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Chap. V. State of Architecture to the End of the Reign of Henry VIII.

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were buried in St. George's church, with an intention of their being removed into the monument as soon as it should be finished. Charles I. resumed the design, proposing to enlarge the chapel, and fit it for his own and the interment of his successors. But the whole was demolished in 1646, by order of parliament, and the rich figures of copper gilt melted down. James II. repaired this building, and employed Verrio to paint it, intending it for a popish chapel—but no destination of it has yet succeeded; it remains a ruin, known by the name of the Tomb-house.

C H A P. V.

State of Architecture to the End of the Reign of HENRY VIII.

IT is unlucky for the world, that our earliest ancestors were not aware of the curiosity which would inspire their descendants of knowing minutely every thing relating to them. When they placed three or four branches of trees across the trunks of others, and covered them with boughs or straw to keep out the weather, the good people were not apprised that they were discovering architecture, and that it would be learnedly agitated some thousand of years afterwards who was the inventor of this stupendous science. In complaisance to our enquiries they would undoubtedly have transmitted an account of the first hovel that was ever built, and from that patriarch hut we should possess a faithful genealogy of all its descendants. Yet such a curiosity would destroy much greater treasures; it would annihilate fables, researches, conjectures, hypotheses, disputes, blunders and dissertations, that library of human impertinence. Necessity and a little common sense produced all the common arts, which the plain folks who practised them were not idle enough to record. Their inventions were obvious, their productions useful and clumsy. Yet the little merit there was in fabricating them being soon consigned to oblivion, we are bountiful enough to suppose that there was design and system in all they did, and then take infinite pains to digest and methodize those

wards changed his mind and built his chapel at Cygnea Cantio published with his Itinerary by Westminster. See Leland's Comment on the Hearne, vol. ix.

imaginary

imaginary rudiments. No sooner is any æra of an invention invented, but different countries begin to assert an exclusive title to it; and the only point in which any countries agree is perhaps in ascribing the discovery to some other nation remote enough in time for neither of them to know any thing of it. Let but France and England once dispute which first used a hatchet, and they shall never be accorded till the chancery of learning accommodates the matter by pronouncing that each received that invaluable utensil from the Phœnicians. Common sense, that would interpose by observing how probable it is that the necessaries of life were equally discovered in every region, cannot be heard; a hammer could only be invented by the Phœnicians, the first polished people of whom we are totally ignorant. Whoever has thrown away his time on the first chapters of general histories, or of histories of arts, must be sensible that these reflections are but too well grounded. I design them as an apology for not going very far back into the history of our architecture. Vertue and several other curious persons have taken great pains to enlighten the obscure ages of that science; they find no names of architects, nay little more than what they might have known without enquiring; that our ancestors had buildings. Indeed Tom Hearne, Brown Willis, and such illustrators did sometimes go upon more positive ground: they did now and then stumble upon an arch, a tower, nay a whole church, so dark, so ugly, so uncouth, that they were sure it could not have been built since any idea of grace had been transported into the island. Yet with this incontestable security on their side, they still had room for doubting; Danes, Saxons, Normans, were all ignorant enough to have claims to peculiar ugliness in their fashions. It was difficult to ascertain the period * when one ungracious form jostled out another: and this perplexity at last led them into such refinement, that the term *Gothic Architecture*, inflicted as a reproach on our ancient buildings in general by our ancestors who revived the Grecian taste, is now considered but as a species of modern elegance, by those who wish to distinguish the Saxon style from it. This Saxon style begins to be defined by flat and round arches, by some undulating zigzags on certain old fabrics, and by a very few other characteristics, all evidences of barbarous and ignorant times. I do

* When men enquire, "who invented Gothic buildings?" they might as well ask, "who invented bad Latin?" The former was a corruption of the Roman architecture, as the latter was of the Roman language. Both were debased

in barbarous ages; both were refined, as the age polished itself; but neither was restored to the original standard. Beautiful Gothic architecture was engrafted on Saxon deformity; and pure Italian succeeded to vitiated Latin.

