A review of the professional life of Sir John Soane, Archt. ... With some remarks on his genius and productions. Read at the ... meeting of the Institute of British architects ...6th February, 1837 / [Thomas Leverton Donaldson].

### Contributors

Donaldson, Thomas Leverton, 1795-1885. Royal Institute of British Architects.

### **Publication/Creation**

London : J. Williams, 1837.

#### **Persistent URL**

https://wellcomecollection.org/works/yqpatu5j

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## A REVIEW

OF THE

# PROFESSIONAL LIFE

OF

# SIR JOHN SOANE, ARCHT.

R.A. M.I.B.A. F.R.S. AND MEMBER OF VARIOUS FOREIGN ACADEMIES.

DECEASED 20TH JANUARY, 1837.

# WITH SOME REMARKS ON HIS GENIUS AND PRODUCTIONS.

READ AT THE FIRST SUBSEQUENT ORDINARY MEETING OF THE

# INSTITUTE OF BRITISH ARCHITECTS,

HELD MONDAY 6TH FEBRUARY, 1837.

BY

# THOMAS LEVERTON DONALDSON,

FELLOW AND HONORARY SECRETARY, CORRESPONDING MEMBER OF THE INSTITUTE OF FRANCE, &C. &C.

### LONDON:

JOHN WILLIAMS, LIBRARY OF ARTS, CHARLES STREET, SOHO SOUARE.

MDCCCXXXVII.



#### DRURY, PRINTER, 10, JOHNSON'S COURT, FLEET STREET.

# ADVERTISEMENT.

The following Review of the Professional Character and Works of Sir JOHN SOANE appears precisely as it was prepared for reading at the ordinary Meeting. It was hastily written in the interval which elapsed between his Funeral on the 30th of January and its delivery on the 6th of February. The Author was able to devote to it those few hours only, which public and private avocations enabled him to spare to the subject. A press of professional engagements have since prevented him from giving it that revision and correction, which might have removed to a great degree its imperfections. These circumstances may account for any opinions, which opportunities for examination and mature reflection might have enabled the Writer to modify, and render less inaccurate.



# SIR JEFFRY WYATVILLE, ARCH., RA., M.I.B.A. F.R.S. F.S.A. &c. &c.

DEAR SIR,

To no one can the dedication of the following pages be more appropriate than to yourself. From your hands, the subject of this Memoir received the tribute paid to him by his Brethren in Art. By his death you are become the Senior of the Profession, a station to which you are so well entitled from your long standing, your rank, and those works, which must hand down your name and reputation to the latest times in connection with Windsor Castle. That favorite and splendid residence of our Kings owes its restoration, and its more than pristine beauty and solidity, to your taste and skill.

Believe me, my Dear Sir,

With respectful esteem,

Your very obedient Servant,

THOS. L. DONALDSON.

7, Hart Street, Bloomsbury Square, March 1, 1837.



### A REVIEW

#### OF THE

# PROFESSIONAL LIFE AND WORKS

#### or

# SIR JOHN SOANE, R.A., M.I.B.A., &c. &c. &c.

### Delivered at the ordinary Meeting of the Institute of British Architects, on Monday, the 6th of February, 1837.

THE DEATH of an individual, so distinguished in our profession as Sir John Soane, being an event of no ordinary occurrence, it has appeared to me that it might be useful to review his career as an Artist, while the memory of his person, of his productions, and of the circumstances of his life are fresh in our memory. Too often the memoir of one distinguished in the pursuit of art, of science or literature, is not undertaken, until the period when the remembrance of him is past, and the scanty records of his professional career scarce furnish a solution to the mystery which too often hangs over his studies and the gradual developement of his faculties. I address many to whom he was better known than to myself, and some who are better acquainted with the facts, which I am about to state. Still this record, however incomplete, of a departed distinguished Professor of our Art, may not be without its fruit; for I stand not here to exaggerate or extenuate his failures, nor to be the mere panegyrist of his merits. The opinions, which I shall submit, are the impressions of one scrupulously anxious to do justice to those qualities which entitle him to our respect and regard as an Artist. I trust that I shall disappoint none in forbearing to enter upon the private life of Sir John Soane. It is not my purpose to tear aside the veil, which should separate from general observation the domestic character and the familiar intercourse of the private life of any individual—I regard him only in so much as respects his conduct as a public man. I would not disturb the solemn repose of the tomb, in which his remains have just been deposited, by allusions to those various sources of joy or sorrow, which chequered his domestic life. With these we have no concern; and I have only to regard him as an Architect, who, as an artist, as a man of science, a munificent lover of his profession, and above all, as a benefactor of this Institute, has just claims to our admiration and respect.

I am given to understand that Sir John Soane was born near Reading, on the 10th September 1753, and that his father was a very humble builder in that neighbourhood. He was placed at a School in that Town, kept by a Mr. Baker, where, it is to be presumed, he received to a certain extent a classical education. In fact, his frequent quotations, in his lectures and published volumes, from Vitruvius and other Roman Authors in their own language, indicate a degree of familiarity with the writings of the Ancients; which, if not acquired in his earlier youth while at school, prove that he made himself master of the Latin language with an indefatigable desire for improvement, when at a later period he had learned to appreciate the value of its acquisi-Indeed, he seems to have had a peculiar facility tion. for the mastery of foreign languages, as it was not unusual to hear him converse with ease, in their own tongue, with Italian and French Architects, who were introduced to him; and his various publications abound with quotations from the best authors on the Art in those languages. At an early age he entered the office of Mr. Dance, whose reputation is well known to us all, as that of a man endowed with great originality of thought and feeling for art, which he has happily carried out in his Lunatic Hospital of Saint Luke's, and the Prison of Newgate. Under this gentleman, for whom he ever entertained the most affectionate respect, he learned the first rudiments of Architecture, and subsequently, with his concurrence, removed to the office of Mr. Holland. It does not appear that he was regularly bound as an articled pupil; \* but that under these distinguished Architects he gradually acquired a knowledge of the profession.

In 1772, when he was nineteen years of age, he obtained the silver medal at the Royal Academy, for the best drawing of the elevation of the Banqueting House at Whitehall; and four years afterwards the gold medal of the same Institution was awarded to him for the best design of a Triumphal Bridge.

