

Arthur Thomas Bolton
Cantor lectures on the architecture
and decoration of Robert Adam and
Sir John Soane.

NA
996
B64



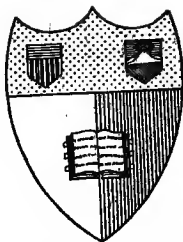
College of Architecture Library
Cornell University

NA

996

B64

DOES NOT CIRCULATE



Cornell University Library
Ithaca, New York

BOUGHT WITH THE INCOME OF THE
SAGE ENDOWMENT FUND

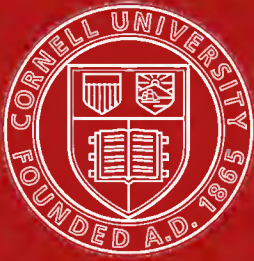
THE GIFT OF
HENRY W. SAGE

1891



'I. Taylor Sc.

Elevation of the Society's House,
designed by ROBERT ADAM ESQ.^r



Cornell University Library

The original of this book is in
the Cornell University Library.

There are no known copyright restrictions in
the United States on the use of the text.



SYON HOUSE. ROBERT ADAM, ARCHITECT, 1762.

The ascent from the Hall to the Ante-Room.

ROYAL SOCIETY OF ARTS

JOHN STREET, ADELPHI, LONDON, W.C. 2.

CANTOR LECTURES

ON

The Architecture and Decoration of Robert Adam and Sir John Soane, R.A.

(1758–1837).

WITH TWENTY-ONE ILLUSTRATIONS.

BY

ARTHUR T. BOLTON, F.S.A., F.R.I.B.A.

Soane Medallist and R.I.B.A. Essay Medal, 1893. Curator of Sir John Soane's Museum.

Delivered before the Royal Society of Arts on May 3rd, 10th, and 17th, 1920.

PRICE, 2s. 6d.

LONDON :

PRINTED BY WM. CLOWES & SONS, LTD., DUKE STREET, STAMFORD STREET, S.E. 1.

1920.

7901

G86E

A506727

SYLLABUS.

LECTURE I.

The first lecture deals with the general position in English architecture at the time of Robert Adam's return from Italy in 1758, and describes the revolution of taste that he brought about. The leading ideas of his scheme of architecture and decoration, now known as the Adam style, are fully discussed.

LECTURE II.

The second lecture continues the subject in greater detail through a selection from the most characteristic works by Robert Adam, dealing more particularly with the interiors and decoration of his famous houses.

LECTURE III.

The third lecture is devoted to Sir John Soane, and traces his relations to the movement begun by Robert Adam and to the Greek and Mediæval revivals. Soane's ideas on architecture and decoration are discussed in relation to his more important works. In conclusion, it is pointed out that three-quarters of a century is covered by the work of Robert Adam and John Soane.

The Architecture and Decoration of Robert Adam and Sir John Soane, R.A. (1758-1837).

LECTURE I.—DELIVERED MAY 3RD, 1920.



CAMEO PORTRAIT OF ROBERT ADAM, ARCHITECT. (1728-1792.)
Modelled by Tassie and produced by Wedgwood.

was born in 1753 and came to London in 1768, the year of the launching of the famous Adelphi enterprise.

Any such selection of dates is, of course, purely arbitrary as one period blends into another, the seed of any change of style has long been germinating, and while all can mark the new growth when it has shot up, few can detect the transitional stages of its development. From the time of the introduction of pure Italian architecture into England by Inigo Jones, in the reigns of James and Charles I., a tolerably regular line of development had been pursued, in spite of the gap caused by the Civil War.

The work of that great architect was the object of the enthusiastic regard of the school of Burlington and Kent. James Gibbs, the immediate leader before Robert Adam, had died in 1754. He was very fairly characterised by Walpole, who said that "Gibbs' merit was fidelity to rule, his defect a want of grace."

THE opening date of the period which has been taken as the subject of these Cantor Lectures is that of Robert Adam's return from his memorable grand tour, which extended from the summer of 1754 to January, 1758.

The closing date is that of the death (January 20th, 1837) of Sir John Soane, who

the period of the two first Georges had been a solid and consistent whole, which it now became the mission of Robert Adam, as a revolutionary artist, to break up and transform. The opening of a new reign in 1760 was of itself a favouring circumstance, and in ten years from that date imitation of

Adam work had become general. The commencement of the long ministry of Lord North (1770-1782) marked the close of the troubled period of the transition from the Early to the Late Georgian, and the year 1775, that of the mid-point of Robert Adam's career in London (1758-1792), coincides with the high-water mark of that epoch of prosperity and magnificence. Everybody knows how the American and other wars clouded over the fair prospects. In 1780 occurred the Gordon Riots, in 1782 the Ministry collapsed, and a real recovery was only commencing when the death of Robert Adam took place (March, 1792), almost simultaneously with that of Sir Joshua Reynolds.

In 1793 the Revolutionary Wars began which were almost continuous up to 1815. By the time that peace was re-established after Waterloo a new generation had sprung up, to whom Robert Adam was merely a name, almost a legend, and one grown so distorted that in the current view the Adams had been little better than speculative builders.

Adam work was freely destroyed for the next half century during the ascendancy of the Greek and Gothic Revivals, and it has been the work of this generation to re-establish its fame.

There is a closer link than is generally supposed between the work of Soane and Adam. By reason of his marked personality and long life, Sir John Soane came to be respected and even venerated as the veteran heir of the age before the great wars of the Revolution.

As gold medallist of the Royal Academy (1776) he had been introduced to George III. by Sir William Chambers himself. He was the pupil of George Dance, R.A., and had been an assistant in the office of Henry Holland, jun., and could claim to have been the friend of Robert Adam, James Stuart, and James Wyatt, who had been the leaders of that remarkable epoch.

Soane as an artist, moreover, was an outcome of Robert Adam's revolutionary mission, belonging more to the Adam and Dance group than to the more orthodox school of Chambers, Taylor, and Paine.

The fundamental idea of Robert Adam that lay at the root of his revolution was the thesis "that the domestic architecture of the Greeks and Romans was entirely distinct from that of their temples." This proposition, which may, perhaps, be regarded as merely a commonplace to-day, called in question the validity of the system of the orders which had been the subject of so much study since men had first turned to the

remains of Roman antiquity as a new basis for building, in the earliest days of the Renaissance.

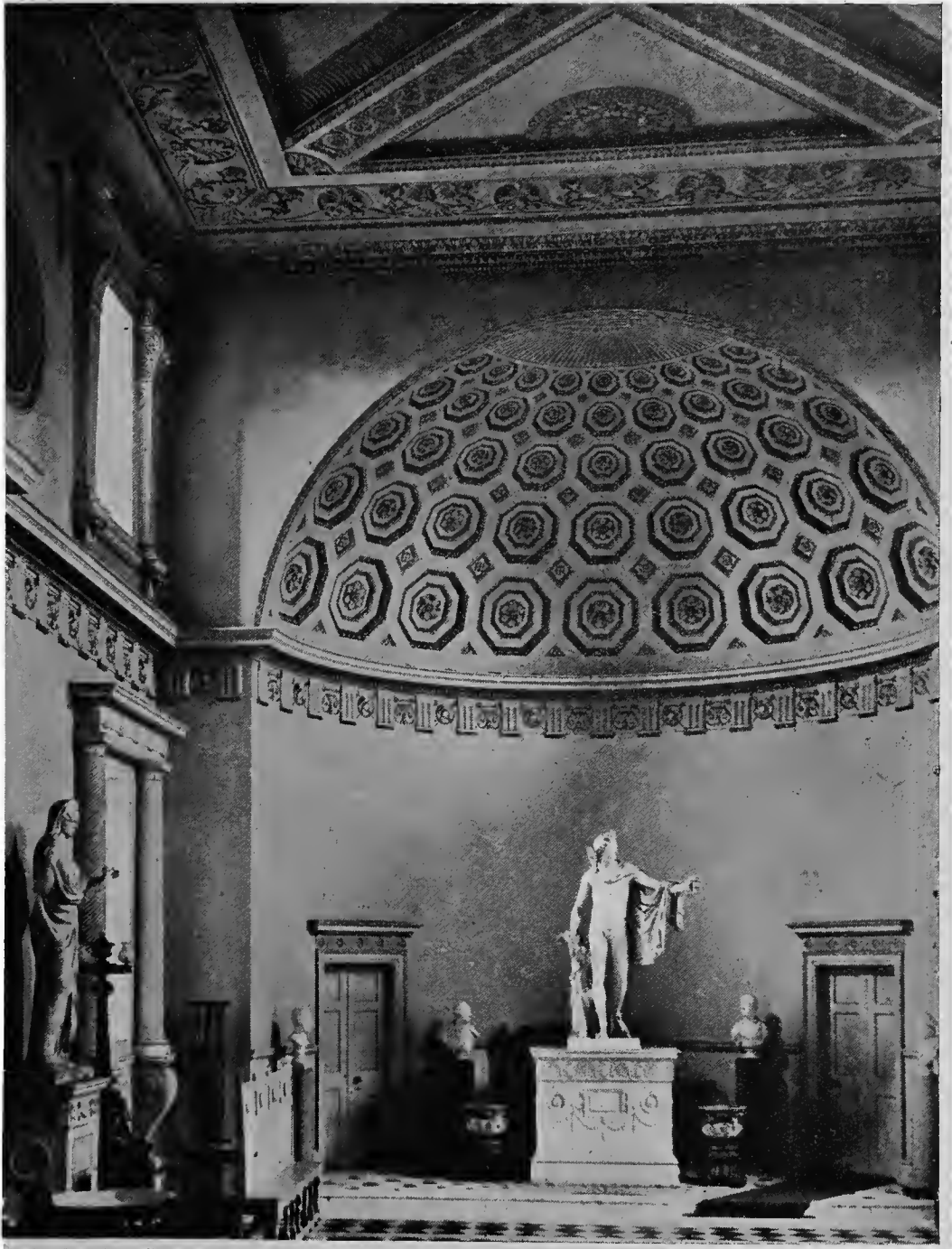
Palladio had, systematised the use of the orders, and the universal admiration for his building achievements at Vicenza and Venice had carried his style throughout Europe. His "Architettura" (1570) had been Inigo Jones's handbook in Italy, and the Anglo-Palladian School was fortified by more than a century of successful practice in England.

Robert Adam's earliest work, after his return in 1758 from Italy, is leavened by this tradition, and there has always been a body of opposition to his revolutionary theories and their application in architecture.

Soane accepted Adam's basis, but modified it by the adoption of those Greek ideas and details against which Sir William Chambers had thundered in vain. The Bank of England, to which Soane had been appointed architect in 1788, was the field in which from 1794 onwards this later revolution of Soane's was manifested. The opposition was intense; the feelings of the remnant of the old school were outraged by the young architect's substitution of such unorthodox work, in place of the sound tradition of the school of St. Martin's-in-the-Fields.

After the great war the older school was practically extinct. The Greek and Gothic revivals were in possession of the field, until, in the last years of Soane's life, a new chapter was commenced by the introduction of the Florentine and Roman, Astylar manner, introduced by Sir Charles Barry, R.A. Sir John Soane, R.A., who had started under the influence of Robert Adam, showed in his last work, the new State Paper Office (1829-33), an evident appreciation of this fresh departure.

As all are aware, Robert Adam was the second of four sons of William Adam, sen., an architect of large practice in Scotland up to the time of his death in 1748. John, the eldest of these sons, passed his life in Edinburgh and on his estate at Blair Adam. Robert, the second son, born in 1728, was educated from the age of fifteen at Edinburgh University. James, the third son, born 1730 (?) was also entered there, but under the Greek in place of the Latin professor. Of William, the youngest of the group, very little is known; he seems to have been the business agent of the London practice of Robert and James. As the survivor of the group, living until 1822, he deserves remembrance because it is through his care that the priceless collection of Adam drawings in the Soane Museum has survived.



SYON HOUSE. THE HALL.

As was stated at the outset Robert returned from his memorable grand tour of nearly four years' duration in January, 1758, and the remainder of his life was passed in London, varied by repeated journeys to Scotland and over all England, in connection with his extensive practice as an architect.

James may be regarded as having been chief of the staff to Robert, while John's position seems to have been that of the eldest brother, to whom a certain deference was shown, as by the inclusion of his name in the contracts, etc., of the Adam Brothers.

There is nothing to show that, apart from the genius of Robert, any one of the other three sons of William Adam, sen., would have achieved anything ranking above the sound and traditional, if heavy and dull, work of their father.

As is well known James made an extended tour from 1760 to 1763 in the early days of Robert's commencing practice in London. He collected pictures, antiques, books and drawings abroad, and directed various studies by draughtsmen and others, as though intending some important work. The architectural results of his tour were, however, unimportant in comparison with that of Robert's earlier tour.

