

ARCHITECTURE.

The science of Architecture has at all times, and in all civilized countries, been considered not only a pleasing but a highly useful branch of knowledge.

The great utility of this science and the elegant accomplishments connected with its study, have almost rendered a knowledge of its rules and principles necessary to complete a liberal education.— But it is not our intention to bestow encomiums on the science nor to give anything like a detailed history of it, but to present our readers with a plain and condensed account of what may be termed its elementary principles.

Architecture is usually divided, with respect to its objects, into three branches, civil, military, and naval.

Civil Architecture called also absolute, and by way of eminence, architecture, is the art of contriving and executing commodious buildings for the use of civil life, as houses, temples, theatres, halls, bridges, porticoes, &c.

Architecture is scarcely inferior to any of the fine arts in point of antiquity. Nature and necessity taught the first inhabitants of the earth to build themselves huts, tents and cottages; from which, in course of time, they gradually advanced to more regular and stately habitations, with a variety of ornaments, proportions, &c. To what a pitch of magnificence the Tyrians and Egyptians carried architecture, before it came to the Greeks, may be learned from ISAIAH xxiii. 8; and from Vitruvius's account of the Egyptian Oeci; their pyramids, obelisks, &c.

Yet in the common account, architecture should be almost wholly Grecian original; three of the most regular orders or manners of building are denominated from them, viz: *Corinthian*, *Ionian*, and *Doric*; and there is scarcely a single number, or moulding but comes to us with a Greek name.

Be this as it may, it is certain the Romans, from whom we derive it, borrowed what they had entirely from the Greeks, nor do they seem, till then, to have had any other notion of the grandeur and beauty of buildings besides what arises from their magnitude, strength, &c. Thus far they are unacquainted with any other besides the *Tuscan*.

Under Augustus, architecture arrived at its glory; Nero neglected it as well as the other polite arts. Nero, amongst a heap of horrible vices, still retained an uncommon passion for building; but luxury and dissoluteness had a greater share in it than true magnificence. Apollodorus excelled in architecture, under the emperor Trajan, by which he merited the favour of that prince; and it was he who raised the famous Trojan column, existing to this day.

After this, architecture began to dwindle again; and though the care and magnificence of Alexander Severus supported it for some time, yet it fell with the western empire and sunk into a corruption, from whence it has not recovered for the space of twelve centuries.

The ravages of the Visigoths, in the fifth century destroyed all the most beautiful monuments of antiquity; and architecture thenceforward became so coarse and artless, that their professed architects understood nothing at all of just designing, wherein its whole beauty consists, and hence a new manner of building took its rise which is called the *Gothic*.

Charlemagne did his utmost to restore Architecture, and the French applied themselves to it with success under the encouragement of H. Capet; his son Robert succeeded him in his design, till by degrees the modern architecture was run into as great an excess of delicacy as the Gothic had before done into passiveness. To these may be added, the Arabick, and Morisk or Moorish architecture, which were much of a piece with the Gothic, only brought in from the south by the Moors and Saracens, as the former from the north by the Goths and Vandals.

The architects of the 13th, 14th, and 15th centuries, who had some knowledge of sculpture, seemed to make perfection consist altogether in delicacy, and multitude of ornaments, which they bestowed upon their buildings with a world of care

and solicitude, though frequently without judgment or taste.

In the last two centuries, the architects of Italy and France were wholly bent upon retrieving the primitive simplicity and beauty of architecture; in which they did not fail of success; insomuch, that our churches, palaces, &c., are built after the antique. Civil architecture may be distinguished with regard to the several periods or states of it, into the antique, ancient, Gothic and modern, etc. Another division of civil architecture arises from the different proportions which the different kinds of buildings rendered necessary, that we might have some suitable for the purpose according to the bulk, strength, delicacy, richness, or simplicity required.

Hence arose the five orders, all invented by the ancients at different times, and on different occasions, viz: *Tuscan*, *Doric*, *Ionian*, *Corinthian*, and *Composite*. The Gothic architecture may also be mentioned here, for it is perfectly distinct both from the Grecian and Roman style, although derived from the latter.

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INFORMATION WANTED

OF PIERSE McELLIOTT, late of Tralee, County Kerry, Ireland. When last heard of he was employed as principal clerk with Jno Okely, Esq. merchant, Smith's wharf, Baltimore. Any information respecting him sent to this Office, will be thankfully received.
Hamilton, Sept. 15, 1841.