In such conceptions of the young student a practical design, calculated for ordinary circumstances, is not expected ; in fact, we rather look for that overflowing of the fancy, which, unrestrained by motives of economy, by limitation of space, or peculiarity of customs, and not restricted to any period, chooses provinces for its treasury, the most flourishing period of our Art for its epoch, and the unfettered region of the fancy for the storehouse of its conception. This was felt by our youthful aspirant for fame and honours, and the design for a triumphal bridge became a "via triumphalis" over the expance of a wide river, and colonades, porticos, vestibules and magnificent halls, circular, square or oblong, left ample scope to the invention. It is a poet's dream, indicative of vast fertile resources in the mind of the Author. In contemplating this happy composition, we cannot but feel struck with the idea, that the design of Piranesi, for a similar subject, may have suggested the first ideas, for his subject; yet the publication of that volume of the "Magnificenza" had been so recent, having

<sup>•</sup> The humble sphere of Sir John Soane's early life precludes this idea. It is said that his sister was a servant in Mr. Dance's family: if so, it but proves the strength of Sir John Soane's character, which enabled him to raise himself by his own exertions and abilities to so distinguished a rank.

appeared only a few years previously, when the intercourse between Rome and the capital of this empire were less frequent than at present, and consequently affording less opportunity of immediately referring to works of such recent publication, that I am inclined to think that Mr. Soane was entirely indebted to his own fancy for the conception: unless, indeed, he had borrowed perhaps a passing thought from a similar design by T. Sandby, Arch., professor at the Royal Academy, and which has been presented to this Institute by our honorary member, J. Britton Esq.

Sir William Chambers seems to have been struck with this brilliant evidence of genius in the young Architect, and took occasion in that, or in the subsequent, year to introduce him to the King, who nominated him travelling Student of the Royal Academy for three years, with an allowance of  $\pounds 60$ per annum, and the like sum for travelling expenses; the nomination of the travelling Student being then, I believe, the act of his Majesty, and not, as now, exercised by the Academicians.

Mr. Soane left London for Italy in March, 1777, and during his stay in that soil of the arts, which lasted for three years, he measured the ancient remains with great assiduity, and made various original designs, among which the more important were those for a British Senatehouse and a Royal Palace. In both these he seems to have let his fancy range among that vastness and profusion, which distinguish the Palaces, the Thermæ and Temples of Imperial Rome; and some of which is inherited even by the Papal City. The circular porticos of St. Peter's form, with some modification, important features in his Senatehouse ; and the Halls, Vestibules, Exedræ, and Porticos of the Baths of Caracalla and Diocletian, are the groundwork of similar compartments in the body of his buildings. One might almost be led to imagine that he was, by a species of forethought, led to turn his attention to that class of edifice which, in after time, circumstances concurred

to render subjects of reflection to his maturer studies. These two designs, which are published in his works, abound in graceful and happy adoption of ancient art, skilfully adapted to modern usages; and there are portions never equalled by himself in future times, nor excelled by any other. I cannot refrain from noticing the angular porticos of his Palace, and the water court of his Senatehouse, as splendid instances of his imagination and skill.

It is difficult to ascertain to what extent Mr. Soane carried his studies of the antique edifices of Rome. There was a rumour at the time of his return, that he had lost, in his journey homewards, almost all his sketches and drawings made in that city, but a vast number are still preserved of his original studies; these consist of the details of the amphitheatre of Vespasian, of the triumphal arches and other monuments of the eternal city, as well as of the circular temple at Tivoli, which are neatly, but timidly drawn. In fact, at no period was Sir John Soane distinguished for mastery of his pencil; and his reputation has rested on the design, not on the drawing of his conceptions: still his sketches, drawn with a common pen, evinced great feeling for proportion and accuracy of effect and detail. Much of his time must have been devoted to original compositions; for such combinations as those of his Senate-house and Royal Palace must have occupied a great portion of his attention : and it was during this period he produced another design for a Triumphal Bridge, similar in its general arrangements to his old idea, and having sent it to the Academy of Fine Arts at Parma was elected a member of that body.

It is a curious circumstance, that in the year after he left England for Italy, his first publication appeared in print. It seems to be probable, that he had prepared designs for the work before he set out on his travels, and had left them for publication in the hands of Mr. Taylor, the Bookseller.

Mr. Soane \* first appeared then as an Author in the publication of a series of designs, consisting of plans, elevations, and sections, for temples, baths, casines, pavilions, garden seats, and obelisks, published in 1778. The class of subjects here chosen is that with which the portfolios of every young man, who at all practices design, abounds : they are conceived in all the weakness of the style then prevalent. His plans but rarely show ingenuity, and his sections and elevations very seldom rise to mediocrity; in fact, they generally would be a discredit to the Tyro of the present day. But in thus condemning the juvenile productions of Mr. Soane, let us not forget the disadvantages under which the student laboured at that period, and many of which were not removed even when he, who now addresses you, was pursuing his studies. Of the important work of Stuart's Athens, only one volume had appeared in 1762, and so unprepared were the architects of that day for a style of architecture completely at variance with their established notions, that this volume, so fruitful in its subsequent results, was in the possession only of the curious, of the antiquarian, and affluent; appreciated rather for its archæological information than valued for those new views of art, which the monuments it illustrated developed to the Architect. At that time, and even up to within twelve or fifteen years since, casts from the antique were unknown. Those rich stores of fancy and design were closed to our architects, who rarely visited Italy-Greece never. The works, in illustration of the modern edifices of France and Italy, had not vet appeared. Is it then to be wondered at, if, with these disadvantages, the youthful productions of the subject of this memoir did not rise above mediocrity, and gave no promise of those works which he subsequently produced? If such are our advan-

<sup>•</sup> The original orthography of his name seems to have been without the final E, for his name is spelt SOAN on the title of this work, as well as in the Catalogues of the Royal Academy, to the fourth exhibition of which he was a contributor. Why he added in after years the E to his name, and at what period, it is difficult to ascertain.

tages, which he possessed not, it behoves us to run the race with greater vigor, and that, with all these aids to our studies and improvement, we do as ample justice to our rich stores of knowledge, as Mr. Soane did to the slender opportunities which he had of improvement and instruction in the higher branches of the art.