At the same time too much importance has been attached to Robert Adam's highly successful book of 1764 on Diocletian's Palace at Spalato, which he had studied on the spot in 1757. The value of this study was that it enlarged his idea of ancient domestic architecture, and confirmed the view that he had already taken as to the essential difference between the temple architecture of the Greeks and Romans and that of their private houses. The allegation that the Adam style derives from this late Roman work on the coast of the Adriatic is a pure myth, as anyone who looks at the book with attention will soon discover. Robert Adam's studies abroad were pursued in a very catholic spirit, and the work of the Early Renaissance, of the Romanesque, and even the Mediæval ages, was not without its effect upon his mind.

As the son of an architect and one who had already certainly taken part in actual work, Robert set out on his grand tour with an exceptional equipment, and on his return he had the ability, knowledge, and fortune, that enabled him to undertake at the outset of his career in London, work of very considerable importance. He seems, therefore, to have escaped the long and trying period of unemployment that is the usual fate of the beginner in architecture.

Before dealing in some detail with a selection from the innumerable works of the Brothers Adam, from 1758 to the close of the century, it will be as well to consider the character and direction of the movement initiated by Robert, because it will be evident that the Adam revolution in style was not merely one of internal architecture and decoration.

No such separation is, in fact, possible, and it was soon evident that his attack on the validity of the order system in use internally could not fail to lessen its importance externally as well. Broadly speaking, the mission of Adam was a recall to the principle that in any treatment of the surface of a building, whether external or internal, the value of the relative planes may be a primary consideration. As applied to street architecture in particular, this is a principle of the greatest value, and it is not limited to any one phase of architectural style. The Adelphi, in its pristine condition, showed a masterly consideration of the problem of low relief; the rigid plainness of the background was a necessary condition of the successful distribution of the ornament in vertical pilaster strips. There was a balance of effect, which has been upset by the subsequent application of details, uncalled for, and destructive of the original breadth of effect.

Robert Adam very soon treated the orders with the same freedom externally as he had claimed internally. He asserts that the architect possessed of any degree of mastery can, and should, vary the received proportions and features of the orders. He thus freed himself of the hampering effect of deep entablatures, composed of the full architrave, frieze; and cornice, as strictly regulated by the width and height of the pilaster or column.

By decorating a plain faced architrave he dispensed with the frieze, and regulated the depth of his cornice by a consideration of its relative value to the tall and wide spaced column, or pilaster, which lent itself to his conception of elegance and decorative effect for domestic buildings. In this way he evolved the façade of an Adam character, which has become a recognised feature of our London streets. He accepted gladly the London stock brick and, whether in stone or stucco, he gave a note of contrasted effect by a sparing but always judicious use of classically derived features.

In a general consideration of the Orders he admits only three—Doric, Ionic, and Corinthian—and he sees that they are each of them repre-

sentative of a different expression. Proceeding further he discriminates against the current Early Georgian use of the Corinthian with unfluted shafts, arguing with much subtlety that there are relative degrees of enrichment to be observed, and, therefore, where this could not be afforded, a simpler order must be adopted.

Contrary to the general opinion Robert Adam had a special feeling for the Doric order, which he used in his earliest days with remarkable success. The mausoleum at Bowood, as well as the Admiralty screen, may be cited as masterpieces of this application. Similar success attended his employment of the Doric in the various halls of his houses from Syon onwards; and, in his latest great work, the Edinburgh University, the great entrance is a magnificent example of the same style on a grander scale.

It is a curious fact that whereas that pillar of orthodoxy, Sir William Chambers, R. A., was mainly responsible for the Chinese mania, having at Kew Gardens practised an eclecticism of the wildest character, Robert Adam, on the other hand, recalled the taste of his age to the veritable antique.

Current domestic work, when he arrived on the scene, was split into three main currents—Italian, French, and Chinese. The Italian, through Burlington and Kent, had acquired a late Venetian character, work of the type that may be seen in the decorations of the Villa

Rotunda, which are commonly regarded as of a date subsequent to Palladio's death. The Villa Maser, where Burlington acquired Palladio's drawings, was frescoed by Paolo Veronese, and the stucco work was by that architect's favourite *stuccatore*, Vittoria. Here,



SYON HOUSE. DETAIL IN HALL.

and in the church adjoining, the character of the decoration is semi-baroque, such as in fact appears to have been intended by Wren himself in St. Paul's, if the well-known engraving of the interior section of the Cathedral is reliable evidence.

French work had only recently been fully exemplified in the interiors of Chesterfield House (1749), where the gilded rococo salons

still remain, as evidence of the Earl's thesis that a house should be Italian outside and French within.

The Chinese School had the full approval of Chippendale, and work like Clandon Park, Surrey, shows the style that was fashionable in the earliest years of Robert Adam's commencing practice.

To the Italian votaries Adam proposed a return to a strict following of antiquity, as it was to be seen in the *cryptæ*, or excavated chambers of the remains of Imperial Rome, and in the newly revealed houses and remains of Pompeii and Herculaneum.

The current French work he desired to reform altogether. He set out to abolish "the absurd French compositions of this kind (interior decorations and fittings) hitherto so servilely imitated by the upholsterers of this country" (England).

Sir John Soane, in his lectures to the students of the Royal Academy, some twenty-five years after Robert Adam's death, asserts that the interlaced C scrolls, and other features of current French taste, were in actual fact for the time being driven out by Adam's reformation of the taste of his day.

The Chinese mode Adam left entirely on one side, the only concession being that, in such early work as that for the Queen of the "Blue Stockings," Mrs. Montagu, in Hill Street, 1766, he uses some Chinese pagoda-like details in the regularly disposed panels of the ceiling.

Adam at first had considerable difficulties in bringing his executants to relinquish the well-established class of detail to which they had grown accustomed. Even in the execution of designs as late in date as 1774, as for instance the piano for the Empress Catherine, he has occasion to complain that the person who executed the work had departed from his design.

Some of the early mirror frames at Osterley can be seen to be much superior in design to their execution, and it was only where he had full control that the whole of the interior, furniture, hangings, etc., of his houses are completely true to his ideal.

The stages of Robert Adam's development are quite sufficiently marked out. Shardeloes, in Buckinghamshire, is as characteristic of the earliest stage as Home House in Portman Square is of the latest.

The actual first work, some interiors at Hatchlands, near Guildford, for Admiral Boscawen (1759-60), are clearly the student work of the

young architect, on his first return from the rich storehouse of Italy. A much more serious note is struck at Syon, where the length of time over which the work extended enabled Adam to develop his ideas from the early style of the hall and dining-room to the later phase of the drawing-room and gallery.

At Kedleston the Adam scheme was hampered by the pre-existing and partly executed design of Brettingham and James Paine. Some of the work there is closely allied to Shardeloes and Syon, but a variety of difficulties prevented the full development of Robert Adam's ideas, in spite of the mass of alternative drawings, that he had made. The Great South Front, which was to be an example of his principle of "movement," remains as a fragment, a noble centre, devoid of the wings and quadrant connections, which were essential to its full effect.

This idea of "movement" is really a recognition by Robert Adam of the principle that lay behind the work of the later Roman school of Bernini and Borromini. The Italian Baroque had been a revolt against the over-systematisation of the orders, and was a claim to treat buildings as a sculptural unit that could be shaped at will, as an affair of relative masses, dependent on light and shade for an effect which might even become merely pictorial.

Unfortunately this late Italian claim for freedom was pushed to a license, which revelled in a mere inversion of recognised details, rather suggestive of a certain poverty of original invention. It has hardly been recognised that Robert Adam had ever given attention to the work of the late Roman school. The facts have been established by an analysis of his library, which proves that he had collected a choice selection of books on the subject.

Evidently Robert Adam did not agree that the architects of this school were the "block-heads" of the famous letter from Sir William Chambers to his pupil Stevens at Rome. Of this epistle Chambers characteristically gave an identical copy to young Soane, upon his setting out in 1778 upon his grand tour.

We have, therefore, without doubt, the explanation why Robert Adam was the earliest to appreciate the real merits of his predecessor, Sir John Vanburgh, to whose genius he paid a discriminating tribute, years in advance of that by Sir Joshua Reynolds, which has been so often quoted.

Adam had very early in his career added to houses by Vanburgh, as at Compton Verney and Kimbolton, he had certainly seen both



SYON HOUSE. THE ANTE-ROOM.

Blenheim and Castle Howard, and thoroughly understood both the merits and defects of the earlier master.

Unfortunately, Robert Adam by the conditions and circumstances of his day never achieved that grand building, which was always in his dreams, and constituted the goal of his ambition.

At first he hoped for a royal palace for the new King, or at least for new Houses of Parliament, which would also involve new Law Courts. The Adelphi itself was really projected as an example of a great work, worthy of comparison with the *vestigia Romanorum*. A derelict and apparently useless sloping site was to be transformed by vast underworks raising it to the level of the Strand, where a fine terrace of houses was to demonstrate the possibilities of London improvements. Quays and warehouses below at the river level were to give a commercial backing to artistic enterprise, and this busy scene Robert Adam, no doubt, saw in his mind's eye as a foreground, recalling the quays below the Imperial ruin of Spalatro.

Only at the close of his life did the new University of Edinburgh afford him an opportunity of displaying his power of conceiving a great building as a whole, and of designing it in a style of broad simplicity, which surprises those who have merely considered him as an ornamentalist.

The Register House of Scotland, a much simpler problem, shows that Robert Adam could build with a simplicity and refinement that is truly Grecian. Robert Adam as an architect, in fact, demonstrates the truth that there is no real divorce between the extreme qualities of architecture. He seems by instinct to have adopted the same alternative as Sir Charles Barry in the case of the Houses of Parliament, either absolute simplicity as in the elevations of the inner courtyards, or extreme elaboration as in the exterior façades of the new Palace of Westminster. The architectural quality demanded in both cases springs from the same root, a fine sense of unity in the design of the whole, by which the mass is never sacrificed to the detail.

The subordination in Robert Adam's finest work is complete, and extends to every detail, all of which are so fused in the total effect that nothing is extraneous to the design.

In his early interiors Adam was hampered by the enthusiasm of the period for the statues of antiquity. The recovery of the Greek masterpieces, through the copies of the Roman School

of Antiquity, was one of the great interests of the day.

Niches were required for the Venuses, Floras, Dianas, Jupiters, and Apollos of the old Pantheon. The early Adam hall, dining room, staircase, and even the gallery, became the scene of such displays. At Syon there are three great statues on either side of the mantelpiece. Bas-reliefs, where originals were not forthcoming, are given in chiaroscuro paintings. Adam soon realised the unsuitableness of this scheme of decoration for an English interior, and, while he considered that the dining room in particular should be in stucco, so that a "smell of the victuals" might not hang about that apartment, he turned to other and more characteristic forms of decoration.

For the ceiling of these rooms an oval band, supported by wreaths of vine leaves, and enclosing crossed lines of the Bacchic thyrsus, is an early and constantly recurring motive. The band is later on interrupted and strengthened by tablets, presenting miniature bas-reliefs of classical composition.

The walls divided out into large panels above a chair rail are either filled with stucco arabesques, or left as a field for inserted portraits, or decorative landscape compositions, most often introducing ruins, antique or castellated.

Ruins and the elements of picturesque decay had a singular fascination for an age and society which, perhaps, had a subconscious feeling that it was itself drifting towards the Niagara Falls of the Great Revolution.

Robert Adam's ruin compositions have, however, another purport in that they are essays in design, quite as much as recollections of the past impressions of his days of travel. During the slack period, following upon the American, French, and Spanish wars, he made a number of these compositions; there are some forty in the Soane Collection alone. They can be divided into two main groups—those which derive their romance from the ruins of antiquity, and others which recall his early days in the Highlands. In the latter group massive castles crown craggy heights above lakes, or rushing streams of water, crossed by long low arches of masonry. Robert was dreaming of rotundas masked as circular dungeon towers, whose buttresses should be linked together by a chain of arches, forming a ring of powerfully shadowed recesses. This revived feudalism was not to be extended to the interiors.

Culzean Castle, in Ayrshire, while castellated externally, is pure Adam classic within. His



SYON HOUSE. DETAIL IN ANTE-ROOM.

anticipatory mediævalism, where not a concession to the desires of his clients, was, in fact, due to a prepossession of his own that a broken craggy site was a reason for a design of a castle-like character. Possibly, if his travels had extended to the homeland of Greek architecture, he would have received a different impression from the relation of the temples to their mountain scenery and sites. The landscape school of gardening, originated as much by Kent as by any one person, was still in full possession of the field. Robert Adam seems never to have fully thought out the true relation of site and buildings. When he touches on that subject he seems to imply that buildings can be spread out, so as to rise up naturally out of the ground, a feat which even Blenheim cannot be said to have achieved. An Adam house in the country is apt to present the appearance of an isolated cube of masonry, seen under the most favourable circumstances at the end of a vista of trees. Terraces, forecourts, and garden walls had been proscribed by the destructive followers of Kent, and no real school of gardening existed to maintain the sound tradition derived from the gardens of Italy.

The primary object, however, of these compositions by Robert Adam was most likely that of affording ideas for the decoration of wall panels in interiors. He objected strongly to the vast pictorial compositions of the later Italian School, and their followers. Giulio Romano, in the Palazzo del Te at Mantua, had abused the Raphaelesque fresco as a means of interior decoration by an absurd attempt to obliterate the walls themselves, which presumably he had set out to decorate.