not mean to say simply that the round arch is a proof of ignorance; but being so natural, it is simply, when unaccompanied by any graceful ornaments, a mark of a rude age—if attended by misshapen and heavy decorations, a certain mark of it. The pointed arch, that peculiar of Gothic architecture, was certainly intended as an improvement on the circular; and the men who had not the happiness of lighting on the simplicity and proportion of the Greek orders, were however so lucky as to strike out a thousand graces and effects, which rendered their buildings magnificent, yet genteel, vast, yet light*, venerable and picturesque. It is difficult for the noblest Grecian temple to convey half so many impressions to the mind, as a cathedral does of the best Gothic taste—a proof of skill in the architects and of address in the priests who erected them. The latter exhausted their knowledge of the passions in composing edifices whose pomp, mechanism, vaults, tombs, painted windows, gloom and perspectives infused such sensations of romantic devotion; and they were happy in finding artists capable of executing such machinery. One must have taste to be sensible of the beauties of Grecian architecture; one only wants passions to feel Gothic. In St. Peter's one is convinced that it was built by great princes. In Westminster-abbey, one thinks not of the builder; the religion of the place makes the first impression—and though stripped of its altars and shrines, it is nearer converting one to popery than all the regular pageantry of Roman domes. Gothic churches infuse superstition; Grecian, admiration. The papal see amassed its wealth by Gothic cathedrals, and displays it in Grecian temples †.

I certainly do not mean by this little contrast to make any comparison between the rational beauties of regular architecture and the unrestrained licentiousness

* For instance, the façade of the cathedral of Rheims.

† In the six volumes of letters published at Rome, and entitled *Raccolta di Lettere sulla Pittura, Scultura ed Architettura*, are several of mons. Mariette, a most worthy man, but too naturally infected by the prejudices of his country, his religion, and his profession of connoisseur. All professions are too apt to be led by words, and to talk by rote. Connoisseurs in the arts are not the least bigoted. Taste has its Inquisition as well as Popery: and though M. Ma-

riette has been too partial to me, he has put this work in his *Index Expurgatorius*, from totally misunderstanding my meaning. Here follows his censure of the passage above, in which I have ascribed more address to the architects of Gothic churches, than to those of St. Peter's—not as architects, but as politicians—a distinction M. Mariette did not give himself time to make, or he could not have understood a book so ill that he gave himself the trouble to translate. After an account of these Anecdotes, and too flattering mention of the author, he says, "Quest' opera

tioufness of that which is called Gothic. Yet I am clear that the persons who executed the latter, had much more knowledge of their art, more taste, more genius, and more propriety than we choose to imagine. There is a magic hardiness in the execution of some of their works, which would not have sustained themselves if dictated by mere caprice. There is a tradition that sir Christopher Wren went once a year to survey the roof of the chapel of King's college, and said that, if any man would show him where to place the first stone, he would engage to build such another. That there is great grace in several places, even in their clusters of slender pillars, and in the application of their ornaments, though the principles of the latter are so confined that they may almost all be reduced to the trefoil, extended and varied, I shall not appeal to the edifices themselves—It is sufficient to observe, that Inigo Jones, sir Christopher Wren and Kent, who certainly understood beauty, blundered * into the heaviest and clumsiest compositions whenever they aimed at imitations of the Gothic—Is an art despicable in which a great master cannot shine?

Considering how scrupulously our architects confine themselves to antique

opera e arricchita di presso di cento ritratti, e la stampa e veramente magnifica. Io vi farò ridere, se vi dirò, che la chiesa di San Pietro non è di suo gusto, et che egli la trova troppo carica d'ornati, il che non gli pare proprio per un tempio degno dello Maesta dell' Essere supremo, che lo abita: che gli ornamenti, che vi sono sparsi à profusione, non vi sono posti per altro che per fomentare † la superstitione, di che egli accusa

malamente la nostra chiesa Romana: Ed à quale edificio credete voi, che egli conceda la preferenza sopra à S. Pietro? A una chiesa fabricata sul gusto Gotico, et le di cui muraglie sieno tutte nude: cosa, che fa Pieta!?"

