

## CHOICE OF A SITUATION.

In choosing a site for a dwelling house, one should never omit to regard, as of primary importance, its healthfulness and comfortable exposure. Elevated sites are not always the most healthy, nor are valleys invariably less exposed to winds than high places. A dry tract in a sheltered valley is unusually healthy, while one that is cold and damp, how great soever its elevation, is always unhealthy. It may be considered an axiom, that a dry situation is in any country preferable to the damp one, being less exposed to pestilential vapors in a warm climate, and to the predisposing causes of pulmonary complaints in a cold climate. A large proportion of the coughs and catarrhs to which our people are subject, might be avoided, if our dwelling houses were placed upon dry and protected situations. When it is not in the power of the proprietor to choose such a site, he should obviate the evils arising from a damp soil, by a thorough system of drainage. If his pecuniary resources are too limited for the expense that would attend it, he would be wise to finish the interior in a plainer style, and use the money thus saved to pay for his draining operations.

The dryness of any tract depends more on the character of the soil and the subsoil, than upon its elevation. A subsoil of clay, and a foundation of rock, are unfavorable in this respect. Slopes of either description are commonly wet and springy. Those swells of land which are termed by geologists *morains*, are most free from springs and from superabundant moisture, consisting of pebbles, gravel and loam. All these circumstances affect our comfort and convenience, no less than our health. Mud is abundant in wet weather around a house which is placed on a clay foundation, unless it be drained and covered with gravel; and the most disagreeable dust in dry weather is produced by clay.

There are other considerations worthy of particular notice. No little circumstance puts the female members of a well ordered household so greatly out of humor, as the bringing into the house the mud from the streets and enclosures. When, therefore, the soil and the subsoil are both of clay, they ought to be covered with eight or ten inches of good gravel, and subjected to complete drainage. The children of a family are more comfortable in a place that has a sandy or gravelly foundation, natural or artificial, and they annoy the housekeepers less by bringing mud into the house upon their feet. This evil is not avoided by simply raising the house on a terrace, if the grounds are left in their natural condition outside of the embankment. The best method of avoiding mud and dampness, is to elevate the house, if it be placed upon a flat, and build a gravel slope, extending several rods in all directions from the house. The more gradual the slide the better, as a deep descent is liable to be furrowed by the streams that come from showers.

Under the head of location, position may very properly be made a theme of discourse, for a house may stand on an excellent site, and yet be so inconveniently placed, as to lose many of its advantages. A house on the slope of a hill is liable to be exposed to the water that flows from the summit. Hence it should not be set on a level or in a hollow, but on a gentle swell of land, causing the streams that run from the hill to circle round it. Many of these points, which would seem too obvious to need mention, are frequently overlooked or disregarded, while the proprietor squanders his money upon needles embellishments and ostentatious follies.

A dwelling house ought to be conveniently accessible from the street; and it is better to forego some advantages of prospect, than to place it so far upon a declivity as to render it difficult to be reached, either on foot or in a carriage. Neither should a house in the country stand directly on the road side; it should be placed far enough from it to escape the dust, without causing inconvenience to the occupants on account of distance.

It may be further remarked, without encouraging that idle propensity that causes certain persons to prefer the opportunity of seeing the objects in the streets, to any other circumstance connected with location, that it is confessedly, at certain times, an agreeable and rational amusement, to look out upon this varied procession of moving objects. In winter especially, after the female members of the family have passed several weeks in the seclusion of their home, an occasional sight of other human beings in the street affords a cheerful recreation. To an invalid, likewise, who is confined to the house, these scenes are important trifles that may seriously affect his spirits; and they furnish points which are not unworthy of our regard, in the choice of a site for a dwelling house.

—*Hovey's Magazine of Horticulture.*