RUSKIN JOHN

THE POETRY OF ARCHITECTURE

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The Poetry of Architecture / Or, the Architecture of the Nations of Europe Considered in its Association with Natural Scenery and National Character:

Содержание

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PREFATORY NOTES

Of this work Mr. Ruskin says in his Autobiography:—"The idea had come into my head in the summer of '37, and, I imagine, rose immediately out of my sense of the contrast between the cottages of Westmoreland and those of Italy. Anyhow, the November number of Loudon's *Architectural Magazine* for 1837 opens with 'Introduction to the Poetry of Architecture; or the Architecture of the Nations of Europe considered in its Association with Natural Scenery and National Character,' by Kata Phusin. I could not have put in fewer, or more inclusive

words, the definition of what half my future life was to be spent in discoursing of; while the *nom-de-plume* I chose, 'According to Nature,' was equally expressive of the temper in which I was to discourse alike on that, and every other subject. The adoption of a *nom-de-plume* at all implied (as also the concealment of name on the first publication of 'Modern Painters') a sense of a power of judgment in myself, which it would not have been becoming in a youth of eighteen to claim...."

"As it is, these youthful essays, though deformed by assumption, and shallow in contents, are curiously right up to the points they reach; and already distinguished above most of the literature of the time, for the skill of language, which the public at once felt for a pleasant gift in me." (*Præterita*, vol. I. chap. 12.)

In a paper on "My First Editor," written in 1878, Mr. Ruskin says of these essays that they "contain sentences nearly as well put together as any I have done since."

The Conductor of the *Architectural Magazine* in reviewing the year's work said (December, 1838):—"One series of papers, commenced in the last volume and concluded in the present one, we consider to be of particular value to the young architect. We allude to the 'Essays on the Poetry of Architecture,' by Kata Phusin. These essays will afford little pleasure to the mere builder, or to the architect who has no principle of guidance but precedent; but for such readers they were never intended. They are addressed to the young and unprejudiced artist; and their great object is to induce him to think and to exercise his reason....

There are some, we trust, of the rising generation, who are able to free themselves from the trammels and architectural bigotry of Vitruvius and his followers; and it is to such alone that we look forward for any real improvement in architecture as an art of design and taste."

The essays are in two parts: the first describing the cottages of England, France, Switzerland, and Italy, and giving hints and directions for picturesque cottage-building. The second part treats of the villas of Italy and England—with special reference to Como and Windermere; and concludes with a discussion of the laws of artistic composition, and practical suggestions of interest to the builders of country-houses.

It was the Author's original intention to have proceeded from the cottage and the villa to the higher forms of Architecture; but the Magazine to which he contributed was brought to a close shortly after the completion of his chapters on the villa, and his promise of farther studies was not redeemed until ten years later, by the publication of *The Seven Lamps of Architecture*, and still more completely in *The Stones of Venice*.

Other papers contributed by Mr. Ruskin to the same Magazine, on Perspective, and on the proposed monument to Sir Walter Scott at Edinburgh, are not included in this volume, as they do not form any part of the series on the Poetry of Architecture.

The text is carefully reprinted from the *Architectural Magazine*. A few additional notes are distinguished by square

brackets.

A few of the old cuts, necessary to the text, are reproduced, and some are replaced by engravings from sketches by the Author. Possessors of the *Architectural Magazine*, vol. V., will be interested in comparing the wood-cut of the cottage in Val d'Aosta (p. 104 of that volume) with the photogravure from the original pencil drawing, which faces p. 21 of this work. It is much to be regretted that the original of the Coniston Hall (fig. 8; p. 50 of this work) has disappeared, and that the Author's youthful record of a scene so familiar to him in later years should be represented only by the harsh lines of Mr. Loudon's engraver.

THE EDITOR.

INTRODUCTION

1. The Science of Architecture, followed out to its full extent, is one of the noblest of those which have reference only to the creations of human minds. It is not merely a science of the rule and compass, it does not consist only in the observation of just rule, or of fair proportion: it is, or ought to be, a science of feeling more than of rule, a ministry to the mind, more than to the eye. If we consider how much less the beauty and majesty of a building depend upon its pleasing certain prejudices of the eye, than upon its rousing certain trains of meditation in the mind, it will show in a moment how many intricate questions of feeling are involved in the raising of an edifice; it will convince us of the truth of a proposition, which might at first have appeared startling, that no man can be an architect, who is not a metaphysician.

2. To the illustration of the department of this noble science which may be designated the Poetry of Architecture, this and some future articles will be dedicated. It is this peculiarity of the art which constitutes its nationality; and it will be found as interesting as it is useful, to trace in the distinctive characters of the architecture of nations, not only its adaptation to the situation and climate in which it has arisen, but its strong similarity to, and connection with, the prevailing turn of mind by which the nation who first employed it is distinguished.

3. I consider the task I have imposed upon myself the more

necessary, because this department of the science, perhaps regarded by some who have no ideas beyond stone and mortar as chimerical, and by others who think nothing necessary but truth and proportion as useless, is at a miserably low ebb in England. And what is the consequence? We have Corinthian columns placed beside pilasters of no order at all, surmounted by monstrosified pepper-boxes, Gothic in form and Grecian in detail, in a building nominally and peculiarly "National"; we have Swiss cottages, falsely and calumniously so entitled, dropped in the brick-fields round the metropolis; and we have staring square-windowed, flat-roofed gentlemen's seats, of the lath and plaster, mock-magnificent, Regent's Park description, rising on the woody promontories of Derwentwater.

4. How deeply is it to be regretted, how much is it to be wondered at, that, in a country whose school of painting, though degraded by its system of meretricious coloring, and disgraced by hosts of would-be imitators of inimitable individuals, is yet raised by the distinguished talent of those individuals to a place of well-deserved honor; and the studios of whose sculptors are filled with designs of the most pure simplicity, and most perfect animation; the school of architecture should be so miserably debased!

5. There are, however, many reasons for a fact so lamentable. In the first place, the patrons of architecture (I am speaking of all classes of buildings, from the lowest to the highest), are a more numerous and less capable class than those of painting. The general public, and I say it with sorrow, because I know it

from observation, have little to do with the encouragement of the school of painting, beyond the power which they unquestionably possess, and unmercifully use, of compelling our artists to substitute glare for beauty. Observe the direction of public taste at any of our exhibitions. We see visitors at that of the Society of Painters in Water Colors, passing Tayler with anathemas and Lewis with indifference, to remain in reverence and admiration before certain amiable white lambs and water-lilies, whose artists shall be nameless. We see them, in the Royal Academy, passing by Wilkie, Turner and Callcott, with shrugs of doubt or of scorn, to fix in gazing and enthusiastic crowds upon kettles-full of witches, and His Majesty's ships so and so lying to in a gale, etc., etc. But these pictures attain no celebrity because the public admire them, for it is not to the public that the judgment is intrusted. It is by the chosen few, by our nobility and men of taste and talent, that the decision is made, the fame bestowed, and the artist encouraged.

6. Not so in architecture. There, the power is generally diffused. Every citizen may box himself up in as barbarous a tenement as suits his taste or inclination; the architect is his vassal, and must permit him not only to criticise, but to perpetrate. The palace or the nobleman's seat may be raised in good taste, and become the admiration of a nation; but the influence of their owner is terminated by the boundary of his estate: he has no command over the adjacent scenery, and the possessor of every thirty acres around him has him at his mercy.

The streets of our cities are examples of the effects of this clashing of different tastes; and they are either remarkable for the utter absence of all attempt at embellishment, or disgraced by every variety of abomination.

7. Again, in a climate like ours, those few who have knowledge and feeling to distinguish what is beautiful, are frequently prevented by various circumstances from erecting it. John Bull's comfort perpetually interferes with his good taste, and I should be the first to lament his losing so much of his nationality, as to permit the latter to prevail. He cannot put his windows into a recess, without darkening his rooms; he cannot raise a narrow gable above his walls, without knocking his head against the rafters; and, worst of all, he cannot do either, without being stigmatized by the awful, inevitable epithet, of "a very odd man." But, though much of the degradation of our present school of architecture is owing to the want or the unfitness of patrons, surely it is yet more attributable to a lamentable deficiency of taste and talent among our architects themselves. It is true, that in a country affording so little encouragement, and presenting so many causes for its absence, it cannot be expected that we should have any Michael Angelo Buonarottis. The energy of our architects is expended in raising "neat" poor-houses, and "pretty" charity schools; and, if they ever enter upon a work of higher rank, economy is the order of the day: plaster and stucco are substituted for granite and marble; rods of splashed iron for columns of verd-antique; and in the wild struggle after novelty,

the fantastic is mistaken for the graceful, the complicated for the imposing, superfluity of ornament for beauty, and its total absence for simplicity.

8. But all these disadvantages might in some degree be counteracted, all these abuses in some degree prevented, were it not for the slight attention paid by our architects to that branch of the art which I have above designated as the Poetry of Architecture. All unity of feeling (which is the first principle of good taste) is neglected; we see nothing but incongruous combination: we have pinnacles without height, windows without light, columns with nothing to sustain, and buttresses with nothing to support. We have parish paupers smoking their pipes and drinking their beer under Gothic arches and sculptured niches; and quiet old English gentlemen reclining on crocodile stools, and peeping out of the windows of Swiss châlets.

9. I shall attempt, therefore, to endeavor to illustrate the principle from the neglect of which these abuses have arisen; that of unity of feeling, the basis of all grace, the essence of all beauty. We shall consider the architecture of nations as it is influenced by their feelings and manners, as it is connected with the scenery in which it is found, and with the skies under which it was erected; we shall be led as much to the street and the cottage as to the temple and the tower; and shall be more interested in buildings raised by feeling, than in those corrected by rule. We shall commence with the lower class of edifices, proceeding from the roadside to the village, and from the village to the city; and,

if we succeed in directing the attention of a single individual more directly to this most interesting department of the science of architecture, we shall not have written in vain.