* In Lincoln's-inn chapel, the steeple of the church at Warwick, the king's-bench in Westminster-hall, the screen at Gloucester, &c.

† Observe that I have said just the contrary (in that Gothic churches infuse superstition; Grecian, admiration). In my comparison between the effects of a Grecian and a Gothic church, is there any question of preferring the latter to the former in point of architecture? Have I not said that Gothic architects had not the happiness of discovering the true beauties of the Grecian orders? Is there a word of St. Peter's being overloaded with ornaments? Have I not even said, that a Gothic church, *though* stripped of its shrines and splendour, makes stronger religious impression, than the cathedral of Rome, though advantaged by all those decorations? And why, but because gloom and well-applied obscurity are better friends to devotion than even wealth! A dark landscape, savage with rocks and precipices, by Salvator Rosa, may be preferred to a serene sunshine of Claud Lorrain; not because it is a more pleasing, but a more striking picture. Cato is a regular drama, Macbeth an extravagant one: yet who thinks the genius of Addison equal to Shakespear's? The one copies rules, the other the passions. A Gibbs and money, a French critic and an English schoolmaster, can make a building or a tragedy without a fault against proportion or the three unities; and the one or the other might make either. It required a little more genius to write Macbeth, or to establish the Roman Catholic religion; and though monsieur Mariette does not know it, his creed, which he mistakes for architecture, was more obliged to Gothic architects than to Michael Angelo and the rest, who designed St. Peter's.

precedent, perhaps some deviations into Gothic may a little relieve them from that servile imitation. I mean that they should study both tastes, not blend them; that they should dare to invent in the one, since they will hazard nothing in the other. When they have built a pediment and portico, the Sibyl's circular temple, and tacked the wings to a house by a colonnade, they seem *au bout de leur Latin*. If half a dozen mansions were all that remained of old Rome, instead of half a dozen temples, I do not doubt but our churches would resemble the private houses of Roman citizens. Our buildings must be as Vitruvian, as writings in the days of Erasmus were obliged to be Ciceronian. Yet confined as our architects are to few models, they are far from having made all the use they might of those they possess. There are variations enough to be struck out to furnish new scenes of singular beauty. The application of loggias, arcades, terraces and flights of steps, at different stages of a building, particularly in such situations as Whitehall to the river, would have a magnificent effect. It is true, our climate and the expence of building in England are great restrictions on imagination: but when one talks of the extent of which architecture is capable, one must suppose that pomp and beauty are the principal objects; one speaks of palaces and public buildings; not of shops and small houses.—But I must restrain this dissertation, and come to the historic part, which will lie in a small compass.

Felibien took great pains to ascertain the revival of architecture, after the destruction of the true taste by the inundation of the northern nations; but his discoveries were by no means answerable to his labour. Of French builders he did find a few names, and here and there an Italian or German. Of English he owns he did not meet with the least trace; while at the same time the founders of ancient buildings were everywhere recorded: so careful have the monks (the only historians of those times) been to celebrate bigotry and pass over the arts. But I own I take it for granted, that these seeming omissions are to be attributed to their want of perspicuity rather than to neglect. As all the other arts* were confined to cloisters, so undoubtedly was architecture too; and when we read that such a bishop or such an abbot built such and

* The arts flourished so much in convents to the last, that one Gysard, a visitor employed by Thomas Cromwell to make a report of the state of those societies previous to their suppression, pleads in behalf of the house of Wollstrop, "That there was not one religious person there, but that he could and did use, either embrothering, writing books with very fair hand, making their own garments, *carving, painting, gilding.*" Strype's Memor. vol. i. p. 255.

such

such an edifice, I am persuaded that they often gave the plans as well as furnished the necessary funds; but as those chroniclers scarce ever specify when this was or was not the case, we must not at this distance of time pretend to conjecture what prelates were or were not capable of directing their own foundations.

