

# **ARCHITECTURE AMONG THE POETS**

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Architecture among the Poets by H. Heathcote Statham

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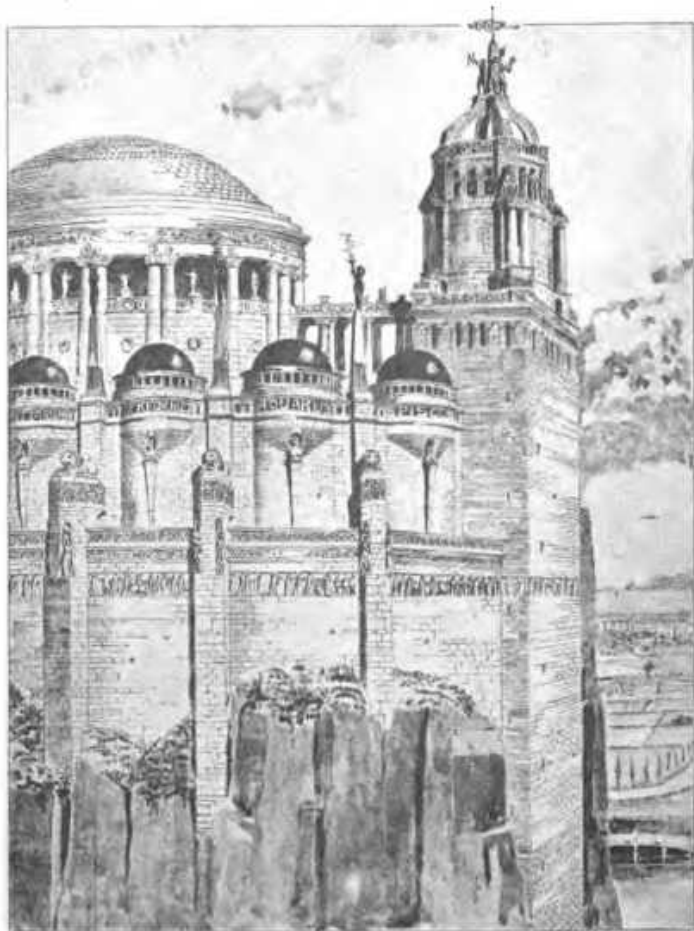
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**H. HEATHCOTE STATHAM**

**ARCHITECTURE  
AMONG THE POETS**





INK PHOTO LONDON

A CORNER OF THE "PALACE OF ART."

(See pages 111-112.)

"I built my soul a lordly pleasure house  
Wherein at ease for aye to dwell."

# ARCHITECTURE AMONG THE POETS

BY

H. HEATHCOTE STATHAM

AUTHOR OF "ARCHITECTURE FOR GENERAL READERS,"  
"MODERN ARCHITECTURE," ETC.

WITH 13 ILLUSTRATIONS BY THE AUTHOR

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## PREFACE

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A GOOD many years ago the author contributed to *The Builder*, anonymously, a short series of articles under the title "Architecture among the Poets." That this essay attracted some interest was evident from the fact that, as Editor of that journal, he has from time to time received enquiries as to the date of the articles, from correspondents wishing to obtain the back numbers containing them. The essay is here presented in a permanent form, re-written, revised, and with considerable additions, as well as with some illustrative sketches not before published.

H. H. S.

LONDON,  
*June, 1898.*





## ARCHITECTURE AMONG THE POETS.

THERE is a peculiar and significant interest in the references made by poets to the discoveries of science or the creations of art, and the illustrations or imagery which they draw from these sources. For it is not until a subject has been, as we may say, popularised, has become a matter of general human interest or belief, that it can be regarded as an effective source of poetic illustration, seeing that poetic imagery deals with broad generalities and not with debateable matter, with perception and not with thought :

“ —Thought may take perception's place,  
But hardly co-exist in any case.”\*

Thus, in science, the discoveries of one age become the poetry of the next. It was only after the revelations of geology as to the age

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\* Sordello.

of the earth, and the changes its surface has gone through, had become generally accepted that a poet could write—

“There rolls the deep where grew the tree;  
O earth, what changes hast thou seen;  
There, where the long street roars, hath been  
The stillness of the central sea.”

It is for this reason that music, the most immaterial of all the arts, and the one which, in more or less sophisticated forms, has been most universally practised, has probably furnished more matter for poetic illustration and imagery than any other art; and next to that comes painting, which, taking the word in its widest scope, as including every method of graphic delineation, has come more home to men's business and bosoms than any other art appealing to the sense of sight. Sculpture and architecture, arts less understood of the people, have received proportionally less attention from the poets.

Yet the poetical references to architecture, even if we confine ourselves mainly, as I propose here, to those in our own language, are often of great beauty and interest, and are

worth more attention than they have received. Their interest, it may be observed, is of two kinds, poetic and historical. Architecture may be regarded, from one point of view, as the realisation of an imaginative conception in composition and outline; from another point of view, as the craft of building. Poetry has from time to time taken cognisance of it in both aspects. References to the craftsmanship or to the materials employed are often of interest as throwing historical light on the manner in which the art of architecture was regarded by the poet's contemporaries, and on its technical processes; such incidental references in poetry forming a kind of unconscious and unpremeditated testimony which is sometimes more significant than any more definite or consciously intended historical evidence. The other kind of interest in poetic allusions to architecture is of a more purely intellectual nature; that which arises from the employment by the poet of imagery drawn from architecture, or from the use of poetry to give vivid and picturesque descriptions of architecture. In both cases we are pleased by finding architecture drawn