other hand, good taste is invariably shocked at the attempts to work out Italianized decoration in metal. You may observe this at almost any railway-station as you travel along.

The use of Iron in interior construction is undoubtedly destined to displace Timber in great measure. It has already done this in buildings of the nobler sort; and will probably do so in our houses also, when we get rid of Eighty-year Leases.

But as concerns our special subject of art-progress.—Amongst other important uses to which this metal may be turned in Gothic buildings, is its application to the

windows. It supplies us in this particular with an economical means of imparting additional force and character to plain Gothic houses. The simple elegance of these, when carefully designed, would be much enhanced by furnishing the windows with iron casements, filled with a little graceful Tracery. The very lightness and airiness of this would preclude the possibility of its being confounded with stonework. We must have no approach to the imitation of one material in another.

The use of Iron in churches is, to some extent, admissible and advantageous. Much greater beauty and more striking effect would be the result of adopting it for the exposed framework of the roofs, if our architects would bestow some attention upon the unlimited artistic capabilities of the material. They might do much better than offend the eye by their plain timber roofs, which disappoint the natural expectation awakened by dwelling upon surrounding elaborateness. The enduringness of Iron, also, makes it more congruous with the character of the structure when used in

so important a division of it. And it is ultimately more economical.

But from the lower portion of a church Iron, as a *decorative* medium, should be rigidly excluded; except, of course, in such as are erected temporarily, or in the midst of unwholesome alleys, for the purpose of gathering in the Heathens of Christendom to the bosom of Religion. In a church which professes to be the expression of a congregation's Devotion, all the ornamentation which is liable to the immediate scrutiny of the eye should declare itself to be the offspring of Patient Labour and True Handiwork. And if their devotion cannot afford so much,—why then let them piously refrain from ornament altogether.*

* The portion of the General Public which sits in the Aisles, complains bitterly of the obstruction of view caused by the nave-piers. Why could we not—as another step in the development of the capabilities of the Gothic—widen and heighten the nave, and narrow the aisles; reserving these as *passages only*, which was their *original* use. A narrow gangway would suffice where we have now a “middle-aisle.”

The lighting by “standards,” too, is bad. The light should always be thrown from above—by gasoliers, or other means.

X.

There is some question as to the compatibility of the Dome with Gothic Outlines. So far as regards its application in ecclesiastical structures the question is easily disposed of. The primary *constructional* use of the dome is to cover a great width of circular space. Now in a church constructed for *worship* we do not require vast circular width. The nave of Westminster, or York, or Lincoln, has greater width than is ordinarily requisite. And Gothic Art has supplied us with the most beautiful and effective means of covering this. We leave out of question such buildings as are devoted to *preaching* as the chief business. There you may use the Dome to your heart's content. It matters little. The primary *artistic* intention of the dome is to give vastness and height. Now I suppose few men would have so little sense of Structural Power, as to prefer the vastness of this to the overwhelming grandeur of such a pile as Lincoln. And as for height, your dome

is not nearly so expressive of that as the massy tower with its far up-reaching spire. Then as to the real question of the harmony, or want of that, between the domical contour and the upwardly-converging lines of a Gothic church.

There is no reason why a dome should not be pointed, like a Gothic arch. There are many such, of very beautiful outline, in Hindu Architecture. And in the *interior* of Gothic structures, chiefly under towers, there is a pointed-domical construction which is in perfect harmony with the other lines of the design. But with reference to the use of the dome for the *exterior* of ecclesiastical edifices, there are two insuperable objections. First,—In ordinary churches, if you substitute the dome for the tower-and-spire—and every church should have a spire—there is a positive loss of vertical expression, or heaven-pointing upwardness. In cathedral-churches this loss would be still more extensive and destructive. For there can be no comparison between the effectiveness of a great central tower, like that at Lincoln, and any possible dome. And further, it is

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very questionable whether there would be a true harmony of composition, between the great arch-form of a well-dimensioned dome and the nearly unbroken verticalism of the lines of the exterior. Second,—In order to give life and relief to the exterior of the dome, it must be surmounted by a Lantern, or some such finishing member. This is conclusive against the use of the dome; for its pointedness must be hereby neutralized and stopped, by having horizontal lines drawn across its summit.

