

Cambridge University Press
978-1-108-08079-8 - Memoirs of the Life and Works of Sir Christopher Wren: With a Brief View of the Progress of
Architecture in England, from the Beginning of the Reign of Charles the First to the End of the Seventeenth Century
James Elmes
Frontmatter
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Memoirs of the Life and Works of Sir Christopher Wren

James Elmes (1782–1862), the son of a builder, trained at the Royal Academy Schools as an architectural designer, but his career encompassed publishing and writing on architecture as well. A friend of Benjamin Robert Haydon and his circle, he was the first publisher (in his *Annals of Fine Arts*) of Keats’ most famous odes. This work – the first biography of Wren – was published in 1823, and is dedicated to the President and Fellows of the Royal Society, of which Wren was a founder member in 1660. Elmes based his work on the so-called ‘Parentalia’, or notes on the Wren family compiled by his son (also Christopher), and privately printed by his grandson Stephen in 1750. Elmes puts Wren’s life and works into the context of the intellectual ferment of Restoration England, and combines the narrative of Wren’s life with an architectural commentary on his most important works.

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Engraved by Edw^d Scriven. Historical Engraver to His Majesty.

Sir. Wren

*Engraved for Filmess's Life of Wren, from a Drawing by W. Behnes, after the Original Picture
of Sir Godfrey Kneller's, in the Council Chamber of the Royal Society*

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M E M O I R S
OF THE
L I F E A N D W O R K S
OF
S I R C H R I S T O P H E R W R E N,
WITH A BRIEF VIEW OF THE
Progress of Architecture in England,
FROM THE BEGINNING OF THE REIGN OF CHARLES THE FIRST TO THE END OF
THE SEVENTEENTH CENTURY;
AND AN
APPENDIX OF AUTHENTIC DOCUMENTS.

BY JAMES ELMES, M.R.I.A. ARCHITECT,
AUTHOR OF HINTS FOR THE CONSTRUCTION OF PRISONS; TREATISE ON DILAPIDATIONS;
LECTURES ON ARCHITECTURE, &c.

“ Certissime constat, ut præcociiores neminem unquam prætulisse spes, ita nec maturiores quemquam
fructus protulisse: prodigium olim pueri, nunc miraculum viri, imo dæmonium hominis, suffecerit
nominâsse ingeniosissimum et optimum CHRISTOPHERUM WRENNUM.”
DR. BARROW’S Oration at Gresham College, 1662.

LONDON :
P R I E S T L E Y A N D W E A L E,
HIGH-STREET, BLOOMSBURY.
1823.

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LONDON:
PRINTED BY THOMAS DAVISON, WHITEFRIARS.

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TO
SIR HUMPHRY DAVY, BART.
PRESIDENT,
TO THE VICE-PRESIDENTS, COUNCIL, AND FELLOWS
OF
THE ROYAL SOCIETY:
THE FOLLOWING MEMOIRS,
ILLUSTRATIVE OF
SIR CHRISTOPHER WREN;

THE ORNAMENT AND PRIDE OF ENGLISH SCIENCE AND ART, THE ASSOCIATE OF THAT
ILLUSTRIOUS BAND OF PHILOSOPHERS, WHOSE DISCOVERIES AND INVENTIONS DO HONOUR TO
OUR NATION, AND WHOSE UNION FORMED THAT SOCIETY, OF WHICH HE WAS ONE OF THE
FOUNDERS AND EARLIEST PRESIDENTS, AND WHOSE MEMBERS WERE THE PATRONS, FOSTERERS,
AND PROMULGATORS OF THE NEWTONIAN PHILOSOPHY, AND OF ITS IMMORTAL AUTHOR,

ARE,

WITH THEIR OBLIGING PERMISSION,

MOST RESPECTFULLY INSCRIBED AND DEDICATED,

BY THEIR FAITHFUL AND OBEDIENT SERVANT,

JAMES ELMES.

London, February 25, 1823.

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PREFACE.

THE following Memoirs, illustrative of the life and works of our greatest architect, were began by me nearly fourteen years ago, as introductory to a large work which I proposed to publish on the Cathedral of St. Paul, his greatest architectural performance. This being abandoned, and my drawings being engraved for another publication*, I then intended to reprint the Parentalia, with the new matter which I had collected as an appendix; but subsequent and important additions, and an attentive perusal of that part of Parentalia which relates to Sir Christopher Wren, induced me to attempt an enlarged and entirely new life.