Vast canvases, in Adam's opinion, whether on the walls or ceilings, were a mistake. They trespassed on the field of architecture, and destroyed the scale as well as the necessary detail of the interior they purported to embellish. At Syon, in the drawing room, Adam endeavoured to restrict the painter to small flying figures, occupying the field of the octagons and circles of the great cove, as well as of the flat of the ceiling. Undoubtedly, in this instance, the figures are too small, and hereafter Adam provides medallions and lunettes, or oblongs and squares, as panels forming an essential feature of his intricate ceiling designs. In these spaces there is room for three or more figures, and the simpler classic myths are recalled by these graceful compositions.

Constantly these panels are shown in colour

sketches on the detail drawings of ceilings and walls. A great variety of artists must have been engaged on works of this character, which so often now are merely ascribed to Zucchi and Angelica Kauffmann. Hamilton is particularly mentioned by Soane as preferred to the elder Smirke, R.A., who seems to have been occasionally employed by James Wyatt. The chief artist for the latter architect, however, was Biagio Rebecca.

Silk as a substitute for the costly tapestry was often employed for the drawing rooms, either in plain colours, or woven in patterns as at Syon, where the wall covering is said to be the earliest of the Spitalfields silk damasks.

Tapestry is seen in all its glory at Newby. There were four famous sets by Boucher and Neilson. The others were at Croome, Arlington Street, and Osterley.

The drawing-rooms at Newby and Osterley are glorious pieces of colour. Every detail has been successfully combined by Adam in the general effect of the whole. He had already in the great room at Kenwood experimented in the direction of subduing by flat washes of colour the glare of a purely white ceiling ornamented in stucco. This was a very different method from the tiresome "picking-out" of parts in colour and gold, which followed in the early part of the next century. As used by Robert Adam this colour treatment is essentially a wash, intended to blend the effect of the whole, and not to isolate particular ornaments, or lines of mouldings.

Given tapestry or figured silks on the walls, woven pattern fabrics on the furniture, finely embroidered clothes, and a carpet reflecting the elaborate design of the ceiling, all with details and tones of pure, bright, and strong colour, it is elementary that a full accord would require the extension of colour to the ceiling itself.

The typical Adam interior of the period 1770-80 stands in a striking contrast to that of the antecedent age of the first two Georges, in respect of every detail that contributes to the total effect of the taste of the age. Pattern design, whether in form or colour, reached a high level, and fragments of the style have persisted, and reappear in common use, to the present day.

It is natural to inquire how far the development of Robert Adam's idea of interior treatment was modified in the course of his practice. It is possible to recognise three stages, the first in which the ornamentation, while classic in

comparison with French rococo, is yet more florid and scroll-like than the work of the true Adam character. The main period is that in which architectural lines and classic types are fully observed. In the third stage a tendency to relax this severity of form may be detected, and there is an occasional use of flowers, which border on a merely naturalistic treatment.

Probably Robert Adam found it difficult to resist the pressure of common opinion, which fails to recognise the limits of the direct application of natural forms. Very few are aware of the long course of evolutionary change, which has shaped the well-established forms of classic mouldings and enrichments. The attempt to supplement these by direct transcripts from natural objects has very rarely been successful or permanent. It seems clear that Robert himself was content with the alphabet of the art of decoration, and that such attempts as those of the "Britannique order," the "Scotch capital," etc., are merely due to James Adam's vague imaginings. There was a good deal of the amateur in the composition of the third member of the Adam group.

Contemporary critics, who talked about the superior chasteness of James Wyatt's use of the antique, failed to see that Robert Adam had the better sense of the all-important distribution and spacing of ornament. His combinations of lines, and special gift of pattern-making, saved him from a variety of false effects, which are to be seen in the work of his rival Wyatt and of his colleague James Stuart.

The colour decoration of Wyatt is also inferior, because it is so often based upon an imitation of the least attractive phase of the Raphaelesque. It may be said that while Adam might have been taught by Raphael himself, Wyatt had sat at the feet of Giulio Romano. The Cupola Room at Heaton Hall shows the hot type of colour that Wyatt favoured. Robert Adam's most original contribution to colour effects was, perhaps, the combination, which he labelled as "Etruscan Decoration."

In an age which demanded the sanction of antiquity for any fresh departure, such a label had obvious advantages. Adam puts forward an array of authors, but he is careful to explain that not much is to be gathered from them on this subject of "Etruscan Decoration." The real idea at the back of his essay was a sense of the values of earth colours, bright and dull reds, yellows, grey blues, chocolate browns and black. Horace Walpole talks of being plunged

into a "chilly bathos" by the Etruscan Room at Osterley. The simplicity of the scheme startles him. He does not understand this reliance on the earliest principles of decoration, those by which a few of the simplest colours are disposed in direct contrast of hue.

So much of this interesting colour work has been obliterated by later fashion that very few examples exist in sufficient completeness. The Etruscan scheme was applied throughout walls, ceilings, hangings, carpets, and furniture. Occasionally the mantelpiece of white marble inlaid with composition is all that remains to show the original character of the colour scheme of the "Etruscan Room."

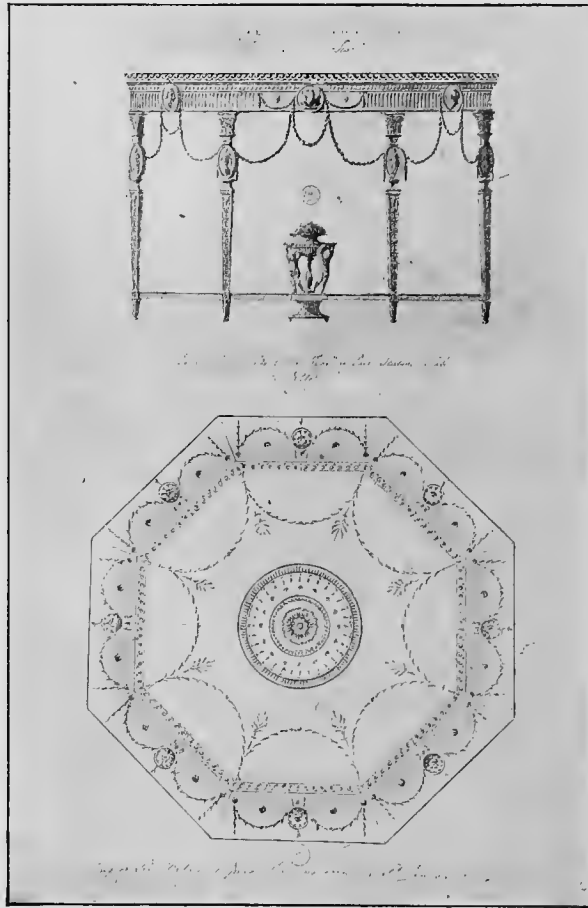
The general knowledge of antiquity, its literature, legends, and myths, as well as the common forms of their expression in ancient art, amongst the class for whom Robert Adam chiefly worked, was a valuable background for his achievements. As a source of expression the original fables were current coin. The choice of Hercules, or of Paris, the continence of Scipio, the sacrifice of Iphigenia, and the rest of the typical myths needed neither label nor explanation. To-day many of the Adam bas-reliefs and subjects of decoration have become merely a riddle to the spectator who misses the application that suggested their particular use. This power of applying universal symbols, for the expression of particular qualities, was of great assistance in the use of sculptural decoration. Abused by dulness it degenerated into an impossible conglomeration of tiresome allegorical figures, such as the great war soon after piled up under Academical auspices in the Abbey and St. Paul's.

It is worthy of note that where Robert Adam used pairs of life-sized figures in his earliest and favourite form of chimney-piece, he seems to give them no special characteristics. Their aspect is purely decorative and unhampered by any forced significance. The same seems true of the Syon Bridge design, where the three female figures have no greater characterisation than that of a group of the three Graces. This avoidance of an overcharged expression in sculpture is a lesson of the greatest value.

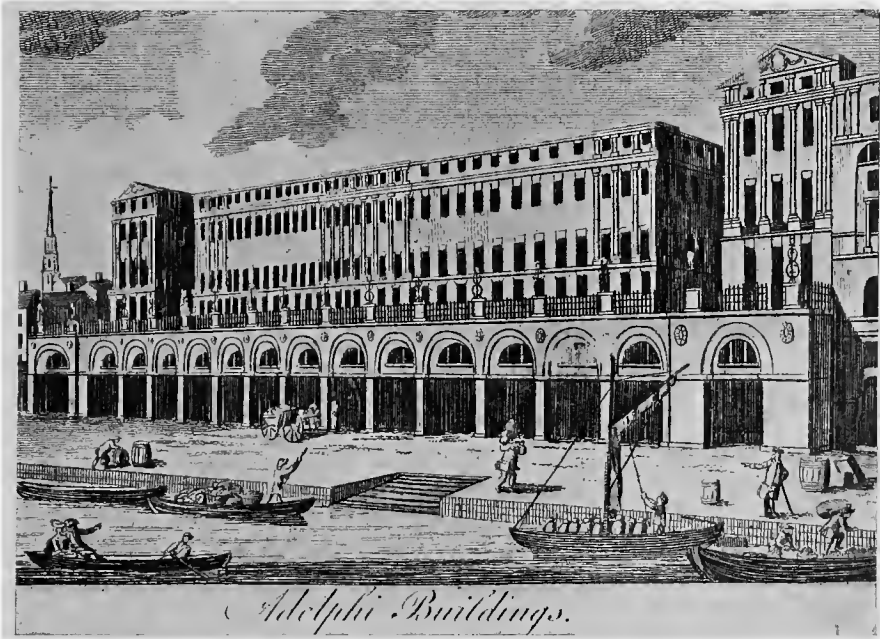
These lectures are not the place in which to deal with the architectural qualities of Robert Adam's planning. All that need be said here is that as house-builder he has had few equals. Numbers of his houses remain practically unaltered, and their continued occupation for more than four generations testifies in a remarkable way to their merits.

It should be pointed out, however, that in sectional treatment Robert Adam never resorts for effect to the experimentalism of George Dance and John Soane. There is no hint of eccentricity in his classic schemes, which remain true to the antique ideal of simplicity and repose. Adam taught and practised the necessity of variety, in contradistinction to the dulness of that series of oblong and square interiors, which had prevailed in the earlier Georgian times. He points out the value of the progressive

effect ending in a climax, but he arrives at such a result without apparent effort, or any straining after a *coup-de-theatre*, in the manner of a Jesuit church, or late Roman Renaissance interior.⁹ This Grecian moderation is all the more remarkable because Adam was the earliest to appreciate the real merits of his predecessor, Sir John Vanburgh, and, as we have seen, he had a knowledge of the Italian baroque, and had been a close ally of Piranesi.



ADAM DRAWING. CONSOLE TABLE AND CEILING.



VIEW OF THE ROYAL TERRACE OF THE ADELPHI.

Initiated by Messrs. Adams in 1768, and begun to be occupied 1772.

LECTURE II.—DELIVERED MAY 10TH, 1920.

I PROPOSE to deal in this second lecture with a brief selection of some of the principal Adam houses, more particularly with reference to their interiors, in a sequence of dates.

It is impossible to do more than merely outline a few of the principal points in each case, and I can only refer you to the two folio volumes, now in the press, in which I hope to give a full and adequate survey of the vast subject of the work of that gifted and versatile artist, Robert Adam.

Hatchlands.—At Hatchlands, near Guildford, in Surrey, in a very dull house, reminiscent of the old Admiralty, without, however, any portico, Robert Adam made his first essay in interior decoration following upon his return from his grand tour in January, 1758.

Ripley, the carpenter, who was the architect of the Admiralty in 1724–6, was probably that of Hatchlands as well. He died February 10th, 1758, less than a month after Robert's return.

As Admiral Boscawen (1711–1761), the hero of the capture of Louisburg (1758), returned in November of that year and sailed again on April

14th, 1759, the date of the Adam drawings can best be placed quite early in the latter year.

The Admiral's monument in Cornwall states that he had just finished the work at his death, January 10th, 1761, and less than two years would be little enough time for the execution of the Adam work at Hatchlands. Robert's share must be confined to the completion of some of the chief rooms. Naturally the work is unrestrained in design and seems bursting with all the enthusiasm of a recent return from Italy. The actual work is better than the drawings, and the design evidently underwent a process of revision in execution, though one less chastened than would have been the case after even a brief experience on the designer's part of actual work.

The centre room of the chief front, the present Great Drawing Room, is the interior with which the principal Adam drawings that remain are concerned. The ceiling is centred on an oval, enclosed by the strong lines of a prolonged octagon, with an outer border enlivened by sea horses in relief. The concentration of ornament in the corners is an Italian feature. The

walls are simply framed up into panels, which in Adam's drawing are filled in with arabesques in stucco, of the type of those which exist at *Shardeloes*. Two paintings of ruins are shown in the centre panels, with a subject-piece enclosed in the overmantel frame. The fine white marble mantelpiece displays a pair of tall graceful figures, a composition which was Robert Adam's earliest ideal. The adjoining Library has even more character. The scheme of the ceiling seems to have a personal reference to the hero's career. The set-out is a radiating scheme of panels with an effect rather resembling that of the gussets of an octagonal dome. The four main figures in these spaces are Neptune, Justice, Fame, and Victory, the last being a figure with a laurel wreath and palm branch. The alternating panels are filled in with twin mermaids rising from a base of cannons, rifles, anchors, flags, swords, spears, and even drums, a mass of decorative symbolism dear to the heart of the eighteenth century. The whole design has evidently a monumental significance and symbolic intent.