PART I.
The Cottage

I.
THE LOWLAND COTTAGE —ENGLAND AND FRANCE

10. Of all embellishments by which the efforts of man can enhance the beauty of natural scenery, those are the most effective which can give animation to the scene, while the spirit which they bestow is in unison with its general character. It is generally desirable to indicate the presence of animated existence in a scene of natural beauty; but only of such existence as shall be imbued with the spirit, and shall partake of the essence, of the beauty, which, without it, would be dead. If our object, therefore, is to embellish a scene the character of which is peaceful and unpretending, we must not erect a building fit for the abode of wealth or pride. However beautiful or imposing in itself, such an object immediately indicates the presence of a kind of existence unsuited to the scenery which it inhabits; and of a mind which, when it sought retirement, was unacquainted with its own ruling feelings, and which consequently excites no

sympathy in ours: but, if we erect a dwelling which may appear adapted to the wants, and sufficient for the comfort, of a gentle heart and lowly mind, we have instantly attained our object: we have bestowed animation, but we have not disturbed repose.

11. It is for this reason that the cottage is one of the embellishments of natural scenery which deserve attentive consideration. It is beautiful always, and everywhere. Whether looking out of the woody dingle with its eye-like window, and sending up the motion of azure smoke between the silver trunks of aged trees; or grouped among the bright cornfields of the fruitful plain; or forming gray clusters along the slope of the mountain side, the cottage always gives the idea of a thing to be beloved: a quiet life-giving voice, that is as peaceful as silence itself.

12. With these feelings, we shall devote some time to the consideration of the prevailing character, and national peculiarities, of European cottages. The principal thing worthy of observation in the lowland cottage of England is its finished neatness. The thatch is firmly pegged down, and mathematically leveled at the edges; and, though the martin is permitted to attach his humble domicile, in undisturbed security, to the eaves, he may be considered as enhancing the effect of the cottage, by increasing its usefulness, and making it contribute to the comfort of more beings than one. The whitewash is stainless, and its rough surface catches a side light as brightly as a front one: the luxuriant rose is trained gracefully over the window; and the gleaming

lattice, divided not into heavy squares, but into small pointed diamonds, is thrown half open, as is just discovered by its glance among the green leaves of the sweetbrier, to admit the breeze, that, as it passes over the flowers, becomes full of their fragrance. The light wooden porch breaks the flat of the cottage face by its projection; and a branch or two of wandering honeysuckle spread over the low hatch. A few square feet of garden and a latched wicket, persuading the weary and dusty pedestrian, with expressive eloquence, to lean upon it for an instant and request a drink of water or milk, complete a picture, which, if it be far enough from London to be unspoiled by town sophistications, is a very perfect thing in its way.[1] The ideas it awakens are agreeable, and the architecture is all that we want in such a situation. It is pretty and appropriate; and if it boasted of any other perfection, it would be at the expense of its propriety.

13. Let us now cross the Channel, and endeavor to find a country cottage on the other side, if we can; for it is a difficult matter. There are many villages; but such a thing as an isolated cottage is extremely rare. Let us try one or two of the green valleys among the chalk eminences which sweep from Abbeville to Rouen. Here is a cottage at last, and a picturesque one, which is more than we could say for the English domicile. What then is the difference? There is a general air of *nonchalance* about the French peasant's habitation, which is aided by a perfect want of everything like neatness; and rendered more conspicuous by

[1] Compare *Lectures on Architecture and Painting*, I. § 16.

some points about the building which have a look of neglected beauty, and obliterated ornament. Half of the whitewash is worn off, and the other half colored by various mosses and wandering lichens, which have been permitted to vegetate upon it, and which, though beautiful, constitute a kind of beauty from which the ideas of age and decay are inseparable. The tall roof of the garret window stands fantastically out; and underneath it, where, in England, we had a plain double lattice, is a deep recess, flatly arched at the top, built of solid masses of gray stone, fluted on the edge; while the brightness of the glass within (if there be any) is lost in shade, causing the recess to appear to the observer like a dark eye. The door has the same character: it is also of stone, which is so much broken and disguised as to prevent it from giving any idea of strength or stability. The entrance is always open; no roses, or anything else, are wreathed about it; several outhouses, built in the same style, give the building extent; and the group (in all probability, the dependency of some large old château in the distance) does not peep out of copse, or thicket, or a group of tall and beautiful trees, but stands comfortlessly between two individuals of the columns of long-trunked facsimile elms, which keep guard along the length of the public road.

14. Now, let it be observed how perfectly, how singularly, the distinctive characters of these two cottages agree with those of the countries in which they are built; and of the people for whose use they are constructed. England is a country whose every scene

is in miniature.[2] Its green valleys are not wide; its dewy hills are not high; its forests are of no extent, or, rather, it has nothing that can pretend to a more sounding title than that of "wood." Its champaigns are minutely checkered into fields; we can never see far at a time; and there is a sense of something inexpressible, except by the truly English word "snug," in every quiet nook and sheltered lane. The English cottage, therefore, is equally small, equally sheltered, equally invisible at a distance.

15. But France is a country on a large scale. Low, but long, hills sweep away for miles into vast uninterrupted champaigns; immense forests shadow the country for hundreds of square miles, without once letting through the light of day; its pastures and arable land are divided on the same scale; there are no fences; we can hardly place ourselves in any spot where we shall not see for leagues around; and there is a kind of comfortless sublimity in the size of every scene. The French cottage, therefore, is on the same scale, equally large and desolate looking; but we shall see, presently, that it can arouse feelings which, though they cannot be said to give it sublimity, yet are of a higher order than any which can be awakened at the sight of the English cottage.

16. Again, every bit of cultivated ground in England has a finished neatness; the fields are all divided by hedges or fences; the fruit trees are neatly pruned; the roads beautifully made, etc. Everything is the reverse in France: the fields are distinguished by the nature of the crops they bear; the fruit trees are overgrown

[2] Compare with this chapter, *Modern Painters*, vol. iv. chap. 1.

with moss and mistletoe; and the roads immeasurably wide, and miserably made.

Fig. 1. Old Windows: from an early sketch by the Author.

17. So much for the character of the two cottages, as they assimilate with the countries in which they are found. Let us now see how they assimilate with the character of the people by whom they are built. England is a country of perpetually increasing prosperity and active enterprise; but, for that very reason, nothing is allowed to remain till it gets old. Large old trees are cut down for timber; old houses are pulled down for the materials; and old furniture is laughed at and neglected. Everything is perpetually altered and renewed by the activity of invention and improvement. The cottage, consequently, has no dilapidated look about it; it is never suffered to get old; it is used as long as it is comfortable, and then taken down and rebuilt; for it was originally raised in a style incapable of resisting the ravages of time. But, in France, there prevail two opposite feelings, both in the extreme; that of the old pedigreed population, which preserves unlimitedly; and that of the modern revolutionists, which destroys unmercifully. Every object has partly the appearance of having been preserved with infinite care from an indefinite age, and partly exhibits the evidence of recent ill-treatment and disfiguration. Primeval forests rear their vast trunks over those of many younger generations growing up beside them; the château or the palace, showing, by its style of architecture, its venerable age, bears the marks of the cannon-ball, and, from neglect, is withering into desolation.

Little is renewed: there is little spirit of improvement; and the customs which prevailed centuries ago are still taught by the patriarchs of the families to their grandchildren. The French cottage, therefore, is just such as we should have expected from the disposition of its inhabitants; its massive windows, its broken ornaments, its whole air and appearance, all tell the same tale of venerable age, respected and preserved, till at last its dilapidation wears an appearance of neglect.

18. Again, the Englishman will sacrifice everything to comfort, and will not only take great pains to secure it, but he has generally also the power of doing so: for the English peasant is, on the average, wealthier than the French. The French peasant has no idea of comfort, and therefore makes no effort to secure it. The difference in the character of their inhabitants is, as we have seen, written on the fronts of their respective cottages. The Englishman is, also, fond of display; but the ornaments, exterior and interior, with which he adorns his dwelling, however small it may be, are either to show the extent of his possessions, or to contribute to some personal profit or gratification: they never seem designed for the sake of ornament alone. Thus, his wife's love of display is shown by the rows of useless crockery in her cupboard; and his own by the rose tree at the front door, from which he may obtain an early bud to stick in the buttonhole of his best blue coat on Sundays: the honeysuckle is cultivated for its smell, the garden for its cabbages. Not so in France. There, the meanest peasant, with an equal or greater love of display,

embellishes his dwelling as much as lies in his power, solely for the gratification of his feeling of what is agreeable to the eye. The gable of his roof is prettily shaped; the niche at its corner is richly carved; the wooden beams, if there be any, are fashioned into grotesque figures; and even the "air négligé" and general dilapidation of the building tell a thousand times more agreeably to an eye accustomed to the picturesque, than the spruce preservation of the English cottage.

19. No building which we feel to excite a sentiment of mere complacency can be said to be in good taste. On the contrary, when the building is of such a class, that it can neither astonish by its beauty, nor impress by its sublimity, and when it is likewise placed in a situation so uninteresting as to render something more than mere fitness or propriety necessary, and to compel the eye to expect something from the building itself, a gentle contrast of feeling in that building is exceedingly desirable; and if possible, a sense that something has passed away, the presence of which would have bestowed a deeper interest on the whole scene. The fancy will immediately try to recover this, and, in the endeavor, will obtain the desired effect from an indefinite cause.

