

PART VI: AFTER THE PUBLICATION

CHAPTER NINETEEN: THE TREATISE'S RECEPTION

Garbett's influence, which may not have been very great, cannot be measured with any great degree of historical accuracy. This is partly due to the fact that he is too easily ignored. His name rests on one achievement, a book, which, though it went through nine editions, seems to have been largely rubbed out of history. As a sermon in morality it certainly was not as thunderously persuasive as Ruskin's *Seven Lamps*; as an exercise in rationalism it did not achieve the systematisation of Viollet-le-Duc's *Entretiens* or his *Dictionnaire*. Being primarily a speculative work, it had no simple demagogic strategy to contribute to either side in the battle of styles, in fact it had, as has already been noted, wanted to bypass the issue of a battle by asking different questions.

It was an *able* work; quietly influential, in the sense that many accepted its ideas

but did not feel the need to proclaim their newly found faith from the roof-tops. For such an effect the book was too diffuse, its advice to architects too intricately argued, lacking the concrete and easy condemnations or the single-mindedness by which it differed substantially from Ruskin's *Seven Lamps* and Pugin's Catholic apologies.

The book's positive advice did not range far into the area of practice with such abstract axioms as unity amidst variety, contrast versus gradation and the subordination of forms. Instead it concentrated on preliminary concerns represented by the word design which for him meant the careful analysis of purpose in both a narrow architectural and a broader social sense. To relate civilisation to the architect he concentrated on the phenomenology of perception. The new device of builders was to be *thought and consideration*, to show an *honest intention* so as to be *what you would seem*. Garbett was not primarily geared to the architect's practice, he was sharpening the architect's

attitude, and this is difficult to measure in any quantitative way. Garbett's aesthetic principles were, with the exception of Ruskin, quite readily agreed with, but were obviously not felt to be spectacularly controversial and were therefore left for what they were.

The only propositions that were contested with any vehemence were his provocative views on some specific aspects of English Gothic architecture, those bits of it which were thought to have attacked the English pride, the English identity which was becoming increasingly identified by its creative heritage industry. One is tempted to deduce from these responses that many had not quite understood the object of the book. It is admittedly difficult to reconcile Garbett's strong phrases denouncing mindlessness, ignorance, the vulgarity of the masses and the lack of properly applied principles in design, with the balanced view he took when showing his reluctance to blame style, or the lack of it, for the contemporary problems in architecture. His apparent defence of all styles, his enormous

love for Greek architecture, his even greater devotion to Gothic architecture, his rejection of them as suitable models for contemporary architects, his prediction concerning an architecture of the future and his advocacy of Italian architecture as a style suited to the present all amounted to an attitude which was too comprehensive to provoke controversy. He refused to play according to the rules of nineteenth-century architectural polemics, which state that style apology must be the ultimate aim of all speculation, a rule to which he only succumbed long after the publication of the *Treatise*.

Following in the wake of Ruskin's *Seven Lamps*, and covering roughly similar areas, Garbett's possible influence is frequently overlooked in favour of his more famous colleague. And as many regarded Garbett a pupil of Ruskin, the two were frequently identified with each other. Ruskin's influence was massive in that the books he wrote were popular. Garbett never achieved popularity, but he did reach the limited public for which his book

had been intended. There are many instances where knowledge of Garbett's *Treatise* can be traced; there are some instances where actual influence can be seen, and there are a few cases where his thoughts are echoed, but where a connection can only be suspected.

Ultimately it may be said that in England, the immediate reception of the book was concentrated on his so-called attack on English Gothic architecture. In America, where his book was widely circulated, the expressive qualities in architecture, especially those forms of it that were concerned with morality, were often referred, while his ideas on styles of construction must have fallen on a receptive and well-prepared bedding. In the twentieth century, most writers predictably chose to notice and concentrate on his anticipation of the modern movement and on his peculiar brand of functionalism.

The magazines: The Builder

The review of the *Treatise* in *The Builder* was almost certainly written by George Godwin, who was editor of the magazine from 1844-1883.¹ Godwin was not ravingly enthusiastic, but generally approving. He calls the *Treatise*: *a very noticeable work, full of thought, and showing much ability, though with some vagaries.*² He is shocked by Garbett's contemptuous treatment of England's much beloved parish churches but in spite of that, he hails Garbett as a *new and not weak ally* in the fight against copyism. Godwin quotes a passage from Robert Kerr's *Newleafe Discourses* where Newleafe exhorts the architect to go to nature:

...the true principles of criticism are not comparison with authorities, but abstract test[s] by principles of nature and reason. I

1. On George Godwin see: King (1976) pp. 32-53.

2. Review of Garbett's *Treatise* in *The Builder*, VIII, 372 (March 23, 1850) 133-134.

*say when you design go to your own intellect to guide your hand by its regulations - not to books and dogmas and rules of styles.*³

This is certainly an aspect of Garbett's belief, but his solution, as we have seen, does not propose to discard past achievement so unconditionally. Newleafe then goes on to quote Cockerell which provides a fairer parallel with Garbett's intentions when he says that

"He who would really become an architect must leave the special discussion of styles, and steadily look to the true end and aim of this art." So says Professor Cockerell; and it is a gleam of living light appearing in dead darkness when he says so. May it

3. Ibid., p. 133; *The Newleafe Discourses on the Fine Art Architecture*, had first been serialised in *The Builder* and subsequently been published by John Weale in 1846. For a discussion of its contents see Pevsner (1972) pp. 217-221.

*increase and increase till men can see by it! But how strange that it should be so wonderful a thing to find an artist telling artists to go to nature! Vague and weak as are the words, yet hear them, hear them and ponder them - "the end and aim of the art." The ancients went to nature when they produced those very authorities you go by; the originator of every style must have gone to nature for his principles; and I say, instead of tethering yourself by these, go you to nature also.*⁴

Words that Garbett must have taken to heart, and words which Godwin recognised as constituting Garbett's program. Amused at the notion that a building can be selfish and finding the precept of politeness a false one, he nevertheless devotes quite a bit of space to quotations in which Garbett discusses the moral obligation of buildings to the spectator. But he treats it dismissively, rightly if somewhat pompously proposing that what is beautiful for the owner is not

4. Ibidem.

always incompatible with the tastes of the spectator. His rejection of consideration, or politeness is pedantic, pushing Garbett's ideas to an extreme where they do not really belong, or ever intended to go. Godwin willingly misinterprets Garbett, believing the latter to have implied that a building can achieve politeness even if it is unsuited to its purpose and the wants of its owner and as long as it does not fail to give beauty to the spectator. He does not take into account Garbett's earlier powerful insistence on the integration of the three aims of architecture: commodity, firmness and delight. Although he does agree that the appearance of thought in the design is essential, he does not think that it matters whether the thought is directed towards the owner or the spectator. The author of the review obviously had more faith in the innate goodness of human nature and had not the spectre of the 1950's 60 and 70's to digest.

