









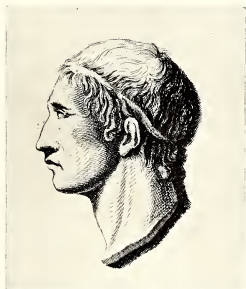






# ROBERT ADAM

ARTIST AND ARCHITECT:  
HIS WORKS AND HIS SYSTEM



ROBERT ADAM (CAMEO PORTRAIT).

*From "The Connoisseur."*

THE SUBSTANCE OF LECTURES DELIVERED AT THE SOCIETY OF ARTS;  
THE SOCIETY OF ARCHITECTS; AND THE ARCHITECTURAL SOCIETIES OF  
CARLISLE; BIRMINGHAM; BATH; DUBLIN; EDINBURGH; GLASGOW;  
HULL; LIVERPOOL; MANCHESTER; NEWCASTLE; OXFORD;  
CAMBRIDGE; SHEFFIELD; YORK; AND OTHERS.

BY

PERCY FITZGERALD, M.A., F.S.A.

WITH ILLUSTRATIONS.

LONDON: T. FISHER UNWIN, PATERNOSTER BUILDING.

1901.











INK. PHOTOGRAPH BY A. C. L. & S. EAST HARDING STREET FETTER LAKE E.C.

FITZROY SQUARE.  
ROBERT ADAM, Architect.

*Reprinted from "The Architect" a Weekly Art Journal*











PHOTOGRAPHED BY DEDFORD LEHNER & CO. 147 STRAND W.C.

INK PHOTOGRAPH BY SPRACE & CO. 147 & 148 EAST HARDING STREET FETTER LANE, E.C.

FITZROY SQUARE, LONDON: EAST SIDE.

ROBERT ADAM, Architect.

*Reprinted from "The Architect," a Weekly Art Journal*





# SYNOPSIS OF CONTENTS.

	PAGE		PAGE
The Author's Interest in the Subject ..	5	His Visit described ..	23
His Series of Lectures ..	6	Mr. Jackson's ..	<i>ibid.</i>
Adam an Artist as well as Architect ..	7	Difficulties of Study and Measurements ..	24
Likeness to Sir Walter Scott ..	<i>ibid.</i>	His Reproduction of the Types in London ..	25
Glimpses of his Early Life at Edinburgh ..	8	The British Coffee House ..	26
The English Benevenuto Cellini ..	9	His Noble Illustrated Works on Architecture ..	<i>ibid.</i>
His Combination of Gifts ..	<i>ibid.</i>	Their Imagination and Variety ..	<i>ibid.</i>
His Vast "Output" of Work, as Builder ..	<i>ibid.</i>	Rage at the time for building Palaces ..	27
Unity of his Style and Touch ..	10	Wanstead and its Destruction ..	<i>ibid.</i>
Shares of the Four Brothers in the Adam		PRINCIPLES OF THE ADAM STYLE ..	28
Work ..	<i>ibid.</i>	MOVEMENT—the Central "Note" ..	<i>ibid.</i>
A Decorator ..	<i>ibid.</i>	"Movement" defined ..	<i>ibid.</i>
A Furniture Designer ..	<i>ibid.</i>	Kedleston ..	29
A Sculptor ..	<i>ibid.</i>	Gosford House—a Typical Illustration of	
A Painter ..	11	"Movement" ..	30
His Gift of Distinction ..	<i>ibid.</i>	Architectural Elements adopted and	
Definition of Distinction ..	<i>ibid.</i>	developed by Adam ..	<i>ibid.</i>
His Architectural Propriety ..	<i>ibid.</i>	(1) The Oval; (2) The Arch; (3) The Window;	
Sense of Proportion ..	12	and (4) The Column ..	31
Worker in Metals ..	<i>ibid.</i>	The Oval, its suggestion of "Movement"	
The Only Devisor of a Style ..	<i>ibid.</i>	in comparison with the Circle ..	<i>ibid.</i>
Member of Parliament ..	13	Oval Stair in St. James' Square ..	<i>ibid.</i>
Buried in Westminster Abbey ..	<i>ibid.</i>	The Gate Pier ..	32
Sketches in the Soane Museum ..	<i>ibid.</i>	The Oval Foundation of the Arch ..	<i>ibid.</i>
His Works in London ..	14	The Window, not the Door, the note of the	
An Admirable Crichton ..	<i>ibid.</i>	Adam House ..	<i>ibid.</i>
Link between him and Sir J. Vanbrugh ..	<i>ibid.</i>	Eyes of the House ..	33
His System condemned by Gwilt ..	15	Adam Window a Construction ..	<i>ibid.</i>
Also by the late Mr. Ferguson ..	<i>ibid.</i>	The Society of Arts ..	34
Strictures on his "Fenestration" ..	16	Stucco—the material most in harmony with	
Praise of the Edinburgh University ..	<i>ibid.</i>	brick; ..	<i>ibid.</i>
Mistakes in the Article in the <i>Dictionary of</i>		Gwydyr House ..	35
<i>National Biography</i> ..	<i>ibid.</i> (Note)	Comparison between The Athenæum and	
Only Three Works of Imagination and Grace		United Service Clubs ..	<i>ibid.</i>
during the past Century ..	<i>ibid.</i>	Stone Dressings for Windows ..	<i>ibid.</i>
Soane's Mannerism ..	17	Oval Balconies ..	<i>ibid.</i>
Inspired by the Tivoli Temple ..	<i>ibid.</i>	Wall Space ..	<i>ibid.</i>
Adam preceded as an Imaginative Architect		Illustration of the Orangery ..	<i>ibid.</i>
by "Wood of Bath" ..	18	The Column ..	37
Likeness between them ..	<i>ibid.</i>	Sympathetic Treatment v. The "Column of	
Both inspired by Cities ..	<i>ibid.</i>	Commerce" ..	<i>ibid.</i>
Laying out a City ..	19	Adam's use of the Entasis ..	38
Wood displaced in Bath by Adam ..	<i>ibid.</i>	Mr. Pearson's Theories ..	<i>ibid.</i> (Note)
The Pulteney Bridge ..	<i>ibid.</i>	His Enthusiastic Praise of the Column ..	<i>ibid.</i>
Baldwin under the Adam Influence ..	20	Novel Treatment of the Capital ..	39
Brydon's Lack of Imagination ..	<i>ibid.</i>	Heretical Dealing with the Entablature ..	<i>ibid.</i>
Adam a "Pictorial" Architect ..	21	Bold "reshaping" of the whole Order ..	<i>ibid.</i>
"Pictorial" Architecture explained ..	<i>ibid.</i>	Critics' Misconstructions ..	40
Wood and Sedding "Pictorial" Architects ..	22	His Aim, the modifying the assertive nature	
Adam's Visit to Rome ..	<i>ibid.</i>	of the Order ..	<i>ibid.</i>
In Search of Old Roman Domestic Archi-		Usually "Engaged" in the Brick ..	<i>ibid.</i>
tecture ..	<i>ibid.</i>	Treatment of the Pilaster ..	<i>ibid.</i>
Diocletian's Palace at Spalato ..	23	Illustration of his Treatment ..	<i>ibid.</i>

	PAGE
Doorways in Mansfield Street .. ..	41
Homogeneousness of his Treatment— Fanlights, Balconies, etc. .. ..	42
Stately Doorway in Chandos Street .. ..	<i>ibid.</i>
Omission of the Flight of Steps .. ..	<i>ibid.</i>
The "Block System" in Streets.. ..	43
Wood's Treatment .. ..	44
The Noble Bath Circus .. ..	<i>ibid.</i>
Inigo Jones .. ..	45
Nash's Regent Street .. ..	<i>ibid.</i>
THE ADELPHI .. ..	46
Associated with Garrick and Dickens .. ..	47
The Terrace suggested by that at Spalato .. ..	48
The Financial Scheme .. ..	49
Notable Residents .. ..	<i>ibid.</i>
Barry and the Society of Arts .. ..	50
Coutts' Bank .. ..	<i>ibid.</i>
Instant Recognition of the Adam Work .. ..	51
Garrick's Mansion .. ..	<i>ibid.</i>
Monumental Underground Structures .. ..	52
Peter the Great's House in Buckingham Street .. ..	53
The Boy Dickens .. ..	<i>ibid.</i>
The "Fox under the Hill" .. ..	54
Other Adelphi Inns .. ..	<i>ibid.</i>
The Coutts' Bridge .. ..	<i>ibid.</i>
Adelphi Arches explored .. ..	55
Verses on the Adams .. ..	57
ADAM MANSIONS .. ..	58
Fitzroy Square criticised .. ..	59
The Register House, Edinburgh .. ..	61
The University Building .. ..	<i>ibid.</i>
Lansdowne House, its Homogeneousness .. ..	<i>ibid.</i>
Suburban Noblemen's Mansions .. ..	62
Osterley Park described .. ..	63
Kenwood, Kedleston, Northumberland House .. ..	64
Adam excluded from the Royal Academy .. ..	65
Adam's Stucco Material .. ..	<i>ibid.</i>
Rotunda Hospital Frieze, at Dublin .. ..	66
The Liardet Stucco and its elements .. ..	<i>ibid.</i>
Nash the Introducer of wholesale "Plastering" .. ..	<i>ibid.</i>
Merits of Adam's Brickwork .. ..	68
Bath House, Piccadilly .. ..	<i>ibid.</i>
Bands of Stucco .. ..	<i>ibid.</i>
His Stucco and Plaster of Paris contrasted .. ..	69
Falsity of Imitative Decoration .. ..	<i>ibid.</i>
Adam Houses in Dublin .. ..	70
His Dignity of Treatment .. ..	<i>ibid.</i>
The Custom House at Hull .. ..	71
Wyatt an Inheritor of Adam's Style .. ..	72
Praise of Drury Lane Theatre .. ..	73
Traces of his Style in Nash's Work .. ..	<i>ibid.</i>
Portland Place, Portman Square .. ..	74
Propriety of Steps discussed .. ..	<i>ibid.</i>
Adam Villa in Portland Place .. ..	75
Miniature Hall in Albemarle Street .. ..	<i>ibid.</i>
House in Hill Street .. ..	<i>ibid.</i>

	PAGE
"Uglification" of the Architect's Work .. ..	77
Westminster Hall thus "Uglified" .. ..	<i>ibid.</i>
Also Lombard Street .. ..	78
Boodle's Club .. ..	79
London Bridge and Waterloo Bridge .. ..	<i>ibid.</i>
INTERIOR DECORATION .. ..	80
Different Arrangement in England and France .. ..	81
The Wynne Williams Mansion .. ..	<i>ibid.</i>
Adam's Scheme of Colour .. ..	<i>ibid.</i>
Grotesque derived from Grotto .. ..	82
Hexagonal Patterns in his Ceilings .. ..	<i>ibid.</i>
His Relief Patterns adapted from Painted Models .. ..	<i>ibid.</i>
Abolished interior heavy Entablatures and "Tabernacles" .. ..	83
Lord Derby's Mansion in Grosvenor Square, a Typical Specimen .. ..	84
Relief Decoration a security against alteration .. ..	<i>ibid.</i>
The "Scheme" described .. ..	<i>ibid.</i>
His Favourite Forms and "Motives" .. ..	85
Library at Syon House .. ..	<i>ibid.</i>
Significance of his Doors .. ..	86
<i>Portes Battans</i> the correct form .. ..	<i>ibid.</i>
Adam's Majestic Treatment of the Door .. ..	<i>ibid.</i>
The Ball Room at Lansdowne House .. ..	87
Harewood House .. ..	<i>ibid.</i>
Destruction of Ashburnham House .. ..	88
Adam's Arrangement of Halls and Staircases .. ..	89
His Theory of the Chimney-piece .. ..	90
His Furniture suggestive of French work .. ..	<i>ibid.</i>
Designed on <i>Architectural Principles</i> .. ..	91
Grandeur of his Wardrobes .. ..	92
Anticipated the "Empire" Style .. ..	<i>ibid.</i>
IRON WORK, Variety of his Patterns in Railings and Balconies .. ..	<i>ibid.</i>
The Principle of his Balcony Treatment .. ..	93
Designed Grates, Knockers .. ..	<i>ibid.</i>
An exquisitely designed Door Plate .. ..	<i>ibid.</i>
His Cast-Iron Work as shown at Harewood House .. ..	94
His Goldsmith's Work, Door Furniture, etc. .. ..	<i>ibid.</i>
Designed Coach Houses, Lodges, Dog Kennels, etc. .. ..	95
His Designs for Silver Plate after Pottery Models .. ..	<i>ibid.</i>
Head of Cane .. ..	96
Designer of Tombs and Monuments .. ..	<i>ibid.</i>

## APPENDIX.

Speeches at the Society of Arts .. ..	97
Colonel Edis on the Adam Style .. ..	<i>ibid.</i>
Mr. Statham's Views .. ..	98
Objection to Festoons as a Decoration for Ceilings .. ..	<i>ibid.</i>
Mr. Hunter Donaldson .. ..	99
Mr. Hugh Stannus .. ..	<i>ibid.</i>
Mr. H. B. Wheatley .. ..	100

## PREFACE.



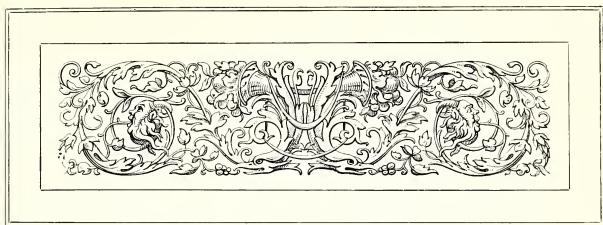
WITHOUT unduly flattering myself, I please myself with the fancy that the perusal of this slight treatise will foster in many a sort of taste for architecture. The reason is that Adam's principles and practice have such perfect "propriety"—are so consistent and logical, that they commend themselves at once to all schools, and that in rather an engaging way. This principle of his "architectural propriety" I have insisted on all through: and it will be found, I boldly maintain, in all Adam's works—great or small. A mere layman in these matters, I have had to work unassisted; for we look in vain, after a hundred and odd years, for any commentaries or exposition of his theories and work. I have brought a good deal of industry to my very pleasing task, and I really think have evolved a nearly complete system, which will give a very fair idea of what was the architect's mind when he was planning and carrying out his designs. As he always made these as attractive as he could, so it is likely that the reader when learning about him in these pages will to some degree find something of this attraction; I hope so, at least.

Enough, I think, has been given here to prove that the subject is worthy of deeper study and capable of regular development. At any rate, I do hope that this book will make an impression, for it is written in real and deadly earnest. I have a firm conviction that what is urged in these pages is the true—the real thing that ought to be recognised and accepted. But I can fancy that even now, after this long interval, the well crusted professional may look with horror and dislike on these "antics"—as he may call them—of this chartered libertine.

I am much indebted to the kindness of the Editor of *The Connoisseur*, who has lent me the blocks of a number of illustrations that appeared in his Magazine.







# ROBERT ADAM: ARTIST AND ARCHITECT.

## WITH AN ACCOUNT OF HIS SYSTEM.

---

### CHAPTER I.



FOR many years now have I been busy striving to secure recognition for that gifted Architect and Artist, ROBERT ADAM. One of the profession might, perhaps, ask concerning me, "*Que diable fait-il dans ce galère?*" considering that I am not an architect, and can only boast an amateur's knowledge of the subject. But I was drawn to the subject by a sort of irresistible fascination exercised not merely by the author's works, but by the author himself, who was full of a living attraction and interest. It was impossible not to be interested in one who in his work and doings showed a spirit truly romantic, full too of an animation and grace that contrasted with the too often prosaic and business-like nature of his fellows. He was indeed a most accomplished man, and under the spell of his character and genius I was led to make many toilsome and inconvenient expeditions, giving lectures all over the country, and, what seems bold enough, in the presence of nearly every architectural society in the kingdom. This reception—rather an unusual thing—I know I owed to the novelty and interest of the subject, which, being dramatic in itself, inspired a sort of dramatic treatment, and was fortified by a large series of effective pictures.

It will be seen from the list of societies to whom I retailed my Adam story, that I went pretty far afield, and brought the subject before a fairly representative audience. These were The Society of Arts—who gave me the silver medal for my performance—The Society for the Encouragement of the Fine Arts; The London Society of Architects; The Architectural Societies of Edinburgh, Manchester, Liverpool, Oxford, Glasgow, Newcastle, Carlisle, Birmingham, Dublin, Hull, York, Bath, Sheffield. These visits were exceedingly interesting. I was always cordially received, and I could see that the hearers were much interested in a subject to which hitherto but little attention had been paid. It was a difficult and even awkward situation to be speaking in presence of experts. I found the best way was to say out plainly what I thought on the matter, and say it boldly, without showing hesitation, or the fear of falling into mistakes or of displaying one's ignorance. My preservation was an unaffected enthusiasm for Adam and all his work, with a native instinct for what was artistic.

At these lectures of mine, sometimes the attendance was large, at other times rather moderate; but the students were always attracted; I calculate that on the whole I must have brought the subject within the knowledge of some thousands, and many of these must have worked on, or have been led to take up the matter, to apply it and study it seriously. Nor was I slack in the direction of writing.

From the earliest days, old buildings having grace and beauty had always the most extraordinary attraction for me. I am ashamed to say none of the boasted scenes of nature—the mountains, lakes and plains—appealed to me in the way that a small ancient town did. In a building—particularly of the renaissance type—there seemed to be something more living and suggestive. A well-designed building was company—it seemed to speak. I had a particular delight in the renaissance buildings, on account, I believe, of the sincerity and unobtrusiveness of their ornamentation, with a sort of general delicacy of treatment. The old classical or Greek elements seemed to me to be a little obtrusive and coarse, also a little uninteresting. The cornices and pediments stood out and claimed attention noisily. To see a picture even of one of these palaces affects one, their ornamentation is so telling, and yet so retiring. Adam's work always offered much of this charm and feeling, its detail invariably interested and attracted the eye, or set the mind in motion. There was always some striking or graceful little arrangement that repaid inspection.

There is at this moment a decided revival of interest in Adam and in Adam work. I do not flatter myself that this is due to my humble *propaganda*, but I think it has been aided by it. It is impossible to continue long "hammering"

at a subject without exciting some attention. I was always convinced that what was really so attractive and fanciful must, before long, rouse at least curiosity; it was showy enough—some might say theatrical enough—to suit the popular taste. But however that may be, the decorative part of the system has at least been revived—I cannot say very successfully, for it has been mostly copied and imitated without attempting to pierce to its true principles.

The truth is this is rather an artistic subject than an architectural one. Robert Adam was more of an artist—and a very great artist—than an architect. Do we know, I might ask, any other English architect of whom this may be said? That is, is there anyone who is first of all an artist and then an architect? In the last century there was indeed Pugin, who was exquisitely artistic in everything that he touched: but he could hardly be called English. The average architect in great practice, the “architect of Commerce” who will build you a church or a mansion or a great hotel or a railway station, such as was the late Sir Gilbert Scott, has generally a prosaic cast of feeling. We always see the rule and square and compass; but they are sound and safe men, and produce satisfactory—often admirable effects. We have a wholly different feeling in the presence of a man like Adam,—Adam of the unbounded fancy and imagination—of Adam who could not help “adorning all that he touched”—of Adam with whom it was far easier to be original than to copy.

Adam—a brilliant Scot—always suggests something of the immortal Sir Walter, who seemed to bring his own fine, sterling and impressive nature into all his work. This element of personal *Character* and style always adds a weight and motive to the intellectual gifts. In *physique* and face he was something like Scott, that is to say, he was like most Scots; so was he in his power of work and also in that sincerity and amiable unobtrusiveness which distinguished the great and noble writer. We naturally expect in the Scot a hard, matter-of-fact system, but, strange to say, we find these two eminent men perfectly saturated with romance. In Adam as in Scott, there was no pretence, show, or self-advertisement, there was unsparing toil and conscientious work. The comparison may seem fanciful, but it always strikes me; and when I saw Adam’s portrait by Raeburn, lately exhibited in Bond Street, I was heartily glad to greet it as an old and much admired friend. It had the same geniality, a full, pink, rather unrefined face, rustic withal, and certainly like to Scott.

But little is known of the life of this eminent man, and there is but slight mention of him in contemporary works. From the few glimpses that we can obtain, we can see that socially he was a most engaging person, that his company was sought, and that it was “good company.” He was quite unspoiled by his high connections and distinguished patrons, albeit he was architect to the King and a *persona grata* at court, besides enjoying other honours.

We find this pleasant man enjoying the lively companionship of the jovial "rollicking" men who then gave Edinburgh society a sort of celebrity. Talk, discussion, and conflicts of wit, at taverns and other places, were then in vogue. In these the Fergusons, Carlyles, John Horne, Blair, Hume, and many more took their share. Everyone seemed to look forward to the night's meetings: and there was a sort of nervous eagerness each day to plan some sort of festive dinner or meeting for the night, when there was deep drinking and abundance of talk. This was scarcely a wholesome sort of life, yet Robert Adam, with his enormous professional practice, figures constantly in these *jousts*. With an unaffected sociability, without "putting on side" as it is called, or airs—he was only anxious to have his share of the general enjoyment.

About the year 1750, he was living in Edinburgh with his mother and brothers, a young man of about twenty. This lady was the aunt of Dr. Robertson, the historian. She encouraged her son's friends, and entertained them, only stipulating that he was not to bring "any of his atheist friends to the house." Her son, however, who was attached to David Hume, contrived to introduce him, concealing his name, and Hume made so agreeable an impression on the lady, that she told her son she was delighted with her guest, "the large jolly man." "Why, mother," said Robert, "that was the very atheist you are so much afraid of." "No matter," she said; he might bring him as often as he liked.

Robert Adam must have had an excitable temperament. Once he was seen after a dinner party galloping round and round his green in a mad state of exultation. He had of a sudden fallen in love with a maid of the house, to whom he made his proposals there and then, offering to carry her off to London with him! But Jenny declined.

What forcibly illustrates Adam's shrewd and pushful character was his joining a party of friends who were going to London from Edinburgh with a view of being presented to the great man of the day, Lord Bute. Making so long a journey on so slight a chance of succeeding seemed an imprudent business, but Adam knew how to turn the chance to profit. True the result seemed for the moment unpromising, for the nobleman received them in a cold and haughty style. Adam was furious. He who had been presented to all the Princes in Italy and France, and always graciously received, to be treated with such distance and pride by one of the youngest of Peers! It will be seen how prudent and shrewd was the young architect, for by-and-by he quite gained this influential patron, and was employed by him to erect two magnificent and palatial mansions, Luton and the one in Berkeley Square.

One of his friends tells us that the Adams were a very loving family, for when James was setting off from London to return to Scotland, the rest of the

family insisted on attending him as far as Uxbridge. James seems to have been a very jovial creature. When he went with his friends to see Blenheim, he could hardly contain his admiration of Vanbrugh's work, though he had seen all the grand palaces in Italy. He declared that in none was there more "movement," as he called it. This notion of "movement" was therefore as essential to him as it was to his greater brother.

He was little over sixty when he died (he was born in 1728, and died in 1792), and into that short architectural life of some forty years he crowded an enormous, incredible quantity of work. For in truth everything connected with Adam is something of a prodigy, and more or less excites astonishment.

Few could imagine what a brilliant, versatile, artistic nature his was. It is hardly too much to call him the English Benevenuto Cellini. We have really no one that can be compared with him for his extraordinary and divers parts. Who expects such things in an average architect? It is astonishing to take stock of his gifts. He was first of all an architect pure and simple, but of unbounded range. For he built all that was buildable: noblemen's palaces; ordinary houses, great and small, detached or in rows; terraces; great and ambitious squares, or "blocks"; churches; theatres; public buildings; monumental gates; screens.

What were his works we shall see presently, but there was an energy and power present that made one more miracle or gift in this extraordinary character. To take an instance: he must have built nigh a dozen great palaces for noblemen, and at his death he had some half a dozen in hand. Now, as architects know, if one of their number is commanded to build an imposing mansion for a Duke or wealthy patron, this will be a serious "job" and occupy his time and thoughts for at least twenty years. So it was with Eaton Hall, the Duke of Westminster's seat, and so with the Duke of Norfolk's rebuilding of Arundel. It may be a matter of half a lifetime. But a dozen great houses, and with this a quantity of other great works being carried on! How then did he supervise? How could he visit and control such huge enterprises, each afar off and at different ends of the kingdom? It is a riddle indeed. The only solution is that here the man was as much a genius as he was in other ways, and that like Napoleon he had fashions of his own for "putting things through." Then consider the difficulties of travel in those times, the long distances, the slow progress—in fact it is impossible to find a solution. Even with the railways, an architect in large practice nowadays finds it hard work enough to supervise his various works. I have heard architects speak of Adam's efforts in this way, and declare that it passed the wit of man, and *their* wit also, to guess how the thing was accomplished.

And here again we must note what a unity, what a uniform personal element is found in all his various works. We recognise his handwriting in it all. It is not as though he had left it to his agents, deputies and pupils to work out his main idea.

We find his own touch in every direction, in the smallest matter as well as in the largest. Robert Adam is *there*. Nor can we accept the rather fanciful notion of the four Brothers Adam—Robert, James, John and William—all working together and inspired by the same feeling and principles. That is quite unusual and even impossible. In the first place, two of the brothers, John and William, are quite, as it were, out of it; and it is not professed that they took any part in his labours. James is more conspicuous, we have his designs and works; but it is clear that Robert completely dominated him and the rest, and that James merely followed his brother's lead. Had he been a partner with an equal substantial share in the works, on Robert's death he would have asserted his power and continued to carry on the business in the same spirit. It was thus that the elder Dumas was assisted in his stories by one Maquet, who under his direction and inspiration carried out all his great enterprises, and, as it was claimed, deserved all the credit. But on Dumas' death, when this assistant might have stood by himself, it was found that he could do nothing! He was a mere *caput mortuum*.

Next he was a decorator of the most elegant and fanciful order; lavish in design, full of grace, of propriety; embroidering his ceilings, walls, everything in a most appropriate and original fashion of his own. Nothing could be richer, and nothing could show more perfect propriety, than his graceful designs.

Next furniture: in this also he had a speciality. His work ranges with Sheraton's, Chippendale's—I should put him above either Sheraton or Chippendale—even with the Reisners and other French masters. Its character is marked in the most extraordinary way. See an Adam wardrobe or book-case, and one is struck by its character—firmness of touch, bold and graceful outline and fine proportion. Under this head of furniture, he designed literally everything that is to be found in a room: cornices, tables, chairs, sofas, carpets, hangings, chandeliers, girandoles, cabinets, vases, etc. These he has furnished in profusion; all are in harmony with each other. Iron work of the most solid kind, and at the same time of the most fanciful and imaginative sort. Jeweller's work he also excelled in.

Robert Adam might be considered a sculptor, for he designed for sculptors. Everyone knows the Adam chimneypieces—those rich and beautiful and costly works, which are now often torn from the original sites and set up in modern mansions—their extraordinary variety and luxuriance of design. His system of interior decoration was a vast department and contributed immensely to the realizing of the Adam style. For our artist had such a firm hold of his principles that he instinctively made even the smallest object take fitting and harmonious shape. Everything in his house became “Adam all over,” and could be recognised as such. I have been assured by Lady Wynne Williams, that in her house in St. James' Square, every article in it, down to the cruet stand, had been

designed by him. This department alone again excites our wonder as to how time was found for the designing. For every Adam house has invariably its series of Adam chimney-pieces wrought in beautiful statuary marble by leading sculptors. This notion of making the common adjuncts of the room, such as the bare ceiling and the chimney, contribute to the decorative result is surely an original and correct method of treatment.