Whilst in Italy he made the acquaintance of Mr. Thomas Pitt, afterwards Lord Camelford, and many other gentlemen, who continued their friendship to him to their death, and nearly all of whom he outlived. He likewise was introduced to the eccentric bishop of Derry, subsequently the Earl of Bristol, by whom he was employed to make several designs both at Rome and immediately upon his return to England, and from which he derived no immediate pecuniary compensation, a fact which he somewhat injudiciously records in one of his works; for unfortunately the disappointment, attendant upon the just expectation of remuneration for the exercise of his abilities and the occupation of his time, was not softened in after times

The second publication, which issued from the pen and pencil of Mr. Soane, appeared in 1788 and is a folio volume, containing designs for houses executed in various parts of the country, from the period of his leaving Italy in 1780 to 1788. The style and matter of his introduction reminds the reader very forcibly of his subsequent lectures delivered at the Royal Academy, and contains many allusions, with a perhaps somewhat ostentatious display, to Vitruvius, Alberti, and other writers. It is curious to mark the coincidence, which occurs in some of his remarks, with the circumstances of this period :--- " In the present times there is a fashion even in architecture," he observes, "a fashion which renders learning and application needless, and teaches her boldly to attempt every thing -a fashion, that has brought forward men, whose works, replete with foreign absurdities, future ages will view with wonder and astonishment. Doubtless, the judicious artist

will find many things in the arrangement and decorations of modern French and Italian houses, worthy of his serious attention; but the absurdities, daily intruded on us by French refinements, introduced without the least regard to climate and mode of living, are too gross to escape censure." The plans in this volume, which are exclusively for private houses, are beyond all praise, their distribution being simple, convenient, and striking in effect. The elevations, with one or two exceptions, are as deficient in taste as the plans are admirable in conception. The entablatures are rarely more than one-sixth the height of the column, the cornices are meagre, and the openings generally without dressings. The chimneys, a feature upon which he bestowed so much care in after times, are insignificant and unsightly. In one respect, Mr. Soane seems to have been particularly felicitous, and that was in making additions to old mansions, so as to give increased comfort, and at the same time to produce far greater importance and embellishment to the original building. Throughout this series of designs, Greek architecture does not appear to have had any influence upon the taste of Mr. Soane; but his Orders, when introduced, and that is but seldom, are of the school of the Adams's, without boldness or breadth of effect.

About 1788, he married Miss Smith, niece to Mr. Wyatt, an eminent builder, but no relation of the family so distinguished in architecture. Shortly after, through the death of Mr. Wyatt, Mr. Soane succeeded, in right of his wife, to a very considerable fortune.

In the course of this same year of 1788, in which he published the work which we have just noticed, he was appointed, upon the death of Sir Robert Taylor, to the honorable and lucrative office of Architect to the Bank of England, after a spirited contest with some others of the leading Architects of the day. The Bank must be considered as the Capo d'opera of Sir John Soane; the very difficulties, which he had to encounter, contributed to his success; for the unwearying attention, which he was obliged to bestow upon the arrangement of the plan, was too congenial with his natural disposition, not to contribute materially to enable his fancy to have its full play. The interior, nay the exterior also, displays many aberrations of genius, and too often an attempt at effect by ignoble means; but all must allow that the arrangement of the Rotunda and adjoining halls, so calculated to recall the Thermæ of Ancient Rome in the general outline, the elegant passage which affords access to the Rotunda, the Lothbury Court with its triumphal arch and lateral porticos upraised on flights of steps, some of the inner courts, and the charming Doric Vestibule or Prince's Street entrance, display a profound acquaintance with picturesque effect both of outline and chiaro scuro, and offer to the student many valuable studies of detail.\* The E., W. and North sides present the most splendid lengths of dead wall, that can be cited in any

• The opinion here expressed of the Bank of England, may by some be considered as the impression of early prepossessions, or the result of prejudiced friendship. I am therefore gratified in adducing the following extract from a Report on the house and museum of Sir John Soane, read to the Société libre des Beaux Arts, at Paris, on the 29th of November, 1836, written by Mons. J. J. Hittorff, Architect, the judgment of one at all events beyond the suspicion of bias or prejudice. This paper was transmitted to me about ten days after I had read my own Review, for the purpose of my delivering it into Sir John Soane's own hands :---

"L'agrandisement ou peut être la reconstruction presqu'entière de la Banque de Londres est l'ouvrage, qui contribua le plus à sa reputation."

" Ce fut en 1788, quelque tems après son retour d'Italie, qu'il en fut chargé. Le goût et le savoir, écrit à ce sujet un Auteur Anglais, avec les quels il remplit sa tâche, firent voir que le choix de l'Architecte ne pouvait être meilleur. Le début était doublement heureux, car le jeune Artiste trouva dans les Directeurs de l'Etablissement des hommes, comme il y en a trop peu, qui secondèrent toutes ses vues, pensant avec raison que l'auteur d'un projet, devenu son propre juge, se jugera aussi sévèrement et avec une capacité moins incertaine, que ne peut le faire toute autre personne étrangère à l'Art. Une grande économie alliée a des beautés du premier ordre, tel fut le résultat et la récompense de cette sage conduite."

"Il n'entre pas dans mon objet de vous décrire dans toutes ses parties cette importante construction. Il vous suffira de savoir que les connoissances et les critiques Anglais s'accordent pour y admirer la solidité, la grandeur, l'élégance dans l'exécution des détails, une richesse sans exces, en un mot, un ensemble, qui atteste le talent et le jugement de l'Architecte. L'Edifice est un trapèze sur les côtés du quel s'élévent monument of modern times. Doors and windows are the main features, which give animation and expression to a facade. But precluded, as the Architect was, from affording numerous openings on these sides and from introducing any windows, he has so judiciously arranged his niches and decorative embellishments, as to keep alive the attention, to delight the fancy, and raise expectation at every step. The principal front is the least happy feature of the whole; for, if the general outline may be accused of a want of height, now more apparent that the lofty range of private buildings raise their gigantic elevations on the opposite side of Prince's Street, the centre of the south side, the principal feature, is deficient in importance and disappoints the spectator. Here Sir John should have risen with the occasion; and by the adoption of a gigantic order, rising high above the rest, have given a more pyramidal form to his outline, and that dignity and importance to the principal entrance, which now it so much wants. Still the fancy loves to linger on the Bank, and he must be insensible indeed, who does not experience strong emotions, as he passes through the various parts of the building, and

