OPENING ADDRESS OF THE ARCHITECTURAL SECTION AT THE EDINBURGH MEETING.[1]

By THE RIGHT REV. THE BISHOP OF CARLISLE.

It is not unusual to commence a sumptuous dinner with three or four oysters and a small portion of brown bread and butter. This introduction to the repast, though highly esteemed (as I am given to understand) by connoisseurs in such matters, differs from the repast itself in at least two important particulars. In the first place, it is distinctly preparative to that which follows; a means rather than an end; an overture, which you may, if you please. wholly neglect without prejudice to your subsequent conduct and possible enjoyment. And in the second place it does not need the sublime culinary skill necessary to produce the dishes which are to follow: all that is required of the person who provides this part of the entertainment is the power of opening a few oysters, and of spreading a little fresh butter upon certain slices of brown bread for that purpose provided.

I venture to claim for the few introductory observations, which I have the honour of addressing to this distinguished body of Archæologists this morning, the same kind of relation to the intellectual banquet which is to follow, as that assigned to the morsels which I have described as prefacing a scientific dinner. I have none of the skill which will be displayed by those who follow me. I can but hope, even by dullness and heaviness, if by no brighter and better qualities, to excite an appetite for the archæological repast which will commence when I have sat down.

It has occured to me, in considering upon what string I could most conveniently hang together some introductory remarks, that I might with advantage direct your minds

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for a few moments to the subject of the treatment of ancient buildings. It will be remembered that although *Architecture* is the subject which is to be dealt with in this section, it is not Architecture pure and simple, but Architecture in its relation to archæology. The most recent form of architecture is that adopted in the construction of the Forth Bridge; but I fear that I should have to rule a paper upon the architecture of the Forth Bridge out of order, as not being connected with archæology. Ancient buildings alone are admissible into the discussions of this room, and a few words upon the manner in which they should be treated may perhaps be not without their use.

Now the first method of dealing with ancient buildings, and one which will probably be recognised as an important one in such a company as the present, is to leave them alone. Perhaps in some cases this recipe requires to be applied in conjunction with another, namely, to take care that other people leave them alone also. There are cases in which these two methods of treatment ought to be applied in the most rigorous and literal manner, and in which nothing more ought by any means to be done. Take as a primary example some of the buildings of Egypt, buildings which combine in the most marvellous manner the reality of almost immeasurable antiquity with some of the appearances of the freshness of recent work, buildings which are the archæological heritage of the whole civilized world, but in which according to the eccentric course of human affairs our own country has just now a special interest, combined with a special responsibility. I presume that no one is likely to attempt to "restore" any of the Egyptian Temples; to let them alone would probably be the universal notion of what is best for buildings such as these; though it may be well to add that the other consideration must not be omitted, namely, that care should be taken that others leave them alone too. It is not pleasant to find that there is some fear lest national jealousies should prevent that absolute care for the safety of Egyptian monuments which all right-minded men would desire; archæology knows or ought to know no distinction of race; it matters not whether the chief post be allotted to a Frenchman or an Englishman, provided only that

there be some one, who is endowed with real power and who is competent for the work. It is painful to think of the amount of mischief which may be going on, unless constant and vigilant care be taken. A little circumstance in my own experience may illustrate this. Being in one of the Nile Temples, I forget which, some years ago, with a large party of visitors, I noticed a man who was proposing to different members of the party, myself amongst them, to procure for them in consideration of a *Baksheesh*, any small portion of stone which we might wish to carry away; the man was furnished with a neat hatchet, which appeared to be in excellent condition, and which he was evidently in the habit of using for the gratification of intelligent travellers. I mentioned my discovery to the dragoman in charge of our party, who seemed not much interested and disposed to adopt a *laissez faire* policy; however I insisted upon the offender being brought to account, and had the satisfaction at length of witnessing a hand-to-hand tussle between the dragoman and the hatchet-man, which terminated in favour of the former and in the loss of the weapon by the latter. Whether they agreed to bury it, or whether it is still in use, I do not know.

I ought to qualify what I have said concerning the propriety of leaving such monuments as those of Egypt alone, but adding that of course care should be taken to guard against those causes of decay which exist even in Egypt. I have just been perusing the second Annual Report of the Society for the preservation of the Monuments of Ancient Egypt; and in that Report I read that the energies of the Society during the past year have been directed principally to two points, the necessity for an Official Inspector whose duty shall be the care of the Ancient Monuments, and an endeavour to do something towards arresting the gradual destruction of the Great Temple at Karnak. In the subsequent part of the Report we read of the effects of the salts in the soil of Karnak, which are gradually undermining the columns, and the necessity of propping up such columns as are now in danger of falling and dragging with them the rest of the construction. The problem of preserving this wonderful monument is a rather complicated one; I shall not discuss

it; I merely notice it in passing, as a proof that mere leaving alone is not always a sufficient means for preserving ancient monuments.

