

cautions against fire. It was shown that no fire alarm apparatus of any kind was about the building, no Fire King or other extinguisher, not a hydrant nor a foot of hose. The sum total of provision against fire seems to have been—six buckets of water in each story of the rear building! No wonder the verdict of the jury exclaims against "such lamentable and culpable indifference."

The buildings were pronounced to be, if once thoroughly on fire, exceedingly dangerous in consequence of their peculiar construction. This is doubtless true; but there are hundreds, we might even say thousands, of buildings in the cities of Montreal and Quebec, the structure of which is to be condemned for like reasons. The frame work which supports them is of wood, but for the sake of warmth, of appearance, or of fashion the wooden frame is encased with brick, in most cases but four inches thick. When, therefore, the flames or the smouldering fire has sapped the strength of the wood supports, the fair-seeming wall of brick, having no sufficient strength to stand alone, topples and falls, and woe to those who work beneath.

A Montreal architect has himself declared, says the *Witness*, that three-fourths of all the houses in Montreal are unsafe in case of fire. And further, it is declared by the jury whose finding we are discussing, that from the evidence obtained at the inquest it appears that proprietors, architects, and builders have for years disregarded the city by-laws as to buildings, and have ignored the powers and prerogatives of the building inspector. It is not, however, surprising that the present incumbent of this office should be overlooked, when a builder testifies that in six years' experience in that city he never saw a building inspector on a building. Here, surely, is cause for municipal action to at least prevent the erection of more fire-traps. Which will Montreal do, abolish the office or dismiss the man?

There has unquestionably been great laxity in enforcing the law, inadequate though that law may have been; and there is great need for the placing of the department of the building inspector in that city upon a footing of intelligence and vigour. The recommendation made that the fire brigade should be informed by the department named of all buildings which, from the nature of their construction or the kind of business done therein, are hazardous, is a proper one; though we predict that the list of such buildings, if accurate, will be long. The evidence of Fire-Guardian Cairns at the inquest is suggestive on this point. He states: "I said to the men with

me, 'I will not take you into that lane.' I cautioned them to look out for that gable, and immediately afterward a portion of it fell; my reason for warning my men of this gable was because the late Chief Bertram had told me when the building was going up that the gable was dangerous, and if ever there was a fire not to let any of my men go in there."

That there is a measure of responsibility attaches both to those who design such buildings as the one in question, or the authorities who permit their erection, can scarcely be denied. We may go farther and affirm that underwriters should mark their reprehension of buildings of this class by refusing to insure them. This is a method stern and effectual of improving the character of urban structures.

Meantime, the blame of the calamity is not by this verdict fixed anywhere. The jury recommend that the authorities shall "use all the means at their disposal to solve the mystery," whatever that may mean. Let us hope the matter will not end till it is learned authentically who are the responsible parties, and having so learned let steps be taken accordingly.

Since the above was written we learn of the fall on Monday evening last of a brick building on Wellington street in this city, four stories in height, belonging to Messrs. Snarr & Sons, which had been condemned by the City Commissioner, and was being taken down. There were several men at work dismantling the building when the walls fell, and one of them was injured. The fact that the structure fell apart from inherent weakness is a sufficient proof, if any were needed, of the wisdom of the Commissioner in condemning it. What might have been the result if it had been allowed to be finished, machinery and operatives placed in it, or goods stored and clerks employed, and it had fallen with these inside, is dreadful to think of. Here is an instance of the need for supervision of buildings; and at the same time of the proper administration of his office by an officer of whose numerous duties include the inspection of new erections within the city limits.

THE EXPORT OF OUR LIVE CATTLE.

The present and future importance of the movement recently begun in the shipment to Britain of live stock, fully warrants the interest displayed in it by the press both here and in the old country. The ready sale which has been found in England for "American beef" shipped either live or dead, and the effect it has had in cheapening the price of butchers meat to a

class who need it and who use it largely, point to the permanency of the demand, and the consequent growth and development of this business. The reduction effected already in the price of meat to the English artisan by the shipments thus far made, must create increased request for it in the localities where hitherto its price made it a rarity, or at any rate made its consumption far smaller than it will be. Canadian and American meat sells now in Liverpool or Glasgow at from sixpence to eightpence sterling per pound, dressed weight, and it costs a penny the pound to get it conveyed thither. This reduction of from 20 to 30 per cent. in the price is a great boon to the British workman, and it is at the same time a price which well pays the Canadian producer. The price obtained here for live beeves of good quality today ought to encourage our farmers to engage more generally and more largely in the business of grazing. When it is considered how favorable is the prospect for a continual and increased with the British markets, those who have thus far hesitated, on account of the abrogation of reciprocity with the States, or for other reasons, to engage in stock raising from a fear that it would not pay, can now make the attempt, with good reason to believe that they will thereby benefit both their farms and their pockets. Only once, about 1864, did prices for live beeves reach what they are now, and the continuance of them is thought not unlikely by persons in the trade, while the improved accommodations, and increased facilities of transatlantic carrying, are likely, in the long run, to cheapen freights. It is the opinion of those who have resided in both countries, and have been long familiar with the live stock capacities of each, that for generations to come, Britain will be unable to raise cattle enough by many thousands to supply her wants, many will have to go out of cattle raising there, it will not pay them, and therefore, the probable demand thence justifies and requires energetic efforts to provide increased grazing ground in Canada.

If they desire to be perfectly safe in their experiment, let them arrange to conduct a dairy farm and raise stock in conjunction, as it were; so that, if one branch fail them, the other can be fallen back upon. The chances are altogether against both these descriptions of business, if properly conducted, proving unremunerative at the same time. It is to be remembered by those who fatten stock for Britain, that it is heavy beeves which are best suited for that trade, while for Canadian markets light ones, from 1100 to 1300 lbs. weight, are suited,