20. Now, the French cottage cannot please by its propriety, for it can only be adapted to the ugliness around; and, as it ought to be, and cannot but be, adapted to this, it is still less able to please by its beauty. How, then, can it please? There is no pretense to gayety in its appearance, no green flower-pots in ornamental lattices; but the substantial style of any ornaments

it may possess, the recessed windows, the stone carvings, and the general size of the whole, unite to produce an impression of the building having once been fit for the residence of prouder inhabitants; of its having once possessed strength, which is now withered, and beauty, which is now faded. This sense of something lost, something which has been, and is not, is precisely what is wanted. The imagination is set actively to work in an instant; and we are made aware of the presence of a beauty, the more pleasing because visionary; and, while the eye is pitying the actual humility of the present building, the mind is admiring the imagined pride of the past. Every mark of dilapidation increases this feeling; while these very marks (the fractures of the stone, the lichens of the moldering walls, and the graceful lines of the sinking roof) are all delightful in themselves.

21. Thus, we have shown that, while the English cottage is pretty from its propriety, the French cottage, having the same connection with its climate, country, and people, produces such a contrast of feeling as bestows on it a beauty addressing itself to the mind, and is therefore in perfectly good taste. If we are asked why, in this instance, good taste produces only what every traveler feels to be not in the least striking, we reply that, where the surrounding circumstances are unfavorable, the very adaptation to them which we have declared to be necessary renders the building uninteresting; and that, in the next paper, we shall see a very different result from the operations of equally good taste in adapting a cottage to its situation, in one of the

noblest districts of Europe. Our subject will be, the Lowland Cottage of North Italy.

Oxford, *Sept., 1837.*

II.
THE LOWLAND COTTAGE—ITALY

"Most musical, most melancholy."

22. Let it not be thought that we are unnecessarily detaining our readers from the proposed subject, if we premise a few remarks on the character of the landscape of the country we have now entered. It will always be necessary to obtain some definite knowledge of the distinctive features of a country, before we can form a just estimate of the beauties or the errors of its architecture. We wish our readers to imbue themselves as far as may be with the spirit of the clime which we are now entering; to cast away all general ideas; to look only for unison of feeling, and to pronounce everything wrong which is contrary to the *humors* of nature. We must make them feel where they are; we must throw a peculiar light and color over their imaginations; then we will bring their judgment into play, for then it will be capable of just operation.

23. We have passed, it must be observed (in leaving England and France for Italy), from comfort to desolation; from excitement, to sadness: we have left one country prosperous in its prime, and another frivolous in its age, for one glorious in its

death.

Now, we have prefixed the hackneyed line of Il Penseroso to our paper, because it is a definition of the essence of the beautiful. What is most musical, will always be found most melancholy; and no real beauty can be obtained without a touch of sadness. Whenever the beautiful loses its melancholy, it degenerates into prettiness. We appeal to the memories of all our observing readers, whether they have treasured up any scene, pretending to be more than pretty, which has not about it either a tinge of melancholy or a sense of danger; the one constitutes the beautiful, the other the sublime.

24. This postulate being granted, as we are sure it will by most (and we beg to assure those who are refractory or argumentative, that, were this a treatise on the sublime and beautiful, we could convince and quell their incredulity to their entire satisfaction by innumerable instances), we proceed to remark here, once for all, that the principal glory of the Italian landscape is its extreme melancholy. It is fitting that it should be so: the dead are the nations of Italy; her name and her strength are dwelling with the pale nations underneath the earth; the chief and chosen boast of her utmost pride is the *hic jacet*; she is but one wide sepulcher, and all her present life is like a shadow or a memory. And therefore, or, rather, by a most beautiful coincidence, her national tree is the cypress; and whoever has marked the peculiar character which these noble shadowy spires can give to her landscape, lifting their majestic troops of waving darkness from

beside the fallen column, or out of the midst of the silence of the shadowed temple and worshipless shrine, seen far and wide over the blue of the faint plain, without loving the dark trees for their sympathy with the sadness of Italy's sweet cemetery shore, is one who profanes her soil with his footsteps.

25. Every part of the landscape is in unison; the same glory of mourning is thrown over the whole; the deep blue of the heavens is mingled with that of the everlasting hills, or melted away into the silence of the sapphire sea; the pale cities, temple and tower, lie gleaming along the champaign; but how calmly! no hum of men; no motion of multitude in the midst of them: they are voiceless as the city of ashes. The transparent air is gentle among the blossoms of the orange and the dim leaves of the olive; and the small fountains, which, in any other land, would spring merrily along, sparkling and singing among tinkling pebbles, here flow calmly and silently into some pale font of marble, all beautiful with life; worked by some unknown hand, long ago nerveless, and fall and pass on among wan flowers, and scented copse, through cool leaf-lighted caves or gray Egerian grottoes, to join the Tiber or Eridanus, to swell the waves of Nemi, or the Larian Lake. The most minute objects (leaf, flower, and stone), while they add to the beauty, seem to share in the sadness, of the whole.

26. But, if one principal character of Italian landscape is melancholy, another is elevation. We have no simple rusticity of scene, no cowslip and buttercup humility of seclusion. Tall

mulberry trees, with festoons of the luxuriant vine, purple with ponderous clusters, trailed and trellised between and over them, shade the wide fields of stately Indian corn; luxuriance of lofty vegetation (catalpa, and aloe, and olive), ranging itself in lines of massy light along the wan champaign, guides the eye away to the unfailing wall of mountain, Alp or Apennine; no cold long range of shivery gray, but dazzling light of snow, or undulating breadth of blue, fainter and darker, in infinite variety; peak, precipice, and promontory passing away into the wooded hills, each with its tower or white village sloping into the plain; castellated battlements cresting their undulations; some wide majestic river gliding along the champaign, the bridge on its breast, and the city on its shore; the whole canopied with cloudless azure, basking in mistless sunshine, breathing the silence of odoriferous air.

27. Now comes the question. In a country of this pomp of natural glory, tempered with melancholy memory of departed pride, what are we to wish for, what are we naturally to expect in the character of her most humble edifices; those which are most connected with present life—least with the past? what are we to consider fitting or beautiful in her cottage?

We do not expect it to be comfortable, when everything around it betokens decay and desolation in the works of man. We do not wish it to be neat, where nature is most beautiful, because neglected. But we naturally look for an elevation of character, a richness of design or form, which, while the building is kept a cottage, may yet give it a peculiar air of cottage aristocracy; a

beauty (no matter how dilapidated) which may appear to have been once fitted for the surrounding splendor of scene and climate. Now, let us fancy an Italian cottage before us. The reader who has traveled in Italy will find little difficulty in recalling one to his memory, with its broad lines of light and shadow, and its strange, but not unpleasing mixture of grandeur and desolation. Let us examine its details, enumerate its architectural peculiarities, and see how far it agrees with our preconceived idea of what the cottage ought to be?

28. The first remarkable point of the building is the roof. It generally consists of tiles of very deep curvature, which rib it into distinct vertical lines, giving it a far more agreeable surface than that of our flatter tiling. The *form* of the roof, however, is always excessively flat, so as never to let it intrude upon the eye; and the consequence is, that, while an English village, seen at a distance, appears all red roof, the Italian is all white wall; and therefore, though always bright, is never gaudy. We have in these roofs an excellent example of what should always be kept in mind, that everything will be found beautiful, which climate or situation render useful. The strong and constant heat of the Italian sun would be intolerable if admitted at the windows; and, therefore, the edges of the roof project far over the walls, and throw long shadows downwards, so as to keep the upper windows constantly cool. These long oblique shadows on the white surface are always delightful, and are alone sufficient to give the building character. They are peculiar to the buildings of Spain and Italy; for owing to

the general darker color of those of more northerly climates, the shadows of their roofs, however far thrown, do not tell distinctly, and render them, not varied, but gloomy. Another ornamental use of these shadows is, that they break the line of junction of the wall with the roof: a point always desirable, and in every kind of building, whether we have to do with lead, slate, tile, or thatch, one of extreme difficulty. This object is farther forwarded in the Italian cottage, by putting two or three windows up under the very eaves themselves, which is also done for coolness, so that their tops are formed by the roof; and the wall has the appearance of having been terminated by large battlements and roofed over. And, finally, the eaves are seldom kept long on the same level: double or treble rows of tiling are introduced; long sticks and irregular wood-work are occasionally attached to them, to assist the festoons of the vine; and the graceful irregularity and marked character of the whole must be dwelt on with equal delight by the eye of the poet, the artist, or the unprejudiced architect. All, however, is exceedingly humble; we have not yet met with the elevation of character we expected. We shall find it however as we proceed.

