

Num, alumni nostrae domus,
Est canendum, discere
Dum studetis, cantu mentes
Proderit rificere.

Cras labores non invisos
Fortes renovabitis,
Unde magnum, scitis bene,
Praemium parabit

Qualis furit torrens celsis
Devolutus montibus
Vere primo, liquefacta
Auctis nive fontibus,

Talis est humana vita
Vos expertis credite
Nen nisi armatis bene
Navibus discedite.

Saepe cursus inter saxa
Fluctibus latentia
Saepe tenet hostis saevus
Juga imminetia.

Saepe fessis contra flumen
Est nitendum brachiis,
Saepe ne vis ferat ratem
Turbidae voraginis.

Sapientes jam durate
Pectora laboribus,
Reditus relictis semel
Nullus est litoribus.

Male nunc consumptum tempus
Frustra olim flebitur:
Strenuo fortique viro
Portus vix tenebitur.

Durus hic sed brevis labor,
Nec inanis gloria
ejus cui corona frontem
Cinxerit Victoria.

Caris—tollite clamorem—
Tectis cito reddite
Dulci matris et sororis
Osculo fruemini.

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'OUR DETESTABLE PERPENDICULAR.'

BY REV. CHARLES H. SHORTT, B.A.

'Should you ask me whence this language. * * *
'I should answer I should tell you'—go and read the
'Stones of Venice' or the 'Seven Lamps,' and if very
soon you do not meet with the words themselves you
will have met with so many of the same kind that you
will probably ask why Ruskin takes such particular plea-
sure in ridiculing our most English style. The expression
occurs in a list of faults in the less noble periods, not at
all in a prominent place and not likely to be remembered
were it not that the spirit of the words runs through
all of Ruskin's architectural writings. He generally
illustrates the strong points of a style by pointing out
opposite weaknesses. The barbarous styles are often
pointed at, useful warnings are drawn from the French
Flamboyant, the Renaissance is mercilessly dissected;
but more often than any our unfortunate Perpendicular
is held up as the 'horrid example.' An instance of
stiffness or inconsistency is never sought in any other

style if this will provide it. The author often goes out
of his way to seize a prominent piece of it—a traceried
window or a wall decoration—and then delights in
tearing it asunder. Sometimes he quite loses his tem-
per over it and applies some of the choicest gems of his
somewhat powerful vocabulary of abuse upon some mis-
praised member. This would not be at all surprising if the
buildings of the Tudor era were much worse than those
of contemporary architects on the continent. The Per-
pendicular is not worse than its neighbors. On the con-
trary, weak as it is the Flamboyant is incomparably
weaker. Ruskin himself much prefers it to the 'soulless
renaissance.' One naturally wonders then why he so
loves to attack 'our detestable Perpendicular,' as he calls
it, when the foreigners can supply him with better
game. May I venture to suggest a reason which looks
to me very probably the real one? Pray pardon the
impudence, and look at England at the time that the
tastes of the great master were forming, when his won-
derful patriotic works were still in embryo. England
was just recovering from a severe attack of the renaiss-
ance fever, that contagious continental disease which
permanently ruined the artistic health of so many
countries. Fortunately for her this disorder had not
crossed the channel until after the Reformation had had
time to run its course in a comparatively quiet way, yet
before the terrible Puritan outbreak had begun its
ravages. On the continent both movements began at
once and acting together so shook the art and religion of
Europe that its entire recovery looks doubtful. But
England dealt with them separately, and treated her
religion much better than her art. She cleansed her
ritual, altered some minor points in her faith, but re-
tained her traditional Catholicity; yet afterwards when
the Classic mania attacked her she entirely forsook her
traditional Gothicism—Perpendicular as it was at the time
—and lost her heart on a foreigner. Her new love built
her some grand works, as St. Paul's will ever testify, filled
her burned capital with columns, pediments and domes
—altered her Christian Churches till they would have
served for the heathen gods, and instructed her people
in the same way of thinking and building. For many
years English religion and English taste slumbered
comfortably—the church, established in a square pew
and a 'three-decker' architecture, happy in the most
perfect copy of a frieze or cornice from the Acropolis or
Forum. "The people did not like anything at all and
pretended to like a triglyph." This spirit was reflected
upon the colonies. Canada has many a relic of it in the
Basilica of Quebec, St. George's Church, Kingston, and
in many a quaint useless old portico, (such as that on
the west side of Bay St., Toronto, within the 'Palace'
wall).

Nature likes to have her own way. The English
nature was too Gothic to remain any longer a Greek
slave chained to a column. It was too religious to be
satisfied with a harangue upon the glorious establish-
ment from beneath a gold 'Lion and Unicorn.' The
movement which overflowed in Methodism, followed by
the Catholic wave which in its impetuous zeal threw a
fragment of its crest into Roman waters, so stirred the
church that it is fast becoming what it was and what it
ought to be. With revived religion came life—with life
as a matter of course—art. Britain let go her Classical
friend and returned to her old love. The latest Gothic
was naturally most studied not the best Gothic, and
every new building grew up in perpendicular grooves.

Such was the state of England when Ruskin first