Godwin begs to differ on much of what Garbett says about Gothic architecture, especially when the latter

rejects England's parish churches contemptuously as being built by those "ignorant of the true principles of Gothic"; had Mr Garbett devoted the amount of study to them that they deserve, writes Godwin, he would not say such things. He is also disapproving of Garbett's pessimism concerning national character and the survival of taste, but his objections make one suspect that he has chosen to see only the surface of Garbett's argument and has not considered it worth his while to dig deeper. This view is corroborated by his interpretation of Garbett's views on expression, which according to him, Garbett considers overrated. He ends his review by *simply adding* that the principle on which Garbett points to as the basis for a new system is the truss in opposition to the beam and the arch. Thereby illustrating that that particular aspect of the *Treatise*, which is what the Twentieth century chose to note about Garbett's thoughts, was then considered not particularly exciting news. This is all the more interesting when one considers that Godwin was himself the

author of a prize-winning essay on the properties of concrete, which for many years was considered the standard work on the subject, and which, similarly, had an air of prophecy about it.⁵

A week later, on March the 30th a disappointed *Amateur* wrote to object to *the tone of architectural writers*.⁶ He declared himself a lover of architecture and in search of its principles; he wanted scientific principles, such as those which in chemical and physical science serve to unite scientific men into a vast and harmonious community. The amateur

5. G. Godwin, "The Nature and Properties of Concrete," *Transactions of the Institute of British Architects*, Vol. I, Pt. 1. Collins (1959) p. 39, writes that Godwin was the earliest English advocate for the use of this material.

6. An Amateur, "The Tone of Architectural Writers," *The Builder*, VIII, 373 (March 30, 1850) 148-149.

believed implicitly that such a state could be achieved and that such conditions would create a neutral ground of indisputable truth on which no quarrels were permitted. Surely, he argued, writers on architecture would also be able to find such indisputable common ground, were they to start on their undertakings with the single purpose of discovering the truth: *if they were actuated by a real love of scientific principles they would work harmoniously together, and endeavour to establish for art and its professors that neutral ground whereon all might meet in harmony*. Was this Peter Legh, it sounds so familiar.

But the amateur was brought back down to earth with something of a shock when he read Garbett. Some of the latter's reasoning *is both new and true*, he writes, but the tone is both injurious to the author and to the principles he wants to expound. Men, who would otherwise gladly listen to Garbett, would be offended by his vocabulary. To use such words as *rubbish*, *trash*, and *nonsense*; and to call one's own

colleagues names such as *dolt*, *ass*, *ignoramus*, and *bungler* is, he writes, sad to see.

Furthermore he wanted to point out that the London of today is not the only place where people live surrounded in objects of bad taste, and that the people of ancient Greece lived in the rudest huts, and had not the conveniences that the ladies of today have at their disposal.⁷ Again, the amateur took Garbett at face value; did not bother to sift the rhetoric from the ideas, probably because that face value was useful to his national pride; was not London the new Athens or Rome?

The Amateur's reaction was a common one. It could point to the conclusion that Garbett's principles, however good in themselves, were indeed badly put across, as it was his tone that most, if not all, contemporary English critics objected to. His invectives and anger did a lot of damage to the initial reception of the book, deflecting attention from his ideas

7. cf. *Treatise*, p. 4.

and principles, to his likes and dislikes. Garbett is so heated in his condemnation that he fails to notice the many toes he treads on. He may have been a clever analyst but he was also too much of a hot head, too impetuous to be allowed to leave the battle-field unscathed.

Having said that, the reply he gives to the Amateur two weeks later is enjoyable for its cool-headed rejection of all the objections that the Amateur had raised. The article also served as a reply to Godwin's review.⁸ Garbett begins by denying the existence of any harmony between scientists. Even if such a harmony exists now, he argues, it certainly did not in the time of Galileo and Newton; their greatness did not depend on their harmonious relationship with others. He then makes a distinction between true and established principles. True principles, he writes, lie scattered throughout the works of

8. E.L. Garbett, "On Architectural Principles and the Tone of Writers," *The Builder*, VII, 375 (April 13, 1850) 171-172.

architectural theory, but these are not necessarily established, or universally accepted: *There are many principles, he writes, which no one disputes in their abstract shape, and yet, in applying them to architecture, its professors differ so widely as to deduce two incompatible or directly opposite rules of action from the same principle.* He goes on to dispute the very existence of neutral ground in architecture and as to the nature of controversy:

The fact is, Sir, that in such a subject as science then was [in the time of Galileo and Newton], or art theory now is, there is only one way of avoiding disagreement. There is such an art as that of speaking long and yet saying nothing. Writers who would please all must learn this art. By its means they will find it easy to extend volumes on architecture to any length without saying anything, and therefore without differing from any party.

Controversy in the pursuit of truth is healthy, and Garbett certainly relishes a good argument. As to the rude huts in which the Grecian ladies had to dwell without modern conveniences, is replied to rather

weakly with the dangerous assumption that they at least were artistic huts. Evidence to this effect is supplied by the fact that every other object preserved from that period is endowed with tastefulness.

Garbett's reply ends with a more respectful address to the editor, (George Godwin) in whose impartiality Garbett has more faith. They differ, professedly, in two matters of *opinion*: the latter's rejection of the importance of unselfish design is acknowledged and Garbett responds to it by saying that the idea was but a stopgap, to be removed the moment a more efficient one is found.

As to the matter of the parish churches, Garbett believes it is not really important whether one person considers them good Gothic, and the other bad Gothic, if those opinions were reached by long and attentive study, it is far more important to discuss these differences with the ultimate object of discovering the truth.

The Athenaeum

The review given in *The Athenaeum* on March 16th is understandably shorter as the magazine did not specialise in architecture, but comes straight to the point.⁹ Garbett's *Treatise*, they write, bids fair to divide attention with Mr. Ruskin's *Seven Lamps*:

Unpretending and even humble in form, written in a style which cannot be commended, and published at what may be called a merely nominal price, it is stamped, nevertheless, by sterling originality - that originality which proceeds from earnest and many-sided thoughtfulness accompanied by conscientiousness of purpose..(..)..he sets many matters in a new light - some of them in such a light as will not fail to give umbrage to sundry parties.

It is, naturally this last aspect on which the review intends to concentrate. The first quotation from the *Treatise* concerns the much beloved parish churches which are so harshly dealt with by Garbett. The reviewer then passes on to the concept of thought in architecture and the problem of copyism, agreeing whole-heartedly with

Garbett's diatribe against pattern books. The review ends with the following:

Most worthy of serious consideration is also the following passage: "By a singular inconsistency, those who constantly profess to be no judges are really the style formers. They say, 'we know nothing of the art, but we know what pleases us.' But what does this assume? Plainly that the art is intended to please them. This is the grand art destroying error. No true art is, or ever was, meant to please the many, but to teach them when to be pleased." The passage which we have quoted may serve to recommend the nature of this little work- little in the ordinary meaning of the term, yet large and weighty in its import and object. There are one or two matters in regard to which we do not exactly agree with Mr. Garbett:- perhaps because he has not sufficiently explained himself. But we sincerely approve of his principles on the whole.

What is one to make of all this? The review only pays attention to Garbett's least delicate contentions; it says nothing of the principles themselves but confines itself to what Garbett criticises, and what, indeed, is most likely to cause readers to take umbrage and read on.

9. *The Athenaeum*, 1168 (March 16, 1850) 290-291.

