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BRICKS AND BRICK BUILDINGS,

A PAPER

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BY

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## BRICKS AND BRICK-BUILDINGS.



I HAD thought of calling this paper an “Apology for Bricks.” Certainly I intended to begin the paper with an apology for its subject. It seemed to me that I had taken up, what many might consider, very vulgar materials. I believed that the idea which some have of bricks is, that they are as ugly as they are indispensable. We know very well that in this part of England there are many buildings which we cannot afford to build of stone, and which are not ornamental enough for the genius of stucco. The union, the factory, the barracks, the peasant’s cottage, and the substantial business-premises, we should all agree, must in Hertfordshire, be of brick, or of brick and flint. But did circumstances lead us to build for ourselves, we should think of some more ambitious material. We consider ourselves aggrieved when our neighbour brings *his* bricks too near us. There are few of us who would not think his view spoilt by the introduction of what we call an “ugly, staring, red brick house”

right into its foreground. Now, on all these points I shall attempt to say something presently. I shall be very careful not to ride a hobby to death. I will try not to injure a good case by overstatement. I would, however, first mention in all sincerity that I now feel that the apology of which I spoke, should be made for myself, and not for my subject. Since I have opened a few books and tried to steal the results of other men's labours, I have come to think that a paper on bricks and brick-buildings might, without any condescension, be written by the first architect of the day. He would have occasion, in the course of his remarks, to notice some of the finest buildings in this, and in other countries. I believe that he would do immense good by showing men that the beauty of a building is less dependent upon its material than upon anything else whatever about it. Outline, proportion, light, shade, suitableness to the purpose, are all points which appeal more forcibly to the eye of the connoisseur. These same considerations sway the judgment of those who are not aware of the principles on which they admire or disapprove.

I would like to begin at the beginning, and at least attempt to proceed methodically. I have no doubt my remarks will be sufficiently desultory to take off any appearance of stiffness in my arrangement. I will, first, set out the derivation and definition of a brick, that we may fix our subject. Then, as the constitution of this society seems to suggest, we will consider, the *antiquities* of brick—the *architecture* of bricks, and the *economics* of bricks. I shall be proud,

indeed, if I can teach any of my hearers in a matter in which, until I set to work to get up this paper, I was myself so profoundly ignorant.

The derivation of the word will not assist us much to ascertain the meaning of the term. Brick, as a name, came to us, no doubt, through the continental languages, either from the French "brique," or, more probably, from the Dutch "brücks," for the Flemish bricks were early imported into this country. These foreign words were themselves derived from a low Latin word "brica," and that, Menage says, was from *imbricare*, or, "ab imbre tegere." Whether correct or not, we are not helped by this to any other meaning than that of shelter. I would start as a definition of brick, that it is—earth, *moulded* for building purposes. I do not say earth baked or burned, for I must remember that there are such things as sun-dried bricks. And by "*moulded*" I do not consider the term limited to bricks *cast* in a mould, as, I daresay, there have been such things as bricks moulded by the hands, to the size and shape required. I do not intend to include in my paper any notice of the roof tile which is first cousin to the building brick, nor yet of the paving tile, which, you may remember, at King's Langley they called a "flowered brick," and which, certainly, seems to be a "genteel relation" of the builder's. But you see, from the wide description taken up, how primitive and natural a material is the brick. In large alluvial plains the water overflows, and fattens, and stiffens the soil, and the force of the current washes down a heavy deposit of rich loam which at once

comes up to the quality required for brick earth. So, as you are aware, the earliest brick buildings of which we have any knowledge are to be found in Mesopotamia, by the side of the ancient rivers, the Euphrates and the Tigris. So, afterwards, they came to have at least one brick pyramid by the side of the Nile. This pyramid, Herodotus tells us, they made from the silt taken out of the water. "I am formed of bricks," said the marble tablet on the pyramid of Asychis, "and these were made of mud adhering to poles drawn from the bottom of the lake." And where geography does not furnish us so readily with a clue, it is likely that geology could teach us a similar reason for the accumulation of clay, and for its use by those who dwelt in certain brick-built localities. Thus London, situated in what is called the London-Basin, which is a huge bed of plastic clay covered with alluvial deposit, was intended, by what we call nature, to be a brick-built city; or, as it is disrespectfully called, to be a "Babel of bricks." When lamenting the absence of stone from the neighbourhood of the giant metropolis, we do not sufficiently consider what wealth of cheap, strong, and enduring material lies around it and under it. The thickness of the three beds in the Parish of St. James is said to be not less than 235 feet. There are said to be three layers of London clay all adapted to different kinds of brick. There is the pure, unmitigated clay; and there is this same clay tempered with chalk or marl; and, again, the clay mixed with sand or gravel. I have read, too, that Belgravia was once known and feared as damp, clayey fields, until a

spirited builder made its own clay into its own houses; first carefully draining and drying the district.

