

## DESCRIPTION OF THE PLATES.

### PART I.

PLATES 1 to 29.

#### ARCHITECTURAL ORNAMENTS—MONOCHROME DESIGNS, &c. &c.

##### 1. DOORS OF THE CLASSICAL ORDERS.

As it is rare to find the extremities and details of antique figures well preserved, so among the ruins of ancient buildings we seldom meet with any in which that important detail, the door, is remaining. This feature is, however, as expressive as the mouth or eyes of a statue. Classical edifices being deficient in windows, the whole vitality is, as it were, concentrated on this feature of the building. Even the palaces of Bramante have lost a great deal of their original character by the destruction of the doors, which seem not to have satisfied the architects, at a later epoch of deteriorated taste. At Rome not one of the palaces erected by this immortal genius has retained this feature. Portals of so discordant and heavy a design have been added to them, that the eye is painfully affected, and the whole effect of the buildings has suffered greatly from the discrepancy.

The present Plate lays before the eyes of the pupil a synopsis of the three classical orders of architecture, as far as their character expresses itself in the construction of the doors. Such a parallel is indeed wanting to the greater part of elementary works on architecture.

A. *The Door of the Pantheon* at Rome shows not only the splendour and refinement of the most beautiful among the ancient systems of architecture, viz. the Corinthian Order, but exhibits, also, one of the most perfect specimens of an antique portal; even the frame and trellis-work over the entrance being preserved.

B. *The Door of the Minerva Polias* at Athens, places before us the graceful beauty of the Ionic style in its finest development. We can scarcely understand all the wonderful refinements of the Ionic Order without thoroughly studying the graceful details which this part of the system presents to us.

C. *The Door of the Temple of Hercules* at Cora, furnishes a good and instructive specimen of the more simple and grave style of the Doric Order, which admits the accessory graces of curved lines, only with great reserve, and maintains a solemn and antique character.

##### 2. MODE OF CONSTRUCTING THE CURVES OF SOME OF THE SO-CALLED ETRUSCAN VASES.

The boundless variety of forms which is presented to us by the immense quantity of Greek Vases discovered in Italy, and particularly in Etruria, almost bewilders us by its endless profusion. As long as the eye is not acquainted with the principle of the construction of these manifold curves, not only the amateur but even the artist, who looks at them in a practical point of view, is unable to derive full enjoyment from them. The eye soon becomes wearied by passing along the fine lines of these infinitely multiplied curves, as long as we are ignorant of the laws in conformity with which they are arranged.

The present synopsis of vases, which were measured and carefully copied from the originals in the British Museum, shows with mathematical precision that every curve is the segment of some real circle, the centre of which may easily be found by the help of the diameters indicated by the red lines. Thus we learn that all the curves which circumscribe the outlines of ancient vases are not ellipses, but true circles, and that the combination of them is, therefore, even where we meet with the most strange connections of inverted lines, always strictly mathematical—a fact of the highest importance, both in a theoretical and practical point of view.

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