He was a painter and had a taste for water colours, of which he has left specimens. With the assistance of his brother he was also an author! He wrote in a pleasing, simple style that gave an interest to his thoughts. Nothing is more striking than the modesty of his expositions. The works he published were on the grandest and most sumptuous scale, superb atlas folios—"huge armfuls," as Elia used to say—which from their splendid treatment are appreciated beyond works of their kind. One of the most delightful and romantic books is his account of the Dalmatian City Spalato. This is a noble folio, on board-like paper, superb printing, and engravings by Bartolozzi—one or two at least—and others.\*

Distinction also—another precious gift—this was his pre-eminently. Adam had certainly a "note" of distinction. And how difficult a thing to define! We can feel it though we cannot describe or define it. My own definition, though I cannot assert that it is a correct one, is that it amounts to "the disdaining of common things and common methods or particulars." That is, the man of distinction does not care about and does not use the common, showy accidents. The man of distinction, I should say, was the one who had a bright, or the brightest ideal ever before him—which, however, he does not hope to meet or to realize: though he *acts* always as though such were in being. With this exemplar before him, he seems to disdain or overlook all earthly machinery of life and art on which common folk lay such stress.

Another of Adam's striking and unique gifts was what I may call Architectural Propriety. All that he designed was correct and fitting *in omnibus*. The eye, as it measures his work, misses nothing, and feels that nothing need be changed. As we look we do not, as so often happens, think that this might be shorter or that larger; everything seems set down in the most perfect way, according to *his* intention, for once and for all. When we come to the plate of the side of Fitzroy Square—which is the frontispiece of this work, and study it carefully from all points of view, we shall have this feeling. The more we search into its details, the more we shall be confirmed in our security that all is right and correct. Nay it even grows on us—as it is called—and we see more and more what interest there is in the details and how weighty they are, and how

---

\* When I purchased my copy the Bartolozzi craze was raging, and I found that one or two of the most noteworthy plates had been taken out for the collector's portfolio.

much they suggest. This "Propriety" is rare enough, and how much of its opposite, architectural impropriety, do we not meet at every turn? Designs all experimental and tentative—something that "will do"—things introduced by a chance and *après coup*—gropings after effect—accidental hitting on what *will* do. All this happy-go-lucky style contrasts with Adam's firm, certain touch, defining what he had settled on, clearly and unchangeably resolved. But apart from previous calculation even, a spontaneous suggestion was certain to be carried out in the most correct fashion, his knowledge and instinct being so certain.

And then for Proportion: never had artist so exquisite an innate sense of that Heaven-sent gift which supplies all grace, beauty, richness and magnificence, size—everything. He could not make anything that was out of proportion. I really believe, though unsuspected or not recognised, this is the secret of his attraction. In our days is it an exaggeration to say that this nice proportion is hardly considered at all?

He was a worker in metals—iron, gold and silver. He designed grates, fire-irons, fenders, balconies, street railings, verandahs, lanterns, chandeliers, knockers, fan-lights, all these in profusion and infinite variety of designs. It is an education in such work to walk through our city and note the many patterns of balconies and fan-lights which meet the eye at every turn; and nothing is more striking than to note how exactly he suits the design to the occasion and the material to its capacity. How delicate and airy is his work. To his cast-iron work—witness the railing in front of the War Office in Pall Mall, as well as the highly original balconies of the Agricultural Society's House in Hanover Square—he imparts a richness and absence of that stiffness so often found in cast-iron work. This seems really amazing. In all these departments he expended himself with the utmost profuseness and prodigality. The more he drew on himself the more ready he seemed to meet further drafts. There was one of his gifts—and a most precious one too—and which seems to come by instinct or by birth, that of perfect artistic *fitness*. Whatever he arranged, whatever elements he put together, he did so in the most natural and effective way.

And then, most extraordinary thing of all, he was the devisor, the author of a *style*! Who has ever done this? Not Wren, or Vanbrugh, or Inigo, or Scott, or Barry, or Street. A style too that has lasted for nigh a hundred and fifty years, and that is now being revived. A style too that has always been admired for its grace and stateliness, and above all a style that is recognisable at a glance, in its largest and most ambitious shapes as well as in its details. The "Adam style," or as it is almost invariably called, the "Adams style." The words call up a sort of prim decoration, very slightly prim, but attractive. It is common when a new vast hotel is being opened to have a



room or two decorated in Adam fashion. The effect is generally not very striking, for it is not enough to copy his details from his books; you must acquire the Adam feeling.

As everything connected with this remarkable man was exceptional and out of the usual course, we find that he added to his already onerous duties by entering Parliament, in 1768, as member for Kinross-shire. One cannot recall any other architect in full practice devoting himself to House of Commons work. And what other architect was escorted to the grave in Westminster Abbey by so many persons of rank? His pall was held up by the Duke of Buccleugh, Earl of Coventry, Earl of Lauderdale, Viscount Stormont, Lord Frederick Campbell, and Mr. Pulteney.

Most architects in their course accumulate a number of their sketches and designs, which they preserve bound up, it may be in a few volumes, but with Adam and his brothers everything was done on a grand scale. There is no more astonishing monument of labour, industry and versatility than the volumes of Adam's designs and notes that are stored in the Soane Museum. These fill some fifty or sixty odd volumes in crowded writing, with plans, sketches, speculative notes of every kind. One must confess, though, to a little surprise at the rude and careless character of the sketches, as one might have expected something much more finished from the elegant touch of Adam. They are like rude school-boy drawings.

We have hardly materials for judging what were his merits as an artist in painting. There are some specimens of his work in the Soane Museum, but it would seem from a passage in the *Gentleman's Magazine* of 1792, that even in this way he had quite a reputation. For we are told that "his talents greatly extended beyond the line of his own profession, and he displayed in his numerous drawings in landscape a luxuriance of composition and an effect of light and shadow which have scarcely ever been equalled." This seems rather extravagant praise, yet there seems no reason when there was so much deservedly of praise, why the writer should, without just grounds, commend his labour in this unexpected direction. So we may sum up the gifts of this brilliant personage: he was architect, decorator, sculptor, ironworker, furniture maker, designer of stuffs, hangings, jewellery, etc., financier and building speculator, author, painter, member of Parliament!

Next, what were his works? What did he do? It is curious that at this moment, in London at least, there is but little of a conspicuous kind that will attract the eyes, for much has been destroyed or disfigured; though scattered all over the country are abundant specimens of his work. This general

distribution is the extraordinary feature, for go where you will, you are certain to come upon Adam. Like his great predecessor Wren, it may be said of him, "*Si monumentum quaeris*," etc. Lately passing through the old-fashioned portion of the good old city of Hull, I found myself before a most striking and characteristic work of his, the Custom House, admirable for its originality and simplicity and imparting quite an air of distinction to the region in which it was placed. It is indeed a delightful and interesting work.

I do not profess to give a catalogue of his buildings to be found in London. The Adelphi—a small city in itself; Portland Place and its surroundings, innumerable streets and many mansions. Of Squares we have Bedford; Stratford Place; half of St. James' Square; as much of Portman Square; a great portion of Russell Square; one half of Fitzroy Square; and a side of Bryanston Square. Bedford Square is laid out on ambitious lines, each side having a central architectural building, with pediments, etc. But the remarkable thing is that the interior of each house has an attraction and is fully equipped with all invariable Adam adornments, in which the owner takes immense pride and often invites you to come and look at, as though it were superior to its fellows.

And now having made this enumeration of his gifts and accomplishments, may we not ask, is not this a remarkable personage? Is he not a prodigy—an Admirable Crichton for his versatility, management, capacity? And is there not a wonderful attraction about such a man? Who have we, or have had we, like him? Above all, should we not like to know more about him? We are not so richly endowed with men of brilliant type—men who can do anything in their own *metier*, and who seem never to fail in their stroke. We indeed cannot name anyone who can, I will not say be put beside him, but who is at least of the same class. Architects above all are often practical men: perhaps often *borné* in their gifts. At this moment we may look round and fail to see anyone who could furnish us with a really poetical work. There is a curious link—*was* rather—between Adam and Vanbrugh—whom he so admired for his "movement"—and which I doubt if anyone knows of but myself. A score of years there was standing in a space of ground close to Whitehall Palace, a little low building, sadly faded and dilapidated, with a sort of saucer dome and two gabled wings. This had actually been Sir John's dwelling house, built by him for himself, and was made much fun of at the time by Swift and other wits, who likened it to a goose pie. Increased room and alterations were needed, and Adam added the two wings and gables in rather incongruous fashion. Thus it became the combined work of two eminent architects. But no one thought of this, and one day it was levelled and carted away *sans cérémonie*.\*

---

\* I contributed *mon petit possible*—writing papers on it in the *St. James' Gazette* and other journals, describing its history and pleading for its preservation.

Robert Adam and his system has been attacked by many with a strange and bitter animosity. Joseph Gwilt, an interesting man and fair architect, but long since forgotten—unknown to *this* generation—was conspicuous and illiberal in his treatment of one whose name even he could not spell correctly, and whose boots he was incompetent to black. Like so many of our time he would style him “Adams.” He took under his patronage two rather obscure men, Stuart and Revett, whose “chasteness and purity” he speaks of with exaggerated praise, as having “to contend against the opposite and vicious taste of Robert Adam, a fashionable architect, whose eye had been ruined by the corruptions of the worst period of Roman Art. It can scarcely be believed that the ornaments of Diocletian’s Palace at Spalato should have loaded our buildings contemporaneously with the use among the more refined few of the exquisite exemplars of Greece, and even of Rome in its better days. But such is the fact: *the depraved compositions of Adam* were not only tolerated, but had their admirers. It is not to be supposed that the works of a man who was content to draw his supplies from so vitiated a source will require a lengthened notice, yet he had his happy moments, etc.”

This Gwilt, as we can see, was an enthusiast. He was devoted to the good old classical school, and we can quite understand his disgust that Adam should have adopted the gross and barbaric school of decoration that he found in Dalmatia. This reflection may also have struck many of Adam’s sincere admirers. But it must be recollected that he merely got inspiration from these things and that he recast and evolved beautiful combinations out of them. His revolt against the classical orders would have yet more scandalized and crushed the orthodox Gwilt, and few indeed imagined how far Adam carried it, and how sacrilegiously he carried it out. For in pursuit of his new ideals and plans Adam was not checked by any orthodox scruples as to the old rules. Few think or know what an iconoclast he was. He spared neither the Orders nor their Capitals, columns or dimensions, shaping and reshaping all unscrupulously according as he found it necessary for his artistic purposes.

Mr. Ferguson is almost more severe than Gwilt, declaring that “the brothers acquired a repute for a knowledge of classical art which their buildings by no means justified, as in this respect they were inferior even to Chambers.” “Their great merit,” goes on this critic, “is that they stamped their works with a certain amount of originality which, had it been of a better quality, might have done something to emancipate art from its trammels. The principal characteristic of their style was the introduction of very large windows, generally without dressings. These they frequently attempted to group three or more together by a great glazed arch over, so as to make the whole side of a house look like one room.” There is an extraordinary amount of exaggeration and prejudice in all

this. This "very large window" was not the principal characteristic of the style, it was merely an element. Neither did they "try" to make the whole side of a house look like one room; no architect would "try to do so."\*

The University Buildings at Edinburgh he described as "being four stories in height, without the least attempt at concealment and with a cornice at the top, the only fault of which is that it is not sufficiently bold for its position. The centre is pierced by three bold arches. Those on the side are each adorned by two monolithic pillars. The whole composition of the centre is bold and ornamental, without any feature so gigantic as to crush the wings or overpower the other parts. We possess few public buildings presenting so truthful and well balanced a design as this and certainly the Adams never erected anything else which was nearly so satisfactory."

I fear this hostility is due to what so often prompts the formal, prosaic soul to gird at and make little of the romantic or poetical practitioner. It is the same in other departments. Wagner was overwhelmed in a torrent of satire and fury; he was too romantic for his time. I well recall bringing over some of his music in the "fifties" and showing it to certain Professors of repute, who lost all patience and after indulging in loud laughter declared it was all "simple nonsense." Such folk cannot forgive romance. Unhappily in all the professions there is this lack of fancy and graceful imagination in which our neighbours so excel, who adorn all they touch—were it even the slightest trifle.†

The truth is during the whole course of the last hundred years, we cannot point to more than half a dozen works which display this imaginative power and grace. One of these is the Houses of Parliament, which owe their poetry to Pugin, a Frenchman by descent. There is the striking police office of Mr. Norman Shaw—most original, and much admired on account of its romantic character. There is the new Westminster Cathedral, which in spite of shortcomings is a work of poetry and would have pleased Adam himself, to whose treatment it is somewhat akin. The Law Courts are hardly to be counted, having little character and presenting the air of being stunted and checked wherever they attempt to develop themselves favourably. This was in fact owing to the situation of the hapless architect. St. George's Hall, at Liverpool, has inspiration

\* The articles in the overpraised *Dictionary of National Biography* generally contain mistakes: but that on Robert Adam is conspicuous in this respect. A journal of travel, which is printed in the Library of Fine Arts, was written, not by him as stated, but by one of his brothers. The Palace of Diocletian was at Spalato—not Spalatro, and the drawings were made by Clerisseau, not by Adam. They are said to have originated the idea "of making a number of houses look like a single block": an idea that was originated by Inigo Jones, and later by Wood, of Bath.

† Thus in their last Exhibition they found it necessary to make a bridge across the Seine as an approach, with the result that in about a year they had fashioned that elegant "Alexandier Bridge," which is a new and perfect ornament to the glittering city, from its grace and showiness. Our slow moving professors have constantly to design bridges for the Thames, but who looks for grace or ornament in the treatment?

and is imposing from its grandeur and grace. Perhaps the most successful "modern antique" is assuredly the old Town Hall, at Birmingham, an impression much increased by its present mouldering condition. As for huge and pretentious edifices, such as the costly Manchester Town Hall, there seems to me no finished conception left, save of size. Such suggest the lines :—

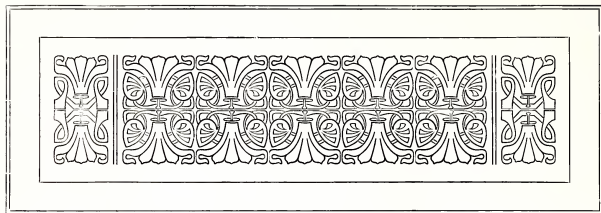
"Lie heavy on the earth, for he  
Laid many a heavy load on thee."

It might be said that Soane is the only other whose style, so singular and original, may be recognised at once. His leading motive seems to have been a sort of Egyptian water vase with "ears," which he perpetually introduced as an actual decoration, or else adapted its curves and general form as a decoration. This seems but a bald stock-in-trade, but it was genuine and expresses his feeling. And so we recognize it.\* Between him and Adam there was a sympathy, for he bought all the voluminous sketches of the brothers, and even some paintings by Robert. The Bank of England, his best work, has quite a classical air; the pavilions at the corners are elegant.

It is to be noted that Soane, exactly like Adam, drew his first inspiration of a style from one particular building, the Temple at Tivoli, near Rome, which he developed for his many purposes, either structural or ornamental. It is extraordinary how this suggestion prospered with him, and how recognisable are the details. At the Bank of England, particularly, the pavilions—without actual imitation—suggest the whole tone and fashion of the imposing Temple. When any special piece of work of his strikes us, we can assume that he had asked himself how it could best be adapted to his Tivoli pattern. It is an interesting question, how far this system ought to be pursued: it certainly betokens an ardent enthusiasm and also ensures a *system* with rules and precedents, and with also a harmony and consistency. It is in fact an ideal, kept steadily before the eyes, and is more effective in kindling the imagination than the old formal rules and models of Palladio and Vitruvius with all their "orders." It is certain that from the Gilbert Scotts, Pearsons, Burgesses, and Barrys, we have never received anything that seemed really inspired, though all was strictly correct, "formular," and even grandiose.

---

\* In Regent Street, among Nash's mansions, we find some of Soane's, which at once strike the eye from their oddity



## CHAPTER II.



It is often thought that Adam was the first of the romantic and reforming architects, but the fact is, that some thirty years before Adam came, there had arisen a very remarkable man who was to leave his mark upon the country, and whose work, having made a deep impression in his day, continues to this hour to cause pleasure and admiration. This reformer was John Wood—"Wood of Bath" as he is spoken of—a truly great performer on the architectural stage, an original spirit, who, though he has not been appreciated as he deserves by official judges, at least invariably commands the admiration of successive generations who visit the noble city which he adorned. Just as in the case of Adam, there has been little recognition of his work, and it will hardly be credited that the late Mr. Ferguson, in his exhaustive Review of English Architecture, does not even mention his name! What could be the reason? Had he forgotten? Or had he ever seen his works? And yet what Wood did made an epoch. For he was a Pioneer—the first to introduce the scenic or decorative style for streets.

There were, as we might expect, many points of likeness between these two eminent men. Both adapted or formed a style suited to English streets. Each drew their inspiration and treatment from a foreign city—Wood from Palladio's city—Vicenza: Adam from the Dalmatian Spalato. We often find that architects will thus find their inspiration in a favourite city or building. Some have literally permeated themselves with the spirit of such a monument as St. Mark's, at Venice, or the Mosque, of S. Sophia, whose design and details they reproduce

with modifications and can hardly keep out of their works, much as Mr. Dick was haunted by King Charles' head. Both men created and renewed cities or quarters of cities, laying them out after their own picturesque principles.

It has been given but to very few English architects to have the splendid privilege of laying out a city according to their own fancy and ideas—a high and delightful thing, almost absorbing in the opportunities it offers. This, with the building of a theatre or opera house, makes a fascinating task for the architect. Wood at Bath—Grainger at Newcastle—Adam and Nash at London were the favoured few. I do not count Edinburgh, as many hands were there concerned. Adam and Nash have left their mark writ large—Nash's mark larger and as recognisable as Adam's—in the Regent district. Nash in his way has certainly been most successful, and his work, not without a simulation of classical dignity, strikes the stranger most of any portion of London. Wood carried out in his street architecture many devices which Adam adopted. Of the two Wood was certainly the more ambitious in style and grander in treatment; but it must be borne in mind that Adam was appealing to the more homely instincts—he wished to be cheap and serviceable.

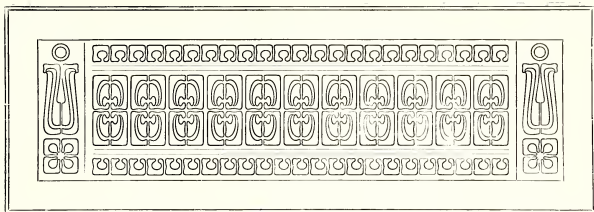
Wood came some thirty years and more before Adam appeared on the scene. It seems certain that the latter must have taken some note at least of his predecessor's system, and, as we shall see later on, adopted and developed many of his striking devices. Not so generally known is it that he actually succeeded in almost supplanting him on his own ground, and in due course made his own style the dominating one in Bath itself. This is a curious thing, and it shows how potent and irresistible was Adam's influence. Visitors to Bath will recall the Pulteney Bridge, which leads to Pulteney Street, and is indeed a most picturesque, piquant and highly original piece of work. Some Bath experts contend that this is of Baldwin's design, Wood's successor though not follower; but no one who is familiar with Adam's special *work* and treatment can have the slightest hesitation in pronouncing it to be his. In such a case, those "in the know," and who have their Adam by heart, as it were, are entitled to decide, for they know best what is the genuine Adam sentiment, which is more *felt* than matter of direct proof. The beautiful and peculiar arches of the bridge—the graceful quaintness of the buildings on the bridge, with their domes, etc.—the general ornamentation—all this is Adam unmistakable and Adam "all over." There is however positive proof of his intention to "capture" Bath, for among his designs is found one for "the concert and assembly rooms, at Bath," as well as one for the Pulteney Bridge, of which we have been speaking. There was also "a design for a town house at Bath for Mr. W. Pulteney." Among his designs we find many for London houses—thus there is one for Lord Shelburne looking into the Green Park; a house in Gerrard Street, Soho, for Sir William James, Sterne's friend, and to which the caller addressed

his letters ; the Mill House at Putney Heath ; and one at Hyde Park Corner, for Lord Barrymore—which must surely be the present Apsley House, later altered and transformed by Wyatt. But further, the Pulteneys were patrons of Adam, and at his funeral Mr. Pulteney was one of the pall-bearers. As the street and bridge were named after him he must have been lord of the soil, proprietor, and how likely that he would have secured the work for his *protégé*?

But with this foothold obtained, we find Adam's style actually supplanting that of his predecessor. For Baldwin came after Wood, and to Baldwin is owing some of the more striking and conspicuous groups of building—those that leave most impression on the visitor, such as the Town Hall, the Pump Room and its piquant colonnades. These are in Adam's own style—not in Wood's—and thus prove the statement that I have made. They contrast curiously with Wood's more classical methods. In later days Mr. Brydon, a local architect, made additions to the Town Hall which are rather out of sympathy with the Adamesque work—with the feeling shown in the columns, etc., Brydon's work being hard and somewhat stiff, though he strove hard to follow his models. The same lack of sympathy is shown in his additions to the Roman Baths, which are out of keeping with the grand Roman spirit.







### CHAPTER III.



THE peculiar character—or as some would call it, mannerism—which betrays the Adam system might be thought difficult to define exactly. It is only familiarity with his work from every side and every point of view that furnishes the secret. I believe that the whole depends on certain elements of singular grace and expression, for which Adam had a strong *penchant*, and which he combined and varied in fashions suggested by his own intense sense of beauty and enthusiasm. These forms we find in

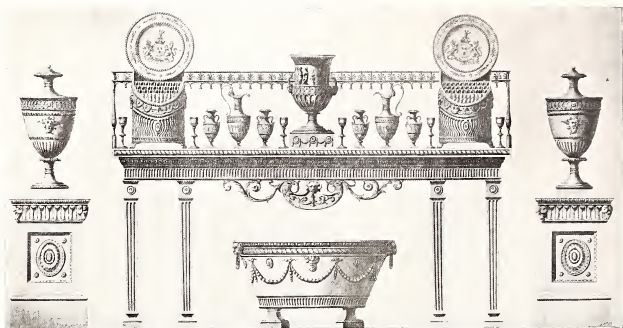
the well-preserved remains of Diocletian's palace, notably in the colonnade in the Atrium—the court-yard by the Jupiter Temple—all the germs of his system in fact, decorative and other, which he adapted to his own purposes. Thus we see facing the entablature on columns bent into an arch with bizarre effect and which furnished him with the root of his favourite window design. On the walls we find his specially shaped and peculiar arch—outlined merely and not intended for service.

Casting about for a word or words that would exactly describe Adam's peculiar methods—a difficult thing to find—it seemed to me that to call him a *Pictorial Architect* and his system *Pictorial Architecture* would answer very well, and correspond to the various gifts displayed by our architect. For he laid out his façades very much as a painter would his picture, with a view to attract, to excite interest and curiosity. Colour, shadow, relief, contrast, graceful forms and outlines—these he set forth on his “fronts”; he made everything “speak” or say something. Such pictorial artists are always interesting; their works excite and pique. “Wood of Bath” was pictorial in this sense, so was the late Mr. Sedding,

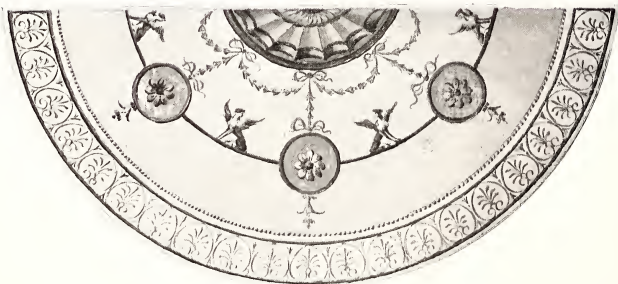
and a few more. They contrast strongly with the slow moving, strictly regular, and the rather uninteresting Professors of the regular school, who do all by square and line. This Sedding had a wonderful likeness to Adam. He had an attractive personality and something of Adam's versatility, as we can see from that interesting if somewhat theatrical church of his in Sloane Street. Like Adam he loved to expend himself in designing everything for his work, such as the lights, door handles, railings, etc. Adam's nature was permeated with this pictorial feeling, he found nothing that was responsive or suggestive in the established models that surrounded him at home. The "Pillar and Portico style," as it might be called, had no flexibility, for it had its stiff rules. He could not exercise his fancy on such materials. Full of enterprise and originality, he resolved to go forth as an architectural Pilgrim and seek for what he wanted. And this exploring was not to be in conventional pastures, but he set himself to discover what would be new and at the same time practical. There was a stroke of genius in this motive.

About the middle of the century this spirited young architect found himself at Rome studying for his profession. In some modest, sensible observations he tells us the reflections that occurred to him when surveying the ruins of the Eternal City, and how they suggested to him an ambitious scheme. He had been struck by the fact that scarce any Roman or Grecian monuments remain to us but public buildings, temples, amphitheatres, and baths, which alone had the grandeur and solidity that could defy time and violence. "The private but splendid edifices in which the citizens of Rome and Athens resided have all perished. The more accurate accounts of Vitruvius and Pliny convince us that the most admired efforts of modern architecture are far inferior to these superb works, either in grandeur or elegance. There is not any misfortune which an architect could more lament than the destruction of these buildings." "This thought," he goes on, "often occurred to me during my residence in Italy, nor could I help considering my knowledge of architecture as imperfect, unless I should be able to add the observation of a *private* edifice of the ancients to my study of their public works." But the question was, Where were such opportunities of study to be found? As he wandered among the Roman monuments he was particularly affected by the great Baths, the work of the Emperor Diocletian. Their system of decoration left a deep impression on him, and, with that of Raphael's *Stanze* in the Vatican, was to supply him with many ideas which he later utilised when adorning interiors at home. It occurred to him that this great prince, whose passion for architecture prompted him to erect many grand and expensive structures at Rome, Nicomedia, Milan, Palmyra, and other places, had also been led to build a monumental palace in Dalmatia, which was scarcely known and still less visited. Here was exactly what he was in search of. He had seen in the accounts of former travellers that the palace was in fair preservation, though it





SIDEBOARD WITH KNIFE BOXES, &c.



PAINTED TOP OF CABINET.  
(From "*The Connoisseur*").

had never been "observed with any accuracy." He was convinced from the specimens he had examined of the Emperor's work that his taste was superior to that of his own times, and that he must have formed a school of artists whose labours would well repay examination. After due inquiry, and weighing all the advantages and objections, our young architect determined to carry out his scheme and visit these interesting remains.

He made his preparations carefully. He induced Clérisseau, a French architect and antiquary—the same, I presume, who wrote a fine, richly illustrated folio on French antiquities—to accompany him. He also engaged two draughtsmen, of whose skill and accuracy he had long experience.

On July 11th, 1757, the party set sail from Venice, and after a ten days' voyage, on July 22nd, reached the coast of Dalmatia. He describes, simply enough but enthusiastically, the sight that greeted the travellers as they sailed into the bay. "The city of Spalato, though of no great extent, is so happily situated that it appears, when viewed from the sea, not only picturesque but magnificent. As we entered a grand bay and sailed slowly towards the harbour, the marine wall and long arcades of the palace, one of the ancient temples, and other parts of the building which was the object of our voyage, presented themselves to our view, and flattered me, from this first prospect, that my labour in visiting it would be amply rewarded." This it was certainly destined to be, for his many works all more or less reflect the gracefully poetic tone of the ruined *facade* that was now opening before him.