Surely we perceive already that it is not wise, to frown into disuse so universal and profitable a material. He is a wise economist of a nation's resources, who can show his countrymen how to please the eye with that which must please the pocket, and, I believe, serve the indweller best. There is no such perfect defence from the weather, as a sufficiently thick, brick house. No stone can equal it, nor any other natural material. It cannot be so entirely dessicated as that which has been in the fire and on fire. I opened a book this morning which spoke incidentally of the dampness as well as of the expensiveness of stone. A brick, as we have it in these days, of the best quality, is almost impervious to the outer air. I have seen in a gentleman's house in a stone county what is called a weeping stone: that is a stone which, by capillary attraction, sucks in at one end the external moisture, and presents it at the other end, upon the drawing-room paper. And, though flints do not thus pass-on and pass-through the weather, yet, if they are to be kept within the price of best brick-work, they must necessitate the use of a large quantity of rough and poorly-made mortar; and they leave many roughnesses, on which the water is detained, and allowed to soak through, or, at least, into the wall.

I come back to the *Antiquities* of Brick. As early as Babylon and Nineveh, or earlier than these cities, was the Tower of Babel, and that is expressly said to have been

brick-built. "Go to," said the ungrateful descendants of him who had been preserved through the flood; "go to, let us make bricks and let us burn them thoroughly," or, as in the margin, "Let us burn them to a burning." The great idea in their mind, perhaps, was to improve upon the common sun-dried brick, which might not bear the weight and height of the tower they projected. In a warmer country the heat of the sun, if sufficient time were allowed, would make a much better brick than with us, but never equal to a *burned* brick such as the Babel builders proposed. "And they had slime for mortar:" this was, no doubt, the asphalté or bitumen which was so common in those parts, and which Arrian says was afterwards used in the Temple of Belus. A building of "bricks burned to a burning," and cemented with asphalté, might well seem to promise lengthened continuance; but I pass from the unblest enterprise without speculating here on its fall or fate. Babylon was, perhaps, more than any other city of old, a brick-built town. That Babylon pleased the eye is clear from the praise of sacred and profane writers. Even when pronouncing its doom the prophet calls it "The Lady of kingdoms," and "the beauty of the Chaldees' excellency." Babylon, much more than Nineveh, was bricken, to coin a word. In both Babylon and Nineveh, the rough part of the work was done by these sun-dried bricks; but, in Nineveh, the ornamental effect was given by slabs and masses of gypsum, or alabaster let into the wall; while at Babylon it was produced by burned and chiselled and moulded bricks, which were put on in



front as a facing before the commoner ones. You will see this difference laid down in the last chapter of Layard's smaller work, and you will find full account of the bricks in Rich's Babylon. Specimens may be seen in the East India Company's Museum in London, though a sufficient idea of the manner of building may be found in old Herodotus. The father of history tells us, among other things, that the bitumen was applied hot, and that (by way, I suppose, of bond,) there was at every thirtieth course a layer of mats composed of reeds. Rich, or some other traveller, has reported that the lime in the mortar is more tenacious still, and harder to separate from the brick, than is the asphalte.

