

## OPENING ADDRESS OF THE ARCHITECTURAL SECTION<sup>1</sup>.

By PROFESSOR MIDDLETON.

There is probably no district of England which is as rich as Gloucestershire in objects of archæological interest, embracing all periods—prehistoric, Roman and mediæval. With all the various races who have inhabited Britain this part of Mercia has been a specially favourite dwelling place, owing partly to its fertility, its well watered valleys, and also to its noble ranges of hills, affording the best of sites for camp-earthworks or fortresses surrounded with stone walls. In building materials for military and domestic use Gloucestershire is specially rich; its extensive forests supplied timber in abundance; and almost every hill afforded good and easily worked building-stone<sup>2</sup>; the oolitic limestone, the blue lias and the so-called Stonesfield slate which was so valuable for roofing purposes.

And further I may say that the archæology of no other district in England has been more carefully studied than that of Gloucestershire, more especially during the 30 years that have elapsed since the former visit to this city of the Archæological Institute in 1860.

It is somewhat difficult to find anything new to say after the many valuable monographs that have been produced by careful local antiquaries, and the various writings of such learned and widely famed archæologists as Professor Willis, Mr. Petit, Mr. Parker, the Rev. C. H. Hartshorne, Professor Westmacott, and others, who were present here in 1860, but, now, alas, are numbered with the heroes of the past. However, there are one or two able writers, who were at our last meeting here, and who

<sup>1</sup> Read at the Annual Meeting of the Institute, at Gloucester, August 13th, 1890.

<sup>2</sup> Chalk countries, such as Cambridgeshire, are usually poor in old buildings.

I am happy to say are still among us—Professor Freeman, Precentor Venables, and Dr. Collingwood Bruce.

The result of this long array of distinguished writers having dealt with the archæology of Gloucestershire is that I somewhat shrink from treating to-night this well-worn subject with my feebler hand, and I propose to lay before you, as shortly as I can, the results of the many important explorations that have been made during recent years, not in Gloucestershire or even England alone, but throughout the classical world and more especially in Hellenic soil. It is now becoming more and more necessary to realise that archæology is a subject that must be worked at as a united whole—that is, that the Art and the Antiquities of no one country can fruitfully be studied by themselves, but must be explained and illustrated by a comparison with the state of artistic development in other countries—not necessarily at a contemporary period of time, but with those which were passing through a similar stage in their mental and artistic development.

The extraordinary unity of the human mind wherever found and in whatever period—provided there is some similarity in their relative stage of progress—is a very striking and important fact, and one of the widest application.

Thus, for example, in the prehistoric tombs of Hissalik in the Troad, Mycenæ, Tiryns and other places dating probably twelve or fourteen centuries B.C., we find repeated again and again types of ornament which have the closest resemblance to those of the Celtic races a little before the Roman conquest of Britain, and even later.

Again, the close relation between the art of classical people and that of the early inhabitants of Britain has been established in a very startling and brilliant way by Mr. Arthur Evans, who has been the first to point out fully the fact that in the early Celtic burials of Britain, during the second and first centuries B.C., we find actual objects, bronzes and the like, of classical workmanship—the result of the long packhorse and river line of trade that passed through Gaul and connected Britain with the Græco-Italic art of Northern Italy. The result of this is, not only that we find in early Celtic graves actual objects of Italian workmanship, but also that the native Celtic potters were largely influenced in the forms of their

vases by having before them as models the bronze vessels from beyond the Alps. This explains the curious ribbed shape of much of this early Celtic pottery, imitating the banded or corrugated forms by which the classical metal-workers strengthened the thin bronze of their vessels.<sup>1</sup>

So, again, such interesting Roman remains as those at Lydney and Bath are illustrated by the recent explorations of the sacred *temeni* of Asklepios in Athens and at Epidauros in the N.E. of the Peloponnese.

At Lydney we have the sacred spring and the sanctuary of a Romano-British deity called *Nodens* or *Nudens*—possibly a local form of the Roman Aesculapius, who again was a modified form of the early Greek Asklepios, a deity of Chthonian character, in his original form.

The *Asklepieia* of the Greeks, we find, included within the sacred temple inclosure rows of bed rooms for the patients who came for the “water cure,” covered *stoa*e, or *porticus* for exercise in bad weather, hot and cold Baths, and the “Pump-room” where the patients drank of the healing spring.

