

men, who were well disposed to adhere to their fathers' notion of all foreigners being humbugs, and, as a consequence, stuck to the perfection of their own taste; but some younger men, adopting those foreign notions, sadly confused their trade. The ladies naturally possess a more lively perception of the beautiful than man, and will always be found the first to appreciate the elegancies of refinement. It was thus that, guided by their natural taste, they chose dresses whose improved colouring had come from France, bought French ribbons for similar reasons, and eagerly sought the nicely-fitting French slipper and French glove; all this was declared prejudice, protective duties were tried without success, for he will be a clever statesman to defeat woman when dress is concerned. Customers of a quarter of a century's standing looked at their neighbours, admired the taste or novelty, and bought elsewhere; it became high time for both tradesman and manufacturer to accommodate themselves to the growing change: deficiency of intelligence upon the origin of true taste prevented inquiry into the causes which produced these improved articles in France, and they sought, and still seek, to meet the difficulty by importing and copying patterns. Then came a parliamentary inquiry, and a great mass of evidence was collected; among many others I contributed to state our deficiencies. Subsequently a School of Design was instituted, which has continued putting forward excellent theories, but unsuited for practical purposes, and a continued series of failures has resulted from an unbusiness-like management.

There are very many persons, who, without much thought, and with a deficient capability of comprehension, consider the art of *Devising or Design* to be nothing more than mere drawing, and as easily learned as any mechanical craft. By taking this deteriorating view of the art, it immediately ceases to be held in the estimation to which, from the importance of its varied and extensive application, it is justly entitled.

A creditable designer requires to have naturally a fine perception of the beautiful, a feeling for the charming versatility of form and colouring, a lively imagination, facility in associating ideas and applying the materials collected by study to produce invention, and an extensive acquaintance with the sources of ornament and principles in which the Arts of Design originated among the nations of antiquity, and ultimately arrived at very great perfection. A peculiar knowledge separate from artistical skill is also requisite for the application of design to manufactures. Judicious culture, aided by experience, will produce a purity of taste, a power of adjusting and adapting the separate principles with sound judgment, so as to create the highest excellencies.

A man thus endowed claims respect and attention; and we find in all countries, and in all times where the elegant arts have been appreciated, the artist, in his several gradations, placed in a conspicuous position, and supported in honour and opulence. The nation that would live in after ages, by acquiring distinction in the refinements of art, must elevate the artist, and however indisposed we may be to admit the fact, it is unquestionable that in England this has not been done. A want of appreciation of the artist's labours for the application of fine art has caused secondary design to be neglected, and the inordinate desire to accumulate wealth has caused the softening, elegant refinements of universal art to be subverted by the British standard of man's worth—money.

But brighter prospects are dawning; the successful cultivation of design by our continental neighbours will tend to place us in our proper position. The most powerful and wealthy kingdom must not continue to do less for the encouragement of art than such a state as Bavaria. Although a nation of shopkeepers, we may hope to see a taste spring up among our merchant princes that shall demand a revival of the sumptuous decorations of the old Italian trader. What a cheering hope to think of our City companies and corporate bodies all over the country sparing a little wealth from gross feasting, to decorate their halls, encourage art, and do honour to themselves! The Egyptian Hall may yet present other than its newly poverty-stricken attempt at decoration: some Medici in embryo may spread one dinner less, and cover its naked surface with

decorations suitable for the chief apartment of the first (i.e. *the richest*) of corporations.

Once enable the public mind to understand the real beneficial purposes of art, and it would be fostered: fewer discreditable public edifices erected, and a desire for the universal embellishment of interiors arise, with the capability of appreciating the ennobling and humanizing qualities associated with a love of the fine arts. Architecture, painting and sculpture are all equally incomplete without each other; and design for the manufacturer becomes indispensable. It is in the powers of each one of us to contribute toward the better understanding and consequent appreciation of these social benefits, which are obtained by cultivating the refinements of understanding; and it will be found a means of accelerating the advancement to superior feeling for both art and artists, especially for its appreciation when applied to manufactures.

It is necessary we should constantly keep before us the fact, that our own more humble branches of art are inseparably associated with the success of the higher branches. They cannot be cultivated apart, and when speaking of one I include both. A noble architectural mansion requires the rich embellishments of historic painting, decoration and gilding, sculpture in its halls, elegant furniture and costly plate, more or less in good taste, as the owner is influenced by liberality and fine feeling toward arts. Dress and ornaments partake of the splendour, and thus we have a universal benefit, creating and extending itself to a variety of minor employments.

Design, or creation of form and enrichment, being as essential to manufacturers among the ancient nations as at present, we may consider the arts to have then originated, and to have been systematically encouraged; and, although the existing sources for obtaining certain information are limited, we can arrive at highly interesting general conclusions respecting the actual formation of art, and the embellishment of their manufactures.