Nor can we feel any surprise that he was thus affected. As our eyes fall on the fine print, Bartolozzi's work, which portrays the scene, we can call up that morning, and the delighted surprise with which the traveller welcomed the enchanting view. There was the forgotten city—the long, elegant colonnade overhanging the waters, destined later, in smaller shape, actually to reappear on the banks of the Thames; there was the graceful campanile beside the hexagonal Temple of Jupiter; the ancient houses incrusting the walls. Over all was a tranquil, even forlorn tone of solitude and abandonment. It seemed a picture from a dream, full of romance; and the semi-barbaric figures of the natives in their effective dress—half Greek, half Turkish—added a picturesque element to the scene. Mr. Jackson, the latest visitor, gives an interesting picture of the impression left on the stranger as he first beholds the astonishing pile: "Even in its present state, ruined, defaced, and overgrown with the mean accretions of fifteen centuries, its vast proportions and solid construction excite our astonishment. The principal buildings are within the walls, and nearly the whole of the exterior walls themselves remain standing. The two temples are turned into churches, the peristyle forms the town square or piazza, the outer walls still

fence the older town, and three of the four gates still exist, and form the ordinary entrances. The Brazen Gate has indeed disappeared, and a mean modern doorway has taken its place; but the Golden, or North, Gate still remains, with its bracketed colonnettes and arcadings; and the Iron, or West, Gate, capped with a coquettish mediæval campanile, still admits from the Borgo to the precincts of the older town."

The arrival of the strangers, who began almost at once their examination, excited the surprise and curiosity of the inhabitants. They proceeded to make their drawings; but the suspicious Venetian governor fancied they were surveying and measuring the fortifications, and a peremptory order was conveyed to them forbidding further attempts of the kind. They had been promised a formal permit from the authorities at Venice, but it had not arrived. This was an unlucky interruption. A sort of Caledonian providence here took care of our travellers: for it chanced that a "brither Scot," General Graeme, commander-in-chief of the Venetian forces, chanced to be in the place, and "interposed in my behalf with the humanity and zeal natural to a polite man," says Adam. No doubt he acted on the oft-quoted doctrine that "bluid is thicker than water." His efforts were seconded by Count Mariovich, an antiquary of the place, and the prohibition was withdrawn. The Governor, however, still suspicious, "detailed an officer," who was directed not to lose sight of them. The shrewd Adam applied himself with redoubled zeal to get his work done, for, as he said naturally enough, "the fear of a second interruption added to my industry; and, by unwearied application during five weeks, we completed, with an accuracy that afforded me great satisfaction, those parts of our work which it was necessary to execute on the spot." Indeed, after he had been there some time his zeal prompted him to dig in various quarters, and, he says, "very probably I might have made some useful discoveries, had not the repeated alarms and complaints of the inhabitants prevailed on the Governor to send me the most positive orders to desist. I was therefore obliged, though with regret, to obey, and hastened to finish what remained uncompleted above-ground." We may admire this honest enthusiasm, and may speculate, too, on the wonder of the natives at the proceedings of the persevering Scotchman. Considering the shortness of the time, the result was really wonderful, for we have a vast tome of beautiful drawings, with abundance of measurements, plans, surveys as the result. Nearly one hundred drawings, plans, restorations, etc., were made.

That visit took place nigh on a hundred and fifty years ago. Attractive as the place is, it seems strange that so few travellers and tourists have followed the example of Robert Adam. The latest was that accomplished architect, Mr. Jackson, who has given a pleasing account of his visit, and showed such interest in the remains that he was selected to design a new campanile for the



RUINS AT SPALATO.



SOFA.

(From "The Connoisseur").





cathedral in an adjoining city. Lady Strangford and Sir Gardner Wilkinson have also recorded their impressions of the place. Before Adam, however, we can trace but few visits to the interesting ruins, save perhaps that of the Abbé Fortis. A sort of mystery, indeed, as though it were some enchanted palace, seemed to hang over it. The charm was the living interest given to the old ruins, among which the natives lived and flourished, and pursued their avocations.

The palace, which is on so vast a scale, excited the admiration of contemporaries and others who lived close to the time, and the Emperor Constantine Porphyrogenitus, who had seen most of the ancient monuments, declared that no description could give an idea of its magnificence. It is some 600 feet square, enclosed within walls, and contains a space of nine and a half acres. It has, or had originally, its four gates, one in the centre of each wall, which form the extremities of two long streets that cross each other in the centre. There are great towers at each corner. The accommodation had need to be large, for it contained not only apartments for the Emperor and his immense retinue, but vast open spaces for exercise. There were barracks for the Prætorian guards, and two imposing temples. It indistinctly suggests the design left by Inigo Jones for his great palace at Whitehall—of which only a fragment, the Banqueting Hall, was attempted.

Our travellers in the course of their surveys were able with perfect ease to trace out the exact outlines and divisions of the different quarters, some of which had to be followed into the private houses and gardens of private houses. Mr. Jackson found many a beautiful fragment incorporated with the homely modern walls.

"Everything is vast and overwhelming," he says, "and it is with a feeling of awe that one passes under the huge arch stones of the gate." Two great streets, each about 40 feet wide, intersected each other in the centre. These were entered by four gates, or gate-houses, pierced in the colonnades that enclosed the palace. Great towers rose at the corners. Of these gates, one was called the Porta Aurea, or Golden Gate, another the Porta Aenea, or Brazen Gate.\* The Porta Aurea was of a striking pattern—a small doorway in a richly-treated *façade*, which was set-off with columned niches and lunette windows, a pattern that was often reproduced by the architect in his more showy works.

How deeply permeated he was with the spirit of all that he saw here, is shown by the fact of his reproducing in London these interesting types of buildings. A few years ago there was standing in Cockspur Street, a work of Adam's called the British Coffee House. Adam was proud of it and engraved it in his collection. And

---

\*The other day a friend of mine travelling in Dalmatia sent me a post card with a picture of Diocletian's Golden Gate. It was a strange mixture of eras.

yet one can see he got the design from this Golden Gate. But it is more the feeling of the thing that is recognised. I heartily wish, if I might say so, that this fashion of an architect attaching himself to a single building like St. Mark's or San Sophia, or some town, was more in fashion, that let it colour and direct all he did, just as Romney gained by perpetually painting Lady Hamilton.

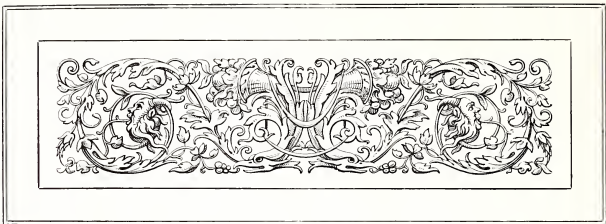
Having worked here diligently and assimilated the very essence of all that was round him, he returned to England fully equipped with a new and rather startling style. For an official exposition of the Adam style we must go to the author himself, who very shortly, but in a pleasing simple fashion, expounds a few principles which supply the key-note of the whole. In the very sensible remarks of the Brothers—introducing the grand collection of their works—a rather amusing tone of inflation and confidence might strike us as boastful, did we not know their natural modesty, which was associated with so many gifts. They were really stimulated by the extraordinary success they had met with, and which might have overset less brilliant natures. And they tell us with a natural pride, "In the works we have had the honour to execute, we have not only met with the approbation of our employers, but even with the imitation of other artists, to such a degree as to have brought about a revolution."

As we turn over the plates of those nobly imperial volumes, we cannot but be struck by their brilliant and dramatic character; and recognise here that "movement" and expression which the author has imparted to his original Buildings. Here we see the play of light and shade, the "advance and recession" and all the other elements, with the general pictorial character. Pictorial and romantic as these drawings are—they are altogether different from the usual formal architectural drawings. What strikes us especially is the beautiful and artistically wrought detail of the ornamentation, over which we linger with a fond admiration—astonished at the fancy and versatility of the accomplished designer. The entertainment imparted is only second to that which would have been furnished by seeing the originals, what is now altogether lost to us owing to the shabby, defaced state of the originals. But we can conceive how beautiful a spectacle must have been an Adam work, newly finished, with its snowy white aspect, and its delicate details—all sharp and clear, the whole alive with grace and beauty. As architectural drawings, even, these are truly remarkable; for in spite of the romantic and fanciful tone cast over them, there is none of the misty "prettiness" we so often find in modern work—everything is to scale and rule. These might almost serve as working drawings or the foundation of working drawings. Of this however there can be no doubt, that from these stately tomes—"huge armfuls," as Elia has it—can be drawn all the principles and details of the Adam system.\*

\* He was admirably served by his engravers, among whom was Pastorini, and the greater Piranesi—a personal friend who himself might be called a pictorial architect, for he *built* as it were on paper, and restored on paper many hundreds of the old Roman buildings.

Does not all this show how perfect and accomplished a *virtuoso* we had in this extraordinary man? The Adam spirit breathes from every page of these volumes. Here was yet another marvel, for engrossed as the Brothers were with their vast enterprises, they found time to supervise and direct this gigantic work, in a day when there was no easy "process-work" at so much the square inch to illustrate the architect's speculations. Here each plate was a special artistic effort, that must have taken a vast amount of time and labour.

Mr. Fergusson has described the extraordinary rage for palace-building which seized on the English nobility about the middle of last century, rather the century before last. It was the same in Ireland and Scotland. In Ireland we find numbers of these splendid structures, great central blocks with semi-circular wings and noble chambers, which the improvident owners built regardless of expense, crippling themselves and their descendants. Many of them now are in a neglected semi-ruinous state, partially accountable for encumbered estates Court and Land Acts. Some of the English houses are on a scale that would need the revenues of a sovereign prince to keep them up. One of the wildest extravagances in this way was the vast building reared by that half madman Wellesley Pole, who, having strangely enough won the greatest heiress in England, also vainly sought by the Duke of Clarence, proceeded to waste her fortune until both were reduced to beggary. It seemed to anticipate the frenzied building freaks of the unhappy King of Bavaria. Wanstead was the name of this spendthrift's mansion, which for its stupendous proportions might almost take one's breath away! Its fate was to be levelled to the ground for the sake of the unpaid for materials. Not a stone was left upon a stone. The mere levelling of such a monstrous pile would in itself have been a costly business from the time and labour, and the small price obtainable for materials once used. In modern days we had another instance of this destruction when the sumptuous mansion of Baron Grant at Kensington was pulled to pieces and levelled on the eve of its completion, its superb marble staircase, bought for a small sum, now adorning a millionaire's house. Indeed the recklessness shown in this wild competition was something incredible. It seemed almost a mania. I have been assured by an old friend, the owner of one of the most imposing of these mansions in Wiltshire, that much of the estates was lost by giving leases to the tenants for sums of ready-money ridiculously under the value, in order to pay for this palace.



## CHAPTER IV.



ND now, what was the grand principle—the key-note as it were—to the Adam system? It was “Movement,” as he called it—opposing it to the old inert, inexpressive methods that ruled when he came on the scene. It is easy for anyone to attempt or to suggest “movement,” but there is a risk that mere “fussiness” and disorder will be the result. The word “Movement” explains itself—it means life and expression, with the suggestion of ideas. It sets the spectator’s mind in motion; his eye is attracted by this object

and that; he notes their meaning. In a good picture we have this movement—which is the basis of interest and attractiveness and therefore it is that I have styled Adam’s system “pictorial.” “Pictorial architecture” is not by any means a bad name. We shall understand it better by considering the old conventional style, which was too dignified and restrained to admit of movement. We see this in the case of long ranges of windows—ranges that tell no story and are merely regimental. But Adam concentrated the expression in one or two large windows. The aim of these old stately palaces seemed indeed to be to frown off all enquiry or speculation, to present a haughty unreadable front that furnished no clue to what was within. In a pleasantly written passage Adam thus unfolds what he meant by this principle of “movement.” He sought, he says, “improvement in the form, convenience, arrangement and *relief*”—note the word—“of apartments, and a greater movement of variety in the outside composition.” That is to say, the pleasing and dignified classical arrangement of an “outside”

according to the established rules, could only supply a general harmonious whole. The usual porticoes, pediment and columns and cornices, followed invariably after an established pattern, and were simply ornamental.

Then we have a more precise definition of Movement. "Movement is meant to express the rise and fall, the advance and recess, with other diversity of form, in the different parts of a building, so as to add greatly to the picturesqueness of the composition. For the rising and falling, advancing and receding, with the convexity and concavity and other forms of the great parts have the same effect in architecture *that hill and dale, foreground and distance, swelling and sinking have in a landscape*; that is, *they serve to produce an agreeable and diversified contour, that groups and contrasts, like a picture, and creates a variety of light and shade which gives great beauty, spirit and effect to the composition.*" This striking passage, which might have come from Ruskin and would certainly have commended itself to him, embodies the whole Adam system and was constantly and thoroughly applied by him in his work. All that follows in this essay will be found to be no more than a development applicable to the principle here laid down.

"It is not always," he goes on, "that such a variety can be introduced into the design of a building, but where it can be attained it should be without encroaching upon its usefulness." He then mentions as an illustration of "movement" the effect of the height and convexity of the Dome of St. Peter's as contrasted with the lower square front and convexity of its court. The south front of Kedleston, in which he had a share, he praises. He commends Sir John Vanbrugh as a genius of the first class. "The movement in his works is extraordinary; though they are marked by extravagance and barbarity, they are rough jewels."

Of the entablature, he says, "It is here not intended to find fault with it, but only so far as it has been abused by the misapplication, ignorance, and want of invention in many modern artists."\* It used to be the fashion to issue monographs dealing with these great palatial buildings, in which all beauties of design and decoration were pictured and described—and most interesting works are these. Most of Adam's great houses would bear such treatment—Bowood, Osterley, Lansdowne House, Syon House, and many more. In all these we are struck not only by the fanciful and varied treatment, but by the free treatment of the established "orders." Architraves are omitted without scruple, entablatures are modified and toned down, capitals diminished; and, it must be said, with a general result of propriety and increase of effect. Of Kedleston, Lord Scarsdale's seat—a truly gigantic production—he was but part author, Paine, another "nobleman's architect" having done a good deal of the work. Paine followed Adam's principles of decoration, as can

\* It will be noted as significant of his delicate treatment, that he generally describes his brethren as "artists."

be seen in the Chapel of Wardour Castle, where are embroidered pilasters and "grotesque" work galore. But he is more correct than spirited. Adam was often not content with giving his house a single front, but, as in the case of Luton, he made each side a separate front of varied treatment. The cost of this system must have been enormous.

And now we can illustrate this "movement" by one of his earliest and most characteristic attempts, startling almost from its novelty and its contrast with the old system. This was an addition that he made to Lord Wemyss' house, Gosford Hall. It is most attractive from its life and animation, and embodies "movement" in every particular.

There is a central block of handsome proportions laid out with three arched windows. This is united by a sort of colonnade or corridor with smaller blocks or wings, each having the same window motive. These windows give the whole its character. Everything in the façade is practical and full of meaning. How marked and significant are the three Domes, a large one in the centre, the two others of smaller size. They tell their tale, that there are halls beneath them. So do the large windows, which betoken that there are great reception rooms or great well staircases behind. The connecting corridors signify traffic to and fro. There is a quaintness and unexpectedness about the whole that is highly pleasing, note too the life and "movement" supplied by the later Lunette window.



Fig. 1. Illustration of "Movement"—  
GOSFORD HOUSE.

Making then this "Movement" the base of everything, we now go on to enquire what were the more subsidiary principles of the Adam system.

I do not know whether the average architect has a fancy for certain particular members of the Architectural Family, and produces his effects with these by preference. I fancy he uses all indiscriminately according as they are wanted. Adam relied on a few beautiful elements, attracting the eye and giving to them a new power. He refined them until he had extracted and distilled the very quintessence of elegance from them; he got out of them all that they were capable of. Here was a system. There is a sort of analogy as it seems to me between the principle in Adam's system of developing to the fullest these particular elements and Wagner's reform in music. Before his time the musicians when dealing with voice harmonies in parts were accustomed to use the lower voices as accompaniment to the first which gave the air. They thus made up the full chord.

There was this fashion also in architecture where the component elements were used to support the leading motive in the same mechanical or conventional way. Wagner was persuaded that this was a waste of dramatic material, that every voice was equal in importance to its fellows, and that it was a degradation to use them merely to fill in harmonies. The alto, tenor, and bass should "lead" on equal terms with the soprano; hence he set himself to furnish each voice with a living dramatic motive independent of its fellow; hence the richness of this and the multiplicity of the interest. Adam in the same way imparted a new and independent character to the different architectural elements hitherto treated in conventional style and used as unemphasized details of a whole, and made them dramatic.

These elements which are simple enough he uses almost invariably, and they become the basis of his whole work. I trace the following:—

- (1) *The oval.*
- (2) *The arch.*
- (3) *The window.*
- (4) *The column.*

It will be noted that these are all curvilinear in form, and it will be found that the oval enters more or less into all.

For the oval Adam had a sort of passion; he used it always in preference to the circle which, indeed, he scarcely used at all. It is easy to see the reason for this preference, there being more *movement* in the oval, to say nothing of its being more acceptable to the eye. It is not fantastical to say that there is "movement" in the oval as compared with the circle; in the latter every portion has the same aspect, whatever portion we choose we find radii proceeding from the centre. The circumference is the same everywhere and at the same distance from the centre; hence a general monotony and sameness. But in the oval we have two centres and two lines of movement. The outer line varies, being narrow at one portion and expanding at the middle. It tends also in the direction of its longest part. Adam not only used the strict oval shape relying on its attraction, but he disposed it suggestively with great subtlety in all kinds of fashions. It is clear this form, which is not usually found, gave his work an unusual charm and originality. We find this oval in his ceilings with smaller ovals at the corners; ornaments on a wall surface: we find balustrades taking sinuous forms in the shape of oval vases. I know nothing more original or more strikingly effective than his great oval staircase which fills the centre of a huge mansion in St. James' Square, now occupied by the Board of Agriculture. This monument, for so we call it, is almost startling for its originality and wonderful success. The "well" or opening is oblong instead of square or circular, and this form is retained up to the top story. Let us conceive then of this noble stair, with its richly wrought iron rail, sweeping aslant and with

a gentle curve to the first landing, then taking another sweep in the opposite direction, the opening outlined by the two flights being somewhat in the shape of a flattened O. So on to the top. The majesty and dignity resulting can scarcely be described.

A gate pier does not much lend itself to the picturesque, it is a homely object enough ; but it is worth considering how Adam set about to impart beauty to such a thing. The piers of Lansdowne House, Berkeley Square, are plain light tall square pillars of stone, supporting green gates. But we should note the proportion—the proportion indeed of everything concerned in the composition ; the long brick wall, with delicate cornice on top, its base as delicate, a lodge behind, all laid out by our artist as a picture. Every part will bear close examination. The height of the plain rude brick wall is exquisitely suited to its length : so are the exceedingly delicate mouldings. The pier he lights up by placing a carved oval with a scroll ornament high up, and this draws the eye with a curious attraction, supplies movement and is placed on the exact fitting spot, neither too high nor too low. That all this is not mere speculation is clear from the fact that the architect had this pier and oval beautifully engraved on a large scale and included in his works. He also had the lodge and gate engraved, showing that he took pride in the design.

Bisected, the oval furnishes him with the peculiar form of his arch. He rarely used the half circle, but usually such a curve as would result by dividing a circle into three parts and taking the uppermost. Here again he sought movement ; for in the case of the half circle, the two extremities if prolonged would descend vertically, and the supporting lines, as in a doorway, would “run into” the arch : whereas with his bisected oval the lines of the arch tend away to right and left, not downwards ; crossing the vertical lines—hence movement. All Adam’s doorways are arched in this fashion, as we can see from those in Portland Place, and it will be confessed that they offer far more animation than the conventional patterns. Thus we see how the oval directs the form of his doorways.

From the oval we derive the arch ; from the arch the window, by a sort of evolution. This brings us to an interesting question as to the physiognomy, as we may call it, of the house. We have seen Adam’s theory of movement, which is to be found in the house front as well as elsewhere. But we ask ourselves, which of its elements should produce this air of movement ? Some lay the emphasis on the entrance, as though that were the note ; it should be large and important so as to catch the eye and invite entrance—crowds go in or go out. But this is evidently an accident and not of the essence of the house, which is for those who reside therein, and who are few. As the walled front of a house implies the exclusion of light and air, windows are important because they let in these important elements. Without them, and without the proper proportion of size, breadth, all within would lose



character and effect. The windows and their arrangement are all important. Adam, however, seemed to think of *the* window rather than of windows. *The* window, just as we think of *the* door. Both are entities of the house.

Taking then the window in preference, Adam treated it according to his conception of its being the most important element. As the staircase, lobbies, etc., ascending to the roof, make the essential "internals" of a house, so the window which represents these on the outside should be quite as important—so important, that Adam almost seemed always to construct his house *round* the window, so that the house was for the window instead of the window being for the house. This prominence of so illuminating an element was bound to be made as decorative as it was constructive. Such treatment was really a novelty, and the result imparted a cheerfulness and animation that was refreshing and brilliant.

It is not fanciful to liken this result to that of effective eyes in the case of a human being, which in proportion to their beauty and brilliancy become the chief living note not only of the face, but of the figure. In speaking of Adam houses and other buildings it should be remembered what rough and destructive treatment they have encountered. Adam always relied on the contrast between his grey pseudo-stone dressings and the body of yellow brick which it was to set off. Both toned down together. But very soon the owners began to "paint" and "point"—that is paint the columns and dressings and "point" the yellow brick. Adam's idea of a homogeneous mass blended together is thus quite destroyed; and the homogeneity is lost. Hardly any work of his has escaped being be-monstered or uglified in this way.

It was among the ruins of Spalato that Adam found this favourite type which he adapted to his windows. It will be said that this pattern was in use before his time—notably in the Horse Guards' building—but it was different. Adam's was a regular structure and built; the others were mere openings following the shape of an arch. Adam's typical window, which he used so often as a centre, was an effective piece of construction, and original too. He formed a tall broad arch, divided it into three portions by two columns which supported a sort of parapet. Above was a radiating, fan-shaped decoration, semi-circular in outline, with a small semi-circular light just above the two columns. This arrangement was often on a grand scale, as can be seen at Boodle's Club, St. James' Street. Within we know are the hall and staircase,



Fig. 2. RUINS AT SPALATO  
(showing Adam "motives").

large and requiring much light. We feel at once that the function of the great window is to supply plenty of this light, so it tells all this story plainly from the outside. Such is the reason that Adam's fronts are so "intelligent," as it were—so informing: they tell plainly what they are there for. I confess one of these Adam windows, outlandish as they seemed to Mr. Ferguson, appear to me to be interesting and pictorial enough. As we have seen, he scoffed at the notion of taking out nearly the whole front of the house and calling the opening a window, which was really an ignorant misrepresentation.

With much art Adam imparted a lightness to the structure, for it was regularly built and bore its share in supporting the weight of the wall above it—much as a fireplace has to be built so as to support the wall of the chimney. The arch above Adam, filled with cement and, as we have seen, in a radiated pattern. But no one can judge of the effect of these things now, as they have been overloaded with paint.

As an illustration of this peculiar treatment of the window, the house of the Society of Arts is well worth studying, and as a specimen of treating the various elements that go to make up a building destined for particular purposes. The architectural adornments, such as the portico, columns, pediment—the brick base or step on which the columns stand—show us clearly what Adam had in view; viz., to make the classical treatment harmonise with modern materials and with the fragile brick ground; and suggest an air of massive security. Brick and stone do not harmonise, the latter seems to crush and overpower the former. Adam, instead of having a detached portico and pediment, embedded both in the brick and thus seemed to bind all together in a mass, giving an air of firmness and security. This system of half columns or engaged columns he used even in the case of his stone buildings, the columns thus, instead of standing aloof and being merely ornamental, did real work; they became the stays of the building like the modern steel framework.



Fig. 3. THE SOCIETY OF ARTS  
(ADELPHI).

The constructed window lent itself to many variations, in which the fancy of the designer had full play. I had long been calling attention to an overlooked or scarcely noticed specimen—a homely brick mansion in Whitehall, Gwydyr House, which is set off by a dainty little window of this kind, worthy the notice of architects

of taste. Lately it was a gratification to note that it had attracted the attention of the accomplished editor of *The Architect*, who reproduced it on a large scale. It was in this way that Adam redeemed the coarseness of a common material such as yellow brick, lighting it up, as it were, with a dainty and elegant feature which drew the eye at once, and turned the rest into a sort of rude background. Nothing more elegant and refined can be conceived than the lines of this charming little sketch.\*

If one would realise conveniently the results of this window treatment, let us stand in Waterloo Place and look at the two club houses before us and which face each other—to wit, the Athenæum and the United Service Club. In the first the long and graceful windows are disposed by an accomplished designer to add to the effect. Each has its proper amount of wall space about it. We feel, so nice is the adjustment, that another window could not have been introduced without destroying the general proportions of the whole. We then turn to its *vis-à-vis*. There we see a row of windows crowded together—shouldering each other as it were—an ungraceful show. And we feel, moreover, that one might have been taken away or another added without making any difference.

The notion of adding dressings and cornices to windows ranged in rows never much commended itself to Adam. The system always seems to overburden the window, and interfere with its original native expression of a simple opening. Why should it be thus garnished to produce a cumbrous effect? A mere opening to let in light, especially when such openings are repeated in rows, does not need such garnishing. Infinitely more effective and expressive is the *clear-cut opening* with much depth, which “tells” far more. Adam, when he used a cornice over a window, did so for emphasis’ sake when he had but a few and wished to give each importance. But there was reserve and the decoration was not obtrusive. We can see this in the elevation of his Register House at Edinburgh. As I show presently, each window has an individual character, is not one of a row, and has abundance of what I have called elbow-room. Each might be the single window of a house.

One of Adam’s pleasing fancies in dealing with the window is the oval balcony, an unusual thing, of which there are a few specimens scattered through London—one in Hill Street, another in Portland Place. I doubt, however, if this be quite legitimate in matter of construction, as it is obvious that it grows narrower at each end and thus cannot afford accommodation.

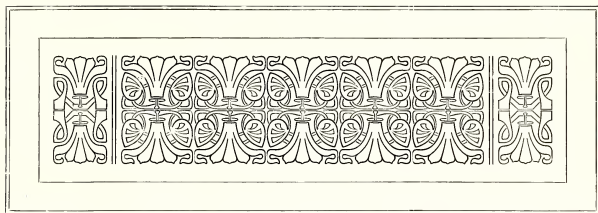
The matter of wall space between and above the windows seems to be altogether neglected in our day. And yet for logic and symmetry it is all-important. The wall is the main factor, the windows only an accident—windows are in, and for, the

\* It has, of course, been mangled and altered. The doorway, which made a part of the composition, violently altered—two of the columns carried away, a story added. Yet in spite of all it still attracts.

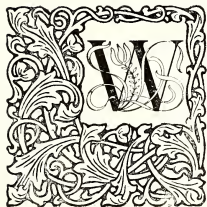
wall, not the wall for the windows. Yet we often find the windows so many and so much crowded together that the wall amounts to merely partitions between them. One should see *below* the windows so much as should suggest the idea of a parapet or space between them and the floor; and above so much as should signify the space between the floor and the top of the windows below. All windows should have "elbow room," as it were, as much as though they were but one window in that line. Nowadays it is the custom to carry down the drawing room windows to the floor, abolishing the parapet altogether, with a loss of dramatic expression, for the parapet suggests something to lean on as you look out into the street.

It is astonishing what marvels this sense of architectural "feeling" produces. We often see literal reproductions—copies in fact—of small unimportant buildings, such as an orangery. Some of these have a singular grace and piquancy that is quite mysterious: such, for instance, as Wren's orangery at Kensington. There is a poetry about it and yet it is difficult to put the finger on where the charm lies. And yet when we find it reproduced, say in the guard house of a barrack by one of our moderns, we find but a lifeless uninteresting bit of work without feeling or poetry or even meaning.