I must not stay any longer in the East. I must not do more than remind you of the mention made in Exodus of the ordinary mode of making bricks in Egypt and the adjacent countries. This was by mixing straw in the mud, as we still mix hair in the mortar, to increase the tenacity. I will only add that the ancient buildings of India show great skill in working the brick itself. Some Nepal bricks in the East India Company's Museum are remarkable for their texture. They are fine and clear in the grit, and are sparkling like granite, and are worked with great delicacy and skill. The Chinese choose to build with *blue* bricks. And while we need not envy them the colour, I am told that the fineness of their porcelain earth shows itself even in the manufacture of their bricks. Greece, perhaps, of all countries, was least indebted to bricks. Many parts of it might be described as large stone

quarries; and I am not so brick-mad as to desire to see the stone of Pentelicus, or marble of Paros, superseded by bricks. There is, or was, *some* brick in Athens; for example, in the city walls, and we used to believe at Oxford that the expression, “a regular brick,” was taken from Aristotle’s encomium of the perfect gentleman, as a four-sided brick without blame or faultless—the Greek bricks being cubes, and every part, in a well made brick, corresponding. The Greek names for bricks were didoron, pentedoron, tetradoron, according to their size—‘doron’ meaning hand-breadth. They appear to have been simply sun-dried. Vitruvius says that the process of drying required two years; and the laws of Attica required a brick to be five years old before it was used. But if there were some bricks in Greece, there were more in Rome. The compliment paid to Augustus, that he found Rome of brick and left it of marble, will show how universal was its use. There is now standing in Rome a pillar of the Temple of the god Rediculus, from “Redire” to return, built in thankfulness for the return of Hannibal, which is of brick, and which has been carved into the perfect tracery of an Ionic capital. Of course, the Romans introduced bricks into this country as into their other provinces. I might almost say, while within a mile of Verulam, “Si Monumentum quæris circumspice.” The Roman brick, set in durable mortar, was indeed, a fine building material. It was shaped like the Babylon brick. It was flatter, wider, larger, thinner than ours; and was, I believe, almost a square, as it lay in the building. They mixed pounded

brick with the mortar, and thus preserved, when desired, an uniform red colour.

I approach now the most perplexed question, as to the antiquities of brick, in attempting to consider how soon, after the departure of the Romans, the English made, or imported, or used, any other bricks than those which their old conquerors had left behind them. The Romans left and the Saxons came, say about A.D. 450. You may be surprised to hear that Lyttelton (cited in Britton's Arch. Ant.) supposes the oldest remaining brick building, not of Roman material, to be 800 years, at least, after this. The very excellence of the work, in the 15th or even 14th century, would show that there must have been much practice to have such success. It may be argued, too, that so simple a process as brick-making would not become extinct; and an edict of King Alfred, A.D. 886, is given by Strype to show his encouragement of bricks. However, I daresay, we may be admonished by the scarcity of early bricken remains of the general rudeness of the dwellings of our forefathers both before and after the conquest. Old Fuller says that (A.D. 940) Hoël Dha, Prince of Wales, built himself a palace in Cærmarchenshire, of wattled hurdles, and "to difference it from and to advance it beyond other palaces," he peeled his hazels and called the whole building "*White Hall*." The noble built his castle-walls, five feet thick, of stones, flints, and any rubble. The many Roman remains furnished abundant materials for great buildings through many ages. Thus, A.D. 1077, the Abbot Paul found Verulam a sufficient quarry to build the

whole Norman part of the abbey church. Matthew Paris says, "Totam ecclesiam Sancti Albani cum multis aliis ædificiis opere construxit lateritio." There is an interesting question raised in Parker's Glossary as to the newel of the stair in the north transept. There are certain bricks there which are said to be circular, and moulded as if for the particular purpose of the stair. Then, if so, it is argued, why may not many others have been made at the time? And, again, could enough of these bricks have been found in Verulam? Parker inclines to consider the whole as Roman, and even the circular bricks to have been formerly used in columns. St. Botolph's Church, Colchester, is another Roman-brick-built church. The earliest Flemish or English brick-building of which there are any remains, I believe, will be found to be Little Wenham Hall in Suffolk. This is said to be of the date 1260, temp Henry III. A hall at Cambridge was built of bricks, reg. Edward III., and the accounts show the expense to have been only 6s. 1d. per thousand. I could give a good catalogue of brick-buildings of a later date, particularly in the times of the Henries 6th, 7th, and 8th. Oxburgh Hall, Eton College, Hurstmonceux Castle, Hampton Court, carry us down to the Tudor times, when the decay of the native forests, and the advance of the arts, brought brick into more general use. As late as the time of Elizabeth, Holinshed makes no mention of bricks as a common building material. Shakspeare, perhaps, can hardly be depended upon as an authority for more than the customs of his own times, else

it might have been alleged that he makes bricks to have been a common material at a much earlier date. In the 2nd part of Henry VI., Snook the weaver declares of Jack Cade's father that he had built a chimney in their house, and "the bricks," says he, "remain to this day to testify of the fact." "The Houses of the Commonaltie," says another writer, "were not of brick until the middle of the reign of Elizabeth. They were of timber and lath and plaster." King James 1st issued two proclamations as to the use of brick in the forefront of all London houses.

