

I could rest the remaining part upon a sound foundation of learning and science.—[Sir Walter Scott.

Miscellaneous.

COMMON SCHOOL ARCHITECTURE.

As we now have a Common School System in the country, that is celebrated, by a little improvement, to elevate the standing of the yeomanry to a much higher rank, in an intellectual point of view, than what they have heretofore occupied, we shall at all times, when a favourable opportunity presents itself, give valuable information on such subjects as would be interesting and useful to all who are anxious to promote the educational interests of the rural population of the Province. The following description of school architecture was accompanied, in the *Agriculturist*, with drawings of the front elevation, ground plan, desk, section of seat and desk, side elevation, and an additional ground plan, showing the hollow in the wall, &c. all of which were neatly executed, and would cost, at the lowest calculation, £5, if engraved here, on wood. This expense cannot be incurred by us at present, but the written description being plain, will be readily comprehended by the reader, although not accompanied by drawings:—

Under this head it will be sufficient to enumerate the principal features of school houses as they are.

They are almost universally badly located, exposed to the noise, dust, and danger of the highway, unattractive, if not positively repulsive, in their external and internal appearance, and built at the least possible expense of material and labour.

They are too small. There is no separate entry for boys and girls appropriately fitted up; no sufficient space for the convenient seating and necessary movements of the scholars; no platform, desk, nor recreation room for the teacher.

They are badly lighted. The windows are inserted on three or four sides of the room, without blinds or curtains to prevent the inconvenience and danger from cross lights, and the excess of light falling directly on the eyes or reflected from the book, and the distracting influence of passing objects and egresses out of doors.

They are not properly ventilated. The purity of the atmosphere is not preserved by providing

for the escape of such portions of the air as have become offensive and poisonous by the process of breathing, and by the matter which is constantly escaping from the lungs in vapor, and from the surface of the body in insensible perspiration.

They are imperfectly warmed. The rush of cold air through cracks and defects in the doors, windows, floor, and plastering is not guarded against. The air which is heated is already impure from having been breathed, and more so by noxious gases arising from the burning of floating particles of vegetable and animal matter coming in contact with the hot iron. The heat is not equally diffused, so that one portion of the school room is frequently overheated, while another portion, especially the floor, is too cold.

They are not furnished with seats and desks, properly made and adjusted to each other, and arranged in such a manner as to promote the comfort and convenience of the scholars, and the easy supervision on the part of the teacher. The seats are too high and too long, with no suitable support for the back, and especially for the younger children. The desks are too high for the seats, and are either attached to the wall on three sides of the room, so that the faces of the scholars are turned from the teacher, and a portion of them at least are tempted constantly to look out at the windows—or the seats are attached to the wall on the opposite sides, and the scholars sit facing each other. The aisles are not so arranged that each scholar can go to and from his seat, change his position, have access to his books, attend to his own business, be seen and approached by the teacher, without incommencing any other.

They are not provided with blackboards, maps, clock, thermometer, and other apparatus and fixtures, which are indispensable to a well-regulated and well-instructed school.

They are deficient in all of those in and out door arrangements which help to promote habits of order and neatness, and cultivate delicacy of manners and refinement of feeling. There are no verdure, trees, shrubbery, nor flowers for the eye; no scrapers and mats for the feet; no hooks and shelves for cloaks and hats; no well, no sink, basin, or towels to secure cleanliness, and no places of retirement for children of either sex, when performing the most private offices of nature.

In the following description the correct principles of school architecture are observed:—

The building stands 60 feet from the highway, near the centre of an elevated lot which slopes a little to the south and east. Much of the larger portion of the lot is in front, affording a pleasant play ground, while in the rear there is a woodshed, and other appropriate buildings, with separate yards for boys and girls. The walls are of brick, and are hollow, so as