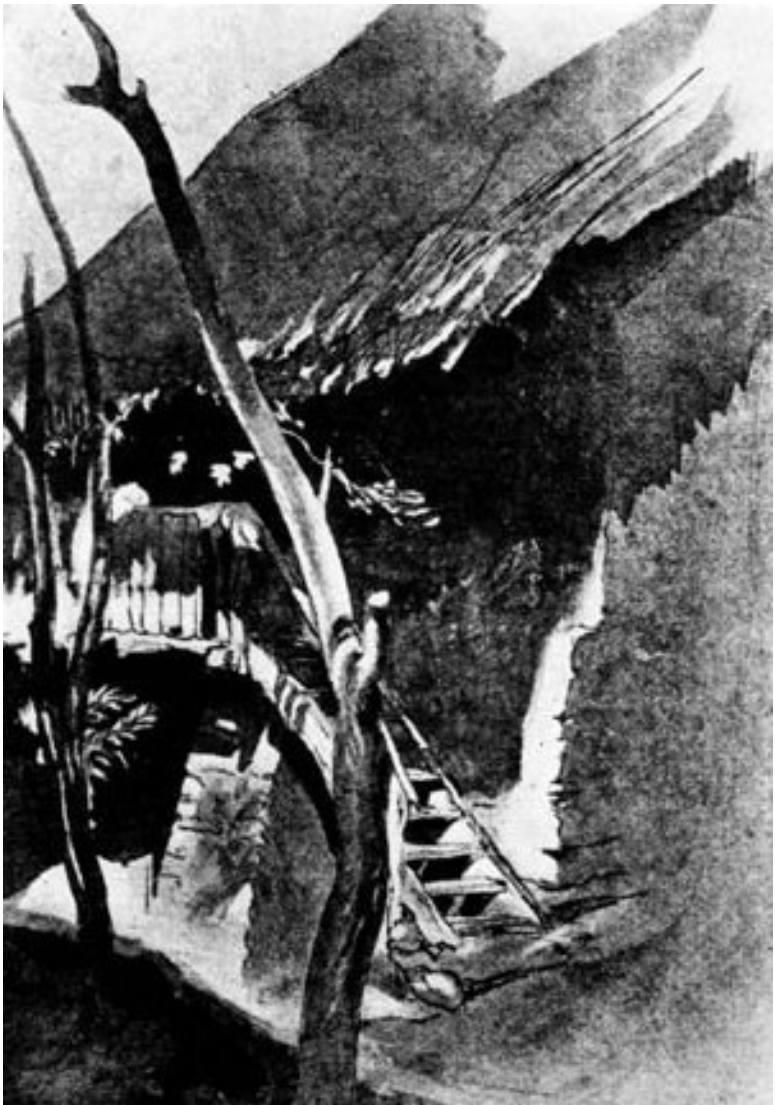
29. The next point of interest is the window. The modern Italian is completely owl-like in his habits. All the daytime he lies idle and inert; but during the night he is all activity, but it is mere activity of inoccupation. Idleness, partly induced by the temperature of the climate, and partly consequent on the decaying prosperity of the nation, leaves indications of its

influence on all his undertakings. He prefers patching up a ruin to building a house; he raises shops and hovels, the abodes of inactive, vegetating, brutish poverty, under the protection of aged and ruined, yet stalwart, arches of the Roman amphitheater; and the habitations of the lower orders frequently present traces of ornament and stability of material evidently belonging to the remains of a prouder edifice. This is the case sometimes to such a degree as, in another country, would be disagreeable from its impropriety; but, in Italy, it corresponds with the general prominence of the features of a past age, and is always beautiful. Thus, the eye rests with delight on the broken moldings of the windows, and the sculptured capitals of the corner columns, contrasted, as they are, the one with the glassless blackness within, the other with the ragged and dirty confusion of drapery around. The Italian window, in general, is a mere hole in the thick wall, always well proportioned; occasionally arched at the top, sometimes with the addition of a little rich ornament: seldom, if ever, having any casement or glass, but filled up with any bit of striped or colored cloth, which may have the slightest chance of deceiving the distant observer into the belief that it is a legitimate blind. This keeps off the sun, and allows a free circulation of air, which is the great object. When it is absent, the window becomes a mere black hole, having much the same relation to a glazed window that the hollow of a skull has to a bright eye; not unexpressive, but frowning and ghastly, and giving a disagreeable impression of utter emptiness and

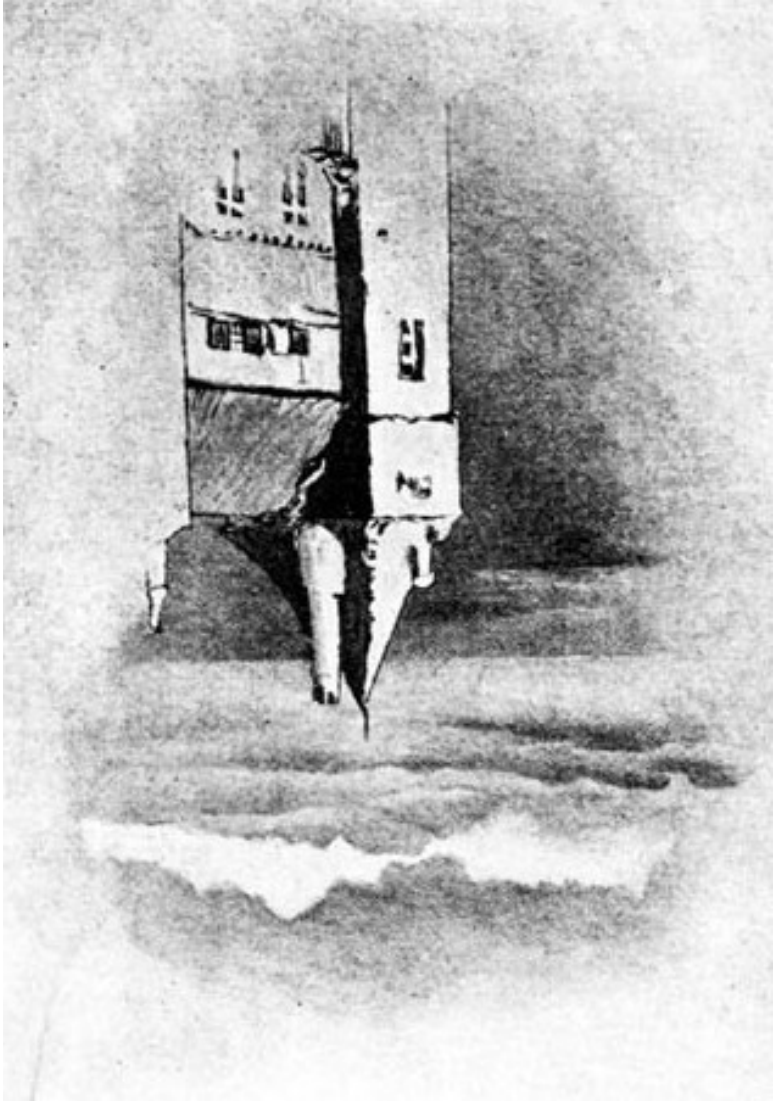
desolation within. Yet there is character in them: the black dots tell agreeably on the walls at a distance, and have no disagreeable sparkle to disturb the repose of surrounding scenery. Besides, the temperature renders everything agreeable to the eye, which gives it an idea of ventilation. A few roughly constructed balconies, projecting from detached windows, usually break the uniformity of the wall. In some Italian cottages there are wooden galleries, resembling those so frequently seen in Switzerland; but this is not a very general character, except in the mountain valleys of North Italy, although sometimes a passage is effected from one projecting portion of a house to another by means of an exterior gallery. These are very delightful objects; and when shaded by luxuriant vines, which is frequently the case, impart a gracefulness to the building otherwise unattainable.

30. The next striking point is the arcade at the base of the building. This is general in cities; and, although frequently wanting to the cottage, is present often enough to render it an important feature. In fact, the Italian cottage is usually found in groups. Isolated buildings are rare; and the arcade affords an agreeable, if not necessary, shade, in passing from one building to another. It is a still more unfailing feature of the Swiss city, where it is useful in deep snow. But the supports of the arches in Switzerland are generally square masses of wall, varying in size, separating the arches by irregular intervals, and sustained by broad and massy buttresses; while in Italy, the arches generally rest on legitimate columns, varying in height from one and a half

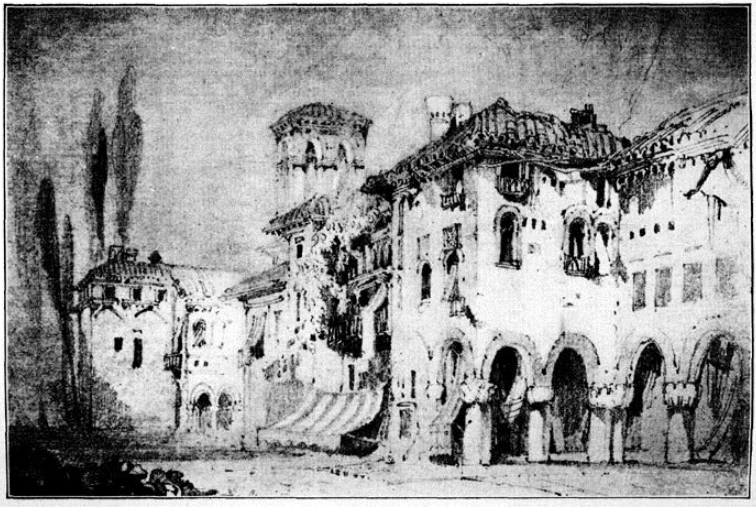
to four diameters, with huge capitals, not unfrequently rich in detail. These give great gracefulness to the buildings in groups: they will be spoken of more at large when we are treating of arrangement and situation.



Italian Cottage Gallery, 1846.



Chimney at Neuchatel; Dent du Midi and Mont Blanc in the distance.



Cottage near la Cité, Val d'Aosta, 1838.

31. The square tower, rising over the roof of the farther cottage, will not escape observation. It has been allowed to remain, not because such elevated buildings ever belong to mere cottages, but, first, that the truth of the scene might not be destroyed;[3] and, secondly, because it is impossible, or nearly so,

[3] The annexed illustration will, perhaps, make the remarks advanced more intelligible. The building, which is close to the city of Aosta, unites in itself all the peculiarities for which the Italian cottage is remarkable: the dark arcade, the sculptured

to obtain a group of buildings of any sort, in Italy, without one or more such objects rising behind them, beautifully contributing to destroy the monotony, and contrast with the horizontal lines of the flat roofs and square walls. We think it right, therefore, to give the cottage the relief and contrast which, in reality, it possessed, even though we are at present speaking of it in the abstract.

