

OUR NATIVE WOODS.

We thank the *Iowa College Quarterly*, issued by the Agricultural College, for calling attention to the absurd fashion which prevails so largely at the present time of finishing the interior of our dwellings with pine, and then painting it with imitations of our natural woods, when the real article can be had with a delicate graining far more beautiful and enduring than the best work of the painter's brush. We give the article in full, and trust that the readers of the CANADIAN HORTICULTURIST will be benefitted by the perusal.

It is a remarkable fact that, while in many parts of the west the timber belts that are close at hand contain an abundant supply of excellent building material, nearly all our buildings, public and private, are furnished from basement to ridgepole with an inferior wood brought from a distance. For outside work in wooden structures, however, this wood is the best that the country affords. Pine shingles, when properly made and laid, and pine weather-boards well painted, make most effective coverings for roof and wall. But when it comes to the inside finishing, it is certain that the builder would profit by a change of material. Three things are now exclusively used for inside work, namely, pine, paint and plaster. All three are objectionable on the score both of economy and good taste. For stucco, (plaster of paris,) is superior to common mortar; polish is better than paint; and the native woods are certainly superior to pine.

It is true that pine, being a soft wood, is easily worked, and that consequently pine window and door casings, baseboards, etc., can be got out and put up with less expense than those of hard wood. But it is the softness of pine that renders it unfit for inside finishing, since it is so easily defaced by the wear and tear to which it is subjected in living rooms. Moreover, pine casings, doors, etc., must be covered with paint by reason of the fact that when left bare or finished with oil the wood grows dark and dingy. Not so with the hard woods that grow on the borders of our streams. Nearly all of them will take a polish, which, when finished with oil or covered with varnish, presents a bright and beautiful surface that will last for centuries. A sugar maple board, for instance, will, when well seasoned and well worked, show a white, smooth, hard finish, with fine and delicate graining. Oak, (both red and white,) furnishes a surface that no pigment can equal; and the grain of the latter is, as everybody knows, especially rich and varied. So too, white ash, when reduced to smoothness, displays in its graining a variety of patterns which are far more attractive than any color whatever laid on with the brush. Now these bright, close grained woods, which are so imperishable and so susceptible of a beautiful polish, can be got in Iowa at a lower rate per thousand than pine of a like grade. Why then should we go on using a defective wood for inside work, and covering it with spurious imitations of the natural grains, when the genuine originals, thus coarsely imitated, are within the reach of all? The intrinsic value of our native woods for floors may be urged with equal force. It is