

The
Cystal **P**alace:

Its
Architectural History
and
Constructive Marvels.

By
Peter Berlyn, and Charles Fowler, Junr.

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mdcccli.

PREPARING FOR PUBLICATION BY
JAMES GILBERT, 49 PATERNOSTER ROW,
(UNIFORM WITH THE PRESENT VOLUME),

The Curiosities and Wonders
contained within
The Crystal Palace.

BY

PETER BERLYN, ESQ.

Illustrated by Several Hundred Engravings.



TO HIS ROYAL HIGHNESS PRINCE ALBERT,

The Following Pages,

DESCRIPTIVE OF

THE ARCHITECTURAL AND CONSTRUCTIVE MARVELS OF

THE STOREHOUSE OF THE WORLD'S WONDERS

OF ART, SCIENCE, AND MANUFACTURE,

ARE, BY PERMISSION, MOST HUMBLY DEDICATED,

AS A SLIGHT TRIBUTE

OF THE ADMIRATION AND GRATITUDE

WHICH, IN COMMON WITH THE WHOLE CIVILIZED WORLD,

ARE AMPLY SHARED IN BY

HIS ROYAL HIGHNESS'S

MOST DEVOTED, FAITHFUL, AND OBEDIENT SERVANT,

THE PUBLISHER.

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INTRODUCTION



So much has already been said and written, both wisely and well, upon the marvellous edifice which has just been reared with such magical rapidity to enshrine the results of the skill and industry of all nations, that it would appear an almost hopeless task to present the subject in any new point of view to the reader. If, therefore, the authors cannot lay claim to novelty or originality in the execution of the pleasurable work which they have undertaken, they are not without hopes that, from their having been connected with this gigantic undertaking during the greater part of its progress, they will be enabled to trace in a more detailed and consecutive manner than has yet been attempted the history of the design and execution of the building up to the period of its completion.

A great deal has been lately said upon the want of distinctive character in almost all the buildings of the present day; and it is certainly a striking fact that in scarcely any of our important modern structures does the exterior appearance in any way lead the spectator to form an idea of the purposes or arrangement of the interior, the former being apparently governed by fancy, or the fashion for some particular style, while the latter only, is accommodated to the peculiar requirements of the case.

Thus we have porticos which do not shelter from the weather, or in which no one is allowed to walk; Venetian palaces appear piled upon a substructure of plate-glass; baronial castles prove to be model prisons; and richly-decorated mansions, from the time of "Good Queen Bess," or fanciful Italian villas, are made to serve for the accommodation of paupers.

The ancients appear to have been more careful in this respect, so that the form and external arrangement afforded in most cases a ready key to the purposes of their structures. Their temples, their fora, theatres and amphitheatres, baths, and other public edifices, seem each to have been stamped with their own characteristic features, at the same time without in any way producing a monotonous uniformity among the different examples of the same class of building.

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Now, if this criterion of excellence be applied to the remarkable building recently erected in Hyde Park, it will be found that the constructive arrangement of the interior is plainly expressed without, and it must be conceded that it possesses at least those elements of beauty arising from consistency and simplicity which, in combination with its vast size, give it also that of grandeur. That it is faultless it would be needless to assert, or to imagine that, from its example, a new style of architecture will originate; but that it is admirably suited to its purpose, that it is a remarkable specimen of the constructive skill of this country, and that it will certainly form one of the most interesting objects of the Great Exhibition by which it has been called into being, if not the most interesting of all, must, we think, be admitted by all candid observers.

Although the building in its present form was designed, as well as carried out, in a singularly short space of time, this could not have been accomplished but for the great amount of thought and labour which had been previously bestowed upon the subject. In order, therefore, to trace the whole of the progress of the design, it will be necessary briefly to advert to the early labours bestowed upon the project.

On the 5th of January, 1850, the Royal Commission for carrying out this great scheme was gazetted; its first and second meetings, which were respectively held on the 11th and 18th of the same month, were entirely devoted to preliminary arrangements, and determining the mode of conducting its proceedings.

Among the most urgent matters calling for the attention of the Commissioners, the subject of the building early presented itself, as it was of the utmost importance that the longest possible time should be allowed for its erection; and, accordingly, at the third meeting, held on the 24th of January, the following noblemen and gentlemen were appointed to act as a

Committee for all Matters relating to the Building.