## CHAPTER V.



Now come to the column. The column is commonly a rather conventional element in a building, and is usually dealt with in a perfunctory style, according to hard strict rule, as if a matter of course. It might be said indeed that there is the "Column of Commerce," which figures so regularly in the local Bank or Institution, as a dignified and becoming accessory. No one seems to feel any particular enthusiasm about the column or to be eager to bring out its perfections. But Adam had a sort of passion for the column; he believed that it was the most perfect and elegant of all the architectural elements, that it served to express feeling and grace and charm if it were but treated with skill and sympathy, instead of by rule and compass and conventionalism.

Adam has proved to us by actual examples that by this sympathetic treatment, real feeling and charm can be extracted from the column, that is, from each particular column with its all elegant lines and contours. He considered that there was in them something sentient and living. Your ordinary journeyman-fashion is to set down a whole row of columns measured out correctly according to the formulas. One column is about the same as another, and there is only the one way of fashioning them, that is according to the formulas aforesaid. But as I said, Adam was passionately devoted to the column and believed that each had its "movement," and was capable of anything and of being turned to any purpose. All which may be thought fantastic and imaginative, but it is really practical architecture. Columns are used to give support to burdens laid on them; that support may be in excess, or may fall short. It is always harmonious for the eye to see this

nicely adjusted with no superfluity either way. Thus, we see in the street a stalwart porter struggling to carry a heavy load; another no stronger will carry the same amount with ease and grace, and please the eye. This sense of proportion Adam always delighted in. It leaves an enjoyable impression. But this exact adjustment is only elementary and but the beginning. In the lines of Adam's columns is found a marvellous grace, a tender subtlety, a delicacy that is quite extraordinary and which is produced we hardly know how. Nothing can be conceived more lovely—that is the word—than the range of columns that form the great Porch at Osterley. These seemed to be worked by fairy fingers—they are as delicate as if wrought in ivory—they breathe grace and breathe life. The Entasis is perfectly exquisite and to it is owing the charm. There is nothing fanciful in all this, for there are abundant analogies—in the tree that tapers upwards; in the human arm which holds aloft the heavy bar, with the slender wrist that thickens towards the elbow. The grace is drawn from the feeling of the spectator that the material thickness is proportioned to the demand for strength, the top of the column needing less strength and thickness than the bottom. The eye likes to feel that there is no waste. As we shall see later, in one of Adam's beautiful door handles there is a sort of Entasis\*. Adam seemed to produce his results much as Gibson or Canova produced the marble arms of a woman with their exquisite finish, these contrasting with the plainer and less refined, but correct work of the common sculptor. Adam really worked on his column as though he were a sculptor. He used the Entasis, which was no novelty, and common enough both then and now. But there is Entasis—and Entasis, and the mystery of the contour line was his secret. In short it became his own. Adam put his own soul, all his delicacies and graces into his column. But let us hear him on this interesting subject, observing how he speaks from his very heart. He speaks in a perfectly engaging fashion of the column. He treats it as though it were his "pet child." It will be interesting to consider minutely his remarkable theories on this one topic, as they can be applied generally to his whole system. It is clear that his whole aim was to refine and beautify without regarding antiquated rules.

"The column," he said enthusiastically, "is not only one of the noblest and most graceful pieces of decoration, but in all round bodies especially, such as stand isolated, there is a delicacy of proportion to be observed, that those of another form

---

\* A sort of Entasis is shown in the variety of the contours of the Etruscan Vases, which are so subtle as almost to defy rules and which yet seem to be founded on the elimination of all material that does not contribute to the strength or construction. This same principle will be found in Adam's beautiful door handles, to be described later, where the outlines of the shank is proportioned to the service expected from it. Mr. Pearson, to whom a tablet has lately been set up in the Crypt of St. Paul's, a great Athenian in architecture, is said to have discovered further mysterious Greek arts in the treatment of the column. As it was said, his accurate measurements revealed to us how far the Greeks had gone beyond the use of the straight line into the comprehension of the hidden curve. Thus the lines of the base of the Parthenon were curved in order to appear straight, and columns on the same plane were made different in size in order to create a more perfect and harmonious impression of uniformity. One might, however, think either that these things were owing to accident, decay, settlement, or the deceptions of scene painting would become thus ennobled into art.

and in other situations do not require." He means that were the Capital of the existing canons adhered to, it might be out of proportion with the rest, and should therefore be altered. "Our constant practice," he goes on, "has been to diminish our columns from the base to the capital by means of the instrument used by Nicomedes for describing the first conchoid, which we think has exceeded in elegance any other method. The proportion of columns greatly depends upon the situation of these columns, whether outside or inside, engaged or insulated, raised above the eye, or level with it.

"The Capital is an object of great distinction and delicacy. We acknowledge," *i.e.*, he and his brother James, "only three orders, for the Tuscan is a bad and imperfect Doric, and the Composite an awkward mixture without either grace or beauty. The Doric capital, when properly adorned, is capable of great elegance. The rest of space between the astragal and the annulets should be of much greater height than the proportion prescribed by Palladio and others." He thought the Ionic capital, with its volutes square in front, was as rich and magnificent as the Corinthian. Angular volutes he thought "less solid, less grave and less graceful, but the great size of the volute of the Grecian Ionic has always appeared to us by much too heavy, the Roman to border on the other extreme. We have therefore generally taken a mean between them, which we think has a happy effect, making them in width about one half of the superior diameter of the column, and observing that the centre of the eye of the volute is nearly perpendicular to the extremity of the said.

"We always used a double fillet as giving more light and shade as well as relief; in imitation of the Greeks we likewise bend the channel, or hollow whence the volutes spring."

As to entablatures, the brethren had some very heretical notions. "We can see no reason for assigning to each order its precise entablature, fixed down unalterably both in figure and dimension. Different circumstances both of situation and propriety ought to vary their form, and also their proportion." In fact, the architect was entitled to shape his own entablatures according to his wants. As to mouldings, he considered the Roman was less curvilinear than the Greek—"we have always given a preference to the latter. I have even thought it advisable to bend them still more, particularly in interior furnishings, where objects are near, and ought to be softened to the eye, for circular mouldings are intended to relieve the sight from the acuteness of the square ones, of which too frequent a repetition would be infinitely harsh and tiresome. But on bending the *cimarecta*, the *cimara versa*, the *ovolo*, the *cavola*, and the *astragal*, they blend and mingle themselves more harmoniously with the square, etc."

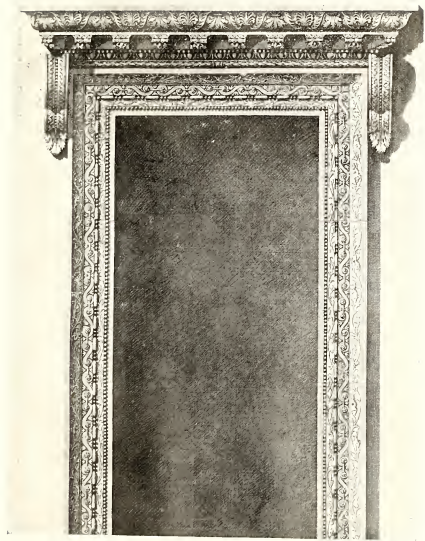
This bold reshaping of the column, and free-and-easy (as it might be termed) alteration of its elements, must have struck the Gwilts and others with a sort of horror

—Here was something heretical indeed ! And yet it is impossible not to recognise how graceful was the effect of his trimming down the capital, cutting down its bulk by nearly one-half ; with that elegant arrangement of his, which turned it into two clusters of eight leaves, one growing out of the other. This treatment was in the interest of the column, which he wished to be supreme, and to *prove* that it was supporting the general weight without having an over-burdensome capital interposed. His capital was merely a bit of ornamentation, intended to decorate the junction of column and entablature. The latter, too, he also relieved and lightened in the same fashion, and for the same season. The old precisians were accustomed to these heavy cornices and huge pediments, and their eye missed something in Adam's " meagre " treatment.

It is extraordinary how even distinguished critics in dealing with Adam have missed the whole point of his treatment of entablatures, cornices, capitals, etc. They dwell on the meagreness and narrowness of these adjuncts, as though his sense of proportion had been wanting. The truth was this was his style—his own style according to which he strove to moderate the excessive exaggeration of those portions of the orders, and which seemed to him to dominate too much and to the prejudice of the building itself. He thought the effect would be better if they were made subsidiary. The pediment he considered far too large, unmeaningly large—a piece of show ; this he flattened down, as it were, making the ends exceedingly acute. So with the cornice on the University Building at Edinburgh, which Mr. Ferguson thought too slight. These alterations seem to me quite appropriate and happy, they become portions of the building and not additions to it. They impart a sort of airy elegance. It seems to be the necessary part of his style—indications rather than actual realizations. So with leaving out of the architrave while retaining the frieze. As his principles in harmony are found in other parts of the building, we naturally count on this Adam treatment here. Anyone who studies the Edinburgh University building will see how suitable is the censured cornice.

So when we find ourselves in presence of one of his great buildings, we recognise his treatment of the classical elements : we feel that here is something different and wonder what is the secret and what motives influenced him. It strikes me that his aim was first to keep under and modify the assertive nature of high classical elements. This we gather from his utterances about the column which he wished to refashion regardless of the sacred rules. In all these great efforts of his there is an air of restraint and of something kept down. As an illustration we may recall his dislike to the isolated columns—columns standing by themselves with large spaces about them, and which seemed to him superfluous excrescences. He preferred " embedding " them in his brickwork, using them as stays to support the house—very much as the moderns use steel supports. Mr. Statham, the editor of *The Builder*, I know has about as strong a feeling against the pilaster as Adam had against the detached





EXTERNAL DOORWAY.  
(From "*The Connoisseur*").



column, and this seems reasonable in the case of the corrupt fashion in which the pilaster is, as it were, "glued" on to the front of a house by way of ornament. With Adam, however, it was always a structural element, built into the brickwork and giving support to the house.

Now for an illustration or two. A street doorway is usually thought to be below regular architectural treatment—it is always conventional and designed according to the one established pattern. But Adam always saw that the slightest, most trivial element could be dealt with artistically as well as in homely fashion and could be made to contribute to the general effect. A modern architect might be amazed at finding him designing such things as garden seats, and even dog kennels. But he felt that anything he touched might be adorned. There is a group of doorways in Mansfield Street, close to Portland Place, and which are striking for their variety and elegance of treatment. He seemed to put his art into them. Here is one that exhibits all his graces,\* though it has been disfigured and "uglified," painted over, and the fanlight removed.



Fig. 4. DOORWAY IN MANSFIELD STREET.

Looking at the first of this group of doorways in Mansfield Street, are we not struck by the general grace, the refinement of the lines and proportions, and the delicate ornamentation? The columns with their simple, elegant capitals are specially attractive. Note also the panelling of the door, unobtrusive, yet with a sufficient character of its own. The band of stonework above is meant to light up the general waste of the brickwork—though there is a sad disfigurement in the clumsy modern balcony. There was originally one of Adam's airy semi-circular railings with its sinuous iron tracery. Yet this delicate piece of handiwork has been standing for nigh a hundred and thirty years, and still "stands where it did." In spite of all, nothing can be more graceful or refined than the columns which seem to droop beside the door, like the arms of some fair woman. There is a reposeful air, and it is a composition full of grace and dignity, contrasting with the coarse blatancy of the common doorway.

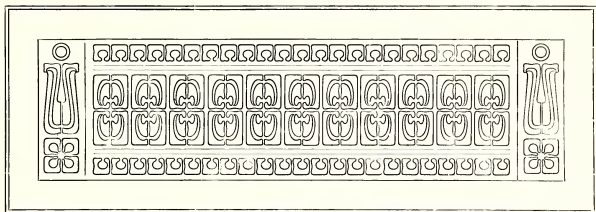
Another, a porchless structure, exercised the architect's powers of variety. The door itself is the central "note," framed and set off in a highly decorative

\* During the course of my many lectures, this view when exposed on the screen always excited applause.

fashion. How pleasingly elaborate is the fanlight; as it would seem too large an area of glass, he inserts the inner semi-circle to supply an idea of support and security. Again is the panelling of the door beautifully designed. It is garnished with his own specially designed knocker. No. 3 is not so much to be admired, the cornice being unduly heavy. Here is yet another doorway in this Mansfield Street, which is of another pattern, with four columns instead of two. It will be seen that the door is rather overpowered by this arrangement, and is itself of rather too alternated a pattern. But the "uglifiers" have been at work. The pretty fanlight with its detail has given place to a sheet of plate glass—always unornamental and suggesting emptiness—while the panelling below has been cut away and two windows substituted. Two lights have also been broken at the side. Poor Adam has suffered much by this sort of tinkering. In Portland Place, nearly all his large and expansive fanlights have been removed to give place to sheets of plate glass. We may be struck by the simplicity of the effect here, but our architect when called upon could be showy enough, as in the instance of the richly treated and imposing doorway to a nobleman's mansion in Chandos Street. This stately thing is well worth a visit; nothing can be more delicate than the moulded garlands, and the flutings. We see his peculiar modified capitals to the best advantage, also his appropriate ironwork. It will be noted how he disdains the usual flight of steps. There was much art in this omission, for the approach on the level added a dignity to the doorway. You advanced towards it—it was a sort of forecourt, and was a sort of continuation of the street level. How different this to the ascent, then to find oneself perched on a little platform.



*Fig. 5.*  
DOORWAY IN CHANDOS STREET.



## CHAPTER VI.



SPOKE before of Adam's obligations to Wood of Bath. From him he adopted the effective system of laying out his streets in "blocks" and thus breaking up the long ranges of houses which have such a monotonous effect. A builder—"jerry" or other—who sets himself to build a street from end to end, only thinks how he shall make each side of his street one interminable house, partitioned off into many houses by party walls. But there is one roof for all and one front and back. This is all unengaging and very "cheap

and nasty." Such are Harley and Wimpole Street, which carry the system to the extreme of inspidity, or as Sydney Smith put it—"everything must come to an end, even Wimpole Street." This professional builder's way of doing the thing is certainly the most convenient. But the old and natural system is for each house to be built separately, and one at a time, and this produces a picturesque and very expressive effect. Each owner or builder, as he adds on a house to the line, adds also the expression of his own individuality and requirements. We can read these off in the physiognomy of each. It is this that gives such an interest to the market places of cities in France and Belgium, where tall and short houses, broad and narrow ones, coloured and uncoloured ones, are clustered together; and so in the case of that striking Square, Portman, where on two of the sides we have mansions of every dimension and abundant stateliness ranged together. These are mostly Adam's work and the effect is very striking and interesting. So with St. James's Square, where all the houses have a more striking individuality and demand—command rather—our attention and curiosity, in some instances admiration. Commercial interests of course interpose to prevent this system being generally adopted.

It was Wood who carried out the system of grouping houses in blocks, thus abolishing the monotony where a number of houses were reared at the same time. Each block was treated architecturally and as a simple building, with a central portion and wings, so that the spectator might fancy he was standing before some great public edifice. The objection was made that this was an unbecoming "sham," for that it was really only a number of houses masquerading, if one might say so, as a single one. The deception too was betrayed by the number of doors and entrances. But, as was said before, such a block is really more akin to a single house than a number of houses, for there is one roof for all, one front and one back, and the dividing walls are party ones, each shared by two. Architectural logic and propriety therefore would require that it should be treated more like a single house than a number of houses.\*

Wood, using the rich Palladian style, gave an attraction to his rows of houses, notably in Pulteney Street, Bath, by lavish decoration round the windows and doors, thus carrying off the monotony and attracting the spectator's eye. Adam had to content himself with his own more bare form of decoration. But it must be said he cannot compare with Wood for the latter's splendid and daring methods. Adam's blocks were so large and overgrown as to destroy the attempted effect of their looking like single houses : as in the case of his Squares, Bedford, and Charlotte, in Edinburgh, where there is a pediment and pilasters in the centre, and wings stretching away to an inordinate length. They suggest some enormous overgrown façade of a hospital or other institution. We compare with these the beautiful St. James's Square, in Bath, where all is perfectly proportioned, moderate in size, most impressive and picturesque, and truly architectural.

But there are some other monuments in Bath of Wood's designs which words are scarcely adequate to praise sufficiently, so noble is the effect. I speak of the magnificent Circus and Royal Crescent, the latter perhaps better known by Winkle's adventure than by its architectural merits. Adam had hardly grasp or "largeness" enough for so fine a thing as the Circus. It is full of poetry and grandeur of sentiment; etched by Piranesi in one of his monumental plates, it would be quite Roman. To see it at night by moonlight with all its shadows and its solemn imposing state is something overpowering. I really believe we have nothing else so grand or solemn. It is broad and massive in its treatment, yet full of the most abundant and ornamented details. The curve is beautiful, and truly artistic are the openings to side streets, three not four as an average performer would have made it—for the sake of symmetry, as he would fancy. The richness of the detail may be gathered from the fact that each

---

\* As an amusing illustration of the inconvenience of this combination, Colonel Edis told me that he once had rooms in a pediment of FitzRoy Square, where there was a circular window in the centre. This was divided between two tenants, so that he enjoyed a sort of crescent-shaped window.

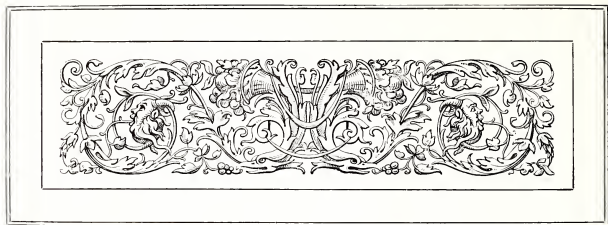
window has *four* columns, and that there are some six or seven hundred in all ! How bold and imposing too the cornices—massive and full of shadows. Three orders of architecture are given, one on each tier.

I spoke before of how the doors, generally made prominent, betray the separate houses ; but here Wood of Bath used an artful yet artistic device to neutralise this objection. Each doorway has neither portico or cornice and is exactly in line with the adjoining windows ; while the aperture is cut exactly like those of the windows, only at the bottom it is carried down a little lower. Thus the eye is quite beguiled.

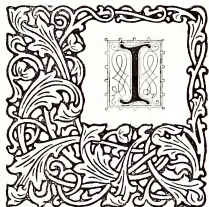
It has been repeated indeed that neither Wood nor Adam were the earliest introducers of the block system, and that Inigo Jones has left in London various combinations of this kind which we find at Covent Garden Market and Lincoln's Inn Fields. The Covent Garden buildings were however a professed reproduction of the Italian Piazza, and its chief " motive " was a covered promenade with arches. The groupings at Lincoln's Inn were professedly detached houses placed together with pilasters and without any attempt to exhibit symmetrical blocks of buildings.

Nash, who came later, deserves much credit for the fancy he showed in designing such groups. Regent Street is remarkable for the ingenious variety of patterns shown, and there is one block by Burlington Street laid out in the Mansard fashion, with pilasters reaching to the ground, and a rich cornice and capital, which is singularly piquant and bold. But here like everything else, there has been the usual disfigurement from paint, shops, breaking up of the sky-line by added stories, and rebuilding. Nash had his double crescent known as The Quadrant, a most original work when enriched with its colonnade which I well recall.





## CHAPTER VII.



IN this man of romantic ideas there was a commercial and highly speculative element of a strongly marked kind. This led him into some very daring enterprises which were remunerative, as well as offering a wide field for his talents. As we have seen, when our architect was in the far-off Dalmatian city of Spalato, he was much struck by that astonishing monument—a wonderful work truly—the great Palace of the Emperor Diocletian, with its sea terrace spreading along the Adriatic, 600 feet long. This so impressed him—as well it might—that he brought its image away with him and renewed it on the Thames. The Adelphi quarter is the result—a very striking instance of his work in this way, and always seeming to have highly romantic associations. The Adelphi is an almost poetical and interesting place, built about 140 years ago. It has quite a history. My friend, Mr. H. B. Wheatley, has been its chronicler. Crowds pass down the Strand daily and never dream that a small city is close by. You enter—and the hum and roar of the Strand is at once hushed as you find yourself on the Terrace. The view, with the Thames running at its foot, used to be superb. Now, as we know, the Embankment has long since interposed in front; the Adelphi has been pushed back, as it were, far from the river; it has almost a ridiculous look, as if *stranded* in a garden. It has no meaning. But in its day it was thought a prodigious and stupendous thing. Lords and ladies contended for the splendid and spacious houses of the Terrace. Who can think now that it was once a great quarter, or that it had several streets of its own, a great bank (now removed), two hotels, several clubs, stables, a church, later converted into a bank?

Garrick's House, once the offices of the Literary Fund, has many agreeable associations, and lovers of Boswell will recall the pathetic scene after his death, when the brave old Johnson, coming from the dinner party given by Mrs. Garrick, walked on the terrace and talked of their friend. The place is also associated with a poor waif and stray, the boy Dickens, who used to roam about its precincts and quays, and has many allusions to the place in his writings. The façade of the houses on the terrace, as some of us may recall, used to be a fine and architectural one, marked by large and effective treatment. Adam had a fashion of ranging the uppermost row of windows with a large space between them and the next story. This left a curious impression of height; the decoration was exceedingly rich, the pilasters embroidered over with an acanthus decoration. This treatment was repeated on prominent houses, at corners, where vistas were to be obtained. But now the whole has been overlaid with paint and "compo" its decorations effaced. As this large piece of ground is of extraordinary value, it has been eagerly coveted. The London County Council have tried to obtain it for their new Hotel de Ville. In fact, it may be considered as doomed and only lingering on sufferance. With a curious but common inappropriateness, a pediment has been erected in the centre to give a finish and symmetrical air. Before there was none and the cornice was continued uninterrupted from end to end; only in the middle there were simply eight pilasters without any pediment, and a certain accumulation of details. This drew the eye as to a centre. Adam evidently wished to avoid the weakness of the feeble pediments, which have no effect when displayed on so long a range of building. It was one more of his protests against a slavish adherence to these antique formulas.\*



Fig. 6 AN ADAM HOUSE IN THE ADELPHI.



Fig. 7 BRIDGE IN THE ADELPHI.

\* One has only to look at the long flanks of the India and Foreign Offices—the centres of which are marked by pitiful pediments, columns, etc.—to see how weak and unequal such adornments are.

The little streets that descend from the Strand to the Embankment are mostly old-fashioned and picturesque in their way—perhaps from the contrast they offer to the noise and “sea-shell roar” of that busy thoroughfare. Many end in a *cul de sac* with an open aerial gallery as it were, whence you can look down on the silvery-looking Thames below, with all its noble bridges. These quiet alleys have some interesting or suggestive memorial to exhibit; their houses seem all of the one pattern—sound and snug—of early Georgian era, and mostly given over to the “private hotel” business. It may be conceived how much more interesting and piquant it was when they led straight down, as many did, to the water’s edge, now set far off by many furlongs. The curious mixture of associations, as we wander up and down; the strange incredible squalor of some portions, the comparative stateliness and imposing air of others, the way in which memories of Garrick, Franklin, Peter the Great, the Romans, Charles Dickens, and many more, are suggested and jumbled together at every turn, has an extraordinary effect. It will be seen that this is one of the most interesting quarters in London, and is well worth wandering through.

The Adelphi is of course associated with the name of this eminent family of architects. These remarkable persons in their work have left the most enduring marks of their talent and influence all over London. It is a sign of extraordinary ability, and even genius to make so strong an impression on one’s generation, and leave imperishable tokens behind. The Adam style is felt and appreciated to this hour, so marked and distinct is it, and, as we walk about London, it constantly forces itself on us for recognition. We know it by a certain grace and delicacy, a generally dignified treatment; above all, by a beautiful proportion that triumphs over inferior means and materials, which must strike even careless beholders. As we walk along it is possible to stop and say “Yonder is an Adam house.” All their effects are nicely calculated; such as the depth of a pilaster, the size of a window, the relation of the stories. The late Mr. Fergusson notes particularly “their peculiar mode of fenestration.” “They frequently,” he says, “attempted to group three or more windows together by a great glazed arch above them, so as to try and make the whole side of a house look like one room.”

A bold, ambitious scheme was, indeed, the fruit of the Dalmatian studies. The monumental terrace filled the mind of the traveller. In the Strand at Durham Yard the ground seemed to take much the same shape. His dream was to rear, on double and triple rows of arches, just such a terrace which should look down on the Thames. And this was clearly the origin of our familiar Adelphi Terrace.

No sooner was the scheme conceived than it was taken in hand in a daring and ambitious style. Money was wanting, but, being Scotchmen, the brothers

Robert, John, Thomas, and William were patronised by their countryman Lord Bute without which they could not have hoped to obtain the Act of Parliament they wanted. They began their works in 1768, leasing the ground from the Duke of St. Albans, for the very short term of ninety-nine years, at a rent of £1,200. A steep incline, as may be seen now in Buckingham Street, descended from the Strand to the Thames, and their plan was to raise on a series of massive arches quite a new quarter of streets, fronted to the Thames, by a handsome terrace.

The substratum of this great work is really monumental from the size and dignity of its arches. The huge brick arch, such as we see it in a railway viaduct, is a coarse, unpleasing thing ; but the student of the Roman palaces made his work grand, dignified, and Roman too. As we enter the city from Durham Street or from the side in Buckingham Street, we cannot but be impressed with the fine vaulted work the harmonious proportions, and the air of strength and endurance. In parts there are several tiers of these vast and massive structures.

The brothers calculated that they would be used as Government storehouses, but in this they were disappointed. They soon found themselves engaged in a law-suit with the Corporation, as they had encroached on the foreshore of the Thames, and these checks led to serious pecuniary embarrassments in prosecuting the enterprises. In 1773 they were obliged, after mortgaging their property, to take the unusual course of raising funds by lottery. They obtained an Act of Parliament allowing the issue of tickets for the scheme. The prizes ranged from £5 to £50,000, there being 108 in all. In this way they raised some £218,000, and the houses appear in some way to have been also prizes. The whole enterprise was brought to a conclusion in a very short time, the buildings, arches, etc., all being completed by 1773, having taken only about five years to build. Then these stately mansions in the terrace were eagerly sought. Garrick established himself at No. 4 ; and the ceiling of his drawing-room had been beautifully decorated. Indeed, a pleasant volume might be written on the lives and adventures of the tenants of the Adelphi or those associated with it—the hapless Barry the painter ; Dr. Graham the quack, and his “ celestial bed ; ” Lady Hamilton, who was his subject ; Topham Beauclerk, the man about Town, and John’s friend, Old Mrs. Garrick, who was there so lately as 1822 ; and Mr. Blanchard, the amiable and popular *littérateur* and dramatist, who lately resided there. He declares that he is but “ two shakes of the hand ” away from David. Lord Beaconsfield, an adventurer also, in the better sense of the term, was born on the terrace ; also “ Tommy ” Hill, the friend of Theodore Hook, and the Paul Pry of Poole. Mr. Attenborough has long occupied the gracefully decorated houses that led from the Strand, now destroyed, and his books and records could unfold some strange stories of adventure. And finally, to bring in a tone of

wealth, "the potentiality of growing rich beyond the dreams of avarice," the great banking house of Coutts spreads away in different directions over the quarter. Mr. H. Wheatley, who has written much that is curious and interesting on the Adelphi, tells us the history.\*

The story of the luckless Barry is most pathetic, and as we sit in the fine meeting-room of the Society of Arts, a choice work of Adam's, and look up at the painter's crowds of animated figures that line the walls, it comes back with a strange vividness. There was something in him akin to the character and erratic course of Haydon, the same despairing sense of talent neglected and put aside, the contest with the Academy, and a sort of quarrelsome eccentricity. The difference, however, between the two men is, that Barry's works on the walls speak for him and proclaim his fine academic culture, his surprising grace and poetry in the beautiful, well-designed figures and groups, and the refined transparent colouring; with which we have only to contrast the heavily painted earthy-looking portraits of the Queen and Prince Albert, which by some strange lack of congruity have been thrust into this classical company. One can conceive, however, the difficulties of dealing with a man who insisted on representing the death of Wolfe by a number of perfectly nude figures, and who, in his latter days of penury and neglect, when asked out to dine, insisted on tendering from one-and-sixpence to two shillings to his host in payment of the meal! These fine pictures, which are the wonders of the Adelphi, cover a canvas that spreads round the room. To obtain the fame and expanse allowed by such an undertaking, the chivalrous artist offered to do the work gratis; not however, it may be supposed, that when the work was done, the Society would be so mean as to leave him without remuneration. As the result proved, he was fairly well paid for his labours.

