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The Works Of Horatio Walpole, Earl Of Orford

In Five Volumes

Walpole, Horace

London, 1798

Supplement.

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S U P P L E M E N T.

BY the favour of the earl of Warwick, I am enabled to bring to light a very capital artist, who designed or improved most of the principal and palatial edifices erected in the reigns of Elizabeth and James I. though even his name was totally forgotten. I am empowered by the same condescension to point out a volume of drawings of that individual architect

J O H N T H O R P E,

who has left a folio of plans, now in lord Warwick's possession. There are not many uprights, but several ground plans of some of the palaces and many of the seats of the nobility, extant, erected, or altered at that period. Of some he names himself the author—of others he either designed, supervised, or proposed alterations—though, according to the negligence of that age, he is not circumstantial in particulars. There are ground plans of Somersethouse; of Buckhurst-house in Suffex, an immense pile; of Woolaton; Copthall; Burleigh-house; Burleigh on the Hill* (the duke of Buckingham's); sir Walter Cope's, now Holland-house at Kensington; Giddy-hall in Essex; Audley-inn; Ampthill (now called Houghton); and Ampthill Old House, another spacious palace in which Catherine of Arragon some time resided, and of which he says he himself gave the plan of enlargement; and Kirby, of which he says he laid the first stone in 1570. The taste of all these stately mansions was that bastard style which intervened between Gothic and Grecian architecture; or which perhaps was the style that had been invented for the houses of the nobility, when they first ventured, on the settlement of the kingdom after the termination of the quarrel between the Roses, to abandon their fortified dungeons, and consult convenience and magnificence; for I am persuaded that what we call Gothic architecture was confined solely to religious buildings, and never entered into the decoration of private houses. Thorpe's ornaments on the balustrades, porches, and outsides of windows are barbarous and ungraceful, and some of his vast windows advance outwards in a sharp angle; but there is judgment in his dispositions of apartments and offices, and

* Cliefden, built by the second Villiers duke of Buckingham, was evidently copied in little from his father's seat Burleigh on the Hill.

he allots most ample spaces for halls, staircases and chambers of state. He appears also to have resided at Paris, and even seems to have been employed there; at least he gives alterations for the queen-mother's house *Faber St. Germain*, which I suppose means the Luxembourg in the fauxbourg St. Germain, and a plan of the house of monsieur Jammet (*Zamet*).

There are several other smaller feats and houses in the book, some with the names of the gentlemen for whom they were built. One, which he calls *Cannons*, his *Father Fakes* house; and another is a whimsical edifice designed for himself, and forming the initial letters of his name *I T* conjoined by a corridore [which I have expressed by the dotted lines], and explained by this curious triplet,

These two letters I and T,	}
Joined together as you see,	
Is meant for a dwelling-house for me	
	JOHN THORPE.

The volume however is a very valuable record of the * magnificence of our ancestors, and preserves memorials of many sumptuous buildings of which no other monument remains.

* There is a draught of the chapel of Henry VII. which he says cost 14,000*l*.