

## CANADIAN HOMES AND THEIR SURROUNDINGS.

BY THE HON. JAMES YOUNG.

WE have not seen "the last rose of summer," but as I look out of my library window over Galt's picturesque landscape, there are signs that beauteous summer is on the wane. The sun has already turned his more fervid glances southwards. Our forests, in which elms and oaks and maples, and sombre pines and brighter evergreens so charmingly mingle, have not yet lost their leafy splendour and luxuriance. The lawns and flower beds around our dwellings are still rich with brilliant colors. But something is missing from the landscape, of the freshness and bloom of June, something of the sap and softness of early summer, something of nature's zenith:

"Before time's effacing fingers,  
Have swept the lines where beauty lingers."

Very beautiful indeed are our Canadian summers, when mountain and valley, tree and flower, lake and river, are radiant with sunshine; but alas, it must be confessed, they are too short. By the end of August, even though summer's heat may continue, we are forced to say with Mrs. Heman's:—

"Thou art bearing home thy roses,  
Glad summer fare thee well!  
Thou art singing thy last melodies,  
In every wood and dell."

But is it not possible, with comparatively little effort or expense, to make our homes and their surroundings more beautiful and attractive, not only in summer, but all the year round?

It must be admitted, we have in Canada a good deal to learn in this respect. Our cities and larger towns are now doing fairly well, and in many cases developing a love of natural beauty. Toronto has of late years, undergone a metamorphosis.

Its University and other parks, its Jarvis, Bloor, St. George and other boulevards and lawns, and its clean, asphalted streets, have made it one of the handsomest cities on the continent. Montreal has its inimitable Mount Royal, with its grand and stately residences and spacious lawns and wealth of shrubbery. Where are there to be found lovelier spots than the Parliamentary Park and Major's Hill at Ottawa; and far-severed Halifax and Vancouver, looking out so gracefully on the briny waters of the Atlantic and Pacific, have each attractions peculiarly their own. Many of our towns, too, are awakening to the fact that beauty, as well as utility, has something to do with their prosperity and success, and although civic rulers are proverbial for being like the much abused Peter Bell, to whom,

"A primrose by the river's brim,  
A yellow primrose was to him,  
And nothing more."

still the municipal mind has begun to grasp the idea that it is quite as cheap in the end, and immensely more pleasing, to have streets laid out with grassy boulevards and avenues of elms or maples or chestnuts, as to have broader thoroughfares left year after year in a bare and untidy condition.

Whilst there are many beautiful and happy homes in Canada, and they are rapidly increasing, what does candour compel one to say of too many of them, especially our village and farm dwellings, even in wealthy and long-settled districts? Take our average village first. Here and there you will find pretty houses and lawns, but they are something like oases in the desert, whilst the "ninety and nine" look as if they had been pitched together in blissful ignorance of any