A month after this review was published another appeared in the same magazine, ostensibly about a book published by Raphael and J.A. Brandon called *Open Timber Roofs of the Middle Ages*.¹⁰ The space devoted to reviewing this book is, however, insignificant; most of the column is occupied with criticism on the stand Garbett takes on timber roofs for Gothic buildings. On this point Garbett was again to receive a lot of contemporary criticism, and on this point he was to waste most of his energy defending his stand.

It is not surprising that both reviews, the one in *The Builder* and the first one in *The Athenaeum*, made much of Garbett's condemnation of the parish churches. Many considered these to be England's finest possessions, they were England much in the same way as Louis XIV was France. But they mistook Garbett's denial of their being examples of good Gothic for being

10. *The Athenaeum*, 1172 (April 13, 1850) 400. The Full title of the Book by Raphael and J.A. Brandon is *Open Timber Roofs of the Middle Ages; Illustrated by Perspective and Working Drawings of some of the Varieties of Church Roofs*, 1850. Only the last paragraph of the review is devoted to this book.

bad buildings generally. His remark concerning the condemnation of timber roofs in Gothic churches, attacked the established values of the Ecclesiologists; they and many besides considered the open roof of Westminster Hall, for instance, to be one of England's greatest glories. According to Garbett, wooden roofs were never meant as a permanent feature of Gothic architecture. They were originally put in as a temporary shelter against the elements, while the masonry was allowed to settle a number of years before putting on the permanent stone-vaulted ceiling. In writing this he consciously attacked those advocates of the Gothic revival who advocated the use of wooden roofs in new churches. It is therefore not surprising that the counter-attack on the *Treatise* was launched from that flank.

Two weeks later Garbett published a reply to the objections made to his *Treatise* in *The Athenaeum*, but his failure to offer a compromise, his cool treatment of those who disagree with him, his insistence on the rightness of his theories and the tone in

which he conveys them, could not fail to provoke stubbornness on the part of his critics.¹¹ In his reply he quotes Bartholomew, on the fact that the excellence of gothicity lies in the handling of the Roof. He backs this up with a quote from Dr. Robison, who also believed that the roof of Westminster Hall was false in that it hides its essential constructional parts with what is conceived to be ornamental, i.e. wooden imitations of stone arches. Wooden roofs, says Garbett, may be admired, but in so doing all Gothic ideas must be relinquished. Garbett admits to having once admired Westminster Hall:

I, too, before I knew what architecture is, - when (though studying it for years) I still thought like the many, that its object was to please the eye, - could admire that and many similar roofs as much as any one, and even think it a fine thing to mimic them. But since learning that mimicry is not true architecture, I have also gradually learned that this roof itself is mimicry throughout. (..) Its author seems with the

11.E.L. Garbett, "Westminster Hall and Open Roofs," *The Athenaeum*, 1174 (April 27, 1850) 456.

prophetic eye of genius, to have looked a few centuries in advance of his age, and designed for the Victorian era,- the age of universal mimicry,- the age of making new things look old, and old ones new, - the age of "restorations," and polychromy, and "perspectives" -(...) but more probably he had to sacrifice every requirement of true taste to a royal whim. Richard the Second had seen the triumphs of the masons, (..); and nothing would satisfy him but to have an avenue that should look as tall as that of a church without really being so...

Later on in the same article he enumerates all the advantages of adopting a vaulted ceiling in Gothic construction, mentioning that it renders the adoption of true Gothic architecture possible instead of its mimicry; that as a stone vault requires knowledge and skill to build it so that its adoption would naturally eliminate ignorant professors from the practice. The fact that a stone vault is more fireproof is mentioned, a fact which had been systematically treated by Samuel Ware. A curious reason is that it alone renders efficient ventilation possible. This he offers to prove, but unfortunately, is not

asked to do so.¹² Acoustic advantages are given, but all to no avail: a short notice appended by the editors to Garbett's article tells us that they are not convinced by his arguments:

*Had he contented himself with merely vindicating the superiority of vaulting over timber roofs we might have acquiesced in his opinion,- whereas he is opposed to the latter altogether. However, what he has urged is likely to stir up some discussion..(..)..it seems to us, Mr. Garbett must either make many converts, or raise up a host of opponents.*¹³

Their prediction turned out to be accurate. A week later R.M. Phipson wrote an angry reply to Garbett's article. In it he attempted to refute all of Garbett's assertions, one by

12.The idea may be related to his invention of a fireproof mode of building.

13.see note 10.

one.¹⁴ Some of his refutations amount to no more than calling Garbett's propositions ignorant or vague. Mr. Phipson ridiculed Garbett by saying that Bartholomew was no authority on taste and that Dr. Robison was ignorant of architecture.¹⁵ Apart from these rather empty retorts, Mr. Phipson has one or two fair objections. One of these rightly contradicts Garbett's groundless assertion that open timber roofing was never used until the decline of the Gothic system. Mr. Phipson enumerates a number of examples which give proof of the opposite. But the article is tedious and laborious in its criticism. In any case the editors have had enough, they thought it only fair to place Mr. Phipson's criticism, but advise any further correspondents to apply

14.R.M. Phipson, "Westminster Hall and Open Roofs," *The Athenaeum*, 1175 (May 4, 1850) 481-482.

15.Because Robison had got his nomenclature of the various Gothic styles mixed up.

to *The Builder* or *The architect* which are considered more appropriate arenas for professional dispute.

Duly we go back to *The Builder* where the discussion is opened by an angry "W.T.T." who writes to object to Garbett's views on the roof of Westminster Hall.¹⁶ He raises a number of irrelevant points, showing him to have completely misunderstood the point of the book. Garbett responds with understandable impatience.¹⁷

The last we hear of Garbett's *Treatise* in *The Builder* is a voicing of disappointment in its achievements by the author himself.¹⁸

16.W.T.T. "Roof of Westminster Hall," *The Builder*, VIII (May 11, 1850) 220.

17.E.L.G. "Roof of Westminster Hall," *The Builder*, VIII, 380 (May 18, 1850) 233.

18.This is not completely true, some years later in 1853, Thomas Purdie, writes an angry reply to an article of Garbett's in *The Builder* entitled "The Question of Shams," XI, 520 (Jan. 22, 1853) 50-52, which Garbett signed

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Again he is concerned with defending his definition of Gothic architecture: the thing that distinguishes Gothic from all other styles is vaulting. The assertion, he admits, was by no means new when he made it, but perhaps never so plainly stated as in the *Treatise*: a pure Gothic building means nothing more nor less than a truthfully elaborated and decorated, vaulted building:

I was accordingly prepared to expect some argument on this point, but met with

"E.L.G." Purdie writes in *The Builder*, XI, 524 (Feb 19, 1853) 116: *There is a work entitled "Rudimentary Treatise on the Principles of Design in Architecture," by Edward Lacy Garbett, of which 'E.L.G.' may have heard. It is a book which I have read with much pleasure as well as profit.* Subsequently he compares Garbett's more recent arguments about the imitation of materials, with those he held in the *Treatise*. The discussion is a good example of how Garbett became more doctrinaire and less consistent as time went by.

exactly the same disappointment of which another writer complains. The architects, instead of arguing met him with, "Mr. A. thinks the Doge's palace a very beautiful building, but we think it a very ugly one," and there the matter rests. Just so a writer in the Gentleman's Magazine treated what he was pleased to call my "vaulting fallacy," Mr. Garbett thinks a building without vaulting cannot be real Gothic, but we think it can be very good Gothic, and so think proper to warn our readers against this fallacy.¹⁹

19.G [sic] L. Garbett, "The Common Sense of Gothic," *The Builder*, IX, 455 (Oct. 25, 1851) 670-671. The review in *The Civil Engineer and Architect's Journal*, XIII, 151 (April 1850) 114-115 is not really worth discussing even though it is quite laudatory. But it is so obvious that the reviewer did not read the book that even his better remarks somehow have an uncertain ring to them which echo with irrelevant generalities.