This was to have been published more briefly last

* Mr. Britton's Fine Arts of the English School.

spring; but the press had hardly been set to work, when some new and most important documents presented themselves to me, which, with a journey to Ireland, on professional purposes, where I met with other important documents, alluded to in the body of the work, induced the delay, the enlargement, and, I trust, also the improvement of the work.

The various hitherto unpublished original papers which I have obtained and printed, are valuable additions to the Life of this great man; who experienced the ingratitude of cotemporaries, and the apathy of successors, in a more extraordinary degree than perhaps ever befel a man of equal talents, of equal public utility, and of equal celebrity.

With Pope, Addison, Swift, Atterbury, Arbuthnot, and Gay, for witnesses of his full-blown fame, not a solitary distich could either afford him at his unnoticed death; though the German Kneller has been more immortalized by the pen of Pope than by his own pencil. But the man from whose comprehensive mind arose the majestic cathedral of St. Paul, and the fifty

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parochial churches of London—the royal and magnificent hospital of Greenwich—the no less appropriate and useful one at Chelsea—the most splendid ornaments of our metropolis—the most useful structures of our two universities,—he, who was at once our greatest architect, mathematician, and philosopher; the most learned man of his day, who may be most justly named the British Archimedes, was old, was the victim of political intrigue, and had no longer the countenance of royalty, which had smiled upon him for nearly three quarters of a century. He and native talent were out of fashion; and when ingratitude and the injustice of intriguing foreigners robbed him of his rights, his honours, and his well-earned rewards, the wits, the poets of the day, suffered this unequalled man to sink into the silent grave unnoticed but by his beloved son, Christopher, who erected the small mural monument in the crypt of St. Paul's, and began his work * illustrative of his honoured ancestors. This

* Parentalia; or, Memoirs of the Family of the Wrens. Folio. London, 1750.

work was not completed till nearly thirty years after the great architect's death, when it was published by Stephen Wren, his grandson, who liberally sent a number of copies to the two universities, for distribution among those who honoured his name.

The following letters, transcribed from the originals in the possession of his daughter, Miss Wren, whose attention and services I have had several occasions to record, accompanied the parcels of books. They are neither of them directed; but the first is evidently to some friend at Oxford, and the second to another at Cambridge. The book is now scarce, and at a high price; but no part of it which relates to Sir Christopher is omitted in the present work.

The letters, with the presentation copies, are as follow :—

“ Great Russell-street, April 1, 1751.

“ SIR,

“ My grandfather, Sir Christopher Wren, was so well known, and his memory is so much esteemed at

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Oxford, that the history of his life and works will not, I am convinced, be thought a disagreeable present. I have, therefore, sent thirty books by the waggon, and as I had the honour of being educated under the judicious Dr. Newton, have fixed upon that most worthy friend of mine to present every college and hall in the university with one of them. Desiring he would also do me the favour to accept of the remaining copies, and distribute them among those he thinks most worthy. I shall make a tour into the country in a day or two, when I hope to have the pleasure of seeing you ; but if the holidays prevent my having that pleasure, you will please to favour me with a line to let me know what reception the books met with.

“ I am, Sir, &c.

“ STEPHEN WREN.”

“ Great Russell-street, April 1, 1751.

“ SIR,

“ Mr. Ames acquainted me a few days ago that he had seen you, and that you had been so kind as to

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promise to present, in my name, one of my books of Parentalia to every college and hall in your university, for which I return you thanks. I have therefore sent twenty books; but as I am informed that exceeds the number of colleges, I desire you will accept of the remaining copies to be distributed among those you think most worthy; and I should be particularly obliged to you, if you would favour me with an answer, to let me know what reception the books met with.

“ I am, Sir, &c.

“ STEPHEN WREN.”

Of Sir Christopher's lineal living descendants, are Miss Wren, the daughter of his grandson Stephen, who has a sister residing at Bristol Hot Wells, and a cousin's son, Christopher Wren, Esq., of Wroxhall Abbey, in Warwickshire, formerly a seat of our architect's, and where his only son, Christopher, lies buried. To this gentleman, as well as to the above-mentioned ladies, I am under considerable obli-

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gations for friendly aid in this work. The former lady procured me the honour of an introduction to the late Sir Joseph Banks from Mr. Edgeworth, and the subsequent use of the manuscript copy of *Parentalia* in the possession of the Royal Society.

To several professional friends I also take leave to return my thanks for kind assistance and good wishes, particularly to Mr. Soane for the use of scarce and expensive books from his valuable library, and to Messrs. C. R. Cockerell and Joseph Gwilt for the loan of their excellent and accurate drawings, and for other friendly aids.

