

THE
CANADIAN BUILDER,
 AND
MECHANICS' MAGAZINE.

THOMAS W. DYAS, A., P. L. S., EDITOR.

LONDON, ONT., MAY 1, 1869.

THE Rev. Mr. Punshon, in one of his letters to England, made some remarks on the difference of appearance between Canadian and American cities, which comparison did not altogether redound to the credit of the former. A number of our extra zealous and patriotic Canadians, who can see nothing wrong in anything in their country, immediately sprang to the rescue, and filled the papers with replies to Mr. Punshon's letter, and by their quantity of words completely swamped out the slight impression caused by it. The burthen of the cry was—not that the Canadian city is as beautiful or neat as the American city, this they say is altogether a secondary consideration—but that our cities are so much more substantially built, that we look more to use than appearance, and a lot more of this tirade which extra loyal Canadians always indulge in when comparing their institutions with those over the way. We have so often repeated these pleasant and consoling tales to ourselves that they have become a part of our faith, and to deny their correctness is to display an ignorance and lack of correct judgment quite unbearable. 'Oh,' say these men, 'the Americans are all for show; they certainly put up fine-looking buildings, this we cannot deny; and their streets appear more beautiful, and their cities neater; but then there must be something wrong with them, for you know they are Yankees, and do things in the Yankee style (here they turn up their noses); but as for us we follow the English style, and therefore it must be, and therefore is, a fact that we do it better than they.' Then, when we come to ask these gentlemen in what particular our style is superior to the American, they commence a tirade on America and Americans, stringing together a lot of rubbish about light and unsubstantial buildings, &c., &c., which they always have used as arguments, and which they consider totally unanswerable. Then when we show them how our buildings are quite as unsubstantially put up, and that our construction is quite as flimsy as the American's, they don't know what to

answer. But you do not convince them; for to believe that an American can do anything better than a British subject is rank treason.

Do we build more with an eye to comfort and stability than do the Americans? It has been so often stated that we do so, that we now take it for granted without examining to find if it is so; but we think that if we compare without prejudice we will find that no house in the world is built with more regard to convenience than that of the American. The care of the American in this particular has been the theme of many travellers, both English as well as American, and they award them their meed of praise for it. There is no doubt, however, but that they do put up some slight buildings, but in this particular it would be well for us to recollect the saying, 'Those that live in glass houses should not throw stones,'—for we also put up exceedingly slight buildings at times. But we must not consider strength as the only requisite for houses, or comfort as all that is required in a city.—We need in both cases something to strike the eye, something to make an impression on the stranger who passes through; and something of that charm which pervades a neat city, to retain the straggling, and entice others to settle within its limits.

BUFFALOES VS. TELEGRAPH POLES.—Here is a good story from the west. The buffaloes found in the telegraph poles of the overland line a new source of delight on the treeless prairie—the novelty of having something to scratch against. But it was expensive scratching for the telegraph company; and there, indeed, was the rub, for the bison shook down miles of wire daily. A bright idea struck somebody to send to St. Louis and Chicago for all the brad-awls that could be purchased, and these were driven into the poles with a view to wound the animals and check their rubbing propensity. Never was a greater mistake.—The buffaloes were delighted. For the first time they came to the scratch sure of a sensation in their thick hides that thrilled them from horn to tail. They would go fifteen miles to find a brad-awl. They fought huge battles around the poles containing them, and the victor would proudly climb the mountainous heap of rump and hump of the fallen, and scratch himself into bliss, until the brad-awl broke or pole went down. There has been no demand for brad-awls from the Kansas region since the first invoice,

WHO SHALL BUILD OUR HOUSE.

The question is a very disturbing one to a great many people. The more because they have so many wants in the matter.

They want it, first, very cheaply built—that is to say they want to make a good bargain of it.

Next, they want it tastefully built.

Next if they want a great deal of room in a house not very large,—which is always an awkward want.

Next, they are not quite sure of material, but want the best, and that it should not cost too much, and are open to conviction in respect to any material which shall be economical and beautiful and durable.

Next, they want a good architect, who shall be experienced and manageable, and listen to their views, and modify plans as the work goes on, and keep cost within hailing distance of the estimates.

Next, they want, virtually, to plan it themselves.

The wants may be reasonable enough, individually, but when they are massed together in the mind of a talkative man or woman, they make an awkward congeries of wants.

In old times nobody thought of consulting an architect about house-building, but matured his own plans, so far as able, and then compared notes with the master carpenter who carried the matter through. But it has come to be understood that he who devotes himself to the planning of houses every week in the year, should know more about it than he who plans only once in a lifetime—and yet there are very few architects who are left untrammelled.

We had occasion to ask, not long since, one of the most accomplished architects in this city what country house of his construction he felt most pride in?

"I feel pride in none," said he; "I have never yet been my own master."

The same thing is doubtless true to a considerable extent of architects of churches and other public buildings, who are subject to the rulings of committees, who have always a lively idea of their judgment in the premises,

But is it a reasonable request that a man should give up wholly the modelling of the house which is to make his home for years to the judgment of the architect?

By no means; and that architect is the best who can so interpret and meet the spe