His Grace the Duke of Buccleuch, K.G., F.R.S.

The Right Hon. the Earl of Ellesmere, F.S.A.

Charles Barry, Esq., R.A., F.R.S.

William Cubitt, Esq., F.R.S., Pr. of J.C.E.

Robert Stephenson, Esq., M.P., F.R.S.

C. R. Cockerell, Esq., R.A.

I. K. Brunel, Esq., F.R.S.

Thomas L. Donaldson, Esq., M.I.B.A.

From which list it will be seen that some of the very highest professional talent in the country was enlisted on behalf of the undertaking.

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Labours of the Building Committee.



HE first point to be ascertained by this Committee was where to find an eligible site; for although they were not able at that early stage of their labours to determine the exact amount of space that would be required, they appear to have been of opinion that, from the general data before them, about sixteen acres would be necessary—an amount which has been subsequently considerably exceeded, but which was already an enormous area to be covered by one building; and in dealing with it the Committee must have felt that a very heavy amount of responsibility rested upon them, as appears, indeed, from their recommendation to the Royal Commission given below.

After about a month of attentive deliberation, the Committee made a report upon this part of their labours.

With regard to the site, it had appeared to the Committee that—firstly, the north-eastern portion of Hyde Park; secondly, the long space between her Majesty's private road and the Kensington road, in the southern part of Hyde Park; and thirdly, the north-western portion of Regent's Park, were the only available spaces about the metropolis which would afford the necessary accommodation; and it was believed that the order in which they were named represented also their relative eligibility. As regarded the first, the Committee had been informed by the Chief Commissioner of her Majesty's Woods and Forests that considerable objections would arise to its occupation for such a purpose, and that no such objections would be raised to the use of the second; and the Committee, therefore, recommended the adoption of this site, which, amongst other advantages, is remarkable for the facility of access afforded by the existing roads.

As regarded the extent of the building, the Committee were not yet in possession of sufficient data to enable them to determine this accurately, but, from such information as they had before them, they thought that it might be assumed, for the present, that about sixteen acres of covered space would be required.

And finally, as regarded the mode of proceeding to determine the general interior arrangements or ground-plan of the building, a subject to which they had given much consideration, they resolved, "That, in their opinion, it was desirable to seek, by public competition, for suggestions as to the general arrangements of the ground-plan of the building."

It was deemed by the Committee that the peculiar object for which the building was required, namely, the encouragement of the widest and most liberal competition in all the branches of arts and manufactures—the circumstance of the cost of the erection being defrayed by the public—the

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peculiar character of the building, for the designing of which were especially required judgment and contrivance in the detail of arrangement, and experience in the management of large crowds, and for the construction of which the mechanical skill and knowledge of the application and of the economical use of materials now so generally possessed by builders and practical men were necessary—all seemed, in the opinion of the Committee, to be reasons for recommending that the designs for the general arrangements should, as far as practicable, be the result of public competition, and that the actual construction should be so to the fullest extent. The Committee were, moreover, of opinion that the general design or arrangement of

such a building was one of those subjects, perhaps few in number, on which many good ideas may be elicited by a general contribution of plans; and that a mode might be adopted of obtaining such plans, and collecting useful suggestions from them, which should not eventually lead to any loss of time, or be attended with those delays which too frequently render ordinary competition inconvenient.

Great objections were made in some quarters to the proposed site in Hyde Park; but as they were not raised on really public grounds, they were gradually overcome by the interest which the public at large manifested in the success of the undertaking. In consequence of the latter recommendation in the Report which was adopted by the Royal Commissioners, the following document was published by them on March 13th, 1850, copies of which appear to have found their way into almost every corner of Europe:—