des façades de 250 à 450 pieds de longueur. L'irrégularité du terrain, de grandes inégalités dans la hauteur du Sol offraient beaucoup de difficultés à vaincre. Elles n'empêchèrent pas l'Artiste de distribuer l'intérieur de la manière la mieux entendue et la plus commode pour les besoins du service. De vastes salles, des cours spacieuses variées de formes et de dimensions, présentent les aspectes les plus pittoresques et les plus divers. On y voit plusieurs rotondes d'une noble simplicité, surmontées de Dômes et de Voutes en pierre. L'Œil et l'esprit sont frappés des combinaisons ingénieuses qui ont présidé à la distribution de la lumière. Les effets de celle ci et de la perspective, calculés pour les localités et les donnés de l'Architecture, sont souvent merveilleuses. Il y a aujourdhui près de vingt ans que je vis cet Edifice. L'impression de son ensemble fut telle sur moi, que le souvenir ne s'en est pas effacé ; cependant la reproduct on souvent heureuse d'une foule de beaux motifs et de charmans details, puisés dans les restes de l'Architecture Antique, et dans l'Architecture Orientale moderne, n'a peut être pas produit cette fusion complette, qui imprime au tout le caractère de l'unité et de l'individualité. On rapporte que Canova, après avoir rendu un éclatant hommage au talent que M. Soane avait déployé dans ce monument, avait dit n'y découvrir qu'un défaut c'est que dans ses nombreuses parties, ouvrage d'un Architecte unique, il y avait de quoi faire une belle réputation à plusieurs. Cette observation fine et juste en contient à la fois l'éloge et la critique.

does not recognise the master mind, which, even amidst many weaknesses, reigns throughout.

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There is one very important circumstance connected with the Order adopted for the exterior of the Bank. The general system, prevalent among the Architects of this period, had been that of Italian architecture of the\* Palladian School; but too often materially deprived of its expression and breadth by the admission of a class of meagre ornament derived from the baths of the Romans, and introduced by the Adams'. Instead of recurring to the noble examples, which the ruins of Ancient Rome still offer to the student, they sought rather the imitation of the masters of the modern school. Consequently, the proportions of the ancient Orders were materially altered, their breadth of effect was destroyed, and a multiplicity of mouldings in cornices superseded the preponderance of plain fascias, the evidence of a pure style. In the previous designs of Mr. Soane all these defects are apparent; but in adopting the order of Tivoli for the predominant feature of the Bank, he made a most felicitous choice :--the masculine vigor and breadth of effect of this Corinthian materially influenced not only his own future productions, but also those of his contemporary and succeeding Architects. The construction of the Bank also called forth all the science of the Architect: the site of this important edifice and of the houses, which were subsequently taken down and added to the precinct, was a complete bog; consequently the rottenness of the soil required the utmost care, and every precaution then in practice was adopted to secure a good and stable foundation for the buildings. In these precautions he was most successful;

\* Sir William Chambers is in this country, and perhaps in any other, the Architect who has, since Palladio's own time, best followed the style and principles of that great master. It is remarkable, that the example of our countryman has not had a greater influence upon the English school; but the introduction of Grecian Architecture, at the very period when he was in the zenith of his reputation, gave another direction to the taste of the public and of the profession. for so solid were the substructions, that, up to the period of his retiring from the honourable appointment of Architect to the Bank, which he had held for forty-five years, no material settlement was perceptible in any part; and if, within these few months, symptoms have appeared of some defects, they are to be attributed to circumstances which have recently arisen, and over which he had no control, and which no Architect could have anticipated as likely to occur. Besides this difficulty in the foundations, the original superstructure also exhibited in several parts evidence of decay, and he was obliged to pull down most of the old buildings and reconstruct them anew. It is to be regretted, that in some instances he did not adhere to the original design of the Halls which he altered ; but perhaps it is too much to expect that an Architect, ambitious to distinguish himself by originality of conception, should tamely adhere to an old design, and neglect the favourable opportunity of proving his own genius, for the sake of rendering such strict justice to the skill and taste of those, who had gone before. It remains to be seen whether his conduct in this respect was singular; or whether the course he pursued, and for which he has been blamed, is adopted by those, who may be subject to the like temptation.

In the year 1791, he was appointed clerk of the works to Saint James's Palace, the two Houses of Parliament, and other public buildings at Westminster. In 1794 or 1795, he received the nomination of Architect for new buildings in the Royal Woods, Parks, and Forests. After having resigned the first of these appointments, Mr. Soane was directed in 1794, by a committee of the House of Lords, "to turn his attention during the course of the summer to what alterations could be made to render the House of Lords and the rooms and offices appertaining thereto more commodious, consistently with the general plan of the adjoining buildings." We can conceive the exalted feelings with which Mr. Soane received these instructions, and the conscious pride with which he must have entered upon the bright prospect of realising some of those gorgeous and imposing dreams of his former years, and carrying into effect, though perhaps on an humble scale, the fondly cherished idealties of his Roman conceptions. He was then forty-one years of age; a period when a man is in the full vigour of his intellect, and his youthful impassioned fancy is mellowed and subdued by experience, and practice carries into useful application the stores, which he has laid up in former times. It is true that the mass of incongruous erections, with which he was surrounded, was enough to baffle the utmost ingenuity of the most laborious study; but still he was bound down by no style uncongenial to his taste, and his judges were to be his Sovereign and the House of Lords. The plans which we have of this design, display his usual felicity of arrangement; the parts are rarely guilty of two minute sub-divisions; his apartments and halls are generally noble in size, and uniform in their proportions. The style is Græco-Roman, the Order Corinthian. The subject was a favourite one, and was dwelt upon with delight throughout his after existence; for even when the hope of realisation had passed away, the Exhibition at the Royal Academy contained, almost each succeeding year, some finely wrought out portion of a work, which must be called his finest design. I have said, when the hope of realisation had passed away : for alas! considerations of economy, the exercise of influence in favour of a successful rival, or some other unfortunate circumstance, prevented this striking design from being now numbered among the monuments of the metropolis.

In 1795, Mr. Soane was elected an Associate of the Royal Academy, and in 1802, an Academician.

In 1806, he was appointed Professor of Architecture; a distinguished position in the profession, which gave him the opportunity of influencing most materially the taste of the rising generation. The very limited num-

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ber of lectures, which the Professors are required to give, does not allow of that enlarged treatment of the subject, which it calls for. To imagine the term Architecture to be confined to that of Greece and Rome, is but a narrow view; and by excluding Egyptian, Hindù, Arab, and Gothic, precludes the Architect from embracing sources of new impressions and varied effects, totally distinct, and as beautiful as distinct. Consequently, six lectures embraced only the elements of what is called Classic Architecture, with a rapid glance at the same style, as revived in Italy and carried into execution by Palladio and the Architects of his school.

