



Ex Libris

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THE  
GRAMMAR OF ORNAMENT

BY  
OWEN JONES.

ILLUSTRATED BY EXAMPLES  
FROM VARIOUS STYLES OF ORNAMENT.

ONE HUNDRED AND TWELVE PLATES.



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## PREFACE TO THE FOLIO EDITION.

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It would be far beyond the limits of the powers of any one individual to attempt to gather together illustrations of the innumerable and ever-varying phases of Ornamental Art. It would be barely possible if undertaken by a government, and even then it would be too voluminous to be generally useful. All, therefore, that I have proposed to myself in forming the collection which I have ventured to call the *Grammar of Ornament*, has been to select a few of the most prominent types in certain styles closely connected with each other, and in which certain general laws appeared to reign independently of the individual peculiarities of each. I have ventured to hope that, in thus bringing into immediate juxtaposition the many forms of beauty which every style of ornament presents, I might aid in arresting that unfortunate tendency of our time to be content with copying, whilst the fashion lasts, the forms peculiar to any bygone age, without attempting to ascertain, generally completely ignoring, the peculiar circumstances which rendered an ornament beautiful, because it was appropriate, and which as expressive of other wants, when thus transplanted, as entirely fails.

It is more than probable that the first result of sending forth to the world



## PREFACE.

this collection will be seriously to increase this dangerous tendency, and that many will be content to borrow from the past those forms of beauty which have not already been used up *ad nauseam*. It has been my desire to arrest this tendency, and to awaken a higher ambition.

If the student will but endeavour to search out the thoughts which have been expressed in so many different languages, he may assuredly hope to find an ever-gushing fountain in place of a half-filled stagnant reservoir.

In the following chapters I have endeavoured to establish these main facts,—

First. That whenever any style of ornament commands universal admiration, it will always be found to be in accordance with the laws which regulate the distribution of form in nature.

Secondly. That however varied the manifestations in accordance with these laws, the leading ideas on which they are based are very few.

Thirdly. That the modifications and developments which have taken place from one style to another have been caused by a sudden throwing off of some fixed trammel, which set thought free for a time, till the new idea, like the old, became again fixed, to give birth in its turn to fresh inventions.

Lastly. I have endeavoured to show, in the twentieth chapter, that the future progress of Ornamental Art may be best secured by engrafting on the experience of the past the knowledge we may obtain by a return to Nature for fresh inspiration. To attempt to build up theories of art, or to form a style, independently of the past, would be an act of supreme folly. It would be at once to reject the experiences and accumulated knowledge of thousands of years. On the contrary, we should regard as our inheritance all the successful labours of the past, not blindly following them, but employing them simply as guides to find the true path.

In taking leave of the subject, and finally surrendering it to the judgment of the public, I am fully aware that the collection is very far from being complete: there are many gaps which each artist, however, may readily fill up for himself. My chief aim, to place side by side types of such styles as might best serve













































































































































































































































































































































































































































































































































