The applicability of the dome to Gothic secular edifices is as easily determined. We have already explained that it is neither æsthetically necessary, nor possible, to obtain the full force of vertical expression in civil structure. And as the dome would generally be either a very minor feature, on the one hand, or a grand predominating element, on the other, there could be no question as to the complete harmony between that and the rest of the building. For, in the one case, it would be subordinated to the general lines; and, in the other, it would completely subordinate these to itself.

Suppose a Gothic Artist were set to design a covering for the Reading-room at the British Museum. We are not to imagine surely that he would throw up the task as beyond the scope of his special Art. He would, no doubt, in the first place, get rid of Circularity altogether by making his structure polygonal on plan. The unrelieved circular form of the present building produces a pervading want of *repose* which is absolutely painful. He might then, with great propriety, adopt an obtuse-pointed dome; as an acute or equilateral contour would carry him too high for his economical means, and the uses of the building. Or still better, he might make use of a sectional contour composed of a hyperbolic curve, compounded with arcs of a circle to make it rise tangentially from the side-walls.* This form would be at once a

* The thrust would thus be converted from diagonal to vertical. It may occur, however, to the critical technical reader, that this form would be only another inflexion of the Tudor-arch, which we have previously reprobated. But the conditions of equilibrium in the Arch and the Dome are essentially different. In the one the thrust is *parallel*, whilst in the other it is *radiating*. And it is demonstrable that whilst the form described in the text would be nearly

nearer approach, in its general effect, to the pointed outline; incomparably more pleasing to the eye; and the best as regards stability. He would next design a window with equilateral-pointed arch and light tracery in each compartment of the polygonal dome. These would be infinitely preferable to the stolid inelegance of the present circular-headed windows. And altogether he would obtain an effect very far superior to that of the existing structure. The dome of this has undoubtedly a certain grandeur. Its mere size ensures that. But it is altogether deficient in beauty. And the fingers of the Gothic Artist must sorely tingle, when he looks at its hapless and commonplace decoration, to tear that off, and substitute something which should better satisfy the eye and give life to the great void space.

the weakest for an Arch, it would be nearly the strongest for a Dome.

The Flying-buttress, that beautiful invention of the Gothic Artist, might be used with immense effect to give the necessary balance to the tholobate, and increase the general effect.

XI.

Next as to Plaster. If any man should desecrate Christian-English Art with cement-hypocrisies, what should we say to him? This,—that if he would fain lie, by pretending to be an Artist, when in truth he is not, and by making a show of working in Noble material, when in truth he works in the Ignoble, he had best revert to Paganism, and vent his plenitude of littleness in senseless Architraves and Bear's-breech.

For plain Gothic buildings there is nothing more comely than honest, homely Brick. If you turn to account the variety of its naturally-modulated colours, you have in the material itself a simple and uncostly adornment. And, besides, Clay is pliable enough. You may mould it to any fancy for the purposes of superior ornament. The next step in Domestic Art must be to utilize the decorative attributes of Clay.

If a man cannot afford to bestow a real, true, honest embellishment on the house he builds, he had much better abstain alto-

gether from any attempt at adornment. Why should he feed his vanity with hypocrisies, and satisfy pride with shams? We should avoid with the most rigid scrupulousness any use of fictitious ornament in our Architecture, for precisely the same moral reasons that a woman of prudence and self-respect will refuse to wear upon her wrist a gilded bracelet, or upon her neck a gilded chain. It is a mean dishonesty, beneath the dignity of independence.

XII.

Upon the economical capabilities of Gothic Structural Art, a word or two. If you choose to be lavish, it is difficult to conceive of any limit which can be put to your expenditure. The Artist can find you a place for a modicum of all the most costly materials which the wide earth will yield you. And his Sculptor will drain mines of wealth in covering your palace with the rich products of his Art. The Chromatist will sink untold thousands in gold-leaf and purples. The Glass-stainer will provide

windows for you—each one worth more, in money, than the best picture by Murillo. From the very nature of True Art, there *can be no* limit to its costliness. You might as reasonably seek to set a price upon Faith and Aspiration themselves.

If the Anglo-Italian architect were to strain his every vital, he must come to a limit presently. In *his* palace he could only go to a certain known extent of ornamentation, of a certain appraisable character. He should be able to say accurately beforehand what his Cost will be. Faith and Aspiration would by and by find themselves caged in the bars of the Hecatompodon.