Practical Architecture was also necessarily omitted. Thus the Professor with his hands tied could not do justice to his subject. Yet it must be confessed that, at the period, his lectures produced considerable effect. They directed the attention of the student to the pure examples of ancient and modern times; they inculcated a high tone of morals in professional practice; and they excited in the breast of the young architect, a glow and ambition for distinction. But when these lectures at a later period, although extended by an additional series, came to be repeated; and the later researches of subsequent travellers, and the improved acquaintance, which we had acquired in other styles of art and particularly in Gothic, were overlooked; and when the Professor did not advance with the progress of the age; the repetition became wearisome, and failed of exciting that attention which they formerly commanded. The numerous attendance, therefore, of visiters and students, attracted in the first instance by the novelty of the subject and by the prodigious number, variety, and beauty of the drawings, gradually dwindled away, and the chair of Professor of Architecture, at the Royal Academy, became a title without those results to the Art, which it ought to produce.

It should be noticed that the courses of lectures were

suspended, after being continued some time, on account of certain reflections, which the Professor made upon the edifices of a brother Academician. He conceived, that he was called upon to remark upon the modern as well as ancient productions of Architecture ; and that it was his duty to comment upon the works of a distinguished living Artist, whose example might be pernicious. It is not for me to consider whether the criticism might have been correct, or if it proceeded from any other motive than a sense of duty. In judging of public men, we are safest in drawing our conclusions from apparent causes. But, taken even in its most favorable point of view, it might have occurred to the Professor, that hardly any urgency could justify so great a departure from that professional courtesy, which should exist between those following the same pursuit; and that even the just criticism of a professional man, on the productions of his cotemporaries, will rarely be attributed, however wellgrounded it may be, to any other than an ungenerous feeling, and is sure to revert on the critic.

The members of the Royal Academy felt that propriety, which was due to the eminent Architect whose work had been criticised, and which had not been so apparent to the Professor. A resolution of the Council appeared to him to derogate from the dignity of the chair, which he occupied, and the lectures were suspended. This was a great loss to the students, which nothing either on the one part or the other could justify. If the Professor considered his independence compromised, he should have resigned. If he did not, the council should have required the continuance of the course without the offensive strictures; and, if that availed not, should have appointed another to supply the important loss experienced by the young men, who looked up to them for protection and instruction. But a mistaken pride on the one hand, and a false delicacy on the other, caused a suspension of the lectures for some

years, and similar feelings at a later period, neutralised the advantages, which might be derived from the lectures on Architecture. The profession now look with intense anxiety to the appointment of a successor to Sir John Soane; and anticipate, from their well-qualified Brethren in that Institution, a Professor who shall do justice to a subject inferior to none other in importance, and second to none in extent and the general interest which it carries with it.

In the later years of his professional practice, Mr. Soane erected the following public edifices :---considerable additions to Chelsea Hospital-houses in Regent Streetthe National Debt Office-the Freemason's new Hall, attached to the Hall in Great Queen Street-a new royal entrance to the House of Lords-the Courts of Law in Westminster-the Board of Trade and Council Offices at Whitehall, and Churches at Walworth, Bethnal Green, and Mary-le-bone. These are more distinctly the productions of the later style of our Architect, and subjected him to severe criticism. Indeed, it must be owned that among some qualities, which we must recognise as the fruits of a well-stored mind, there are the peculiar defects to which we have already alluded; and which, we fear it must be ackowledged, have not added to that well-deserved reputation, which he had acquired as the Architect of the Bank of England. His last work, the State Paper Office, in Saint James's Park, with many peculiarities, is still a fine production : the plan is arranged with his usual skill, and the details of his façades only require greater vigor and boldness of profile, in order to make this edifice rank with the masterpieces of Italian art.

In 1828, Sir John Soane published a volume of designs for public and private buildings, the engravings of which are of so inferior a nature, that justice is not done to his powers; and from want of correct drawing, his finest designs bear the impression of feebleness and distortion.

Allusion has already been made to the zeal and fervor with which, from his very first introduction to public notice, he followed up his professional career. At no period was he influenced by sordid motives; but took a pride in collecting, at whatever cost, marbles and casts from ancient fragments, as well as a well-stored library, becoming the distinguished rank which he held in the profession. He had, previously to his nomination as Professor at the Royal Academy, procured a fine series of antiques and works of art: but, when he was called to that chair, he conceived himself forced from his appointment to render his museum and library still more complete, not only as objects of reference for himself, but as illustrations of the principles which he laid down for his pupils, and for the students at the Royal Academy. This feeling became in time a passion; and as each acquisition appeared to other eyes to render the series more complete, in him it seemed but to create a new desire for addition; and in order that it might become still more unique, no price was deemed by him too great, which might render the Soane Museum an object of interest in the eyes of his countrymen and foreigners. Thus the splendid Egyptian Sarcophagus, which had been brought to Europe by Belzoni, and offered to the British Museum for the sum of £2000, was, upon its being declined by the Trustees of that establishment as an excessive demand, eagerly purchased by Sir John Soane in 1824, and placed in a prominent situation among the reliques of Greek and Roman art. The possibility, that one of his own blood might not succeed to his professional connexion and his reputation, and the desire of perpetuating his name at all events in some striking manner in reference to his own personal predilections, and of transmitting to posterity his ardent love for his profession, suggested the idea of leaving this rich store of valuable antiquities to the Nation, and by a liberal endowment, to ensure its utility for succeeding generations of Architects.

In 1833, he procured an act of parliament, vesting the Museum in trustees for national use, and enabling him to carry into full effect his generous intentions.