32. Having now reviewed the distinctive parts of the Italian cottage in detail, we shall proceed to direct our attention to points of general character. I. Simplicity of form. The roof, being flat, allows of no projecting garret windows, no fantastic gable ends: the walls themselves are equally flat; no bow-windows or sculptured oriels, such as we meet with perpetually in Germany, France, or the Netherlands, vary their white fronts. Now, this simplicity is, perhaps, the principal attribute by which the Italian cottage attains the elevation of character we desired and expected. All that is fantastic in form, or frivolous in detail, annihilates the aristocratic air of a building: it at once destroys its sublimity and size, besides awakening, as is almost always the case, associations of a mean and low character. The moment we see a gable roof, we think of cock-lofts; the instant we observe a

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capital, the vine-covered gallery, the flat and confused roof; and clearly exhibits the points to which we wish particularly to direct attention; namely, brightness of effect, simplicity of form, and elevation of character. Let it not be supposed, however, that such a combination of attributes is rare; on the contrary, it is common to the greater part of the cottages of Italy. This building has not been selected as a rare example, but it is given as a good one. [These remarks refer to a cut in the magazine text, represented in the illustrated edition by a photogravure from the original sketch.]

projecting window, of attics and tent-bedsteads. Now, the Italian cottage assumes, with the simplicity, *l'air noble* of buildings of a higher order; and, though it avoids all ridiculous miniature mimicry of the palace, it discards the humbler attributes of the cottage. The ornament it assumes is dignified; no grinning faces, or unmeaning notched planks, but well-proportioned arches, or tastefully sculptured columns. While there is nothing about it unsuited to the humility of its inhabitant, there is a general dignity in its air, which harmonizes beautifully with the nobility of the neighboring edifices, or the glory of the surrounding scenery.

33. II. Brightness of effect. There are no weather stains on the walls: there is no dampness in air or earth, by which they could be induced; the heat of the sun scorches away all lichens, and mosses and moldy vegetation. No thatch or stone crop on the roof unites the building with surrounding vegetation; all is clear, and warm, and sharp on the eye; the more distant the building, the more generally bright it becomes, till the distant village sparkles out of the orange copse, or the cypress grove, with so much distinctness as might be thought in some degree objectionable. But it must be remembered that the prevailing color of the Italian landscape is blue; sky, hills, water, are equally azure: the olive, which forms a great proportion of the vegetation, is not green, but gray; the cypress and its varieties, dark and neutral, and the laurel and myrtle far from bright. Now, white, which is intolerable with green, is agreeably contrasted with blue; and to this cause it must be ascribed that the white of the Italian building is not found

startling and disagreeable in the landscape. That it is not, we believe, will be generally allowed.

34. III. Elegance of feeling. We never can prevent ourselves from imagining that we perceive in the graceful negligence of the Italian cottage, the evidence of a taste among the lower orders refined by the glory of their land, and the beauty of its remains. We have always had strong faith in the influence of climate on the mind, and feel strongly tempted to discuss the subject at length; but our paper has already exceeded its proposed limits, and we must content ourselves with remarking what will not, we think, be disputed, that the eye, by constantly resting either on natural scenery of noble tone and character, or on the architectural remains of classical beauty, must contract a habit of feeling correctly and tastefully; the influence of which, we think, is seen in the style of edifices the most modern and the most humble.

35. Lastly, Dilapidation. We have just used the term "graceful negligence": whether it be graceful, or not, is a matter of taste; but the uncomfortable and ruinous disorder and dilapidation of the Italian cottage is one of observation. The splendor of the climate requires nothing more than shade from the sun, and occasionally shelter from a violent storm: the outer arcade affords them both; it becomes the nightly lounge and daily dormitory of its inhabitant, and the interior is abandoned to filth and decay. Indolence watches the tooth of Time with careless eye and nerveless hand. Religion, or its abuse, reduces every individual of

the population to utter inactivity three days out of the seven; and the habits formed in the three regulate the four. Abject poverty takes away the power, while brutish sloth weakens the will; and the filthy habits of the Italian prevent him from suffering from the state to which he is reduced. The shattered roofs, the dark, confused, ragged windows, the obscure chambers, the tattered and dirty draperies, altogether present a picture which, seen too near, is sometimes revolting to the eye, always melancholy to the mind. Yet even this many would not wish to be otherwise. The prosperity of nations, as of individuals, is cold and hard-hearted, and forgetful. The dead die, indeed, trampled down by the crowd of the living; the place thereof shall know them no more, for that place is not in the hearts of the survivors for whose interests they have made way. But adversity and ruin point to the sepulcher, and it is not trodden on; to the chronicle, and it doth not decay. Who would substitute the rush of a new nation, the struggle of an awakening power, for the dreamy sleep of Italy's desolation, for her sweet silence of melancholy thought, her twilight time of everlasting memories?

36. Such, we think, are the principal distinctive attributes of the Italian cottage. Let it not be thought that we are wasting time in the contemplation of its beauties; even though they are of a kind which the architect can never imitate, because he has no command over time, and no choice of situation; and which he ought not to imitate, if he could, because they are only locally desirable or admirable. Our object, let it always be remembered,

is not the attainment of architectural data, but the formation of taste.

Oct. 12, 1837

III.
THE MOUNTAIN COTTAGE —SWITZERLAND

37. In the three instances of the lowland cottage which have been already considered, are included the chief peculiarities of style which are interesting or important. I have not, it is true, spoken of the carved oaken gable and shadowy roof of the Norman village; of the black crossed rafters and fantastic proportions which delight the eyes of the German; nor of the Moorish arches and confused galleries which mingle so magnificently with the inimitable fretwork of the gray temples of the Spaniard. But these are not peculiarities solely belonging to the cottage: they are found in buildings of a higher order, and seldom, unless where they are combined with other features. They are therefore rather to be considered, in future, as elements of street effect, than, now, as the peculiarities of independent buildings. My remarks on the Italian cottage might, indeed, be applied, were it not for the constant presence of Moorish feeling, to that of Spain. The architecture of the two nations is intimately connected: modified, in Italy, by the taste of the Roman; and, in Spain, by the fanciful creations of the Moor. When I am considering the fortress and the palace,[4] I shall

[4] That part, however, was not written, as the "Architectural Magazine" stopped

be compelled to devote a very large share of my attention to Spain; but for characteristic examples of the cottage, I turn rather to Switzerland and England. Preparatory, therefore, to a few general remarks on modern ornamental cottages, it will be instructive to observe the peculiarities of two varieties of the mountain cottage, diametrically opposite to each other in most of their features; one always beautiful, and the other frequently so.

38. First, for Helvetia. Well do I remember the thrilling and exquisite moment when first, first in my life (which had not been over long), I encountered, in a calm and shadowy dingle, darkened with the thick spreading of tall pines, and voiceful with the singing of a rock-encumbered stream, and passing up towards the flank of a smooth green mountain, whose swarded summit shone in the summer snow like an emerald set in silver; when, I say, I first encountered in this calm defile of the Jura, the unobtrusive, yet beautiful, front of the Swiss cottage. I thought it the loveliest piece of architecture I had ever had the felicity of contemplating; yet it was nothing in itself, nothing but a few mossy fir trunks, loosely nailed together, with one or two gray stones on the roof: but its power was the power of association; its beauty, that of fitness and humility.

39. How different is this from what modern architects erect, when they attempt to produce what is, by courtesy, called a Swiss cottage. The modern building known in Britain by that name has very long chimneys, covered with various exceedingly

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running soon after the conclusion of Part II. "The Villa."

ingenious devices for the convenient reception and hospitable entertainment of soot, supposed by the innocent and deluded proprietor to be "meant for ornament." Its gable roof slopes at an acute angle, and terminates in an interesting and romantic manner, at each extremity, in a tooth-pick. Its walls are very precisely and prettily plastered; and it is rendered quite complete by the addition of two neat little bow windows, supported on neat little mahogany brackets, full of neat little squares of red and yellow glass. Its door is approached under a neat little veranda, "uncommon green," and is flanked on each side by a neat little round table, with all its legs of different lengths, and by a variety of neat little wooden chairs, all very peculiarly uncomfortable, and amazingly full of earwigs: the whole being surrounded by a garden full of flints, burnt bricks and cinders, with some water in the middle, and a fountain in the middle of it, which won't play; accompanied by some goldfish, which won't swim; and by two or three ducks, which will splash. Now, I am excessively sorry to inform the members of any respectable English family, who are making themselves uncomfortable in one of these ingenious conceptions, under the idea that they are living in a Swiss cottage, that they labor under a melancholy deception; and shall now proceed to investigate the peculiarities of the real building.

40. The life of a Swiss peasant is divided into two periods; that in which he is watching his cattle at their summer pasture on the high Alps,[5] and that in which he seeks shelter from the

[5] I use the word Alp here, and in future, in its proper sense, of a high mountain

violence of the winter storms in the most retired parts of the low valleys. During the first period, he requires only occasional shelter from storms of excessive violence; during the latter, a sufficient protection from continued inclement weather. The Alpine or summer cottage, therefore, is a rude log hut, formed of unsquared pine trunks, notched into each other at the corners. The roof being excessively flat, so as to offer no surface to the wind, is covered with fragments of any stone that will split easily, held on by crossing logs; which are in their turn kept down by masses of stone; the whole being generally sheltered behind some protecting rock, or resting against the slope of the mountain, so that, from one side, you may step upon the roof. That is the *châlet*. When well grouped, running along a slope of mountain side, these huts produce a very pleasing effect, being never obtrusive (owing to the prevailing grayness of their tone), uniting well with surrounding objects, and bestowing at once animation and character.