The remarks made concerning Egyptian architecture manifestly apply to countless other works in all quarters of the globe, not by any means excepting our own land. In fact, wherever there is an ancient piece of architecture, which has become by the lapse of time, and the changes which time brings with it, a monument of the past pure and simple, there can be no question as to the method of treatment. Either leave it alone,—or if that be impossible, take such steps as will avoid its destruction,—is the precept to be given. Stonehenge, and all similar relics, the Roman Wall in my own part of the world, together with many other examples, may be quoted as illustrative of the kind of structure which should be, with the exception already made, respectfully but severely left alone. One difference, it may be remembered, between our own country and Egypt is this, that in Egypt danger arises from want of a master, or owner with plenary powers; whereas in England the opposite peril arises, and a monument is sometimes placed in jeopardy by the fact, that some one can prove to the satisfaction of the Law Courts that the said monument is his in fee simple. Of course I bear in mind recent wise legislation on this subject; but, this notwithstanding, I read in the "Times," about a month ago, a letter containing a complaint that since 1806 a stone hedge has been carried through a circle in Cornwall, known as the "Stripple Stones;" and the writer adds, "Within sight of this giant circle is another, the Wippet Stones. Here, since they were planned and measured (that is, since 1806), a monolith has been erected in the centre to bear the initials of the proprietor, C. G." I do not know that this erection can be described as any actual injury to the monument; but it is not quite in accordance with the manner in which one likes proprietary rights to be used.

Thus much for edifices which may be regarded as monuments pure and simple. It is far more difficult to define the proper method of treating buildings which are partly monumental, but partly also in ordinary use for the practical purposes of living men. Obvious examples are

to be found in this city,—Edinburgh Castle, Holyrood House, the Church of St. Giles. I mention these local examples with the more pleasure, because I read an article in the "Times" of February 21 last, which described the restoration of the Parliament Hall in Edinburgh Castle as a model for restoration work; the writer speaks of the hall as having been "restored by the liberality of the late Mr. W. Nelson, and by the skill and knowledge of Mr. Hippolyte Blanc." I imagine also that in Holyrood House the *juste milieu* between leaving all alone and leaving nothing alone has been wisely kept; and though the change in St. Giles' Church from what it was in my own recollection has been great, perhaps one may say even radical, still I think that Jenny Geddes herself, if her spirit still haunts the scene of her great ecclesiastical achievement, will be disposed to grant that the change is "no so very bad."

The fact is that the problem of dealing with ancient buildings, which are still serving contemporary living purposes, must of necessity be very puzzling, and in some cases perhaps actually impossible. Of one thing an architect may rest quite sure, namely, that whatever course he adopts he will be severely taken to task, partly perhaps by men of his own profession, but still more and still more confidently by that remarkably dangerous and inevitable person, the infallible amateur. When the late Mr. Street was engaged in altering, or (if you please so to call the process) restoring, the ancient Refectory or Fratry of the Abbey of Carlisle, he was favoured with advice from many quarters; he did not implicitly follow it, but he made his apology to his advisers by producing a sketch showing what the work would have been had all the advice been taken. There is perhaps nothing easier or cheaper than giving advice, especially on a subject which you only imperfectly understand.

A curious incident occured only lately in connection with an ancient building, which illustrates the difficulty of which I speak. It will be remembered that a Royal Commission was issued for the purpose of inquiring as to the best method of dealing with the problem now forced upon the country by the filling up of Westminster Abbey with monuments and statues. Several solutions were

suggested, one dealing structurally with the Abbey Church itself, another with the Chapter House: only two suggestions, however, met with any favour at the hands of the Commissioners, and the merits of these two appear to be so evenly balanced, that out of six Commissioners, three voted for one, and three for the other; the result of this drawn game I do not venture to anticipate; but the dead-lock which has been reached after full discussion and deliberation by six persons, presumably amongst the most fitted to discuss and deliberate in the whole kingdom, sufficiently illustrates the difficulty of solving problems connected with ancient buildings, which are at the same time old and new; national monuments, but not monuments only.

The most familiar and ordinary example in England of a building, which is monumental and something more, is to be found in the Parish Church. If I were speaking in England, I should be tempted to dwell more at length on this subject than would perhaps be suitable on the North of the Tweed. But, even in Scotland, the example of St. Giles', Edinburgh, to which I have already referred, of the Cathedral at Glasgow, and other interesting and beautiful old churches here and there, still used for divine worship will show that a Scotch architect may sometimes be called upon to rack his brains in order to discover what is the treatment of any given building, which shall at once recognise its character as a monument to be conserved, and a contemporary building to be used. What, however, I desire chiefly to press is this, that these two sides of the question must both be considered with reference to churches whether in Scotland or in England. I remember hearing my friend, the late Professor Willis, one of the keenest and most profound ecclesiastical archæologists of his day, say that he delighted to see a church stripped of every fitting, because he could then thoroughly examine it, and make out its architectural history; his only grief was that the fittings would have at some time and in some form to be replaced,—which is a very pleasant view for an archæologist, but not entirely acceptable to those who wish to use the building for the purpose to which it was devoted by those who built it. I must, however, content myself with asserting the living character

of churches for the present era, without endeavouring to indicate the manner in which this character is to be reconciled with that other, no less true and certainly not unimportant, which presents them to us as precious monuments—sometimes over a large area the only surviving monuments – of a past which we do not wish to forget.