Felibien is so impartial an author, that he does not even reject the fables with which our own writers have replenished the chafms in our history. He quotes Matthew of Westminster for the flourishing condition of architecture in Britain at a time when indeed neither that nor any other science flourished here.—King Arthur, say they*, caused many churches and considerable edifices to be erected here. It would in truth have been an act of injustice to us to omit this vision, in a man who, on the authority of Agathias, relates that the emperor Justinian had in his service one Anthemius, so able a *mathematician* that he could make artificial earthquakes, and actually did revenge himself by such an experiment on one Zeno a rhetorician. The machinery was extremely simple, and yet I question whether the greatest mathematician of this age is expert enough to produce the same effect; it consisted in nothing but placing several caldrons of hot water against the walls of Zeno's house. The same author has cited Procopius for the origin of dams to restrain the course of rivers, the method of whose construction was revealed to Chryses, an architect of Alexandria, in a dream. Dreams, lies, and absurdities are all one finds in searching into early times. In a scarcity of facts, probability was the last thing to which such authors attended; and consequently they left a mark by which, if we pleased, we might distinguish between the truth and what they invented.

In Felibien † the only thing I find to my purpose, and all that he really found in Matthew of Westminster, is, that in the kingdom of the Mercians Sexulphus, abbot and afterwards bishop, built a considerable monastery called Medes Hampstede ‡: unless it may be a satisfaction to antiquaries to know who first invented those grotesque monsters and burlesque faces with which the spouts and gutters of ancient buildings are decorated. It was one Marchion of Arezzo §, architect to pope Innocent III. Indeed I speak now critically;

* Felib. vol. v. p. 165.

† Felib. p. 185.

VOL. III.

‡ Peterborough.

§ Felib. p. 224.

O

Marchion

Marchion used those grinning animals only to support columns—but in so fantastic an age they were sure of being copied, and soon arrived at the top.

Vertue, no less industrious than Felibien, could discover but two ancient architects, Gundulphus who built the Tower * (the same person who erected the cathedral of Rochester), and Peter of Colechurch priest and chaplain, who in the year 1163 rebuilt London bridge of timber †. Edward Fitzo, we have seen, was master of the new works at Westminster under Henry III. and may fairly claim his place in this list ‡.

In the cathedral of Lincoln is a curious gravestone over a mason of that church, almost perfect, except in that material part the year of his death, the latter figures being obliterated. On each side of him is his trowel and square:

Hic jacet Ricardus de Gaynisburgh olim cementarius hujus ecclesie qui obiit duodecim. kalendarum Junii anno Domini M ccc—

But the brightest name in this list is William of Wykeham, who from being clerk of the works rose to be bishop of Winchester and lord chancellor; a height which few men have reached by mere merit in any mechanic science. Wykeham had the sole direction of the buildings at Windsor and Queenborough-castle; not to mention his own foundations. He rose by pleasing one of the greatest princes, and deserved his fortune by bestowing it on noble charities.

William Rede, bishop of Chichester in 1369, reckoned the best mathematician of the age, was a prelate of similar taste; he built the first library at Merton college, and the castle of Amberley.

* See the compact between the king and bishop in the *Textus Roffensis*, published by Hearne; and that between the same bishop and William Rufus for erecting the castle of Rochester, cap. 88, and Stowe's Survey of London.

† William de Sens soon after the year 1174, temp. Hen. 2di, built the choir of the cathedral of Canterbury, as it still exists. Helias de Berham, canon of Salisbury, à primâ fundatione

(temp. Hen. 3tii) rector fuit novæ fabricæ per 25 annos; et Robertus cementarius rexit per 25 annos. See Leland's Itinerary, vol. iii. p. 66. Helias de Berham was probably the person mentioned above, p. 12, by the name of Elyas in the reign of king John.

‡ See Stowe's Survey, p. 28. Hembert of Xaintes is mentioned as a builder of the bridge of London, and of the chapel in it.

In St. Michael's church at St. Alban's were the following inscriptions :

" Hic jacet Thomas Wolvey [or Wolven] Latomus in arte, nec non armiger illustrissimi principis Ric. secundi, quondam regis Angliæ, qui obiit anno Dom. M,ccc,xxx. in vigiliâ Sti. Thomæ Martyris, cujus animæ propitiatur Deus. Amen."