It is at present my intention to commence, ere long, a graphic illustration of the principal architectural works of Sir Christopher, illustrative, not only of his designs, but of his unrivalled and unequalled principles of construction, to correspond in size with the present work, and of which due notice will be publicly given.

J. E.

London, Feb. 25, 1823.

ERRATA.

Some of the sheets having been printed during the author's absence in Ireland, has occasioned a few inaccuracies, which may be remedied by a pen.

- Page 19, line 1, *for* Hank *read* Haak.
92, 1 and 2, *for* is now in the possession of the Earl of Macclesfield, President,
read was in the possession of the Earl of Macclesfield, formerly
president.
101, 1 of note, *erigendi* should be in italics.
110, last of note, *for* 1731 *read* 1631.
123, last but four, *for* Stephins *read* Stepkins.
143, 8, *for* way wirer *read* way wiser ; as also in page 144, line 11.
186, note 3, *for* ΛΟΙΜΟΛΟΓΙΑ *read* ΛΟΙΜΟΛΟΓΙΑ; and *between* nuperae and po-
pulum *add* apud.
243, 1 of note, *for* Sheldoniacum *read* Sheldonianum.
248, 1 of note, *for* Refectory *read* repertory.
263, 4 of note 2, *for* Calenarian *read* Catenarian.
267, last of note 1, *for* 08 *read* 108.
269, 1 of note 1, *for* 240 *read* 241.
315, last but one, *for* Stone *read* Strong.

By an inadvertency of the writing engraver, the Elevation of the College of Physicians is inscribed
Section, and *Section Elevation*.

ADDENDA.

About the year 1652 may be added the following note, for which I am indebted to Mr.
Mathews, a promising young architect, a son of our great comedian :

In an old quarto play, translated from the Plutus of Aristophanes, is the following manuscript
remark, in the handwriting, and with the signature, of Isaac Reed, the commentator :—" This is
the play in which Sir Christopher Wren, our great English architect, performed the character of
Neauias" (*Νεανίας* adolescens) " before the Elector Palatine, Dr. Seth Ward, and many others,
probably in 1652."—ISAAC REED, 1801. The title of the comedy is as follows :

Πλουτοφθαλμία Πλουτογαμία.

A Pleasant Comedie ;

Entituled,

Hey for Honesty, down with Knavery.

Translated out of Aristophanes his Plutus, by Tho. Randolph : augmented and published by F. J.

Dives Fabula sum superque :

At Pauper satis et super Poeta.

London : Printed in the year 1651.

THE

L I F E

OF

SIR CHRISTOPHER WREN.

PART I.

INTRODUCTION.

VIEW OF THE PROGRESS OF ARCHITECTURE IN ENGLAND, FROM THE BEGINNING
OF THE REIGN OF CHARLES I. TO THE END OF THE SEVENTEENTH CENTURY.

WHEN Charles the First ascended the peaceful throne of his father, he found the people over whom he was to reign in a state of intellectual culture and civilization, highly susceptible of mental improvement and moral progression. They had arrived, just to that state of incipient refinement, which seeks to add embellishments to necessities :—to that point of civilization, which, restless after novelty, elicits discoveries the most important to mankind, and effects revolutions in art, science, literature, and polity, that form the leading features of history.

Architecture, like poetry, like painting, and like all other intellectual excellencies that exalt and refine our nature, has its

rise, its progress, its perfection, and its decline. Its rise with us, was with the Aborigines of the island; its progress with the Anglo-Saxons, the Normans, and that mixed people afterwards called the English; but when it will arrive at its perfection in this country, is not the immediate object of inquiry.

The refined and elegant taste of the young king, caused by his excellent education, by his association with accomplished companions, and by his recent travels into France and Spain, where he became acquainted with Rubens and his gorgeous works, had rendered him a fit monarch for a people in a more settled and decided state of manners, religion, and policy, than he found his English subjects, particularly the leading parties of the metropolis. But the rigid puritanism of the more violent of the reformers, both in religion and in government, counteracted the tasteful propensities and resolves of the sovereign, as well as the less public spirited intention of his policy. Hence, that love of art, the most graceful laurel in the coronal of a patriot king, which distinguished the accomplished and unfortunate Charles, and his polished but proud and intemperate friend, George Villiers, Duke of Buckingham, aided as they were by the richer and more respectable portion of the ancient families, many of whom were Roman catholics by religion, became odious to the mass of their newly-proselyted protestant fellow-subjects.

