

**NEW SYSTEM OF ARCHITECTURE,
FOUNDED ON THE FORMS
OF NATURE AND DEVELOPING
THE PROPERTIES OF METALS**

Published @ 2017 Trieste Publishing Pty Ltd

ISBN 9780649657421

New System of Architecture, Founded on the Forms of Nature and Developing the Properties of Metals by William Vose Pickett

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Edited by Trieste Publishing Pty Ltd.
Cover @ 2017

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WILLIAM VOSE PICKETT

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THE PROPERTIES OF METALS**

NEW SYSTEM
OF
ARCHITECTURE,
FOUNDED ON
THE FORMS OF NATURE,
AND DEVELOPING
THE PROPERTIES OF METALS;
BY WHICH A HIGHER ORDER OF BEAUTY,
A LARGER AMOUNT OF UTILITY,
AND VARIOUS ADVANTAGES IN ECONOMY,
OVER THE PRE-EXISTENT ARCHITECTURES,
MAY BE PRACTICALLY ATTAINED:
PRESENTING ALSO,
THE PECULIAR AND IMPORTANT ADVANTAGE OF BEING
COMMERCIAL,
ITS PRODUCTIONS FORMING FITTING OBJECTS FOR
EXPORTATION.



BY
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LONDON:—LONGMAN & CO.

1845.

Printed by G. Coventry, Tottenham.

CONTENTS :

Preface.

CHAPTER 1.

BRIEF ENQUIRY INTO THE OBJECTS TO BE ACCOMPLISHED IN
"A NEW ARCHITECTURE."

CHAPTER 2.

"CONSTITUENT MATERIALS" FOR "A NEW ARCHITECTURE."

CHAPTER 3.

OF THE GENERAL CHARACTER OF ITS FORMS.

CHAPTER 4.

OF THE CONSTRUCTIVE PRINCIPLE—ITS ECONOMY AND EFFECTS.

CHAPTER 5.

THE SAME, CONTINUED.

CHAPTER 6.

OF THE NATURE OF THE ART ITSELF.

CHAPTER 7.

OF THE GENERAL ECONOMY OF THE SYSTEM.

CHAPTER 8.

REMARKS ON THE PRESENT STATE OF ARCHITECTURE, AND
ON METALLIC ART IN GENERAL.

CHAPTER 9.

"COMMERCIAL," "PROFESSIONAL" AND "UNIVERSAL" ADVANTAGES
OF THE NEW OR METALLURGIC ARCHITECTURE.

APPENDIX.

EXPLANATORY OF THE MANNER IN WHICH THE ART OR SYSTEM
IS PROTECTED BY PATENT.

PREFACE.

THE first idea of the System of Architecture, the primary principles of which are herein set forth, occurred to the mind of its author on visiting a few years since the stalactitic caverns of Derbyshire. He was then struck with the exceeding beauty, and applicability to the purposes of Architecture, of the forms exhibited, not alone in these most interesting productions of inanimate, but also in those of animated nature in general. But, upon considering the possibility of rendering the various combinations of these descriptions of forms subservient to the practical purposes of that art, he found the ordinary material of *stone* entirely unfitted for the required end. He therefore naturally turned to *metals*, as furnishing the requisite means for the fulfilment of the desired object; and also as presenting most useful and most efficient constituent materials for the comprehensive purposes of the entire art.

This conclusion was arrived at, first, by an examination into the nature of metallic productions, and the capability of these bodies for the realization of peculiar beauty; and secondly, from the evidences of their perfect and satisfactory applicability to numerous synonymous purposes, especially those of bridge-building, and above all, ship-building, to which they are now so

PREFACE.

extensively applied, and for which strength, durability, non-combustion, economy of space, facility in construction, and general comfort and convenience, united with cheapness, must of necessity form the principal recommendation; as but little taste is exhibited in *naval* in comparison with *civil* Architecture; or in other words, the adoption of cast-iron for the building of ships is not on account of the capability of that material for producing peculiar beauty, but in consequence of its possessing those decidedly *useful* properties, which should equally recommend its application in the erection of dwellings, and other edifices on land.

On examining further into the nature of the numerous manufactured substances employed in the practices of existent Architecture, he found them equally applicable as substitutes for its legitimate material, to the purposes of a genuine *metallurgic* as to those of *masonic* Architecture, whenever any superiority in economy or other advantage might recommend their adoption.

Having therefore, reduced his original idea into a clear and definite "code of laws," the fulfilment of which would necessarily involve the establishment of a new art in Architecture; because laws of such a nature have never yet been known to govern the practices of any system of Architecture; and having tested their justice and practicability by a requisite course of experiment,—which also perfectly convinced him of the possibility of producing by these means a beauty in effect superior to that in any other Architecture, and of combining with that beauty *all* the necessary utilities required of the art,—he became desirous of surrendering his discovery for the benefit of the public. But having devoted several years and incurred considerable expense in the pursuit of

PREFACE.

the necessary experiment, he felt himself unable in justice to do so, without a previous guarantee of some species of indemnity for his disclosure.

Under these circumstances, application was made during the year 1843, in rotation, to the several leading institutions in London, professing to take cognizance of and encourage art,—*all* of which declared their inability to meet the exigencies of the case.

On appealing to Her Majesty's Government, a similar reply was given,—“it was not their duty or custom to encourage inventors.”

There now, therefore, appeared no other alternative but to throw himself on those more generous governments of the Continent, whose policy it is, in contradistinction to our own, to give that countenance and support to the authors of useful inventions, which may enable them to withstand the combinations of opposing prejudice, or fanciedly injured interests, which here are too frequently permitted to accomplish their ruin.

It is, indeed, proverbial, that while England has derived more advantages from *invention* than any other country in the world, her *inventors* receive little else than neglect and injustice during life, while their countrymen make all smooth with their consciences by *giving themselves* monuments to their memories when dead.

The illustrious Harvey, the discoverer of the true circulation of the blood, found his practice fall off on the promulgation of his discovery. He was so far treated with neglect, as not to have even one individual to attend his lecture; and it is recorded that during his life-time *no* physician was known to have received his