

A

HISTORY

OF

ARCHITECTURE.

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CHAPTER I.

INTRODUCTION.

IN all regions men have felt the necessity of adding to the covering which is carried about with the person, and which we call attire, another covering, more extended, more detached, more stationary, for the purpose of ampler comfort and of greater security, and which might be able, with his body, to include such goods as he possessed.

Wherever this receptacle has been formed, in consequence of the peculiar exigencies of the climate, of the inconveniences to be avoided, and the comfort to be derived, and with reference to the materials found to effect these purposes, which might most easily be obtained, and not in imitation of the constructions of other nations, the architecture, rising like an indige-

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nous plant out of the nutriment, and modified by the checks of the soil and atmosphere, may assert its claim to perfect originality. Derived directly from, and wholly adapted to, the wants experienced, and the opportunities afforded of supplying them, it will, however primitive and simple, offer a distinctive form and character, evidently suited to these contingencies, and different from the architecture of other nations not similarly situated.

The savage, on the shores of New Zealand, possessed of no goods; indifferent to wife and children; with no care beyond that for his own hideous person, and for that person merely requiring, during the hours of repose, shelter against the fury of the blast or of the beast of prey, digs in the sand, for his living body, a hole little larger than that which he might require for his grave.

The Caraib, wandering among the trackless forests of the New World, instead of a dwelling level with the ground and formed in the shifting sand, scoops for himself, within the trunk of a tree partly hollowed out by decay, a habitation, not very extensive, but one whose foundations are rooted in the earth, and whose roof waves high in air.

The Tartar, on the elevated and central plains of Asia, whose herds are his sole wealth, and who, as soon as pasture fails in one spot, removes both his family and cattle to another, in order that his dwelling may follow his possessions, may be as light and portable as his roving life requires, may be adapted to his exigencies and his means, constructs it with the hides

of those very animals whose flesh he makes his food. While on the road he is satisfied with spreading them as an awning over the waggon that conveys his family; where he intends to tarry awhile, he transfers them to the ground, by throwing them across wooden poles, and pinning them down with wooden pegs: he never gives them a permanent hold in the soil.

Of these Tartar tribes, at a very early period, some hordes roamed eastward, until they reached a fertile country, where large rivers, and beyond these an immense ocean into which their streams flowed, forbade any further progress; but where the soil, by its fertility, consoled them for the impediments offered by the waters to which it owed its fruitfulness, and induced them to change their wholly pastoral for an agricultural life, and to remain stationary rather than retrace their steps;—here, then, no longer maintaining those prodigious herds, and no longer able to make their houses entirely of hides, they must construct more substantial dwellings of whatever other different materials they found more at hand; and here, no longer wishing their habitations to be portable, satisfied that they should adhere to the soil, they were content to do so. Instead of the tent of hides, they built the immoveable mansion of wood, of stone, of clay unbaked and baked, of brick—nay, of porcelain—of china!

Other Asiatic tribes descended from the cool heights of Thibet into the burning plains of Hindostan, and there found a country fitted, indeed, for the finest tillage, but, at the same time, felt the fiercest rays of the sun exert on them their fury. Thence their mode

of construction, from the first, offered forms and modifications wholly opposite to those of the Tartar tents. Renouncing all idea of further movements, only wishing for the most effectual shelter from the heat, they dug, in the barren rocks that surrounded their vast plains, habitations immoveable as the earth itself, and which formed one body with the mountains, into whose bosom they penetrated,—habitations which, fitted for them during life, seemed still most suitable after death. Thus arose the stupendous excavations of the Bahar; thus were formed, along the banks of the Ganges and the Barampooter, those cities of caves, of which some served as retreats for the living, while others were left as a receptacle for the dead.

A population which, where the inexhaustible fertility of the soil supplied an easy and plentiful support, increased rapidly, soon was forced to advance into the plain, far from the reach of the surrounding hills, and, by degrees, became obliged, near the banks of the rivers, to raise on the surface of the ground the dwelling which, near the brow of the rock, they had been able to dig in the bowels of the earth. The inhabitants, instead of burrowing, now built; instead of forming excavations in a previously solid mass, now raised a substantial pile round that which had been an uninterrupted void: instead of removing portions of rock, as superfluous and cumbersome, they now sought those very portions, before abandoned, as the materials they most wanted.

But as the distance from the mountains became greater, and the labour of the conveyance grew heavier

and was less willingly incurred for every trifling edifice; and where rivers, yearly overflowing their banks and inundating the surrounding country, left ample deposits of mud, and produced abundant crops of reeds and rushes, these offered at hand, and under foot, materials so plentiful, and so easily wrought into the requisite buildings, that, slight and perishable as such must be, they seemed preferable to those materials whose superior solidity was, in most cases, too dearly paid for by the difficulties of their transport and their erection.

The ordinary dwellings of India now obtained walls made of the mud found in the bed, and roofs formed of the rushes growing on the banks, of their rivers, and canals, and tanks, and, from the extreme of imperishable solidity, passed to the contrary extreme of perishable lightness; and only for those edifices, from the religion of the people, their temples, and from their superstition, their tombs, which were considered as requiring greater permanence, did immense blocks of stone continue to be taken from the quarry and the catacomb, conveyed with immense labour to the distant plains, and there afresh piled up in buildings, capable of resisting the utmost efforts that time itself might make to destroy them.

## CHAPTER II.

ORIGIN AND NATURE OF THE EGYPTIAN STYLE OF  
ARCHITECTURE.

As in Asia certain tribes descended southwards from the heights of Thibet into the plains of Hindostan, formed by the Ganges and its tributaries; so in Africa certain other tribes descended northwards from the mountains of Ethiopia into the valley of Egypt, formed by the Nile and its various ramifications.

