

RUSKIN JOHN

LECTURES ON
ARCHITECTURE AND
PAINTING, DELIVERED
AT EDINBURGH IN
NOVEMBER 1853

John Ruskin

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and Painting, Delivered at
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PREFACE

The following Lectures are printed, as far as possible, just as they were delivered. Here and there a sentence which seemed obscure has been mended, and the passages which had not been previously written, have been, of course imperfectly, supplied from memory. But I am well assured that nothing of any substantial importance which was said in the lecture-room, is either omitted, or altered in its signification; with the exception only of a few sentences struck out from the notice of the works of Turner, in consequence of the impossibility of engraving the drawings by which they were illustrated, except at a cost which would have too much raised the price of the volume. Some elucidatory remarks have, however, been added at the close of the second and fourth Lectures, which I hope may be of more use than the passages which I was obliged to omit.

The drawings by which the Lectures on Architecture were illustrated have been carefully reduced, and well transferred to wood by Mr. Thurston Thompson. Those which were given in the course of the notices of schools of painting could not be so transferred, having been drawn in color; and I have therefore merely had a few lines, absolutely necessary to make the text intelligible, copied from engravings.

I forgot, in preparing the second Lecture for the press, to quote a passage from Lord Lindsay's "Christian Art," illustrative of what is said in that lecture (§ 52), respecting the energy of the mediæval republics. This passage, describing the circumstances under which the Campanile of the Duomo of Florence was built, is interesting also as noticing the universality of talent which was required of architects; and which, as I have asserted in the Addenda (§ 60), always ought to be required of them. I do not, however, now regret the omission, as I cannot easily imagine a better preface to an essay on civil architecture than this simple statement.

"In 1332, Giotto was chosen to erect it (the Campanile), on the ground, avowedly, of the *universality* of his talents, with the appointment of Capo Maestro, or chief Architect (chief Master I should rather write), of the Cathedral and its dependencies, a yearly salary of one hundred gold florins, and the privilege of citizenship, under the special understanding that he was not to quit Florence. His designs being approved of, the republic passed a decree in the spring of 1334, that the Campanile should be built so as to exceed in magnificence, height, and excellence of workmanship whatever in that time had been achieved by the Greeks and Romans in the time of their utmost power and greatness. The first stone was laid, accordingly, with great pomp, on the 18th of July following, and the work prosecuted with vigor, and with such costliness and utter disregard of expense, that a citizen of Verona, looking on, exclaimed that the republic was taxing her strength too far, that the united resources of two great monarchs would be insufficient to complete it; a criticism which the Signoria resented by confining him for two months in prison, and afterwards conducting him through the public treasury, to teach him that the Florentines could build their whole city of marble, and not one poor steeple only, were they so inclined."

I see that "The Builder," vol. xi. page 690, has been endeavoring to inspire the citizens of Leeds with some pride of this kind respecting their town-hall. The pride would be well, but I sincerely trust that the tower in question may not be built on the design there proposed. I am sorry to have to write a special criticism, but it must be remembered that the best works, by the best men living, are in this age abused without mercy by nameless critics; and it would be unjust to the public, if those who have

given their names as guarantee for their sincerity never had the courage to enter a protest against the execution of designs which appear to them unworthy.

Denmark Hill, *16th April 1854.*

LECTURE I. ARCHITECTURE

Delivered November 1, 1853

1. I think myself peculiarly happy in being permitted to address the citizens of Edinburgh on the subject of architecture, for it is one which, they cannot but feel, interests them nearly. Of all the cities in the British Islands, Edinburgh is the one which presents most advantages for the display of a noble building; and which, on the other hand, sustains most injury in the erection of a commonplace or unworthy one. You are all proud of your city; surely you must feel it a duty in some sort to justify your pride; that is to say, to give yourselves a *right* to be proud of it. That you were born under the shadow of its two fantastic mountains,—that you live where from your room windows you can trace the shores of its glittering Firth, are no rightful subjects of pride. You did not raise the mountains, nor shape the shores; and the historical houses of your Canongate, and the broad battlements of your castle, reflect honor upon you only through your ancestors. Before you boast of your city, before even you venture to call it *yours*, ought you not scrupulously to weigh the exact share you have had in adding to it or adorning it, to calculate seriously the influence upon its aspect which the work of your own hands has exercised? I do not say that, even when you regard your city in this scrupulous and testing spirit, you have not considerable ground for exultation. As far as I am acquainted with modern architecture, I am aware of no streets which, in simplicity and manliness of style, or general breadth and brightness of effect, equal those of the New Town of Edinburgh. But yet I am well persuaded that as you traverse those streets, your feelings of pleasure and pride in them are much complicated with those which are excited entirely by the surrounding scenery. As you walk up or down George Street, for instance, do you not look eagerly for every opening to the north and south, which lets in the luster of the Firth of Forth, or the rugged outline of the Castle Rock? Take away the sea-waves, and the dark basalt, and I fear you would find little to interest you in George Street by itself. Now I remember a city, more nobly placed even than your Edinburgh, which, instead of the valley that you have now filled by lines of railroad, has a broad and rushing river of blue water sweeping through the heart of it; which, for the dark and solitary rock that bears your castle, has an amphitheater of cliffs crested with cypresses and olive; which, for the two masses of Arthur's Seat and the ranges of the Pentlands, has a chain of blue mountains higher than the haughtiest peaks of your Highlands; and which, for your far-away Ben Ledi and Ben More, has the great central chain of the St. Gothard Alps: and yet, as you go out of the gates, and walk in the suburban streets of that city—I mean Verona—the eye never seeks to rest on that external scenery, however gorgeous; it does not look for the gaps between the houses, as you do here; it may for a few moments follow the broken line of the great Alpine battlements; but it is only where they form a background for other battlements, built by the hand of man. There is no necessity felt to dwell on the blue river or the burning hills. The heart and eye have enough to do in the streets of the city itself; they are contented there; nay, they sometimes turn from the natural scenery, as if too savage and solitary, to dwell with a deeper interest on the palace walls that cast their shade upon the streets, and the crowd of towers that rise out of that shadow into the depth of the sky.

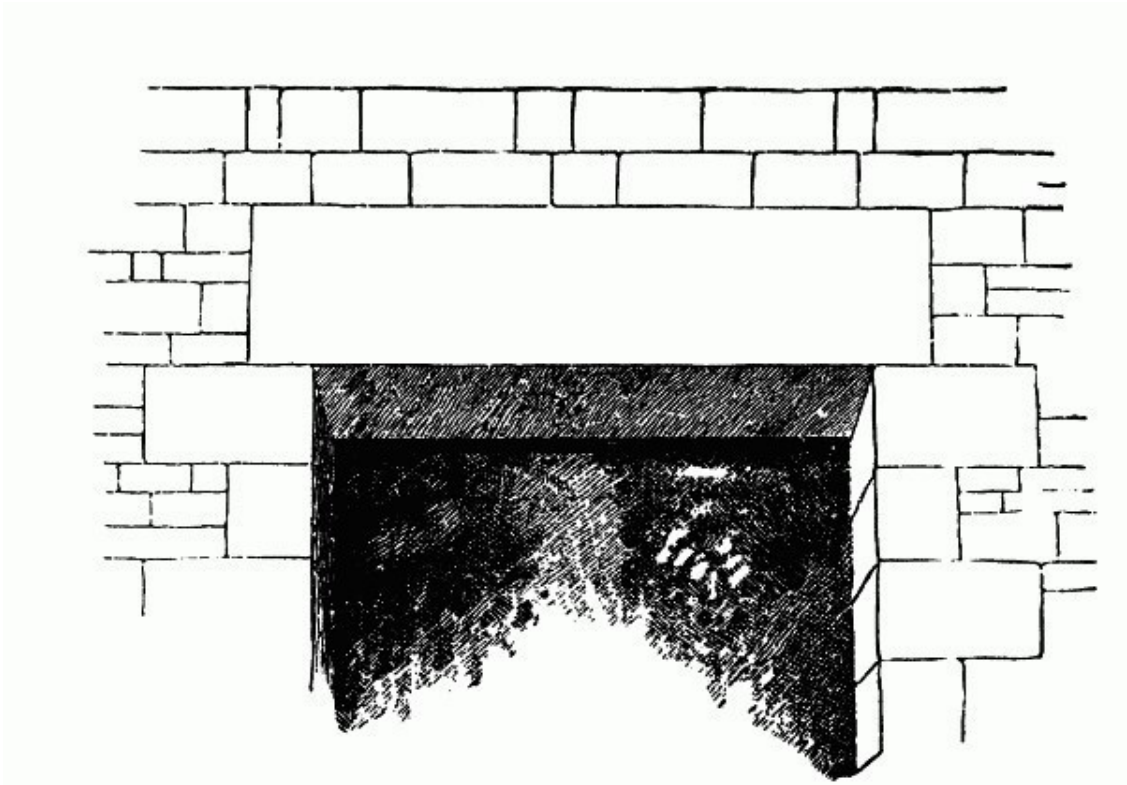


Fig. 1.

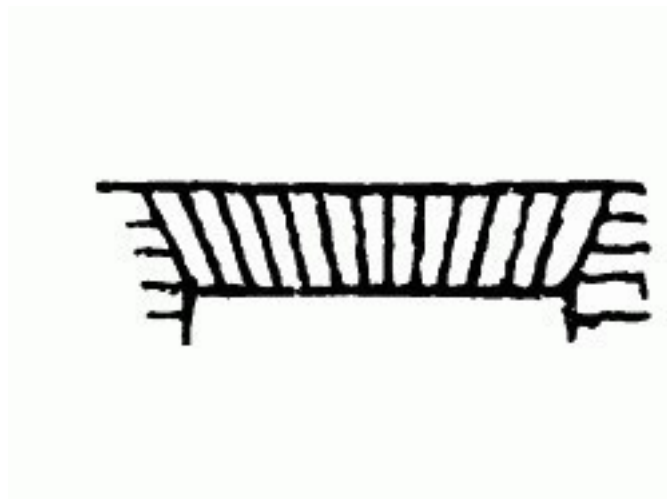


Fig. 3.



Fig. 5.
Plate I.

