



History of Architecture

A. D. F. Hamlin

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A history of architecture is a record of man's efforts to build beautifully. The erection of structures devoid of beauty is mere building, a trade and not an art. Edifices in which strength and stability alone are sought, and in designing which only utilitarian considerations have been followed, are properly works of engineering. Only when the idea of beauty is added to that of use does a structure take its place among works of architecture. We may, then, define architecture as the art which seeks to harmonize in a building the requirements of utility and of beauty. It is the most useful of the fine arts and the noblest of the useful arts. It touches the life of man at every point. It is concerned not only in sheltering his person and ministering to his comfort, but also in providing him with places for worship, amusement, and business; with tombs, memorials, embellishments for his cities, and other structures for the varied needs of a complex civilization. It engages the services of a larger portion of the community and involves greater outlays of money than any other occupation except agriculture. Everyone at some point comes in contact with the work of the architect, and from this universal contact architecture derives its significance as an index of the civilization of an age, a race, or a people.

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