"The Committee appointed by the Royal Commission to advise on 'all matters relating to the building,' having received the sanction of the Commission, are desirous of obtaining from all parties who are disposed to assist them suggestions for the general arrangement of the buildings and premises required for this Exhibition. Upon the general form of the building in plan, the distribution of its parts, the mode of access, and the internal arrangements and contrivances, will depend the convenience and general fitness of such a building; and it is upon these points that the Committee seek information and suggestions, and wish to encourage the most extended competition in the preparation of plans. The Committee do not propose to offer any pecuniary reward for such plans—they rely upon the desire which men of all countries will feel to forward the objects of the proposed Exhibition. The Committee think it probable that, when the plans are received, they may not be limited to the selection of any one plan, but may derive useful ideas from many; and that the best plan may be determined upon by the help of this general assistance. As the credit of any such plan will be due solely to the contributors, the Committee propose to make a report, in which they will acknowledge by name those whose plans had been wholly or partially adopted, or who had afforded the most useful

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suggestions; and the Committee hope to be able to offer such other honorary distinction to the successful contributors as the circumstances may appear to warrant. In order to guide the contributors in the preparation of such plans and designs, and to facilitate the examination and the comparison of them when received, the Committee have enumerated concisely the principal 'desiderata' for such a building, and have laid down certain rules and conditions to which they earnestly request the contributors to conform, as the Committee will be under the necessity of abiding strictly by the regulation of not acknowledging any plans which may be sent in a form inconsistent with these rules. Copies of the engraved plan of the ground referred to may be had on application to the secretaries of the Commission, at the New Palace at Westminster."

An engraved plan of the site which had been fixed upon, together with the subjoined regulations, which all competitors would be expected to observe, were subsequently issued to all applicants:—

"1. The communications from contributors must consist of a single sheet of paper, not larger than the accompanying engraving, with a simple ground-plan upon a scale of 1·1000 of the full size, with such elevations and sections only of the building, and on the same sheet, as may be necessary to elucidate the system proposed—such elevations and sections not being intended to convey more than a general idea of the building, and not entering into details of construction or of architectural decoration—to be accompanied by a short, clear-written explanation of the system recommended, on a separate sheet. Any contributor wishing to send two designs must send separate and distinct communications, each conforming to the above conditions. No communications made inconsistent with these conditions, or any plan prepared upon a different scale from that prescribed, can be received. The plans, &c., must be sent on or before the 8th of April next, addressed to the Secretaries of the Exhibition, New Palace at Westminster, London. It is suggested that the most convenient mode of preparing the plan, elevation, and section, would be to draw them upon one of the engraved copies of the plan of the ground which accompany these instructions.—2. The building is to be erected on the space marked A B C D, and must not extend beyond the boundaries of the shaded portion. The groups of trees shown on the plan must be preserved. The principal public approaches are by the roads E F and G H. The road K L will be available only for foot-passengers. There will be no objection to the formation of cross-roads between the two last, G H and K L, if the design of the building requires it.—3. The roofed portion of the building is to cover a space of 700,000 square feet, or about 65,000 square metres; and the whole building must not occupy, including open spaces, an area of more than 900,000 square feet, or about 84,000 square metres. The building generally will be of one storey only.—4. No space will be

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required for cattle, or for shrubs or flowers.—5. It may be assumed, so far as it affects the ground-plan, that the light will be obtained entirely from the roof, and the building will be constructed of fire-proof materials.

"The general requirements are—simplicity of arrangement; economy of space; capability of extending or curtailing the building without destroying its symmetry as a whole, or interfering with the general arrangement, it being impossible to determine the exact extent of roof required until a late period of construction. Adaptation for the erection of separate portions of the building at different periods. Conveniences of ingress and egress, with facilities of access to all parts of the Exhibition, either from the exterior or interior. Means of classification of the various objects of different departments. Wall-space for the display of articles requiring it. Means of affording private access and accommodation for exhibitors, with counting-houses, if required. Committee-rooms, council-rooms, public refreshment-rooms, and all other public and private accommodation. (This portion of the building may be in two or more storeys if required.) Internal arrangements, by which, under proper regulations, large crowds of visitors may circulate freely, and have convenient access to all parts of the Exhibition, and uninterrupted means of examining the various objects exhibited."

The Competition Designs.



HOUGH the time allowed for the preparation of drawings was but short, being only about one month, no less than 233 designs were sent in, many of them of an elaborate architectural character. Of these, thirty-eight, or one-sixth of the whole, were received from the different foreign countries of Europe (France, twenty-seven; Belgium, two; Holland, three; Hanover, one; Naples, one; Switzerland, two; Rhine Prussia, one; Hamburgh, one); 138, or more than half the entire number, from London and its vicinity, where the interest excited was naturally more immediate; fifty-one from the provincial towns of England; six from Scotland, and three from Ireland. Seven were sent anonymously. The small number contributed by the sister kingdoms seems rather remarkable.