Thus Garbett's *able Treatise* sank into the mire of his mindless multitude and succumbed to the party politics he had so cleverly avoided in formulating his principles. All its fine ideas apparently rejected on account of its treading on the toes of the Goths, who did not want to see his point of view. He did want to flatter the Classical camp and to be taken up as their spokesman, but was not accepted. As a result he had to go it alone.

It must be admitted that Garbett was very good at treading on toes, he did it eagerly, sometimes well and sometimes stupidly, but it nevertheless seems a shame that the metaphysical aim of the book was lost on most contemporary readers and rejected on account of the easily misinterpreted definition of Gothic architecture.

Ruskin's Answer to Mr. Garbett

One of the few exceptions to the bickering Garbett received in the magazines was Ruskin's response to the *Treatise* contained in a lengthy appendix to the second

volume of *The Stones of Venice*.²⁰ The reader may recall that Sir Charles Eastlake believed that Ruskin generally proved his case *whether answering Mr. Garbett or posing Mr. Fergusson*.²¹ This statement obviously referred to two appendices, one of which was called "Answer to Mr. Garbett." Most of it, that part dealing specifically with Garbett's *Treatise* and its criticism of Ruskin was omitted from later editions.²²

20. Ruskin, *Works*, Vol. IX, p. 450 ff. It is Appendix No. 17 called "An Answer to Mr. Garbett."

21. Eastlake (1970) p. 277. Ruskin also published a critique of Fergusson's *An Historical Inquiry into the True Principles of Beauty in Art*, of 1849 in Appendix number 13 entitled "Mr. Fergusson's System," Ruskin, *Works*, Vol. IX, p. 440-444. The Appendix was cancelled in later editions of the *Stones of Venice*.

22. Ruskin, *Works*, Vol. IX, p. 450. Ruskin did not want to encumber the general aim of
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The appendix opens with Ruskin denying that he has been guilty of plagiarism. In chapter VII of the first Volume of *The Stones*, called "The Pier Base," Ruskin uses the analogy of the elephant's foot and the base of a column, both being used to support a weight.²³ He calls the elephant's foot the Doric base of animality and then directs the reader to appendix no. seventeen:

Some three months ago, and long after the writing of this passage, I met accidentally with Mr. Garbett's elementary Treatise on Design. If I had cared about the reputation of originality, I should have been annoyed - and was so at first, on finding Mr. Garbett's illustrations of the subject exactly the same as mine (sic), even to the choice of the elephant's foot for the parallel of the Doric

the treatise with accidental inquiry or controversy, see *Works*, Vol. IX, p. 454, note 1.

23. Ruskin, *Works*, Vol. IX, p. 106.

*pillar: I even thought of omitting, or re-writing, great part of the chapter, but determined at last to leave it stand. I am striving to speak plain truth on many simple and trite subjects, and I hope, therefore, that much of what I say has been said before, (...): at all events the elephant's foot must belong to Mr. Garbett, though, strictly speaking, neither he nor I can be quite justified in using it, for an elephant in reality stands on tiptoe; and this is by no means the expression of a Doric shaft.*²⁴

But his analogy and that of Garbett are only nominally similar, for when Garbett uses the elephant's leg, he does so on the strict condition that it is turned upside down so that the foot forms the capital. This is a fundamental difference between his use of the elephant's foot and that of Ruskin, who uses the analogy in connection with the base of the column, thereby keeping the elephant on his feet as it were. There is, therefore, no plagiarism involved, and

24. Ruskin, *Works*, Vol. IX, p. 450.

every reason to believe in Ruskin's sincerity when he denied the accusation.

But all this is, in a sense, only the excuse for a much more serious discussion of Garbett's *Treatise* with regard to its critique of the *Seven Lamps*. Ruskin begins by recommending Garbett's *Treatise* as of much interest and utility. However, as passages in the *Seven Lamps* are quoted, and objected to in it, Ruskin thought it necessary to show his readers the kind of animadversions that *The Seven Lamps* had had to sustain at the hands of architects. As Garbett cannot be counted among the least intelligent, he would do so by his example. The responses are slightly disappointing however. Garbett's question as to why convenience and stability are not enough to constitute architecture is cryptically answered by asking another question: *Why have we been made men and not bees and termites.*²⁵ In other words, convenience and stability are enough for them, but it is natural for man to require

25. *Ibidem*.

beauty. But if we return to Garbett, we see that this is precisely the answer which he had anticipated and rejected. Ruskin does concede, however, that Garbett has given a very pretty if partial answer to the question, which he begs the reader to consider.²⁶

The next thing Ruskin refers to is the question about beauty and ornament. Garbett's objection that the two should be used interchangeably is replied to with a passage which has a direct bearing on the problem of ornament. I shall quote the passage in full:

..in page 12, it is made a grave charge against me that I use the words beauty and ornament interchangeably. I do so, and ever shall; and so I believe, one day will Mr. Garbett himself; but not while he continues to head his pages thus: "Beauty not dependent on ornament or superfluous features." What right has he to assume that ornament, rightly so called, ever was, or

26.Ruskin, Works, Vol. IX, p. 451.

can be superfluous. I have said above, and repeatedly in other places, that the most beautiful things are the most useless; I never said superfluous. I said useless in the well-understood and usual sense, as meaning, inapplicable to the service of the body. Thus I called peacocks and lilies useless; meaning that roast peacock was unwholesome (taking Juvenal's word for it), and that dried lilies made bad hay.²⁷

The passage continues and refines Ruskin's definition of ornament which I have not come across in any secondary discussion of Ruskin's ideas on ornament, which therefore can be considered of some interest to Ruskin scholars while at the same time being not without relevance to the present problem of gauging Garbett's reception:

...and for lilies, though the great King of Israel was not "arrayed" like one of them, can Mr. Garbett tell us which are their

27.Ruskin, Works, Vol. IX, p. 451.

superfluous leaves.²⁸ Is there no Diogenes among lilies? none to be found content to drink dew, but out of silver? The fact is I never met with an architect yet who did not think ornament meant a thing to be bought in a shop, and pinned on, or left off, at architectural toilets, as the fancy seized them, thinking little more than many women do of the other kind of ornament - the only true kind- St. Peter's kind, -"Not that outward adorning, but the inner -of the heart."²⁹ I do not mean that architects cannot conceive this better ornament, but

28.The editors refer us to Matthew vi. 29: Consider the lilies of the field, how they grow; they toil not, neither do they spin: yet I say unto you that even Solomon in all his glory was not arrayed like one of these. The whole chapter of Matthew concerns the higher, or in Ruskin's parlance the useless aim in life. Man should not just worry about bread and clothes but seek first His kingdom.

