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NOTE AND COMMENT.



IN these columns we have often had occasion to speak of the late Josiah Mason and his death would seem to call for at least a brief editorial mention in this place. In one particular he has a record peculiar to himself among those who have devoted the earnings of a life time to the endowment of public institutions. The majority of these have left their money after death for charitable purposes, but Sir Josiah has spent upwards of \$2,000,000 during his own life time in building and endowing immense public institutions. Apart from the satisfaction

which must accrue to the man who sees around him the monuments of his own greatness, there is surely a higher philanthropy in the spending of wealth during one's lifetime, than in the common practice of public benefactors, who after making all the use they can out of their money during life, leave the trouble of its disposal to their executors, and gain a reputation of benevolence which has not cost them a penny, nor probably done them much good. Josiah Mason both earned and spent his money well. From nothing he raised himself to affluence, and the money he had gained by the sweat of his brow he devoted to the highest of uses, the elevation of the class from which he had sprung, in the hopes of smoothing the path for those who would follow in his steps, and obtaining for them the advantages which he himself felt the want of.

OPINIONS, many and diverse have been expressed in various quarters about the falling of the plaster ceiling in the Baptist tabernacle in Ottawa. The inquiry was conducted in the usual way. Some "practical men" were examined, and gave opinions which recall those of their brethren who testified concerning the disaster at the Madison Square Garden. Some of them thought that the fall of the plastering was due to the "damp

weather" from which we must infer that Dominion plastering is only expected to stay up so long as the clouds are propitious. Others supposed that the settling of the building had "forced off the framework," that is, we suppose, the cross-furring, "from the rafters," an opinion still more extraordinary than the other. We are not at all disposed to believe that Canadian plasterers generally do work which is incapable of resisting a moist atmosphere or the settlement of a wall, and we prefer to adopt the suggestion put forward by the *Building and Engineering Times*, that the ceiling fell down because it was too weak to stay up. What was the nature of the weakness we cannot say. Perhaps the lime was bad, or the mortar was not trowelled sufficiently to make it clinch the laths, or perhaps the hair was omitted, or had been left too long in the lime, and thus corroded and destroyed—such faults are found in the work of dishonest and ignorant masons, or possibly the furring-strips had been put on with small nails, and secured only to alternate rafters, as is sometimes the way of dishonest and ignorant carpenters; but we affirm with confidence that if the ceiling had possessed proper strength it would not have fallen, and that its lack of such strength was due to the ignorance or greed of some person or persons unknown, but whose identity could be established by a very simple investigation.

LANDLORDS are a much abused class the world over, and tenants are too prone, it is to be feared, to cast upon their shoulders the burden of their own negligence and that of their household. A favorite cause of complaint is the imperfection of the drainage, for which the landlord is invariably made responsible, occasionally without cause. An illustration of a not uncommon occurrence is to be found in the case of *Muspratt vs Hussey* recently decided in England. The plaintiff, a clergyman, sued the defendant, a builder, for misrepresentation as to the sanitary conditions of a house which he leased. That the drains were in fact in a bad state, was clearly proved. But the jury, by finding a verdict for the defendant, shewed that they at least did not believe that any misrepresentation had been made, and the condition of the drains, which had been used by the plaintiff for over a year was clearly due to the usage they had received at