The greater part of these designs were, of course, contributed by members of the architectural and engineering professions, but some were the productions of amateurs, and one among them purported to be the suggestion of a lady. Here, then, was matter enough not only to assist, but even, from its great variety, to perplex the Committee, since at once every possible variety of style in decoration, material in construction, and system in arrangement, were strenuously recommended by the authors of the respective designs as the great ultimatum sought for.

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To Mr. Digby Wyatt, whose services were to a great extent withdrawn from the Executive Committee, in order that his professional knowledge of the subject might be placed at the disposal of the Building Committee, was intrusted the arduous task of examining and classifying these incongruous materials, and of eliminating from them such general principles of arrangement as seemed most worthy of the attentive consideration of the Committee. The result of this gentleman's minute examination was embodied in a Report, upon the basis of the recommendations contained in which the subsequent utilitarian portions of the design of the Building Committee would appear to have been founded.

After holding about fifteen protracted sittings, the Committee presented the following Report to the Royal Commission on the 9th of May:—

“ May it please your Royal Highness,

"My Lords and Gentlemen,

"We have the honour to report that we have examined the numerous plans so liberally contributed by native and foreign architects in accordance with the public invitation.

"Exhausting in their numerous projects and suggestions almost every conceivable variety of building, the authors of those designs have materially assisted us in arriving at the conclusions which we have now the honour to report.

"We have been aided in our analysis of this subject by a great amount of thought and elaboration thus brought to bear upon it from various points of view.

"We have, however, arrived at the unanimous conclusion, that able and admirable as many of these designs appeared to be, there was yet no single one so accordant with the peculiar objects in view, either in the principle or detail of its arrangements, as to warrant us in recommending it for adoption.

"In some of the least successful of the designs submitted, we find indicated errors and difficulties to be avoided, whilst in the abler and more practicable of them, there are valuable conceptions and suggestions which have greatly assisted us in framing the plan we have now the honour to lay before you. In preparing this design we have been governed mainly by three considerations:—

"1. The provisional nature of the building.

"2. The advisability of constructing it as far as possible in such a form as to be available, with the least sacrifice of labour and material, for other purposes, as soon as its original one shall have been fulfilled, thus insuring a minimum ultimate cost.

"3. Extreme simplicity, demanded by the short time in which the work must be completed.

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"For the arrangements of the plan we rely for effect on honesty of construction, vastness of dimension, and fitness of each part to its end.

"The principal points of excellence we have endeavoured to attain are—

"1. Economy of construction.

"2. Facilities for the reception, classification, and display of goods.

"3. Facilities for the circulation of visitors.

"4. Arrangement for grand points of view.

"5. Centralisation of supervision.

"6. Some striking feature to exemplify the present state of the science of construction in this country.

"The first of these, ECONOMY, is attained by doing away with any internal walls (all divisions being made by the necessary stalls), by reducing the whole construction, with the exception of the dome, to cast iron columns, supporting the lightest form of iron roof in long unbroken lines, and by the whole of the work being done in the simplest manner, and adapted in all respects to serve hereafter for other purposes.

"The second, facilities for the RECEPTION, CLASSIFICATION, and DISPLAY of goods. The main central entrance for the reception of objects for exhibition will probably be that most approachable from the public road. All cases accompanying goods will be examined, registered, catalogued, &c., in the offices of the Executive; the packing-cases will then be put upon a truck running on a line of rails laid down temporarily, and conveyed to the centre turn-table, from which they may be carried by a line of rails at right angles to the first, to the end of the transverse gallery, in which they may be destined to be placed.

"The most important condition to insure successful *classification* is, that those to whom the duty of arrangement may be confided should be hampered by no fixed limits of space, such as would have been the case had the building been divided into a number of halls, sections, or chambers. The plan submitted fulfils this condition

perfectly; as objects can be arranged just as they are received, and moved, if necessary, from gallery to gallery with great facility.

