



P R E F A C E.

ANOTHER year has been added to our labours, and it is again a pleasant duty to lay before our readers a brief account of the progress of the two professions, to the service of which we are devoted. It will naturally be expected that in a year of severe financial embarrassment, succeeding also to one so fertile in important results as was the last, there must necessarily be a falling off in the amount of what would otherwise have been effected, and a delay in the execution of many works, the completion of which is thereby retarded. Our own exertions, however, we have not suffered to flag under circumstances so dispiriting, but trust that so far as has depended on us, the present volume is worthy of its predecessor, and of the patronage with which our endeavours have been crowned.

In considering the general features of architecture, we find that the invasion of the Renaissance style, which we announced last year, has actually occurred, but has singularly been accompanied with, or rather smothered by, a resuscitated taste for Elizabethan external and internal decoration. Considerable attention has also been devoted to the early antiquities of Moresque architecture. Our own ecclesiastical antiquities, we are happy to mention with praise, have been chosen as the special object of enquiry by a Society of Clergymen at Oxford, and thus we are led to hope for an improvement in taste, in a quarter which hitherto has had but too great a part in producing the present degeneracy.

A striking and interesting circumstance to every well wisher of the arts, is the great zeal with which both associated bodies and individual members of the profession have engaged in the struggle for maintaining the true principles of competition. Among these cases have been the Nelson Testimonial, St. George's Hall Liverpool, and the Royal Exchange, in the still pending contest respecting which latter, we believe we may say with truth, "Quorum pars maxuma fui." On learning the extraordinary attempt to impose a tax of a guinea on applicants, for copies of the Instructions of the Committee, we immediately obtained copies both of the instructions and the plans, and left them at our office for the free use of any applicant—a course of conduct for which we feel an abundant reward, in the vote of thanks unanimously bestowed on us by the Manchester Architectural Society. From these exertions hitherto, no immediate fruit has resulted, but much has been already attained from the influence which they have had in awakening the public mind from its lethargy, and calling its power to a subject so importantly affecting the national glory and the general taste.

Great progress has been made this year in bringing the accessory science of geology to bear upon architectural pursuits, and with a success which must have an influence on the future progress of each respectively. Government issued a commission, composed of geologists and architects, to examine the quarries of England, for the purpose of ascertaining the stone best fitted for the construction of the new Houses of Parliament. This commission has produced a report which must long be a standard of information to the profession, and a valuable model in future enquiries. The Government has also formed a Museum of Economic Geology, attached to the department of Woods and Forests, in which the commissioners specimens are collected, and to which future accessions will be made. Special courses of lectures on the connection of these two subjects have been delivered by eminent geologists: at the Royal Institute of British Architects by G. F. Richardson, (reported in our Journal), and at the Architectural Society, by E. W. Brayley, jun. Great attention is also paid to these subjects in the several faculties of civil engineering. Although not yet brought into immediate connection with architecture, we feel it our duty to allude to the discoveries in photography by Daguerre and Fox Talbot, and to those in engraving by voltaic electricity made at Liverpool. In the British Museum great improvements have been effected, and a Museum of Antiquities has been formed by the city authorities, in Guildhall. We regret, however, that the Soane Museum, the proper Museum of Architecture, as yet manifests no progress. The elementary drawing and professional schools throughout the country have exhibited a remarkable improvement, as have the schools of design, and the class of decorative artists appears to have attained a higher standard than it ever before reached. An act has been passed for giving protection to the copyright of manufacturing designs, and it is to be hoped that this symptom of a better system of legislation for art, may be pursued successfully. We may mention here as another legislative act, although not in perfect regularity, that an amendment has been made in the Brick Duties Act.