The mantelpiece in white marble, of which the drawing exists, is interesting as an early example when Adam was disposed to follow massive architectural types.

There was a great salon upstairs which no longer exists. The ceiling was based on a great oval, the band of which was filled in with octagonal coffering.

The abiding interest at *Hatchlands* will always be that of possessing the earliest decorative essay of Robert Adam after his return from Italy.

Shardeloes.—*Shardeloes*, near Amersham, in Buckinghamshire, may be regarded as the first house, though here also some building work was already in hand, before Adam came on the scene.

The interiors of this house illustrate the claim, made by Robert Adam in his preface to the "Works" of 1773-8, to have effected a revolution in the taste of the age:

"In the decoration of the inside, an almost total change, the massive entablature, the ponderous compartment ceiling, the tabernacle frame, almost the only species of ornament formerly known in this country, are now universally exploded, and in their place we have adopted a beautiful variety of light mouldings, gracefully formed, delicately enriched, and arranged with propriety and skill. We have introduced a great diversity of ceilings, friezes and decorated pilasters, and have added grace and beauty

to the whole, by a mixture of grotesque stucco and painted ornaments, together with the flowing *rainceau*, with its fanciful figures and winding foliage."

Shardeloes represents, of course, the origination rather than the full accomplishment of these ideas. As an early work it has a strong hold on what had gone before, with all the fresh interest added of the germinating stage of a new manner.

In the interiors we see the heavier and bolder ornamentation of the beginner, who has not yet shaken himself free of the earlier Georgian style. The wild curves and scrolls of leafage, in this preliminary essay at *Shardeloes*, as also in the first Adam designs executed at *Kedleston*, had yet to be subdued and harmonised into a new system of low relief decoration of a classical and restrained architectural character.

The wall decorations of the Dining Room are perhaps the most symptomatic achievement at *Shardeloes*, work which seems to call for less of the taming process than the ceilings throughout the house, which very probably were the first work executed. In these wall panels the sphinxes and the inserted bas-reliefs, which were to form the central *motifs* of his system, already appear and strike the true Adam note. The finish and delicacy of the later work are indicated rather than achieved at *Shardeloes*.

The house interiors remain here seemingly the same and untouched. The wall colourings are now faded to pleasant tones of green, lilac, and grey, while the ceilings are mostly white.

The doors, double owing to the thickness of the walls, are magnificent specimens of mahogany, aged to the colour of a tawny port wine, and dulled in polish to a delightful surface.

The Salon, entered from the great portico in the centre of the east front, is a stately hall in that form of Doric, which Adam afterwards developed so effectively at *Lansdowne*, *Harewood*, and many another of his great houses.

The Dining Room at the northern end of the east front is a fine interior, richly decorated. The ceiling has a large oval band crossed by very free-flowing foliage, like a chain of wreaths. The crossed thyrsi and the ivy in the centre are an obvious reference to Bacchic rites. As a whole this design suffers from heterogeneous effect of elements insufficiently welded together. Adam, more than once, using the same idea, hereafter effected great improvements on this early composition.

The Drawing Room, in cream colour, contrasts with the faded blue of the Salon. Relief is



SYON HOUSE. FIREPLACE IN DINING-ROOM.

afforded by two fine mirror frames in gold on gilded console-tables with quadrant tops of scagliola. The ceiling presents a central circle with four lions' heads linked-together by bold swags. Four fans are introduced, features which Adam afterwards developed with great effect. Here again the somewhat wild scrolling on the ceiling illustrates the early date of the work.

The Library, occupying the centre of the south front is perhaps as characteristic as any of these interiors. It may be regarded as the first of those rooms, dedicated to books, of which he produced so fine a series. The distribution of the south window-wall takes the form of a shallow arcade, the bookcases being worked in as projections on the piers. The other walls are entirely lined for two-thirds of their height with white painted deal casings framing up wire panel doors, behind which the books are visible. The entrance doorways to the room are brought into the scheme, so that the line of the book casing is preserved throughout. Above are a series of panels filled in chiaroscuro paintings on green grounds, like a Wedgwood cameo relief on a large scale. The fine mantelpiece is of white marble with Sienna yellow insertions. It has long fluted consoles and a vase in low relief on the central panel of the frieze.

Harewood.—The Adam drawings for the interior of Harewood, in Yorkshire, form an important group of designs all dated 1765. The carcass of the house had been in progress from about 1760, John Carr, of York, being the local architect on the spot working in conjunction with Adam, more particularly in reference to the exterior and the plan, which both represent a compromise between the older tradition and Robert Adam's newer ideals. Adam's plans and elevations for interiors at Harewood occupy many sheets of drawings, and show more work even than was ever realised. They cover the whole of the interior, and include accessory buildings, which do not appear to have been built. Each room is shown by a separate sheet, giving a detail plan, with the four elevations of the walls drawn round it. The correspondence of these drawings with the actual work shows that extraordinary fidelity which astonishes us in Adam's executed works. The detail can be authenticated by the photographs I have had taken, in all cases, proving that what Robert Adam designed was faithfully produced.

Many alternative first and second designs exist, but once the drawing was approved, the work seems henceforth to have been carried through exactly as it was shown by him. It is

a great testimony to the confidence that was placed in Adam, and to his own power of realising his intentions. The Hall at Harewood is on a large scale and, though less imposing and masterly than that of Syon, is yet a monumental example of Robert Adam's work. The bold engaged columns, though unusual with him—he habitually used pilasters—are shown as of fully three-quarters' projection in his original design. The main feature of each wall is emphasised by an arch; in particular opposite to the entrance doorway was a deeply recessed archway with niches, which has since been filled up on the Hall side. The ceiling of the Hall is flatly treated with a central octagonal feature. On the walls are medallions and panels, and on the flag in one of them is the date 1767, which will be that of the completion of this interior, as the drawing for the Hall is dated 1765, and for the fireplace 1766.

The Music Room, entered on the right, is a fine Adam interior still possessing the original carpet, which reflects the design of the ceiling. The medallions on the walls are ascribed to Angelica Kauffmann, and the landscapes to Zuechi, while the portrait of the first Earl of Harewood, in an Adam frame, is by Hoppner. It should be noted that all Adam's drawings for the furniture at Harewood are missing. It is probable that they went direct to Chippendale, and were not returned.

The Great Gallery has been altered; the chimney piece has been moved to the Dining Room. It is a fine instance of the early type of a pair of tall graceful women. The frieze and enclosing mouldings were of ormolu, with a purple ground to the bas-relief panels. The figures were united by light and graceful swags.

The fine ceiling of the Gallery was carried out by Rose from a large coloured drawing by Adam dated 1769. It is exceedingly good in relative scale and ingenious in pattern.

The curtain boxes to the windows are characteristic, and the pendant valances, carved by Chippendale in wood, are so skilfully executed as to quite deceptively match the deep blue colour, as well as the fabric of the curtains.

This doubtless was so arranged to obviate the bad effect of the dust and corrosion of any woven material at that height.

The window piers have magnificent console-tables with mirrors over them. The former follow a design, made by Robert Adam for Sir Lawrence Dundas in 1765, with interesting modifications of detail. The white marble tops have coloured inlays and gold framings. The mirrors have oval paintings by Angelica Kauffmann.



SYON HOUSE. CEILING IN DINING-ROOM.

The Salon in the centre of the south front has been altered by book-casings. Adam had placed screens of columns across the apses, with a pedimented doorway as a centre between them. The pair of splendid mantelpieces on the two side walls remain complete with their over-mantles in exact accordance with his drawing. The composition which he shows occupying the central panel is a "Sacrifice."

A tourist, writing in 1787, says: "All the rooms are equally elegant and costly, but the large Gallery and the Great Drawing Room present such a show of magnificence and art, as the eye hath scarce seen. . . . The Great Drawing Room is as handsome as designs and gilding can make it; here are seen elegant glasses, ornamented with festoons, particularly light and beautiful; also tables with same. The whole has been furnished only a year by Chippendale, of St. Martin's Lane."

The lesser Drawing Room was apparently an Etruscan room.

Croome Court, in Worcestershire, and *Bowood*, in Wiltshire, both present Adam work of the early period, but in each case these are alteration and decoration works to buildings, erected mainly by others, and need not be discussed here.

Kedleston, Derbyshire.—James Paine tells us that in 1761 he prepared the designs for Kedleston which appear in his book. This vigorous but rather heavy-handed architect enjoyed a great reputation and an enormous practice in the North of England. His scheme was to build a centre block with four detached wings, connected by quadrant corridors treated as colonnades. The plan was never completed, and only two wings with their connections exist.

He says that he accepted the previous design of Brettingham for the four wings, but himself "planned the centre block and connecting corridors."

This bears out a memorandum by the first Lord Scarsdale, recording that he built the house between the years 1758-68, and makes it probable that Brettingham was the first architect.

Adam's earliest drawings relate to carpets and ceiling designs, and it would appear most probable that, at first, he was to complete the interior. He appears to have been already working in association with Paine at Alnwick.

The most marked feature of Paine's centre block was a great columned hall and a circular salon, between which he proposed to place the main staircase of the house. Subsequently, however, according to his own account, finding

himself too busy in other parts of England to devote to the proposed building the close attention which so great a work required, he requested to be allowed to resign the task, "whereupon it was entrusted to those able and ingenious artists, Messrs. Robert and James Adam."

In point of fact he was very much preoccupied with Worksop, which had just been burnt down (October, 1761) a month after its completion.

From all this we may assume that Lord Scarsdale had lost faith in the scheme propounded by Paine, and that Robert Adam was called in to complete and particularly to decorate the structure.

Adam revised the plan by suppressing the great staircase, by which change of plan the idea of a great villa in the antique manner was better realised. The bedrooms above were purely secondary, and a minor staircase was all that was required. A grand suite of unbroken state apartments on one level was thus secured.

It is evident from the external appearance of Kedleston that the elegant centre of the south front is entirely due to Robert Adam. It was a part only of a fine and characteristic composition. Had Adam's design been carried out this front would have been complete in itself, and would have illustrated his principle of "movement," as expounded in the prefaces to his "Works."

The large original Adam drawings in the Soane Collection show that the north façade has merely been revised by him, the circular medallions under the portico being, for instance, added. Except, in fact, for a few minor details and a superior air of refinement, this front agrees with Paine's elevation.

The interior of Kedleston, however, is obviously entirely by Adam, and it is of remarkable interest, because it is a development of the work at Shardeloes, and is also closely related to the great interiors of Syon, which were in progress at the time.

Of the thought and labour that Robert Adam gave to Kedleston there is remarkable evidence. Folios of designs in colour and pencil, some of which were used, while others remain as studies, exist. Every detail was brought into the scheme, furniture, grates, fire-irons and fenders, all testify to the thoroughness and comprehensive character of his work as an architect.

The Salon, or Rotunda, into which the Great Hall leads, is remarkable for its successful proportion. It is forty-two feet in diameter and fifty-five feet high, with four alcoves in extension of each plan, each eleven feet across and twenty-



SYON HOUSE. DETAIL IN GALLERY.

two feet high. The usual diameter of Adam rotundas is about thirty feet.

The coffered dome is very pleasant in scale and treatment, and there is great charm in the lighting effect.

The decorative tablet panels surmounted by candelabra on the walls are notable pieces of stucco work. The minute amorini are polished to a marble surface and relieved by a dull red background and gilded frames. The striking cast metal altars, and vases in the alcoves, were connected with the hot air scheme of heating, employed by the Adams in these rotundas.

The Great Hall and Salon lead on the right into the Dining Room, where Adam's attention to detail is conspicuous in the treatment of the alcove, which is flanked by two doorways of exquisite finish.

The ceiling is planned to receive landscapes by Zuccarelli and Zucchi. Other panel pictures decorate the walls.

On the left of the Hall and Salon is the Music room, which contains an interesting organ case, richly gilt but simple in design. Adam's original design was far more elaborate. The white marble chimney piece is inlaid with blue-john.

The Great Drawing Room, which was originally hung with blue damask, has a coved and richly decorated ceiling. It follows closely a design dated 1760. The freedom of the decoration is reminiscent of the earlier Adam work, as at Hatchlands.

The mantelpiece, with a pair of tall figures, follows the ideal set at that house and at Croome.

The Venetian window, the columns and pediment of which, like the doorcases, are of Derbyshire alabaster, is remarkable for its scale and planning, by which an effect of great depth and richness is obtained.

The furniture of this room is of interest. Alongside of beautiful tables and mirrors, essentially typical of his style, are four massive sofas with elaborately carved and solidly gilt merfolk, mingled with dolphins and palm leaves, quite Venetian in taste, which contrast curiously with the lighter and more delicate devices for which Robert Adam was famous.