I have thus dealt with ancient buildings as divided into classes; those which are purely monumental, the class most dear to the true archæologists heart; and those which, while partly monumental, have nevertheless living uses which the archæologist is at least compelled to tolerate. But this second class admits of a sub-division which ought not to be neglected, because it does in fact point to one of the most difficult questions presented to those who have in any way to deal practically with ancient buildings. I refer to the fact that many, perhaps the majority of ancient buildings, are the archæological records, not of one, but of several historical epochs. I was myself for more than ten of the best years of my life, the custodian of such a building. Ely Cathedral, like most of our great churches, was not built by one architect, or even by one generation. It is a monumental record of all periods since the Conquest, and it contains beautiful specimens of all schools of architecture; Norman, Early English, Decorated, with just a flavour of Sir Christopher Wren. When a building of this kind has to be meddled with,—and meddled with it sometimes must be, let the advocates of leaving old buildings alone say what they will,—the most perplexing questions will necessarily arise. If you are dealing with a building which has one date, one style of architecture, one design, it is comparatively easy to put yourself in the position of the original architect, and to try to do what you think that he would have done; but this method obviously fails in the case of a building, the history of which spreads over centuries, and which is the result of the plans of architects who followed the admitted rules and methods of the days in which they lived, and who (it may be added) sometimes cut into each other's work with no fear before their eyes of a Society for the Protection of Ancient Buildings, and with no Lord Grimthorpe to tell them what was right and what was wrong. What is the

modern architect to do? There has been no unbroken continuity of ecclesiastical architecture: there is a great gulf between the modern architect and the builders of our great Cathedrals. *Apparent rari nantes in gurgite vasto.* Rickman striking out bravely at the head of them: Pugin, Butterfield, Scott, and others, doing their best to follow: but there has been a shipwreck, after all; and the methods of Church restorers for some time after the modern renascence had marks of salvage from the wreck,—if indeed such marks have altogther disappeared even now. It would not be suitable for me to attempt a solution of the difficulties, the existence of which I have thought it right to indicate; in the interest of archæology however I would venture to insist upon two principles—(1) that the rule of leaving alone whatever exists in ancient buildings should be followed as closely as the condition of things, in any given case, will allow; and (2) that care should be taken not to introduce new work so carefully and even slavishly copied from the old, as to lay a snare for the feet of future inquirers. For my own part I believe —and I think I may fairly quote Ely Cathedral in support of my opinion—that it is possible to introduce new work into juxtaposition with old, without on the one hand any sense of incongruity, or on the other any indication of weak and foolish copying. Perhaps in archæological architecture, as in politics, a brave originality is not only consistent with, but is the wisest and safest outcome of a true and wise Conservatism.

But it is time for me to draw these preliminary observations to a close. Let me do so by saying, that from the archæological point of view we may rightly divide ancient buildings into two great classes, the dead and the living. The former is perhaps the more dear to the heart of the archæologist, just as the dead subject is in a certain sense more precious to the anatomical student than the body of a living man. You can examine the dead building entirely at your leisure; you can see it sometimes almost in the course of building; the craft of the old builders makes itself known by many a curious indication to the skilful eye; and the imagination can picture to itself scenes, whether of worship, or war, or social festivity, which have taken place within those ancient

walls, in the days of hoary antiquity; the poet finds a genial companion in the archæologist, and they may enjoy themselves side by side, though the craft of one is different from that of the other; both however would agree in their sentence as to what should be done with those lovely monuments of past time. *Do* with them? Leave them alone, says the poet; leave them alone, says the archæologist; and the sentence is taken up by a chorus of—what shall I say? all men and women of sense? well —I might say that—but on this present occasion I will use an equivalent expression and say—all members of the Archæological Institute!

And so much for my first class. They should be left alone; or only so far meddled with as to prevent mischief, and to hand them down uninjured and unaltered to posterity. But what of my second class? They too must be conserved, but it cannot always be upon the plan of letting them alone. Architects are called in, just because the buildings are not to be let alone. What manner of men ought these architects to be? Politics apart, they ought to be profoundly conservative. Then they ought to be learned and skilful, in order that they may see their way as to the best thing to be done. And further, they ought to be patient, good tempered, long suffering, because they are sure to be pelted and overwhelmed with abuse, whatever course they take. However, it is to be hoped, that the backs of architects are suited to their burdens, and that men will always be found having the natural and acquired qualifications necessary to deal with ancient buildings wisely, cautiously, kindly.

And now my little preliminary dish may be cleared away, and the real banquet begin.