

## NOTES ON ANCIENT ARCHITECTURE.\*

Having heard so much of the splendid masonry of the ancient monuments of Egypt and Greece, I resolved to visit these interesting places, and may say the half has not been told. So much has been written of the wonders of Egypt, I will only refer to the masonry of the Great Pyramid in contrast to that of the Grecian temples. The workmanship of the limestone of the outer courses of the Great Pyramid, and the granite lining of the King's Chamber in the interior, cannot be excelled to-day, with all our enlightenment.

Although the roof of the chamber is quite flat, being some seventeen feet span, constructed of granite blocks, no fracture has taken place; on reference to any section of the pyramid it will be seen that the Egyptians were masters in the art of building. To take the weight off the roof they left small chambers above the main chamber, and constructed the same so as to throw the weight upon the walls. But when you compare this masonry with that of the temples of Greece, it is in no way equal.

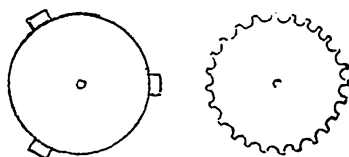
Take, for instance, the Parthenon temple, or those of Theseus and Jupiter. On account of a defective foundation, one of the columns of the latter had fallen over, which showed the beds of the stones to be rubbed smoothly in some way. The columns of these temples are simply perfect, showing no joints, and all the flutings are in perfect line. Nearly all travellers think they are in one stone, but after inspection it can be seen that they are constructed of separate stones or courses, but they show no joint—How then were they put together?

I visited the quarries at Pentelicus, but could not gain any information. I spent a couple of days exploring the ruins of the Acropolis, and found a stone which no doubt, was in the same state as when it left the quarry, and had been condemned for some defect. This stone



was six feet in diameter, three feet thick, cut roughly round, and had three lugs upon it, about eight inches square, having eight inches projection (shown in cut) and had a hole through the centre.

This gave the key to their construction. The moulded base was cut and set, then the next stone was set upon it, a pin put through both, arms were secured to the lugs, and men turned them round and round until they were ground one into the other. Practically they became one stone. This process was continued the whole length of the column. The lugs were then cut off, the column made the proper size, and fluted thus—



which accounts for all lines being so perfect.

Seeing a lot of nice ashlar lying about I wondered now they were hoisted into position. I found one piece about four feet six inches long, one foot six inches high, and three inches thick, with a lug left upon the face, three inches long, one and a half by one and a half inches, which showed that some sort of an iron claw came over this and was secured at the back. Then, when set, the same would be cut off, and the face rubbed.

Another matter that may be of interest is, Where did the stone come from to build the Temple at Jerusalem? which I think can be partly explained in this way. Standing upon the site of the Temple, facing Mount Zion, the city rises abruptly to the right. I took an aneroid reading, then went outside the city. Entering into a large cave under this high part through an iron door in the city wall I found some partially dressed stones and others ready for dressing. The aneroid showed the same level as the court-yard of the temple. No doubt a great deal of the stone was quarried and worked here. Quarry marks and smoke of the rush-lights can easily be seen. Trolleys or waggons would be used to convey the stones to the site. This agrees with 1 Kings vii. 7.

B.

\*The gentleman who contributes the above interesting items is a practical architect and contractor. We are not aware that the details he mentions have been previously noted.

“The worst is not  
So long as we can say, ‘This is the worst.’”

—*Shakespeare*.