41. But the winter residence, the Swiss cottage, properly so-called is a much more elaborate piece of workmanship. The principal requisite is, of course, strength: and this is always observable in the large size of the timbers, and the ingenious manner in which they are joined, so as to support and relieve each other, when any of them are severely tried. The roof is always very flat, generally meeting at an angle of 155°, and projecting from 5 ft. to 7 ft. over the cottage side, in order to prevent

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pasture; not in its secondary sense, of a snowy peak.

the windows from being thoroughly clogged up with snow. That this projection may not be crushed down by the enormous weight of snow which it must sometimes sustain, it is assisted by strong wooden supports (seen in Fig. 3), which sometimes extend half down the walls for the sake of strength, divide the side into regular compartments, and are rendered ornamental by grotesque carving. Every canton has its own window. That of Uri, with its diamond wood-work at the bottom, is, perhaps, one of the richest. (See Fig. 4.) The galleries are generally rendered ornamental by a great deal of labor bestowed upon their wood-work. This is best executed in the canton of Berne. The door is always six or seven feet from the ground, and occasionally much more, that it may be accessible in snow; and is reached by an oblique gallery, leading up to a horizontal one, as shown in Figs. 3 and 4. The base of the cottage is formed of stone, generally whitewashed. The chimneys must have a chapter to themselves; they are splendid examples of utility combined with ornament.

Fig. 3. Swiss Cottage. 1837.

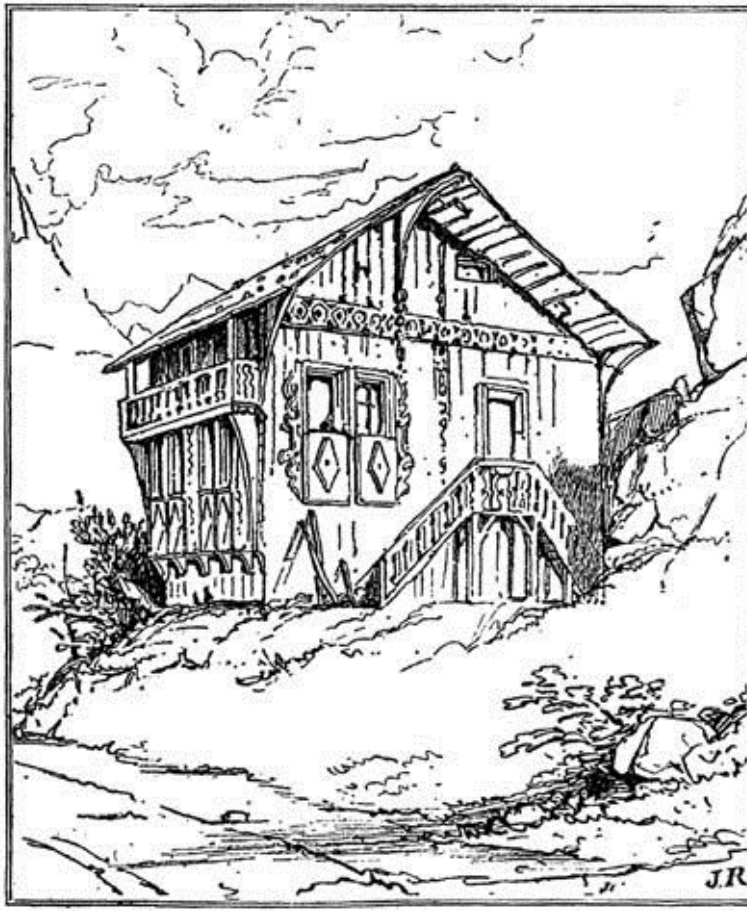

Fig. 4. Cottage near Altorf. 1835.

Such are the chief characteristics of the Swiss cottage,

separately considered. I must now take notice of its effect in scenery.

42. When one has been wandering for a whole morning through a valley of perfect silence, where everything around, which is motionless, is colossal, and everything which has motion, resistless; where the strength and the glory of nature are principally developed in the very forces which feed upon her majesty; and where, in the midst of mightiness which seems imperishable, all that is indeed eternal is the influence of desolation; one is apt to be surprised, and by no means agreeably, to find, crouched behind some projecting rock, a piece of architecture which is neat in the extreme, though in the midst of wildness, weak in the midst of strength, contemptible in the midst of immensity. There is something offensive in its neatness: for the wood is almost always perfectly clean, and looks as if it had just been cut; it is consequently raw in its color, and destitute of all variety of tone. This is especially disagreeable, when the eye has been previously accustomed to, and finds, everywhere around, the exquisite mingling of color, and confused, though perpetually graceful, forms, by which the details of mountain scenery are peculiarly distinguished. Every fragment of rock is finished in its effect, tinted with thousands of pale lichens and fresh mosses; every pine tree is warm with the life of various vegetation; every grassy bank glowing with mellowed color, and waving with delicate leafage. How, then, can the contrast be otherwise than painful, between this perfect loveliness, and the

dead, raw, lifeless surface of the deal boards of the cottage. Its weakness is pitiable; for, though there is always evidence of considerable strength on close examination, there is no *effect* of strength: the real thickness of the logs is concealed by the cutting and carving of their exposed surfaces; and even what is seen is felt to be so utterly contemptible, when opposed to the destructive forces which are in operation around, that the feelings are irritated at the imagined audacity of the inanimate object, with the self-conceit of its impotence; and, finally, the eye is offended at its want of size. It does not, as might be at first supposed, enhance the sublimity of surrounding scenery by its littleness, for it provokes no comparison; and there must be proportion between objects, or they cannot be compared. If the Parthenon, or the Pyramid of Cheops, or St. Peter's, were placed in the same situation, the mind would first form a just estimate of the magnificence of the building, and then be trebly impressed with the size of the masses which overwhelmed it. The architecture would not lose, and the crags would gain, by the juxtaposition; but the cottage, which must be felt to be a thing which the weakest stream of the Alps could toss down before it like a foam-globe, is offensively contemptible: it is like a child's toy let fall accidentally on the hillside; it does not unite with the scene; it is not content to sink into a quiet corner, and personify humility and peace; but it draws attention upon itself by its pretension to decoration, while its decorations themselves cannot bear examination, because they are useless, unmeaning

and incongruous.

Swiss Châlet Balcony, 1842.

43. So much for its faults; and I have had no mercy upon them, the rather, because I am always afraid of being biased in its favor by my excessive love for its sweet nationality. Now for its beauties. Wherever it is found, it always suggests ideas of a gentle, pure, and pastoral life.[6] One feels that the peasants whose hands carved the planks so neatly, and adorned their cottage so industriously, and still preserve it so perfectly, and so neatly, can be no dull, drunken, lazy boors; one feels, also, that it requires both firm resolution, and determined industry, to maintain so successful a struggle against "the crush of thunder, and the warring winds." Sweet ideas float over the imagination of such passages of peasant life as the gentle Walton so loved; of the full milk-pail, and the mantling cream-bowl; of the evening dance and the matin song; of the herdsmen on the Alps, of the maidens by the fountain; of all that is peculiarly and indisputably Swiss. For the cottage is beautifully national; there is nothing to be found the least like it in any other country. The moment a glimpse is caught of its projecting galleries, one knows that it is the land of Tell and Winkelried; and the traveler feels, that, were he indeed Swiss-born and Alp-bred, a bit of that carved plank, meeting his eye in a foreign land, would be as effectual as a note of the *Ranz des Vaches* upon the ear.

44. Again, when a number of these cottages are grouped

[6] Compare *Modern Painters*, vol. iv. chap. xi, and vol. v. chap. ix.

together, they break upon each other's formality, and form a mass of fantastic proportion, of carved window and overhanging roof, full of character and picturesque in the extreme. An excellent example of this is the Bernese village of Unterseen. Again, when the ornament is not very elaborate, yet enough to preserve the character, and the cottage is old, and not very well kept (suppose in a Catholic canton), and a little rotten, the effect is beautiful: the timber becomes weather-stained, and of a fine warm brown, harmonizing delightfully with the gray stones on the roof, and the dark green of surrounding pines. If it be fortunate enough to be situated in some quiet glen, out of sight of the gigantic features of the scene, and surrounded with cliffs to which it bears some proportion; and if it be partially concealed, not intruding on the eye, but well united with everything around, it becomes altogether perfect; humble, beautiful, and interesting. Perhaps no cottage can then be found to equal it; and none can be more finished in effect, graceful in detail, and characteristic as a whole.

45. The ornaments employed in the decoration of the Swiss cottage do not demand much attention; they are usually formed in a most simple manner, by thin laths, which are carved into any fanciful form, or in which rows of holes are cut, generally diamond shaped; and they are then nailed one above another to give the carving depth. Pinnacles are never raised on the roof, though carved spikes are occasionally suspended from it at the angles. No ornamental work is ever employed to disguise the beams of the projecting part of the roof, nor does any run along

its edges. The galleries, in the canton of Uri, are occasionally supported on arched beams, as shown in Fig. 4, which have a very pleasing effect.