2. *That* is a city to be proud of, indeed; and it is this kind of architectural dignity which you should aim at, in what you add to Edinburgh or rebuild in it. For remember, you must either help your scenery or destroy it; whatever you do has an effect of one kind or the other; it is never indifferent. But, above all, remember that it is chiefly by private, not by public, effort that your city must be adorned. It does not matter how many beautiful public buildings you possess, if they are not supported by, and in harmony with, the private houses of the town. Neither the mind nor the eye will accept a new college, or a new hospital, or a new institution, for a city. It is the Canongate, and the Princes Street, and the High Street that are Edinburgh. It is in your own private houses that the real majesty of Edinburgh must consist; and, what is more, it must be by your own personal interest that the style of the architecture which rises around you must be principally guided. Do not think that you can have good architecture merely by paying for it. It is not by subscribing liberally for a large building once in forty years that you can call up architects and inspiration. It is only by active and sympathetic attention to the domestic and every-day work which is done for each of you, that you can educate either yourselves to the feeling, or your builders to the doing, of what is truly great.

3. Well, but, you will answer, you cannot feel interested in architecture: you do not care about it, and *cannot* care about it. I know you cannot. About such architecture as is built nowadays, no mortal ever did or could care. You do not feel interested in *hearing* the same thing over and over again;—why do you suppose you can feel interested in *seeing* the same thing over and over again, were that thing even the best and most beautiful in the world? Now, you all know the kind of window which you usually build in Edinburgh: here is an example of the head of one (*fig. 1*), a massy lintel of a single stone, laid across from side to side, with bold square-cut jambs—in fact, the simplest form it is possible to build. It is by no means a bad form; on the contrary, it is very manly and vigorous, and has a certain dignity in its utter refusal of ornament. But I cannot say it is entertaining. How many windows precisely of this form do you suppose there are in the New Town of Edinburgh? I have not counted them all through the town, but I counted them this morning along this very Queen Street, in which your Hall is; and on the one side of that street, there are of these windows, absolutely similar to this example, and altogether devoid of any relief by decoration, six hundred and seventy-eight.¹ And your decorations are just as monotonous as your simplicities. How many Corinthian and Doric columns do you think there are in your banks, and post-offices, institutions, and I know not what else, one exactly like another?—and yet you expect to be interested! Nay, but, you will answer me

¹ Including York Place, and Picardy Place, but not counting any window which has moldings.

again, we see sunrises and sunsets, and violets and roses, over and over again, and we do not tire of *them*. What! did you ever see one sunrise like another? does not God vary His clouds for you every morning and every night? though, indeed, there is enough in the disappearing and appearing of the great orb above the rolling of the world, to interest all of us, one would think, for as many times as we shall see it; and yet the aspect of it is changed for us daily. You see violets and roses often, and are not tired of them. True! but you did not often see two roses alike, or, if you did, you took care not to put them beside each other in the same nosegay, for fear your nosegay should be uninteresting; and yet you think you can put 150,000 square windows side by side in the same streets, and still be interested by them. Why, if I were to say the same thing over and over again, for the single hour you are going to let me talk to you, would you listen to me? and yet you let your architects *do* the same thing over and over again for three centuries, and expect to be interested by their architecture; with a farther disadvantage on the side of the builder, as compared with the speaker, that my wasted words would cost you but little, but his wasted stones have cost you no small part of your incomes.

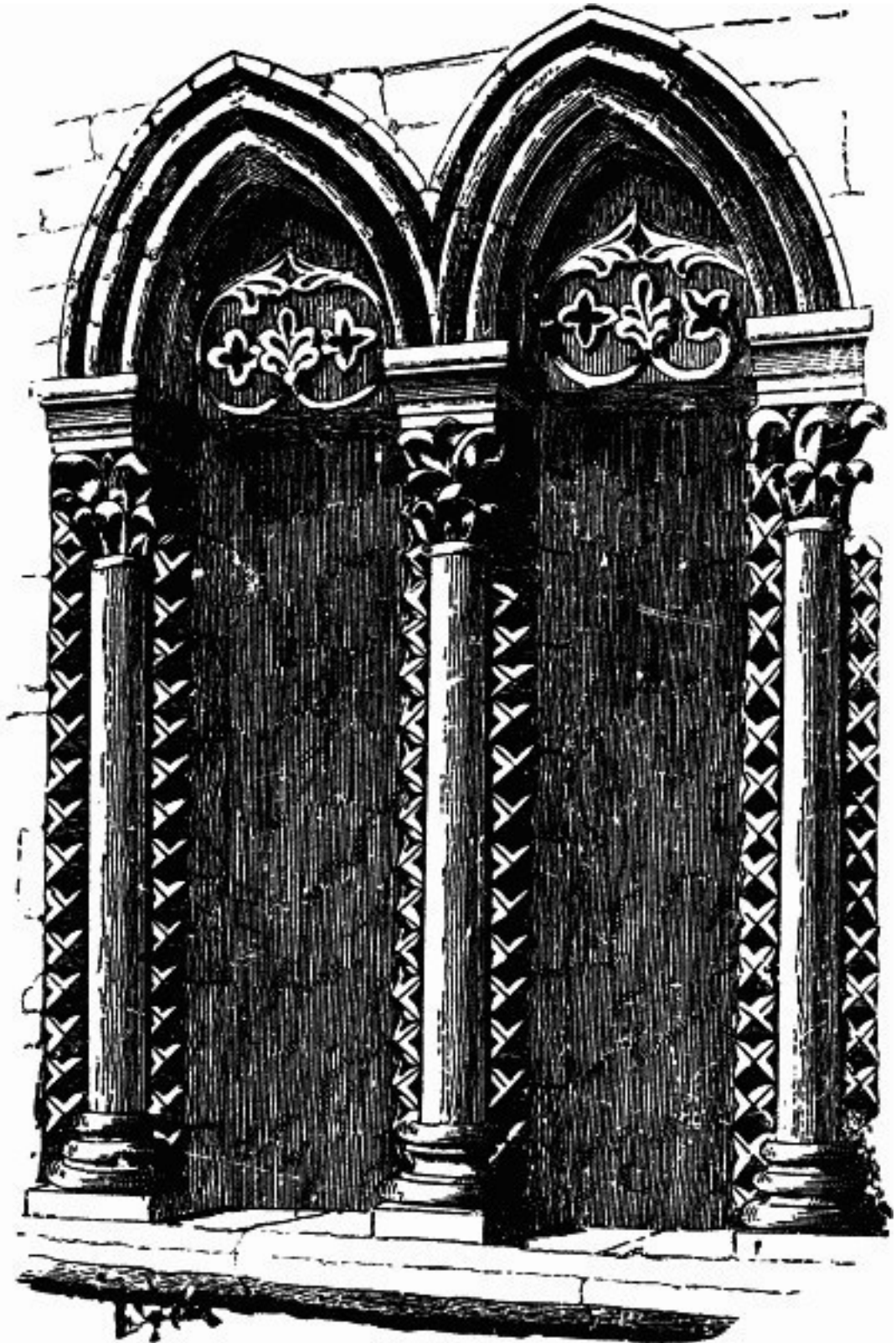


Fig. 2.
PLATE II.

4. "Well, but," you still think within yourselves, "it is not *right* that architecture should be interesting. It is a very grand thing, this architecture, but essentially unentertaining. It is its duty to be dull, it is monotonous by law: it cannot be correct and yet amusing."

Believe me, it is not so. All things that are worth doing in art, are interesting and attractive when they are done. There is no law of right which consecrates dullness. The proof of a thing's being right is, that it has power over the heart; that it excites us, wins us, or helps us. I do not say that it has influence over all, but it has over a large class, one kind of art being fit for one class, and another for another; and there is no goodness in art which is independent of the power of pleasing. Yet, do not mistake me; I do not mean that there is no such thing as neglect of the best art, or delight in the worst, just as many men neglect nature, and feed upon what is artificial and base; but I mean, that all good art has the *capacity of pleasing*, if people will attend to it; that there is no law against its pleasing; but, on the contrary, something wrong either in the spectator or the art, when it ceases to please. Now, therefore, if you feel that your present school of architecture is unattractive to you, I say there is something wrong, either in the architecture or in you; and I trust you will not think I mean to flatter you when I tell you, that the wrong is *not* in you, but in the architecture. Look at this for a moment (*fig. 2*); it is a window actually existing—a window of an English domestic building²—a window built six hundred years ago. You will not tell me you have no pleasure in looking at this; or that you could not, by any possibility, become interested in the art which produced it; or that, if every window in your streets were of some such form, with perpetual change in their ornaments, you would pass up and down the street with as much indifference as now, when your windows are of *this* form (*fig. 1*). Can you for an instant suppose that the architect was a greater or wiser man who built this, than he who built that? or that in the arrangement of these dull and monotonous stones there is more wit and sense than you can penetrate? Believe me, the wrong is not in you; you would all like the best things best, if you only saw them. What is wrong in you is your temper, not your taste; your patient and trustful temper, which lives in houses whose architecture it takes for granted, and subscribes to public edifices from which it derives no enjoyment.

5. "Well, but what are we to do?" you will say to me; "we cannot make architects of ourselves." Pardon me, you can—and you ought. Architecture is an art for all men to learn, because all are concerned with it; and it is so simple, that there is no excuse for not being acquainted with its primary rules, any more than for ignorance of grammar or of spelling, which are both of them far more difficult sciences. Far less trouble than is necessary to learn how to play chess, or whist, or golf, tolerably,—far less than a school-boy takes to win the meanest prize of the passing year, would acquaint you with all the main principles of the construction of a Gothic cathedral, and I believe you would hardly find the study less amusing. But be that as it may, there are one or two broad principles which need only be stated to be understood and accepted; and those I mean to lay before you, with your permission, before you leave this room.