Because the Egyptians, in their astronomical knowledge and records; in their religious doctrine and observances; in their customs and manners; in their works of industry and art, unimitative and imitative; and peculiarly in their architecture, offered with the Hindoos some remarkable conformities: because they possessed certain traditions similar to those of the Hindoos, and believed in the transmigration of souls, and in their original emancipation from, and their ultimate re-absorption in, the supreme essence, or general soul of the world: because they have large excavations, and immense insulated monuments, like the Hindoos: because, of the former, the supports are short and massy; and of the latter, the form pyramidal: because, in both, the lotus and the palm are favourite ornaments; and many other symbols are the same in the

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different countries : and because the figures represented in Egyptian monuments are stiff and motionless like those seen in Hindoo antiquities ; many have considered the arts and sciences of Egypt, and in particular its architecture, as derived—*i. e.* imitated—from that of the Hindoos. They have considered the Grottos of the Thebais as children of the excavations of Ellora, and the Pyramids of Egypt as the offspring of the Pagodas of India.

There are not, however, sufficient grounds for these inferences. Those phenomena of nature which are most general, most striking, in every country, and in every country influence the condition of the inhabitants most obviously and extensively, would, in every country alike, become the first objects of observation, scrutiny, record, and science ; and as we have seen that architecture, like every other art of utility, must derive essentially out of the peculiar climate, and locality, and productions of the country where it arises, it must consequently, even where equally original and native in two different countries, offer certain coincidences, according to the degree in which these countries possess these features in common with each other, even though intercourse or communication should not have occurred between them.

Egypt, like India, is possessed of a hot climate ; of a river rising in high mountains, and yearly overflowing its lower banks, on which the inhabitants depend for their annual harvests ; of an alluvial soil, intersected, for the sake of necessary irrigation, by numerous cuts and canals, and produces animals and vegetables of the

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same peculiar amphibious and other species. On its waters the Nymphæa,\* and along its shores the Banana and Palm Tree, in the same abundance. Around this humid and flat expanse rises a circle of arid rocks, fit only for the shelter of goods and stores, for habitations of the living, for receptacles of the dead, and consequently producing in its inhabitants similarity in their modes of life and methods of industry, in their topics of hope or fear, of amusement, study, or contemplation. Thus each presents with the other coincidences remarkable, but accounted for by the nature of the regions in which they exist. Moreover, in all countries alike, in the infancy of architecture, inability to enclose a vast expanse of space, and to combine solidity with lightness, produces massiness in the parts within, and slope on those without.

In like manner, in the infancy of sculpture, incapacity to seize and embody the ever-changing appearances of movement and expression engenders rigidity of limbs and immobility of features, and thus we may explain these points of similarity. We cannot, therefore, in Egyptian art, especially in architecture, find any circumstance to warrant us in contesting its claim to originality, or in considering it as derived, much less as imitated, from that of the Hindoos.

In fact, if in Egyptian art we see some resemblances to that of India, which might induce the suspicion of

\* China possesses, equally with Egypt, its lotus, which figures in all its dressed gardens. It is that kind which resembles most the Egyptian; but the extremities of its petals, instead of being of a lilac colour, are pink.



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affiliation, we see other differences which wholly disprove it. In the architecture of India, the most stupendous works are those excavations in the solid rock, in the execution of which patience and perseverance form the chief requisite; in which little mechanical skill is required; of which a single long-lived hermit has, sometimes, produced wonderful specimens. It possesses few monuments insulated all round, and raised from the ground, of great magnificence or difficult execution. The Egyptians, as stupendous in their excavations as the Hindoos, are far more so in those edifices, like the Temples of Thebes, and the Pyramids of Memphis, raised on the surface of the ground, in which blocks of stone of immense weight, conveyed to an immense distance from the quarry, elevated to a surprising height, and cut and interwoven with others in the most ingenious and solid manner, imply mechanical powers, and skill of the highest description, of which the Hindoo buildings give no example. All the excavations of Elephantas and Ellora united, imply less skill in mechanics than does the small chapel of Minerva, brought from Upper Egypt to Sais, which only measured twenty-one cubits in length, by fourteen in width, and eight in height; or than the cell of Latona, equally conveyed many miles to Butus, whose dimensions were of forty cubits only every way, but each of which were of a single stone, hollowed out into the requisite shape. Of Egyptian architecture, moreover, the forms, the outlines, are wholly different in their details; and while in Hindoo monuments the same mouldings are repeated to ex-

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cess, and conceived in the extreme of insipidity and heaviness, those in Egyptian architecture are beautifully varied and contrasted. In India, likewise, the figures often show a preposterous reduplication of limbs, never seen in those of the Egyptians. Those in *basso relievo* rise entirely from the ground, while, in Egyptian monuments they are, for the sake of better preservation, sunk under its surface; and, while the stiffness of the Hindoo figures seems entirely owing to the infant state of art, (of which there is no exception), that of the Egyptians is accompanied by circumstances which prove it to be less the effect of the inability of the artists, than of those laws which prevented them from varying the original forms and attitudes, in a country where, as the written language was symbolical, it was deemed important thus to legislate, that, in process of time, the meaning might not become unintelligible through the changes in the representative figures. Many of those that are very coarse in their limbs and extremities, are exquisitely wrought in the features; and now and then we find a figure of an animal, or even a human being, finished with truth and beauty, which we should in vain seek in India, and which proves in the Egyptians a great though repressed superiority of skill.

But however much the Egyptian architecture appears thus obliged to give up the claim of more primeval origin, which it would possess if its own evident antiquity were still preceded by an earlier antiquity in the Hindoo architecture, its parent, and, on the other hand, may assert its greater originality,—the