46. Of the adaptation of the building to climate and character, little can be said. When I called it "national," I meant only that it was quite *sui generis*, and, therefore, being only found in Switzerland, might be considered as a national building; though it has none of the mysterious connection with the mind of its inhabitants which is evident in all really fine edifices. But there is a reason for this; Switzerland has no climate, properly speaking, but an assemblage of every climate, from Italy to the Pole; the vine wild in its valleys, the ice eternal on its crags. The Swiss themselves are what we might have expected in persons dwelling in such a climate; they have no character. The sluggish nature of the air of the valleys has a malignant operation on the mind; and even the mountaineers, though generally shrewd and intellectual, have no perceptible nationality: they have no language, except a mixture of Italian and bad German; they have no peculiar turn of mind; they might be taken as easily for Germans as for Swiss. No correspondence, consequently, can exist between national architecture and national character, where the latter is not distinguishable. Generally speaking, then, the Swiss cottage cannot be said to be built in good taste; but it is occasionally picturesque, frequently pleasing, and, under a favorable concurrence of circumstances, beautiful. It is not, however, a thing to be imitated; it is always, when out of its own

country, incongruous; it never harmonizes with anything around it, and can therefore be employed only in mimicry of what does not exist, not in improvement of what does. I mean, that any one who has on his estate a dingle shaded with larches or pines, with a rapid stream, may manufacture a bit of Switzerland as a toy; but such imitations are always contemptible, and he cannot use the Swiss cottage in any other way. A modified form of it, however, as will be hereafter shown, may be employed with advantage. I hope, in my next paper, to derive more satisfaction from the contemplation of the mountain cottage of Westmoreland, than I have been able to obtain from that of the Swiss.

IV.
THE MOUNTAIN COTTAGE —WESTMORELAND

47. When I devoted so much time to the consideration of the peculiarities of the Swiss cottage, I did not previously endeavor to ascertain what the mind, influenced by the feelings excited by the nature of its situation, would be induced to expect, or disposed to admire. I thus deviated from the general rule which I hope to be able to follow out; but I did so only because the subject for consideration was incapable of fulfilling the expectation when excited, or corresponding with the conception when formed. But now, in order to appreciate the beauty of the Westmoreland cottage, it will be necessary to fix upon a standard of excellence, with which it may be compared.

One of the principal charms of mountain scenery is its solitude. Now, just as silence is never perfect or deep without motion, solitude is never perfect without some vestige of life. Even desolation is not felt to be utter, unless in some slight degree interrupted: unless the cricket is chirping on the lonely hearth, or the vulture soaring over the field of corpses, or the one mourner lamenting over the red ruins of the devastated village, that devastation is not felt to be complete. The anathema of the prophet does not wholly leave the curse of loneliness upon the

mighty city, until he tells us that "the satyr shall dance there." And, if desolation, which is the destruction of life, cannot leave its impression perfect without some interruption, much less can solitude, which is only the absence of life, be felt without some contrast. Accordingly, it is, perhaps, never so perfect as when a populous and highly cultivated plain, immediately beneath, is visible through the rugged ravines, or over the cloudy summits of some tall, vast, and voiceless mountain.

48. When such a prospect is not attainable, one of the chief uses of the mountain cottage, paradoxical as the idea may appear, is to increase this sense of solitude. Now, as it will only do so when it is seen at a considerable distance, it is necessary that it should be visible, or, at least, that its presence should be indicated, over a considerable portion of surrounding space. It must not, therefore, be too much shaded by trees, or it will be useless; but if, on the contrary, it be too conspicuous on the open hillside, it will be liable to most of the objections which were advanced against the Swiss cottage, and to another, which was not then noticed. Anything which, to the eye, is split into parts, appears less as a whole than what is undivided. Now, a considerable mass, of whatever tone or color it may consist, is as easily divisible by dots as by lines; that is, a conspicuous point, on any part of its surface, will divide it into two portions, each of which will be individually measured by the eye, but which will never make the impression which they would have made, had their unity not been interrupted. A conspicuous cottage on

a distant mountain side has this effect in a fatal degree, and is, therefore, always intolerable.

49. It should accordingly, in order to reconcile the attainment of the good, with the avoidance of the evil, be barely visible: it should not tell as a cottage on the eye, though it should on the mind; for be it observed that, if it is only by the closest investigation that we can ascertain it to be a human habitation, it will answer the purpose of increasing the solitude quite as well as if it were evidently so; because this impression is produced by its appeal to the thoughts, not by its effect on the eye. Its color, therefore, should be as nearly as possible that of the hill on which, or the crag beneath which, it is placed; its form, one that will incorporate well with the ground, and approach that of a large stone more than of anything else. The color will consequently, if this rule be followed, be subdued and grayish, but rather warm; and the form simple, graceful, and unpretending. The building should retain the same general character on a closer examination. Everything about it should be natural, and should appear as if the influences and forces which were in operation around it had been too strong to be resisted, and had rendered all efforts of art to check their power, or conceal the evidence of their action, entirely unavailing. It cannot but be an alien child of the mountains; but it must show that it has been adopted and cherished by them. This effect is only attainable by great ease of outline and variety of color; peculiarities which, as will be presently seen, the Westmoreland cottage possesses in a

supereminent degree.

50. Another feeling, with which one is impressed during a mountain ramble, is humility. I found fault with the insignificance of the Swiss cottage, because "it was not content to sink into a quiet corner, and personify humility." Now, had it not been seen to be pretending, it would not have been felt to be insignificant; for the feelings would have been gratified with its submission to, and retirement from, the majesty of the destructive influences which it rather seemed to rise up against in mockery. Such pretension is especially to be avoided in the mountain cottage: it can never lie too humbly in the pastures of the valley, nor shrink too submissively into the hollows of the hills; it should seem to be asking the storm for mercy, and the mountain for protection: and should appear to owe to its weakness, rather than to its strength, that it is neither overwhelmed by the one, nor crushed by the other.

51. Such are the chief attributes, without which a mountain cottage cannot be said to be beautiful. It may possess others, which are desirable or objectionable, according to their situation, or other accidental circumstances. The nature of these will be best understood by examining an individual building. The material is, of course, what is most easily attainable and available without much labor. The Cumberland and Westmoreland hills are, in general, composed of clay-slate and gray-wacke, with occasional masses of chert[7] (like that which forms the summit

[7] That is to say, a *flinty* volcanic ash.

of Scawfell), porphyritic greenstone, and syenite. The chert decomposes deeply, and assumes a rough brown granular surface, deeply worn and furrowed. The clay-slate or gray-wacke, as it is shattered by frost, and carried down by torrents, of course forms itself into irregular flattish masses. The splintery edges of these are in some degree worn off by the action of water; and, slight decomposition taking place on the surface of the clay-slate, furnishes an aluminous soil, which is immediately taken advantage of by innumerable lichens, which change the dark gray of the original substance into an infinite variety of pale and warm colors. These stones, thus shaped to his hand, are the most convenient building materials the peasant can obtain.[8] He lays his foundation and strengthens his angles with large masses, filling up the intervals with pieces of a more moderate size; and using here and there a little cement to bind the whole together, and to keep the wind from getting through the interstices; but never enough to fill them altogether up, or to render the face of the wall smooth. At intervals of from 4 ft. to 6 ft. a horizontal line of flat and broad fragments is introduced projecting about a foot from the wall. Whether this is supposed to give strength, I know not; but as it is invariably covered by luxuriant stonecrop, it is always a delightful object.

52. The door is flanked and roofed by three large oblong sheets of gray rock, whose form seems not to be considered

[8] Compare the treatment of a similar theme in *Modern Painters*, vol. iv., chaps. viii.-x.

of the slightest consequence. Those which form the cheeks of the windows are generally selected with more care from the débris of some rock, which is naturally smooth and polished, after being subjected to the weather, such as granite or syenite. The window itself is narrow and deep set; in the better sort of cottages, latticed, but with no affectation of sweetbrier or eglantine about it. It may be observed of the whole of the cottage, that, though all is beautiful, nothing is pretty. The roof is rather flat, and covered with heavy fragments of the stone of which the walls are built, originally very loose; but generally cemented by accumulated soil, and bound together by houseleek, moss, and stonecrop: brilliant in color, and singular in abundance. The form of the larger cottages, being frequently that of a cross, would hurt the eye by the sharp angles of the roof, were it not for the cushion-like vegetation with which they are rounded and concealed. Varieties of the fern sometimes relieve the massy forms of the stonecrop, with their light and delicate leafage. Windows in the roof are seldom met with. Of the chimney I shall speak hereafter.

53. Such are the prevailing peculiarities of the Westmoreland cottage. "Is this all?" some one will exclaim: "a hovel, built of what first comes to hand, and in the most simple and convenient form; not one thought of architectural beauty ever coming into the builder's head!" Even so; to this illustration of an excellent rule, I wished particularly to direct attention: that the material which Nature furnishes, in any given country, and the form

which she suggests, will always render the building the most beautiful, because the most appropriate. Observe how perfectly this cottage fulfills the conditions which were before ascertained to be necessary to perfection. Its color is that of the ground on which it stands, always subdued and gray, but exquisitely rich, the color being disposed crumblingly, in groups of shadowy spots; a deep red brown, passing into black, being finely contrasted with the pale yellow of the *Lichen geographicus*, and the subdued white of another lichen, whose name I do not know; all mingling with each other as on a native rock, and with the same beautiful effect: the mass, consequently, at a distance, tells only as a large stone would, the simplicity of its form contributing still farther to render it inconspicuous. When placed on a mountain-side such a cottage will become a point of interest, which will relieve its monotony, but will never cut the hill in two, or take away from its size. In the valley, the color of these cottages agrees with everything: the green light, which trembles through the leafage of the taller trees, falls with exquisite effect on the rich gray of the ancient roofs: the deep pool of clear water is not startled from its peace by their reflection; the ivy, or the creepers to which the superior wealth of the peasant of the valley does now and then pretend, in opposition to the general custom, cling gracefully and easily to its innumerable crevices; and rock, lake, and meadow seem to hail it with a brotherly affection, as if Nature had taken as much pains with it as she has with them.