We are reminded of Adam's comment, when publishing the plate in the "Works" of the Empress Catherine's piano:—"This design was much altered by the person who executed it." Adam's drawing in the Soane Collection for the sofa, signed "R. Adam, architect, 1762," shows how the architectural limits he observed have been overpast.

Mrs. Montagu had a similar sofa, according

to the note on the drawing, but with a different colouring in the upholstery, one design being red and the other green.

Her sofa, however, must have been executed in a style severely classic, so as to accord with the beautiful mantelpiece, which Adam also designed in 1766 for her house in Hill Street.

In the Library, unlike the other apartments on this floor, the Doric pillars and the entablature of the doors are in wood, and are somewhat heavy in scale and treatment. The ceiling is decorated in tints of blue, pink, and mauve. The chimney-piece agrees with Adam's drawing. The State Boudoir and its Ante-room are separated by a screen of columns and pilasters, grouped in relation to a segmental archway, late Roman in style.

In these rooms there is less of the early Georgian influence which Adam had set out to reform, and a lighter scheme of decoration and furnishing prevails.

The subsidiary buildings in the grounds and the great bridge are fine examples of Adam's treatment of accessories to his main group.

Syon House.—The plan of Syon in the "Works" bears the date 1761, which will be the time when Adam's connection with the work began. His own statement, however, gives 1762 as the year in which the Duke of Northumberland resolved to fit up the apartments "entirely in the antique style." Adam says "the idea was, to me, a favourite one, the subject great, the expense unlimited, and the Duke himself a person of extensive knowledge and correct taste in architecture."

Adam had just completed Shardeloes, and resemblances can be traced between the details employed there and those used in the earlier rooms at Syon. For instance, the ceiling of the Dining Room is closely related to that of the Library at Shardeloes.

The work must have been in progress many years, as one of the carpets is dated 1769, and the whole of the intended scheme was, even so, never realised, as the most important feature of the plan, the central rotunda, was not executed. This salon was needed to bring the entire suite to a focus and connect together all the apartments, serving, in Adam's own words, "for general rendezvous, and for public entertainments with illuminations, dancing and music." Apparently, in September, 1768, this rotunda was temporarily erected for the reception given to the King of Denmark, when 300 persons were entertained in the room, "without the least bustle."

Adam himself defines the position he had to

deal with, in creating this magnificent suite of rooms at Syon within the existing walls of the house. "Some inequality in the levels on the old floors, and some want of height to the enlarged apartments were," he says, "the chief difficulties with which I had to struggle."

Entering at once the Great Hall, the full grandeur of his conception is realised. This interior, in a creamy white with a black and white marble floor, realises the classic ideal of pure form and restrained ornament.

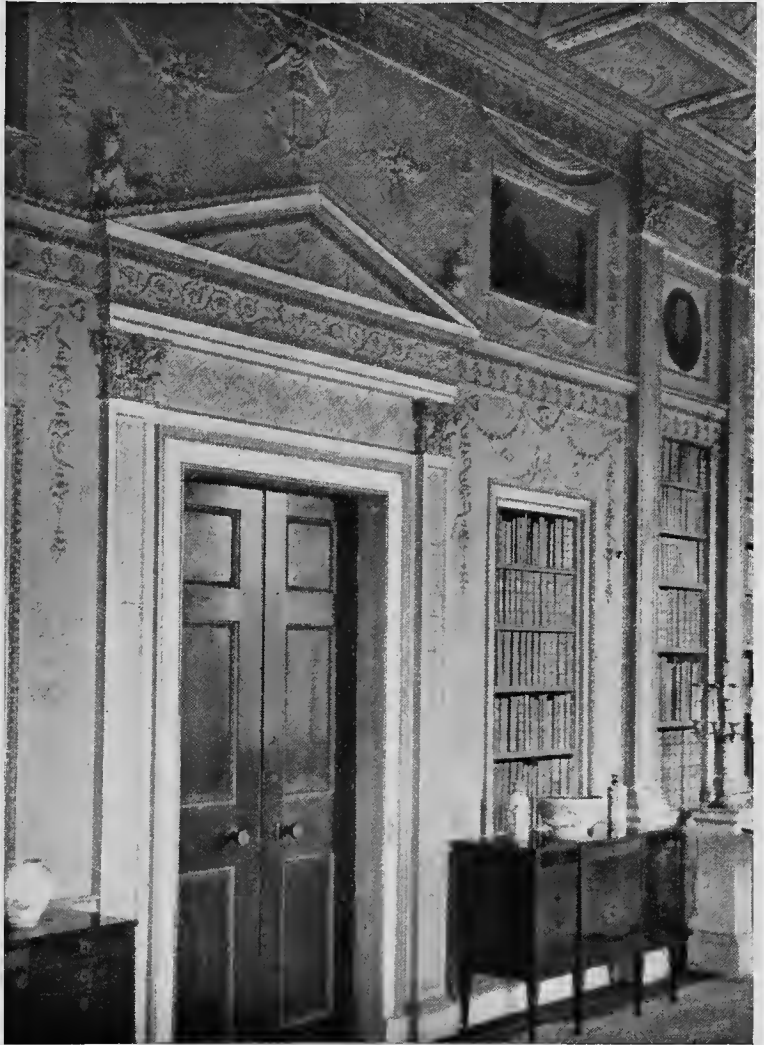
Late in the afternoon the western sunlight strikes down from the upper range of windows, producing a wonderful effect of light and shade. The size, 60 feet by 30 feet by 30 feet, is about that of the great room at Wilton, but no greater contrast between the two interiors can well be imagined, and we realise at once how much has happened in the intervening century. The problem of the dimensions is solved by Robert Adam on entirely different lines to those followed by Inigo Jones. He reduces his length by a great apse at one end, and a square recess at the other, the latter having a screen of columns. The connecting walls have each five windows and a door. Such are the simple elements out of which this fine interior has been evolved.

The highly original ceiling with its large crossed beams, doubtless arose from his wish to reduce the excessive height of the bare structure, and the idea is worked out with great skill.

A broad band of ornament frames the central

oblong and ties the whole design together. The disposition of the floor follows that of the ceiling. It is doubtful if Adam ever used the Doric order, which he preferred for halls, with better effect.

The steps, which were necessary to reach the



SYON HOUSE. DOOR IN GALLERY.

principal floor level at both ends of the Hall, are so cleverly worked in that they seem an additional charm, rather than a difficulty overcome.

To step up from the Hall to the Ante-room is to pass into another world. It is Rome of the most lavish epoch of the Empire, when the world's wealth poured as a great river into the all-powerful metropolis. Colour reigns supreme

with a predominance of solid gilding. The keynote has been twelve ancient columns of verde-antique, recovered from the bed of the Tiber. To these shafts Ionic capitals solidly gilt have been added, with a new entablature, in which the frieze is decorated with a honeysuckle in gold on a bright blue ground. The walls are pale green with doors in dark mahogany and gold. Green bronze is also used in the bas-relief over the fireplace.

The floor is a remarkable piece of scagliola, very highly polished, and marvellously preserved. The colours are yellow, bright and dark red, reaching to chocolate, and a peculiarly soft greenish grey, relieved by some actual blue.

The architectural interest of the room centres in the very clever arrangement of the twelve columns, as the room is not really square, being 36 ft. 6 in. by 30 ft., with a height of 21 ft.

The desired square set-out is obtained by bringing forward the columns on the window side and carrying across the entablature, the vertical line being maintained by statues upright on the columns. Thus the room is square in effect with the minimum loss of floor space.

Entering the Dining Room we leave colour behind us and return to an effect of white, but in a warmer tone and with a free relief from gilding. This room would seem to be one of those first completed at Syon. Each end of the room has an apse with a screen of columns across it, and the half domes are well ornamented but without the extreme beauty of those at Kenwood. A flat band carried round the room, level with the top members of the cornice of the order connects the end and side walls, a treatment favoured by Adam.

With the Red Drawing Room colour again resumes its sway. The walls are hung with Spitalfields silk, in which the pattern of flowers and ribbons in grey shimmers like silver on a plum coloured ground. The ceiling has a deep cove, which, together with the central flat, is all set out in octagons and diamonds, rather small in scale. These have been painted with figures by Angelica Kauffmann, too small for their position, and, in addition, so emphasised by bright blue grounds, as to produce a spotty effect, which is somewhat distracting. The Adam carpet is of a good and restful design, the colours pink and yellow with some blue, all now very harmonious. It is dated "1769, T. Moore."

The two doorways are remarkable for the ivory grounds to the pilasters, which are overlaid in ormolu.

The white statuary marble mantelpiece is a masterpiece of applied ormolu. The enrichments are chased and perforated frets, appliques, even the flutes of the columns have tiny strings of beads which are attached to the fillets between the flutes. The rosettes, swags, and even the dentils are of the same metal. It is like an overdress of gold lace thrown upon the white marble form.

This drawing room is Adam's Ante-room to the real Withdrawing, or Ladies', Room, the gallery, which he planned for their particular delight. "Furnished in a style to afford great variety and amusement," is his own expression. It is certainly a marvellous interior, because it is the Elizabethan-Jacobean gallery seen through a different medium. The problem was the narrow width of 14 ft., with a length of 136 ft., and a height the same as the width. These are quite the old dimensions for galleries in England, and it was only the orthodox classic ideas of proportion, that seemed to make them incapable of solution. Robert Adam accordingly dealt with the problem on his own lines, not, perhaps, without some observation and reflection on the many older galleries, which he must have seen in various parts of the country. His scheme is that of a unit of four pilasters, with wide intervals or bays, centred upon the three doors and two fireplaces, so that in the perspective a sense of spacing and variety is obtained, which mitigates the great extent of the gallery in length. The opposite wall, with its eleven windows, could not be made to agree with this set-out, so it has been boldly disregarded.

The pilasters, however, are retained to frame up the windows, maintain the balance of the two sides, and give the required vertical lines in the perspective of the whole.

The ceiling is daringly set out with circles, repeated down the length of the room, and held in an octagonal framework separated by squares. Unity is obtained by cross lines, which lead the eye down the vista of the gallery with a tendency to expand its width. The wide compartments in which the doors and fireplaces occur are skilfully treated with niches and circles, and the main order of pilasters is supported by a secondary Ionic, between which the bookshelves are fitted in.

The deep frieze above the architrave cornice of this minor order is varied with landscape and portrait panels, and by some circular recesses for busts and choice vases.

The minor closets and central recess are conversational retreats. The square closet is

interesting, but the gem is the circular domed boudoir, which realises the setting of an eighteenth century print, of the age of Watteau, Lancret and Boucher.

The ceiling paintings of the gallery are rather small and too pretty. The general effect of the faded pink and green of the wall decorations is good. It must all have been immensely gay when new and fresh. Of Adam design there are two pairs of beautiful tables of marquetry with carved and fluted legs and framework. One of them has a scroll pattern working from two centres, so as to fill in the oblong shape of the table top. It is inlaid in yellow and green on brown. The other has an all-over pattern. They are English made. Two half-circle console tables, carved and gilt with urns worked into the base, and bearing table tops of inlaid marble, are also of Adam design, as well as two oblong console tables, the tops of which are of mosaic.

The highly-important work at Osterley, in the same locality, while partly of the same date as Syon, also contains examples of Robert Adam's later style. Space does not allow of more than a reference here, but in the forthcoming book the house will be fully illustrated and described by the special permission of the owners. Here, as at Apsley House, English execution was made a special feature. Not only does this fact dispose of the idea that Robert Adam was merely indebted to and dependent on Italians, but it also confirms Soane's statement as to the beneficial effect of Adam's influence on the arts and manufactures of the time.

Luton Hoo, for the Earl of Bute (1767-8 period) must also be passed over, though it was certainly a very important transition work and possessed probably the finest of all the Adam libraries. Unfortunately this work no longer exists owing to a fire and later reconstructions.

Kenwood, Hampstead, for Robert Adam's friend and patron, the great Earl of Mansfield happily remains.

Kenwood, is a villa design created out of an older existing house. Changes, following on the death of the great Earl of Mansfield and of his architect, have altered its character externally, the removal of the main road and the abolition of the forecourt tending to give it more the character of a country-house.

The Portico, therefore, at present cannot be said to possess its original effect, while on the garden side the decay of the original stucco arabesques has led to a replastering now devoid of the ornate character of the original.

Passing through the Hall of an Adam character,

a very pleasant ante-room, lit by an end Venetian window towards the south, leads into the "Adam Room," as it is now appropriately called. This truly magnificent apartment ranks high amongst the great chambers to be found in England, and takes a leading place in the list of its architect's achievements.

Robert Adam's own account is as follows:—

"The great room with its ante-room was begun by Lord Mansfield's orders in the year 1767, and was intended both for a library and a room for receiving company. The circular recesses were, therefore, fitted up for the former purpose, and the square part or body of the room made suitable to the latter." This duality of purpose corresponded with the character of the client.

"The ceiling," Adam tells us, "is in the form and style of those of the ancients. It is an imitation of a flat arch, which is extremely beautiful, and much more perfect than that which is commonly called the coved ceiling."

