

this last hour is a momentous object. To be able to meet it with a rational composure and dignity, calmness and fortitude, should be the earnest desire, and engross the principal attention of man.

That we may have a peaceful and happy exit, when we are called to quit this mortal scene, it becomes us to renounce the pursuits and indulgences of vice and error, and to walk in the paths of virtue, which alone lead to true felicity.

"Boast not thyself of to-morrow; for thou knowest not what a day may bring forth."

Worcester, June 24, 1790.



On the architecture of America.

*Sic unum quicquid paullatim protrahit
atas*

*In medium, ratioque in luminis eruit oras.
Namque aliud ex alio clarescere corde
videmus,*

*Artibus, ad summum donec venerit
cumen.* *Lucretius.*

"THE genius of architecture has shed maledictions over our land," says Mr. Jefferson. In a democracy, whoever of the citizens sees a public evil, and does not speak of it, is silently treacherous to the world: and whoever of them perceives, and yet does not endeavour to remove, a public inconvenience, is an accessory to it. Impressed with these opinions, on the score of the duty of all good citizens, and believing that we exceedingly suffer from the style in which we build our houses, and the materials of which they are erected, I have devoted one of these humble lucubrations to a hasty survey of architecture.

There can be no doubt but our style of building has, within a few years, very considerably improved: but there yet is open to the taste and good sense of the citizens a very great space, indeed, for their inventions, taste, and wealth, to be laudably exerted in. In this country, we are less confused in our ideas of propriety, in general, than are the inhabitants of any other country on the globe. We recur to first principles with

ease, because our customs, tastes, and refinements, are less artificial than those of other countries; and because we act more from the impulse of an enlightened nature, than from the coercion of the fashions, imposed tyrannically by that immense opulence which in Europe trifles with nature, and draws its pleasures from the more inaccessible reservoirs of art. Such is our happiness. In architecture, of which no prototype exists in the vast variety of nature, and which is the most artificial of all the points to which civilized man proceeds, we have it not in our power to profit by this happy freedom. Architecture comprehends in itself the collective discoveries in proportion, solidity, strength, harmony, and fitness of parts, economy of space, and subservience to domestic utility and comfort, which artists of different countries and ages have collected together into the art of building of houses. Different eras have been influenced by different tastes. A peculiar style of building was adapted to each climate. The Grecians formed into one exquisite model, the good properties from each of the different styles: and from this selection and application resulted their high-finished graces of architecture. The Romans followed. A style less simple, and more diffuse, aided by an additional order, compounded of the various orders of the Greeks, left the laurel of high perfection in their hands. Their taste became vitiated. The arts accompanied the retrograde of their character, till its final decline, and left that which is called the Gothic taste, as their last feeble effort at refinement. Religion added, in that rude age, when every thing was wrong, to the wildness of conceit, to which the Gothic fashion was already but too prone. What superstition appropriates to her own mysteries, becomes sacred: and as she had obtruded her tasteless and mystical allusions from scripture, to the embellishment of the heathen converted temples, all her ornaments became beautiful in the eyes of fanatical barbarians. The Gothic architecture first triumphed over the arts of Greece and

Rome, before the total decline of the empire; and, on the revival of the arts, enjoyed for centuries, a second victory over eras of refinement, that ought disdainfully to have rejected it on the resumption of the classic taste. The churches, abbeys, monasteries, and cathedrals in Europe are all of the Gothic barbarian cast. Even the castles and houses, imitating their magnificence, bear an affectation of devout ornament, all borrowed from the embellishment of the cathedral. To abolish this taste was a work of great difficulty—and even in the last century, and at a period when architecture had very much exalted herself, among her Gothic ruins, sir Christopher Wren found his noble Grecian model of Saint Paul's, which he first presented at court, rejected. Into this beautiful model he was obliged, in order to comply with pious frivolity of taste, to interweave enough of the Gothic web to make saint Paul's but the second building in the world.

The Americans have a taste, not corrupted—but suspended in its progress. The moment they see what is truly beautiful, they acknowledge its ascendancy. Hitherto they have but little attended to this branch of the fine arts. In reaching at perfection, they will not have to travel through the rubbish of Gothic whim and caprice: the Grecian school is open to them—and they ought to adopt its models in all their severe and elegant simplicity. Their present style is slovenly in the greatest degree: they may step from this situation to the highest attainments at a stride.

The evil in our architecture lies principally in this—that we build of wood. From this custom much immediate, as well as remote inconvenience, is to be expected: and certainly, however suddenly felt may be the comfort arising from celerity and dispatch, the numerous considerations of perishableness, want of safety, and call for repairs, added to the reflexion, that the public taste is for the time deprived of one great field of exertion, will very much weigh with an enlightened people, when

once they become awakened to their advantages, and proud of the singular novelty of their physical and moral opportunities of situation.

Wood, considered as a material of architecture, is not only perishable, but it is dreadfully accessible to all the dangers of wind and fire, and is not so strong as brick or stone. To these objections may be added the consideration, which will weigh with the man of taste, that wood is unsusceptible of chaste ornament. If it be adorned, it is in a finical puerile taste, in which there is as great a distance from the simplicity of the Grecian, as variance from the whimsical, yet often pleasantly fanciful assemblage of the Gothic style.

