

# The meaning of Architecture.

I

Every time that we walk the streets of Montreal, or of any other city, we must notice that the buildings which line them are different, and that their difference tells us something about the purpose of the building.

Edm<sup>r</sup>. Prince St.  
New York  
Wall Street.

At one corner we will see a great departmental store, with huge windows of plate glass, in the next block is a bank its front adorned with massive stone columns, its windows comparatively small and surrounded by elaborate architectural decoration further on is a Church, standing within a plot of green grass and surmounted by a spire. Its windows are long and pointed and it has no massive columns.

These differences we accept as matters of course, we recognise a church or a store at once by its outside appearance and it would seem strange, and rather objectionable if, on entering a building with pointed windows and a lofty spire we were to find ourselves in a departmental store. Yet, if we are to know anything about architecture this is where we must begin, why do we build churches with narrow pointed windows and stores with broad flat ones?

Now, in the first place we do it for convenience. A store has to have large windows in order that the goods which are for sale may be displayed as an ~~temptation~~ encouragement and perhaps a temptation to the passerby. In a bank, on the other hand, we have no goods to display, so we only have windows large enough to allow in light. But this does not explain the pointed arches, or the massive columns.

The fact is that we like a building to look like what it is. A Bank we imagine to ourselves as a strong place full of riches and so we feel satisfied when a bank looks strong and rich. We adorn it with massive columns and elaborate architectural adornments so that it may look strong and wealthy, and we are quite right - for this is good architecture.

Again - we are accustomed to seeing pointed arches in our churches. Our earliest memory of a church is the memory, in most cases, of a pointed arch, if we travel



most of the churches which we see will have pointed arches and so it gives us pleasure, it gives us the undefinable feeling of being in a place ~~dedicated to~~ devoted to unworldly thought when we find ourselves amid pointed arches.

And this too is good architecture, for a building should not only look like what it is but it should ~~fill us with~~ <sup>inspire us with.</sup> the right feelings, a house should make us feel comfortable and "at home" a public building should make us feel proud to belong to so great an Empire a bank should make us feel safe and confident. All this is in the power & belongs to the art of Architecture.

So we may begin with two guides. A building should be convenient - if it needs big windows it should have them and it should be expressive of its purpose.

Any building which does not fulfil these ~~the~~ needs is bad architecture. A house which is uncomfortable to live in, a church which is undignified to worship in a public building which is mean and insignificant, all these are bad architecture.

Royal  
Institution  
Edinr

→ To be good architecturally a building must be convenient base and expressive to look at.

This has been ~~the case~~ <sup>so</sup> since ever man began to build and will be so as long as he does build. It seems very simple and natural that it should be so yet, even today, the disregard of these simple matters is responsible for more bad architecture than is any other cause.

We ~~are~~ too often see an elaborate building ~~which is~~ covered with wonderful decoration but excessively inconvenient inside. We are told "Oh, but the needs of the Architecture have to be considered, the Colonnade no doubt makes the ~~builds~~ rooms dark but a colonnade is necessary to this style" That is bad architecture.

Royal  
Institution  
Edinr

→ Or again we visit some public institution and find it built of rough brick with square ugly windows. It looks more like a factory than anything else but we are told "It is very convenient and serves its purpose quite well, ~~we had no money to spend on~~ its appearance does not matter"



that also is bad architecture, quite as bad though not perhaps quite as bad as the first building. For architecture does not consist of ornament, but ~~of~~ is simply suitable building.

Now, because it has the power to move our minds with feelings of awe, of comfort or of pleasure, architecture is an art and like all other arts it has certain particular means and materials with which it works. The painter for instance works with nature, with paint & canvas, the silversmith works with silver, with hammer and graver and with the <sup>useful</sup> ~~natural~~ shapes of spoons and coffee pots and both are artists. The architect works with structure, with the manner in which materials of various kinds are put together to make a strong and useful building. It is a mistake to think of Art as purely concerned with nature, in Architecture, as in music or in silversmith-work, nature plays a very small and subordinate part it is structure which controls and originates all the beauty of a fine building.

Now the manner in which buildings have been put together <sup>has been</sup> ~~has~~ very different at different times and in different countries. ~~We belong to the great European civilization and our concern~~ These different ways of putting a building together form the historic "Styles of Architecture" and it is of them that I am going to speak to you. We belong to the great European civilization and we are only concerned about the European "styles of Architecture" the classic styles of Greece and Rome, the mediæval styles of the Byzantine Empire and of Western European Gothic - the Renaissance styles which spread all over Europe in the XV century and the modern architecture which has resulted from all these as they have descended to us.

~~Now~~ The earliest civilization of which I shall speak is that of Greece. There were earlier ~~the~~ civilizations in Egypt, in Babylonia and in Crete, great civilizations which have left behind them mighty works, but they have not had any very deep influence on our modern life, so that we may begin with Greece.

In the VI or VII century B.C. we find the coasts of the Levant, the land of Greece, ~~and~~ the heel of Italy and Sicily inhabited by the people who called themselves Hellenes and whom we know as Greeks. They were of two allied races. The Dorians in Greece Italy and Sicily and the Ionians in Asia minor but both



erected buildings somewhat similar in character. All Greek buildings have columns supporting beams and a roof. The Greek temple is a simple, longshaped house with a verandah running round it.

Theracium. NW  
Theracium S. 2.