"The coved ceiling, which is a portion or quadrant of a circle round the room, and rising to a flat in the centre, seems to be altogether of modern invention, and admits of some elegance in the decoration."

The eighteenth century architects, following Palladio and the Italians, had established in England the lofty *piano nobile* of Italy, and had been much exercised by the excessive height so obtained, unsuited as it was for living rooms in our northern climate. The cove as described by Adam above, is found in all the houses of the time, particularly in those of single and double cube dimensions, experiments to which the Palladian School were excessively devoted.

The State Dining Room at Bowood is a good example of the coved type, and in that instance Adam has certainly invested it with "some elegance in the decoration."

The stucco work at *Kenwood* was by Rose, the plasterer, who was also employed by Adam at Syon, etc. "The paintings," he says, "are elegantly performed by Mr. Antonio Zucchi, a Venetian painter of great eminence; and the grounds of the *panels* and *freeses* are coloured with light tints of pink and green, so as to take off the glare of white, so common in every ceiling, till of late. This has always appeared to me so cold and unfinished, that I ventured to introduce this variety of grounds at once to relieve the ornaments, the crudeness of the white, and create a harmony between the ceiling and side walls with their hangings, pictures and other decorations."

Here we have a clear statement of Robert

Adam's ideas. His ideal of low relief in schemes of house decoration, with details of elegance and refinement, carries him on to the use of flat tones of colour, which shall give the necessary emphasis to the ornament.

It is not, properly speaking, that "picking out" method which followed later, as the style degenerated in the hands of his followers and successors. That detestable method of decoration was, however, an easy step down as soon as the Adam manner was imitated and cheapened.

A main feature of the Kenwood Great Room is the pair of apses with their screens of columns, the entablatures of which, carried straight across at the spring of the half domes, bind together the whole design of the interior. By this means an effect of perspective and some mystery of light and shade are produced.

The half domes are masterly pieces of decorative stucco work, worthy of Pirro Ligorio himself. The great vault is well set out in flat compartments varied in proportion, and adorned with ovals, half ovals and circles. These are filled in with highly-coloured paintings, executed in tones strong enough to stand the rich gilding, which forms so large an element in the whole effect. The fluted columns in white are a strong element in a successful scheme.

Continuity of design between the two apses and the centre bay is secured by a bold honeysuckle band at the base of the vault and of the apses.

It is a recall of the narrower frieze of the entablature where lions' and bulls' heads, the family crests, are repeated in a chain of running ornament.

The two large arched recesses on either side of the fireplace had originally characteristic Adam mirrors and settees.

The bookcases of the apses had originally solid dados.

On the piers between the windows are two mirrors in carved wood and gilded frames. These are illustrated in the "Works."

The white statuary mantelpiece has carved pilasters, bulls' heads and sphinxes. Over it is the imposing portrait of the Earl, by David Martin (1736-1798), set in a panel with a finely designed flat framework. The bottom border which balanced the top cresting has been swallowed up by an excess in the size of the picture.

From an account of 1776 it appears that the Hall and other rooms, except the Library, had their walls covered with Indian or Chinese papers.

The *Adelphi* scheme was launched while

Kenwood was in progress. It appears to have been somewhat unfortunately undertaken, and it is unlikely that Robert Adam had any conception of the drag that it was to prove upon his hitherto promising career.

The whole subject of Adam's great influence upon the architecture of London requires a volume in itself, and with regret I have concluded that it cannot be brought within the scope of these lectures. One or two leading points may be given. *Shelburne*, now *Lansdowne House*, begun about 1762 for the Earl of Bute, was sold by him to the Earl of Shelburne in 1765, and the work of completion went on until 1768. It was in the contract of sale that the house was to be completed according to the original scheme by the Adams, the vendor sharing in the expense. This house is, of course, a very important example of Adam's work.

Mansfield Street (1770), was first planned to lead up to a great house, which was not built. The houses here follow upon the *Adelphi*, and contain interesting work.

Portland Place, as first intended in 1773, was to have been a *corso* of great houses. When the original idea fell through, the enterprise appears to have been left to James Adam to carry out in a much less stately and magnificent manner, 1776-78. The war time delayed the scheme of the new street, and much of it was afterwards merely a continuation by Nash, or else the work of independent builders. One of the finest of Adam town houses is *No. 20, St. James's Square*, but even this was less magnificent in its interiors than old *Derby House*, in Grosvenor Square, which no longer exists. An example, standing in a class by itself, is *Home House*, in Portman Square, which exhibits a late phase of Adam work. In spite of alterations in the first half of the nineteenth century, this house still gives a fine idea of the golden age of late Georgian magnificence.

Fitzroy Square (1790) was only in hand at the time of Adam's death; it was stopped by the outbreak of the great war after only two sides were built. The other two, executed quite twenty years later, show the altered temper of the times.

Of the vanished *British Coffee House*, in Cockspur Street, Soane, who, of course, knew it well, spoke in his lectures to the Royal Academy, declaring that, quite as much as the Register House of Scotland, in Edinburgh, it was a monument to the ability of its architect.

The reality of Robert Adam's influence on

the architecture of the time is shown by the persistent attribution to him, personally, of a variety of the buildings of his contemporaries, whose names are practically, if not entirely, forgotten.

The city of London was least affected by his revolution, the all-pervading work of Wren, and his immediate followers, constituting a strong local tradition.

In the same way the work of Robert Adam in Scotland would here make quite impossible demands on our time and space. It must suffice to call attention to the noble *Register House* of Scotland, facing the end of the North Bridge in Edinburgh, a work remarkable for the Grecian refinement of its detail, and to the

later, grand and massively simple *University*, as originally designed by Robert Adam. These will all be dealt with at length in the forthcoming book.

Unfortunately the Revolutionary Wars following Robert Adam's death in 1792 blighted the fair prospects of that great work, the *University*, as well as those of *Charlotte Square* (1791) with its intended church.

On the resumption of both of these undertakings after the war, by the new generation that had sprung up, the Adam tradition had already been clouded over, and the resulting work fell far short of the intentions of that great architect of the last half of the eighteenth century, Robert Adam.



VASES THAT BELONGED TO ROBERT ADAM NOW IN SIR JOHN SOANE'S MUSEUM.

LECTURE III.—DELIVERED MAY 17TH, 1920.

If architecture is to be seriously regarded as a reflection and record of the life in all its varied aspects of any particular period, then we must expect to find that Sir John Soane, however great an admirer he may have been of the architectural genius of his own early days in London, would yet, in his own subsequent work, achieve an artistic effect very different in character to that realised with such success by Robert Adam.

Much had happened since the climax of the late Georgian prosperity and magnificence, coincident with the mid-point of Robert Adam's career as a practising architect in London, a date which may be taken as almost that of Soane's first great success, the winning of the gold medal of the Royal Academy in 1776.

The disastrous American War, the domestic troubles of the Gordon Riots, the collapse of the King's system of personal Government through Lord North's Ministry (1770-1782), were only premonitory symptoms of the great avalanche of the Revolutionary Wars (1793-1815) which overwhelmed the existing social order in Central Europe, and profoundly modified that of our own country.

Robert Adam's own work, in his last years, when under Pitt's guidance the country appeared to be recovering its prosperity, seems to have assumed a graver cast.

By a curious inversion a greater parade of architecture is demanded on the exterior of the houses, a more distinctive assertion of the class rather than of the individual, and the interiors tend to lose their former importance. A more equal standard of decoration, a type in fact is being established for a majority, to which each individual will more or less be driven to conform.

Unlike Robert Adam, who was never recognised, young Soane was a chosen pupil of the Royal Academy. Sir William Chambers, founder and protector of the infant institution, had approved of his Triumphal Bridge, and had himself introduced the successful student to the Royal Patron, as a preliminary to his start upon his grand tour.

Chambers was incapable of change. In his last edition (1791) of the "Civil Architecture" of 1759 he reiterates his earlier condemnation

of Greek architecture. The work of Adam and Stuart was unchaste, subversive of true principles, and students and the public must be protected, on principle, from its pernicious influence. This frame of mind is a recurrent phenomenon, and there is no particular way of dealing with it, other than that of maintaining a sound tradition of artistic liberty and equality, if not of fraternity.

It is to Soane's credit that his individuality was strong enough to withstand this pressure. As a pupil of George Dance, R.A., he had been in touch with a gifted designer, whose trend was towards experimental essays, and new combinations. Unfortunately, Dance was weak on the constructive side, as well as somewhat lacking in energy. He seems to have admired the force and determination of his pupil. "Remember," he writes to Soane, "your motto, *Mihi, turpe relinqui*," while at another time he cautions him to "sprinkle cool patience upon the heat and flame of thy distemper."

Henry Holland, jun., to whom Soane appears to have been an assistant from 1772 to 1776 or 1777, was also an architect of rare ability, and a man of a modest and retiring nature. His earlier work is like that of Robert Adam and James Wyatt, but in the interiors of Carlton Palace he seems to have struck a note more definitely Græco-Roman, for which "Empire" is, perhaps, as nearly an equivalent term as any.

Soane's association in his Roman days with the Bishop of Derry, afterwards first Marquess of Bristol, seems to have brought him into touch with a learned society imbued with the classics. He makes designs for a "dining room" and a "canine residence" in the antique manner, but follows it up by modern versions of the same. This is very characteristic of Soane's practical habit of mind.

He studies the "antique," but as an artist who is in search of material for the development of his own powers and the realisation of his own ideals. A merely dilettante attitude was alien to his temperament. This is revealed in his attitude to a draughtsman, who showed him the usual sketches of the Pantheon portico at Rome. "Are the columns equally spaced," he inquires, and when the sketcher hesitates, a curt

"Ah, I see you do not know!" closes the discussion. He himself had measured the Pantheon, and the bearing of the facts had not been lost upon him.

The effect of Soane's grand tour upon his mind appears to have been that of modifying his first love of Adam and Wyatt work, through the deep impression made upon him by the Greek Doric of Pæstum and Sicily. As is well known, he was prevented by circumstances from reaching Athens, and seeing the masterpieces of the Doric and Ionic styles in all their effectiveness. The Street of Tombs at Pompeii also, I fancy, profoundly impressed him.

The consequence was that when Soane began to rebuild the Bank in 1794, he treated its screen-wall decorative architecture on lines which were profoundly original. The new work was something entirely different from that which might have been predicted from a pupil of the designer of Newgate, and of a student who had come so directly under the influence of Chambers.

The interior of the Bank especially is remarkable because, although there is an apparent following of the scheme of the Roman *thermæ*, the character of the design is entirely novel. It is more modern than much that is projected or executed to-day. Soane's feeling for the bones of the architectural corpus is almost uncanny. The Bank interiors are as remarkable in that way as the much later work of Duc in the Palais de Justice at Paris.

When allowance has been made for the temper of Soane's age, as one of war with all its revulsions and ensuing exhaustion, his work holds good as an astonishing reversion to the bare realities of design, after the magnificence of Adam decoration and ornament.

Soane possessed a great feeling for surfaces, and his linear method of decoration perhaps arises from that source, as though he would abolish all projections, lest any shadows or excrescences might detract from their effectiveness. At the same time these considerations must not be pushed too far, as though Soane was wedded to a clearly-defined and closely-reasoned logic. He never was a clear thinker; on the contrary, he is given to flashes, often strangely phrased, which burst through an ultra dry form of verbal expression. Only when he is roused does Soane break through this acquired reserve, and even then there is a certain cloudiness, witnessed by phrases like the "poetry of architecture," to be achieved apparently by the union of forms and qualities usually regarded as antagonistic. It is easy to

understand, therefore, that the attitude of his contemporaries was one of bewilderment, not unmixed with ridicule.

George Wightwick truly reports that no architect was ever less beholden to his own time, nor anyone more crudely assailed. It would have been too much to expect that the essential quality of Soane's art should be generally appreciated in his own time. Even to-day it arouses questionings as to method after the general harmony of the whole has been admitted.

It is not pretended that Soane as an architect ranks with a master like Robert Adam. He is always a pioneer, pointing towards something, which, perhaps, is incapable of being realised, and all the time hampered himself by difficulties of expression never completely mastered.

For one thing Soane's design is extraordinarily fluid; he multiplies alternatives to an extent which produces absolute confusion, when the building, to which so many drawings, all apparently final, refer, is very often no longer in existence.

Worst of all Soane is apt to repeat forms already used by himself elsewhere, as though he had himself grown weary of his own vacillation.

This uncertainty of temper probably accounts for the ridiculous importance that he attached to Père Laugier's architectural dogmas, as set forth in the "*Essai sur Architecture*" of 1755. This amateurish effort owed its passing importance to the circumstances of the time in France.

A tide of revolt had set in against the license of the Jesuit style, and the worthy Father, intent upon his intended reformation, propounded a short cut to purity by a drastic amputation of the body of architecture. There were to be no more pilasters, arcades, and high basements, no domes or other exuberances; all was to be reduced to the pure Order of Columns of the antique pattern.

There was, however, this anomaly, that in the desert was to bloom a new flower, a triangular church with three apses, at once mystical and correct. Soane seems to have taken all this quite seriously, and the implied dogmas were a fatal handicap to his monumental designs on several occasions.