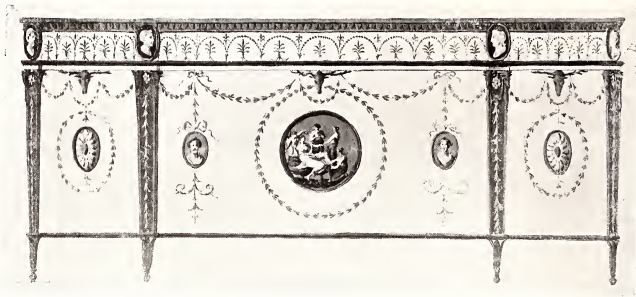
Among their other plans, the brothers did not forget a chapel, which was built at the corner of James and William Street, which the bankers, however,

---

\* "John Campbell, who died in 1712, and lies buried with his wife in the churchyard of St. Paul's, Covent Garden, is supposed to have been the founder of the bank in St. Martin's Lane. It is not known when the business was removed to the Strand, or the exact locality to which it was so removed, but the house is described as The Three Crowns, next the Globe Tavern, and it is believed that John Campbell was there in 1692. Campbell was succeeded by Middleton, who was succeeded by George Campbell. The firm was then known for a time as Campbell and Bruce; from 1751 to 1755 George Campbell was sole partner. At the latter date James Coutts, who married a niece of George Campbell, was taken into partnership, and the firm became Campbell and Coutts. In 1760, James Coutts, the sole partner, took his brother Thomas into partnership. He died in 1778, and the sole charge of the bank devolved upon Thomas Coutts, and from that time to this the style of the famous house has been Coutts & Co.

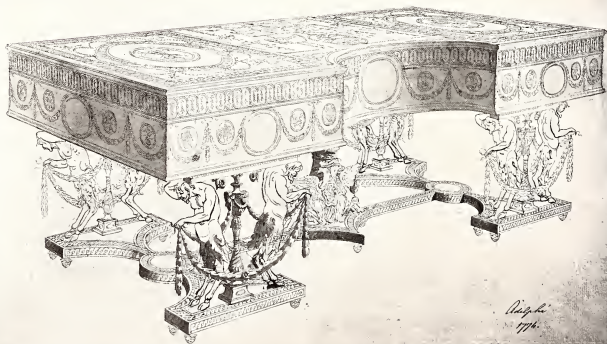
"Although the houses built on the site of the New Exchange were not old when the Adelphi was planned out, the brothers Adam, who were known to Coutts, were employed to build a new house. This they did with a slightly architectural elevation, the symmetry of which has been somewhat injured by alterations of late years. In the house built by the Adams, Thomas Coutts lived for many years, and his dining-room and drawing-room, with their handsome marble chimney-pieces and fine mahogany doors, are still unoccupied. When Lord Macartney was on his embassy to China, he sent over some Chinese wall-paper to Coutts, which was hung on the walls of one of these rooms, and there it still is."





CABINET.

(From "*The Connoisseur*").



DESIGN FOR PIANOFORTE FOR THE EMPRESS CALLERON.

(From "*The Connoisseur*").



soon absorbed into their premises. To join this, however, a covered bridge was necessary, for which the firm had to obtain an Act of Parliament. The old banker "did not wish," says Mr. Wheatley, "the view from his drawing-room window to be spoiled," so he built a low house in John Street, and arranged with the Adams that the opening, now Robert Street, should be opposite this so as to form a frame for his landscape.

Every architect knows the "Adam" work—the long pilasters and medallions on a brick background, each enriched with arabesques and garlands of a delicate character. They know too the virtues of proportion and space, regulated by principle and calculation. In many an old house we recognise their ceilings; a great circle in the centre, filled in with tracery in very low relief. Their designs have been published, and at least display a prodigious fancy and variety. Portland Place and its stately mansions, with their broad surfaces of brick, have a certain dignity; but the houses have been sadly disfigured by additions, and the pleasing old-fashioned-looking Fitzroy Square seems like a bit of Bath. The brothers are said to have been the first, in London at least, who attacked the difficult problem of imparting to a number of detached mansions the air of being portions of one whole, which in architecture is a deception most intolerable and not to be endured. For there is a perpetual struggle of assertion between the two principles going on—the separate houses making protest, as it were, by their individuality against being considered one great expression—while the long *façade* in its turn contradicts and overpowers this individuality. There are also some Adam houses in York Place, easily recognisable. I confess, however, that Finsbury Circus staggers one. There is a terrible monotony in the place, though the line of the circus is graceful. It was probably a "job" akin to a painter's "pot-boiler," and to be done cheaply. It is to be suspected that Gwydir House, in Whitehall, which has been defaced by alterations, was his work. Plaster and delicate stucco-work—the patterns apparently taken from arabesque work—light garlands and vases wrought in very slight relief, these were all combined with yellow brick-work. Ceilings, chimney-pieces, furniture, garde-vins, plate-boxes, were also designed by the brothers on this principle.

Garrick, when he came to London and set up with his brother as a wine-merchant, opened their small place of business where the Adelphi is, perhaps where Durham Street now stands. Towards the end of his life, after an interval of nearly forty years, he returned to this humble spot to inhabit a stately mansion on the terrace. These houses are all well designed, the rooms of noble proportions—particularly the drawing-rooms. They have a unique feature of a basement in two stories, and you seem to descend into the bowels of the earth. Now they are given up to offices and public purposes, but when richly furnished, decorated, and inhabited by persons in Garrick's position, the effect must have

been admirable. After a dinner-party of a summer's eve, the company adjourned to the noble terrace, looking down at the shipping and the bridges, and Boswell describes such a scene. It is curious that the brothers should have—unconsciously, no doubt—renewed the curious old family street names of one hundred years before. Just as they found George, Villiers, Duke, of, Buckingham—so they christened their work, as we have seen, Robert, John, William, James, and Adam. "Off" Lane ran between Buckingham and Villiers Streets—but the name has been changed of late years.

Still, the wonderful work underground excites more interest and astonishment than what is on the surface. The busy passers-by in the Strand will note a huge yawning archway at the bottom of a short inclined street which leads into these catacombs. As already pointed out, the work is of a Roman cast, the arches being regularly groined in Gothic fashion. As Mr. Wheatley tells us: "I have as yet spoken only of the superstructure of the Adelphi, and merely casually alluded to the arches below, which form one of the most remarkable sights in London, but it is a sight that only a few are privileged to see. I have wandered through these arches with wonder, under the obliging guidance of the custodians. Below you there is a very town, much of it filled with bottles of old vintages. The arches were many of them open for years, and formed subterranean streets leading to the wharves on the Thames. They were constructed (as stated on an old engraving) so as to keep the access to the houses level with the Strand, and distinct from the traffic of the wharves and warehouses. They extend under the whole Adelphi, including Adam Street, from York Buildings, and were also carried under the additional buildings at the end of Salisbury Street. In many places there are double tiers of arches. Some twenty years ago the dark arches had a bad name on account of the desperate characters who congregated there and hid themselves away in the innermost recesses, but at last the place was cleared out, and the greater portion of it closed in. The extensive cellarage of Messrs. Tod-Heaty gives evidence of the former state, for one of the alleys is styled Jenny's hole—and the arch above was known as the Devil's Bridge. The disgraceful condition of the arches could not have existed for any length of time, as, some forty years ago, the place was well cared for by the wharfingers, and at nine o'clock at night a gun gave the signal for the gates to be closed."

One of the most singular incidents in this stupendous undertaking is the short lease which was given and accepted. The result was that it expired in the year 1867, and the whole fee, with streets, houses, &c., passed into the hands of Messrs. Drummond. This was a fine property to gain in such a way. It was, however, rather dilapidated, and there were signs of sinking in the terrace or of failure in some of the arches, but this proved to be merely a trifling

matter. The whole, however, was thoroughly repaired and restored. Unfortunately it was thought proper to plaster over the *façade* of the terrace, which destroyed the graceful arabesques, which are, however, left on the flanking houses behind: though Walpole humorously declared that the embroidered pilasters reminded him of "warehouses laced down the seams, like a trull in a soldier's old coat." Buckingham Street is another of these quaint, bright streets in the Adelphi, leading down to a cheerful opening, whence, as from a balcony, we look down on the animated Thames below. The old York water-gate here displays its upper portion, while beside it runs the sequestered little mall, with its dozen trees, once a charming little promenade when the river ran beside it. Life in "residential chambers" here might seem acceptable enough. On the left hand, at the bottom, is a remarkable house of some antiquity, which, as one of the useful medallions of the Society of Arts tells us, was occupied by the Czar Peter on his visit to London. Its various stories are now given over to the Charity Organisation Society—and a maternity association. But on going up the stairs we see palpable vestiges of the magnificence of the place, which must have had some connection with the old York House. For we find ourselves in a spacious and imposing drawing-room, of which the entire walls are oak as well as the flooring, and the two elegant doorways are embroidered round with a rich carved flowering border. But it is the unique ceiling that will excite admiration, consisting of a thick wheel-like border, filled in with the boldest and richest stucco-work, presenting solidly wrought roses and leaves. This encircles a painted allegorical piece, but so grimed with dirt that the subject cannot be clearly seen. It is but little damaged. One could fancy this room restored and furnished, and the rude Muscovite seated in congenial proximity to his favourite river. The side of the house that looks over the Embankment, though covered with whitewash, displays a tall elegant central window of a decorated kind, showing that the whole must in its best days have been of a spacious and imposing character. The view from this window, as indeed it is from all these corner houses giving on the river, is charming. On the opposite side of the street, a few doors higher up, is another old mansion of some pretence—also given over to offices—and noteworthy for the twenty or so grotesque heads, one of which is set over every window. It is hard to account for this odd form of adornment, unless it came with the Dutch. They are found in a few quarters of London, some putting their tongues out to the spectators, others crying, laughing, &c. This mansion is believed to have been the one occupied by Mr. Secretary Pepys, and so we look at it with interest.

With the Adelphi are connected some particularly interesting incidents in the life of Dickens. As we stand on the spacious terrace, leaning on the rails, and looking down, we see between us and the gardens below some ancient ramshackle coachhouse-looking buildings and sheds, where some small businesses are

carried on. One of these is an old public-house, once standing almost by the water's edge. It was hither that the little boy Dickens when engaged in the blacking business, used to resort; "one of his favourite localities" was "The Fox under the Hill" public-house, now shut up and dilapidated, but still retaining its name.

There is nothing so forlorn as the aspect of this ruined public-house—the letters faded out, the doors tumbling from the hinges. Indeed, all the portion under the terrace is an extraordinarily squalid and miserable collection of shanties and tumble-down buildings, which it is astonishing should have been allowed to remain. There are hay waggons, with a suggestion of a tavern yard, sheds, workshops, but all in the saddest state of squalor.

There is no doubt that this is the tavern introduced into *Martin Chuzzlewit*, and described as being in "the humbler regions of the Adelphi," where Mark Tapley was hired.

On the higher level of the terrace there are some gloomy-looking hotels, of many windows, "The Caledonian" and "The Adelphi." There is here the air of dingy old fashion, so well suited to *Pickwick*, and it does seem that this Adelphi Hostelry is "Osborn's Hotel," where Wardle and his daughter Emily put up, and where the droll scene occurred of Mr. Snodgrass's being secreted during dinner—the fat boy running "something sharp into Mr. Pickwick's leg" to attract his attention. As we look up at the first-floor windows, the scene rises before us, and the whole appears in harmony with the humours of *Pickwick*. Most natural is it, too, that the Wardles should put up at such a house, for the furniture, &c., all seems to belong to that era.

Overlooked or lost in the Adelphi Buildings we find a very dainty bit of Adam work in the stone bridge which connects two portions of Messrs. Coutts' Bank, or what used to be their bank. It is impossible not to be attracted by this little composition, which suggests a Venetian bridge. My friend, Mr. Wheatley, is inclined to think that it is of later date than Adam's time; it may be so, but it is certainly of his school and manner, if a little coarsened. The peculiar arch alone is significant of his special treatment: moreover, a design for it is found in his collection. There is something very piquant about it. Further evidence is found in the fact that the buildings beside it show unmistakeable traces of his handiwork in their solid and even massive treatment, as is becoming the protective work necessary for the security of a Bank. This note is struck in the bridge itself, which is as fortified as the main buildings it joins together.

A regular exploration of the Adelphi arches leaves a strange impression of wonder and mystery, and the visitor is confounded as he wanders on and on at

the almost Cyclopean character of the work. Here Adam was at his best and finest. We enter in Buckingham Street by a vast and yawning arch, which seems to descend into the very bowels of the place. We can ramble for an hour or more, always through a series of great arched passages which strike off at every angle and in every direction. As we lift our eyes we see overhead monumental groinings and curves of extraordinary height and width, and somewhat flattened in their contours, while here and there little openings and oubliettes pierced in the thickness of the vaultings let in a faint, glimmering light. Sometimes we descend by steps to a yet lower depth where a fresh series of arches awaits us. Everything is spacious and dry, the air fresh, and the temperature warm. There is something almost romantic in these explorings. We wander on and on without encountering a soul. It seems like the middle of the night, and a place where the novelist might find inspiration for some gruesome tale of murder, or of some belated being who has strayed in here and hopelessly lost his way. One of the old inhabitants will tell how once roaming through the place at noon, and looking into one of the mysterious "bins" at the side two women suddenly started up like spectres and fled. They had been sleeping there the night before. A man was once found quite naked, and had to be furnished with clothes before he could be removed. Many recollect when donkeys and ponies used to be regularly "stalled" under the arches and cur dogs prowled about. There are still quoted the traditions of the "Adelphi Arches" and their horrors which were a standing topic in the newspapers of thirty years ago. The dramatists of the theatre close by turned these to account, transferring such horrors to the boards; the heroine decoyed into these caverns supplied a stirring head line "Adelphi Arches by Night." But the hero was of course at hand for the rescue.

All at once we come upon a portion where there is the full light of day, and men busy at work hammering. Here is the front of the terrace which looks upon the Embankment, and forms a row of little houses two stories high, with spacious arched windows. All are in full occupation, and have a bright, cheerful view of the river over the gardens. Thence we plunge again into a fresh department of this true "cellarage." Now we are under the Society of Arts and its deep cellars, now far below the street and with the noisy Strand close at hand, but so far over our heads that not a sound reaches us.

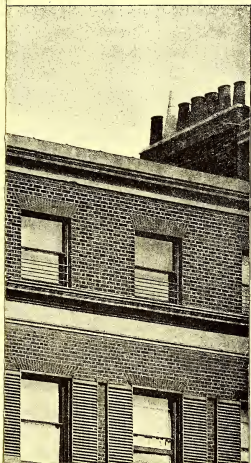
Before the Embankment days a regular wharf ran along by the foot of the terrace with a small dock or two, and here floated up the lighters laden with fruit, which was unloaded for the market. This has now been filled up and a small plot lies between the wharf and the gardens. All these underground caverns were planned by the Brothers, under the encouragement that they would be secured by Government as store places, much as the vaults under

Somerset House were used. This proved but a delusive hope, and they were left, as it is called, "in the lurch." But of course the chief object was to raise the level from the Thames to the Strand and lay out the block of terraces and streets. As a speculation it could scarcely have paid, too much having been sunk or lost in the bare foundations.

While pursuing our way through the gloomy intricacies of the place we find ourselves before a huge wooden gateway which fills up one of the great arches. We fancied we had seen the whole, but here was a new quarter. The gates thrown open, we enter the great cellars of Messrs. Tod-Heatly. The usual pattern of wine cellar is a low series of archings not much higher than the human figure; but here we find ourselves in quite lofty and spacious regions. Lanes and alleys stretch away in all directions, and we can spend a full half-hour in treading them. Everywhere wine casks, cases, and bottles "stacked" to the roof. There are strange cavernous recesses, one of which bears the initials "J. H.," which, it seems, stands for "Jenny's Hole," which some unhappy waif, I suppose, had made her roost.

It is astonishing to see how well the Adelphi has stood during the hundred and thirty years or so of its existence—no doubt owing to its massive and solid character. A crisis, however, came some thirty or forty years ago. The whole was in decay, moral and physical, and fast hurrying to destruction. The arches were failing, the houses falling to ruin. This state of things is said to have been owing to the Embankment, which had driven the river to a distance; and the piles on which the whole was reared, deprived of their accustomed moisture, dried up and dislocated the foundations. In the piers of the arches a great deal of iron had been used, which one would have hardly expected at that era, and this, expanding with heat or contracting with the cold, had fractured the masonry. The whole passing into the hands of Messrs. Drummond, the bankers, the restoration was undertaken on a lavish scale. The old piles were strengthened with concrete, the arches supported by smaller supporting arches, and the great houses on the terrace put in thorough repair. It is said that on each a sum of over two thousand pounds was expended, and over the whole work nearly a hundred and fifty thousand pounds were laid out. The outlay, however, turned out to be profitable, as now every floor is let and found advantageous as a place of business. Yet time was when a "house in the Adelphi" could be obtained for the proverbial "mere song."

From the terrace there is a view of the river far below, and it seems to be a vast height above the river. Few, perhaps, will have noticed the cheerful and elegant circular staircase which at each end used to lead down to the platform below. There was another method of access to the Strand, a gentle ascent,









PHOTOGRAPHED BY BEDFORD LEMERE & CO. LTD., STRAND, W.C.

THE PHOTOGRAPH BY SPRAGUE & CO. LTD. 4 & 5 EAST HARDING STREET FETTER LANE, E.C.

MANSIONS, PORTLAND PLACE, W.

ROBERT ADAM, Architect.

*Reprinted from "The Architect," a Weekly Art Journal*





which led up gradually through the picturesque Ivy Lane, now closed up, but from the Strand we can still peep into a portion of this lane which always seems attractive. Altogether the Adelphi has a romantic attraction, surprising in so modern a work.

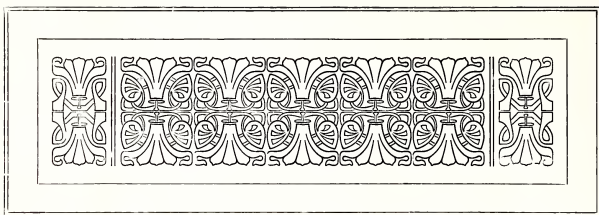
When Adam and his brethren ventured on this great scheme, there was a rhyme in circulation :—

“ ‘Four Scotchmen by the name of Adams,  
Who keep their coaches and their madams,  
Quoth John in sulky mood to Thomas,  
‘Have stole the very river from us.’  
Yet, friends of George and friends of James,  
Envy us not our river Thames ” ;

while Walpole described the warehouses as being laced down the seams, like a soldier's frill in a regimental old coat. The brothers were so Scotch that they imported their workmen from their native country, and even the occasional shoe-black that our architect employed, was also, it was noted, a Scot.

I have spoken of the great underground vaultings in the Adelphi. Nothing is more noble or elevating than Adam's treatment. They are truly monumental and Cyclopean. We often find the same grandeur of treatment in his domestic works, in the great beetling mansions which he reared in Grafton Street and other quarters. Sometimes we find even *two* stories in these underground regions, with massive buttresses to prevent the earth of the street falling in. Vaults and arches were his favourite method of treating the ceiling in his greater mansions.





## CHAPTER VIII.



Now pass to consider what was a great department in the Adam ventures—the innumerable streets of mansions and private houses with which he filled London. These were projected on a large ambitious scale, and exhibited more than anything else his sense of architectural propriety. Using the commonest material—stock bricks and stucco—he drew from them all the effect they were capable of. Building a house or a number of houses seems a simple thing enough, provided the design and pecuniary means are forthcoming. Few nowadays think that there is any science or philosophy in the matter, yet it is one that used to exercise the speculation and talents of our architects. With their delicate æsthetic sense they worked on artistic principles. There have been many modes found suitable of filling a street with mansions—either one by one, and thus giving each house an individuality, or in architecturally designed blocks, or in a long continuity of buildings.

When we consider the vast number of important and stately buildings that our architect has left us, it would be impossible to deal with all *seriatim*. So fixed and logical however were his principles that we are certain to find the same treatment and system in all, and the detailed examination of a single specimen will supply us with a key to the others. These reflections occur to us specially on surveying a work that has long been familiar to Londoners—in old-fashioned Fitzroy Square, found in an old-fashioned quarter. Two sides are Adam's work, and they have been allowed to fall into a sad state of decay and disorder. Yet were they repaired, cleaned, and restored, it is certain that the



DRAWING-ROOM CHAIR (Semi-French).  
(From "The Connoisseur").



group would be greeted as a very notable piece of architecture. We shall be struck by the fine balance of parts, the firm touch, and the abundance of interesting detail; in short, the monumental treatment of the whole. The large plates that are given here are from the journal, *The Architect*, and from their size and picturesqueness offer an unusual opportunity of studying Adam's methods. How imposing is the effect, and how much this sense of being impressed increases as we study it. We can see how lofty and ambitious was Adam's ideal—something that should be palatial.

The first reflection that occurs is that this is not what we are accustomed to in London. It is original—and boldly original, and seems to belong to some old period. Witness the great central block, with its remarkable window, and the two wings—not repetitions—but striking also in their degree. Another impression is that every stroke tells—has some intended meaning—every portion has the boldest and clearest emphasis. It is like the resolute handwriting of a determined man, who sets down nothing but what he wants to express. There is naught here of the conventional components introduced for ornament's sake or for custom's sake. Everything speaks, and seems to be there for some purpose or other. All is clear cut and sharply defined. We may note the beautiful mouldings of the great cornice: how bold and distinct they are! And what a character this cornice gives the whole. How it asserts itself! Again, how well "cut"—how finely proportioned are the windows. Each has its own character. There is a fine severity about them as of being fully and sharply cut out of the stone. As to the particular style, we can hardly identify it. There is nothing of the conventional Chambers or Vanbrugh. It is classical in its way, but with no classical heaviness or solemnity. There is a lightness and romanticism present.

I can fancy Adam saying to himself, "I will carry out the classical notion so far as arrangement goes, but I will soften all down—make it a sort of glorified dwelling house or houses. The effect will be as imposing, though there be no pediment or great detached columns." There is a little weakness—but this is a matter of fancy—in the circular-headed windows of the ground floor. They seem "poorish" compared with the squarely-cut sternness of the others. We should note, too, the four longitudinal lines which divide the structure. What character in the top moulding—which, small as it is, has great power of assertion. Then comes the bold, broad cornice, broken up by a varied ornamentation, with the band above the drawing-room windows, and the parapet below.

What one feels in presence of a work of Adam's of this kind, is that all was complete—proportioned and planned in his mind—before he set it down. All is so distinct and clear. There is no filling in or piecing out, or tinkering. Everything, too, is complete and perfect in its way. This logical determination

is very welcome and satisfactory, but very rare. How constantly we find—and in paintings also—experiments; a trust that something will turn up; with uncertainty, mistiness, filling in, “try this and try that,” “this may look better,” all which contrasts with the conceived plan, distinct in every part and calculated beforehand.

It may be said here that Adam's mouldings have a wonderful fascination: they are so delicate and significant. There is no rule, I fancy, for mouldings: the skill comes of an inborn, indescribable subtlety. Yet, delicate as his mouldings were, they were assertive and potent and could not be overlooked. It is only in these later years that it has been discovered that coarse mouldings with involved contours are not nearly so effective as those delicately outlined. We see now in mixtures of stone and brick how effective and how much more lasting is a faint, delicate swelling, indicated ever so lightly.

One can hardly say enough of a noble work of his at Edinburgh, so stately and so impressive is it, having attained also to quite an antique air and tone. This impression is owing to its fine proportions and stately treatment, and the *certainty* of touch. Tailoring supplies a sort of analogy to architecture; thus we often see buildings which are as it were misfits—or “ill cut.” Here are all the elements, columns, pediments, entablatures, but somehow there is a lack of style, there is something wrong in the “cutting.” There is a class of architect in which one finds this sort of failure; they are correct, conscientious, full of science and knowledge, but they lack heart or enthusiasm, and, above all, imagination. To this class belonged Sir Gilbert Scott, whose churches and restorations cover the land, but are hardly sympathetic.



Fig. 8. THE REGISTER HOUSE, EDINBURGH.

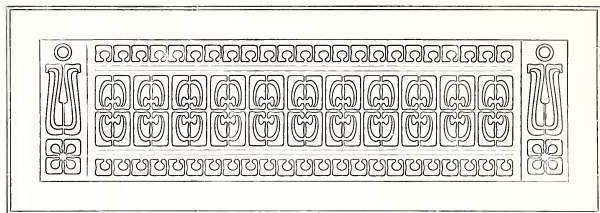


Fig. 9. EDINBURGH UNIVERSITY.



Looking at the noble Edinburgh Register House, we come completely under its spell, and say to ourselves, "Here is the work of a man of genius." The general design is very pleasing, and has movement or expression. Each window asserts itself, the stretch of space between the central block and the wings has more life and stir than one could expect; the whole has a solid fortress-like air becoming enough, as it has valuable objects in charge. Allowance of course must be made for alterations and distortions. But the whole should be seen *in situ*, where it holds an appropriate place. The University Building, also, has the same *grave* air of antique state, with a solemnity quite fitting. All here again is correct, and of a classical form and tone, yet we have present Adam's scenic treatment. There is that air of interest, provocative of speculation. A very noble building in Dublin, the Custom House, has a good deal in common with the University Building. Dublin has many of these stately public buildings, all reared about the same time by Gandon, Chambers, and others. All are in the good old classical style.

The general idea of homogeneousness was present in all Adam's composition. There was a superfluous weight and prominence in the classical details which seemed to militate against this homogeneousness. A study of Lansdowne House shows us in a very clear way what he was aiming at. At first glance it seems an ordinary classical design, but on closer examination we shall see how he has "fined down" everything of the old forms that seemed to him too prominent and obtrusive. Certainly, considering the variety of new styles in so-called Queen Anne, or Norman Shaw style, in French and Flemish—witness the late Imperial Institute—and so on, that are in vogue, it is almost disheartening to find oneself once more confronted with the good old antiquated Greek "business"—the eternal respectable columns and "rustication," as we see them daily rising in the new buildings at Whitehall, all carrying out the old make-believe of state and solemnity. It is curious what an air of old fashion the whole presents. These Greek presentments are out of date, and we might reasonably expect something more adapted to the wants and habits of the time. However, it is all "classical." But a more serious objection is that our architects from lack of practice and familiarity cannot hope to find the proper inspiration, or the proper "feeling." We have seen how Adam put life and "movement" into his columns—kindling the dry bones. Our professors can only consult their books and patterns, and copying diligently and correctly, produce what is formulae and artificial.