"The successful display of the goods would be best insured by leaving, under certain general restrictions, the fitting up of each stall to the Exhibitor or his Agent, floor-space only being allotted to each; and stands, frames, brackets, shelves, &c., being put up by a contractor's carpenter, at a fixed tariff.

"The best light is provided, and the most economical wall-space is proposed to be furnished by connecting pillar to pillar transversely, on the extreme north and south sides of the building, by rods, from which draperies, &c., can be suspended.

"The third, FACILITIES FOR THE CIRCULATION OF VISITORS, is thus attained. The visitor, on arrival at the central hall, proceeds at choice to any one

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of the four sections. He will, most probably, desire either to follow the whole course of the section selected, or will wish to go at once to some particular class or object. He will be enabled to do either the one or the other, without interfering with the general current, by means of gates or other arrangements, which shall insure the current of visitors passing in one direction. If he desire to proceed rapidly from one end of the building to the other, and finds the great central gangway at all blocked up, he will, no doubt, be able to get on by either the north or south corridors, fifteen feet wide. Numerous doors of egress in these latter afford ready means of exit for a large number of persons. Seats are provided in the middle of the great central gangway for those who may desire to rest.

"The fourth, ARRANGEMENT FOR GRAND POINTS OF VIEW. The view from or to the centre of the building will, from its extent, be necessarily imposing. The seats and main avenues are arranged so that, on the occasion of the distribution of the prizes, an immense number of persons may be accommodated. Most interesting views might be obtained from galleries constructed at either end of the building and around the dome, for the admission of the public to which some small charge might be made.

"The fifth, CENTRALISATION OF SUPERVISION. All the business of the Exhibition will be carried on in one spot, and be readily under control. The Royal Commission, the principal Committees, Clerks, Accountants, Police, &c., would be together, and in so large an establishment it would be absolutely necessary, or much time would be wasted in walking from one point to another. Passages running behind the money-takers' boxes, with glazed doors into them, would enable each accountant to detect anything improper that might be going on, and to exchange and balance checks, money, &c., at any moment. Telegraphic communication with each of the four pay-places will permit orders to be given, cash accounts, &c., to be issued and returned, from and to the head-accountant's office, as often as may be necessary.

"Four Committee-rooms, one for a Jury in each section, have been provided at the extreme east and west ends. The duties of such Committees being deliberative, and not executive, it is not necessary that they should be accommodated in the Central Establishment, where they would be more liable to be disturbed than at the extremity of the building.

"A policeman stationed in each gallery would, from his elevated position, be enabled to observe much which might escape detection if he mingled only with the crowd.

"The sixth, SOME STRIKING FEATURE TO EXEMPLIFY THE PRESENT STATE OF THE SCIENCE OF CONSTRUCTION IN THIS COUNTRY. In order that the building, in which England invites the whole world to display their richest productions, may afford, at least in one point, a grandeur not incommensurate with the occasion, we propose, by a dome of light sheet iron 200 feet

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in diameter, to produce an effect at once striking and admirable. From calculations which have been made of the cost of so grand a Hall, we have reason to expect that it may be executed for a sum not greatly exceeding the cost of the simplest form of roof likely to be adopted to cover the same area.

"It is to be borne in mind that a considerable amount of any such difference may be recovered, should this portion of the building be converted hereafter to other purposes, which is more than probable. This vast dome it is proposed to light mainly from one circle of light in its centre, and thus the sculpture will be pleasingly and suitably lit.

"Six out of the eight openings in the cylinder of the dome would be well adapted for the exhibition of stained glass windows of great extent, while the two remaining arches will open to the main central gallery. The lower part of some of the voids will admit the eye to turf and shrubs, and produce a great freshness of effect.

"The immense continuity of the Central Avenue will be broken and relieved by a variation in the roof opposite the openings to the second and third sets of refreshment-rooms, and windows for the reception of Stained Glass may be placed at the ends of each transverse gallery, thus terminating the vista for each.

"It now only remains to explain the course of action we would recommend for adoption as soon as the principles of the plan, &c., shall be positively decided.

"We consider this to be an occasion upon which the greatest amount of intellectual and commercial ingenuity and ability should be called out; and that a generous rivalry among those best fitted to execute the principal portions of this vast structure may lead to results which no amount of detailed study that we could possibly give to this matter would supply.