The first refinements and improvements in architecture, as well as all its subsequent additions, whether intrinsic as in style, or additional as in the embellishments of the painter and the sculptor, generally begin in the capital of a nation, and spread to the provinces, but are often last seen in the castles or mansions of

the great. London began, in the reign of James, to increase beyond that monarch’s conceptions of due metropolitan size ; and its inhabitants to cultivate metropolitan architecture beyond what pleased the British Solomon, who dealt out his wishes, like commands, in oracular apophthegms and pedantic proverbs. Lord Bacon informs us, that King James was wont to be very earnest with the country gentlemen to abandon London for their country seats ; and that he would sometimes say to them : “ Gentlemen, at London you are like ships in a sea, which show like nothing ; but in your country villages you are ships in a river, which look like great things *.”

The growth of London in this reign was prodigious. Sir William Petty computes its population to have doubled every forty years from the year 1600 ; consequently, in 1680, it must have contained four times as many inhabitants as at the beginning of the century. Although James attempted to drive his opulent subjects from the metropolis to their country residences, few of our monarchs had a greater number or more splendid palaces in London than the successor of Elizabeth, from whom he probably inherited this metropolitan architectophobia. That powerful queen, who was one of the most absolute monarchs in our history, issued several rigid proclamations against the increase of new buildings in the city, which, however, failed in producing much effect. James, not content with reproofing and exhorting his nobles and magnates, issued several proclamations to the same purport, yet employed Inigo Jones to design for him his splendid

* Apophthegms.

ideal palace of Whitehall, the banqueting-house of which, and its splendid ceiling, by Rubens, attest the grand imaginations of the king and his architect.

In the 2nd year of his reign, A. D. 1605, he issued the first of these prohibitory mandates, which forbade all manner of building within the city, and a circuit of one mile thereof. Among its commands was the salutary one to a wooden metropolis, that all persons henceforward should build all their fore-fronts and windows, either of brick or stone *. Had the monarch’s learning discovered in his reading no action less worthy of imitation than that of Augustus’ finding Rome of wood and leaving it of marble, it would have been better for his peace, and his son’s fortune as a sovereign. The reason assigned in this proclamation for building with brick and stone is, “ as well for decency, as by reason all great and well grown woods were much spent and wasted, so that timber for shipping became scarce †.”

This proclamation produced as little effect as that of Elizabeth, which induced James to issue another, on October 10, 1607, to the same purport; and on the 16th of the same month, some offenders against it were censured in the star-chamber, for building contrary to the tenor of that proclamation ‡.

By another edict of the same nature, issued in 1614, the commissioners are required to proceed with all possible strictness against every offender of this sort. This had somewhat more effect, particularly as to the mode of building with stone and brick; and from this period may be dated the reformation of the

* Stowe. † Ibid. ‡ Ibid.

architecture of London, which is so much indebted to Inigo Jones, James's chief architect. This great artist was probably indebted to the King of Denmark, James's brother-in-law, for this appointment; as his great and various talents were well known to the Danish king; who so truly appreciated them, that he sent for him from Venice, where he was studying the works of Palladio, with that effect, to which all his works bear testimony.

The first house of note that was erected in conformity with this proclamation was one in the Strand, built for Colonel Cecil. After that, one near Drapers' Hall, Throgmorton-street, in the city, is celebrated; another built for an opulent goldsmith in Cheapside, opposite to Sadlers' Hall; and one for a leather-seller in St. Paul's Church-yard, near the north gate; the proprietor of which was compelled to take down and rebuild it according to the prevailing fashion, after he had constructed it of timber*.

Among the principal mansions of this period, are Hatfield, the seat of the Marquess of Salisbury, and Burleigh, the seat of the Marquess of Exeter, both built in the reign of Queen Elizabeth; and, being still in existence, with very little alteration, are fine specimens of mansions of this period. James built, or improved, in a similar style, Theobald's near Cheshunt, Hertfordshire; the gardens of which, Mandelso, a traveller who visited England about the year 1640, describes as being a large square, and having all its walls covered with fillery (trellis work), and a beautiful fountain in the centre. The parterre he describes as having many pleasant walks, part of which are planted on the

* Stowe.

sides with espaliers, and others arched over. Some of the trees were limes and elms, and at the end was a small mount, called the mount of Venus, which was situated in the midst of a labyrinth, and was in his opinion one of the most beautiful spots in the world. Mandelso also mentions the royal palace and gardens at Greenwich, which were also enlarged and improved by James.