" This man, as far as I understand by this inscription [says Weaver, p. 582.], was the master-mason, or surveior of the king's stone-works, as also esquire to the king's person."

" Hic jacet Richardus Wolven [or Wolvey] Lathonius, filius Johannis Wolven, cum uxoribus suis, Agnete et Agnete, et cum octo filiis, et decem filiabus suis, qui Richardus obiit an. 1490. Quorum animabus, &c."

I have myself turned over most of our histories of churches, and can find nothing like the names of artists. With respect to the builders of Gothic, it is a real loss: there is beauty, genius and invention enough in their works to make one wish to know the authors. I will say no more on this subject, than that, on considering and comparing its progress, the delicacy, lightness and taste of its ornaments, it seems to have been at its perfection about the reign of Henry IV. as may be seen particularly by the tombs of the archbishops at Canterbury. That cathedral I should recommend preferably to Westminster, to those who would borrow ornaments in that style. The fret-work in the small oratories at Winchester and the part behind the choir at Gloucester would furnish beautiful models. The windows in several cathedrals offer graceful patterns; for airy towers of almost filigraine we have none to be compared with those of Rheims*.

* Some instances of particular beauty, whose constructions date at different æras from what I have mentioned, have been pointed out to me by a gentleman to whose taste I readily yield; such as the nave of the minster at York (in the great and simple style) and the choir of the same church (in the rich and filigraine workmanship), both of the reign of Edward III. The Lady-chapel (now Trinity-church) at Ely, and the Lantern-tower in the same cathedral, noble works of the same time: and the chapel of bishop

West (also at Ely), who died in 1533, for exquisite art in the lesser style. These notices certainly can add no honour to a name already so distinguished as Mr. Gray's; it is my own gratitude or vanity that prompts me to name him; and I must add, that if some parts of this work are more accurate than my own ignorance or carelessness would have left them, the reader and I are obliged to the same gentleman, who condescended to correct what he never could have descended to write.

It is certain that the Gothic taste remained in vogue till towards the end of the reign of Henry VIII. His father's chapel at Westminster is entirely of that manner. So is Wolsey's tomb-house at Windsor. But soon after the Grecian style was introduced; and no wonder, when so many Italians were entertained in the king's service. They had seen that architecture revived in their own country in all its purity—but whether they were not perfectly masters of it, or that it was necessary to introduce the innovation by degrees, it certainly did not at first obtain full possession. It was plastered upon Gothic, and made a barbarous mixture. Regular columns, with ornaments neither Grecian nor Gothic, and half embroidered with foliage, were crammed over frontispieces, façades and chimneys, and lost all grace by wanting simplicity. This mungrel species lasted till late in the reign of James the first.

The beginning of reformation* in building seems owing to Holbein. His porch at Wilton, though purer than the works of his successors, is of this bastard sort; but the ornaments and proportions are graceful and well chosen. I have seen of his drawings too in the same kind. Where he acquired this taste is difficult to say; probably it was adopted from his acquaintance with his fellow-labourers at court. Henry had actually an Italian architect in his service, to whom I should without scruple assign the introduction of regular architecture, if it was clear that he arrived here near so early as Holbein. He was called John of Padua, and his very office seems to intimate something novel in his practice. He was termed *Devisor of his majesty's buildings*. In one of the office-books which I have quoted, there is a payment to him of 36*l.* -- 10*s.* -- 0*d.* In the same place is a payment of the same sum to Laurence Bradshaw, surveyor, with a fee of two shillings per diem. To the clerk of the latter, 9*l.* -- 2*s.* -- 0*d.* for riding expences, 53*l.* -- 6*s.* -- 0*d.* and for boat hire 13*l.* -- 6*s.* -- 8*d.* John de Padua is mentioned again in Rymer's *Fœdera*, on the grant of a fee of 2*s.* per diem.