We must remember that the forms used in Architecture usually begin in some very simple manner. The Ancient Greek, long before he began to build his Temples of marble, built ~~them~~ his houses of wood and, as a verandah was a pleasant place to sit in + to shelter from the sun he built verandahs with wooden posts and covered by wooden beams and a wooden roof. So, when he came to build the house for his god he made it a house like his own but much more splendid. in place of wood he used stone or marble he adorned the beams and the gables with sculpture, he moulded the columns, the capitals and the roof rafters in the most delicate manner + he painted his marble building with the gayest colours, just as he had painted his old wooden house. Because the verandah was the only architectural form which he knew he surrounded his temple with a verandah of stone columns. What we now call a colonnade or a peristyle or some other learned name.

Theracium  
Entablature

Of course, when he changed from wood to stone he had to alter some of his forms a little. He had to make his columns thicker than the wood posts and closer together. but, above the columns he imitated <sup>in marble</sup> the shapes of the wooden beams + of the terracotta rainwater gutter and produced the Entablature of Architrave, frieze and Cornice.

Paestum  
T of Paestum

Temples of this kind were built from the VI to the II centuries BC in all the Greek lands. Those built by the Dorians were rather more severe than those built by the Ionians and the forms used by Dorians and Ionians were rather different but all Greek Architecture is founded upon the use of the column and the beam and from this is called ~~Tra~~ Tra ~~beated~~ beated ~~or~~

This Greek Architecture was very well known to the Romans who employed Greek Architects but, with the decline of the Roman power the Greek buildings fell slowly into ruin. For many centuries they were quite unknown until, in the beginning of last Century, archaeologists discovered them and these Greek forms now known as the Greek Doric and Ionic Orders were



copied in modern buildings, as we shall see when we come to modern Architecture

The most famous of all the Doric Buildings was the Temple of Athena the Maiden at Athens. generally known as the Parthenon. It was built in 532 years B.C. of white marble & is now a mere ruin, though one of the most beautiful ruins in Greece. & stands upon the Acropolis, on rock part of Athens.

View of Acropolis. cp. the fort at Quebec.

View of Parthenon.

The most exquisite care was taken in the building of this temple - it is of white marble, now weathered to a golden yellow. The stones are laid without mortar & so fine are the joints that even now a sheet of paper could not be slipped between them anywhere. <sup>with</sup> A mistake of  $\frac{1}{4}$  of an inch anywhere in the building could be detected at once but no such mistake was made.

In modern buildings we ~~should~~ <sup>are</sup> be well satisfied if they are built to within an inch or two of the sizes required. a Greek building was far more accurately built than anything we do today.

Detail of Parthenon entablature.

The capital very plain swelling form, delicate outline.

The frieze with its triglyphs which represent in stone the old wood beams. The carved metopes.

The Entablature. The cornice = the Eaves. curve artists

The sculpture of the Parthenon, the most beautiful in the world.

The procession of the people to present a new cloak to Athena

The Presentation.

The ~~Metopes~~ <sup>Youths</sup> - bearing offerings.

The metopes - the battles of the Centaurs & Lapiths. Civilization & Barbarism  
1.

The Gable or Pediment sculptures. The birth of Athena, the city goddess, who sprang, fully armed, from the head of Zeus.  
West Pediment Iris & Victory Fates

Yet, with all its beauty of sculpture and delicacy of form the Parthenon was a simple hall, surrounded by a verandah. The Greeks, above all people, knew & admired perfect simplicity.



The Architecture of the Ionian Greeks was also one of colonnades and beams, but was a little different in its details. Unfortunately the great temples of Asia minor have been completely destroyed & hardly one stone is left upon another. The great Temple of Diana of the Ephesians has been excavated and its fragments studied, but we have no remains which show us what one of these great Ionian Temples was like. In Athens however, where the people were half Ionian, there are many small temples of this architecture.

- 1 View
- 2 Chores detail
- 3 Cap from Propylaea

The T of Nike' Apteros. The wingless victory.  
 Capital Column with base and volutes on Capital.  
 No triglyphs on Frieze which is continuous.  
 Detail of Ionic Capital.

The Erechtheion or Chapel of Erechtheus. 3 little shrines in one. The sacred olive tree. The gift of Athena. The salt spring of Hephaestus.

- View
- Detail
- Porch of Maidens
- a Maiden
- Egg & Dart.
- Cap Epidaurus.
- Zeus Olymp
- Do Do

View.  
 Detail.  
 The Caryatid Porch. } Ionic details Egg & Dart  
 } } Caryatid  
 } } Antennae  
 } }  
 In later times a new form of Capital was developed in which the bell of the capital was surrounded by leaves of acanthus above which emerge little volutes. This capital was used with an entablature of the Ionic order & was named, for some reason now very difficult to explain, the Corinthian Capital. Zeus Olympus. Athens - 11 century B.C. really an Ionic Temple

From this we get the 3 orders of Greek Architecture. The Doric, the Ionic and the Corinthian. They have all been revived and are still in use in modern architecture and all are distinguished by the very greatest delicacy and fineness of workmanship. Simple though it is, no modern artist has ever improved upon the Doric Capital for its own particular use. & when we think of Greek art we think of grace, dignity, simplicity and a high noble idealism.



There is one other kind of building beyond the Temple about which I wish to say a few words. The Theatre.

1. A dancing place sacred to Dionysus, set in a <sup>little</sup> valley from the sides of which the people could look on at the sacred dance about the altar.
2. a stage at the back for the represent. of the Sacred drama
3. Seats. open to the air.

Object - 1 purely religious

later Cure. The Tragedy is pathetic

The Comedy is a curious form of humorous story associated with Dionysus, later passed into regular political satire.

Epidaurus. Theatre.

Altars Theatre

" " Stage.

" Altar.

" Seat of high priest of D.