At Epidauros all this is on a magnificent scale, with buildings of great beauty, including places of amusement, such as a theatre and a large stadium; and lastly the *Tholos* or pump-room, designed by the younger Polycletus c. 370 B.C., a circular building all of brilliant Parian marble, with external range of Doric columns and an internal ring, inside the round cella, of the Corinthian order—the earliest example of this style which is known to exist.

In the centre of the *Tholos* hall, with its splendid inlaid pavement of coloured marbles, is the sacred well, with a mysterious subterranean crypt for closer access to the wonder-working waters.

At Athens, owing to want of space at the foot of the Acropolis rock, the *temenos* buildings were less magnificent than at Epidauros. The sacred spring (*κρήνη*), which even now issues pure and cold out of the rock, is not sheltered by a marble building, but is within a more primitive rocky

<sup>1</sup> Compare the recently discovered prehistoric pottery from the early graves of the Etruscan Falerii, north of Mount Soracte, with actual bronze studs or

bosses pressed into the soft clay of the pottery before it was fired. See Mr. A. J. Evans' paper on this interesting subject in *Archæologia*, vol. 52, 1890.

cave—partly natural and partly formed by quarrying into the form of a round dome-roofed chamber. By it is the *stoa* for the weaker patients to walk or sit, and next to that is a row of small rooms, probably for the accommodation of those who wished to sleep within the sacred temenos itself, thus giving the god an opportunity of suggesting in a dream the right method of cure.

At Lydney we find a very similar arrangement; and the evidence afforded by the *Asklepieia* of the Greeks makes it more than probable that the curious many-roomed building of cloistered form, near the temple of *Nodens*, was intended as a sort of sacred hotel for the patients' use, not, as had formerly been supposed, simply as dwellings for the priests.

In the same way we find that a study of the later Roman style of building and details goes far to illustrate and explain the early types of the Architecture of the Normans.

In Spoonley Villa, which we shall, I hope, visit this week, and in other Roman houses of Gloucestershire we see in the mouldings of capitals and bases the proto-types of many of the most characteristic mouldings of the Norman and even of the early English style.

At Deerhurst we see in the shapes of the Saxon caps, fluted pilasters, and arch-imposts copies in stone of the later brick-forms of the Romans.

And in the nave and crypt of Gloucester Cathedral we see with the utmost clearness how the Norman builders of the eleventh century copied and modified the characteristic Tuscan or Romano-Doric of the later Empire—the *abacus* of square section and the round *echinus* of the Doric capital are here adopted with but little change.

The truth is that at the time of the Norman conquest many a stately Roman building, of which no trace now exists, must have still been standing in Britain and in Gaul, and it would have been strange if such noble and effective builders as the Normans had not appreciated and utilised the grand designs of the Romans of the past.

Another striking example of similarity in the buildings of two different races, at two far distant periods, but who, nevertheless, were in many respects in the same stage of development, is to be noticed in the palaces of the hero-kings of Mycenae and Tiryns and the halls of the Teutonic or Scandinavian chiefs.

Of the latter existing examples are unknown in Britain, but remains of houses found in Norway and other Scandinavian countries give us a clear notion of what was the type of dwelling used by the chieftains of Saxon or Scandinavian race in England. In both cases—in the prehistoric Greek palace and that of the English Thane—the dwelling consisted of one large hall, with its central fire-hearth, and, in front, a projecting portico carried on wooden columns.

Behind the hall were one or two smaller and more private rooms for the use of the women; in the primitive English house that was all. In the Greek palace the more private apartments were of greater extent and importance. The main hall, however (the μέγαρον of the Homeric heroes) was closely similar in both cases, and in it the chieftain sat and feasted in the company of his friends and retainers; while at night time the hall formed a sort of common dormitory where the men slept side by side, each rolled up in his cloak, making a bed of the rushes which strewed the floor, which in the Greek palace was made of cement, and of simple beaten clay in the Teutonic hall.

I must not fail to make some mention of the many most important discoveries of the last few years on the Acropolis of Athens, which have in many ways gone far to modify all previously existing views on the development of Greek art, especially architecture and sculpture.

