

TORONTO CRYSTAL PALACE.

To the Editor of the ONTARIO FARMER:—

SIR,—In your October description of the pleasant little city of London, and the recent successful provincial Exhibition held there, you say, "The main Exhibition building is of white brick, and, therefore, more durable and permanent than the Crystal Palaces of Toronto and Hamilton." In this, Sir, you are mistaken; the Toronto building is not "wood and glass," but "iron and glass," and if every bit of wood were removed from it, the structure would remain. The wood in the building comprises the filling in of the 16 feet square iron panels; the main floors lying on a bed of concrete and gravel; the gallery-floors, laid on iron girders, and supported by iron columns, and the roof. This building cost, at the time of its erection, in the year 1853, upwards of \$20,000, the sum contributed by the City Council.

Respectfully yours,
TORONTONIAN.

SLATE.

Until within the past ten years, most of the slate used in this country was brought from Wales. Homeward-bound vessels without cargo would take aboard a load of roofing slate for ballast. The Welsh quarries are the largest in the world, comprising excavations sometimes forty acres in extent, three hundred feet deep, and giving employment to small armies of labourers, varying from three thousand to seven thousand in number. Latterly, attention has been turned to American sources of supply, and the quarrying of slate, and its application to various useful purposes, are being gradually developed into an extensive industry. Aside from its use as a roofing material, and for the minor purposes of school tablets, it is used for flagging, for lining furnaces, for tessellated floors, mantels, billiard and other tables, door and window sills, coffins, cisterns, etc., to say nothing of the manufacturing of smaller articles, such as lamps, inkstands, tobacco-pipes, and many other things.

At the quarries the slate is taken out in large blocks, weighing, some of them, three or four tons. The slater opens the end of a block with a chisel, takes hold of the loosened strip, perhaps a quarter of an inch thick, and peels it off as easily as if it were a piece of bark. The tools used are very simple—the "splitter's" implements being chisels shaped like spatulas, while the dresser trims the sheets or pieces to the desired shape with a tool closely resembling a clumsy butcher-knife.

Great care must be exercised in the selection of slate. A good article will grow harder by exposure to the weather, while a poor one will soon become rotten. The characteristic colours of different kinds of slate are due to the presence of foreign substances. Carbon gives a blue tint,

and copper a purple one. A greenish hue indicates magnesia; and a brown, iron. An excess of iron, as also of lime, renders the slate good for nothing. Sulphur is injurious, but its presence may be detected by subjecting the material to the intense heat of a forge fire. Capacity for absorbing water is another feature in worthless slate. This is discovered by weighing a sample, placing it in water for awhile, and weighing it again. Any increase in the weight of course shows absorption, and indicates the inferior quality of the stone.—*American Artisan*.

ART GLEANINGS.

A correspondent of the *N. Y. Evening Post* says cockroaches may be effectually got rid of as follows:—Take carbonic acid and powdered camphor in equal parts; put them in a bottle; they will become fluid. With a painter's brush of the size called a sash-tool, put the mixture on the cracks or places where the "critters" hide; they will come out at once. It is wonderful to see the heroism with which they move to certain death. Nothing more sublime in history; the extirpation is certain and complete.

No acids should be employed to clean tin ware, because they attack the metal and remove it from the iron of which it forms a thin coat. We refer to articles made of tin-plate, which consists of iron covered with tin. Rub the article first with rotten stone and sweet-oil, then finish with whiting and a piece of soft leather. Articles made wholly of tin should be cleansed in the same manner. In a dry atmosphere planished tin ware will remain bright for a long period, but will soon become tarnished in moist air.

An exchange gives these directions for cutting off the neck of a bottle: With a strong twine a yard or less in length, make one turn around the neck, rapidly move the bottle from one end of the string to the other, that the friction may heat the part; while hot, dip in cold water, and the glass is cracked off as clean and smooth as if cut by a diamond. A few strokes or movements with the string are all that is required. A bottle may be cut in two by the same process, if strips of paper are pasted around it to keep the string from slipping from the place desired.

Keep constantly in the tool-house a dry cloth and an oiled one. When a tool is brought in, as it always is when the day's work is done, it is cleaned and wiped with the dry cloth. If it is not to be used the next day, the oiled cloth is then rubbed over it. Whenever a plough or a cultivator is not to be used the following day, it is brought in and cleansed. By pursuing this course through the summer, every implement is kept bright and ready for use. In addition to this, hoes, shovels, spades, &c., are kept sharp. All this time use lard oil, but when there is no further use for ploughs or cultivators, give them a good coat of linseed oil. This forms a covering that is impervious to moisture, and the tool is as bright in the spring as when laid away in the fall.