29.1 Peter iii.3.

they do not understand that it is the only ornament; that all architectural ornament is this, and nothing but this; that a noble building never has any extraneous or superfluous ornament; that all its parts are necessary to its loveliness, and that no single atom of them could be removed without harm to its life. You do not build a temple and then dress it. You create it in its loveliness, and leave it, as her Maker left Eve. Not unadorned, I believe, but so well adorned as to need no feather crowns. And I use the words ornament and beauty interchangeably, in order that architects may understand this: I assume that their building is to be a perfect creature, capable of nothing less than it has, and needing nothing more. It may, indeed, receive additional decoration afterwards, exactly as a woman may gracefully put a bracelet on her arm, or set a flower in her hair: but that additional decoration is not the architecture. It is of curtains, pictures, statutes, things which may be taken away from the building, and not hurt it. What has the architect to do with these? He has only

to do with what is part of the building itself, that is to say, its own inherent beauty. And because Mr. Garbett does not understand or acknowledge this, he is led from error to error.³⁰

But in fact it is Ruskin who has been unclear for this is certainly not what he wrote in the *Seven Lamps*. That is not to say that he is contradicting himself. Far from it, but he has never been so specific as to his intended meaning, so that it was quite legitimate of Garbett to have deduced his criticism and it is Ruskin who is now forced to be more specific. For the rest, as could be imagined, much of it is hair-splitting and Ruskin is quite justified in telling Garbett off for having made an objection against the motto *Ornament cannot be overcharged if it is good, and is always overcharged when it is bad*.³¹ After all the filling which determines the shape of good and bad was taken for

30. Ruskin, *Works*, Vol. IX, pp. 451-452.

31. *Treatise*, p. 16. The slogan is from Ruskin, *Seven Lamps*, p. 51, "Sacrifice," § XV.

granted by Ruskin, he, like Garbett, concerning the nature of Gothic, did not expect to be confronted by misunderstanding and the retort is understandably impatient and though amusing, need not be reproduced here.³²

Garbett also disagreed with Ruskin about the question of manual labour and the necessity for evidence of it in a given object. Garbett writes that the value of ornament does not in the slightest depend on the amount of manual labour it contains, and that if it did the most valuable ornaments would be the stone chains that hang before certain Indian rock temples.³³ The illustration is a bit awkward, but the principle holds sound. Ruskin responds with a parallel designed to expose Garbett's ridiculous position:

The value of Cornish mines, he writes, depends not in the slightest degree on the quantity of copper they

32. Ruskin, *Works*, Vol. IX, pp. 452-453.

33. *Treatise*, p. 162.

*contain. If it did, the most valuable things ever produced would be copper saucepans.*³⁴

Try as one might, it is difficult to see where the parallel proposed by Ruskin lies. If one were to construct a grammatical equation, it would, I suppose, run as follows: Ornament = copper mines; manual labour = copper; valuable ornaments = valuable things; stone chains = copper pans. Even as an exercise in satire, it seems to rather miss the point. It is curious to think that Eastlake considered Ruskin to hold his own when answering Mr. Garbett. If he did hold his own, it was not without having taken much of Garbett's critique of his ideas to heart.

When his enumeration of Garbett's criticisms is at an end, Ruskin goes on to say that though his own technical knowledge may be deficient, his principles are worth connoitring before attacking:

Architects no doubt, fancy they have strong grounds for supposing me wrong

34. Ruskin, *Works*, Vol. IX, p. 455.

*when they seek to invalidate my assertions. Let me assure them, at least, that I mean to be their friend although they may not immediately recognise me as such. If I could obtain the public ear, and the principles which I have advocated were carried into general practice, porphyry and serpentine would be given to them instead of limestone and brick.*³⁵

Then begins the well known passage on the Crystal Palace and the use of iron and glass in architecture which may well have taken into account Garbett's tirade against the Crystal Palace in the pages of the Builder.

And when Ruskin comes to treat again of the value of manual labour in architecture he makes sure to emphasise the fact that this evidence of manual labour incorporates thought and moral purpose, which was exactly the theme of Garbett's critique:

35. Ruskin, *Works*, Vol. IX, p. 454.

All art which is worth its room in this world, all art which is not a piece of blundering refuse, occupying the foot or two of earth which, if unencumbered by it, would have grown corn or violets, or some better thing, is art which proceeds from an individual mind, working through instruments which assist, but do not supersede, the muscular action of the human hand, upon the materials which most tenderly receive, and most securely retain, the impressions of such human labour.

And the value of every work of art is exactly in ratio to the quantity of humanity which has been put into it, and legibly expressed upon it for ever: First of thought and moral purpose; Secondly, of technical skill; Thirdly, of bodily industry.³⁶

36. The editors of the *Works* recommend the reader to compare this passage with a line in *Modern Painters*, Vol. 1, pt. 1, sec. 1, ch. 3 par. 3. J. Ruskin, *Works*, Vol. IX, p. 456. The passage is however, just an echo of the principle of equating manual labour with life in architecture.

This emphasis was, in fairness to Garbett, not there before, although, if one reads the relevant passage in *The Seven Lamps* or in *Modern Painters*, (Vol. 1, Part 1, Sect. 1, Chap. iii, § 3) one can see that Ruskin's idea of manual labour already contains in it the visualisation of mental labour as well as the glorification of sweat and tears.

There is one last passage in *The Stones of Venice* in which the *Treatise* is criticised. It concerns the passage on the need to correct nature when imitating it, quoting Raffaele's dictum that one should imitate nature not as it is, but as it should be. In chapter XXX of the first Volume of *The Stones*, called "The Vestibule," Ruskin writes:

There is material enough in a single flower for the ornament of a score of cathedrals: but suppose we were satisfied with less exhaustive appliance, and built a score of cathedrals each to illustrate a single flower? that would be better than trying to invent new styles, I think. There is quite a difference

in style enough, between a violet and a harebell, for all reasonable purposes.

Perhaps even more strange than the struggle of our architects to invent new styles, is the way they commonly speak of the treasure of natural infinity. Let us take our patience to us for an instant, and hear on of them, not among the least intelligent:-

³⁷

Here follows Garbett's passage on imitation, which is subsequently ridiculed. Ruskin describes a desperate artist wildly trying to control the waves of the ocean into a regular pattern, he fails, whereupon he asks a Greek architect to do it. The latter comes up with a schematic representation of waves shaped like interlocking volutes. With this Ruskin hopes to prove that to attempt to correct nature is stupid and arrogant; the artists goal should be to explain it. If art is to be judged in terms of nature, then it must be judged according to the similitude of the enjoyment it gives. But this is no real

37. Ruskin, *Works*, Vol. IX, p. 407.

contradiction of Garbett's theories, nor for that matter of the ideas of purer neo-classicists. Rather it represents a tangent, and apart from that, a marvellous literary opiate, the chapter reads much like the fantasies conjured up from a postcard showing a Venetian sunset.³⁸

Having said all that, we have to return to the question of Garbett's possible influence on Ruskin. This influence is definitely there in a negative sense, as we have seen. Most of the *influence* that can be shown to have rubbed off on Ruskin was spent in violent conservatism, merely making him defend his theories with greater vehemence. But, as we have seen, not without taking Garbett's criticisms seriously and clarifying his position accordingly, taking away the ambiguity of some of his theories. It is harder to prove a positive influence, although I believe such an influence does exist, be it to a modest

38. The last illustration in that chapter shows a romantic Venetian water-scape veiled in blue.

degree and one which it is almost impossible to ascribe directly to Garbett. The proof of any possible influence, if needed, lies in the certainty that Ruskin had both read and approved of some of Garbett's ideas. If that is a given then any similarity between Garbett's ideas and those of Ruskin as expressed in *The Stones of Venice* and in the *Edinburgh Lectures* which deviates significantly from the ideas presented in *The Seven Lamps* means that they could with some credibility be ascribed to Garbett. But that is going beyond the scope of this dissertation.