We have now got below all architectural *antiquity*. It is time to take up the more purely *architectural* view of the subject. I would prop up my own little opinion by such names as Hope, Gwilt, Britton, and others, and would say, in the words of the first mentioned, that "South of the Alps, builders seem hardly to have been aware of the capabilities of bricks." Palladio left them undisguised in his finest buildings. He has given us even red, uncovered columns; and the Farnese Palace by Bramante and M. Angelo, of which the Reform Club is a copy, is, in some considerable portion of its surface, of brick. Mr. Evans has kindly shown me some interesting drawings of a house, at Hamburg, and of a church in Berlin, in which the mouldings of the arches are perfectly rounded in brick; and, to show that the art has not died out, the South-Western Railway has an entrance in Lambeth in which there appears some beautiful work in columns, and some capitals of brick. My own interest is in the brick, as an element of *domestic* architecture. Its asso-

ciations hardly fit it for churches among us, unless it be of the Byzantine character, which are essentially brick in their material. This reminds me of another class of instances to bring before you: through the plains of Upper Italy, how many fine Lombardic buildings are yet to be seen of brick! Still, I think, we may hesitate as to raising a Gothic church of brick, especially in the country. One of those that occur to me, not far from here, of modern date, is at Latimers, and I do not think that that is encouraging as to repetition of the material. Brick is, in every sense of the word, at home in the Old English Manor-House of Tudor character, and almost of Tudor date. Picture to yourself such a building with its many gables and its high chimneys—its projecting oriels and its deep recesses. In those days they placed their buildings for shelter rather than for view. Consequently you come upon them suddenly; and I would ask you without affectation, has not the sudden sight sometimes called out an exclamation of delighted surprise? No building sits so well on English ground. The deep time-sobered hue of the brick-work warms up a cold November day. It contrasts, or it harmonises well with the green of its surrounding trees. All the old English accessories of a home, cluster becomingly, not to say lovingly, round the old hall. The rooks seem in perfect keeping, and the smoke rises as gracefully, or as grandly, as smoke ought to rise, out of such chimneys. I cannot receive the same kind of pleasure from the view of the grandest stone mansion, or as it may deserve to be called, stone palace. There is a chilliness

in the stone on a sunless day, and there is a glare on a very bright day. It does not seem to belong to us. It is hard to imagine winter fires, and large happy family circles gathered round them, within such stately walls. Or take the comparison on a lower level. When the eye first sees a very handsome new white house, it asks the judgment, Do you think that house is of stone? No! says the judgment, I do not; but I cannot tell whether it is of cement, stucco, plaster, or rough cast. There is a deception on the eye, or the idea of a deception, and admiration is scantily afforded when suspicion is roused. Then bear in mind the endless repairs and re-whitenings. What so melancholy as that greenth which is always stealing up some stuccos? What more pitiful than the ravages of every frost, as shown in flakes of white at the bottom, and in patches of black at the top, where these have come from. One would think it was difficult to fix the identity of a stucco house. Horace Walpole writes to Horace Mann that he had outlived three sets of his own battlements at Strawberry Hill; and many a householder must have seen some half dozen new faces given to the walls he calls the same. Come down lower still, and have we much to be thankful for in the many little cottages ornées which have plaster ornaments and Greek friezes—at once composition and composite—done at so much per yard or per cast. Perhaps we may leave them and their shrubs to the praise bestowed, according to Theodore Hook, by one of his characters, on such a white house—“Oh! she always liked to look at it. It reminded her so of a poached egg among spinach.”