Much has been said, with great severity and unkindness, respecting Sir John Soane's appropriation of so large a portion of his private fortune to this object. But it should be recollected, that he for many years had been in extensive practice and in possession of ample means, which produced a considerable income. Other men might have lavished this in the luxuries of the day, and by a dazzling extravagance might have passed unnoticed; or, if noticed, have been praised for their lavish profuseness. But Sir John was a man of little personal indulgence ; his enjoyment consisted in appropriating that, which might be considered as properly devoted to his individual comforts, to the amassing his collection and increasing those valuable stores, which might be useful to a future generation, and perpetuate his name as the benefactor of his profession. The miser hoards up his store to aggrandise his race-but may not the children's children of Sir John Soane be proud of that public spirit, which, even at the sacrifice of a personal comfort, induced their forefather to connect the name they bear with an endowment, devoted to the cultivation of that art, in connexion with which, in this country at least, his fame must descend to the latest posterity.\*

\* A côté de ce bel example de dévoument civique vient se placer un acte non moins honorable, et qui honore autant les architectes Britanniques que leur vénérable doyen. Je veux parler de la médaille qu'ils firent frapper en son honneur. L'antiquité et les temps modernes, aux epoques du plus vif enthousiasme pour les Arts n'offrent rièn de plus glorieux. Felicitons nous en notre siècle et puissiez vous Messieurs ajouter un nouveau prix aux temoignages d'estime et de veneration dont M. Soane a été l'objet, puissiez vous exprimer votre sympathie pour la louable démarche des Architectes Britanniques par un autre non moins honorable pour la grande Bretagne que pour la France, en addressant à l'auteur de la Banque d'Angleterre et aux mêmes titres, qui lui valurent sa glorieuse distinction, le diplôme de Membre Honoraire de notre Société. *Extract from the paper of Monsr. Hittorff above quoted*. The closing circumstance of Sir John Soane's public life was calculated, more than any other, to afford satisfaction to his sensitive mind, and was the more gratifying, as it assured him of the regard in which he was held by the great body of his professional brethren, by whom his passionate love for his art was duly appreciated. The essential services which he had rendered to Architecture, by his personal example, during a long period of his honorable professional practice, and by the precepts contained in his Lectures, induced his brother Architects to have a medal struck in his honour. This is too recent an occurrence to require more than an allusion to it as an event, which shed a beam of unmingled happiness upon the last days of an artist, venerable for his years, his genius, and his liberality.

Having thus noticed most of the important events in the course of the long and eventful public life of Sir John Soane, I shall not longer occupy your time, except to condense into one short summary a brief review of his character and works. In person, Sir John Soane was tall and of a graceful figure, his features were well proportioned, the outline of a finely formed acquiline nose giving a marked character and refined expression to his profile. We are indebted to his kindness, for a copy of his portrait by Sir Thomas Laurence, which is a striking likeness, and vividly portrays his characteristic shrewdness and vivacity. In his deportment, he was extremely dignified, and, when nothing tended to ruffle his mind, his manner was animated and prepossessing in an eminent degree. In temper, he was irritable, impetuous and untractable-he could not bear contradiction-and opposition induced in him the idea of personal hostility. He was passionately fond of literary pursuits, and derived great pleasure from perusing the works of the most distinguished authors of our own and foreign countries. His own style of writing frequently evinced considerable polish, and abounded with sentiments at once exalted and impressive. In the pursuit of his profession, to which he was devotedly attached, he was most ardent, and spent a fortune in the collection of a museum and professional library, unequalled in that particular class in extent and value by any private collection in the kingdom. His ideas of professional honour and uprightness have never been called in question ; and these principles which guided himself, he constantly instilled into the minds of the student. His notions of the intellectual superiority of the Artist, at the same time that it induced in his own conduct the strictest integrity and most honorable feeling, rendered him impatient of criticism ; and he felt with the utmost acuteness those unsparing reflections upon his peculiarities, as a man and as an artist, which a better disciplined mind would have disregarded.

There are three distinct periods in the taste of Sir John Soane. The first is that when, influenced by the school in which he had been educated, his compositions were timid and poor in effect. His second was, when experience and practice had proved to him the want of importance in his original style of composition, and when he adopted the Corinthian of Tivoli, which, with its boldly conceived profiles and full enrichments, gave a greater solidity and character to his compositions. The third one was when, still retaining a feeling for ancient art, he sought for novelty in the employment of embellishments, trivial and unmeaning, and by the introduction of meretricious effects lowered the character of the art. Throughout the last period of his declining years, he seemed often desirous, as in some parts of the Bank, at Dulwich College, the Courts of Law, the royal entrance to the House of Lords, and other places, to shake off the trammels of the Orders; and by a continuity of small mouldings, and the absence of cornices or other regular details, to produce equal effect. In this, however, the results were rarely happy, and show

how dangerous it is for an Artist to depart from those examples of the best masters and of antiquity, which have received the sanction of many ages and are founded upon good sense and good taste. His love of art was unbounded, and his generous appreciation of the talents of his compeers in Painting and Sculpture is best attested by the fact, that the productions of many of our most eminent artists grace the walls of that edifice, which, through his munificence, has now become public property. Callcott, Turner, Jones, Hilton, Eastlake, Danby, Bird and Daniell, Banks and Flaxman, Westmacott and Chantrey, have some of the happiest efforts of their genius in that house.

His contributions to charitable institutions, whether connected with art or of a general nature, were bestowed with unbounded munificence, and proved that his heart was alive to the wants and distresses of the unfortunate, the fatherless, and the widow. It was his delight to witness the comforts and blessings to which his bounty ministered. Possessed of a liberal fortune, he was gratified, on great occasions in the opportunity of evincing a splendid generosity: and in many instances, as in his donations to the fund for the Duke of York's Monument, to which he contributed a £1000, to the Freemason's Lodge, and to the Royal and British Institutions, he displayed an exalted liberality, which was worthy the spirit of nobility. In fact, his liberality, whether in the promotion of art, or the relief of misery, knew no bounds. Throughout his whole career, as Professor of the Royal Academy, he attached to himself the regard of the students in Architecture, by the kind and encouraging manner in which he always addressed them, by the deep interest which he constantly expressed in their efforts, and by the strong and frequent appeals to their ambition, by which he sought to rouse their zeal and instil into their minds elevated views of the importance and dignity of the career upon which they had entered.

We are led by his own assurances to believe, that he viewed with great pleasure the institutions, which have arisen in late years for promoting the study of our Art. His munificent donation of £250 to the Architectural Society, and of £750 to this Institute, must make his professional brethren ever hold his memory in great regard and estimation. Whatever may be the difference of opinion in those, who profess to judge of art and artists, in regard to those principles of taste, which influence their conceptions, we need only contemplate Sir John Soane on the one hand as the Architect of the Bank of England, and on the other, as the first benefactor of the Institute of British Architects: in either of these views he is entitled to our admiration, our gratitude, and our respect.

Requiescat in pace.

### The following List contains the most important Works of the late Sir John Soane, and his principal Appointments, arranged Chronologically; together with the dates of some of the principal incidents of his Life, drawn up by George Bailey, Esq. M.I.B.A.

