

was at length determined in my favour, and I have gained the premium, which is a gold medal of two ounces and a half weight. You will, perhaps, wonder I should rather concur at Parma than at Rome; to which I reply, that at Rome the judgment is so partial, and protection of cardinals, princes, &c. of such consequence, that in reality little honour is to be gained by it, likewise no person can concur who is not in Rome at the time of concurrence, consequently the number of those who concur must necessarily be less in Rome than in Parma, where all Italy, nay all Europe, may concur. I have not yet received the medal, which is to be sent me at the same time that the decision of the Academy is printed, which I shall send you as soon as it comes to Rome; as to the sketch on the other side of the paper, I beg you will excuse the incorrectness of it, as I had scarce time to finish it by this post; as it is only just to give you an idea of the general disposition, I had not time to put any more than two sections and the plan. The drawings I sent to Parma were five in number, viz., 1, The Great Plan; 2, The Section lengthwise through the great gallery and halls of entrance; 3, The Section through the said gallery breadthwise, and through the cortiles; 4, The Section through the rotunda; 5, The Façade. The plan was drawn upon four sheets of large imperial paper, and the sections and front were upon five sheets lengthwise of the same paper each.

All the columns within the gallery were of the Corinthian order, those of the cortiles Ionic, and those of the façades Doric. This work, my dear Sir, has been my occupation for these 8 months past, and I hope will, in some measure, plead my excuse for not writing; my mind has been in such agitation that I confess I have passed whole nights without sleeping; at length I am at ease, and never felt truer pleasure than I do at present, as I hope this will convince you that you have not misspent your favours on one who is entirely unworthy of them; this has hitherto been my greatest ambition, and will always be the bent of my wishes.—I am, honoured Sir, your most obliged and most obedient Son,

(Signed) GEORGE DANCE.

The report which accompanied the medal bestowed a highly flattering eulogium on the successful competitor; among other favourable notices it contained the following remarks:—

"The beauty of all its forms, the grandeur and just proportions of the edifice, real to mind and represent to the eye the magnificent monuments of the ancients, and that perfect taste which they put into their decorations. The author cannot be sufficiently praised for the study and happy choice he has made of these most commendable models. Every thing in his design appears suited to its place; it would be difficult to take away from the decorations, or to add to them, without impairing the effect; they are numerous without confusion, and suited to the subject."

The design without doubt indicates both talent and careful study, but I must confess I do not discover any of those marks of originality or genius in it which are so conspicuous in Mr. Dance's subsequent works; I regret that I can only produce to the meeting one other of Mr. Dance's architectural studies during his professional tour, but I am happy to say that this one is of rare excellence. A more careful or accurate study of that beautiful specimen of Roman architecture the circular temple at Tivoli, I have never seen, and I take occasion to recommend it particularly to the notice of the students of the institute, as an example of neatness and accuracy combined with freedom of drawing.

Mr. Dance evidently felt his subject both as an architect and an artist. The date of these drawings is 1761-2.

Mr. Dance was admitted a member of the Arcadian College at Rome, and of the academy of St. Luke in the same city, in 1764.

Having completed seven years of assiduous study in Italy, he returned to England, and in 1765, at the age of twenty-seven, succeeded his father in the appointment of clerk of the City works. One of the first buildings he was engaged upon was the small parish church of Allhallows, on London Wall, the design of which was approved by the trustees in May 1765.

This building is of very unpretending character, the plan is a parallelogram with a semi-circular apse at the east end, and a small vestibule and cupola at the west. The ceiling is vaulted and the church fortunately has no side galleries. It must be confessed that this is not one of Mr. Dance's happiest produc-

tions. He was accustomed to call it his first child; his second was a far better specimen and one of larger growth "the prison of Newgate." The date of the contract drawings for this building is June, 1769, and they are signed by the contractors, George Wyatt, John Devall, jun., John Read, and Joshua Hobson.

This building has always justly been considered as one of Mr. Dance's finest works; the architecture of the exterior is highly characteristic of the purposes of the structure; at the very first view the spectator is impressed with its grandeur, solidity, and security. The most successful portions are probably the entrance lodges designed to form important features in the façade: they are stamped with so strong a mark of gloomy grandeur and severity, as to create in us the belief that when designing them the architect must have had in his mind Dante's celebrated inscription.

"Lasciate ogni speranza voi ch'entrate."

The centre portion of the building, forming the governor's house, is not so successful in design as the other parts; the domestic air which is given to it as a residence does not harmonize with the more severe and solid portions of the prison. When first built, this centre part was terminated by a pediment; the present attic appears to have been substituted at the time of the reinstatements after the riots, in the year 1780; the entrance doorway in the original design was also more in character, and more important than the present one.

I need hardly dwell upon the interior arrangements of the prison; at the period in which it was designed, it was no doubt suited to what was then considered to be immediately requisite. At that day the system of classification, and the reformation of criminals had, unfortunately, not engaged public attention; the security of the prisoners appears to have been nearly the only object which was well considered.

The contract drawings for St. Luke's Hospital for Lunatics are dated 1782, and are signed by Joshua and William Hobson, as the contractors. This is a building well worthy the architect of Newgate, and although perhaps not so well known as that structure, is deserving of great commendation for the harmony and appropriateness of its design.