Of the principal reformers of taste among the literary men and nobles of the period, the great Lord Chancellor Bacon stands in the foremost rank; and his opinions on architecture and gardening are decisive of the character of those arts, which he so much improved, in his days. His maxim, that houses are built to live in, and not to look on*, should never be forgotten by the domestic architect; and his description of a palace, in opposition to such huge buildings as the Vatican, the Escorial, and some others, which, he pithily observes, have scarce a fair room in them, is characteristic of the best style of this period, which Inigo Jones, Sir Henry Wotton, and the elegant minded Lord Keeper, had so much improved.

He informs his readers, and his opinions carried weight wherever they were received, that they could not have a perfect palace, except they had two several sides; one for the banquet, festivals, and triumphs, and the other for the household and for dwelling. These sides he ordains should be not only returns, but parts of the front, and should be uniform without, though severally partitioned within; and to be on both sides of a great and stately tower in the midst of the front, that as it were joineth

* Essays.

them together on either hand. He desires to have on the banqueting side, in front, only one goodly room above stairs, of about forty feet high ; and under it a room for a dressing or preparing place at times of triumph. How far Inigo Jones followed this advice may be seen in his design for the new palace at Whitehall. On the other side, which is the household or dwelling side, he would have it divided at the first into a hall and chapel, with a partition between, both of good state and ample dimensions. These apartments were not to go all the length, but to have at the farther end a winter and a summer parlour ; and under these rooms, a fair and large cellar sunk under ground, and likewise some privy kitchens, with butteries, pantries, and the like. As for the tower, he would have it of two stories, eighteen feet high each above the two wings, and handsome leads upon the top, balustraded, with statues interposed ; and the same tower to be divided into rooms as shall be thought fit. The stairs he directs to be formed upon a fair open newell, and finely railed in with images of wood, cast into a brass colour, and a very fair landing-place at the top. He commands that by no means should the servants' dining-rooms be in any of these lower rooms ; for otherwise, he says, you shall have the servants' dinner after your own ; for the steam of it will come up as in a tunnel. And so much for the front : only he understood the height of the first story to be sixteen feet ; the upper he had before ordered at about forty.

Beyond this front he designed a fair court, but three sides of it to be of a far lower building than the front ; and in all the four corners of that court, handsome staircases, cast into turrets

on the outside, and not within the row of buildings themselves. But these towers were not to be of the height of the front, but rather proportionable to the lower building. He would not have this court paved all over, because it would strike up a great heat in summer, and much cold in winter; but only some side walks, with a cross, and the quarters laid with grass, kept shorn, but not too close. The row of return on the banqueting side was to be divided into stately galleries, in which were to be three or five fine cupolas in the length of it, placed at equal distance, and embellished with fine coloured windows of several works. On the household side were to be chambers of presence and ordinary entertainment, with some bed-chambers: and all three sides were to be formed as a double house, without thorough lights on the sides, that there might be rooms from the sun both for forenoon and afternoon. He would have it so disposed, that there might be rooms both for summer and winter; shady for summer, and warm for winter. He complains of some fair houses, so full of glass, that one cannot tell where to go to be out of the sun or the cold. Bowed windows he held to be good, except for cities, in respect of the uniformity toward the street; as being pretty retiring places for conference, and at the same time keeping off both the sun and the wind; for that, he observes, which would strike almost through the room, doth scarce pass the window. He would, however, confine them to few in number, not exceeding four in the court on the sides only.

Beyond this court he would have an inner court of the same square and height, which is to be environed with the garden on all sides; and in the inside cloistered or porticoed on all sides,

upon beautiful and well-proportioned arches, as high as the first story. On the under story, towards the garden, it was to be turned to a grotto, or place of shade or estivation ; and only have opening and windows towards the garden, and be level upon the floor, and no way sunk under ground, to avoid damp. He proposed also a fountain, or some fair composition of statues, in the midst of this court, which was to be paved as the other court. These buildings were intended for privy lodgings on both sides, and the end for privy galleries ; whereof one was to be for an infirmary on the second story, in case the prince or any special person should be sick ; to have chambers, ante-chambers, bed-chambers, &c. joining to it. Upon the ground story he would have a fair gallery, open upon columns ; and upon the third story likewise an open gallery, upon columns, to take the prospect and enjoy the freshness of the garden. At both corners of the further side, by way of return, he directs two delicate or rich cabinets to be formed, daintily paved, richly hanged, glazed with crystalline glass, and a rich cupola in the midst, and all other elegancies that might be thought upon. In the upper gallery he wished there to be some fountains running in divers places from the wall, with other conveniences of that nature.