Born at Reading	1753
DOTH HE RECOMMENDED IN THE PARTY OF THE PART	1768
Exhibited his first Drawing at the Fourth Exhibition at the Royal	Sand Sand
Academy "Front of a Nobleman's Town House"	1772
The same year he obtained the Silver Medal at the R.A. for the best	10000000
drawing of the Front of the Banquetting House at Whitehall .	1772
	1774
	1776
	1777
His first publication, entitled " Designs in Architecture," appeared in .	1778
Elected Member of the Academy of Fine Arts at Parma, and returned	1500
to London from Italy June Designed and executed extensive alterations and additions to Mulgrave	1780
Designed and executed extensive alterations and additions to Mulgrave	
Hall, near Whitby, Yorkshire, for the Earl of Mulgrave-and to	
	1784
— A House for the Rev. G. Gooch, Norfolk	1784
	1784
	1785-8
	1785 - 8
Appointed Architect and Surveyor to the Bank of England, 16th October	1788
Rebuilt Blackfriars Bridge, at Norwich	1789
Rebuilt Blackfriars Bridge, at Norwich	
Mr. Gifford	1789
- A House for the Rev. Charles Collyer, Gunthorpe	1789
Extensive alterations and additions to Bentley Priory, near Stan-	
	1789-1790
to Skelton Castle, for John Wharton, Esq	1791
	1788-1794
Alterations and additions to Moggerhanger House, Bedfordshire,	
	1790-9
Appointed Clerk of the Works to St. James's Palace, the two Houses of	1100-0
	1791
Designed and executed alterations and additions to Barons Court, in	1151
	1791-2
	1791-2
Built his own House No. 19 Lincoln's Inn Fields	1700
-Buckingham House in Pall Mall, for the late Marquess of Buckingham }	1752
	1790-4
Designed and executed alterations and additions to Sulby Lodge, North-	
amptonshire the Seat of René Parne Fee	1700
amptonshire, the Seat of René Payne, Esq	1792
Designed and executed Tyringham Hall, near Newportpagnel, for Wm.	1793
Prood Fea	1500 0
	1793 - 6
the Entrance Cates and Lodge in Hude Dark amounts Cont	1794 - 1802
the Entrance Gates, and Lodge in Hyde Park, opposite Great	1004
Cumberland Street, (since taken down)	1794
A House for the Hon. Mrs. Yorke, (near Southampton)	1794
Became a Member of the Society of Antiquaries	1795
Elected Associate of the Royal Academy Appointed Architect for New Buildings and Repairs in the Royal Parks,	1795
Woods and Ferrets,	
Woods, and Forests. July Designed and executed extensive alterations and additions at Bagden	1795
Designed and executed extensive alterations and additions at Bagden	
House, for the Earl of Ailesbury.	1795
Ditto, at limton St. George, for Earl Patiett	1796
Designed and executed a House at Reading, for L. Austwick, Esq	1796
Alterations and additions to Holwood House, the Seat of the Rt.	
Hon. Wm. Pitt	1797-99

Erected a House in Stratton Street, Piccadilly, for Col. Graham Designed and executed alterations and additions to a House for the	1797—8
Countess of Pembroke, Grosvenor Square	1797-8
Company	1799
Company	1799
Designed and executed extensive alterations and additions to a House	
in St. James's Square, for Samuel Thornton, Esq	1799-1808
to Aynho, Bucks, the Seat of W. R. Cartwright, Esq	1800-1
Designed and executed the Banking-house in Fleet Street, for Messrs.	
Praeds & Co	1801
Elected Royal Academician	1802
Designed and executed alterations and additions at Albury Fark, the	1802
Seat of Samuel Thornton, Esq Ditto, at Cricket Lodge, near Chard, the Seat of the Viscount Bridport	1802
Designed and executed the Obelisk in the Market-place at Reading,	1002
erected at the expense of E. Simeon, Esq	1804
Built a Large House, Counting-houses, Warehouses, &c. in Fountain	
Court, Aldermanbury, for W. A. Jackson, Esq	1804
— A Villa, for himself, at Ealing	1804
Designed and executed alterations and additions to Port Eliot, St. Ger-	
mans, Cornwall, the seat of Lord Eliot, afterwards Earl of St.	1004
Germans	1804
at Ramsey Abbey, Huntingdonshire, the seat of W. H. Fellowes,	1804-1807
Esq to a House at Roehampton, for John Thomson, Esq	1804 - 1807 1804 - 1806
	1004-1000
Earl of St. Germans.	1805-1819
	1805-1806
Alterations and additions to Macartney House, Blackheath, the	
seat of the Hon, G. F. Lyttleton.	1806 - 1807
seat of the Hon. G. F. Lyttleton	1806
Erected a new Mansion at Moggerhanger, in Bedfordshire, for Stephen	
Thornton, Esq	1806-1811
A Monumental Tomb, in the Church-yard, at Leytonstone, in	1007
Essex, for Samuel Bosanquet, Esq.	1807 1807
Appointed Clerk of the Works of the Royal Hospital, at Chelsea	1007
Made Designs for the completion of Taymouth Castle, the seat of the	1808
Earl of Bredalbane . — for the Royal Academical Institution, at Belfast.	1808
Designed and executed a Mausoleum, adjoining the House of Mr. De-	
senfans, in Charlotte Street, Portland Place.	1808
the five new Houses, in Princes Street, forming " New Bank	
Buildings."	1808 - 1810
Buildings." — The new Infirmary, at Chelsea Hospital	1809
Read the first Lecture, Royal Academy, 27 March	1809
Repeated the first Lecture on the 8th January	1810 1810
Lectures stopped, at the fourth Lecture, on the 29th January	1010
Designed and executed alterations and additions to Whitley Abbey, near Coventry, the seat of The Rt. Hon. Lord Hood.	1810
the Entrance to the London Dock Company House, and to the	1010
Counting-house of Messrs. Thellusson, and Co. in Meeting-	
house Court, Old Jewry.	1811
Lectures resumed 9th January	1812
Designed and executed a House in Park Lane, for Mr. Kobins	1812
Alterations and additions to Everton House, Bedfordshire, the seat of	1010
William Astell, Esq. Designed and built his own House, 13, Lincoln's-Inn-Fields	1812 1812
Designed and built his own House, 13, Lincoln's-Inn-Fields	1012
the Now Collow at Dulwich College, to receive the Collection	
of Pictures, bequeathed by Sir Francis Bourgeois, and a Mauso- leum, wherein are deposited the remains of Sir F. Bourgeois, and	
Mr. and Mrs. Desenfans	1812
Elected Grand Superintendent of Works, to the United Fraternity of	
Freemasons	1813