## CHAPTER IX.



HERE are a few favoured noble families who can enjoy their *rus in urbe* under romantic conditions. They can live within an easy drive of London; yet so large and stately are their demesnes, they might be residing in one of the far-off and most rural shires. They have all the rights and privileges of the squire-archy, without the burden of tenants, labourers and other dependents. This happy group includes the Duke of Northumberland at Syon House, Isleworth; Lord Dysart at Ham House, beyond Richmond; Lord Mansfield at Kenwood, near Hampstead; and Lord Jersey at Osterley, near Brentford. With Holland House, at Addison Road. These suburban mansions are all of the first class, and offer an extraordinary interest; they have much architectural charm, three of them being built or remodelled by Robert Adam. The most attractive and original is, however, Osterley, originally Oysterley, House, where in the season garden parties are offered to all the "smart people," who come down in flocks by rail or road. A beautiful ancestral house is seen at its best under such conditions, when its spacious chambers and long galleries are thronged: whereas at other seasons the feeling is that of being taken over some "show place." Osterley has an old and interesting pedigree, having been built by Sir Thomas Gresham, of Royal Exchange memory, and who is said, when Queen



Fig. 10. PORTICO, OSTERLEY HOUSE.





SIDE TABLE, FLUTED DECORATION.  
(From "*The Connoisseur*").

Elizabeth visited him at Osterley, to have raised or pulled down—it is uncertain which—in the course of a night a certain wall, which Her Majesty had either wished for or found fault with. It then passed to the great banking family of the Childs, and from them under romantic conditions to the present owners.

Osterley stands in a “fayre” spreading park. On our way to it we pass the beautiful, elaborately wrought gate of Syon House, one of Adam’s most fanciful pieces of work. Seen afar off, beyond the artificial lake, the mansion has a bright and even gay aspect, from the red brick towers which contrast with the white central portico. It was formerly a rather grim and solemn Jacobean edifice, a sort of open court with wings, each wing flanked by towers and lanterns. Mr. Childs, when he called in Adam’s aid, literally gave him *carte blanche*, and the architect, thus untrammelled, may be said to have here produced the best and most elegant of his many works. He united the two wings by an imposing Greek portico, thus forming a courtyard within; but this portico is really open and is in the nature of a screen of many columns, so that the court behind can be seen. Strange to say there is no sense of incongruity in this union of different styles, which the art of the designer has harmonized admirably. Here again no words could do justice to the exquisite lines of the columns. They are absolutely fairy-like. They seem to swell and throb with life, and the sharpened delicacy of the lines of the pediment is extraordinary.

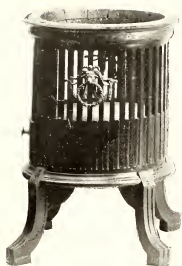
Passing across the court we enter a vast white hall, the surfaces of which have been “broken up” by relief work in a very bold and striking style. For here are “trophies” wrought in bold style and tablets with elegant and suggestive designs. Close by is the long picture gallery, of extraordinary breadth for such galleries, and here are found all the great masterpieces which have been gathered during many generations. This gallery is indeed a regal chamber, not merely from its pictures, but from its rich furniture, mirrors, tapestries, and other appointments. Adam was so original in all he touched, that his designs always challenge our admiration, or at least, interest; and we find ourselves looking with pleasure at his ever-charming door-handles and keyholes. To such trifles did he condescend, and he found genuine pleasure in designing, when he was allowed, everything that was wanting in a house, down to a mustard pot. Here we have those wonderfully embroidered ceilings, in which he revelled, and which shew the fertility of his imagination; one lavishly gilded leaves the effect of a surpassing richness. Owners nowadays begin to take pride in their Adam houses, and bestow much care upon them, but are often “perplex’d in th’ extreme” as to the proper system of colouring and decoration for the ceilings. The traditions have been carried on at Osterley, where are seen also the little panels of Angelico or Zucchi, let into the ceilings. Another of Adam’s *tours de force* is the graceful double stair which leads into the grounds at the back of the house,

with a flowing brass balustrade of free and charming design ; but like much of Adam's work, too delicate for the open air. It is testimony to the quality of Adam's fine work, that after a hundred years and more not a leaf of his flowery designs has dropped away, and this will be noted in nearly all his houses. Much is due, however, to the watchful and judicious care of the noble owner and to the fair *chatelaine* herself.

We pass now to others of his more pretentious mansions, built for "noblemen and gentlemen." Lansdowne House deserves greater praise than it has received for the thoughtful fashion in which the front is laid out. Everything is well compacted together in solid style, and yet there is much suggestion of grace. And here it may be said that what Mr. Ferguson so contemptuously charges the architect with, a general flippancy and tawdriness of treatment, seems thoroughly unwarranted when we find ourselves in the presence of his more substantial work, such as this is, where all things are not ornamental merely, but diligently engaged in doing practical service. The disposition of this mansion is out of the common—a central block, a pediment, behind which the roof is boldly shown, and two subsidiary blocks or wings, lower in elevation by a story. There are three longitudinal divisions ; the first line drawn under the upper story of the central block, the next under the drawing room of the centre and the first story of the other blocks ; the third, the ground floor of all three. The common brick wall that faces Berkeley Square is treated with extraordinary dignity and fitness, so as to suit the trees, the gateway, and the mansion itself.

Kenwood, or Caen Wood, offers nothing very striking, and is almost a replica of Lansdowne House, in Berkeley Square, whereof the circular breakfast room is one of the most elegant chambers conceivable. Lastly, there remains Syon House, which stands in rather a barren plain, and retains still something of its original conventual air ; but within, Adam seemed to have exerted all his most florid powers. The grand library is one mass of flowing decorations, possibly overdone. It is gratifying, as we said, to find the taste for Adam work increasing day by day ; Adam chimney-pieces, Adam doors and doorways, are rising in the market so much so that the former are torn from their site to be carried to Wardour Street. There is a bridge which he designed for Syon House, but I fancy never was carried out, which is perfectly lovely and poetical in treatment. Nothing more graceful can be imagined than its flowing lines. It is as we might imagine quite scenic in treatment. It is in three parts, the centre one being somewhat higher than the others. The outlines of the arches, with a faint Gothic tendency, are truly captivating:

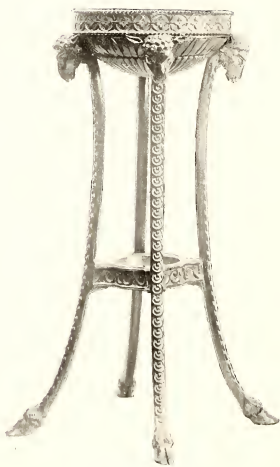
Kedleston, the seat of Lord Scarsdale, in Derbyshire, is one of the most imposing and magnificent mansions—or palaces—in England. Its size is almost overpowering. The Adams, however, had only a share in the construction, but



WINE COOLER.



DINING ROOM CHAIR.



TRIPOD STAND.

(From "*The Connoisseur*").





we can trace their handiwork in the portico and pediment and other directions. The design, it can be seen at once, is not at all of their favourite pattern, and belongs to the old Chambers-cum-Kent-cum-Campbell, *et hoc genus omne*. It was severely criticised by Dr. Johnson on his visit, who found fault with the great hall, which he declared was only suitable for a Court of Justice. In the portico and pediment Adam's touch is clearly seen.\*

Within the long since destroyed Northumberland House, at Charing Cross, the Adams had erected a long façade or wing, which I well recall. This was in their favourite style, akin to that of the Register House. Many of their most pleasing works have perished in this fashion. Such was the fate of the Ranger's Lodge in the Green Park, a simple structure, but marked with the elegance of the Adam treatment.† Happy architect! we may exclaim, that enjoyed such a flood of aristocratic patronage. He was, as it were, "encumbered with help." The noble persons for whom he built and designed, delighted to aid and honour him, but he remained quite unspoiled, and to the last was the somewhat homely and genial artist, such as we see him in Raeburn's portrait—the very Watteau, as I think him, of architects.

I may mention in this place that Adam was a member of all the leading Societies in Scotland and England, the Royal, the Antiquaries, &c. He was also architect to their Majesties. But he did not however belong to the Royal Academy—I was about to add "strange to say." Nothing, however, could be more natural or more to be expected than this exclusion. For the architect was *unorthodox*. He had "spoken disrespectfully of the Equator," and had been profane on the Orders. Sir W. Chambers was sound on these points and therefore admitted. Adam they no doubt looked upon as an irregular charlatan, not to be taken seriously, much as they were a hundred years later to look upon the late Whistler; and so an R.A. he was not.

The stucco or plaster work which the Adams used so profusely is a very interesting topic and has quite a philosophy of its own. I do not speak of the old rich Italian stucco, so free and flowing and decorative, and which always seems to be laid on with a juicy brush. That is a special style. Adam's material was really a sort of artificial stone, and treated as such according to the rules of a perfect artistic propriety. Adam, however, never thought of the device of covering his brick surface with a layer of this material—"plastering"

\*During the gorgeous festivities of the Durbar in 1902 it was remarked as a curious coincidence that the Viceroy, Lord Curzon, should be living in Government House, which was a replica of his own ancestral mansion of Keddleston, at home. It seems that when it was proposed to erect a residence for the Governor-General, the various palatial mansions of England were examined and considered, and Keddleston was found to be the one best suited to the purposes required.

† There is a beautiful and picturesque engraving of this latter work in his collection.

or "compo'ing" it, as the workmen would call it. There is, I fancy, but a single instance where he made the attempt, viz., Lord Harewood's house in Hanover Square, now the Agricultural Society's Offices. No doubt this artful method seemed to him an unworthy sort of sham or pretence. He used his material in solid blocks, just as terra cotta is used now.

In Dublin, which is very full of admirable buildings, there will be found at the Rotunda Hospital, displayed upon what is called the Round Room, a very bold and striking frieze, which is carried round the building near the top with great effect. This consists of "swags," as they are called, alternated with anatomized bulls' heads, finely modelled, but all wrought in what seems to me this Adam material. It is sharp, bleached white, and altogether indistinguishable from carved stone. Yet it has been in its place for a hundred and fifty years and more, and shows nothing of the decay that stone would exhibit in the time. I must say that my friend, Mr. Ashlin, president of the Irish Society of Architects, is not inclined to think that this is Adam's material, but something of another make. Adam's material was a very extraordinary one, not only for its ductility or flexibility, but for its endurance. Described by an eminent judge as a sort of "porridge," it was a patent mixture invented by a Swiss clergyman, named Liardet, purchased by the Adam Brothers, and really became the key of their whole system. They also secured another patent material, the invention of a Doctor Wark, of Haddington, but which we do not find that they used. Liardet's composition was the subject of several tedious trials, the patent being infringed, and also of some pamphlets; the Adams however succeeded in maintaining their right. In all these contentions it does not seem to have been clearly set forth what exactly were the elements of the famous composition. We gather however that there were present oil, lime, sand and lead—a strange, but as it proved, a very efficacious blend.

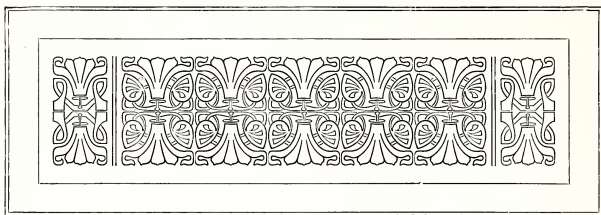
He had a favourite decorative element for his great and lofty halls, which he treated in a large and effective style. In his great book he had condemned wholesale the favourite "Tabernacles," and the massive, obtrusive pillars with their entablatures, so he was bound to find an efficient substitute. It took the shape of huge "Trophies" in oblong compartments—shields, swords, breastplates, the details rather indicated than expressed with distinctness. These are found at Syon House and Osterley.

The one who introduced "plastering" as a wholesale system was Nash, who, about 1820, created a whole city of sham palaces, all apparently built of stone and fitted out with iron columns, pediments and all the adjuncts of classical architecture. It is astonishing what a deep hold this system had and what excellent results it showed, in spite of its falsity. It commended itself to the

meaner and cheaper instincts ; as the builder could use the vilest sort of brick—broken lumps, honeycombed fragments, anything, and all defects could be covered up by the tenacious plaster. Nash's stucco was much admired on its introduction for its enduring qualities. After his death the new Belgravian districts displayed it wholesale ; Belgrave Square, Eaton Square and Place, together with the Bayswater territory, with ranges of villas and terraces all round London. Cleaning became too troublesome, paint was thought necessary to preserve the plaster and it is certain there must be some thirty or forty coats of paint covering these buildings. Some thirty years ago or so began the regular rebuilding of London in actual stone, or in "Queen Anne" brick, and the reign of plaster was over. We hardly think now how constant and familiar was the operation of plastering an old house from top to bottom—a scaffolding set, with men spreading, with trowels, a brown composition over the old, decayed bricks. Such a spectacle is never seen now.

One may wonder how Adam contrived to deal with his artificial stone, now in huge masses, or great columns, in sections, blocks, set one on the other ; then contriving decorative sprays of flowers of the most delicate workmanship. How he contrived to work the material so freely and abundantly is a marvel. I fancy they were turned out of moulds, and this may account for the great smoothness and refinement of his columns and their surfaces.





## CHAPTER X.



MUCH could be said in praise of Adam's beautiful and conscientious brick work. Indeed all his construction is very fine and noble—large and effective—with great supporting arches and stays, as one can see when a house of his is being levelled. He laid his bricks with the most surprising smoothness; not yet had come in the horrible modern system of putting an inch of thick mortar between two courses of three inch bricks, which in three or four courses is equivalent to a whole course of bricks with much saving to

the contractor, while judicious pointing makes all look trim and solid. Adam, I believe, must have used a thin and scarcely palpable wash of cement which left scarcely any interval between the bricks. There is Bath House in Piccadilly, at the corner of Berkeley Street, where the brickwork is simply perfect, and follows a semi-circular curve. In any case, it is wonderful how firm and stout they are, showing no sign of decay after a hundred and forty years, the reason being they were placed so close together, that the wet could not enter or lodge.

Adam, in dealing with the front of his brick house, had a very graceful method of adornment which set off the rather bald nature of the surfaces. He used to trace bands or belts of white stone across, and thus mark on the outside the divisions of the stories. These bands were of varying width, intended to have a sort of significance and convey some hint of the interior arrangement. Thus one would trace the line of the floor, while a narrow band a little way above indicated the line of the sub-base. It is wonderful what a light and

animation these divisions imparted, and the material being bleached white and "weathered" seemed to light up the dull waste of the old yellow brick. A good illustration of this treatment is shown in Gwydyr House at Pall Mall. In his more pretentious mansions like the Portman houses at the corner of Portman Square, he would embroider his bands with a rich and flowing scroll pattern which was highly effective. All these devices—including his tablets, medallions and cornices—gave an interest to the fronts and relieved the general homeliness of the brick.

The judicious reserve shown in dealing with this method contrasts with the overdone modern treatment, where the surface is overloaded with all kinds of decoration; heavy stonework, dressings, etc., being built in with the brick.

And here we must consider how admirable was his choice of the decorative material that he used, and which was a complete contrast to the rather mean effect produced by common stucco or plaster of Paris. In the latter case we are always conscious of the process by which it is affixed to the ceilings—stuck on, or "glued on" somehow. From a distance, even, we can see that it is a soft, flabby material, perishable, indistinct in its lines, and wasting before our eyes. Now Adam's material was hard and sharp, bold and manful: but this was not the whole. He fashioned his designs so as to be in keeping with the material. Hence those geometrical patterns we see in his ceilings, great circles, ovals, with smaller ones in the corners, concentric outlines, graceful curves, radiations. Such hard and inflexible things cannot be cemented on to a surface—they are too heavy—but are embedded in it. They seem a development, or a sort of efflorescence that is thrown out by the surface, and really belongs to it, not attached, which is indeed the true principle of all decoration. How curious is it, by the way, that the nature of a material is always to be recognised, and will assert itself in spite of all disguises. How painful, for instance, and how mean and shabby the effect of our modern "fibrous plaster" ceilings, laid in compartments, formed, as it were, of wooden frame-work and panellings, which are brought to our door in carts, carried upstairs and fixed in their places! They are nicely and carefully modelled—the mouldings carefully and accurately done. But who for an instant is "taken in"? And how painful the effect. So with the sham carved oak panelling that so often covers the wall of a staircase, excellent in colour and treatment, but fashioned out of what is called "Lincrusta-Walton." Yet there is a softness—a general "blobbiness"—which at once betrays the hateful material. Adam's is honest, straightforward, sincere and enduring. It has grown harder and firmer with time, and after a hundred years or so we hardly find a single leaf in a ceiling disturbed, in spite of repeated cleanings and colourings. We may wonder, if he had not been thus fortunate in this discovery of this plastic material, what would have been the result?

All his beautiful and elaborate decoration could not have been ; half his glory would have gone from him. The mere Italian stucco would not have served, for it would not have suited his style. The material prompted or dictated the forms of his decoration, but lacking the material, the decoration would have perished stillborn.

The abundance—superabundance, rather—of these Adam houses all but confounds one. They are everywhere, and we find yet more when we think that we have explored thoroughly. Lately, I was in Dublin—a good old city of very fine houses laid out on the most spacious lines and literally abounding in Adam houses. The very first one I entered was a noble specimen with a vast hall and flying stair, in Kildare Street. There were others in St. Stephen's Green. But I found them in all directions. In St. James's Square we are particularly struck by the size of the mansions, their breadth of window and commanding stateliness. These bold broad apertures, especially those high up, challenge observation ; such are Nos. 5, 4, and 3, and the mansion of many windows at the corner of Charles Street. The Bishop of London's house, adjoining that of the Duke of Norfolk, presents this imposing air, as though quite fit to be a Bishop's mansion. These effects are owing to the solidity of the style, to the sense of proportion and to the large scale on which they are laid out. Another fine gathering of Adam houses is found in York Place—a continuation of Baker Street. The houses here are as stately as those in Portland Place, the doorways more ornated, being garnished round with rusticated terra-cotta blocks, and a central head. A pretty riband with a scroll runs along under the bedroom story. There is, however, an unusual variation from the architect's usual forms, these windows are narrow and arched at the top. Long ago as these houses have been built, they have a solid flourishing air. There was a time when these Adam mansions were neglected and it was thought out of keeping and unfashionable that anyone of *ton* should be found in Russell Square or Portland Place. But the stateliness and spaciousness of these mansions came at last to be recognised. Such grand apartments were thought only to be found at the West End ; they were taken in hand for repairs and now seem likely to last for centuries more.

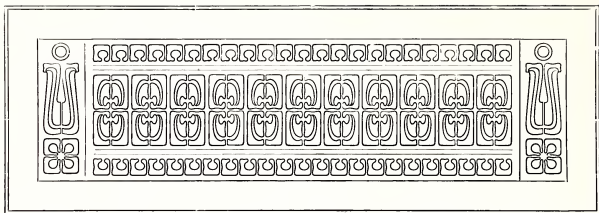
As I said, this dignity and impressiveness was gained by the fine dimensions of the windows and doorways, the skilful disposition of the wall space between the stories and of the wall space between the windows—important and all-essential matters to be considered if *expression* is to be given to the front of a house. There is one house in Charles Street, running between St. James's Square and Waterloo Place, which has this dignified and imposing air to an extraordinary degree. How effective the cornice ! I would commend the study of this imposing structure to the architect, who will discover what art Adam has displayed

in the laying out of such simple arrangements. But here, as usual, the stone base has been overlaid with paint which imparts a flimsy air. It is supremely stately, for the reason that each window and each row of windows is given full meaning and force. How light and elegant, too, is the balcony. We find also when he is treating a corner house, and it has to turn its vast, broad and windowless flank of brick to the spectator, that even here, he can supply an expression. For his treatment of a mere barren flank—a house often turning its shoulder to a side street—many specimens can be found, notably in Portland Place, near the Langham Hotel, and that fine mansion in Portman Square—Lord Portman's, I believe.

There is another well outlined plain brick mansion to be seen in Whitehall, next to the Admiralty. I have always admired its charming lines and well balanced design and fine proportion. It has two wings, while the windows are distributed with a pleasing grace. In Grafton Street there is a very imposing mansion, now a club, which many years ago I was asked by the proprietors of the *Illustrated London News* to visit and describe. I was struck by the imposing hall and noble staircase, which rises in a vast "well" with very striking sweep. In Berkeley Square there are several remarkable mansions—notably No. 29 and its neighbours—with Adam's "hall mark" on the balcony.

There is facing the Horse Guards buildings at Whitehall, an old brick mansion, now a Government Office, which was refaced and laid out by Adam after his own architectural method. It is hardly worth noticing, though he included an elaborate engraving of it in his grand collection of designs—but the charming arched entrance to Scotland Yard which is part of it deserves notice. The line of the arch—his favourite flattened one—and the way in which it is incorporated with the house adjoining, is very interesting and graceful.

As we stand before some work of Adam's or see it for the first time, it is curious to find how we are affected. I have mentioned before how later in the city of Hull I was taken to a building of his (and there is hardly a town where you will not find something of his designing); this was the Custom House. The impression was "how *satisfactory* it all was!"—that was the word. There was no pretension—a plain brick structure, with "dressings" of his special material, yet the effect could not be bettered. It was complete. And then, plain as the whole was, there was a touch as of a master—the design was so simple and direct—no hesitation or faltering. This feeling of satisfaction is really due to the life put into this work, and to the making of each architectural element plain and serviceable and not put in for ornament.



## CHAPTER XI.



HERE is something almost marvellous in everything associated with Adam. When we think of the profusion of his work we would naturally assume that there was a vast crowd of assistant pupils, deputies, etc., and that when the brothers had gone they would have left a sort of school behind ready and fit to carry on the work. Not so. It seems to have died out on the spot, and the style with them. It is quite exceptional in such a case that no successor or imitator should have risen up and maintained the traditions.\*

Their system however was too deeply rooted not to have had its influence, and to have left a few followers or imitators. One of the most important of them was Wyatt, the architect of the Pantheon (now Gilbey's, in Oxford Street) and of Drury Lane Theatre—the one of 1809. Wyatt retained much of the Adam tradition, the window, the decoration and the general sentiment, but we find in his work a greater restraint and tinge of classicality, to be further emphasized by Nash ten years later.

\* Though Adam and his school is nowadays a good deal talked about or referred to, it is rarely that his name is given correctly. He is usually mentioned as "Adams" and his style as the "Adams' style." Yet at the same time there is exhibited an affected familiarity with the "well-known Adams style." I have occasionally found myself "billed" as about to lecture on "Robert Adams and the Adams style."



One would hardly suppose that at this moment there is in London one of the most stately and scenic monuments, but scarcely recognised in old Drury Lane Theatre. One might say—in spite of its mean outside, which was never finished—that it is laid out on the noblest and most palatial lines. The mere *Salle* we have little or nothing to do with and pass by, as it has been changed and altered, but to the approaches and adjuncts sufficient justice can hardly be done. The beautiful and elegant rotunda with its circular gallery—a point for striking an effect seized on by the eager fancy of the architect—the hall below, the flying staircases, the saloons, lobbies, etc., are all combined into a composition, full of grace and have a striking effect that, as we suspect, few of the *metier* could accomplish now. Nothing more effective or more admirable generally can be conceived than the laying out of these things; and our architects of theatres of commerce, of “gaiety” companies and others, seem by comparison to be designing taverns or music halls. A theatre, as now designed, is no longer a spacious hall, good for sight, hearing and gala show, but a series of broad *shelves* or trays, one above the other, on which are piled human figures. But Drury Lane Theatre is a perfect Monument and one that reflects the Adam influence. There is the true touch of the *high* class treatment that seems nowadays lost. There is nothing in London more elevating or ennobling than the approach from the rotunda to the grand double stair, soaring aloft, with the elegant railings, the lofty, spreading walls rising upwards, the touch of Adam, as decorator, marking it across—all this belonging to the old refined world of imaginative and elegant treatment. I doubt if the architects of our day are familiar with this beautiful specimen of internal treatment. Adam was employed by Garrick to remodel and decorate, both outside and in, another Drury Lane Theatre, which was destroyed.

The influence of Adam was indirectly felt for some twenty years or so, until the coming of Nash, in whose work we find many traces of it. But these influences were rather overpowered in his efforts to restore a sort of classical tone and semblance, exhibited in long ranges of imitative stone works—terraces with columns and pediments, etc., which were more or less antagonistic to Adam’s brickwork, the basis of his system. The semi-circular windows were retained, however, with other trifling indications.

Adam was very partial to bowed houses, and when he could, he traced a curve, if not in front, at least at the back. There were some fine mansions of this contour at the bottom of Park Lane, also many in the region of Portland Place, where we come on the house tenanted by Mr. Dombey, and described so accurately by Boz as to be recognisable at once.

A walk down Portland Place and up again is at once suggestive and entertaining. It is astonishing to note the varieties, where all seem of the same

pattern. We are struck by the general nobility; the doorways are of a fine expansive breadth, the halls truly spacious and lofty, all the rooms beautifully designed and proportioned and offering the same air of amplitude. How beautiful are the few remaining fanlights, few because here uglification has been busy, and the delicate and florid tracery has been removed and a *nice* plain sheet of plate substituted. It thus suggests a large unfilled semi-circular opening. The central houses on each side, which have much architectural pretension, are pleasing in treatment, with a certain majesty. One must admit, however, that the sunken semi-circular doorway which holds two doors is but an awkward device, intended to deal with a serious difficulty—that of dividing a central façade equipped with a pediment and pilasters into two portions; one doorway alone would be expected and such was the legitimate treatment.

It is extraordinary what marvels a nice sense of proportion will work. It will supply stateliness and size, it will add a dignity and redeem the poorest material. I often stop to gaze in mingled pleasure and astonishment at one of Adam's ordinary brick mansions, seeing with what art and propriety he has made it seem quite commanding. We see in Portman Square many patterns of mansions, contrasting effectively with each other. Witness the stone-fronted pilastered structure, with its elegant frieze, No. 12. The excessive smoothness of the surface of the doors will be noted, they being of mahogany, long since painted over, in very Gothic taste. The great yellow houses at the corner of Gloucester Place are worthy of serious attention, for their smooth and beautiful yellow brickwork, the tablets which decorate them, and the fine and well-treated flank. It will be noted how Adam used to "break up" the monotony with his lines of cornices and his decorative belts running across. The general effect, however, both of front and flank has been disturbed by the insertion of balconies done in a very clumsy way.

Every house nowadays, however unpretending, must have its flight of steps; this is presumed to add a dignity and is nearly *de rigueur*. How absurd and laughable a pretension it is to come on a long row of mean houses, each garnished with its half a dozen steps leading up to a tiny door. In the case of a grand mansion with its stately portico, this might be appropriate enough, though in a city like this, in its great Squares, as there are never more than three or four steps, the effect is unexpectedly mean. For there is virtually no ascent. Further, if there be an ascent of any kind it should surely not bring you sharp up with your face to the door, but land you on a broad and spacious platform. Now in such cases Adam was fond of a *level* or nearly level approach. He felt that there was more real dignity in that method. Accordingly we often find him expanding his railings outward in fan shape, and the visitor has a sort of level

walk or forecourt before him as he approaches the door. Into this too falls the pavement space in front, and thus there is a regular approach. There may be a step or two, and these are curved and slightly convex.\*

We would hardly expect this versatile man to have contributed a regular villa to the London streets: yet such we find in a back street hard by Portland Place—in a street known as Foley Place. This is a truly elegant little structure, the front decorated with exceeding reserve, the whole small, compact, and yet full of dignity. But it has been painted over again and again, and at this moment seems but a squalid dilapidated thing. If all these disfigured buildings were scraped clean, and the old stone or apparent stone revealed, the proprietors would be surprised at the result.