At the sack of Athens by the Persian invaders in 480 B.C., the buildings, statues and other monuments of the city were burnt and shattered by the invading army—including the most sacred of all Athenian shrines, that of Athene Polias on the Acropolis. After the glorious and decisive defeat of the army of Xerxes at Plataea in the following year (479 B.C.), and the subsequent destruction of the surviving Persian army, the Athenians, with great energy, set to work to rebuild the public monuments of their city on a much more magnificent scale than before.<sup>1</sup> One of the principal public works undertaken at this time was, not merely the rebuilding in Pentelic marble of the Acropolis and other temples, but also the extensive

<sup>1</sup> The great development of the silver mines at Laurium supplied the necessary

funds—first for the Athenian Navy, and then for the public buildings and statues

enlargement of the level plateau at the top of the Acropolis rock by surrounding it with a more extensive circuit wall, set lower down the rocky slope, and by filling with "made earth" the large expanse of additional enclosure. At some places the mass of made earth is from forty to fifty feet deep, and so an enormous amount of material was needed for this extension of the plateau. For this purpose the Athenian used the broken fragments of the stone buildings which had been ruined by the Persians and also a very large number of marble statues—more or less broken during the sack of the city: and great quantities of other *debris*, broken pottery and the like.

Within the last few years this enormous mass of material, all buried below the finished ground level of the time of Kimon, has been thoroughly examined, and a large Museum formed to contain the sculpture and architectural fragments which were found. One of the reasons of the very great value of this discovery is the known date of the damage that was done to the various buildings and statues.

Owing to their position, we know that they must date from before the year 480 B.C.; in many cases they are considerably earlier—but in one direction, at least, we have a fixed date. Among the sculpture are nearly 20 life sized or colossal statues in white marble, all of which must have been executed not long before the sack of Athens. They all represent female figures, either a priestess or a deity: the motive is very similar in them all. The long *chiton poderes* is held up by one hand, and the other hand outstretched held a flower or some other object. All were richly decorated with gold and colour; apparently applied by the wax process (encaustic).

The hair is always red, such red as Titian loved to paint; the flesh seems to have been left uncoloured, but received a delicate polish: and the whole of the drapery was coloured, and had elaborate borders of flower patterns. The eyes were usually inlaid in enamel or crystal.

All these statues are remarkable for their great dignity of pose, and simple, nobly designed drapery.

The modelling of the faces, though having some archaic stiffness, is very soft and often beautiful in expression, with a spiritual beauty that reminds one of the best work of Florence in the 15th century. A very important lesson



to be learned from these statues is that the glorious period of Greek Art under Myron, Polycletus and Pheidias, was not a sudden outburst of inspiration, but was led up to slowly and gradually by the labours of the preceding generations of Attic sculptors—as indeed might have been expected from the analogy of the art development of other countries and other periods.

In addition to these marble statues there were found among the Acropolis debris a number of much earlier pieces of sculpture, worked in the fine local yellow limestone (poros); and all covered with painting of the most startlingly gaudy colours. Some of these, which are of colossal size, appear to have been the pediment sculpture from some early temple, as, for example, a group of Herakles strangling a strange monster—half man and half serpent which represents the sea-god Triton.

Another appears to have been a group of Zeus slaying the earth-born Typhon, the latter of whom is represented as a monster with three winged human bodies and a serpent termination. In these the flesh is brilliant crimson and the hair a still more brilliant ultramarine blue.

Some of the later, but still very early, limestone statues have the borders of their drapery deeply incised with floral patterns, and the sinking filled in flush with cements of different bright colours—red, blue and yellow—very rich and decorative.

All this coloured decoration applied to sculpture by the Greeks is curiously similar both in style and technique to the colour which the artists of mediæval England applied to their carvings in stone and alabaster.

No finer example of its kind exists anywhere than the splendid reredos of the Lady Chapel of Gloucester Cathedral, which even in its sadly mutilated state ought to be protected from all injury, and more especially from “Restoration,” as an object of priceless value.

There is the same fearless use of bright, pure colours, the same minute delicacy of painted pattern covering every detail, and above all the same richness and beauty of texture given by the use of slight, but distinct *relief* to all the brilliantly coloured designs.

With gold this is specially necessary—gilding applied to an unbroken flat surface looks at once poor and gaudy,

and both the Greek and the mediæval artists invariably applied their gold leaf to surfaces which were slightly broken up by relief-work in *gesso* or other material.

This, by giving a varied play of light and shade, immensely enhanced the decorative value of the gold, and at the same time gave it a look of body and solidity.

Any attempt to restore the reredos in the Cathedral Lady Chapel would be a most disastrous failure, and would inevitably cause the destruction of one of the richest examples of mediæval coloured decoration that is still left to us.