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Designed and executed additions to the Earl of Hardwicke's House, in	
St. James's Square	1815
Appointed one of the Attached Architects to the Office of Works	1815
Designed and built a Farm-house, for Thomas Swinnerton, Esq. at But-	1816-1817
terton, in Staffordshire . Designed and executed extensive alterations and additions to the Bank-	1010-1017
ing-house, of Messrs. Grote, Prescott, and Co. in Threadneedle	
	1818
Street. Designed and built the National Debt Redemption and Life Annuities	
Office, in the Old Jewry. —— Alterations and additions to Marden Hall, near Hertford, the seat	1818-1819
Alterations and additions to Marden Hall, near Hertford, the seat	1010
of George Thornton, Esq	1818
near Deal	1813-1815
mear Deal	1820-1821
The new Law Courts, at Westminster, between	1820-1827
Designed and superintended the re-building of Wotton House, in Buck-	
inghamshire, the Seat of the Marquess of Chandos	1820-22
Chosen a Fellow of the Royal Society	1821
Designed and executed Pelwall House, near Market Drayton, for Purney	1821
Sillitoe, Esq a new Church at Walworth, in the Parish of St. Mary, Newington	1822
the new Scala Regia Royal Gallery and Library, in the House of	10.22
Lords.	1822-1824
Trinity Church, St. Marylebone	1824
A New Chapel in the Parish of St. Matthew, Bethnal Green .	1824
Designed and erected the New Office, for the Board of Trade and the Privy Council Offices	1824-7
—— Additional Committee-Rooms, House of Lords	1825
Additional Committee-Rooms, and a New Library for the House of	1020
Commons	1826
Commons the New Grand Masonic Hall, adjoining Freemason's Hall, in Gt.	
Queen Street Printed for private distribution, " Designs for public and private Build-	1826
Printed for private distribution, " Designs for public and private Build-	1007
Published, a Brief Statement of the proceedings respecting the New	1827
Law Courts, at Westminster	1828
Law Courts, at Westminster Designed and executed the New State-Paper Office in Duke Street, West-	
	1829-1833
the Ante-Room to the Sculpture Gallery of Sir Francis	
Chantrey, R. A. Received the honor of Knighthood from His Majesty King William IV.	1831
21st September	1831
Printed for private distribution, a "Description of the House and	1001
Museum on the North side of Lincoln's-Inn-Fields "	1832
Resigned the Appointment of Architect and Surveyor to the Bank,	
Procured on Act of Dollars to Consult 11 11 11 11 16th Oct.	1833
Procured an Act of Parliament for settling his Museum, Library, and Works of Art in Lincoln's-Inn-Fields, for the benefit of the	
Public	1833
Presented with Impressions in Bronze, Silver, and Gold, of a Medal,	1000
struck in his honor by the Architects of England March	1835
Received a Medal from the Société libre des Beaux Arts at Paris	1835
Elected Member of the Academy of Fine Arts at Vienna	1835
Elected Consigliere Corrispondente of the Academy of Fine Arts at	1996
Parma Elected Honorary Member of the Société libre des Beaux Arts, at Paris	1836
9th December	1836
Expired at his House in Lincoln's-Inn-Fields 20th January	1837

### The following is a List of the more important Designs and Compositions made by Sir John Soane.

A design for a British Senate House, and design for a Royal Palace.	1777	
	1777	
	1778	
	1778	
for a Summer Dining-room, for the Bishop of Derry, and various	1110	
for a Summer Dining-room, for the Dishop of Derry, and various		
designs for the improvement of his Lordship's private residence,	1770	1.77
at the Downhill, near Armagh, in Ireland	1778_	111
for an ornamental Dog-house	1780	
for a Mausoleum and Cenotaph, to the memory of Lord	1000	
Chatham. Designs in competition for two Penitentiary Houses, the one to contain	1778	
Designs in competition for two Penitentiary Houses, the one to contain		
600 Males, the other for 300 Females	1781	
for a building to correspond with the Senate-house at Cam-		
bridge, containing a Museum, Picture-Gallery, Lecture-Room, &c.	1791	
for additions to Caius College, Cambridge	1792	
Directed by a Committee of the House of Lords, to prepare designs to		
render the House of Lords, and the Rooms and Offices connected		
therewith, more commodious, and subsequently to design an entire		
new House of Lords.	1794	
Design for Entrance and Lodge in Hyde Park, from Piccadilly, exhibited	1796	
for additions to the East India House.	1796	
for the National Bank of Ireland	1799	
for a House at Weston, near Southampton, for W. Moffatt, Esq	1799	
for a House for Mr. Mansell	1799	
for a House for Mr. Mansell. for additions to Brazen-nose College, at Oxford	1807	
for alterations and additions to Coombe House, Devonshire, the		
Sect of Reymundo Putt Esa	1811	
Seat of Reymundo Putt, Esq for alteration and additions to Camolin Park, the Seat of Viscount		
	1815	
Valentia for a House, proposed to be erected at Butterton, in Staffordshire,		
Ior a House, proposed to be elected at Datterton, in Standards	1816	
for Thomas Swinnerton, Esq.		
Designs to connect the Entrances into Hyde Park and St. James's Park,		
with a Monument to commemorate the Splendid Victories of Tra-		
falgar and Waterloo, the entire group forming the Great Western	1816	
Entrance into the Metropolis, exhibited.	1010	
for a new Palace, proposed to be erected on Constitution Hill,	1821	
in the Green Park, exhibited.	1821	
for a new Church, for the Parish of St. Marylebone.	TOAL	
for an Entrance from St. James's Park into Downing Place,		
Downing Street, and Whitehall, for the entrance of the Board of		
Trade and Privy Council Offices, and for the completion of those	1826	
offices, and others connected therewith	1020	
for a Sepulchral Church, to be erected on the Parade in front of		
the Horse Guards, as a Monument to his late R. H. the Duke	1997	
of York	1827	
for a Monument to commemorate the Services of His Royal		
Highness the late Duke of York, as Commander-In-Ciller, sub-	1000	
mitted to the Committee	1829	

T. R. DRURY, PRINTER, 10, JOHNSON'S COURT, FLEET STREET.