An important incident, that can only be lightly touched upon here, was the check to Soane's artistic development, arising out of the fatal outbreak of the great wars in 1793.

Had his new House of Lords design, approved

in 1794-6, proceeded, as in times of peace it certainly would have done, Soane should, by the test of the execution of his ideas on an adequate scale, have risen to a much higher rank as an architect, and gained a more effective influence on the art of his own, and probably of subsequent times. The problem of this design

Parliament, would have produced in his hands can be judged in part only from the interiors of the Bank. Masterly as these are, they have always been too disjointed by business necessities, and too difficult of access, to have produced the culminating effect promised by the abandoned scheme.



SIR JOHN SOANE'S HOUSE AND MUSEUM, No. 13, LINCOLN'S INN
FIELDS.

Built in 1812. House on the right, 1824.

Similar house on left, Soane's first house in the Fields, 1792.

could only, with a man of his temperament, be solved by the clamorous exigencies of the actual work. He played with it for the remainder of his life, without ever being pinned down to a definite and convincing result.

The effect that a great range of state apartments in a national building, like the Houses of

Soane's buildings after the crisis of the war are manifestly crippled by a smallness of scale and means, inadequate for the real grandeur of the design. Dulwich Gallery and Mausoleum, for instance, do not, as built, possess the impressiveness of which Soane's design was capable.

Deprived of this quality, his architectural design is apt to be regarded as mean and ugly, by those who fail to appreciate the method of the artist, and to remember that "the best of this kind are but shadows, and the worst no worse, if imagination do but mend them."

It is against the critics that they could see this in Gandy's interpretations of Soane's design, and endeavoured to set the one against the other. Of the actual work executed by Soane in 1823 at the old Houses of Parliament, the famous Scala Regia, we have only the drawings and some contemporary report. It was day and night work, having been rushed through in seven months in order to gratify the impatience of George IV. That it was a fine design, we have the drawings of artists made at the time to show, and the only serious criticism seems to have been that it was, as usual, deficient in scale to realise the full effect. It is also possible that this interior

was not so reticent in detail as the rest of Soane's work, but, when his buildings have disappeared, it is unsafe to express an opinion on this head, as experience of the effect of the Soane interiors made upon varying spectators will soon demonstrate.

The writer recalls his own impression of many

years ago of the interior of the old Law Courts at Westminster, probably the first Soane work he ever saw. The earliest sight was bewildering; it was like something never seen before. It defied criticism in detail, possessing a harmony of its own which called for complete acceptance, or rejection, on the part of the spectator.

This fact naturally accounts for the hostility of opinion that followed Soane in his career, as closely as the great admiration of those who felt that he was undoubtedly possessed of genius. It must be, therefore, worth while for the student to consider with some attention the theory and

seen, and are familiar with, in the forms of the buildings around them.

Even Fergusson argues in favour of a metallic architecture in the ancient world. The bronzes of Pompeii and Herculaneum, moreover, show the design that was lavished upon candelabra and tripods, a care which may very well have been extended to those features of domestic interiors for which metal could be used. It is also quite possible that woodwork was treated in a metallic sense, where bronze or iron could not be afforded.

It is certain that the design of the library of the Soane is derived from hints of this character,



SIR JOHN SOANE'S HOUSE, NO. 13, LINCOLN'S INN FIELDS.

THE LIBRARY ON THE GROUND FLOOR FRONT.

practice of an architect possessed of so much force of character.

One source of Soane's ideas seems to have been his own study of the antique mausolea to which Robert Adam had called attention. In the endeavour to determine the true character of the private domestic architecture of the Greeks and Romans, as distinct from that of their temples, it was only natural that reliance should be placed upon those scanty remains of antique fresco decorations, that possessed backgrounds of an architectural character.

The argument may be stated as a proposition that painters do not in fact design, in the architectural sense, but simply recall what they have

and that there is a deliberate attempt to realise the flying arches, and other features, hinted at, in the backgrounds of antique frescoes. In the miniature loggia of the first-floor front we have a much later attempt to realise some Roman gallery, as it might have existed in an imperial palace, or large villa. Colonnets of metal are reproduced in wood, decorated as green bronze, in conjunction with busts resting on metal-like architraves. Candelabra, medallions and bas-reliefs are brought in as elements in the scheme. The extraordinary complexity of the remains of the Villa of Hadrian, at Tivoli, suffices to show how wide a range of domestic work must have existed in Antiquity. This

particular example, moreover, was probably not considered, by the architects of the period, as much more than the extravagance of an imperial amateur. We have, therefore, little more than a hazy idea of the work of the great architects of the old world of Greece and Rome, in the domestic sphere. It is as though the Vatican had perished, and we had merely St. Peter's as a witness to the age of Bramante, Peruzzi, Pirro Ligorio and Raphael.

In contradistinction to Robert Adam, Soane was not a unique master in the special field of house-building. His work is always interesting and full of ideas, but there is an architectural *parti pris*, which hampers the full and free expression of its domestic character. It calls to mind a saying, which may perhaps be traced back to Norman Shaw, or Nesfield, that what the student requires is to eliminate *the architecture* from his house design.

Pitzhanger is interesting as an architect's house, a classical villa essay. Soane was thinking of a "house for an architect in the antique manner." Horace Walpole tells us that he suggested that "the Gallery of Syon should be fitted up in the manner of an antique columbarium," about the last idea that it excites in Robert Adam's hands. Soane's largest and most important house was Tryingham, in Bucks. There is a fine reserve about the exterior. It illustrates what he was intending for the new House of Lords, a design in hand at the same time.

The hall vestibule was practically one bay of one of the large halls of that design. The centre of the house was sacrificed to a lanterned structure, or "tribune," of the type which Soane realised more effectively in the Pitt Cenotaph, at the National Debt Redemption Office, in 1818. The architect was thoroughly pleased with the house, and George Dance both admired it and proposed to "steal from it." It certainly had dignity and character, but as an English home it left a great deal to be desired.

Unfortunately Soane did not build his design for Butterton, in Staffordshire (1816). This is an Adamitic-Greek design, rather suggestive of a medium sized museum or town hall. The interiors, following on his experience with his own house in Lincoln's Inn Fields (1812), would have been of great interest, as an illustration of the further development of his ideas of interior decoration. When Soane built for himself he had always his collections to house and exhibit, and, therefore, it is difficult to



SIR JOHN SOANE'S HOUSE, NO. 13, LINCOLN'S INN FIELDS.
THE BREAKFAST PARLOUR.

The building of Pitzhanger Manor in 1800-2 affords a useful clue to the line of development of Soane's domestic interiors.

Previous to this work he may be said to have worked in an attenuated version of the Adam style. The interiors of No. 18, New Cavendish Street, which he fitted up for the Earl of Hardwicke, are a case in point. It is not certain that the fine-drawn ceiling on the front first-floor drawing room is his, but it is very probable. Here we see work of a Wyatt-Adam character.

judge what he might have done, when free of such considerations.

The circumstances of the time must be recalled. Even the painter Lawrence filled his rooms with casts of statues and Greek architectural details. In 1830 Barry puts a cast of the Parthenon Frieze round one of the interiors of the Travellers' Club, and in the Reform (1837) there is a relic of the same idea in the smoking room. The younger architect was emancipating himself, and the interiors of the Reform Club as a whole marked a new departure.

Decimus Burton, in Grove House, makes his circular hall like the lantern of Demosthenes turned inside out. If this is recalled as an outline

The most symptomatic room is the front parlour, which contains the germ of the famous breakfast parlour of the Soane Museum. The differences, however, are remarkable. In the later work, apart from the structural novelty of the lighting, by which the earlier dome-vault becomes a canopy with two sides clear of the walls, the elimination of the caryatid element of the earlier design shows a much greater appreciation of domestic character.

The Pitzhanger parlour had a marble effect, while that of the Soane is suggestive of wood. Taken as a whole, the tendency of his design is in the direction of an omission of all projecting features. Everything becomes flush, and all



BANK OF ENGLAND. SIR JOHN SOANE, R.A., ARCHITECT.
The first part built 1792-6. Eastern end of façade to Threadneedle Street.

sketch of the ideas of the time, the merit of Soane's interiors in his own house in Lincoln's Inn Fields will be better appreciated.

Pitzhanger illustrates in its interior how far Soane had lost touch with the Adam scheme of decoration, because, although he refers to the two rooms there by his master, Dance, which he was preserving, as "exquisite," he makes no attempt to follow the same style. Admittedly the main feature of the exterior recalls his admiration of the Adam centre-piece of the south front of Kedleston, but his own new interiors were purely Soanic.

As compared with No. 13, Lincoln's Inn Fields, of ten years later, the Pitzhanger interiors exhibit too much of the mausoleum character.

the usual details of skirting, chair rail, architrave, and cornice are boldly dispensed with. Even the door panels are made flush, and inlays, or reed flutings, replace the customary sunk and moulded surfaces.

A little later Soane was attracted by the possibilities of mirror glass for the reduction of shadows, and the illumination of blank surfaces. I do not think that his idea was at all that, which later on became such an abuse, the endeavour to multiply interiors by the use of large sheets of the reflecting surface of mirror glass. Where a comparatively long piece of unbroken mirror is used, over the bookcases on the west wall of the library, a special effect was arrived at, that of giving clearance to the flying arches, and of

repeating the horizontal plane of the ceiling with its compartments. It is a special case, which is justified by its surroundings and undeniable effectiveness. Soane makes a further use of spherical mirrors in order to focus certain interior views. These are decoratively distributed in panels forming part of the internal design.

Splayed jambs to windows, or archways, are also sometimes panelled with mirrors, with a view to the better distribution of the light. When Soane calls attention to the compartments of the ceiling of his house, he connects them in

eliminating the groin by the use of a flat surface, forming, as it were, a gusset. There are thus two intersections instead of one. I believe that this system, which I have seen in process of building on the eastern coast of South Italy, arose to a large extent from the need of dispensing with centering, as the masons seem able to carry out these vaults on practically a self-supporting basis. Soane, at the Bank, had already displayed great ingenuity in constructing his segmental and other vaults, and domes, by means of hollow pots.

Where he uses a flat ceiling he often dispenses with all but the shallowest of sinkings, and he relies on lines of reeds, or strings of single beads, rather too suggestive of pills.

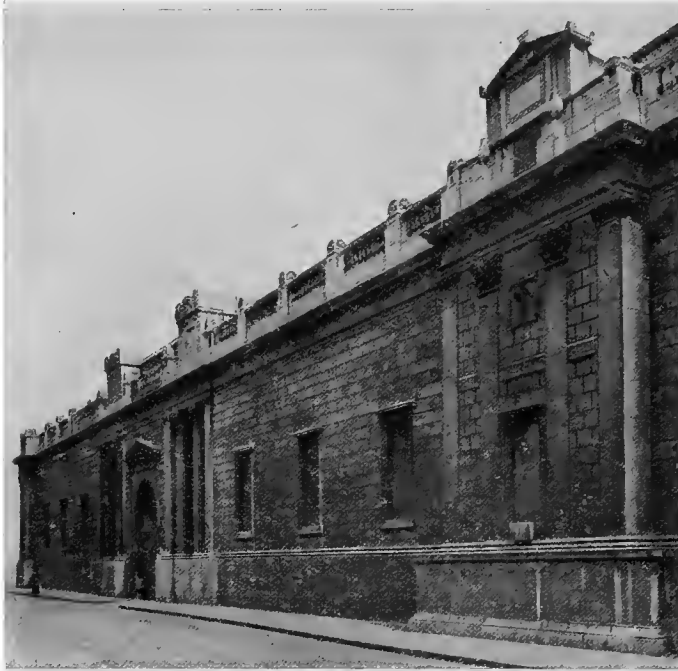
Another form of a more dubious character is the Soanic pendant, a kind of frieze of dependent drops, like reversed cones, concave in outline. Probably this arose out of an attempt to assimilate features of a Tudor and Elizabethan character.

If justification for these divergencies is needed, it may be found in the proposition that constructional features in architecture tend to pass into forms of decoration, and that the use of such features is governed only by the artistic instinct of the architect.

The attempt to apply the logic of ethics has

always involved contradictions of theory and practice, visible enough to all but the convinced partisan. Whatever the theory that may be put forth as an infallible guide in architecture and decoration, it is surely obvious that it must be applicable to all styles alike, and be true of the most ancient, as well as the most modern masterpieces.

When Soane deals with colour in internal decoration he proceeds on lines quite opposed to those of Robert Adam. In the interiors of his own house he depends on the natural colours of the wood and marble, either actual or in paint, with the relief derived from metals, and metallic colours, like bronze. He then



BANK OF ENGLAND. SIR JOHN SOANE, R A, ARCHITECT.
EAST HALF OF BACK ELEVATION.

idea with the main lines of the floor construction above. This shows that he wished to avail himself of the depth provided by the old system of girder-beams, binders, and double floor and ceiling joists. Inside this framework he devises panels with spherical surfaces, an outcome of his exceptional knowledge of domical and vaulting problems.