The quantity of houses built by him in groups and scattered through the metropolis is perfectly astonishing; Wimpole Street, Harley Street, Gloucester Place, Portman Square, St. James's Square, Berkeley Square, Grosvenor Place, all abound in his work. The Royal Institution is a fine specimen of the grander mansion as treated by him. Here is a spacious hall, and a fine flying staircase rising right and left.

Just turning out of Oxford Street is Stratford Place, a pleasing and complete design, closed at the bottom by a graceful and well-proportioned mansion, the outlines elegant with its two colonnades. This structure suggests the variety Adam could impart to his treatment of a subject. We see that he does not attempt here the imposing stone mansion with wings, as at Lansdowne House. This is a sort of glorified dwelling house, more tall than broad, with a general touch of elegance. The owner, however, as usually happens, wanting further accommodation, was driven to "uglify" it, and on these colonnades placed a second story, which altogether overweights the house and destroys its proportions. A new Bank at the corner has also helped to abolish the symmetry of the enclosure. All the houses are pleasing and interesting within and stored full of Adamesque touches.

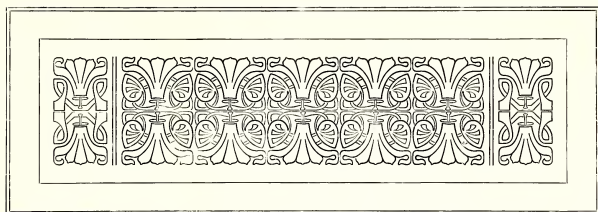
We find in all directions graceful strokes of Adam, scattered about in careless fashion. At one time we come on, as I have done in Albemarle Street, a tiny hall with a series of little saucer-shaped domes, which rest on lunettes, daintily outlined on the side walls. The grace of this is surprising. There is a house at the corner of Hill Street and Berkeley Square, No. 42, which shows this airy fanciful touch in many points. Here the entrance is charming, the two slight steps, gracefully curved, their proportions, size, etc., so pleasingly designed

\*If we would see this treatment to the best advantage we may visit that handsome mansion at the end of Stratford Place, which, it will be found, gains so much by the absence of a flight of steps.

as to excite interest. There are effective railings, shaped like arrow heads, and artistic. But this is not the attraction. When the door is opened we see the small hall, circular, but divided across by a transparent screen of elegant treatment. It is of glass, framed in an oval pattern of wood on each side of the door; the effect is piquant. No visitor could enter that hall without being impressed. According to the old pleasing fashion, a glass door shut off the hall from the staircase, which was in another room as it were.

And here nowadays we may ask where are our men of this imaginative and picturesque cast? We look round in vain for them. Everything seems to be done in footrule and compass, all correct, but uninspired. Look at those new Government buildings, now rising in Whitehall, cold and lifeless, yet correct and suitable for their purpose. Romance, Poetry, movement above all, are lacking: just as they are given in the Norman Shaw Police Office, and the cause of its attraction.





## CHAPTER XII.



S compared with the painter's, the architect's lot is hard indeed. No one dares to meddle with the picture: the painter passes away, but he knows that his picture is secure. Not so with the architect. He can hardly count upon a decade or even less time. One day enlargement is necessary, and "another story" is added; or an excrescence has to be put out here and there. The least affront our present-day architect may look for is to be new fronted.

The feeling is that the proprietor may treat the work as he pleases. No one has an idea of the extent to which this lawlessness is carried. Who thinks at this moment of the Victoria Tower, Westminster, and the summary fashion in which the architect was treated? This Tower was the *clou* of the whole group of buildings, a gigantic affair of enormous height and bulk. After it had been rising slowly for many a year, the Parliament in a fit of impatience abruptly stopped its growth, and ordered it to be roofed at once. It was about thirty feet short of its proper height! It now therefore looks stunted and out of proportion, too gross for its height. But who notices and who cares?

But I suppose the most terrible instance of uglification, of architectural perversion, that we have, and which forms a sort of sore, ever "running" and ever distressing, is found at Westminster Hall in its present shape. The attack on so noble, old, and historical a building began some sixty years ago, when by our incredible ignorance and lack of taste, it was resolved to make it a portion of the new Parliament Houses. The difficulties were found to be

enormous, and the idea was improper, as the styles and treatment were so different. The lines of frontage would not harmonise. It was thought a brilliant idea to work it into the new building as a sort of entrance hall, which it is now. The tall Gothic window is indeed cut across by the roof of the hall, but it was proposed to raise the roof—which was never done. It will be felt at once that the using the hall in this way destroyed altogether its function as a hall. It has become a corridor or place of passage. This was a shocking blunder and virtually destroyed the hall altogether, by using it as an entrance. It was proposed to mask it by a long building of the same pattern as the rest and carried round to join the Clock Tower. Thus there would be a handsome and richly decorated square and the old hall would be blocked out.

Nor was this desecration enough. Some years ago it was debated what was to be done, and instead of leaving it alone, the repulsive annexe was added on with its squat gable jutting out at right angles. Never was there such an eyesore. It was made as discordant as it possibly could be with the new work, and this done by deliberation.

But every portion of the place proclaims some default. There is the luckless Cromwell statue, not allowed to stand on the level and sunk in a pit, only to be raised again by being set on a second pedestal. Such an enclosure as Parliament Square, were it in France, would be laid out as a grand "Place," the starved grass plots removed, the area increased down to the Abbey and to George Street, and a splendid monumental group set up in the centre.

The Abbey too—why is there not a lofty spire raised on the vacant space on the top of the tower? All these neglects show lack of taste, and the need for some such romantic architect as was Adam to leaven the dull material.\*

This uglification has a sort of fascination for certain minds, especially for the corporate mind. Nothing could better show the hostility to everything that tends to add beauty or refinement to the public streets, than a step that was taken just after the Coronation. A number of the City merchants had conceived the rather picturesque idea of decorating their places of business in Lombard Street with signs of the old pattern, and when every house was fitted with these ornaments the effect, it was confessed, was striking and interesting, so that it was determined they should be retained in their places. They were of a solid

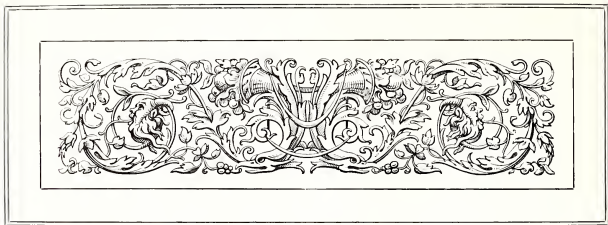
---

\* Wherever we turn our eyes they are certain to light on some melancholy example of this "uglifying" system, joined with a glaring lack of propriety. There is a fair sort of dome to the new Admiralty, if somewhat mean proportions and treatment, but to make it even meaner a flag-staff has been fitted to the apex of the lantern; the whole, therefore, loses significance as a dome, and is subsidiary to the interests of the flag-staff, which devours the rest. So with the Clock Tower at Westminster, a rather piquant and original structure, which, however, loses its whole significance by being used to support a lantern! As in the case of a lighthouse we think only of its useful purpose, embodied by its lantern, so here from habit we find the Parliamentary lantern dominating the whole idea of the structure.

and lasting construction, besides very decorative. It would have lent a poetry to the view, would have revived a pleasing old custom; and there were the old associations of the banks which always hung out such signs. The authorities, however, interfered, saw a fancied danger to passengers, and required them to be taken down, and, in spite of much pleading and remonstrance, taken down they were, and the street restored to its old state of barrenness!

Another instance. Boodle's Club, in St. James's Street, was originally a showy and effective building after the model of the Society of Arts building; about the year 1824, however, it was duly improved, *i.e.*, uglified, in an odd way. It seemed to have been thought that a second door and portico was necessary to *balance the first*, and this was added, with the result, as any architect will agree, of destroying the whole effect of the façade. To make the oddity complete, a window is still left under the portico to supply the place of a door. The best illustration, however, of this destructive mania is the familiar Admiralty screen at Whitehall, now left to neglect and decay. I have often tried to account for the exuberant praises lavished on this structure at the time it was erected, on the ground of its beauty and high classical merit. It was only on comparing the original design with its present condition that I found the reason. It was intended to be a highly ornate structure, the various niches were to be filled with statues and vases, but such ornamentation was omitted to be supplied. In the old books, however, it was always spoken of with the highest admiration as an imposing work. One day I chanced to compare it, as it stands, with the original design, which was really an elegant screen or colonnade, meant to hide the ungainly building behind, which it did effectually. There was just one pretty arched gate in the centre. But the authorities wantonly opened two other gates, carted away the columns so that the screen was perforated again and again, and has long since virtually ceased to be a screen!

We have still happily two noble monuments—London Bridge and Waterloo Bridge—to recreate the eye. The latter excited the enthusiastic admiration of Canova, who declared that it was worthy of the Romans. The beautiful lines and graceful curves of London Bridge were long the delight of cultured eyes until recently, when it has been uglified for utilitarian purposes. In due time, no doubt, the same treatment will overtake Waterloo Bridge. A truly graceful structure—Kew Bridge—has recently disappeared. In the new bridges which cross the Thames at Battersea, Kew and Putney we meet not only a lack of picturesque feeling, but this wilful tendency to ugliness. London Bridge and Waterloo Bridge were designed by a Scot of genius. To Rennie, their author, we owe much.



### CHAPTER XIII.



E now come to what is one of the most attractive, even fascinating parts of our enquiry—the internal decoration of the Adam buildings. So scenic, so brilliant, so full of fancy and grace are his excursions in this way, so varied and novel his displays, that it seems as though we were being led through a series of vast scenic chambers, and become almost dazzled by the glitter of the ornamentation. No one was more original or successful than he was in this line. His decoration has been called garish and tawdry: but all the same it is welcome as relieving the general formality.

To understand these efforts of his luxurious fancy we must consider what few possibilities are offered to the decorator of our time, and how little he has to work upon. The architect, if he be the person employed, has but limited opportunities; nothing beyond the walls and ceilings of the rooms, surfaces flat or slightly coved. Colouring is the one resource, though in this country we do not use that charming form of decoration for ceilings, clouds and apotheoses, with figures of gods and goddesses floating in the empyrean, and which is common in France. Indeed the architect often hardly will think the matter within his province, but will leave it to the taste, such as it is, of the proprietor, or to the professional decorator. The blank waste of wall may be either coloured in distemper; or “hung,” as it is called, with suitable papers. Now Adam held that all this department was *his* department, and was all important in producing the architectural effects; the merely designing of great chambers was but the beginning.

His ideas on this subject are as original as they are practical, and it was extraordinary, for so romantic an artist, how much logic and good sense we find



in his reflections. As when he compares the different arrangement of rooms in France and England, which he held should be regulated by the social habits of each nation. In France, for instance, it was noted that the dining-room is always poorly decorated, for the reason that the natives do not care to linger there, or to sit at their wine: whereas in England it was the most important of rooms, people sitting long "over their bottle." One can hardly say, however, that the laying out of rooms *en suite*, to which Adam was partial, was founded on English habits, for the arrangement seems antagonistic to comfort and cosiness. Adam's disposition of rooms is certainly brilliant, and shows a surprising fancy and resource. He had the art of appearing to cover more ground than was given to him, and multiplied rooms in the most wonderful way. He loved a circular or oval outline. In the Wynne Williams mansion, St. James's Square, the front and back parlours are placed as usual, but he made the dividing wall semi-circular, so that the front room has a concave end, and the back a convex one. His bow-shaped houses had not the usual bluff semi-circular apse-like outline, but a gently swelling contour which had much delicacy and suggestiveness. Speaking of the treating of public buildings, he held that "as they must contain large apartments to hold crowds, they are susceptible of bolder and grander decoration." He adds that "the frequent but necessary repetition of windows in a private house cuts the façade into minute parts, which hinder the greatest and simplest of compositions."

In his grand collection of designs, Adam furnishes some elaborate illustrations of his scheme of colour for ceilings and doors and walls, which are very beautiful and exhibit his usual delicacy of taste. He shows us a lovely Pompeian ceiling from "The Queen's House" (later to give place to Buckingham Palace), where the general "motive" is yellow, with cream colour in small compartments and some faint blue. Another coloured composition of his was the ceiling of Lady Bute's dressing room at Luton, which offered a general pale green ground, with panels of a delicate pink, other panels of a violet hue as delicate; while in the centre was a circular oil painting by Angelica or Zucchi, enclosed in a rich lake coloured border, which lit up, as it were, the whole.\*

Some of his doors he decorated in these Pompeian tints with "grotesques," etc. There is a mansion in Hill Street at the corner of Berkeley Square, where the panels of the shutters are all painted in Pompeian fashion. One pattern of his ceilings is beautiful, being laid out in a large number of framed octagonal compartments, and tinted a turquoise blue. This must have had a surpassingly rich and magnificent effect, but it is obvious must have been a failure unless he had the designing of a "scheme" of furniture that was to be in harmony. He inveighs against the composition ceilings, which he calls "absurd."

\* I possess several of these colour designs intended for the walls, panellings and ceilings of Syon House, the draughtsmanship of which is admirably delicate.

"The decoration used by the Romans in decorating their Balles, Palaces, etc.," he says, "being mostly found in grottoes below ground, came to be styled *Grotesque*." This comes as a surprise, for we are apt to associate the word with something comic. There is a favourite "topic" of Adam's found in his vertical decorations, viz., a sort of twisted stalk, mostly of the Acanthus, which takes curious bends and flourishings. "The flowing ranceau," he calls it, with its fanciful figures and winding foliage. This term means a branch. The acanthus flowing round in many graceful turnings, spreads its foliage with great beauty and variety, and is often intermixed with human figures, animals and birds, real or imaginary, also with flowers and fruits. This gay and fanciful diversity of agreeable objects, well composed and delicately executed in stucco, attains a wonderful power of pleasing.

Adam was wonderfully receptive and adaptive. It is clear that whatever he saw would suit his purposes, he "annexed," adapting and making it his own. The hexagon pattern in his ceiling is to be found in the Temple of Peace at Rome, where the "motive" is displayed with wonderful effect. Lately, looking at some photographs of the objects in the Pompeian Museum, I recognised the patterns of knockers which Adam introduced and was very partial to, a ring richly embroidered resting on another ring underneath. It will be said, perhaps, that he thus *borrowed* his ideas, but he really converted what he found into something new and attractive. An adapted idea—a suggestion, rather, will become quite a new thing in the hands of a genius. It is a most difficult—almost impossible thing, save in the hands of a genius, to adapt an antique idea to modern uses. In such hands it is almost an original. The truth was Adam, a delicate sensitive nature, was accessible to every artistic influence; "*je prends—or reprends mon bien ou je le trouve*" was ever before him.

The principle of Adam's florid interior decoration is rather striking and original. It seemed to him that there was a poverty of effect in mere *painted* detail, however elaborate, and that even were the walls covered with arabesques, as in the case of Raphael's Stanze in the Vatican, "grotesques" as he called them, in a serious sense there was a sort of scenic effect and delusion attempted; for all the "sprays" and foliage only simulated relief and were deceptions. But his idea was to translate these things into reality and display them on the walls in bold relief. He thus

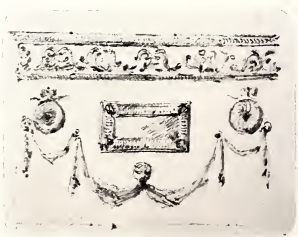


Fig. II. ADAM WALL DECORATION.  
(Drawn by Percy Fitzgerald.)

transformed the painted Vatican forms into raised ones. In applying this principle nothing can be more admirable than his exquisite sense of due proportion. There is no crowding or confusion, the details are just sufficient to suggest the idea of richness and blend into masses. Nothing shows this so perfectly as the beautiful fluting with which he decorates some narrow cornice, the relief being exactly what it should be: the number of flutings, their width, &c., nicely adjusted to "tell" at a distance.\* So with his ceilings, where the relief is of the necessary boldness to affect the spectator's eye looking up from below.

As in the case of exterior treatment Adam carried out many clear and intelligible principles, so in his internal arrangement he confides to us his system which is equally intelligible. In the chambers of many an old stately mansion we note stout columns half engaged supporting the ceilings, with heavy cornices, and vast structures about the fireplace—in short, all the constructive support that seemed necessary for an outside building. It is clear that all this apparatus within is merely in Johnson's phrase, "encumbering with help." Such may be found necessary to buttress up a heavy stone façade; but the same could hardly be requisite to support the joists of a ceiling. But let us hear Adam himself:—"Nothing can be more noble and striking, when properly applied, than a fine order of columns with their bases, capitals, and entablatures; nothing more sterile and disgusting *than to see for ever* the dull repetition of Doric, Ionic, and Corinthian entablatures, *in their usual proportions*, reigning round every apartment where no Order can come or ought to come." Plain, blunt language this, significant also; notably that limitation, "in their usual proportion." For this usual proportion, as we have seen, our architect took on himself to regulate in the interests of beauty. This ponderous style of decoration, described as "the massive entablature, the ponderous compartment-ceiling, the tabernacle frame," does indeed oppress and overpower. Chambers thus garnished are usually enamelled white, a dark or well-observed oil painting is framed into the compartment over the chimney-piece. The "tabernacle frame," too, how well we know it: it is defined as a massive pair of columns with a heavy peaked entablature, enclosing a simple door of entrance, or built up to the ceiling round the fireplace. It seemed odious to Adam and his followers that they should be thus *pursued* by these eternal columns and entablatures into the very saloons and parlours, and that they could not open a door without feeling a debt to the supporting strength of a pair of mammoth columns. It was indeed extraordinary—such relish, idolatry, and infatuation for these superannuated things. "In smaller rooms," he goes on, "the archi'rave has sometimes been omitted, but

\* In Rogers' beautiful *Italy* there is a vignette of Turner's which Ruskin uses to illustrate this theory. It is a wonderfully minute drawing of the Doge's Palace, with all its carved arches, sculptures, &c. With a magnifying glass however, it is found that none of these details are present, only a number of arbitrary dots and strokes. But the effect of carved details as seen from a distance is perfect. On the other hand had these carvings been literally copied there would have been no effect, all would have been confusion.

their places were ponderously supplied by a cornice of most ample dimensions, fit for the Temple of Jupiter Tonans." It will be seen that our architect had a pleasantly sarcastic vein of his own—not too acid—and could write as agreeably as he designed. So that his decoration became always structural, the ceiling laid out in various compartments, the walls broken up in arches and recesses, the ornamentation *entirely in relief*. As we look on his work we feel at once that it is legitimately part of the architecture of the building.

An Earl of Derby long ago had a mansion in Grosvenor Square, which Adam either built or altered, and where he displayed his talents in most brilliant fashion. The drawing-rooms he made quite dazzling from their dramatic variety and richness. They were separated from each other by a low, flattened arch supported on a pair of columns. The ceilings were all vaulted in sections of arches, the walls relieved by recesses. The whole was embroidered all over with his own special decoration in relief. There were friezes and cornices and pilasters and flutings, and the effect was something gorgeous. With an incredible want of taste a later Earl demolished this mansion and built a new one.

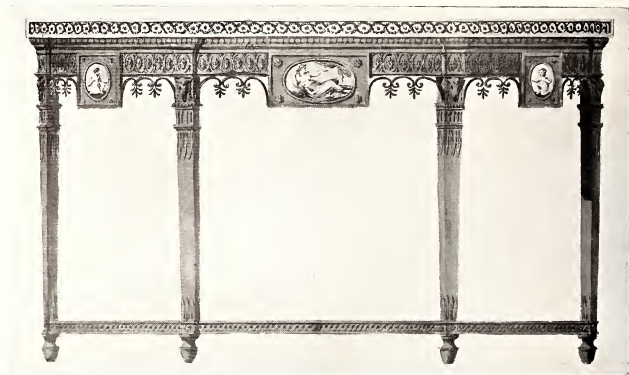


Fig. 12. ADAM INTERIOR  
(At Grosvenor Square).

The scheme of this favourite decoration of his is highly unique. I have said—and there is a good deal of truth in the statement—that having seen and studied the coloured arabesque patterns in the Vatican and other buildings, he thought they would be more effective if translated into actual relief, instead of simulating by the aid of colours and shadows the real forms. His favourite forms, showing an extraordinary fertility and fancy, were variations of the sprays of the hyacinth and such flowers, whose stalk is thick and takes unusual curves. It is curious what a character he imparted to his work by always using these patterns. His treatment of a narrow frieze, with flutings or other elaborate forms, is wonderfully effective. And yet there is no confusion from over-detail, the effect of broad masses is still retained. Add to the effect vases and stands, and placed in niches specially designed for them, mirrors and chimney-pieces designed by himself so as to harmonize with the background against which they were set, and rich carpets of an elaborate pattern like the walls.\* And we should mark this too: what a security the architect had that his designs being in relief could not be altered. Owners might come and go, change their taste, in colour it might be, but the designs remained, and had to remain. At Osterley

\*How little competent Ferguson was to criticise Adam's ornamentation will be seen from the objects that he selects for special praise, viz., the wooden knife boxes and other cases, which are really not very artistic.





PIER TABLE.



CEILING GEOMETRICAL DECORATION.  
(From "*The Connoisseur*").

Park the elaborate ceiling in one of the rooms has been richly gilt all over. The effect is truly resplendent, but I fancy imparts an air of too much solidity and perhaps heaviness.

Adam had brought back with him from Spalato a curious assemblage of images or "motives," which he worked into his decorative system, strange animals, curious forms and varieties of plants, stalks, flowers, and the like. These he had noted on the semi-barbaric carvings that set off the ruins of temples and castles. They include rams' heads—for which he had an unusual *penchant*, using them as ornaments for entablatures—and very effective they are, filling up the space pictorially. He used also sphinxes, winged lions and the like. These furnished him with abundant detail. The rams' and bulls' heads are to be found in Portman Square.

Another splendid display of Adam's interior ornamentation is found in the Library\* at Syon House, a long gallery whose walls seem embroidered all over with the relief work I have before described. Nothing can be richer or more overpoweringly magnificent. His treatment of the book shelves is worth noting; they were sunk in the wall, instead of being, as usual, pieces of wood furniture laid against it. The architect may decide which is the more correct treatment. Adam's notion was that as books were the *raison d'être* of the room, their accommodation should be structural. The pedestrian wandering along the charming and highly countrified Brentford Road, to his surprise comes suddenly on the brilliant if theatrical-looking gate entrance to Syon House. This pleasing composition consists of a central arch with an open colonnade and lodges stretching away on each side. It is covered with the rich Adam "lace work," wrought in his own material. And here is the wonder. It has stood for about one hundred and twenty years, enduring all weathers, and yet the apparent carvings are quite fresh and clean cut. Carvings in stone, so delicate as these are, would certainly have mouldered away by this time and have to be renewed.

As we have seen—and it is well to repeat the statement—the successful effect of Adam's interior decorations is due to the fact that they are on architectural lines, and that the basis and framework, as it were, is laid out on quite structural principles. Thus we find always present friezes and mouldings and airy pilasters, always correct and legitimate *forms* supporting the decoration, and not mere fanciful meanderings introduced for ornament's sake.

I have spoken of the inspiration and emphasis given to the column by our Architect, from which he extracted the very quintessence of expression. The same principle he applied to another element, commonly thought too conventional to need any special treatment and not likely to respond to such. How few think

\* Pictures of this grand chamber, and of those at Grosvenor Square, are given in the Brothers Adam's monumental collections.

that a simple panelled door or doors can have any influence in a scheme of decoration, or that the disposition of a doorway need be other than a "negligible quantity." Yet Adam gave the door life and vitality, beauty and refinement, and made it "tell" in the general picture, and this in accordance with general artistic feeling. As usual he went down to its structural character. He always used double doors, *Portes battans*. Of the propriety of such there can be no question. A large, broad, single door in the hall or a room is as monstrous and hideous a thing as it is structurally wrong. A vast weight is supported on a couple of frail hinges, made strong enough of course for the purpose; but the eye is disturbed by the apparent weakness. The general clumsiness is shown by its working, for when a visitor waits before the hall, which is thrown open, the menial is seen revealed through a slit at one side, and then retreats with the door to the opposite wall, describing a quadrant with it! Contrast with this the dignity of the double doors, which are thrown open by one movement, revealing the spacious hall, the menial standing in the centre.

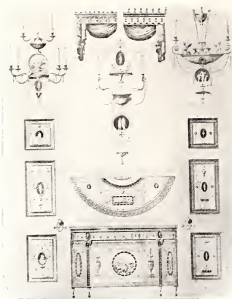
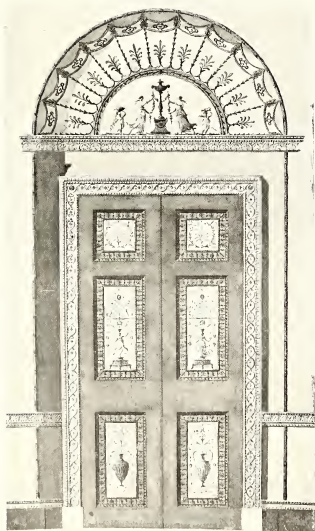


Fig. 13. ADAM DOORS, &c.

A door itself is a piece of construction made of say six panels, fitted in a framework. This joinery is always necessary, as no piece of wood sufficiently large can be conveniently found. The proportion of the panels to the frame is a matter of art and propriety, for there enters the question of proper strength and solidity. It is obvious that a door may be designed well or ill according to the proportions observed. The framing, as it often is, may be needlessly solid, the mouldings obtrusive, while the panelling may be too poor. Adam, however, really made exquisite, ennobling and most elegant objects of his doors and doorways. They impress us by their dignity and majesty. They are almost invariably of solid mahogany, and the decorative part is treated as so fine and marble-like a material requires; with gently swelling mouldings in light relief, enriched with beautiful fluting, a solid decoration and usually gilt. But it is the proportion that strikes us, the balance of height and breadth, with a graceful *tallness*.\* The elegance of design in the doorways also with which he frames his

\* A friend of my own, Colonel Frendergast, when fitting up his house in Grosvenor Gardens, learned that an Adam house was being pulled down and that the fine mahogany doors were to be secured. These he set up in his house. I used often to visit him, but never came away without being impressed and fascinated by these stately portals—so imposing, so elegant. They had quite a refining influence. They were really noble things, of the finest—very finest—mahogany, solid and impenetrable as marble. Adam used to veneer fine mahogany on mahogany less fine. The moulding and joinery corresponded with the material.





DECORATED DOORS AND DOORWAY.  
(From "*The Connoisseur*").



beautiful doors is extraordinary. A favourite pattern is a low flattened arch in slight relief. Sometimes where two doors are side by side—often unavoidable—he encloses both in a similar flattened arch, with beautiful effect, thus suggesting a sense of unity. Anyone going over one of the choicer Adam mansions, such as Lansdowne House or Osterley, must be struck by the imagination displayed in the disposition of the chambers, as well as by the fanciful devices used to create variety. These are all dictated by a feeling of architectural propriety, and excite our admiration for their good sense and correctness. I will describe one pattern at Lansdowne House. There is a long ball-room, with a richly treated waggon roof. At the bottom, however, we see two doors facing each other, one at each side, evidence that the ball-room had interrupted the communication between portions of the house, obliging the inmates to cross the ball-room. Adam felt the awkwardness of this suggestion and dealt with it in this elegant fashion. Just over the doors he brought down his waggon roof, changing it here to a flat ceiling, and thus gave a hint that the place was a passage and therefore separate from the ball-room. At the same time it still continued to belong to the ball-room, as an annexe with a low, flat ceiling just the width of the passage. Such artful and artistic touches set the mind at work and supply a sort of dramatic vitality. They betoken imagination and even genius in their deviser. All these great houses of his are full of such thoughts, such as oval rooms, boudoirs, circular breakfast rooms. My late friend, G. A. Sala, once wrote to me that he had never seen a more lovely room than this at Lansdowne House.