And thus much, says our philosophical architectural theorist, for the model of the palace ; save that there must be, before you come to the front, three courts, and a green court, plain with a wall about it ; a second court of the same, but more embellished, with little turrets, or rather ornaments, upon the wall ; and a third court, to make a square with the front, but not to be built, nor yet enclosed with a naked wall ; but enclosed with terraces,

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leaded aloft, and fairly garnished on the three sides, and cloistered on the inside with columns, and not with arches below. As for offices, he advises to let them stand at a distance, with some low galleries to pass from them to the palace itself*.

So far does this “Columbus of the philosophical world” direct the architectural taste of his day; the fruits of which were apparent, and coming to maturity, in the early part of the reign of the unfortunate Charles. This ideal palace would be an excellent task to try the abilities of a young architect to design on paper, and would make an admirable probationary gold medal study for the more advanced students of our Royal Academy. Bacon was not the only philosopher who considered architecture as worthy the attention of an elevated mind. The wise, the enlightened Sir Henry Wotton, who acquired the soundest elements of the art in the school of Palladio at Venice, where the only practical English architect of the day, the elegant and accomplished Jones, also imbibed the purest streams of art, entered still more deeply into its theory, and gave to the world his admirable “Elements of Architecture;” an art which he confesses requires no commendation, where there are noble men or noble minds. He modestly admits that he is but a gatherer and disposer of other men’s stuff; he yet gives to the world the soundest doctrines of practice, and the purest ideas of taste.

The magnificence of the king and the nobility of England during the latter part of the reign of James, and the beginning of that of Charles, set all the most enlightened men of that period

* Essays.

PART I.

LIFE OF WREN.

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to cultivate art and elegant literature ; and gave the great architect of the day abundant opportunities of exercising those talents which have proved an honour to our country, and have pointed the way to the succeeding genius of Wren.

Jones's first style was less refined than his perfected manner after his return from his second visit to Italy. The Earl of Pembroke, and other tasteful men of the nobility, the Kings James and Charles, all appreciated his genius, and employed his talents to the embellishment of their country and to their own honour. The best of this great architect's works are his Banqueting-house, Whitehall, whether considered by itself, or as a part only of one of the grandest palaces ever designed ; the new quadrangle of St. John's College, Oxford ; the church of St. Paul, and the piazza and arcade of Covent garden ; Lord Pembroke's fine villa at Wilton ; the chapel of Lincoln's Inn, and part of the great square called Lincoln's-Inn-fields ; the queen's chapel at St. James's ; Coleshill, in Berkshire ; Cobham Hall, in Kent ; the Grange, in Hampshire ; the queen's house at Greenwich ; the lovely portico of old St. Paul's, of which Lord Burlington sarcastically said, in comparison with the new,—“ When the Jews saw the second temple, they wept ;”—and many others that may be seen in Campbell's Vitruvius, and in Kent's edition of his works.

An inspection of these works will show the grasp of mind, and the immense progress in the arts, during this period ; exhibiting the state and style of our architecture in a memorable point of view.

Jones was the great practical man of this interesting period

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of our history; Bacon the philosophical director of taste; Wotton the learned theorist; and James and his son, with their enlightened courts, the truly noble and royal patrons of the arts. These great architectural geniuses acknowledged Vitruvius for their principal master; and they valued Palladio, and the master spirits of the art, with a correct estimate. Wotton admits, in his preface, that it may be said that he handled an art no way suitable to his employments or his fortune, and so may stand charged both with intrusion and with impertinency. To the first he answered, that though, by the ever-acknowledged goodness of his most dear and gracious sovereign, he had born abroad some part of his civil service; yet when he came home, and was again resolved into his own simplicity, he found it fitter for his pen to deal with these plain complements and tractable materials, than with the labyrinths of courts and states; and less presumption in him, who had long contemplated a famous republic (Venice), to write then, of architecture, than it was anciently for Hippodamus*, the Milesian, to write of republics, who was himself but an architect.

To the second, he shrunk up his shoulders, as he had learned abroad, and confesses that his fortune is very unable to exemplify and actuate his speculations in this art, which yet made him rather, from this very disability, take encouragement to hope that his present labours would find the more favour with others, since it was undertaken for no man's sake less than for his own. With that confidence he fell into these thoughts, of which there were two ways, he informs us, for him to be delivered; the one

* Aristot. Polit. lib. ii. cap. 6.