6. You must all, of course, have observed that the principal distinctions between existing styles of architecture depend on their methods of roofing any space, as a window or door for instance, or a space between pillars; that is to say, that the character of Greek architecture, and of all that is derived from it, depends on its roofing a space with a single stone laid from side to side; the character of Roman architecture, and of all derived from it, depends on its roofing spaces with round arches; and the character of Gothic architecture depends on its roofing spaces with pointed arches, or gables. I need not, of course, in any way follow out for you the mode in which the Greek system of architecture is derived from the horizontal lintel; but I ought perhaps to explain, that by Roman architecture I do not mean that spurious condition of temple form which was nothing more than a luscious imitation of the Greek; but I mean that architecture in which the Roman spirit truly manifested itself, the magnificent vaultings of the aqueduct and the bath, and the colossal heaping of the rough stones in the arches of the amphitheater; an architecture full of expression of gigantic power and strength of will, and from which are directly derived all our most impressive early buildings, called, as you know,

² Oakham Castle. I have enlarged this illustration from Mr. Hudson Turner's admirable work on the domestic architecture of England.

by various antiquaries, Saxon, Norman, or Romanesque. Now the first point I wish to insist upon is, that the Greek system, considered merely as a piece of construction, is weak and barbarous compared with the two others. For instance, in the case of a large window or door, such as *fig. 1*, if you have at your disposal a single large and long stone you may indeed roof it in the Greek manner, as you have done here, with comparative security; but it is always expensive to obtain and to raise to their place stones of this large size, and in many places nearly impossible to obtain them at all: and if you have not such stones, and still insist upon roofing the space in the Greek way, that is to say, upon having a square window, you must do it by the miserably feeble adjustment of bricks, *fig. 3*.³ You are well aware, of course, that this latter is the usual way in which such windows are now built in England; you are fortunate enough here in the north to be able to obtain single stones, and this circumstance alone gives a considerable degree of grandeur to your buildings. But in all cases, and however built, you cannot but see in a moment that this cross bar is weak and imperfect. It may be strong enough for all immediate intents and purposes, but it is not so strong as it might be: however well the house is built, it will still not stand so long as if it had been better constructed; and there is hardly a day passes but you may see some rent or flaw in bad buildings of this kind. You may see one whenever you choose, in one of your most costly, and most ugly buildings, the great church with the dome, at the end of George Street. I think I never saw a building with a principal entrance so utterly ghastly and oppressive; and it is as weak as it is ghastly. The huge horizontal lintel above the door is already split right through. But you are not aware of a thousandth part of the evil: the pieces of building that you *see* are all carefully done; it is in the parts that are to be concealed by paint and plaster that the bad building of the day is thoroughly committed. The main mischief lies in the strange devices that are used to support the long horizontal cross beams of our larger apartments and shops, and the framework of unseen walls; girders and ties of cast iron, and props and wedges, and laths nailed and bolted together, on marvelously scientific principles; so scientific, that every now and then, when some tender reparation is undertaken by the unconscious householder, the whole house crashes into a heap of ruin, so total, that the jury which sits on the bodies of the inhabitants cannot tell what has been the matter with it, and returns a dim verdict of accidental death.

7. Did you read the account of the proceedings at the Crystal Palace at Sydenham the other day? Some dozen of men crushed up among the splinters of the scaffolding in an instant, nobody knew why. All the engineers declare the scaffolding to have been erected on the best principles,—that the fall of it is as much a mystery as if it had fallen from heaven, and were all meteoric stones. The jury go to Sydenham and look at the heap of shattered bolts and girders, and come back as wise as they went. Accidental death! Yes, verily; the lives of all those dozen of men had been hanging for months at the mercy of a flaw in an inch or two of cast iron. Very accidental indeed! Not the less pitiable. I grant it not to be an easy thing to raise scaffolding to the height of the Crystal Palace without incurring some danger, but that is no reason why your houses should all be nothing but scaffolding. The common system of support of walls over shops is now nothing but permanent scaffolding; part of iron, part of wood, part of brick; in its skeleton state awful to behold; the weight of three or four stories of wall resting sometimes on two or three pillars of the size of gas pipes, sometimes on a single cross beam of wood, laid across from party wall to party wall in the Greek manner. I have a vivid recollection at this moment of a vast heap of splinters in the Borough Road, close to St. George's, Southwark, in the road between my own house and London. I had passed it the day before, a goodly shop front, and sufficient house above, with a few repairs undertaken in the shop before opening a new business. The master and mistress had found it dusty that afternoon, and went out to tea. When they came back in the evening, they found their whole house in the form of a heap of bricks blocking the roadway, with a party of men digging out their cook. But I do not insist on casualties like these, disgraceful to us as they are, for it is, of course, perfectly possible to build a perfectly secure house or

³ Plate I. On this subject, see "The Builder," vol. xi. p. 709.

a secure window in the Greek manner; but the simple fact is, that in order to obtain in the cross lintel the same amount of strength which you can obtain in a pointed arch, you must go to an immensely greater cost in stone or in labor. Stonehenge is strong enough, but it takes some trouble to build in the manner of Stonehenge: and Stonehenge itself is not so strong as an arch of the Colosseum. You could not raise a circle of four Stonehenges, one over the other, with safety; and as it is, more of the cross-stones are fallen upon the plain of Sarum than arches rent away, except by the hand of man, from the mighty circle of Rome. But I waste words;—your own common sense must show you in a moment that this is a weak form; and there is not at this instant a single street in London where some house could not be pointed out with a flaw running through its brickwork, and repairs rendered necessary in consequence, merely owing to the adoption of this bad form; and that our builders know so well, that in myriads of instances you find them actually throwing concealed arches above the horizontal lintels to take the weight off them; and the gabled decoration, at the top of some Palladian windows, is merely the ornamental form resulting from a bold device of the old Roman builders to effect the same purpose.

8. But there is a farther reason for our adopting the pointed arch than its being the strongest form; it is also the most beautiful form in which a window or door-head can be built. Not the most beautiful because it is the strongest; but most beautiful, because its form is one of those which, as we know by its frequent occurrence in the work of Nature around us, has been appointed by the Deity to be an everlasting source of pleasure to the human mind.



Fig. 4.

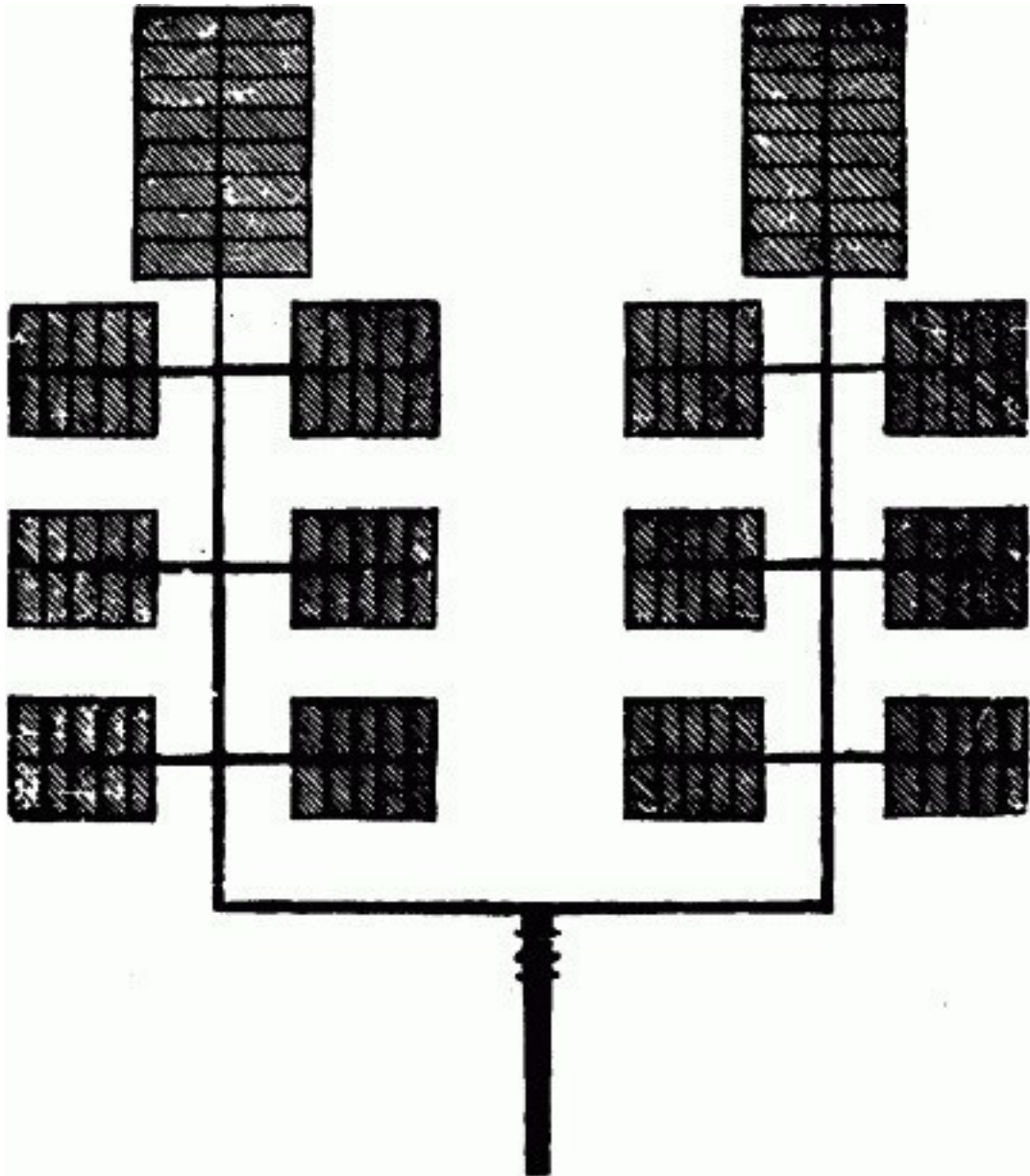


Fig. 6.
Plate III.