Giltspur-street prison appears to have been the next public work of importance designed by Mr. Dance; but this is by no means to be placed in comparison with the two buildings just alluded to; the repetition of three pediments in the same façade is unworthy the hand which has accomplished so much better works.

In his capacity of surveyor to that noble institution, St. Bartholomew's Hospital, the church of St. Bartholomew the Less came under Mr. Dance's superintendence, and in 1789, he nearly rebuilt that edifice; and although there is a certain degree of elegance and ingenuity exercised in the treatment of the octagonal plan of this building, Mr. Dance would not be forgiven in these days, for departing so much as he then did from the original structure. We must, however, make some allowances for the taste and style prevalent at that time, when mediæval architecture was so little understood, and when our ancient churches had no staunch defenders in Camden or Ecclesiological societies. In the year 1793, I find that Mr. Dance designed a new laboratory and several additions to the hospital.

The East-India House, in Leadenhall-street, was rebuilt in 1796; and it appears that Mr. Dance submitted an elevation for that building.

In the same year Mr. Dance appears to have been engaged on that great work, the design for the improvement of the Port of London, which he afterwards, in 1802, submitted to a select committee of the House of Commons.

This design is one of great magnificence and practical utility; it consists of a double bridge, in the place of old London bridge, to admit of the passage of ships by the alternate elevation of a drawbridge on either of the two bridges, whilst an uninterrupted way over the other would be afforded at all times for carriages and foot passengers, without impeding the navigation, and without the necessity of such elevated arches as the height of ships' masts require. The plan embraced the embankment of the river both above and below bridge, the erection of quays and a line of warehouses extending from the Tower to the bridges, with

dock entrances, and terraces on arches, the Custom House being placed in the centre. Besides these manifestly advantageous alterations, he proposed to throw open to the river the noble monument erected by the genius of Wren, making it the focus of an extensive amphitheatrical area on the north side of the Thames, and to erect a naval trophy in the centre of a similar space on the Southwark side. The bridges were to be perfectly level, consisting each of six arches of great span, independent of the centre or drawbridge.

This insignificant design is well given in a mezzo tint engraving, from a picture by Mr. Dance's early friend, William Daniell, and, of course, is well known to the body I am now addressing.

In these days of gigantic engineering, when mountains and rivers are passed under by tunnels, and straits passed over by tubular bridges, Mr. Dance's design may not at first strike the eye as being of that important character which I have claimed for it; but when it is examined in an architectural, as well as in an engineering point of view, I think it will be admitted that it is the conception of a master mind, and that its very magnificence and the necessary sacrifice of valuable ground were the principal reasons of its non-adoption.

A failure in this account, however, was not confined to the city architect, for among many bold and ingenious designs submitted to the House of Commons at that period, I find one by Messrs. Telford and Douglass, to replace old London-bridge by one of cast-iron of a single arch, 600 feet span, and 65 feet in height!

Mr. Dance appears to have been consulted on the subject of the approaches to this *pons triumphalis*; and I find a drawing of his, shewing that the inclined line of approach would have commenced in Bishopsgate-street, near the London Tavern, and terminated on the Southwark side by the Town-hall. It would have formed a most productive line for compensation claims, and a source of no little employment for juries and referees.

The other principal works upon which Mr. Dance was engaged for the corporation of London were the front to Guildhall, which (bearing in mind a very homely but apposite proverb) I will not detain the meeting by commenting upon. The council-chamber, however, is an extremely successful work. It has a pendulous dome springing from four semi-circular arches, and is altogether a very elegant apartment, and of pleasing proportions. Finsbury square was, from Mr. Dance's design; and he also designed and carried through the improvements in Skinner-street and Pickett-street, Alfred-place, Tottenham Court-road, and its terminal crescents.

I believe the last work on which Mr. Dance was engaged for the city was the fitting up of Guildhall, on the occasion of the grand entertainment to the Emperor of Russia and foreign potentates in 1814. I understand he entered on this work quite *con amore*; it was a grand occasion, on which he put forth all his energy; and the committee, having very properly placed the whole matter, both as to design and the means of executing it, into his hands, he was enabled to produce the most satisfactory result in a comparatively short space of time. A view of the hall, as fitted up for the occasion, was painted by Mr. William Daniell.

Besides his official appointments, Mr. Dance appears to have had an extensive private practice, being employed by several noblemen and gentlemen of fortune; among others, the Marquis of Camden, at Bayham Abbey, Lord Ashburton, at Seven Oaks, the Marquis of Lansdown, in alterations and additions at Bowood, and the library at Lansdown House, Berkeley-square; Lord Ashburnham, at Battle, Sussex, Sir Francis Baring, Stratton, Hampshire, and Sir George Beaumont, Coleorton, Leicestershire. The studies and working drawings for these several works are now in the Soane collection, and they will amply repay a careful examination. Those for Ashburnham-place are full of interest. The design for the principal front of this house presents a very curious mixture of Italian and Gothic architecture; some portions are similar to the Guildhall front, and several of the ornaments and enrichments remind us forcibly of similar features so generally employed afterwards by Sir John Soane. The staircase at Ashburnham-place forms a capital