PREFACE

THIS volume was begun as the first instalment of an attempt to trace, for the information of unlearned or general readers, the architectural tradition from its remoter origins to the time when it became generally recognized as part of Roman civilization. The rapid advances which archaeology has made in the few years of the present century may, perhaps, excuse an effort, however imperfect, to bring together in a connected and historical form a certain amount of recent information which is at present dispersed in special books and papers.

In giving precedence to Egypt, I am only following the plan of every book that treats historically of architecture in general, and though I appreciate the motives which have led Mr. H. R. Hall, in his learned and now indispensable work on the ancient history of the Near East to deal first with the Aegean civilization, I do not find in them any reason to displace Egypt from the position hitherto assigned to it in this particular branch of art.

It may be thought that recent works dealing comprehensively with the subject of architecture, such as Professor Simpson’s on “The History of Architectural Development,” or Mr. Statham’s interesting and original
volume, "A Critical History of Architecture," or Mr. Lethaby's suggestive little book on the subject, render any similar attempt superfluous, but in all these works, except perhaps the last, the proportion of space which could be allotted to the early stages of so vast a subject is necessarily very limited. The reader, consequently, fails to realize that the various phases presented to him are sometimes separated by thousands of years and existed in very different social circumstances; and in regard to Egypt particularly is apt to derive the impression that the so-called "orders" were throughout contemporaneous, or as nearly so as those of the comparatively short classic epoch. There seems, therefore, to be room for a book, which, though little more than an outline, and pretending to no technical treatment, aims at giving a historical view of the subject, and notes the changes in aesthetic ideals which, notwithstanding the innate conservatism of the Egyptian race, took place at one or two periods of their history.

Though the art of Egypt as a whole, especially from the decorative side, has been elaborately treated in works by Champollion, Lepsius, Prisse d'Avennes, Maspero, and Perrot and Chipiez, I am not aware that the special subject of architecture has been separately dealt with in the manner and on the moderate scale here attempted, and certainly not since the archaeological work of the last few years has thrown additional light upon it. The discovery and excavation by Professor Naville and
Mr. Hall of the remarkable XIth dynasty temple at Dér-el-Bahri is an event of the greatest architectural interest, and the still more recent excavation by Professor Naville of the supposed Osireion at Abydos is no less important historically.

I have thought that any interest the book may have would be increased by adding as an appendix a paper by Lepsius dealing with some features of Egyptian art, which, I believe, has not been translated before. He visited Egypt in 1842 as leader of a scientific expedition sent by King Frederick William IV of Prussia. No one who reads his letters from Egypt and Sinai can fail to perceive that he was a man of exceptional powers, both mental and physical, and will recognize the acuteness of his observations and deductions. This paper was published in 1872, and therefore represents his mature views. That it is necessarily out of date in some particulars, when phases of civilization in the Mediterranean and Western Asia, unsuspected by him, have been brought to light, will be obvious to every reader, but it contains so much that is suggestive in relation to Egyptian conventional art and the evolution of its architecture with its influence on that of Greece that I hope no one will think its inclusion superfluous.

Though the architecture of Egypt ceases after the XXth dynasty to have any special importance in the general development of the art, I have been tempted to go beyond my original purpose by describing and illustrating later monuments, partly with a view to giving the
book an independent status, and partly in the hope that it may be of some use as a companion so far as it goes to the handbooks of Murray and Baedeker. To these excellent guides, edited respectively by Mr. Hall and Professor Steindorff, I am mainly indebted for historical and topographical details, and for more recent information I owe no less to Messrs. King and Hali's "Egypt and Western Asia in the Light of Recent Discoveries," and to Mr. Hall's volume on the Near East already mentioned. I am also much indebted to Dr. Wallis Budge's "Guide to the Egyptian Collections in the British Museum," and to the trustees for permission to copy some of the illustrations contained therein.

No architectural work can be of much general interest without the aid of illustrations, and I have availed myself of as many as could be conveniently obtained and used. I have to thank the representative of the late Mr. John Ward, F.S.A., for enabling me to use a large number of those, including some sketches by himself, which appeared in his volume of Egyptian travel, entitled "Pyramids and Progress." I must also express my thanks to Professor W. M. Flinders Petrie for allowing me to copy or borrow a number of illustrations from his works, and for other obligations; to Mr. F. Phené Spiers for his kind permission to use two of his published drawings made in 1866, which form only a small proportion of a collection of highly interesting water-colours; to Miss E. L. Lister for the use of two of her own drawings; to the committee of the Egypt
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E. B.