AD. 1544. Rex omnibus ad quos, &c. salutem. Sciatis quod nos, de gratia nostra speciali, ac ex certa scientia et mero motu nostris, necnon in consideratione boni et fidelis servitii quod dilectus serviens noster *Johannes de*

* Brunelleschi began to reform architecture in the fourteenth century. See Voltaire, *Hist. Univ.* vol. ii. p. 179.

Padua

Padua nobis in architectura, ac aliis in re musica inventis impendit ac impendere intendit,

Dedimus et concessimus, ac per præfentes damus et concedimus eidem *Jobanni* vadium sive feodum *duorum solidorum sterlingorum per diem*,

Habendum et annuatim percipiendum *præfato Jobanni* dictum vadium sive feodum *duorum solidorum*, durante beneplacito nostro de thesauro nostro ad receptam scaccarii nostri, per manus thesaurarii et camerariorum nostrorum ibidem pro tempore existentium, ad festa Sancti Michaelis Archangeli et Paschæ per æquales portiones ;

Et insuper sciatis quod, cum dictus *Jobannes* nobis infervivit in dicta arte a festo *Paschæ* quod erat in anno regni nostri tricesimo quarto, prout certam habemus notitiam, nos de uberiori gratia nostra dedimus et concessimus, ac per præfentes damus et concedimus *eidem Jobanni* præfatum feodum *duorum solidorum* per diem habendum et percipiendum eidem, a dicto festo *Paschæ* nomine regardi nostri ;

Eo quod expressa mentio, &c. Teste rege apud Westmonasterium tricesimo die Junii.

Per Breve de Privato Sigillo.

This grant was renewed to him in the third of Edward VI. From the first warrant it appears that John of Padua was not only an architect but musician, a profession remarkably acceptable to Henry.

I cannot certainly indicate to the reader any particular work * of this master ; but these imperfect notes may lead curious persons to farther discoveries. Jerome di Trevisi, one of the painters mentioned before, is also said to have built some houses here †.

Henry had another architect of much note in his time, but who excelled

* Holmby-house was one of our earliest productions in regular architecture, and, by part of the frontispiece lately standing, appeared to be of a very pure and beautiful style, but cannot well be ascribed to John of Padua, as the date was 1583. Wollaton-hall in Nottinghamshire

was perhaps of the same hand. The porch of Charlcot-house, the seat of the Lucys, is in the same style, and at Kenelworth was another, with the arms of Dudley earl of Leicester.

† Felibien, vol. ii. p. 71.

chiefly

chiefly in Gothic (from whence it is clear that the new taste was also introduced). This was sir Richard Lea master mason, and master of the pioneers in Scotland. Henry gave him * the manor of Sopewell in Hertfordshire, and he himself bestowed a brazen font on the church of Verulam, or St. Alban's, within a mile of which place out of the ruins of the abbey he built a feat called Lees-place. The font was taken in the Scottish wars, and had served for the christening of the royal children of that kingdom. A pompous inscription † was engraved on it by the donor ‡; but the font was stolen in the civil wars.

Hector Asheley appears, by one of the office-books that I have quoted, to have been much employed by Henry in his buildings, but whether as architect or only supervisor is not clear. In the space of three years were paid to him on account of buildings at Hunsdon-house above nineteen hundred pounds.

C H A P. VI.

State of Painting under EDWARD VI. and MARY.

UNDER a minor prince, and amidst a struggle of religions, we are not likely to meet with much account of the arts. Nobody was at leisure to mind or record them. Yet the seeds sown by Henry were not eradicated; Holbein was still alive. We have seen that he was chosen to celebrate the institution of Bridewell. He drew the young king more than once after he came to the crown.

Among the stores of old pictures at Somerset-house was one, painted on a

* Chauncy's Hertfordshire, p. 461, where he is called sir Richard à Leigh.

† See it in Camden's Britannia, p. 355, vol. i. edit. 1722.

‡ Nicholas Stone sen. the statuary and master mason, had a portrait of this sir Richard Lee,

whom he much esteemed. It was painted on board about a foot high, his sword by his side. It came afterwards to one whom Vertue calls Old Stoakes, and he gave it to — Jackson, master mason, lately dead.