Gather a branch from any of the trees or flowers to which the earth owes its principal beauty. You will find that every one of its leaves is terminated, more or less, in the form of the pointed arch; and to that form owes its grace and character. I will take, for instance, a spray of the tree which so gracefully adorns your Scottish glens and crags—there is no lovelier in the world—the common ash. Here is a sketch of the clusters of leaves which form the extremity of one of its young shoots (*fig. 4*); and, by the way, it will furnish us with an interesting illustration of another error in modern architectural systems. You know how fond modern architects, like foolish modern politicians, are of their equalities, and similarities; how necessary they think it that each part of a building should be like every other part. Now Nature abhors equality, and similitude, just as much as foolish men love them. You will find that the ends of the shoots of the ash are composed of four⁴ green stalks bearing leaves, springing in the form of a cross, if seen from above, as in *fig. 5*, Plate *I.*, and at first you will suppose

⁴ Sometimes of six; that is to say, they spring in pairs; only the two uppermost pairs, sometimes the three uppermost, spring so close together as to appear one cluster.

the four arms of the cross are equal. But look more closely, and you will find that two opposite arms or stalks have only five leaves each, and the other two have seven; or else, two have seven, and the other two nine; but always one pair of stalks has two leaves more than the other pair. Sometimes the tree gets a little puzzled, and forgets which is to be the longest stalk, and begins with a stem for seven leaves where it should have nine, and then recollects itself at the last minute, and puts on another leaf in a great hurry, and so produces a stalk with eight leaves; but all this care it takes merely to keep itself out of equalities; and all its grace and power of pleasing are owing to its doing so, together with the lovely curves in which its stalks, thus arranged, spring from the main bough. *Fig. 5* is a plan of their arrangement merely, but *fig. 4* is the way in which you are most likely to see them: and observe, they spring from the stalk *precisely as a Gothic vaulted roof springs*, each stalk representing a rib of the roof, and the leaves its crossing stones; and the beauty of each of those leaves is altogether owing to its terminating in the Gothic form, the pointed arch. Now do you think you would have liked your ash trees as well, if Nature had taught them Greek, and shown them how to grow according to the received Attic architectural rules of right? I will try you. Here is a cluster of ash leaves, which I have grown expressly for you on Greek principles (*fig. 6, Plate III.*) How do you like it?

9. Observe, I have played you no trick in this comparison. It is perfectly fair in all respects. I have merely substituted for the beautiful spring of the Gothic vaulting in the ash bough, a cross lintel; and then, in order to raise the leaves to the same height, I introduce vertical columns; and I make the leaves square-headed instead of pointed, and their lateral ribs at right angles with the central rib, instead of sloping from it. I have, indeed, only given you two boughs instead of four; because the perspective of the crossing ones could not have been given without confusing the figure; but I imagine you have quite enough of them as it is.

"Nay, but," some of you instantly answer, "if we had been as long accustomed to square-leaved ash trees as we have been to sharp-leaved ash trees, we should like them just as well." Do not think it. Are you not much more accustomed to gray whinstone and brown sandstone than you are to rubies or emeralds? and yet will you tell me you think them as beautiful? Are you not more accustomed to the ordinary voices of men than to the perfect accents of sweet singing? yet do you not instantly declare the song to be loveliest? Examine well the channels of your admiration, and you will find that they are, in verity, as unchangeable as the channels of your heart's blood; that just as by the pressure of a bandage, or by unwholesome and perpetual action of some part of the body, that blood may be wasted or arrested, and in its stagnancy cease to nourish the frame, or in its disturbed flow affect it with incurable disease, so also admiration itself may, by the bandages of fashion, bound close over the eyes and the arteries of the soul, be arrested in its natural pulse and healthy flow; but that wherever the artificial pressure is removed, it will return into that bed which has been traced for it by the finger of God.

10. Consider this subject well, and you will find that custom has indeed no real influence upon our feelings of the beautiful, except in dulling and checking them; that is to say, it will and does, as we advance in years, deaden in some degree our enjoyment of all beauty, but it in no wise influences our determination of what is beautiful, and what is not. You see the broad blue sky every day over your heads; but you do not for that reason determine blue to be less or more beautiful than you did at first; you are unaccustomed to see stones as blue as the sapphire, but you do not for that reason think the sapphire less beautiful than other stones. The blue color is everlastingly appointed by the Deity to be a source of delight; and whether seen perpetually over your head, or crystallized once in a thousand years into a single and incomparable stone, your acknowledgment of its beauty is equally natural, simple, and instantaneous. Pardon me for engaging you in a metaphysical discussion; for it is necessary to the establishment of some of the greatest of all architectural principles that I should fully convince you of this great truth, and that I should quite do away with the various objections to it, which I suppose must arise in your minds. Of these there is one more which I must briefly meet. You know how much confusion has been introduced into the subject of criticism, by reference to the power

of Association over the human heart; you know how often it has been said that custom must have something to do with our ideas of beauty, because it endears so many objects to the affections. But, once for all, observe that the powers of association and of beauty are two entirely distinct powers,—as distinct, for instance, as the forces of gravitation and electricity. These forces may act together, or may neutralize one another, but are not for that reason to be supposed the same force; and the charm of association will sometimes enhance, and sometimes entirely overpower, that of beauty; but you must not confound the two together. You love many things because you are accustomed to them, and are pained by many things because they are strange to you; but that does not make the accustomed sight more beautiful, or the strange one less so. The well-known object may be dearer to you, or you may have discovered charms in it which others cannot; but the charm was there before you discovered it, only needing time and love to perceive it. You love your friends and relations more than all the world beside, and may perceive beauties in their faces which others cannot perceive; but you feel that you would be ridiculous in allowing yourselves to think them the most beautiful persons in the world: you acknowledge that the real beauty of the human countenance depends on fixed laws of form and expression, and not on the affection you bear to it, or the degree in which you are familiarized with it: and so does the beauty of all other existences.

11. Now, therefore, I think that, without the risk of any farther serious objection occurring to you, I may state what I believe to be the truth,—that beauty has been appointed by the Deity to be one of the elements by which the human soul is continually sustained; it is therefore to be found more or less in all natural objects, but in order that we may not satiate ourselves with it, and weary of it, it is rarely granted to us in its utmost degrees. When we see it in those utmost degrees, we are attracted to it strongly, and remember it long, as in the case of singularly beautiful scenery or a beautiful countenance. On the other hand, absolute ugliness is admitted as rarely as perfect beauty; but degrees of it more or less distinct are associated with whatever has the nature of death and sin, just as beauty is associated with what has the nature of virtue and of life.

12. This being so, you see that when the relative beauty of any particular forms has to be examined, we may reason, from the forms of Nature around us, in this manner:—what Nature does generally, is sure to be more or less beautiful; what she does rarely, will either be *very* beautiful, or absolutely ugly. And we may again easily determine, if we are not willing in such a case to trust our feelings, which of these is indeed the case, by this simple rule, that if the rare occurrence is the result of the complete fulfillment of a natural law, it will be beautiful; if of the violation of a natural law, it will be ugly. For instance, a sapphire is the result of the complete and perfect fulfillment of the laws of aggregation in the earth of alumina, and it is therefore beautiful; more beautiful than clay, or any other of the conditions of that earth. But a square leaf on any tree would be ugly, being a violation of the laws of growth in trees,⁵ and we ought to feel it so.

13. Now then, I proceed to argue in this manner from what we see in the woods and fields around us; that as they are evidently meant for our delight, and as we always feel them to be beautiful, we may assume that the forms into which their leaves are cast, are indeed types of beauty, not of extreme or perfect, but average beauty. And finding that they invariably terminate more or less in pointed arches, and are not square-headed, I assert the pointed arch to be one of the forms most fitted for perpetual contemplation by the human mind; that it is one of those which never weary, however often repeated; and that therefore, being both the strongest in structure, and a beautiful form (while the square head is both weak in structure, and an ugly form), we are unwise ever to build in any other.

⁵ I am at present aware only of one tree, the tulip tree, which has an exceptional form, and which, I doubt not, every one will admit, loses much beauty in consequence. All other leaves, as far as I know, have the round or pointed arch in the form of the extremities of their foils.

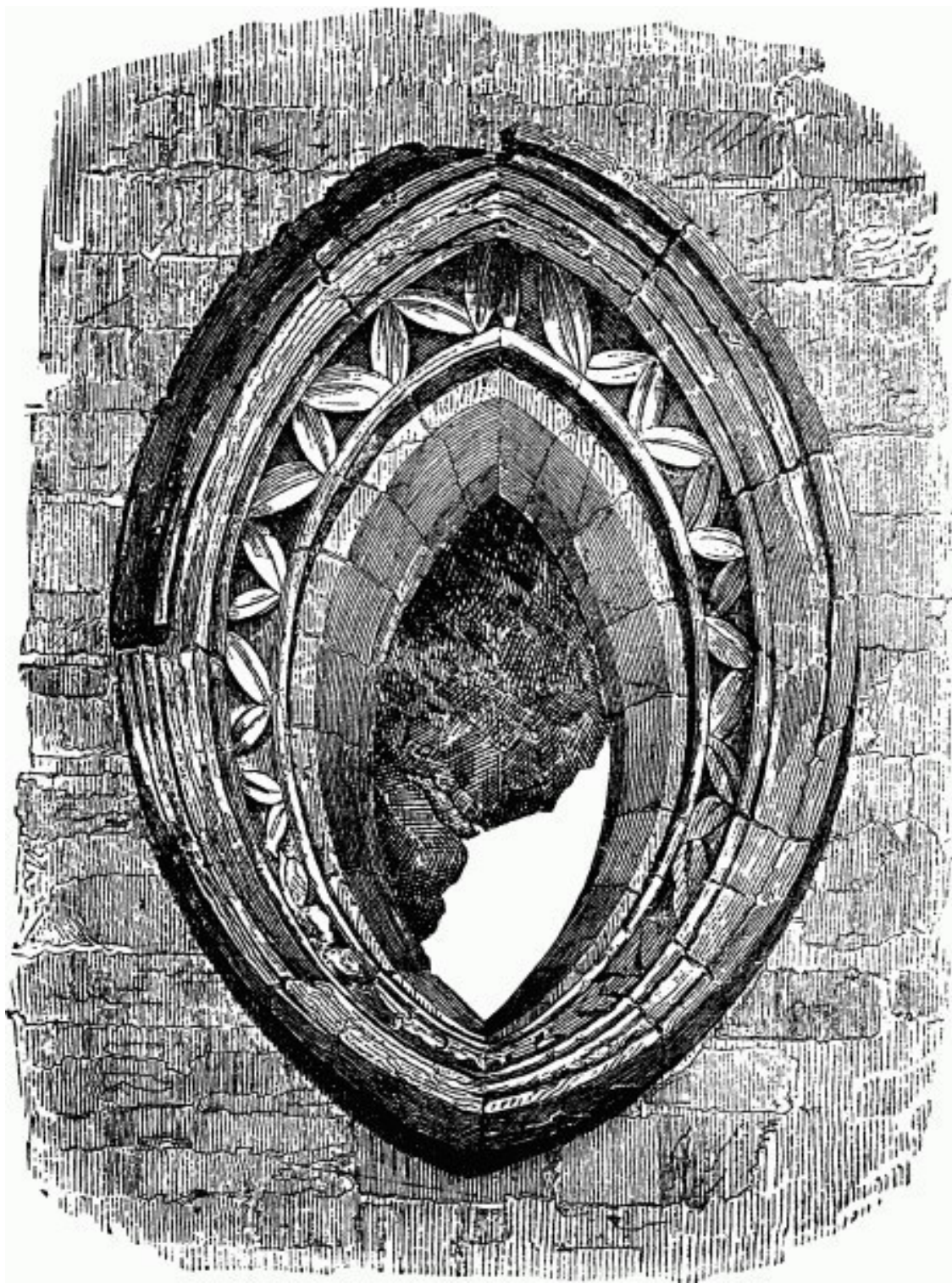


Fig. 7.
PLATE IV.