The passage in the "Answer to Mr. Garbett" quoted above starting with *All art which is worth its room in the world*, shows that Ruskin had been impressed with Garbett's theme of thought and consideration and with the idea of architecture being an intrinsic violation of space. It marks a slight displacement, or refinement in Ruskin's ideas, as much as was necessary, considering Garbett's prior and heavy reliance on much of Ruskin. No longer is it an unspecified human labour

which must be apparent, but a specific aspect of that labour, namely *thought and moral purpose*. The definition of the word *humanity* used in the passage above is contained in another, earlier appendix entitled "Divisions of Humanity" which, in turn, refers to the essay in *The Stones of Venice* on "The Virtues of Architecture,"³⁹ In this essay Ruskin's earlier ideas as expressed in the *Seven Lamps* are clearly refined to incorporate Garbett's pertinent critique. Ruskin's rather primitive utilitarian aesthetics where quantities are, despite the poetic prose, quite crudely brought into relation with qualities, are here refined. In *The Seven Lamps*, for instance, Ruskin had made the quantity of labour directly proportionate to the quality of ornament. In *Modern Painters*, he had launched the idea that Great art is defined by the greatest number of great ideas it contains. In *The Stones of Venice*

39. Ruskin, "Divisions of Humanity," Appendix no. 14, *Works*, Vol. IX, pp. 444-448, & "The Virtues of Architecture," *Stones of Venice*, chapter II, pp. 35-45.

and the *Edinburgh Lectures* the aesthetics and the rhetoric both exhibit a far greater awareness of a theoretical tradition in architecture. In these two later books Ruskin is answering his critics; it cannot be said that his ideas undergo a major revolution, but they have certainly been sharpened by the fact of his awareness of an interested professional public. This can be shown simply by the fact that he does not once mention *The Builder* or *The Architect* or any theoretical text apart from Wren's *Parentalia* in the First Edition of *The Seven Lamps*, whereas both *The Stones* and the *Lectures* refer to *The Builder* quite regularly. The Preface to the second edition of *The Seven Lamps*, requires the reader *not to regard it [The Seven Lamps] as a complete exponent of the views I am at present engaged in advocating, but rather as an introduction to the more considered and careful statements of those views given in the "Stones of Venice," and in my Lectures delivered at Edinburgh.*⁴⁰

40. Ruskin, *Seven Lamps*, p. 15

This increased care and consideration is most beautifully visible in "The Nature of Gothic" to which Garbett, with his lucid treatment of morality in architecture undoubtedly contributed. Having said that, "The Virtues of Architecture" also deserves to be put into that category of all-time classics. It is a beautiful if rather short essay to explain the magic of architecture in terms of the power of intellect, of the amount of thought invested in its creation and, and this gives the game away, the idea of a structural principle as being a guide to aesthetic judgement. This last was to be further elaborated in the First Lecture on Architecture.⁴¹ Those are exactly the themes that Garbett had built into a system of moral aesthetics. He had had Ruskin to help him formulate that theme. It is the refinement of that theme which Ruskin re-appropriates and makes his own. It is precisely that increased care and consideration which constitutes the influence of his main critics, of which

41. Ruskin, *Lectures*, p. 11 f.

Garbett was the first and together with Whewell, the most penetrating.⁴²

The displacement in Ruskin's ideas is subtle, however, and one must not forget that before Ruskin was able to be influenced by Garbett in this small way, Garbett had already been influenced by Ruskin in a huge, though not uncritical way. So that even where there are just grounds to suspect Garbett's presence, as in the First Lecture, in "The Virtues of Architecture," and even in "The Nature of Gothic" he does not often appear clearly beneath Ruskin's prose.

What can be confirmed much more readily is that Ruskin influenced Garbett enormously and increasingly so as the publication of the *Treatise* receded in time. In Garbett's later writings he would, for a time, become Ruskin's most belligerent apostle. But that is a subject for the next chapter.

42. Whewell (1850) pp. 151-159.

G.E. Street and William White

George Edmund Street, (1825 - 1881) gave a number of lectures after the publication of Garbett's *Treatise* which show him to have adopted a number of the latter's ideas.⁴³ According to Germann, it was Garbett who was responsible for the fact that Street dissociated himself from the idea that the English Parish church provided the ideal model for contemporary ecclesiastical architecture.⁴⁴ It was a view still held strongly by other members of the Ecclesiological Society. Street also echoed Garbett's insistence on the fact that the first principle of all architecture, was, *most eminently constructional*. But he could have had that from any number of other thinkers such as Willis, Bartholomew etc. In any case Street went further when he rejected the importance of symbolism, or

43. For an account of Street's writings see Muthesius (1972) p. 40 ff.

44. Germann (1972) p. 132.

matters of taste.⁴⁵ The relative merit of style, Street writes, lies in the matter of construction, only on this point is there no use in arguing, whereas the other aspects of architecture are too open to controversy.

Street like Garbett, related interior space to the range of the eye. Another interesting similarity is Street's insistence on the economy of material.⁴⁶ This had been an important criterion for admiring Gothic architecture with theorists from Robison onwards as it was in this quality that architecture imitated nature's creatures most faithfully.

William White, (1825 - 1900) an early friend of Street's, entertained a number of ideas which may well have been derived

from Garbett.⁴⁷ White believed that the relative importance of the features of a building should be treated to emphasise that difference in value or function, an idea closely related to Garbett's ideas on Palladio's politeness and thought in the arrangement of parts of a building. Both White and Street played down the importance of ornament in architecture. Like Garbett they followed Pugin's dictum of concerning decorated construction versus constructed decoration and that ornament was often the symptom of social motives and saw that a new system architecture might arise from the application of iron and steel.

Other Contemporaries

James Fergusson never mentions Garbett. This is strange on a number of counts, not least among which is the fact that Garbett mentions him favourably in the *Treatise* and often responds to Fergusson's articles in *The*

45.Street (1852) 247-62; Muthesius (1972) pp. 40-41.

46.Street (1853) pp. 70-77; Muthesius (1972) p. 41.

47.Thompson (1968) pp. 226-237 & Muthesius (1972) pp. 41-43.

Builder and other writings. This singular lack of acknowledgement almost amounts to rudeness, especially as we know that Fergusson had studied Garbett's *Treatise* carefully, incorporating some of its ideas into his *Illustrated Handbook*.⁴⁸

The list of architects and theorists that did not hail Garbett publicly, even though they must have been confronted with his ideas either by reading the *Treatise* or in the pages of *The Builder*, such as Robert Kerr, G.G. Scott etc., is much longer than the other meagre list of those who did by way of reaction. Some of those who did not acclaim or disclaim Garbett publicly, may nevertheless have read the *Treatise*, letting its ideas enter by slow and unspectacular osmosis, rather than by sudden and public conversion. The problem of his reception, however, needs more research to do it justice. One thing that must however be said is the expected, but surprisingly complete stonewalling Garbett received from the Ecclesiologists. No review, no

48. Winter (1958) pp. 25-30.

mention, Garbett had been excommunicated.