"We would therefore recommend that every advantage should be taken of the accumulated and experimental knowledge and resources of intelligent and enterprising contractors, and that every opportunity should be afforded to them of DISTINGUISHING THEMSELVES. We would therefore recommend as the best means of enlisting their services the following course of action:

"Adopting the approved design as a basis, we would proceed immediately to prepare such working-drawings and specifications as may be necessary, and to issue invitations for tenders to execute Works in accordance with them, requesting from competitors, in addition, such suggestions and modifications, accompanied with estimates of cost, as might possibly become the means of effecting a considerable reduction upon the general expense.

"W. Cubitt, *Chairman*."

The following Report of the Committee on the competition plans submitted, and which was so unfavourably received by the public, and more

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particularly by the profession, was presented to the Royal Commission on the 16th of May:—

“ May it please your Royal Highness,

"My Lords and Gentlemen,

"Your Committee beg leave to report, that the invitation issued by the Commissioners, requesting information and suggestions for the general arrangement of the Building and premises required for the Exhibition of 1851, has been responded to in the most ample and satisfactory manner, both as respects the variety of useful ideas presented to their consideration, and the liberality with which many experienced and skilful men of foreign countries, no less than of our own, have contributed their valuable time to this great undertaking, thereby evincing their entire sympathy both with the great cause of Arts and Industry in which her Majesty's Commissioners have embarked, and with the arduous labours of the Directors of the undertaking.

"The Designs and Specifications transmitted to the Committee amount to the surprising number of 233, offering an aggregate of professional sacrifice of very considerable importance; for, not confining themselves to suggestions only, which were invited by the Programme, a large proportion of them are remarkable for elaboration of thought and elegance of execution.

"Penetrated with admiration and respect for these gratuitous and valuable contributions, unexampled, they believe, in the history of competition, your Committee have devoted the most careful attention to the collection of these projects, and hasten to offer those acknowledgments which are due to their merits, and to the generous motives which have led to their execution; and they trust that the public may shortly be witnesses of the effect of this very noble emulation of the skill of all countries, by the public exhibition of these designs, offering the opportunity, in the true spirit of the whole undertaking, of mutual improvement, respect, and friendship amongst the cultivators of the liberal arts in the several countries of Europe.

"It is remarkable that, while many of these contributions may be attributed to the laudable motive of professional reputation and advancement on the part of practitioners not yet sufficiently known to the public, a great number are from Gentlemen whose position in the confidence of their respective Governments or in the Republic of Arts and Letters is of the highest eminence, and who can have been actuated by no such personal motives. Already entitled to respect and admiration, they could have little to gain, while they have something to lose, in the competition for glory. The kind and frank communication, therefore, of their thoughts and

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experience towards this great work is to be the more highly commended. Every possible mode of accomplishing the object in view has been displayed by the respective contributors as regards economy of structure and distribution, and these qualities are united with various degrees of architectural symmetry and features in many designs. Our illustrious continental neighbours have especially distinguished themselves by compositions of the utmost taste and learning, worthy of enduring

execution—examples of what might be done in the architectural illustration of the subject, when viewed in its highest aspect, and, at all events, exhibiting features of grandeur, arrangement, and grace which your Committee have not failed to appreciate.

"Amongst these several classes of design, the practical character of our own countrymen, as might have been expected, has been remarkably illustrated in some very striking and simple methods suited to the temporary purposes of the Building, due attention having been paid to the pecuniary means allotted to this part of the undertaking. The principle of suspension has been applied in a single tent of iron sheeting, covering an area averaging 2,200 feet by 400 feet by a lengthened ridge, or in separate tents on isolated supports. Others display the solution of this problem by the chapter-house principle, and a few by the umbrella or circular locomotive-engine-house system of railway-stations, either with a central column or groups of columns sustaining domes or roofs to the extent of four hundred feet diameter.

"Grandeur and simplicity of distribution are carried out with great architectural effect in other compositions, and the general arrangement by columnar supports has been also variously and elegantly developed. The system of iron roofing, with all the architectural powers of which that material is susceptible, has been adopted by some with signal enterprise, ingenuity, and power.