14. Here, however, I must anticipate another objection. It may be asked why we are to build only the tops of the windows pointed,—why not follow the leaves, and point them at the bottom also?

For this simple reason, that, while in architecture you are continually called upon to do what may be *unnecessary* for the sake of beauty, you are never called upon to do what is *inconvenient* for the sake of beauty. You want the level window sill to lean upon, or to allow the window to open on a balcony: the eye and the common sense of the beholder require this necessity to be met before

any laws of beauty are thought of. And besides this, there is in the sill no necessity for the pointed arch as a bearing form; on the contrary, it would give an idea of weak support for the sides of the window, and therefore is at once rejected. Only I beg of you particularly to observe that the level sill, although useful, and therefore admitted, does not therefore become beautiful; the eye does not like it so well as the top of the window, nor does the sculptor like to attract the eye to it; his richest moldings, traceries, and sculptures are all reserved for the top of the window; they are sparingly granted to its horizontal base. And farther, observe, that when neither the convenience of the sill, nor the support of the structure, are any more of moment, as in small windows and traceries, you instantly *have* the point given to the bottom of the window. Do you recollect the west window of your own Dunblane Abbey? If you look in any common guide-book, you will find it pointed out as peculiarly beautiful,—it is acknowledged to be beautiful by the most careless observer. And why beautiful? Look at it (*fig. 7*). Simply because in its great contours it has the form of a forest leaf, and because in its decoration it has used nothing but forest leaves. The sharp and expressive molding which surrounds it is a very interesting example of one used to an enormous extent by the builders of the early English Gothic, usually in the form seen in *fig. 2*, Plate II., composed of clusters of four sharp leaves each, originally produced by sculpturing the sides of a four-sided pyramid, and afterwards brought more or less into a true image of leaves, but deriving all its beauty from the botanical form. In the present instance only two leaves are set in each cluster; and the architect has been determined that the naturalism should be perfect. For he was no common man who designed that cathedral of Dunblane. I know not anything so perfect in its simplicity, and so beautiful, as far as it reaches, in all the Gothic with which I am acquainted. And just in proportion to his power of mind, that man was content to work under Nature's teaching; and instead of putting a merely formal dogtooth, as everybody else did at the time, he went down to the woody bank of the sweet river beneath the rocks on which he was building, and he took up a few of the fallen leaves that lay by it, and he set them in his arch, side by side, forever. And, look—that he might show you he had done this,—he has made them all of different sizes, just as they lay; and that you might not by any chance miss noticing the variety, he has put a great broad one at the top, and then a little one turned the wrong way, next to it, so that you must be blind indeed if you do not understand his meaning. And the healthy change and playfulness of this just does in the stone-work what it does on the tree boughs, and is a perpetual refreshment and invigoration; so that, however long you gaze at this simple ornament—and none can be simpler, a village mason could carve it all round the window in a few hours—you are never weary of it, it seems always new.

15. It is true that oval windows of this form are comparatively rare in Gothic work, but, as you well know, circular or wheel windows are used constantly, and in most traceries the apertures are curved and pointed as much at the bottom as the top. So that I believe you will now allow me to proceed upon the assumption, that the pointed arch is indeed the best form into which the head either of door or window can be thrown, considered as a means of sustaining weight above it. How these pointed arches ought to be grouped and decorated, I shall endeavor to show you in my next lecture. Meantime I must beg of you to consider farther some of the general points connected with the structure of the roof.

16. I am sure that all of you must readily acknowledge the charm which is imparted to any landscape by the presence of cottages; and you must over and over again have paused at the wicket gate of some cottage garden, delighted by the simple beauty of the honeysuckle porch and latticed window. Has it ever occurred to you to ask the question, what effect the cottage would have upon your feelings if it had *no roof*? no visible roof, I mean;—if instead of the thatched slope, in which the little upper windows are buried deep, as in a nest of straw—or the rough shelter of its mountain shales—or warm coloring of russet tiles—there were nothing but a flat leaden top to it, making it look like a large packing-case with windows in it? I don't think the rarity of such a sight would make you feel it to be beautiful; on the contrary, if you think over the matter, you will find that you actually do owe, and ought to owe, a great part of your pleasure in all cottage scenery, and in all the inexhaustible

imagery of literature which is founded upon it, to the conspicuousness of the cottage roof—to the subordination of the cottage itself to its covering, which leaves, in nine cases out of ten, really more roof than anything else. It is, indeed, not so much the whitewashed walls—nor the flowery garden—nor the rude fragments of stones set for steps at the door—nor any other picturesqueness of the building which interest you, so much as the gray bank of its heavy eaves, deep-cushioned with green moss and golden stone-crop. And there is a profound, yet evident, reason for this feeling. The very soul of the cottage—the essence and meaning of it—are in its roof; it is that, mainly, wherein consists its shelter; that, wherein it differs most completely from a cleft in rocks or bower in woods. It is in its thick impenetrable coverlet of close thatch that its whole heart and hospitality are concentrated. Consider the difference, in sound, of the expressions "beneath my roof" and "within my walls,"—consider whether you would be best sheltered, in a shed, with a stout roof sustained on corner posts, or in an inclosure of four walls without a roof at all,—and you will quickly see how important a part of the cottage the roof must always be to the mind as well as to the eye, and how, from seeing it, the greatest part of our pleasure must continually arise.

17. Now, do you suppose that which is so all-important in a cottage, can be of small importance in your own dwelling-house? Do you think that by any splendor of architecture—any height of stories—you can atone to the mind for the loss of the aspect of the roof? It is vain to say you take the roof for granted. You may as well say you take a man's kindness for granted, though he neither looks nor speaks kindly. You may know him to be kind in reality, but you will not like him so well as if he spoke and looked kindly also. And whatever external splendor you may give your houses, you will always feel there is something wanting, unless you see their roofs plainly. And this especially in the north. In southern architecture the roof is of far less importance; but here the soul of domestic building is in the largeness and conspicuousness of the protection against the ponderous snow and driving sleet. You may make the façade of the square pile, if the roof be not seen, as handsome as you please,—you may cover it with decoration,—but there will always be a heartlessness about it, which you will not know how to conquer; above all, a perpetual difficulty in finishing the wall at top, which will require all kinds of strange inventions in parapets and pinnacles for its decoration, and yet will never look right.

Now, I need not tell you that, as it is desirable, for the sake of the effect upon the mind, that the roof should be visible, so the best and most natural form of roof in the north is that which will render it *most* visible, namely, the steep gable: the best and most natural, I say, because this form not only throws off snow and rain most completely, and dries fastest, but obtains the greatest interior space within walls of a given height, removes the heat of the sun most effectually from the upper rooms, and affords most space for ventilation.

18. You have then, observed, two great principles, as far as northern architecture is concerned; first, that the pointed arch is to be the means by which the weight of the wall or roof is to be sustained; secondly, that the steep gable is the form most proper for the roof itself. And now observe this most interesting fact, that all the loveliest Gothic architecture in the world is based on the group of lines composed of the pointed arch and the gable. If you look at the beautiful apse of Amiens Cathedral—a work justly celebrated over all Europe—you will find it formed merely of a series of windows surmounted by pure gables of open work. If you look at the transept porches of Rouen, or at the great and celebrated porch of the Cathedral of Rheims, or that of Strasbourg, Bayeux, Amiens, or Peterborough, still you will see that these lovely compositions are nothing more than richly decorated forms of gable over pointed arch. But more than this, you must be all well aware how fond our best architectural artists are of the street effects of foreign cities; and even those now present who have not personally visited any of the continental towns must remember, I should think, some of the many interesting drawings by Mr. Prout, Mr. Nash, and other excellent draughtsmen, which have for many years adorned our exhibitions. Now, the principal charm of all those continental street effects is dependent on the houses having high-pitched gable roofs. In the Netherlands, and Northern France, where the material for building is brick or stone, the fronts of the stone gables are raised above

the roofs, and you have magnificent and grotesque ranges of steps or curves decorated with various ornaments, succeeding one another in endless perspective along the streets of Antwerp, Ghent, or Brussels. In Picardy and Normandy, again, and many towns of Germany, where the material for building is principally wood, the roof is made to project over the gables, fringed with a beautifully carved cornice, and casting a broad shadow down the house front. This is principally seen at Abbeville, Rouen, Lisieux, and others of the older towns of France. But, in all cases, the effect of the whole street depends on the prominence of the gables; not only of the fronts towards the streets, but of the sides also, set with small garret or dormer windows, each of the most fantastic and beautiful form, and crowned with a little spire or pinnacle. Wherever there is a little winding stair, or projecting bow window, or any other irregularity of form, the steep ridges shoot into turrets and small spires, as in *fig. 8*,⁶ each in its turn crowned by a fantastic ornament, covered with curiously shaped slates or shingles, or crested with long fringes of rich ironwork, so that, seen from above and from a distance, the intricate grouping of the roofs of a French city is no less interesting than its actual streets; and in the streets themselves, the masses of broad shadow which the roofs form against the sky, are a most important background to the bright and sculptured surfaces of the walls.