Emerson and America

Garbett does not write very kindly about Emerson in the *Treatise*. He takes from Emerson the idea of selfishness and much more besides but writes at the same time that Emerson does not come over as a writer *remarkable for perspicuity*.⁴⁹ The relationship between Garbett and Emerson is analysed by Robert W. Winter in his "Fergusson and Garbett in American Architectural Theory," and therefore need not be gone into too fully here. Winter discusses Garbett's ideas by way of introduction, assuming Emerson's thought adequately known and in need less explanation. This, in the context of the present essay, I should like to reverse and see how exactly Emerson agrees with Garbett in a number of Notions.

According to Metzger, Emerson saw his ventures into aesthetics as a form of

49. *Treatise*, p. 5.

protest which he related to his religious protest.⁵⁰ He tried to refute the orthodox view of God with a far more expansive concept of Deity which included nature. Thus phenomenal nature came to include Deity which in turn became the spiritual aspect of nature while nature became the corporeal aspect of God. Emerson, like Garbett, did not refute neo-classical aesthetics but expanded the concept. Beauty constituted one aspect of *an eternal trinity* of Goodness, Truth and Beauty. Beauty was a religious concept. As God's handiwork was nature, and beauty was one of its three characteristics, then ipso facto, beauty was good, and nature was the thing for artists to turn to. Emerson appealed for a direct reference to nature, appreciating the outward visualisation of nature as the result of internal processes. Most importantly, Emerson gave a moral sanction to beauty and also connected beauty with necessity.

50.Metzger (1954) pp. 27-30.

James Elliot Cabot, who had lent the *Treatise* to Emerson in the first place, was, apart from Emerson's biographer, also an architect and had obviously imbibed Garbett's theories. He writes:

*..a house is not a monument, that should draw attention to itself,- but the dwelling place of men upon the earth.*⁵¹

Surely this is a development or at least a confirmation of Garbett's ideas on the moral obligation of domestic architecture which, by insisting on a benevolent relationship between the building and its setting is naturally connected to the concept of modesty. Related to this is the admiration for economy of material in natural structures. Garbett admired the Gothic because, as Emerson echoes, *The line of beauty is the result of perfect economy.*⁵²

51.Metzger (1954) p. 138, n. 7; Cabot (1858) pp. 257-263.

52.Emerson, *Works*, Vol. VI. p. 291.

Emerson also believed that the trouble with art lay not in its execution but in its conception and went on to specify that he disliked the reliance on ancient models. Garbett was adamant that ancient authority should only be wiped out as far as it concerned the copying of superficial form and texture. He did not also automatically reject their more abstract principles, in fact he held them up as exemplary. An interesting similarity occurs in Emerson's "History," where he writes that,

*By surrounding ourselves with the original circumstances we invent anew the orders of architecture.*⁵³

This not on the one hand paraphrases Garbett's idea that if the principle of contrast was to be applied exclusively and consistently the end result of a search after an appropriate architectural support would be the Doric column, but more generally echoes Garbett's need for historical

53. Emerson, *Works*, Vol. II, p. 363.

exemplification to confirm the proper deduction of abstract principles from nature.

Emerson admired Garbett, he considered him better even than Ruskin, whom he called Garbett's teacher.⁵⁴ But this admiration was to be sorely tested. Years later Emerson received a letter from Garbett. Unfortunately it appears that the letter itself was lost but Emerson, who was somewhat non-plussed at its contents, describes them to Thomas Carlyle in order to ask for advice about what to do:

I have been surprised - but it is months ago, - by a letter from Lacy Garbett, the

54. Emerson to Horatio Greenough, January 7, 1852, Emerson (1939) Vol. IV, p. 272: *I was just now reading Garbett's little essay, - Garbett, Ruskin's scholar, and I find the pupil a better teacher than the master, - then I had read the "Seven Lamps" & the "Stones," and I was proud to find that the doctrine they urge with so much energy, you had been teaching long already.*

*architect, whom I do not know, but one of whose books about "Design in Architecture" I have always valued. This letter, asking of me that Americans shall join Englishmen in a petition to Parliament against pulling down ancient Saxon Buildings, is written in a way so wild as to suggest insanity, & and I have not known how to answer it. (..) He claims to speak both for Ruskin and himself.*⁵⁵

Carlyle has left no sign that he ever looked into the problem and there the matter rests. Ruskin had appealed for the establishment of a society for the protection monuments in 1854, but it was not until 1877 that William Morris founded the Society for the Protection of Ancient Buildings.⁵⁶ It is

55. Emerson to Thomas Carlyle, June 30, Emerson (1939) Vol. VI, p. 166.

56. Ruskin had written a pamphlet in 1854 called "The Opening of the Crystal Palace," in which he appealed for founding such a society. J. Ruskin, *Works*, Vol. XII, pp. 417-432.

interesting to think that Garbett had attempted to make a petition to Parliament, even though one has to suspect that the plan was an act of impetuous enthusiasm and that probably nothing came of it.

This reference to his apparent insanity is also interesting as it corresponds roughly in time with Ruskin's reference to the *religious insanities* of a Garbett in his diaries. To deduce from this that Garbett was insane would be ridiculous, on the other hand to conclude that Garbett suffered from an acute lack of a sense of proportion is easily confirmed by his other writings of that period. When he disliked something, whether it was great or small, it would be indiscriminately condemned as monstrous. By using such strong words to criticise even the most harmless of things, Garbett often ran the risk of sounding ridiculous, subjecting his dislikes to gross verbal inflation.

Horatio Greenough's debt to Garbett has already been discussed by N. Pevsner in his

Some Architectural Writers, (pp. 188-189) as well as in connection with architectural politeness in part III of the dissertation and therefore need not be dealt with here too fully. Greenough's concern with the concept of organicism is well known. He believed that the organisation of a building on natural models was of paramount importance. What is interesting then, is that he should admire Garbett's *Treatise* especially for its remarks on the selfishness of a structure.⁵⁷ He points out that the appearance of selfishness in a building is a symptom and not a disease, in order for a building not to appear selfish one must eradicate selfishness itself and not just medicate its symptoms. But then Greenough uses that selfishness by designating the building as a person's consumer-conscience. The building, like Dorian Grey's portrait takes over the visual consequences of the owner's indulgence in

57.Greenough (1969) p. 78. Greenough does not fail to point out that it was Emerson who first gave Garbett this idea.

sin and codifies it. By throwing this badness to the skin, Greenough believed the owner could be rid of it, in other words the owner could be purified by through spiritual centrifugal forces.

