

RUDIMENTARY TREATISE
ON
THE PRINCIPLES OF DESIGN
IN
ARCHITECTURE

AS DEDUCIBLE FROM NATURE
AND EXEMPLIFIED IN
THE WORKS OF THE GREEK AND GOTHIC ARCHITECTS.

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PARTS I. AND II.

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THE PRINCIPLES OF DESIGN

ARCHITECTURE

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CORRECTIONS.

Page.	Line.		
17	6	from top for architecture, read architrave.
80	16	„ for stranger, read stronger.
82	25	„ for plates, read flutes.
87	19	„ for higher, read lighter.
89	16	„ for architecture, read architrave. [strains.
192		end of first note for all but compressible forces, read all transverse

PREFACE.

TWO widely different arts at present bear the name ARCHITECTURE. The more common of them may be defined as the art of clothing or masking buildings, of whatever class, with scenic representations of the features of a superior class, erected in some past age. The merit of these works is of course to be estimated by the fidelity with which they adhere to the peculiar marks of the period chosen, and avoid those belonging to any other period or country. This art has now arrived at great perfection, in consequence of the many fine archaeological works in which specimens of the building styles of various ages and nations are delineated. Indeed, few things can be easier than this is now rendered by such engravings; in the absense of which, of course, verbal directions on this art would be useless, and whose presence renders them needless. With this art, therefore, the present little work has no concern.

There is another art, however, of the same name, more ancient, yet less known and practised at present, because more difficult and troublesome. This is the art of Building Well,—well as regards every purpose intended in building, and not only the actual fitness of a building or its parts to their several purposes, but also the fitness of their *appearance* thereto, together with the generally pleasing character of this appearance, and the correct or tasteful choice and disposition of such decorations (if any) as may aid in this object.

All that relates to the *appearance* of buildings and their parts has been termed architectural DESIGN, or sometimes 'Architecture Proper,' as not being reducible to the principles of any other art; and it is perhaps the only branch of architecture in which, as a whole, those not professing the art can be expected to take an interest. The present treatise is intended to confine itself to this, as far as it can be separated from the other branches, which, however, (especially as regards the branch of construction,) is not always possible.

The existence of professors of this art, implies in itself that they profess to have attained, by special study, the ability to do rightly that which others, without that preparation, do wrongly. That is, it implies the existence of such things as *right* and *wrong* taste in architecture, or, in other words, the dependence of this art on fixed PRINCIPLES,—otherwise the profession would be useless.

"There is," says a proverb, "no disputing about *tastes*," *i. e.* affections of the palate or other senses. It is far otherwise with *Taste*,—another word for sound and cultivated sense, judgment, and perception of fitness. This is a most legitimate, instructive, and fertile subject for useful discussion and conclusive argumentation. Most of the differences that appear between persons of acknowledged good taste will be found on examination to arise from their different acceptations of the same words, and to vanish when these words are defined and then carefully limited to one meaning. Thus a late writer on architecture lays this down as "a principle of simple common sense. Wherever you can rest, there decorate. Where rest is forbidden, so is beauty." Now, taking these words in their accustomed meaning, the latter part of the statement is very disputable, since common sense and the observation of nature fail in discovering that beauty is forbidden any where, or in any circumstances; but when we learn

that this word, as used by the author, is synonymous with *ornament* or *decoration*, our objection vanishes.

The principles of Taste in Architecture, as in every other fine art, can never be *all* elicited: if they could, the art would cease to be a fine art: it would no longer afford a field for genius, which consists in the discovery and practice of principles previously unknown. These are the *secrets* of great artists, kept secret, not from any selfish motive, but because artists, seldom much skilled in the use of verbal language, can rarely translate into that language, even the principles with which they are most imbued. Nay, the most important of these are often of so refined and delicate a nature as hardly to admit of statement in words. "Yet," says Sir Joshua Reynolds, "it does not follow but that the mind may be put into such a train as to perceive, by a kind of scientific sense, that propriety which words, particularly words of unpractised writers, such as we are, can but very feebly suggest."

Every principle in Art (unlike one in Science) has to be discovered *twice*; first, by the artist of genius who introduces it into the *practice* of his art, but would generally be quite unable to state or explain it in words; and secondly, by the critic who translates it into verbal language, and thereby makes it part of the *theory* of the art. Many centuries may elapse between these two discoveries of the same principle: when, at length, it is absorbed into the theory of the art, it becomes common property, and the practice of it ceases to be a mark of genius, for genius consists in practice outstripping theory. The advance of theory, however, does not narrow the field of genius, but urges it on into a higher sphere. As its secrets are, one by one, wrested from it, so it must wrest others from nature.

The present little volume does not pretend to state all the principles now known in the theory of architecture, nor per-

haps even the most important of them. It rather aims to dwell on those which are most neglected in the present (notoriously defective) practice of this art.

The reader is supposed to have acquired from the two former volumes of this series a general notion of the history of this art, of the peculiarities of its various styles, and of the nomenclature of the features of its two great systems,—the Classic and the Gothic: but should any terms new to him occur, ‘Weale’s Rudimentary Dictionary of Terms used in Architecture, &c.’ is at hand.

Our plan is quickly told. The first chapter is devoted to the question—‘What is architecture, and what are the objects at which it aims?’ In the three following, we endeavour to deduce from the works of nature, and from the consideration of these objects themselves, some rules and principles which might be expected to conduce to their attainment; and to show that these principles have actually presided in the most successful productions of the art. In the last two chapters we examine the two architectural systems, by general consent called *pure* or *complete* styles, with a view to show that their purity consisted in the observance of these principles, and to elicit some other principles peculiar and essential to each system. We conclude with a few remarks on the vexed question of the present state and prospects of the art.

E. L. G.

March, 1850.

PRINCIPLES
OF
DESIGN IN ARCHITECTURE.

CHAPTER I.

DEFINITION OF ARCHITECTURE—ITS NECESSITY, USES,
AND REQUIREMENTS.

“Well building hath three conditions; Commodity, Firmness, and Delight.”—SIR HENRY WOTTON.

ARCHITECTURE is the art of well building; in other words, of giving to a building all the perfections of which it is capable.

This differs in no respect from another definition lately put forth, “the art of the beautiful in building;” for those who have undertaken to investigate the abstract nature of beauty, appear not to have arrived at any more definite conclusion than that it consists in *perfection* of any kind; so that, whether we speak of the beauties of a building, or its perfections, we mean the same thing. The term Beauty, however, is often restricted, in architecture, to those merits of a building which are not necessary to its use, or its mechanical perfection; and hence the classification of the aims of architecture under three heads,—Fitness, Stability, and Beauty.

Nothing can be called architecture which does not aim professedly at *all* these three objects. Their respective claims to attention may be very variously proportioned in different kinds of architecture, such as the ecclesiastical, civic, domestic, and monumental kinds; but if there be any structure which