

MUNICIPAL ENGINEERS, CONTRACTORS AND MATERIALS

THE DOMESTIC CHIMNEY.

The strongholds which were erected about the period of the Conquest consisted of several storeys, and their roofs were used as a terrace for defence, thereby rendering the central hearth and opening impracticable, but as it was necessary to provide some exit for the smoke, the fireplace was made in the wall, and terminated in a loophole on the outside; this was an important step towards the construction of the chimney. Conisbrough and Rochester Castles furnish examples of this contrivance, which prevailed, without much variation, from the twelfth to the fifteenth century. Until the latter period the chimney, properly so called, appears to have been little known in England, or indeed in many other parts of Europe. The ancient Romans seem not to have been acquainted with it; and there is no trace of it in Italian houses up to the fourteenth century, by the middle of which it had become common at Venice, for an inscription over the gate of the school of Santa Maria della Carita states that in the year 1347 a number of chimneys were thrown down by an earthquake. We learn also from Muraton that in 1368, a Prince of Padua, on making a journey to Rome, took with him masons to make a chimney at the Inn at which he put up, "because in the city of Rome they did not then use chimneys, and all lighted the fire in the middle of the house on the floor." But, as Mr. Turner remarks, in seeking to ascertain the antiquity which should be assigned to chimneys, facts are often at variance with the statements of respectable writers. Existing remains prove that perpendicular flues were constructed in England in the twelfth century; yet Leland writing in the sixteenth century, speaks with surprise of a chimney in Bolton Castle, which he says was "finished or Kynge Richard the 2 dyed. One thyng I much notyed in the hawle of Bolton, how chimneys were conveyed by tunnells made on the syds of the walls betwyxt the lights in the hawle, and by this means, and by no covers, is the smoke of the harthe in the hawle, vnder strangely conveyed." We can only suppose with Mr. Turner that the principle of the modern chimney was understood long before the construction itself became general. The cost of remodelling the house would in very many cases prevent the improvement. In drawings of the time of Henry III., chimneys of a cylindrical form are represented rising considerably higher than the roof, and orders to raise the chimneys of the king's houses are frequent in this reign. Nevertheless, it was still the general custom even in the fourteenth century to retain the hearth in the middle of the room. When the wood was fairly ignited the smoke would not be great, and the central position of the fire was favorable to the radiation of heat. This method of warming the hall was continued long after fireplaces with chimneys had been erected in the smaller apartments. By the reign of Elizabeth the advantages of the new system were so well appreciated that ladies in their

visits to their friends, if they could not be accommodated with rooms with chimneys, were frequently sent out to other houses, where they could enjoy the luxury.

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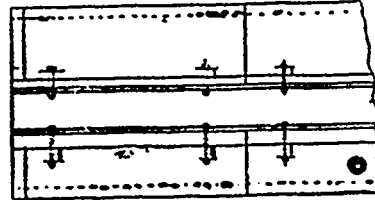
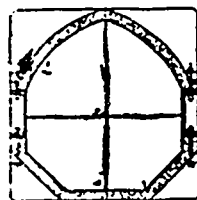
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