54. Again, observe its ease of outline. There is not a single

straight line to be met with from foundation to roof; all is bending or broken. The form of every stone in its walls is a study; for, owing to the infinite delicacy of structure in all minerals, a piece of stone 3 in. in diameter, irregularly fractured, and a little worn by the weather, has precisely the same character of outline which we should find and admire in a mountain of the same material 6000 ft. high;[9] and, therefore, the eye, though not feeling the cause, rests on every cranny, and crack, and fissure with delight. It is true that we have no idea that every small projection, if of chert, has such an outline as Scawfell's; if of gray-wacke, as Skiddaw's; or if of slate, as Helvellyn's; but their combinations of form are, nevertheless, felt to be exquisite, and we dwell upon every bend of the rough roof and every hollow of the loose wall, feeling it to be a design which no architect on earth could ever equal, sculptured by a chisel of unimaginable delicacy, and finished to a degree of perfection, which is unnoticed only because it is everywhere.

55. This ease and irregularity is peculiarly delightful where gracefulness and freedom of outline and detail are, as they always are in mountain countries, the chief characteristics of every scene. It is well that, where every plant is wild and every torrent free, every field irregular in its form, every knoll various in its outline, one is not startled by well built walls, or unyielding roofs, but is permitted to trace in the stones of the peasant's dwelling, as in the crags of the mountain side, no evidence of the line or

[9] Compare *Modern Painters*, vol. iv. chap. 18, § 7.

the mallet, but the operation of eternal influences, the presence of an Almighty hand. Another perfection connected with its ease of outline is, its severity of character: there is no foppery about it; not the slightest effort at any kind of ornament, but what nature chooses to bestow; it wears all its decorations wildly, covering its nakedness, not with what the peasant may plant, but with what the winds may bring. There is no gay color or neatness about it; no green shutters or other abomination: all is calm and quiet, and severe, as the mind of a philosopher, and, withal, a little somber. It is evidently old, and has stood many trials in its day; and the snow, and the tempest, and the torrent have all spared it, and left it in its peace, with its gray head unbowed, and its early strength unbroken, even though the spirit of decay seems creeping, like the moss and the lichen, through the darkness of its crannies. This venerable and slightly melancholy character is the very soul of all its beauty.

56. There remains only one point to be noticed, its humility. This was before stated to be desirable, and it will here be found in perfection. The building draws as little attention upon itself as possible; since, with all the praise I have bestowed upon it, it possesses not one point of beauty in which it is not equaled or excelled by every stone at the side of the road. It is small in size, simple in form, subdued in tone, easily concealed or overshadowed; often actually so; and one is always delighted and surprised to find that what courts attention so little is capable of sustaining it so well. Yet it has no appearance of weakness: it is

stoutly, though rudely, built; and one ceases to fear for its sake the violence of surrounding agencies, which, it may be seen, will be partly deprecated by its humility.

57. Such is the mountain cottage of Westmoreland; and such, with occasional varieties, are many of the mountain cottages of England and Wales. It is true that my memory rests with peculiar pleasure in a certain quiet valley near Kirkstone, little known to the general tourist, distant from any public track, and, therefore, free from all the horrors of improvement:[10] in which it seemed to me that the architecture of the cottage had attained a peculiar degree of perfection. But I think that this impression was rather produced by a few seemingly insignificant accompanying circumstances, than by any distinguished beauty of design in the cottages themselves. Their inhabitants were evidently poor, and apparently had not repaired their dwellings since their first erection; and, certainly, had never torn one tuft of moss or fern from roofs or walls, which were green with the rich vegetation of years. The valley was narrow, and quiet, and deep, and shaded by reverend trees, among whose trunks the gray cottages looked out, with a perfection of effect which I never remember to have seen equaled, though I believe that, in many of the mountain districts of Britain, the peasant's domicile is erected with equal good taste.

58. I have always rejoiced in the thought, that our native highland scenery, though, perhaps, wanting in sublimity, is distinguished by a delicate finish in its details, and by a unanimity

[10] Troutbeck, sixty years since?

and propriety of feeling in the works of its inhabitants, which are elsewhere looked for in vain; and the reason of this is evident. The mind of the inhabitant of the continent, in general, is capable of deeper and finer sensations than that of the islander. It is higher in its aspirations, purer in its passions, wilder in its dreams, and fiercer in its anger; but it is wanting in gentleness, and in its simplicity; naturally desirous of excitement, and incapable of experiencing, in equal degree, the calmer flow of human felicity, the stillness of domestic peace, and the pleasures of the humble hearth, consisting in everyday duties performed, and everyday mercies received; consequently, in the higher walks of architecture, where the mind is to be impressed or elevated, we never have equaled, and we never shall equal, them. It will be seen hereafter, when we leave the lowly valley for the torn ravine, and the grassy knoll for the ribbed precipice, that, if the continental architects cannot adorn the pasture with the humble roof, they can crest the crag with eternal battlements;[11] if they cannot minister to a landscape's peace, they can add to its terror; and it has been already seen, that, in the lowland cottages of France and Italy, where high and refined feelings were to be induced, where melancholy was to be excited, or majesty bestowed, the architect was successful, and his labor was perfect: but, now, nothing is required but humility and gentleness; and this, which he does not feel, he cannot give: it is contrary to the whole force of his character, nay, even to the spirit of his religion.

[11] This too refers to the unwritten sequel.

It is unfelt even at the time when the soul is most chastened and subdued; for the epitaph on the grave is affected in its sentiment, and the tombstone gaudily gilded, or wreathed with vain flowers.

Fig. 6. The Highest House in England.

59. We cannot, then, be surprised at the effort at ornament and other fancied architectural beauties, which injure the effect of the more peaceful mountain scenery abroad; but still less should we be surprised at the perfect propriety which prevails in the same kind of scenery at home; for the error which is there induced by one mental deficiency, is here prevented by another. The uncultivated mountaineer of Cumberland has no taste, and no idea of what architecture means; he never thinks of what is right,

or what is beautiful, but he builds what is most adapted to his purposes, and most easily erected: by suiting the building to the uses of his own life, he gives it humility; and, by raising it with the nearest material, adapts it to its situation. This is all that is required, and he has no credit in fulfilling the requirement, since the moment he begins to think of effect, he commits a barbarism by whitewashing the whole. The cottages of Cumberland would suffer much by this piece of improvement, were it not for the salutary operation of mountain rains and mountain winds.

60. So much for the hill dwellings of our own country. I think the examination of the five examples of the cottage which I have given have furnished all the general principles which are important or worthy of consideration; and I shall therefore devote no more time to the contemplation of individual buildings. But, before I leave the cottage altogether, it will be necessary to notice a part of the building which I have in the separate instances purposely avoided mentioning, that I might have the advantage of immediate comparison; a part exceedingly important, and which seems to have been essential to the palace as well as to the cottage, ever since the time when Perdiccas received his significant gift of the sun from his Macedonian master, περιγραψας τον ἡλιον, ὁς ην κατα την καπνοδοκην ες τον οικον εσεχων.[12] And then I shall conclude the subject by a

[12] Herodotus viii, 137, freely quoted from memory. The story was that three brothers took service with a kinglet in Macedonia. The queen, who cooked their food herself, for it was in the good old times, noticed that the portion of Perdiccas, the youngest, always "rose" three times as large as any other. The king judged this to be an omen of

few general remarks on modern ornamental cottages, illustrative of the principle so admirably developed in the beauty of the Westmoreland building; to which, it must be remembered, the palm was assigned, in preference to the Switzer's; not because it was more labored, but because it was more natural.

Oxford, *Jan., 1838.*

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the lad's coming to fortune; and dismissed them. They demanded their wages. "When the king heard talk about wages—you must know *the sun was shining into the house, down the chimney*—he said (for God had hardened his heart) 'There's your wage; all you deserve and all you'll get:' and pointed to the sunshine. The elder brothers were dumfoundered when they heard that; but the lad, who happened to have his knife with him, said, 'We accept, King, the gift.' With his knife he *made a scratch around the sunstreak* on the floor, took the shine of it three times into the fold of his kirtle"—his pocket, we should say nowadays—"and went his way." Eventually he became king of Macedonia, and ancestor of Alexander the Great.

V.
A CHAPTER ON CHIMNEYS

61. It appears from the passage in Herodotus, which we alluded to in the last paper, that there has been a time, even in the most civilized countries, when the king's palace was entirely unfurnished with anything having the slightest pretension to the dignity of chimney tops; and the savory vapors which were wont to rise from the hospitable hearth, at which the queen or princess prepared the feast with the whitest of hands, escaped with indecorous facility through a simple hole in the flat roof. The dignity of smoke, however, is now better understood, and it is dismissed through Gothic pinnacles, and (as at Burleigh House) through Tuscan columns, with a most praiseworthy regard to its comfort and convenience. Let us consider if it is worth the trouble.

62. We advanced a position in the last paper, that silence is never perfect without motion. That is, unless something which might possibly produce sound is evident to the eye, the absence of sound is not surprising to the ear, and, therefore, not impressive. Let it be observed, for instance, how much the stillness of a summer's evening is enhanced by the perception of the gliding and majestic motion of some calm river, strong but still; or of the high and purple clouds; or of the voiceless leaves, among the opening branches. To produce this impression, however, the

motion must be uniform, though not necessarily slow. One of the chief peculiarities of the ocean thoroughfares of Venice, is the remarkable silence which rests upon them, enhanced as it is by the swift, but beautifully uniform motion of the gondola. Now, there is no motion more uniform, silent or beautiful than that of smoke; and, therefore, when we wish the peace or stillness of a scene to be impressive, it is highly useful to draw the attention to it.

Конец ознакомительного фрагмента.