Garbett on the other hand believed that the building, though being the visual conscience of the owner, did not redeem the owner by removing the burden from him, for Garbett the building was more of a mirror mirror on the wall, something that would ultimately confront the sinner with the truth. For Greenough the expression of a house had a confessional function, for Garbett, it was more like St. Peter's great book in which the sins of the owner were indelibly engraved. Greenough was forgiving, Garbett, judgmental. Acne, or spots are indeed eruptions of *badness* thrown out through the skin so that our interior remains healthier. The symptoms of most diseases are no more than efforts of the body to expel them. Garbett plays on the idea of a disease when he describes the Domestic architecture of London, but

does not see the disease as a form of purification.

Robert W. Winter evaluates Garbett's influence on the architect and theorist Alexander F. Oakey.⁵⁸ But Garbett's undoubted influence on architects such as John Wellborn Root, William LeBaron Jenney, Daniel H. Burnham etc. has never been gone into. Donald Hoffmann mentions Garbett as a source for some of Root's ideas, and Root himself in his articles for the *Inland Architect*, refers to Garbett's *Treatise* as an exponent of the organic theory of architecture, and shares the idea that architecture should imitate the processes of nature.⁵⁹ While judging an essay competition held by the Architectural Sketch Club on "Expression in Form," Root recommended that young architects should read Viollet-le-Duc's *Discourses* and Edward Lacy Garbett's *Treatise*, one may assume that some at least must have done

58. Winter (1958) pp. 28-30.

59. Root (1967) p. 31.

just that.⁶⁰ In fact judging from the amount of extant copies of the *Treatise* in American Libraries, it must have had a considerable impact on American Architectural thought. But this is something that still needs more systematic investigation.⁶¹

William LeBaron Jenney mentions the fact that he has read Garbett's *Treatise* and praises it in much the same way as Greenough and Root have done.⁶² Interestingly, all of them emphasise the smallness of the book and the unassuming

60. *There is a small work on architecture, written by Mr. Garbett, in which occurs a very suggestive and delightful discussion of questions of form as related to architecture and other arts, which it would do well to read.* In Root (1967) p. 31; the quotation is contained in an essay by Root called "Expression in Form," in *The Inland Architect and News Record*, XVI, 3 (Oct. 1890) 30-31. At the end of the essay there is an interesting allusion to the Greek vase as being second only to the human form, an idea that was shared by Garbett and a commonplace.

61. See Garbett's Bibliography of Books and Pamphlets. The Libraries in America which have a copy of Garbett are listed.

62. William LeBaron Jenney knew of Garbett's *Treatise*, cf. Hoffmann (1973) p. 65.

character it exudes.⁶³ One is almost tempted to blame the lack of recognition he received on just that quality. Its size and its plain cover were considered to reflect humility on the parts of the contents. Its influence could therefore enter by an undetectable process. There are many theorists, not least of which is Leopold Eidlitz, who one may suspect of having taken account of Garbett's *little* work.⁶⁴ But due to lack of public acknowledgement it would be impossible to reassess the true extent of Garbett's influence as Garbett was not completely original himself.

The Twentieth Century

It would be wrong to say that the Twentieth century characterises itself by neglect as far as Garbett is concerned. His name quite

63. Most authors referring to the *Treatise* speak of it in terms of fondness and relate this to size, an example is J.W. Root who writes: *There is a small work on Architecture written by Mr. Garbett...in: Root (1967) p. 31.*

64. Eidlitz (1881)

Jacob Voorthuis

regularly crops up in histories of architecture and architectural ideas, though usually in the form of one sentence shared with other obscure figures and an accompanying note giving the full title of the *Treatise*. The first Historian who made serious use of Garbett was Francis Bond in his *Gothic Architecture in England*.⁶⁵ He uses Garbett's definition of architecture to open his book, and proceeds to qualify it. Bond decides that Architecture is the art of building generally and that good architecture is the art of building beautifully and expressively. After that Garbett's name crops up in the notes at regular intervals, quoted as an established authority on Gothic architecture. But this would be the last time. No subsequent work on Gothic architecture, as far as I have been able to determine, acknowledges Garbett's contributions to its understanding.

When Garbett is mentioned in later twentieth-century writings it is usually in connection with the emergence of Modern

65. Bond (1901).

architecture and its underlying ideas. De Zurko, who provides one of the fullest summaries of Garbett's *Treatise*, interestingly does not emphasise Garbett's role as a prophet of a new style of architecture but concentrates instead on the organic aspects of the *Treatise*.⁶⁶ He points out that Garbett was, in many of his theories, not so much indebted to Ruskin as to Reynolds and Quatremère de Quincy. He fails, however, to notice the role played by Alison, Hutcheson and British empiricism generally. Philip Steadman's *The Evolution of Designs* concentrates on Garbett's prophecy concerning tensile construction, thus placing the emphasis on Garbett's relevance to the Modern Movement.⁶⁷

The two most important articles on Garbett to have emerged are firstly Robert W. Winter's "Fergusson and Garbett in American Architectural Theory," and N. Pevsner's chapter on "Greenough and

66.Zurko (1957) pp. 140-144 & pp. 221-222.

67.Steadman (1979).

Garbett in his *Some Architectural Writers of the Nineteenth Century*.⁶⁸ The first gives a summary of Garbett's views in which he concentrates mostly on Garbett's vision of future. He emphasises Garbett's progressivism but fails to qualify it, not taking account of Garbett's peculiar blend of progressivism and historical outlook. Pevsner seems to have caught the essence of Garbett's ideas very accurately and states them very succinctly, writing that Jacob Ignaz Hittorf did what Garbett preached. Hittorf, writes Pevsner, was able to harbour an enormous admiration for the Greeks while building in the style of Cinquecento Italian architecture and at the same time he was a firm believer in constructive truth.⁶⁹ There is no evidence, however, that this similarity in outlook was the result of intellectual interaction.

68.Winter (1958) pp. 25-30 & Pevsner (1972) pp. 188-193.

69.Pevsner (1972) p. 193.

The only writer who has done proper justice to Garbett's role in nineteenth-century English architecture, by incorporating him within the normal course of events is Georg Germann in his comprehensive *Gothic Revival*.⁷⁰ Germann gives a short resume of Garbett's ideas, concentrating on the role of expression in architecture, and the inability of buildings to express their exact destination without the aid of other arts. He also treats of Garbett's position on the imitation of the English Parish church and relates this to George Edmund Street.

There are quite a few references to Garbett here and there, many of them in the form of a single mention in relation to the ideas of Pugin and Ruskin. Most books, however, such as that of Stefan Muthesius' otherwise very informative and lucid *The High Victorian Movement*, whose subject brushes so closely to Garbett's sphere of influence, ignore Garbett completely.⁷¹

70.Germann (1972) p. 125 & pp. 131-133.

71.Muthesius (1972).

George Hersey, in his *High Victorian Gothic, A Study in Associationism* must be less complete than it might have been by not taking account of Garbett, who was certainly the most self-consistent and knowledgeable of the architectural associationists.⁷² J. Mordaunt Crook treats Garbett both in his *William Burgess*, and, more elaborately in his *The Dilemma of Style*.⁷³ He is the first writer not to concentrate exclusively on the *Treatise* itself but also to quote from Garbett's magazine articles. Crook concentrates mostly on the aesthetic implications of constructional principles, i.e. on Garbett's prophetic nature. He praises Garbett's *impeccable logic* and sends him on his way as a forgotten guru.

72.Hersey (1972).

73.Crook (1981) p. 110. and Crook (1987) pp. 110-111.