On the other hand, if you must be sparing, there is no Architecture which will give you so much Beauty in exchange for your Florins. That is the real question with you, I suppose. Without entering into any intricate definition of Beauty, it may be said generally that it is the result of certain contours, or lines; and is inherent in certain forms which are the combinations of these lines. Now when you tear off the plaster-abominations from an Italianized house, you rid it of so much Ugli-

ness. But at the same time you strip it of so much Cost. For this regulation cement-work is not arrived at without filing its bill. If you then substitute for these—plain forms in brick, whether of window, doorway, or other feature, which are the combination of those contours which characterize the Gothic, you gain in Beauty, and gain in Economy. In the mere outlines of the high-pitched roof with its dormer-lights, and the pointed arches—even though flat and plain—there are a life and a gladsomeness which more than compensate for the absence of elaborate and expensive detail.

XIII.

This is doubtless very fine theorizing, all this. Wonderful poetic moonshine. How can we suppose that Truth, and her twin-sister Beauty, should ever prevail and dominate over this chaos-region of Secular Architecture, and reduce it to a condition of Order and Natural Meaning? How are we to conceive of this cotton-bestridden nation ever awakening to the amenities of Art? What are we ever likely to care for the

æsthetic expression of structure, so long as the walls are strong enough to carry our engine-shafting, and the windows let in light enough on our looms and our lathes? What do you conceive it can matter to us, whether our Dwellings be imbued with Paganism and darkened by its shadow, or vitalized and made lovely by Christianity? The imperious tyranny of Gold leaves us no margin of time or attention to bestow on these things.

No more of this. These infidel money-grinders are, after all, but a section of our sterling English nation. And truly in a great sense the most worthless section. Their pitiable worshipping of the glittering Dust has not yet so infected us, as to bring all men to their knees in unseemly prostration. The fated Image which fills the dream of their life shall not grow, and still grow, widening and heightening its uncouth proportions, until it fill our fair land with its impious and ghastly form. To be anon shivered in pieces by the indignant fires of Heaven, and strew our English soil with the ashes of ruin and destruction.

Gold is not Stamina. You may be rich, and yet worth nothing. Wealth is the offspring of Labour. And Labour of Stamina. But Wealth is powerful to react upon its grandsire, and corrode, and finally annul the life to which it owes its being. Real Wealth lies in the sinewy force of moral thewness. And it is better to rejoice in the pride of this, with a poverty of florins, than vaunt a hollow greatness of mere destructible and destroying pounds.

Notwithstanding the degeneracies of Wealth and the degradations of Poverty, there is yet a vast store of healthy Moral Stamina amongst the nobles, amongst the almighty burghers, amongst the vassals and villeins of labour. Your Gold will not corrupt that yet awhile, nor corrode the sinews of Heroic Action it has yet to feed. If you live until the next epoch of Anglican History, not far distant, you will see that.

“Methinks I see in my mind a noble and puissant nation, rousing herself like a strong man after sleep, and shaking her invincible locks. Methinks I see her as an eagle mewing her mighty youth, and kindling her undazzled eyes at the full midday beam; purging

and scaling her long-abused sight at the fountain itself of heavenly radiance." John Milton's prose.* Uninverted this time. The majestic vision of the good blind old poet will be realized with a terrible grandeur before long. And Holy Faith will be triumphant over Unholy Gold.

In the mean time, you are not to think that any perfectness of knowledge, any high culture of critical taste, will alone avail us for the production of a truthful National Art. You must have over and besides these, a life-giving, love-infusing Power. I know of no other than Faith,—belief in the active existence of something infinitely beyond the changeful phases of earth. If you think, in your love of Reasons, that you can find a better than the Faith of the Virgin's Child, you will do well to look to it quickly. You must have something to fall back upon.

Your Negativism, on the one hand, will profit your Art but little. This leads to mere general scepticism and coldness. If you have no Belief, you can have no Love. And without Love, Art will hide her face from you.

