

REVIEWS.

A HISTORY OF ARCHITECTURE IN LONDON.

[By W. H. GODFREY, BATSFORD, 1911. 7s. 6d.]

Everyone has heard of the architecture of Athens, Rome, Florence, Venice, and possibly of Cambodia; or, at home, of Oxford, Bath, Edinburgh; but London cannot claim ever to have had a distinctive school of architecture. It has, however, set its own mark on what may not have been its own invention. Its buildings have been admirably adapted to its climate and the habits of its people, disproving mere plagiarism. National character is apparent in its restraint and good sense, as well as in its honest workmanship. Our Romanesque was an importation, but it is very different from that of Normandy or of the Poitiers district. The Henry III. portion of Westminster Abbey Church has French inspiration, but in quality it surpasses anything in France. Wren did not invent "the orders," but they were the grammar only of the beautiful language in which he wrote.

The title of this book might more correctly be "Architecture in London and its Neighbourhood." London formerly was a twentieth part of what it is to-day. Charlton in Kent and Holland House, when they were built, were country houses at some distance from the town. Hampton Court and Eltham, still further afield, are all included in this excellent book as they are all now enfolded in London's vast tentacles.

There is nothing theoretical or critical about this book of Mr. Godfrey's. It is rather a guide for the tourist or student whose headquarters are in London to direct him to all the best buildings in London and within twelve miles. Even the architect who has spent his life within that radius will be astonished at the great array of noble buildings when thus all brought together and catalogued. No work of importance seems to have been overlooked. There are

250 illustrations, and seven maps showing how the more attractive buildings may be reached. As to the plates, both photos and process work are admirable; the view of the stalls, St. Paul's Cathedral (p. 290), could not be surpassed. Re-constructions of buildings which have disappeared in whole or in part are given, and completed plans of St. Bartholomew's Church, Smithfield, Old St. Paul's, Charterhouse, Austin Friars, and the Fortune Theatre. This book ought to meet with a large sale, for it appeals to the tourist as well as the student.

THE ENGLISH STAIRCASE TO THE
END OF THE XVIIITH CENTURY, small 4to,
Batsford, MCMXI. 18s.

[BY THE SAME AUTHOR.]

This book is rather more technical than that noticed above, but should also be attractive to the general reader interested in the domestic history of his country.

The subject is thus divided: 1. Mediæval Stairs, the survivors being nearly all of stone, including the remarkable instance of that which led to the Dormitory at Hexham Priory, and that at Castle Rising. 2. The Newel type, which was probably an importation from Normandy. 3. The Early Renaissance Staircase, for which timber, in the less monumental buildings, soon became the favourite material, and led to the development of a style specially English and full of charm. 4. The Continuous Carved Balustrade synchronizing with the later Stuart Period. 5. The Later Renaissance. 6. The Georgian Period. The illustrations are on a lavish scale, 53 Plates and 55 Illustrations in the text. The photo plates are excellent, disclosing even the very tool marks on the old oak, and many scale details and plans are given for the benefit of the practitioner.

We have not in England such astonishing *tours de force* as at Chambord and Blois in Touraine. But in its solid construction, its domesticity, and convenience, combined with graceful and often highly-

picturesque forms, the English staircase was unsurpassed. How Sir Christopher Wren could ennoble a staircase may be seen at Page 62, where stonework and wrought-iron are both at their best. The splendour of the Hatfield staircase, due to its spacious planning, as well as its admirable carving, has hardly been surpassed in more modern times. That at Aston Hall is a typical example of the same period. That at St. George's, Canterbury, rather later, more homely, but very charming. A few here illustrated have since been demolished, including that of what was the Orthopædic Hospital, Hatton Garden. One of the latest developments in the more or less stately house, both in town and country, was the stone stair set with wrought-iron open-work supports to a light mahogany hand-rail. Although the petting of the house-dog was not carried in Stuart times to the extent it is now, that they were not altogether excluded from the ground floor is proved by the dog-gates of that time still to be found. A good example here, of rather earlier date, 1583, is given. The writer knows of a much later instance, about 1730, at a country house in Gloucestershire, where many strangers pass up and down without noticing any dog-gate, which is artfully made to fold and lie back as part of the dado of the wall lining, and to draw forward and expand to twice the width when required to fulfil its function.

W. N.