

BUILDING A PALACE.

BY P. LE SUEUR, ESQ.

I HAD been examining the plans of an edifice, in the erection of which I was a good deal interested, and had lingered among the masons and stone-cutters, wondering at the precision with which they shaped the blocks which were to enter into the arches, relievos and buttresses, the hammer and chisel never being used after they were once placed in their positions. The music of the steel upon the stones was still reverberating in the chambers of my brain when I sat down before a comfortable fire at home, prepared to revel in the pages of an interesting volume, when all unconsciously I found myself upon, or near, a large mound, broken here and there into quarries, from which a large number of men were engaged in cutting out stones of various sizes, forms, and degrees of hardness, colour, and beauty. From the quarries the stones were transported to work-shops to be dressed, though some were wrought in the open air, while others received no preparation at all, save the rough hewing which had served to detach them from the rock. Indeed, of the latter, not a few commended themselves at once as every way adapted to the purpose intended, being in fact broad, solid, "live" blocks, admirably suited for the foundations of a majestic edifice. As the stones, great and small, highly polished, ornamentally shaped, diversely tinted, or, severe in simplicity, as ponderous masses, had passed through the hands of the workmen, they were inspected by the architect, and when approved were carried thence.

Being desirous of knowing the precise purpose to which these materials were to be applied, I inquired from a little child who seemed to understand the whole matter, and he innocently replied: "Don't you know? Why, the King is building a beautiful palace, and so he keeps all these men at work."

"But," said I, "why do they work in different quarries and shops, some of them treating the others apparently as strangers?"

"Well, I don't understand it, but I am afraid they are not all agreed, and I am afraid, too, that some don't do their work very well, but perhaps you had better inquire from themselves."