* *The Areopagitica.*

Your magnificently ornate Formalism, on the other hand, will not profit your Art much. This leads to mere sentimental fondness and vanity. But the attributes of High Art are Wisdom and Modesty. Beware of Colour. Beware of the Apple of racy hues. Let the Pagan Art-harlot paint her bold cheek. But do not you encumber Christian Architecture, and sink her to the dust, with the buffooneries of unmeaning pageantry. If your devotion be really stirred by high Faith, and not by the fitfulness of Fashion or the mania of Sentiment, symbolize in your Architecture every feature and every tuition of that Faith. But let it be done truly, with Wisdom and with Modesty.

When will it be time, think you, to leave these insane bickerings about Stoles, Genuflexions, and Division of the Sexes? Is not much of this you wax wroth over but the dregs of Paganism, infused into the chalice of Christianity? And if not, what matters it? Is it Faith, all this? Or is it any essential element of Faith? You would do better to lay fast hold of the Substance,

and think less of Shadows. The Substance is at least more Catholic than Shadows.

And then these other fighting men, who move heaven and earth with the thunder of their denunciations against Error, and tell us that there is no Truth but what is in their keeping; who make the unreligious to mock, by their multitudinous quibblings and diverse renderings; who writhe and twist, like a huge serpent, in the agonies of contention—what is the special evidence of their real belief in the Christian Verities? They are ever crying Faith! Faith! when there is no Faith. It will be hard for us to arrive at the consummation of a truly National Art with these effervescing elements of discord. Perchance the resplendent ray of Unity will light up Young England's "mighty youth."

Full of vigorous Manliness, full of great Meaning, is our English character. Let English Architecture give utterance to these. Full of hate for the traditions of Superstition, full of contempt for Shams, are our English hearts. Let our structural Art betoken these. Replete with Intelli-

gence, and the boundless teachings of universal dominion, let our Architecture embody these. And let us show to posterity that in our Homes, as in our Temples, we scorned the defilement of an alien Art which had its origin in Pagandom, and sanctified them with a Beauty which was at once natural to the soil of our Fatherland, and the offspring of Christian Faith.

APPENDIX.

I.

WHEN I say that the Gothic "does not make the adoption of the high-pitched roof imperative in domestic structure," I do not mean the remark to apply to English Architecture; for I have elsewhere shown that none but the high-pitched roof is properly applicable in this climate. I refer to the modes of the Gothic, which are found in southern latitudes.

It is very curious to observe that, in these southern modes, both the high-pitched roof and high-pointed arch are departed from. And yet, as they preserve all the other characteristics which belong to the Gothic, and have no kindred with classic forms, the generic term Gothic is the only one which can be correctly applied to them.

It is difficult to conceive of any task more difficult, than that of supplying an accurate, philosophic definition of the nature of Gothic Architecture. It is as if one should be set to define *Tree*. I confess that the definition in Section IV. of the last chapter is unsatisfactory to my own mind—as being only *approximate*. I regret that the little time that I have been able to devote to these hurried pages, has not permitted me to bestow more thought on so essential a point. This may be some apology for incompleteness of argument; and for what may appear, to the superficial reader, to be contradictory.

It may be affirmed, generally, that it is not essential in a Gothic structure that it should embody, in an equal degree, *all* the attributes assigned to Gothic Art. At the same time, *au fur et à mesure* that some of these are absent, so should the rest prominently declare themselves.

Such a definition as I speak of should be based, I conceive, on the proposition that "*Architecture is the Ideal Expression of external Nature*," and, by an analysis of what may be termed *Natural Architecture*, should include all those structural forms—such as the Hindu-pointed—which are so closely allied in their essential features to northern Gothic, as to be philosophically separable from it only as we distinguish between two varieties of the same species.

II.

It will be expected, perhaps, that one should say something with reference to the kind of design to be adopted for the proposed Government Offices. It follows of course from our argument that the style should be English Gothic.

It is a pity that Art should be made a football, and the question of National Architecture turned into a political sleight-of-hand. Nothing so much shows the general want of a proper feeling on this subject, as the childish "dodging" backwards and forwards from English to Italian, and Italian to English, at every change of Ministers.

Mr. SCOTT'S design is infinitely preferable to the best of the Italian eternal-commonplaces, which were exhibited at Westminster Hall. Whether it be the best, in its present state, that we could naturally expect to obtain, with our actual progress in English Art, is another question,—to be decided by a higher tribunal. There are several very competent critics, however, who think it is not.

THE END.