19. Finally, I need not remind you of the effect upon the northern mind which has always been produced by the heaven-pointing spire, nor of the theory which has been founded upon it of the general meaning of Gothic architecture as expressive of religious aspiration. In a few minutes, you may ascertain the exact value of that theory, and the degree in which it is true.

⁶ This figure is copied from Prout.



Fig. 8.
PLATE V.

The first tower of which we hear as built upon the earth, was certainly built in a species of aspiration; but I do not suppose that any one here will think it was a religious one. "Go to now. Let us build a tower whose top may reach unto heaven." From that day to this, whenever men have become skillful architects at all, there has been a tendency in them to build high; not in any religious feeling,

but in mere exuberance of spirit and power—as they dance or sing—with a certain mingling of vanity—like the feeling in which a child builds a tower of cards; and, in nobler instances, with also a strong sense of, and delight in the majesty, height, and strength of the building itself, such as we have in that of a lofty tree or a peaked mountain. Add to this instinct the frequent necessity of points of elevation for watch-towers, or of points of offense, as in towers built on the ramparts of cities, and, finally, the need of elevations for the transmission of sound, as in the Turkish minaret and Christian belfry, and you have, I think, a sufficient explanation of the tower-building of the world in general. Look through your Bibles only, and collect the various expressions with reference to tower-building there, and you will have a very complete idea of the spirit in which it is for the most part undertaken. You begin with that of Babel; then you remember Gideon beating down the tower of Penuel, in order more completely to humble the pride of the men of the city; you remember the defense of the tower of Shechem against Abimelech, and the death of Abimelech by the casting of a stone from it by a woman's hand; you recollect the husbandman building a tower in his vineyard, and the beautiful expressions in Solomon's song,—“The tower of Lebanon, which looketh towards Damascus;” “I am a wall, and my breasts like towers;”—you recollect the Psalmist's expressions of love and delight, “Go ye round about Jerusalem; tell the towers thereof: mark ye well her bulwarks; consider her palaces, that ye may tell it to the generation following.” You see in all these cases how completely the tower is a subject of human pride, or delight, or defense, not in any wise associated with religious sentiment; the towers of Jerusalem being named in the same sentence, not with her temple, but with her bulwarks and palaces. And thus, when the tower is in reality connected with a place of worship, it was generally done to add to its magnificence, but not to add to its religious expression. And over the whole of the world, you have various species of elevated buildings, the Egyptian pyramid, the Indian and Chinese pagoda, the Turkish minaret, and the Christian belfry,—all of them raised either to make a show from a distance, or to cry from, or swing bells in, or hang them round, or for some other very human reason. Thus, when the good people of Beauvais were building their cathedral, that of Amiens, then just completed, had excited the admiration of all France; and the people of Beauvais, in their jealousy and determination to beat the people of Amiens, set to work to build a tower to their own cathedral as high as they possibly could. They built it so high that it tumbled down, and they were never able to finish their cathedral at all—it stands a wreck to this day. But you will not, I should think, imagine this to have been done in heavenward aspiration. Mind, however, I don't blame the people of Beauvais, except for their bad building. I think their desire to beat the citizens of Amiens a most amiable weakness, and only wish I could see the citizens of Edinburgh and Glasgow inflamed with the same emulation, building Gothic towers⁷ instead of manufactory chimneys. Only do not confound a feeling which, though healthy and right, may be nearly analogous to that in which you play a cricket-match, with any feeling allied to your hope of heaven.

20. Such being the state of the case with respect to tower-building in general, let me follow for a few minutes the changes which occur in the towers of northern and southern architects.

Many of us are familiar with the ordinary form of the Italian bell-tower or campanile. From the eighth century to the thirteenth there was little change in that form:⁸ four-square, rising high and without tapering into the air, story above story, they stood like giants in the quiet fields beside the piles of the basilica or the Lombardic church, in this form (*fig. 9*), tiled at the top in a flat gable, with open arches below, and fewer and fewer arches on each inferior story, down to the bottom. It is worth while noting the difference in form between these and the towers built for military service. The latter were built as in *fig. 10*, projecting vigorously at the top over a series of brackets or machicolations, with very small windows, and no decoration below. Such towers as these were attached to every important

⁷ I did not, at the time of the delivery of these lectures, know how many Gothic towers the worthy Glaswegians *have* lately built: that of St. Peter's, in particular, being a most meritorious effort.

⁸ There is a good abstract of the forms of the Italian campanile, by Mr. Papworth, in the *Journal of the Archæological Institute*, March 1850.

palace in the cities of Italy, and stood in great circles—troops of towers—around their external walls: their ruins still frown along the crests of every promontory of the Apennines, and are seen from far away in the great Lombardic plain, from distances of half-a-day's journey, dark against the amber sky of the horizon. These are of course now built no more, the changed methods of modern warfare having cast them into entire disuse; but the belfry or campanile has had a very different influence on European architecture. Its form in the plains of Italy and South France being that just shown you, the moment we enter the valleys of the Alps, where there is snow to be sustained, we find its form of roof altered by the substitution of a steep gable for a flat one.⁹ There are probably few in the room who have not been in some parts of South Switzerland, and who do not remember the beautiful effect of the gray mountain churches, many of them hardly changed since the tenth and eleventh centuries, whose pointed towers stand up through the green level of the vines, or crown the jutting rocks that border the valley.

⁹ The form establishes itself afterwards in the plains, in sympathy with other Gothic conditions, as in the campanile of St. Mark's at Venice.

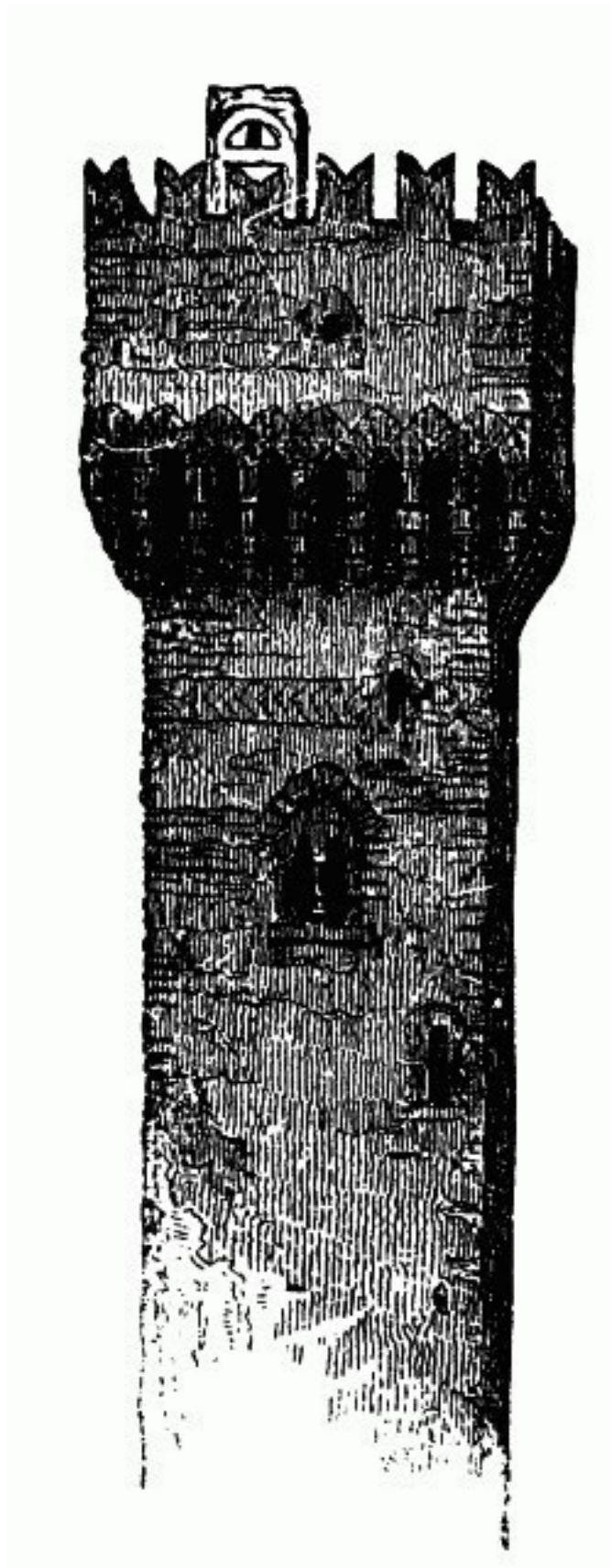


Fig. 10.