Scripture informs us, that before the Deluge, when the habitations were in tents, God had discovered to his people the arts of spinning wool and flax, and the weaving it into stuffs and linen,—and also of forging and polishing brass, iron, &c. The metals being thus rendered subservient to the uses of man, of course received shape for their several purposes. Soon after the Deluge, human industry made several discoveries conducive to the improved beauty of their fabrics: among others, the art of spinning gold thread and interweaving it, if not the actual embroidery of a pattern upon stuffs. The extreme ductility of gold was also known, as we find it beaten into thin leaves, and applied to the surface of wood and metals,—and the secret of casting metals, brass, silver, and gold. They were used to produce figures in imitation of nature, and even statues, vessels for use and ornament, and warlike weapons. Carving upon wood, stone, and marble, was in use,—and the imitation of natural objects by colour (i.e. painting) They became exceedingly celebrated for dyeing their stuffs and silks, giving to them the most exquisite variety of beautiful colours. To all these several discoveries, the art and practice of design must have been an essential addition in their progress to perfection. The East was the cradle of the arts and sciences, and it is sufficient for our present purpose to mention the Eastern empires which, through their long duration and immense extent of power, became associated with other nations of note, as the Egyptians and the Greeks.

(To be continued.)

## THE STREET ARCHITECTURE OF PARIS AND LONDON.

TO THE EDITOR OF THE BUILDER.

SIR,—Having just returned from a tour by way of Paris and Brussels, I intend, should it prove acceptable to you, to send you, as I can find leisure during the next two or three weeks, a few rambling notes of my tour.

My visit had more immediately in view an examination of the works lately done in the sister arts of painting and sculpture, in which commissions have of late been so very liberally dispensed in France; and, as must be confessed, most ably responded to—paintings and statues fresh from the studio so meeting the eye at every turn, as to make even a most cursory

examination of them a work of considerable time. My intention, however, in the meanwhile, is, as being more immediately within the scope of your journal, to confine myself to the architecture of Paris, in contrast with that which has of late years been performed and is now doing in London in that important branch of art.

That much has been done in Paris of late years in art, and with great care and study, every one, who has lately crossed the Channel I think will allow, and although more latitude of opinion may exist as to *how* it has been done, I have no hesitation in my own opinion that, on the whole, and by comparison, in every branch, it has been done well; and especially so, as I have just witnessed in architecture the execution of designs within the last fifteen years, since when I was last there, which give a lasting proof of the high character of the profession in France. The French feel what we have yet to learn, that taste is not expended in vain on the front of a stable or on a village pump. Professional men will have no difficulty, I think, in understanding me when I say that in every work I met, however small and unimportant, I *felt* that an architect had been employed, and I felt, too, that it was not done by adding expense, but that the judicious arrangement and combination of the same materials alone make the difference between the work whereon a man of taste and education has been employed, while the mere builder kept in his proper place, and one where, to save the architect's fee, the builder is himself the designer, leading almost invariably to a vulgar excess of ill-placed enrichment, the additional expense of which costs far more than an architect's commission. It is in this apparently unimportant branch of the architect's labours (but of much importance in leading and preparing the minds of the people to a correct appreciation of the noble works of architecture), that the French, in my opinion, show their superiority over us, while, at the same time, in the magnificent works of the metropolis and the leading provincial towns, a strong effort is making to revive for their appropriate purposes, the two great recognized styles which have shed so much lustre upon the ages in which they respectively flourished, when, by universal consent, they are allowed to have attained that point of excellence which it is enough for an architect of the present day to attempt to imitate. The "Madelain," the "Palais D'Orsay," and the "Notre Dame de Lorette," are great strides towards the one, and the vast sums spending in the completion and restoration of the gorgeous specimens of Gothic in the cathedrals and town-halls throughout the country, give no small proof of enthusiasm in the latter.

In London, on the contrary, nothing has been done on a systematic plan for improving the general character of its architecture, and of late years, in every district, what opportunities have been lost and thrown away. What a noble opportunity, for instance, was lost in the opening of Moorgate and King William-street, for an attempt (and, as I said with reference to what is doing in France, without adding a shilling to the expense) to rival some of the streets of palatial edifices in (not to be too ambitious) some of even the second-rate towns of Italy. It must be annoying, beyond expression, for a man of taste to walk along Moorgate-street, after returning from Paris, to think how little was required to have made it what it ought to have been, and what I cannot but confess I feel that in Paris it would have been made. Ornament is too cheap in London, and too easily had ready-made; and, in this case, there is no want of it; but the directing mind, although having the intention, wanted the knowledge from personal observation of what constitute the features which give so much charm and magnificence to the architecture of the "Grand Canal," "Toledo," and the "Corona."

I have already spent too much of your time and space with preliminaries to enter upon my task in this number, but I cannot omit to remark, that although my observations have suggested themselves to me from comparison, much, as I shall, I hope, show, has been done in London, which cannot but draw forth admiration from any one who has a feeling for beauty and originality in architecture.

Glasgow, July 2.

"OMEGA."