From a curious memorandum, preserved by one of his travelling companions, it would appear that such problems had been thoroughly explored in those early days.

The type of cross vault, that is seen at Pitzhanger and in the Soane Museum, is one that occurs in Southern Italy. It is a method of

obtains emphasis by masses or bands of bright positive colours, *i.e.*, bright Venetian, or Pompeian, reds, and yellows, primrose, or golden, in hue.

Although Soane uses polished brass, in connection with woodwork of mahogany inlaid with ebony, as in cappings and inserted colonnettes, he does not seem to have indulged in gilding, which is remarkable, when we remember the common form of the white and gold interiors of his own period.

In the course of time the original colours of the drawing rooms and the staircase at the Soane have been lost sight of, and a pale green has been introduced with an effect quite un-Soanic.

Probably the interior of the museum itself was in stone colour, because here Soane was relying on the vivid hues of the stained glass in his lanterns. Red, purple, blue, and varying shades of yellow, were employed with a double motive, firstly, to modify the light, in which the marbles and casts were seen, and, secondly, to obtain flashes and local spots of vivid colour, through the rays of light passing through his coloured margins. The large use that Soane makes of top lighting, preferably through lanterns, enabled him to follow out these ideas, because the powerful effect of a top light removed any fear of obscurity.

In fact, there is now an excess of light, resulting in a detrimental glare, where his lanterns have been reglazed at any later time with clear glass.

Soane's use of coloured glass was certainly novel at the time, because gibes were frequently made at the "stained glass dome" in his own house, and, at the new Law Courts (1824) he was advised by his friends to take out the coloured glass, which he had put in, in view of the ridicule that would be excited by its novelty.

In Soane's bands of brightly coloured glass, roundels or guilloches, etc., were etched out in white, probably by an acid, and then shaded, with a scratched high light. Unaltered houses of his period, and up to say 1840, will often be found with these margins of coloured glass, before the general revival of leaded glass. There is one important distinction in Soane's use of yellow glass to diffuse an effect of sunlight, which arises from the fact that some of the glass is white, while the colours have a considerable range in tints from light to dark. I do not think this was merely an inequality of manufacture in the glass, but that it was deliberate on his part, and the resulting effect is quite different to that produced by a needless uniformity of tone, as may be seen in the mausoleum at Dulwich, which must surely have been reglazed at some later time.

It would not appear that in respect of the painter's art, Soane drew any marked distinction between easel pictures, and paintings deliberately decorative. The "History" School of the period, that of West, Northcote, Hilton and Haydon, was regarded at the time as a British achievement, which it was a patriotic duty to patronise and support. If Soane's earnest desire, to have placed two paintings of this character in large panels on the walls of his Scala Regia had been fulfilled, it is to be feared that the decorative result would have been small, while as pictures they would have been no better than the canvases of Durno, Howard, and Jones now in the Soane.

It is probable that Soane, during his time in Rome and Italy, was too exclusively devoted to an absorbing study of architecture, and architectural design, to be able at a later period of his life to free himself from the current ideas of his own day. Although a personal friend of Turner, his choice of the three works by that master, now in the museum, shows no instinctive grasp of the real tendency of that great painter's revolution in art. It is also remarkable that Gainsborough, David Cox, and Constable are not represented at all in the Soane.

In the ceiling of the Soane library and dining room, the paintings by Henry Howard, R.A., inserted as late as 1834, are decoratively less effective than the purely architectural panels, and the ceilings of the two drawing rooms above would gain little by painting. The earlier ceiling of 1792, at No. 12, had a trellis-painted decoration, but Soane did not repeat the experiment.

The Privy Council Chamber ceiling (1824) shows no hint of any such decoration.

It might even be argued that Soane in his pictorial decorative essays was merely acting under the impression produced by Haydon's active campaign, which eventually led up to the Westminster Cartoon Competition, and its not very fortunate outcome, the frescoes of the new Houses of Parliament.

There were considerable limitations in Soane's theoretical endeavour to unite sculpture with architecture. In the most typical Soanic work sculpture plays a very minor part, if not entirely absent. One or two rather wild designs on paper show an excess of caryatid figures, that would have been better entirely omitted. At his best, when he was employing Banks, the sculpture provided at the Bank is only a pair of roundels, of the type used in the Roman triumphal arches, and some suggested figures on the skyline, as used by Palladio.

Some cherubs in pendentives, or in the dies of pedestals, are similarly limited examples of its use. He had a passing idea of inserting a series of bust-like heads, between the trusses of the large Italian cornice of the State Paper Office, but was fortunately persuaded to omit them. As good an instance, as any, of Soane's use of sculpture were the caryatid figures on the staircase of the Marquess of Buckingham's house, in Pall Mall, (now pulled down).

Street, and the façade of his own house. In the last instance the two isolated figures are not essentials of the design.

Soane's attitude to the decorative arts was inconsistent. He actually apologises for Robert Adam's attention to decorative details, on the ground that William Kent had done the same! This false attitude may be regarded as an outcome of Reynolds's "high art" doctrines, and the absurd isolation of "History" painting as

a supreme emanation of art. It is allied to Chantrey's later neglect of detail, as of something opposed to the purity and grandeur of classic sculpture, etc. The fact is, of course, that very erroneous views prevailed as to the practice and theory of the Greeks. Even Flaxman in his lectures displays a curiously limited appreciation of the art of the Early Renaissance period, and an absolute indifference to its later developments.

The touch that Robert Adam alone had established with these schools disappeared in the course of the Greek Revival. Not until the appearance of Alfred Stevens did the decorative aspect of sculpture, in relation to architecture, obtain a fresh recognition in England.

The unique aspect of Soane's work, its peculiar harmony in itself, and freedom from vulgarity, can best be appreciated perhaps by a comparison with such contemporary work as the long gallery at York House (now the London

Museum), and at Apsley House, the Waterloo Gallery, all interiors by James Wyatt's sons. The Buckingham Palace interiors, also, the work of John Nash (1827), illustrate the poverty-stricken condition of the contemporary design of interiors, and the steep descent from the high level of the Adam period.

Some interior work by Decimus Burton is alone comparable with Soane's, until we come to the work of Barry and Cockerell. In the case of the latter his early work at the Bank compares unfavourably with that of Soane. C. H. Tatham



BANK OF ENGLAND. SIR JOHN SOANE, R.A., ARCHITECT.
ANGLE TO LOTHBURY AND PRINCES STREET. (1805-8.)

At the same time Soane most certainly appreciated Flaxman, and secured some of his best models. He also collected Wedgwoods by Tassie and Webber. Thanks to him also we have the four fine eagle panels from Carlton Palace, the work of his former chief, Henry Holland, junr. It might very plausibly be argued that Soane's most interesting and characteristic work is purely architectural, and dispenses with both painting and sculpture, for instance, the Tivoli Corner of the Bank, the Loggia of the Governor's Court, the Vestibule Entrance from Prince's

writes in 1833 to Soane of some early work, probably at the Bank, by young Cockerell, as to the identification of which I am uncertain:—"Exteriore cattivo! Interiore peggio!"

The interior of the Hanover Chapel in Regent Street (now pulled down) was much below the exterior in refinement and effectiveness.

The old Debtors' Court in Portugal Street was a good instance of Soane's power of producing a fine interior out of very simple constructive elements. From the drawings and photographs, which are all that remain, it is clear that this square interior, with four large semi-circular arches, carrying a flat ceiling, possessed a great deal of character. There was also a kitchen under the state room added to Freemasons' Hall, which appears to have had a similar effectiveness. It might have been anticipated that the National Church Building Movement of 1818 would have produced something of the effect of the earlier essay, in the reigns of Queen Anne and George I.

Soane, who was consulted in the company of Nash and Smirke, did his best to secure adequate results, but his Report, urging an allowance of £30,000 for the larger churches, was fatally disregarded for an absolute limit of £20,000. Soane's best design for Marylebone was consequently shut out, and from the two or three examples, which he did carry out, it is only too evident that he had lost any vital interest in the matter.

The rejected design, preserved in a good model, is one of very great interest. It is an arcuated structure with a continuous vault having openings that serve the purpose of a clerestory. The tall moulded round arches and piers have no imposts, and the subordinate gallery is well contrived, without any break in the main lines of the interior. A bold segment arch of the full width of the church marks off the chancel. The whole structure has more sympathy with the early Romanesque, than with any phase of the succeeding Gothic. It was an experimental design that deserved to be executed, and might have proved fruitful. Certainly it was far in advance of the generality of the churches built out of the million grant.

In conclusion, it may be pointed out that this brief survey, in touching on the Architecture and Decoration of Robert Adam and John Soane, has extended over three-quarters of a century.

At the outset Palladianism was in the ascendant, challenged only by French and Chinese tendencies, as well as by the opening buds of the coming Gothic, and Greek, Revivals. At

the close of the period all that was left of Palladian tradition was in process of being transformed by the Astylar Italian, introduced by Sir Charles Barry, who was breaking away from his early adherence to Grecian Revivalism.

Mediævalism had grown into a formidable movement, and the generation immediately following upon Soane's death in 1837, was to witness both the high-water mark and the ebb of that movement.

The veteran of eighty-four was perhaps the last of those who could put in any claim to the friendship of Robert Adam, and with a prophetic instinct he had secured the great possession of the remaining original drawings of the master, at a time when Robert Adam's work and reputation were under a deep, if passing, cloud.

As Sir John Soane's pupils died off appreciation of what he had achieved declined. His great collections were valued for other things than those upon which his own heart had been set. His house came to be regarded as the expression of an eccentric, a monument of personal vanity, and his work as anything but a serious contribution to architectural thought.

The destruction of Soane's buildings has been very extensive, and it is fortunate that his tree was too deeply planted to be entirely rooted up.

It is singular that one of the most discerning tributes to his work should have come from George Wightwick, temporarily in his employ as a private secretary, who left him in a rage after some three months' service in 1824. This personal contact, however, mellowed by the experience of professional life on his own account, and by the passage of time, left a deep impression on the younger man, which is finely expressed in his "Palace of Architecture."

Probably few to-day would care to assail the position of Robert Adam, as a revolutionary artist whose work has left a permanent trace in the history of Architecture.

Sir John Soane's contribution to architectural thought may be challenged, and only the future can show the quality of the wheat as distinct from the tares, which are so easily detected and dwelt upon. That there is a continuous thread running through the whole of architectural history seems self-evident. Each generation essays its own problems in a different spirit, but the tradition is always present, and the task of assigning relative values to the individual contributors is not one to be lightly essayed.

It is sufficient to claim for Soane the possession of original ideas and a power of expression, which makes his buildings so distinctively his own.

Invited to address you here in a House, erected for your Society by Robert and James Adam in 1772-4, I have had the privilege of speaking before a Society, which was nominated by Sir John Soane himself as an elector of a Representative Trustee of the Sir John Soane Museum, being myself its Curator.

It only remains for me to thank you most sincerely for the privilege, and to express my sense of the kindness of the attention which has been given to my subject.

Epilogue.

On the occasion of the third Lecture, in view of certain rumours in the Press, the foregoing was not delivered as printed, as it was thought that the minds of the audience would be occupied with the Bank. Occasion was, therefore, taken to point out the value and importance in the history of English Architecture of Sir John Soane's masterpiece. As, however, an account, fully illustrated, will, it is hoped, shortly be given of this and others of his buildings, in a separate "Publication of the Sir John Soane Museum," it would be superfluous to print here what was actually said on the occasion of the third Lecture. Three special photographs which were taken to make slides for this lecture are, however, reproduced. The first of these shows the earliest part (1794-6) of Soane's rebuilding of the Bank, this right-hand wing being subsequently repeated in 1823, when the left-hand wing of the Bank was

rebuilt, as the later portion of the work. The centre block, not shown, is a recasing of the original Bank building, of which Sampson was the architect. The second illustration shows the first half of the North, or back façade, of the Bank. As, owing to the street improvements of 1800, it became necessary to double this frontage, Soane desired to build a great hexastyle portico, as the centre feature of this newly-extended façade. The necessary projection into the street being, however, refused, Soane was obliged to content himself with the narrow-bay design, seen on the right-hand side of the photograph, which as a centre he always felt was inadequate. The third photograph shows the masterly angle feature of the north-west corner of the Bank at the junction of the two streets: This unaltered work gives the full effect of Soane's unique design, and it has always been regarded as his masterpiece. The design is given in relief on the reverse side of the gold medal presented to him in 1834 by the architects of England.

[The nine illustrations of Syon House are from photographs by F. R. Yerbury, Esq. The blocks are kindly lent by the Editor of the *Architectural Association Journal*. The illustrations of Sir John Soane's work and the three tailpieces are from blocks kindly lent by the Trustees of Sir John Soane's Museum, the other three belong to the Society. Copyright reserved.]



THE TOMB OF SIR JOHN SOANE IN OLD ST. PANCRAS CHURCHYARD.

NA 996.B64

Cantor lectures on the architecture and



3 1924 015 677 754

fine

DATE DUE

~~DECLASSIFIED~~

FEB 7 2004

GAYLORD

PRINTED IN U.S.A.