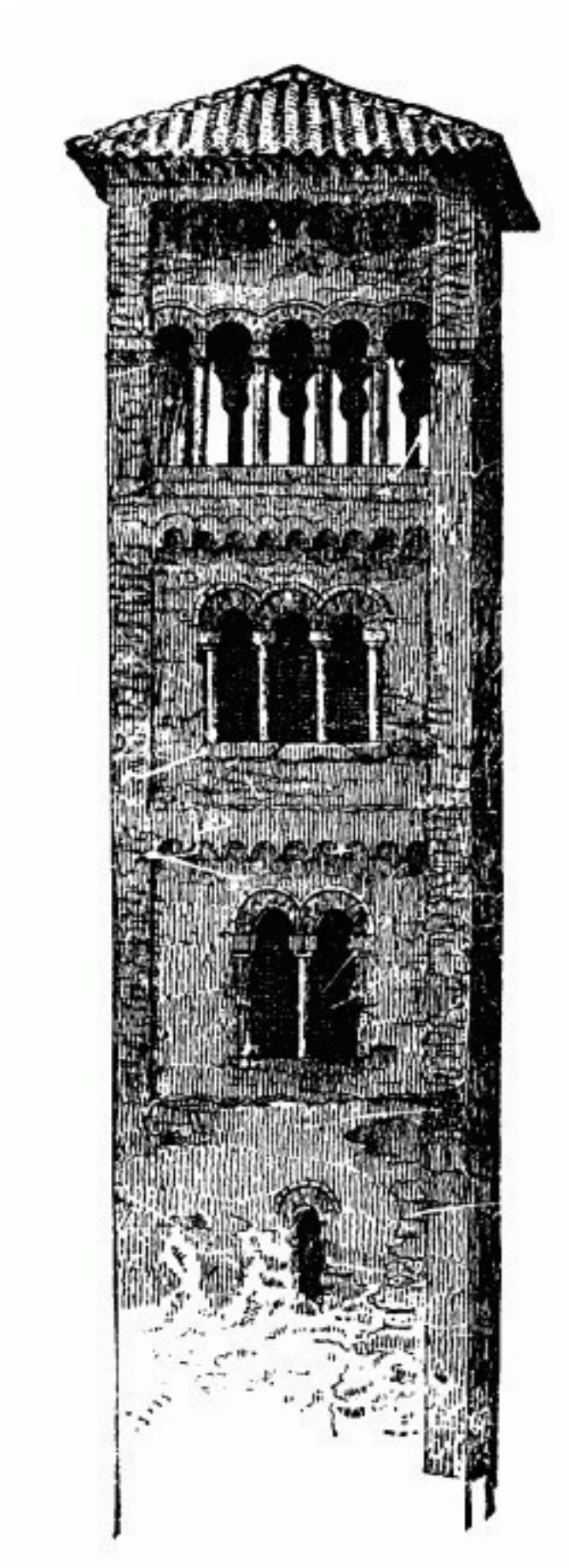


Fig. 9.

PLATE VI.

21. From this form to the true spire the change is slight, and consists in little more than various decoration; generally in putting small pinnacles at the angles, and piercing the central pyramid with traceried windows; sometimes, as at Fribourg and Burgos, throwing it into tracery altogether: but to do this is invariably the sign of a vicious style, as it takes away from the spire its character of a true roof, and turns it nearly into an ornamental excrescence. At Antwerp and Brussels, the celebrated towers (one, observe, ecclesiastical, being the tower of the cathedral, and the other secular), are formed by successions of diminishing towers, set one above the other, and each supported by buttresses thrown to the angles of the one beneath. At the English cathedrals of Lichfield and Salisbury, the spire is seen in great purity, only decorated by sculpture; but I am aware of no example so striking in its entire simplicity as that of the towers of the cathedral of Coutances in Normandy. There is a dispute between French and English antiquaries as to the date of the building, the English being unwilling to admit its complete priority to all their own Gothic. I have no doubt of this priority myself; and I hope that the time will soon come when men will cease to confound vanity with patriotism, and will think the honor of their nation more advanced by their own sincerity and courtesy, than by claims, however learnedly contested, to the invention of pinnacles and arches. I believe the French nation was, in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries, the greatest in the world; and that the French not only invented Gothic architecture, but carried it to a perfection which no other nation has approached, then or since: but, however this may be, there can be no doubt that the towers of Coutances, if not the earliest, are among the very earliest, examples of the fully developed spire. I have drawn one of them carefully for you (*fig. 11*), and you will see immediately that they are literally domestic roofs, with garret windows, executed on a large scale, and in stone. Their only ornament is a kind of scaly mail, which is nothing more than the copying in stone of the common wooden shingles of the house-roof; and their security is provided for by strong gabled dormer windows, of massy masonry, which, though supported on detached shafts, have weight enough completely to balance the lateral thrusts of the spires. Nothing can surpass the boldness or the simplicity of the plan; and yet, in spite of this simplicity, the clear detaching of the shafts from the slope of the spire, and their great height, strengthened by rude cross-bars of stone, carried back to the wall behind, occasion so great a complexity and play of cast shadows, that I remember no architectural composition of which the aspect is so completely varied at different hours of the day.¹⁰ But the main thing I wish you to observe is, the complete *domesticity* of the work; the evident treatment of the church spire merely as a magnified house-roof; and the proof herein of the great truth of which I have been endeavoring to persuade you, that all good architecture rises out of good and simple domestic work; and that, therefore, before you attempt to build great churches and palaces, you must build good house doors and garret windows.

¹⁰ The sketch was made about ten o'clock on a September morning.

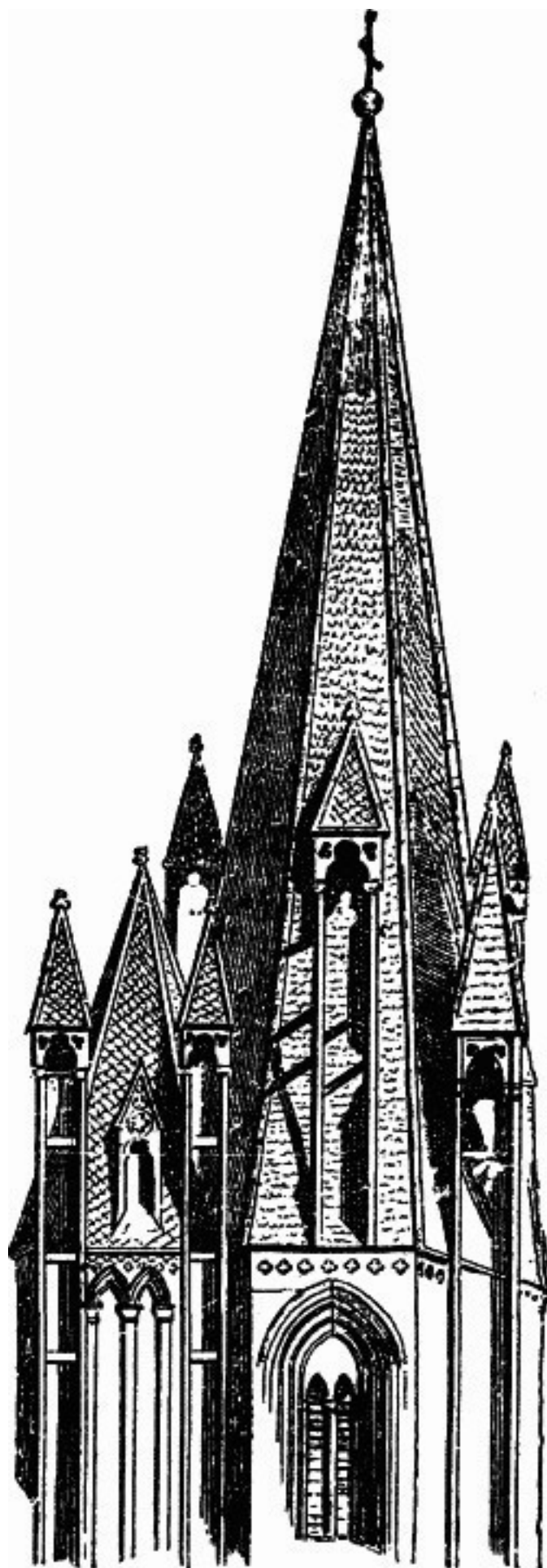


Fig. 11.

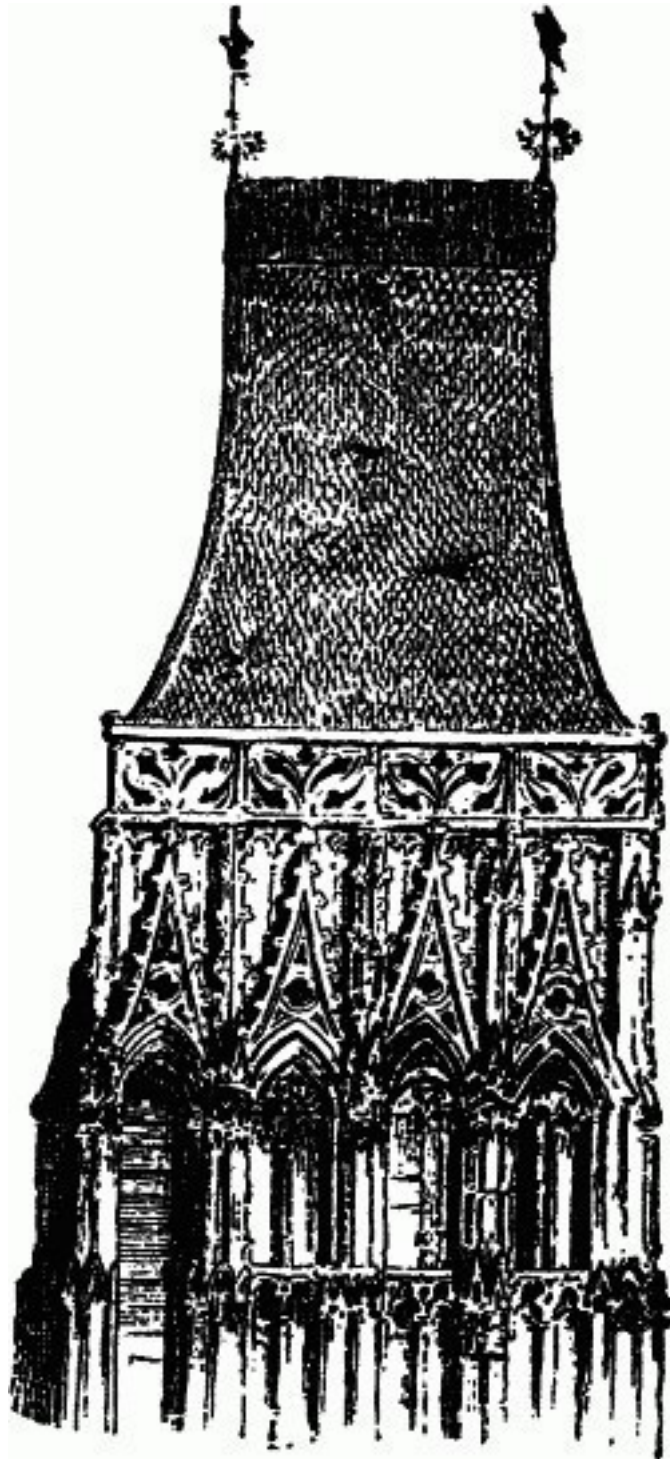


Fig. 12.
PLATE VII.