"In another class of design the authors have viewed with enthusiasm the great occasion and object of the proposed Exhibition, and have waived all considerations of expense. They have indulged their imaginations, and employed the resources of their genius and learning, in the composition of arrangements which present the utmost grandeur and beauty of architecture, suited to a permanent Palace of Science and Art. These, as addressed to the architectural Student, are of the highest value, reminding him of all the conditions of his art—the Egyptian hypostyle, the Roman thermæ, or of the Arabian or Saracenic inventions. And though their expense has placed them beyond reach, they cannot fail to inspire and elevate the treatment of the reality. They at all events confer great obligations on the lovers of the Fine Arts, for the authors have evidently felt that, if one of the results to be expected from the proposed Exhibition may be to prove that the simplest object of ingenuity and skill should not be

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devoid of some of the attractions of taste, the Building itself ought to be an illustration of that important principle.

"The Committee, however, have been unable to select any one design as combining all the requisites which various considerations render essential. But the judgment and taste evinced by a large number of the contributors have enabled the Committee to arrive more promptly at their conclusions, and they have freely availed themselves of most valuable suggestions in directing the preparation of a fresh design for the proposed building.

"They have consequently been most earnest in the desire to fulfil the just expectations of the various competitors, and feel assured that your Royal Highness and the Commission will be of opinion that the most unreserved and handsome acknowledgments are due to those able men of science and art who have in so disinterested a manner submitted such admirable projects for the consideration and

assistance of the Committee. They beg, therefore, to submit, as their opinion, that the following gentlemen are entitled to honourable and favourable mention, on account of architectural merit, ingenious construction or disposition, or for graceful arrangement of plan.

"And they cannot conclude without calling attention to the designs, accompanied by models, of M. Hector Horeau, Architect of Paris, and of Messrs. Turner, of Dublin, as evincing most daring and ingenious disposition and construction.^[1]

"W. Cubitt, *Chairman*."

Some of the strongest objections to this Report are very fairly urged in a letter which appeared in the *Builder* of the 15th of June, a part of which is subjoined:—
"Part II. of the Report contains what I suppose is to be taken as the best exposition of the merits of contributors that the Committee can give, which commences by stating, in a tone of commendation, that, 'not confining themselves to SUGGESTIONS ONLY, which were invited by the PROGRAMME, a large proportion of them are remarkable for elaboration of thought and elegance of execution.' This, I would contend, is clearly a breach of the specified conditions, viz., that SUGGESTIONS ONLY were to be given—that the plan or drawing sent in was to be A MERE OUTLINE SKETCH, upon a SINGLE SHEET; and the Committee even recommended that it would be most convenient merely to trace it upon the common paper on which the 'plan of site' was supplied to the public, a space being left upon the sheet for SKETCHING any sections or elevations that might be necessary to illustrate the design; and that a written description, limited also to 'a single sheet,' was all the exposition of their ideas that authors would be
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allowed to give. The Report goes on to state, that 'our illustrious continental neighbours have especially distinguished themselves [in designing a temporary building for an exhibition] by compositions of the utmost taste and learning, worthy of enduring execution—examples of what might be done in the ARCHITECTURAL illustration of the subject [the conditions strictly enjoined contributors not to enter into architectural detail] when viewed in its highest aspect, and, at all events, exhibiting features of grandeur, arrangement, and grace which your Committee have not failed to appreciate.' It then places in contradistinction to these no doubt admirable but out-of-place productions of architectural genius, the 'practical character of the designs of our own countrymen,' which it states, 'as might have been expected, has been remarkably illustrated in some very striking and simple methods, suited to the temporary purposes of the building, due attention having been paid by them to the pecuniary means allotted to this part of the undertaking.' Yet, notwithstanding this comparison, clearly and indisputably in favour of our own countrymen, as regards the object sought and the conditions stipulated by the Committee, we find by the selected list of those authors who are to receive 'the highest honorary distinction' the Commissioners can award, that the Committee can only discover, out of 195 English and 38 foreign contributors, THREE Englishmen entitled to reward, the remaining FIFTEEN out of the eighteen selected being foreigners; or, as regards the whole numbers, in proportion of 1 to 65 of 'our own countrymen,' the authors of the 'striking and simple,' so admirably 'suited to the temporary purpose of the building,' and 1 to about 2½ of foreigners, who, in

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