Bachelors only ought to build of wood—men who have but a life estate in this world, and who care little for those who come after them. Those, who have either children or a wife to leave behind them, will build of brick, if they wish to leave monuments of kindness, rather than a rent-charge, behind them. A well-finished brick house, however small, is not only more elegant and immediately useful and safe, but it is cheaper in the end, than a wooden one. It needs fewer repairs—its prime cost is little more—it is a property which yields more, inasmuch as, if rented out, it carries from the per cent. of rent, fewer of the eating repairs, which render the profits of wooden rent-rolls so equivocal and precarious. With respect to insurance—which in all populous places, sooner or later, takes place—it bears an analogy to policies on annuities, where one subject lingers under a precarious existence, and the other is blessed with youth, and a sound constitution. In point of ease, taste and duration, there can be no hesitation between them. The whole doubt in the mind of a builder rests in the competition between immediate convenience, and the remote advantage of an unknown duration—for a good brick house will be habitable for centuries.

I have seen many good old brick houses, built in the early part of Elizabeth's reign—and it is well known,

that in Holland, a low, moist country, houses built during their dependence on Spain, are still inhabited, and are perfectly sound.

We have this melancholy consolation, that posterity will find few of the deformities of our bad taste existing to mislead their own. But then, again, we ought to reflect, that those who come after us, and who will take up the arts where we left off, will be deprived of any permanent vestiges of our refinement, on which we ought to hope they would improve.

Considered politically—and in this government every citizen is on the guard of public happiness, and political warfare—there is this good attending brick buildings: from durable habitations, in which more money has been spent, and more of the refined tastes gratified, an affection for the soil is increased. A habit of thought arises, favourable to population—a greater proportion of money is thus realized. The great national fund, of course, is augmented—fixed to the soil—and pledged to the society.

The last and highest consideration, that strikes me, is, that emigration would be less easy, and not so common, were a finer spirit of building to prevail. Were the Tartars to build houses instead of waggons and tents, as baron Tot says they still do, and as they did when the Huns impeded the Goths against the feeble Roman empire, they would not rove, and their country might become a land of tillage. The facility with which we may move, is a strong incentive to that love of change, which it particularly interests us to repress in our citizens.



On party-divisions.—By the late governor Livingston.

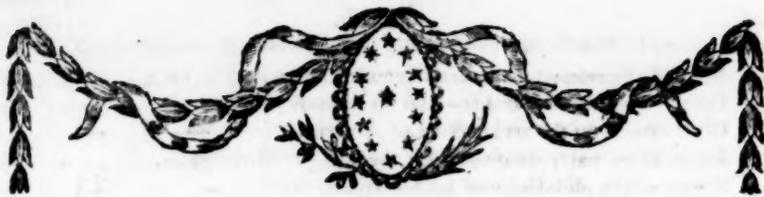
Furor arma ministrat. VIRG.

Factions, among great men, are like foxes; when their heads are divided, they carry fire in their tails; and all the country about them goes to wreck for it. Web. Dutch. of Malby.

FROM the moment, in which men give themselves wholly up to a

party, they abandon their reason, and are led captives by their passions. The cause they espouse, presents such bewitching charms, as dazzle the judgment; and the side they oppose, such imaginary deformity, that no opposition appears too violent—nor any arts to blacken and ruin it, incapable of a specious varnish. They follow their leaders with an implicit faith, and, like a company of dragoons, obey the word of command without hesitation. Though perhaps they originally embarked in the cause with a view to the public welfare; the calm deliberations of reason are imperceptibly fermented into passion—and their zeal for the common good gradually extinguished by the predominating fervor of faction. A disinterested love for their country, is succeeded by an intemperate ardour; which naturally swells into a political enthusiasm: and from that, easy is the transition to perfect frenzy. As the religious enthusiast fathers the wild ravings of his heated imagination, on the spirit of God—and is ready to knock down every man, who doubts his divine inspiration; so the political visionary mis-calls his party-rage the perfection of patriotism—and curses the rational lover of his country, for his unseasonable tepidity. The former may be reduced to his senses, by shaving, purging, and letting of blood: as the latter is only to be reclaimed by time or *preferment*.

Next to the duty we owe the Supreme Being, we lie under the most indispensable obligations, to promote the welfare of our country. Nor ought we to be destitute of a becoming zeal and fortitude, in so glorious a cause: we should shew ourselves in earnest, resolute, and intrepid. We cannot engage in a nobler undertaking; and scandalous would be our languor and timidity, where the sacrifice of our lives is no extravagant oblation. Replete with such illustrious examples, are the annals of antiquity, when the great men of those heroic ages, with a kind of glorious emulation, exerted their talents in the service of their country; and were not only contented, but pleas-



T H E
A M E R I C A N M U S E U M,
 O R, **U N I V E R S A L M A G A Z I N E,**

F O R O C T O B E R, 1790.

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