22. Nor is the spire the only ecclesiastical form deducible from domestic architecture. The spires of France and Germany are associated with other towers, even simpler and more straightforward in confession of their nature, in which, though the walls of the tower are covered with sculpture, there is an ordinary ridged gable roof on the top. The finest example I know of this kind of tower, is that on the north-west angle of Rouen Cathedral (*fig. 12*); but they occur in multitudes in

the older towns of Germany; and the backgrounds of Albert Dürer are full of them, and owe to them a great part of their interest: all these great and magnificent masses of architecture being repeated on a smaller scale by the little turret roofs and pinnacles of every house in the town; and the whole system of them being expressive, not by any means of religious feeling,¹¹ but merely of joyfulness and exhilaration of spirit in the inhabitants of such cities, leading them to throw their roofs high into the sky, and therefore giving to the style of architecture with which these grotesque roofs are associated, a certain charm like that of cheerfulness in a human face; besides a power of interesting the beholder which is testified, not only by the artist in his constant search after such forms as the elements of his landscape, but by every phrase of our language and literature bearing on such topics. Have not these words, Pinnacle, Turret, Belfry, Spire, Tower, a pleasant sound in all your ears? I do not speak of your scenery, I do not ask you how much you feel that it owes to the gray battlements that frown through the woods of Craigmillar, to the pointed turrets that flank the front of Holyrood, or to the massy keeps of your Crichtoun and Borthwick and other border towers. But look merely through your poetry and romances; take away out of your border ballads the word *tower* wherever it occurs, and the ideas connected with it, and what will become of the ballads? See how Sir Walter Scott cannot even get through a description of Highland scenery without help from the idea:—

"Each purple peak, each flinty *spire*,
Was bathed in floods of living fire."

Take away from Scott's romances the word and idea *turret*, and see how much you would lose. Suppose, for instance, when young Osbaldistone is leaving Osbaldistone Hall, instead of saying "The old clock struck two from a *turret* adjoining my bedchamber," he had said, "The old clock struck two from the landing at the top of the stair," what would become of the passage? And can you really suppose that what has so much power over you in words has no power over you in reality? Do you think there is any group of words which would thus interest you, when the things expressed by them are uninteresting?

23. For instance, you know that, for an immense time back, all your public buildings have been built with a row of pillars supporting a triangular thing called a pediment. You see this form every day in your banks and clubhouses, and churches and chapels; you are told that it is the perfection of architectural beauty; and yet suppose Sir Walter Scott, instead of writing, "Each purple peak, each flinty spire," had written, "Each purple peak, each flinty 'pediment.'"¹² Would you have thought the

¹¹ Among the various modes in which the architects, against whose practice my writings are directed, have endeavored to oppose them, no charge has been made more frequently than that of their self-contradiction; the fact being, that there are few people in the world who are capable of seeing the two sides of any subject, or of conceiving how the statements of its opposite aspects can possibly be reconcilable. For instance, in a recent review, though for the most part both fair and intelligent, it is remarked, on this very subject of the domestic origin of the northern Gothic, that "Mr. Ruskin is evidently possessed by a fixed idea, that the Venetian architects were devout men, and that their devotion was expressed in their buildings; while he will not allow our own cathedrals to have been built by any but worldly men, who had no thoughts of heaven, but only vague ideas of keeping out of hell, by erecting costly places of worship." If this writer had compared the two passages with the care which such a subject necessarily demands, he would have found that I was not opposing Venetian to English piety; but that in the one case I was speaking of the spirit manifested in the entire architecture of the nation, and in the other of occasional efforts of superstition as distinguished from that spirit; and, farther, that in the one case, I was speaking of decorative features, which are ordinarily the results of feelings, in the other of structural features, which are ordinarily the results of necessity or convenience. Thus it is rational and just that we should attribute the decoration of the arches of St. Mark's with scriptural mosaics to a religious sentiment; but it would be a strange absurdity to regard as an effort of piety the invention of the form of the arch itself, of which one of the earliest and most perfect instances is in the Cloaca Maxima. And thus in the case of spires and towers, it is just to ascribe to the devotion of their designers that dignity which was bestowed upon forms derived from the simplest domestic buildings; but it is ridiculous to attribute any great refinement of religious feeling, or height of religious aspiration, to those who furnished the funds for the erection of the loveliest tower in North France, by paying for permission to eat butter in Lent.

¹² It has been objected to this comparison that the form of the pediment does not properly represent that of the rocks of the Trossachs. The objection is utterly futile, for there is not a single spire or pinnacle from one end of the Trossachs to the other. All their rocks are heavily rounded, and the introduction of the word "spire" is a piece of inaccuracy in description, ventured *merely for the sake of the Gothic image*. Farther: it has been said that if I had substituted the word "gable," it would have spoiled the line just

poem improved? And if not, why would it be spoiled? Simply because the idea is no longer of any value to you; the thing spoken of is a nonentity. These pediments, and stylobates, and architraves never excited a single pleasurable feeling in you—never will, to the end of time. They are evermore dead, lifeless, and useless, in art as in poetry, and though you built as many of them as there are slates on your house-roofs, you will never care for them. They will only remain to later ages as monuments of the patience and pliability with which the people of the nineteenth century sacrificed their feelings to fashions, and their intellects to forms. But on the other hand, that strange and thrilling interest with which such words strike you as are in any wise connected with Gothic architecture—as for instance, Vault, Arch, Spire, Pinnacle, Battlement, Barbican, Porch, and myriads of such others, words everlastingly poetical and powerful whenever they occur,—is a most true and certain index that the things themselves are delightful to you, and will ever continue to be so. Believe me, you do indeed love these things, so far as you care about art at all, so far as you are not ashamed to confess what you feel about them.

24. In your public capacities, as bank directors, and charity overseers, and administrators of this and that other undertaking or institution, you cannot express your feelings at all. You form committees to decide upon the style of the new building, and as you have never been in the habit of trusting to your own taste in such matters, you inquire who is the most celebrated, that is to say, the most employed, architect of the day. And you send for the great Mr. Blank, and the Great Blank sends you a plan of a great long marble box with half-a-dozen pillars at one end of it, and the same at the other; and you look at the Great Blank's great plan in a grave manner, and you dare say it will be very handsome; and you ask the Great Blank what sort of a blank check must be filled up before the great plan can be realized; and you subscribe in a generous "burst of confidence" whatever is wanted; and when it is all done, and the great white marble box is set up in your streets, you contemplate it, not knowing what to make of it exactly, but hoping it is all right; and then there is a dinner given to the Great Blank, and the morning papers say that the new and handsome building, erected by the great Mr. Blank, is one of Mr. Blank's happiest efforts, and reflects the greatest credit upon the intelligent inhabitants of the city of so-and-so; and the building keeps the rain out as well as another, and you remain in a placid state of impoverished satisfaction therewith; but as for having any real pleasure out of it, you never hoped for such a thing. If you really make up a party of pleasure, and get rid of the forms and fashion of public propriety for an hour or two, where do you go for it? Where do you go to eat strawberries and cream? To Roslin Chapel, I believe; not to the portico of the last-built institution. What do you see your children doing, obeying their own natural and true instincts? What are your daughters drawing upon their cardboard screens as soon as they can use a pencil? Not Parthenon fronts, I think, but the ruins of Melrose Abbey, or Linlithgow Palace, or Lochleven Castle, their own pure Scotch hearts leading them straight to the right things, in spite of all that they are told to the contrary. You perhaps call this romantic, and youthful, and foolish. I am pressed for time now, and I cannot ask you to consider the meaning of the word "Romance." I will do that, if you please, in next lecture, for it is a word of greater weight and authority than we commonly believe. In the meantime, I will endeavor, lastly, to show you, not the romantic, but the plain and practical conclusions which should follow from the facts I have laid before you.

25. I have endeavored briefly to point out to you the propriety and naturalness of the two great Gothic forms, the pointed arch and gable roof. I wish now to tell you in what way they ought to be introduced into modern domestic architecture.

You will all admit that there is neither romance nor comfort in waiting at your own or at any one else's door on a windy and rainy day, till the servant comes from the end of the house to open it.

as much as the word "pediment," though "gable" is a Gothic word. Of course it would; but why? Because "gable" is a term of vulgar domestic architecture, and therefore destructive of the tone of the heroic description; whereas "pediment" and "spire" are precisely correlative terms, being each the crowning feature in ecclesiastical edifices, and the comparison of their effects in the verse is therefore absolutely accurate, logical, and just.

You all know the critical nature of that opening—the drift of wind into the passage, the impossibility of putting down the umbrella at the proper moment without getting a cupful of water dropped down the back of your neck from the top of the door-way; and you know how little these inconveniences are abated by the common Greek portico at the top of the steps. You know how the east winds blow through those unlucky couples of pillars, which are all that your architects find consistent with due observance of the Doric order. Then, away with these absurdities; and the next house you build, insist upon having the pure old Gothic porch, walled in on both sides, with its pointed arch entrance and gable roof above. Under that, you can put down your umbrella at your leisure, and, if you will, stop a moment to talk with your friend as you give him the parting shake of the hand. And if now and then a wayfarer found a moment's rest on a stone seat on each side of it, I believe you would find the insides of your houses not one whit the less comfortable; and, if you answer me, that were such refuges built in the open streets, they would become mere nests of filthy vagrants, I reply that I do not despair of such a change in the administration of the poor laws of this country, as shall no longer leave any of our fellow creatures in a state in which they would pollute the steps of our houses by resting upon them for a night. But if not, the command to all of us is strict and straight, "When thou seest the naked, that thou cover him, and that thou bring the poor that are cast out to *thy house*."¹³ Not to the work-house, observe, but to *thy house*: and I say it would be better a thousandfold, that our doors should be beset by the poor day by day, than that it should be written of any one of us, "They reap every one his corn in the field, and they gather the vintage of the wicked. They cause the naked to lodge without shelter, that they have no covering in the cold. They are wet with the showers of the mountains, and embrace the rock, for want of a shelter."¹⁴

¹³ Isa. lviii. 7.

¹⁴ Job xxiv. 6-8.

Конец ознакомительного фрагмента.

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