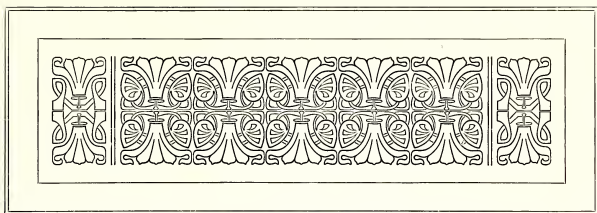
When Adam was called in to alter or rearrange a grand mansion, it is astonishing and pleasing to see how every touch stamped itself on the different parts, contrasting with and lighting up the old work. I was specially struck with one instance of this, in the case of Lord Harewood's seat in Yorkshire, originally built by Carr, a good worthy working architect, who laid out the place according to his conventional ideas of stateliness. No doubt Adam did his best to be in harmony with the older portions—he was too good an artist to wish that his work should be discordant, but so striking and graceful are his alterations, that anyone having little familiarity even with Adam's work, would at once note the difference. There is a clearness and firmness, an intention in all he did to the place, with charming devices and at the same time an amount of thoughtful detail, that must entertain and set the mind at work.\*

---

\* In the admirable series of pictures of old country mansions, given in *The Country*, set forth in some wonderfully dramatic photographs, we find a number of views of Harewood House from many points of view. Most clear and vivid are these representations. Adam's work, it may be said, is particularly suited to the camera, from his clear line and knowledge of relief. I may state here that one of Mr. Ferguson's extraordinary mistakes is the presenting as a work of Adam's, Holkham, which was not in the least in his style and was built by another architect.

It is a hard fate, but to be expected in these prosaic days, that the nobler the Adam mansion is, the more surely it seems to invite destruction. It was so with Ashburnham House, a fine palatial building in Dover Street, with a large enclosure, lodge and gates in front, which we had seen mouldering away for years and sinking into general dilapidation. But the speculator had long marked it for his own; with the ground in front and behind which would serve nobly for new "residential" buildings. The late Mr. Benjamin, of Bond Street, at last bought it. He once took me to see it as it was being pulled to pieces to give place to the gigantic flats of flaming red brick that now line Hay Hill. He ingeniously turned every artistic fragment to profit, such as knackers do with the horses they cut up. The beautiful iron stair balusters richly gilt, the chimney-pieces, carvings, furniture, door knockers, fireplaces—all were disposed of carefully. But the lovely ceilings! they defied all rescue. I must say my friend did all he could—he tried many an ingenious method, but the ceilings *would* not be removed; they fell into fragments when stirred and so had to be broken up.





## CHAPTER XIV.



ANOTHER of these architectural elements, as I call them, so often overlooked as conventional and expressionless, is the stair. At this moment it is scarcely thought of in the designing, save as regards convenience. Any sort of *adapted ladder*, as we might call it, or means of communication between the floors will suffice. This, no doubt, is owing to the cost of the ground and the value of space. The stair is now generally lost in a Cimmerian darkness and is of the meanest treatment. It is hardly reckoned a feature in the house. With Adam, however, it became a highly poetical and suggestive element, virtually the key to the whole structure of the mansion. It dictated all other arrangements. The great central window which furnished light to the stair, denoted the true arrangement within, which was assuredly the great central "well," the stair ascending in flights from the hall to near the roof, with galleries or landings, on which the rooms are disposed. Above all was usually a great and handsome skylight. Adam's stairs are really noble and palatial things. The arrangement was this: first the outer hall—and one is always struck by the fine proportions of his halls, chambers themselves—which was shut off by a wall from the stair hall. There is a sense of surprise and pleasure as we pass through the door and see the lofty well before us, the richly wrought gilt and floriated iron balustrades of the stair rising from right to left or the contrary, and ascending in grand soaring flights above the railed passages,

with the handsome doors of the rooms revealed. There is something very ennobling in the spectacle. Such greeted me in St. James's Square, in Lady Wynn Williams' beautiful mansion, which, though not really large, suggested the idea of spaciousness at every turn, owing to the presence of a beautiful sense of proportion and also propriety.\*

In his chimney-pieces Adam, or the Adams, always kept in view the logical meaning, viz., that it was a construction built to support the weight of the walls over the opening, just as a door or window would be built. Hence the reserve in the cornice. This nowadays is pushed forward and converted into a broad shelf to support all sorts of heavy ornaments and "things." This double duty destroys the character of the supporting piers. It is as though the cornice of a building were brought forward and used to support statues, vases, and the like.† There is something elegant in the air of finish of a lightly marked chimney cornice. It seems to belong to the construction of the room, whereas a mantel shelf supported by columns seems out of place. Adam indeed would place an ornamented mirror on the cornice, but this was designed as a *continuation* of the composition, the support given was merely nominal—a share of the general support to the wall. Of his clustered and florid girandoles one cannot speak highly; they seem flimsy artificial things, and were only wires covered with composition. A genuine Adam chimney-piece of the first class will nowadays fetch a great price in Wardour Street, and furnishers now reproduce them and copy all the details. The sculptures are often by the great artists of the time, and often we find Wedgwood plaques inlaid, not with happy effect. There was a sort of connection between Wedgwood and Adam, the latter being very likely to come under the influence of such an artist. The variety of patterns is what amazes. He once designed with his own hand some twenty-five for a single house in Portland Place. It was the same with his ceilings, in which he showed the same unlimited fancy. In these he was fond of introducing centre-pieces and corner medallions of oil paintings, often by Angelica and Zucchi. These seem rather out of place and have a black and patchy effect. Perhaps a ceiling should be painted all over or left alone.‡

The more elegant forms of Adam's furniture, such as his cabinets, boudoir tables, and the like, have an affinity to the work of the great French masters—such as Reisner and others—though not so free in the touch. This style, however, had not been adopted by Chippendale or Sheraton, so it came

\* In Essex Street there are some old Georgian houses, of small size and pretension, but which display this well and the enclosed stair—one particularly. It is curious how with a feeling of wonder we note the air of spaciousness as the eye travels up with the flights of stairs until they at last touch the roof.

† As indeed Sir W. Richmond has done at St. Paul's—converting a broad cornice into a gilded gallery!

‡ In the Hall of the Royal Academy at Burlington House are a number of these inserted paintings, which have but indifferent effect, and bring an already low ceiling yet lower down. They are out of place in such a situation.

as a complete novelty. All the same it had Adam's mark, and could be recognised as his. His larger "pieces," such as wardrobes, book cases, etc., are most striking and monumental. A fine Adam wardrobe is a truly noble thing, *built* like an architectural structure, the wood beautifully inlaid in oval forms, and, above all, the proportion exquisite. Adam was accustomed to equip his sideboards with certain adjuncts which we cannot think were in the best taste. He would place below a sort of mahogany sarcophagus flanked on each side by a wooden vase of Etruscan pattern, while on the sideboard were the knife boxes before described. These wooden vases were rather painful to look at, as well as false in treatment, for it was borrowing forms that only suited another material—pottery or china.

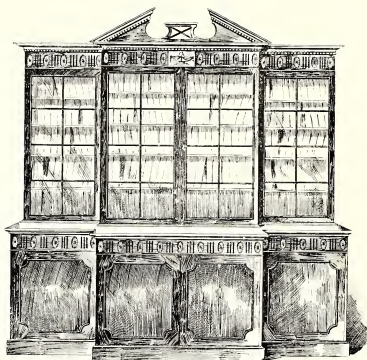


Fig. 14. ADAM BOOKCASES.  
(By permission of Messrs. Druce.)

When we compare Adam's work in this line with that of Chippendale and Sheraton, we shall see at once with what a grace and "movement" the architect inspired his productions. The English designers relied more on their perfect workmanship, the combining of lightness with real strength. They were in fact glorified cabinet makers and joiners. But Adam could not shut out his architectural fancy and accordingly constructed or built his cases. He laid them out as elegant structures, enriching them with his own graceful and recognisable "orders" and decoration. He even supplied an architecture and a sort of entablature with quite an air of conviction. There is an unmistakeable "movement" that interests and lifts it above the common category of book cases. Messrs. Druce, of Baker Street, lately issued an interesting illustrated catalogue of works of these masters—mostly book cases—and have allowed me to use one of their most elegant Adam specimens. It will be noted as an instance of "propriety" how he made no use of the curves and oval which Chippendale and his fellows used for framing the glass. Adam used simple unobtrusive square panes so as to allow of the books within being seen without distraction. Instead of the rather meagre cornices which the others used, Adam's were of a striking kind and richly treated. On the whole he set aside the idea of its being a fragile glass case, the glass being quite subsidiary to its framing.



His wardrobes, too, as I have said, show quite a grandeur of treatment. He had to present a complete wooden case with doors and sides of wood. His idea was to make the wood display and assert itself. He would first design the whole in a monumental style—a building without windows—of the most beautiful proportions, so as not to present a huge and cumbrous box. Here again it became a structure; the doors were works of art, a beautiful but simple inlay—a great oval in each centre, which suggested a movement and animation. The pieces inlaid were large and of the finest quality. Nothing more imposing could be conceived than one of these works. This propriety of treatment—that is, using the material so as to show its proper power and capacity—rarely deserted him.\*

One thinks of course of Adam in connection with the Empire furniture, which he certainly to some extent anticipated. That is, Adam was the first to deal with the wood of furniture as a fine material, and bring it out. This also was the characteristic of the Empire treatment, which used superb pieces of mahogany as fine in colour as in substance, and combined them with ormolu and gilt metal. The mahogany was as hard and close as the marble or metal with which it was mated and was therefore suited for companionship.

His varied patterns of railings and balconies are interesting. They are of wrought or hammered iron, and the design made to suit this form of material. We find for the balconies vertical rods side by side, but with a leaf or so at top and bottom to break the line; geometrical patterns; lines crossing in X shape, some arched, some in scroll shape of very free and flowing design. Often there is an open-work border running along at top and bottom. Sometimes the pattern is divided by a sort of iron pilaster. Verandahs designed and executed by this versatile man were of a characteristic pattern, and are recognisable at once as his work. Here is his usual grace and tenuity of treatment. We can see a brilliant specimen in Berkeley Square, at the corner of Bruton Street; another at George Street, Westminster, at the house that runs by Parliament Square; houses in Piccadilly, close to Berkeley Street. Interesting, too, are his area railings, sometimes in very massive heavy treatment—flat spear heads, arrows, vases, etc.



Fig. 15.  
ADAM RAILINGS—VASE MOTIVE.  
(Drawn by Percy Fitzgerald).

\* It is but fair to say that Chippendale also adopted this architectural treatment in some of his pieces, but with rather artificial results, owing to the quantity of glass and the enclosing flourishes displayed.



COMBINED SIDEBOARD AND CELLARETS.  
(From "*The Connoisseur*").



But anyone who would wish to see Adam's work in this line should repair to Cavendish Square, where he will be astonished to see various patterns of house railings designed by this accomplished being. Let him, with Nos. 5, 6, 7 and 8, thence pass to No. 2, then examine Nos. 31, 32 and 34. It will please the skilled architect, I am certain, to see the boldness of treatment; and he will note besides that each pattern is different. Most curious is the effect when we contrast them with the pretentious modern rail, twice as elaborate but less effective by one half. His tall lamp stands, tripods, etc., which he designed in profusion, were after the Pompeian models, supported on the feet of animals, which was to be later the Empire treatment. The weakness, however, of these things was in their material, his favourite stucco, whereas the "Empire" extravagance was redeemed by the genuine and enduring material—gilt, metal and marbles.

Adam's treatment of the balcony is an interesting feature of his methods. He did not care for the long metal cage of open iron-work which we so often see running across the front, and which offers such uncomfortable suggestions as we walk on it—of insecurity, of slipping through, etc. His almost invariable course was to supply each window with its own semi-circular rail, on which a person might lean and look out, without getting on it. It is wonderful how this contributed to the general effect, and how each window was beautified. The rail was merely a protective one. To see the effect on the general aspect of a mansion one should repair to Hanover Square, and admire the fine cast-iron balconies of the Agricultural Society's mansion.

Adam condescended to design fire-grates and even fire-irons. His grates are fine pieces of work, solid bars handsomely curved and sinuous, set off with brass vases by way of ornaments. This favourite design became also the handles of his fire-irons (I see them now as they repose on my fender)—though I doubt if it be æsthetically correct treatment—as well as the using it for the top of an iron newel in his railings. My door is garnished with an Adam knocker and a beautifully designed door-plate and handle, so exquisitely delicate in its treatment that it seems in its small compass to embody all the graces of the Adam system. It is a perfect decoration. The proportions of the plate are charming, it is of the right length and breadth, with a little beaded edging. The contour of the handle is no less exquisite, thick and swelling where it fills the palm, tapering off gently to the shank; mechanically it is perfect. We know the combination of a letter-box with the brass handle, though the hand must be somewhat in the way of the letters. Adam's beautiful feeling and design and general artistic propriety is shown in every part—in the plate, in the handle where he applies the Entasis—it is altogether an artistic microcosm, and deserves study. Who could imagine an architect of the first rank expending his talent on so homely a thing—to be really left to your ironmonger, who can

supply various patterns according to fancy. The handle is usually twisted and curled, made thin and attenuated in parts.

His cast-iron work in this way, I venture to say, is extraordinary from the air of freedom he imparted to it, and the flowing character of his designs. How he thus succeeded in so intractable a process it is hard to say, perhaps it is owing to the just proportion. Perhaps his most elegant specimen is that before the houses at the corner of Park Lane. We have only to contrast their fine simplicity and effect with the tortured modern work before Lord Rothschild's close by. The railings round Harewood House, in Hanover Square, together with the balconies, are more elaborate and more stiff, but still have a fine effect. He clearly knew the *limits* of casting, and how far it was capable of producing a legitimate pattern. In front of the War Office there is a rather elaborate railing with lamp standards, much out of repair, but still good. Before Foley House we find a very ugly formal pattern, but which is undoubtedly his. But *aliquando dormitat* and in all directions in London we come upon these specimens of his taste and feeling. There is some ironwork of his within the precincts of St. James's Palace, in the Stable Yard, facing the Green Park.

Had Adam devoted himself exclusively to dealing with iron work and its varieties, his whole time must have been absorbed by the innumerable patterns and designs with which he filled the London thoroughfares. A skilled amateur might devote weeks to promenades in which he would find at every corner new and varied specimens to delight him. The area railings and lamp holders alone, knockers even, would astonish him for their originality and effectiveness. In Cavendish and Berkeley Squares there are some fine specimens, also in Hill Street and Charles Street. It is when we contrast his work with the art of the modern Mr. Street, at the Law Courts, that we see the superiority of Adam. Street's work, elaborate as it is, has a wiry look, and is frail for its size.

It is not common or usual to find one who has been dealing with works on a vast scale to be successful in articles decorating delicate artistry. But this miraculous man was at his ease in all lines. We find him designing exquisite bijouterie, as we might call it, to set off his furniture, so delicately fashioned that it is now carefully removed from such artistry and stands by itself. In this sort of dainty goldsmith's work "propriety" once more showed itself. Thus, when he had secured his nobly impressive doors he was inclined to garnish them attractively.



Fig. 16. ADAM DOOR FURNITURE.  
(Drawn by Percy Fitzgerald.)

There was the "furniture," the handles, keyhole coverings, etc. Not much decorative opportunity here. Yet nothing can be more graceful than his decorative methods in this connection.

Quite a remarkable thing in Adam's "practice" is the vast number of trifling things which he condescended to design, such as stables, and coach-houses, small bridges, gates and gate-houses, lodges, and such matters. This he seems to have done in profusion and all as of course. Now I fancy in our time we could hardly venture to ask a first-class architect for such trifling designs; the builder would be able to furnish sufficiently good ones for the purpose. But I trace a significance in all this and a note of professional character. Like Boz, whom I have heard say so often that whatever was worth doing at all was worth doing well, so Adam believed that every touch and stroke of his, no matter how trifling the subject, could be enlivened and set off by adequate treatment, could be made to furnish ornament and effect to the general composition. He took immense trouble with these lodges and lodge gates, for he knew that they could give a point to the main building. At the War Office, in Pall Mall, in front of which is Sidney Herbert's statue, we can see all the departments of his work, the main building pleasingly designed with its effective doorway, and the two lodges or pavilions which set it off, joined by the intervening cast-iron railing. These little buildings have an elegant touch, but are disfigured by being as usual painted over. I have found in various parts of London his graceful attempts at beautifying the façades of coach-houses, as seen from the back drawing-room windows, and which he treated in pleasing classical style. The Wynn Williams house, in St. James's Square, has some fine and elaborate treatment of his kind in the garden buildings. One can fancy one of his noble patrons saying, "Come, Adam, I want you to build me a coach-house"; or he might hear *him* saying when down in the country on a visit, "Let me design you a little summer-house for this corner—it wants something here." Nay, for a friend, Mr. Dundas, he actually condescended to design *a dog kennel*!

Adam's treatment of silver plate is characteristic and seemed to follow that of Bentley and Wedgwood. There can be no doubt that his models for vases, cups, candlesticks, and the like, were more suited to a pottery than a metallic material.\* But it is evident that he recoiled from the stiff and coldly correct methods with which the silver had been dealt with, which attempted to display to the best advantage the shining glittering surface, such as we see in "Sheffield Plate." His idea was to enrich and decorate, and accordingly he placed on his

---

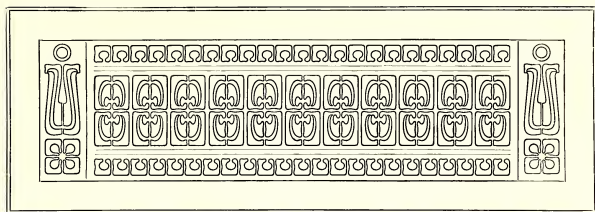
\*I remember being offered by a dealer two superb silver candlesticks of a rich design, adorned with "swags," the feet of an oval pattern. They were of copper, but heavily water gilt, a process which in those days was equivalent to a thin sheet of gold laid on. I spoke of them to that accomplished amateur, the late Mr. Alfred Morrison, who eagerly purchased them.

vases gracefully hung "swags," with rams' heads and ox heads and flowing borders. But this, as I say, was after the pattern of a Wedgwood vase—still the effect is very welcome.

I am tempted to expatiate somewhat enthusiastically upon a beautiful little piece of goldsmith's work of his which is in my possession—the head of a dress cane. The general design, the feeling, the treatment and contrast of material, and above all, the lines, are exquisite. The swelling curves of the top show the genuine artist and the artist's feeling. The grace of the "swags" or pendant garlands, the dotted border, the contrasted tints of the metals—gold and copper, these are the effective elements. The great Pugin had this sort of talent for goldsmith's work and could be as great in designing the metal decorations of a prayer-book or a set of jewels for an intended wife whom he did *not* marry, as for the details of a great building like the Houses of Parliament.

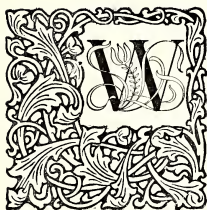
And now to conclude with what is an appropriate enough touch, this universal genius accepted "orders" for tombs of distinguished persons *bien entendu* (for such was always his *clientèle*) and who were to have "snug lying in the Abbey"—as Sir Lucius has it—that is, in Westminster Abbey. To this department he applied himself with the same correctness and also reserve as he did to others. In these tombs there is nothing to attract—no "show off" or flourish. But we still recognise his mark and his firm touch. And in due time, that is in 1792, this brilliant man was himself carried to the great Abbey and laid there amid fitting circumstances of state.





## CHAPTER XV.

### APPENDIX.



WHEN I was giving a lecture on this subject at the Society of Arts, it was attended by some architects of note—Colonel Edis, Mr. Statham, Mr. Hugh Stannus, and others. An interesting discussion followed, in which various views of the matter were put forward.

The CHAIRMAN said, as an architect, living in one of the squares in which Adam worked, he had, for some twenty-five years past, noticed one special type of his design, which he did not altogether admire.

Although he made a terrace of houses more or less

to resemble one house, which might have some advantages, it was somewhat unpleasant to anyone who had to live in one of them to find that half a window belonged to him and half to his neighbour, especially if the window was circular. His view of Adam—and he had seen many of his houses, and had the good fortune to have had to deal professionally with some of them—was that he was much more successful in the smaller detail, especially in his ceilings and the internal decoration, than he was in the general elevation, because he seemed to lose sight of the first attribute of all good architecture, especially domestic, that the external work should be always made subservient to the internal use. We lived in an age in which it was first of all desirable to have comfort of all kinds and general home arrangements. We did not want windows placed so high that we could not look out of them, or so low that they were in the way of the furniture. A house must, first, be useful, and, next, beautiful. So far as his knowledge of Adam's work went, the internal work—more especially the ceilings—was extremely beautiful, but he was not prepared to go quite so far as Mr. Fitzgerald

in his admiration of the general lines of the palace of Diocletian, which was not, in his opinion, one of the greatest triumphs of ancient art. No doubt Adam did a vast amount of valuable work which was very interesting in its time, though he did not think it was so good as that of Stuart—Athenian Stuart, as he was called—because that was much more fine in all its characteristics, and also more able in its architectural details. So far as decorative detail was concerned, they were much indebted to Robert Adam. How far that sort of thing could be done now, architects knew best.

Mr. H. H. STATHAM said there was a great deal in the paper with which he sympathised, though he could not quite join in all the enthusiasm of the reader; not that he quarrelled with him on that account, for no one could give a good account of any man unless he had some enthusiasm for him. He had always admired Adam for two things: first, because he was a likeable, honest, hard-working man of fine personal character; and, secondly, because he was one of the very few architects of whom it could be said that, to some extent, he invented a style—or, rather, sub-style—of his own. The origin of it was all to be found, more or less, in Roman architecture; but he invented a treatment which had his own stamp upon it, and, so far, was original. He agreed with all that had been said as to the delicacy of grace of his internal decoration; but, even with regard to that there was a limit, as there was a constant repetition of the same motives; and, in his favourite forms of wreaths, etc., he never once looked to nature for the basis of his ornament. It was all the repetition of conventional, graceful form, which, though graceful, was cold; you never saw the mark of real genius in it. He had one annoying trick of using festoons everywhere, sometimes quite contrary to all the principles of decorative art. A festoon was a form fashioned by the action of gravitation on something hanging loose; but Adam was so fond of it that he put it horizontally over his ceilings, which was a perfect contradiction of the principle from which that ornament evolved. When you came to the outside, he was still like a decorator and furniture designer; he never rose to any expression of greatness and solidity. A great deal was said about his manner of using pilasters on the face of his houses, and it was to his credit that he used these things with great elegance; but, after all, that system was recognised now as one of the great falsities of architecture. The face of that very building, of which a photograph had been shown, represented architecturally a colonnade, an order which ought to mark a single story; but between it you saw the windows, which marked the two stories, into which the front was really divided, and you could not call that good architecture. Then, that peculiar form of window—of which he was so fond—was not a bad one once in a way, but when you found it everywhere where there was a chance, it became monotonous, and showed deficiency of invention. They must regard him as a very capable architect in the use of the materials which

he chose, but not as a man of great genius or imagination. He represented probably the feeling for art of his own day—cold classic grace, or elegance without imagination.

Mr. J. HUNTER DONALDSON said Adam had the conspicuous merit of knowing what he wanted to do, and he evinced in all he did a sense which, in his time, was much wanting, both internally and externally—that of unity. The great defect up to his time in decoration and furnishing was that it was not conceived in any spirit of unity, and, consequently, was incongruous in character. Throughout France particularly you now found that all men of wealth who spent money on decorations and furniture had a sense of the value of unity of design. In almost any room in any decently furnished house in France you would see one particular style represented—usually a French style—to which, perhaps, they adhered rather too tenaciously, but, at all events, you had the satisfaction of knowing that the woodwork, ironwork, steel, curtains, chairs, etc., were all governed by the one idea of representing a particular style. This was very pleasing, and he regretted that it was not so generally observed in England. It would always be a credit to Adam that he drew public attention to this unity, and gave such emphatic expression to it in his internal decoration.

Mr. HUGH STANNUS drew attention to two large volumes of Adam's designs, which were placed on the table for inspection, which would assist to illustrate the admirable critical account which had been given of Adam's work. The view of the house in Weymouth Street showed how thoroughly Adam had mastered the academic or scholastic tradition of his art. Parts of the wall were thin, and parts thick; and this emphasised, in a very suggestive manner, the two functions which a wall had to perform. A wall had to sustain and support the floors and the roof, and it also had to enclose the rooms; and this was admirably shown in the house, the thicker part being the supporting part, and the thinner part the enclosing. With all respect and deference to that great man he could not help feeling that Adam's style was an imported one. He had spent five years in Italy, and had employed a great number of Italian draughtsmen to copy decorations; and those connected with the style:—Sheraton, Angelica Kauffmann, Cipriani, Bartolozzi, Pergolesi, and Piranesi (who preceded him)—formed quite a band of workers, and the Adam style was the sum total of those working together. He did not mean to say that Adam used them as "Ghosts," but at the same time it must be borne in mind that those wonderful drawings in the Soane Museum, and all those hundreds of buildings up and down the country, could not have been the work of any one man, however, industrious, unless he had numbers of enthusiastic and capable workers to assist him. He entirely agreed with the view that his work was rather that of the decorator than the architect, what Pugin would have called the "inside-out" style. He

once said that some designs were of two styles, the "inside-out" style and the "outside-in" style; and he would probably have classed Adam's among the former. The decoration of those pilasters, and much of his beautiful work, showed no appreciation of the difference between the outside of a building and the inside. The thin relief was very delightful, but still it was more suited to the bright, sunny, clear climate of Italy than that of England, and it was therefore an imported style. It might also be said that it was not a carved style, but a painted style rendered in relief. The beauty of carved ornament was that it covered over the surface rather than showed the interspaces; in the well-known Trojan scroll, for instance, the spaces between ornament were much less than the ornament itself. That was the characteristic of carved ornament—much ornament and little ground. But in painted ornament, there should be light, delicate work, with little bits of colour laid on with a brush; and such was Adam's decoration. In some of his later designs—some of the decoration of cabinets—that delicacy was carried to an extent which it would be hard to equal, and certainly could not be surpassed; and there it was in its right place, *qua* colour, and not *qua* relief. It had been a great pleasure to him to see Adam's work again; and to hear the paper, which really recalled to him his early training in art; and he felt they were under a great debt of obligation to Mr. Fitzgerald for the admirable manner in which he had treated his subject.

Mr. H. B. WHEATLEY said it was desirable to point out, as they were then in an Adam room, that the decoration of the roof was later work; but the frieze just above the pictures was Adam's, and it was very curious to notice that it was almost identical with that on the upper part of Attenborough's House at the corner of Adam Street. One point connected with these decorations was the frequency of their repetition. They were much indebted to Mr. Fitzgerald for the immense amount of fresh information he had brought together. Adam's style was now the fashion, and most people knew more or less about it; but still it would be a revelation to a great many that there were so large a number of houses in London which owed him for their architect. It was worthy of note that, of the very few specimens of old street architecture left in London, a large proportion were by Adam. If they did not answer the highest demands of the architect, they were certainly very pleasing to the eye, and a great relief to the ordinary brick buildings. The United Service Institution had a very interesting history. It was now one of the most dirty and miserable looking buildings in London. It was built originally by Vanbrugh, and was the occasion of some satirical lines by Swift, in which the work of "Vitruvius the Second" is likened to "a goose pie," and it was, therefore, an object of literary interest. In consequence of the additions made by Adam it had been generally overlooked. On account of its association with Swift and the famous architect-author Vanbrugh they would be sorry to lose it, although it certainly could not be commended for its beauty.













