

THE CANADIAN ARCHITECT AND BUILDER

BY THE WAY.

The memory of prominent events and persons who have figured conspicuously in national affairs, is being perpetuated by the designations given to streets in London. Some of the newer thoroughfare bear such names as Pretoria, Joubert, Hawarden grove, etc.

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I observe that Lieut. Peary, of the United States Navy has been granted three years leave of absence to enable him to make another attempt to reach the North Pole. If Mr. Peary does not achieve greater things on this than on his last two or three expeditions, our own Captain Bernier stands a good chance of getting to the pole first.

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We find a good many faddists among architects, but if reports be true they are eclipsed by a certain Swiss silk manufacturer, who has had built for himself a counterpart of the Swiss lake dwellings exhibited in the Zurich Museum. This architectural freak is built on piles in Lake Constance a distance of 200 feet from the shore. Around the house is a gallery 5 or 6 feet wide. The exterior of the walls is covered with osiers and lime. The floor is of plaster and the roof is thatched. Instead of glass, bladder is used. Wood of the yew has been employed as far as possible.

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I learn from "Indian Engineering" that the director of railway construction of the Public Works Department of India has issued a circular to engineers employed on large works asking them to experiment with the process which is said to have been recently discovered in the United States for increasing the tenacity of clay by mixing it with a liquid obtained from boiled straw. Mention of this discovery was made in a recent number of this paper. It is said that this process was employed by the ancient Egyptians in the manufacture of bricks, and that by this means the strength of bricks can be materially increased.

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They have a quaint way of telling the time of day in the Roothings, according to an Essex contemporary. A working man who was walking from Ongar towards Dunmow passed through a village about mid-day, and, wishing to know the hour, asked an old dame who stood at her cottage door if she could tell him the time. "Yes, that I can, boy, if you wait a minute," she exclaimed. She at once hobbled to the end of the row of tenements, and glancing up at a tall cottage chimney, athwart which the rays of the sun fell, said, "It wants just a brick and a-half to one." The surprised traveller, though a bricklayer by trade, had no knowledge of brick chronology, and enquired how many bricks went to the hour. The old lady explained that there were three bricks to the hour; and thus the time would be 12.30 p.m. The mystified man made off to the nearest wayside tavern for his mid-day meal, and he found that the cottage's sun-dial was true, for the hands of the inn clock pointed to half-past twelve.—British Clayworker.

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Up among the arches of the great new cathedral at Westminster a "twittering" may be heard which, on investigation says the Builders' Record, is found to proceed from a score of young ladies enveloped in overalls. These are the workers on Mr. George Bridge's mosaics

—in the chapels of All Souls and of St. Gregory and St. Augustine on either side of the vast nave. Mr. Bridge finds that the young ladies suit his needs admirably, but it must not be supposed that they are there without training. "I have ladies come to me sometimes," say Mr. Bridge, "who think they can set to work at once and earn two or three pounds a week. But that is, of course, absurd. There is a great deal of technique to be mastered, and I estimate that a fairly clever worker needs two years' experience before being put on figure work"—these young ladies have been through the schools and drawn from the "life," so that they are able to handle the mosaic in an intelligent manner. Mr. Bridge's first pupil was his wife, who succeeded so well that he decided to engage other female workers; until we find him here in the cathedral directing quite a school of them. The practice of architecture as a profession for women receives periodical attention but, with a few exceptions, never becomes a reality. For ourselves we do not think it ever will while contractors are men, not always gifted with the tongues of angels; but there is surely a field for women in some of the applied arts connected with architecture where, indeed, the subtler touch of the female hand and the more delicate gauge of the female eye may prove a boon—a possibility to which Mr. Bridge's practical experience gives much hope.

NEW METHOD OF CHIMNEY CONSTRUCTION.

As a substitute for the special device called "wagons" usually employed in the construction of chimney flues in Paris, M. Morel suggests the use of a special form of brick which while strictly conforming to the Police Regulations admits of easy and quick construction and close union of the various parts of the flue. The British Clayworker describes the method thus: The sides are perpendicular to the horizontal surfaces, except one side, which is at an angle of 30 deg. to make a joint between two flues. To enable crossing of the other straight joints one part of the brick is longer than the other part. The bricks are laid as follows: A brick being in place, a second is turned in such a way that the two surfaces are applied one against the other, forming a joint with mortar. Thus a first course is laid, and, as the joints have to be crossed, the bricks in the second course are laid on the two bricks mentioned, and turned so that the large sides of the bricks in the second course are applied against the small sides of the bricks in the first. The inclined joints of the second course are thus in an opposite direction to those of the first. When the flues bend, the bricks are usually laid on different surfaces in steps, forming places where the soot can accumulate to be removed when the chimney is swept. To avoid this inconvenience the flues must be made of plaster or cement. M. Morel employs a special brick with inclined surfaces, which can be utilised with ordinary bricks. A course of bricks is laid and between two courses of these bricks the new bricks are laid, which have two oblique sides. Thus a flue is obtained not having an arrangement in steps, but a sinuous surface, requiring no facing, from which soot can be easily removed.

A new building by-law recently adopted by the city of Minneapolis compels fireproof construction of all public and quasi-public buildings of over three-storey dimension, and prohibits the use of cinder concrete.