What shall we say to street architecture? Well, there I hesitate to wish to see Regent Street Tudorised. Yet you know what was said of the king in whose reign it was built. Like Augustus, he found his capital of brick, and, unlike Augustus, he left of plaster. In New Oxford Street there are some pleasing instances of what may be done in brick with bold and solid stone dressings. I was disposed to admire them the other day by contrast with the new shop-front of a neighbour. The painters were making him Ionic columns. The carpenter had done his part. The artists whom I saw were sprinkling sand over wet white paint, until they satisfied themselves that they had produced precisely the effect of the Temple of Erechtheus. Of course, I do not suppose that I can, or could, with more space, lay down canons of architecture. I have done all that I intended to attempt in these rough statements, if I have induced a single hearer to pause before he build in another material than brick. In these days, when so many parsonage houses and school houses are rising, brick and flint seem to give ample room and verge enough for the taste of the first architect—in Hertfordshire. I would venture to advise all the ornamental mouldings, string courses, &c., being in brick, if not in stone. Much effect may be given by a brick simply set on edge, or put corner or dog-tooth-wise, and by the introduction of the black headers, which, they tell us, were, at first, discoloured bricks, overbaked in the burning. I would wish all builders to have the pleasure of thinking that as they leave the building, so will the



next generation be permitted to see it. Do not stint the roof, and do not be ashamed of the chimneys, and there will be a building which shall be no discredit to the builder.

I pass on now to what I have called the *Economics* of Bricks. I mean the process of making bricks, and their commercial use. It is a singular fact that machinery has never been applied to the making of bricks. This is, I believe, on account of the extreme simplicity of the work. Machinery could scarcely be used with profit where handwork can do so much. Mr. Aitken, in his paper on Pottery, before the Society of Arts, says that a very skilful maker of bricks can mould and deliver from 10,000 to 11,000 bricks in a long summer's day, while the average of men and days would be 5,000. This, you see, for some 125 days of brick-making in the season, would be 625,000 for one man; and as the cost of labour, Mr. Aitken reckons would be 1s. 3d. only per thousand, there is little margin left for the ponderous Engine to take up the work and make a saving of time and money. It is said, however, that by machinery a heavier pressure is brought to bear upon the brick, and thus a denser and more consolidated article is produced, which is of great value in the railway arch, where there is necessarily much superincumbent moisture. I know very little about the *burning* of bricks, except that there is a decided distinction between those which are burned in a clamp (query clump?) and those which are baked in a kiln. The former have ashes grouted with the clay. They thus become, themselves, masses of fire. The

others are only baked, and are, I conclude, much less perfectly hardened and dried. Neither can I say much as to colouring. Chemistry, by the use of oxide of iron, soda, &c., no doubt, can affect the shade, but, I believe, it is more often produced by the nature of the earth. Each neighbourhood, or, perhaps, each brick-field has a character for its peculiar hue and quality of clay. The very light bricks called malms (because once mixed with *marl*,) are now lightened in colour by chalk. There are some light-coloured bricks, and those the best, which are made still from marl earth, as the Ipswich or Suffolk brick used in churches, and the white paving bricks so valuable for the stable and coach-yard, because it absorbs so little moisture, and which comes from Cheshunt on the borders of this county. Deep red bricks are sometimes called Guernseys, and also Windsors. The hard, useful, yellow, London stocks are found down the Thames towards Purfleet, and north of the Thames from Stepney to Brentford. There is no end to the variety and value of different kinds of brick-earth. There is the fire-brick from Stourbridge. There is also the floating or swimming brick, the earth for which is found in Sicily, and which has been recommended for use on board ship. There is now, too, no limit to the size and shape of bricks; and here is one of the excellencies of bricks. Any shape or size of coping or of ornamental brick may be ordered and made, and thus any finish, or any effect that is desired, may be given to a wall or building. This was not always the case. Until a few years ago there was an Excise duty on

bricks, and while that was a hindrance to their use, on the ground of expense, it also had the usual effect of stereotyping the process. It is found that whenever a tax is levied upon any article, in a particular state or shape, the manufacture becomes stationary, the shape is not varied, and the article itself is made according to the pattern which will pay the least duty. This tax may be called Pitt's *Building Works*, Vol. 2, (supposing the tax on windows to be Vol. 1); and it may be said that building owed him little for these double attentions. Walpole, in his letters, tells us that in 1756 a tax was proposed on bricks, but the ministry could not carry it. In 1784, Pitt taxed bricks at the rate of 2s. 6d. per 1000. This was subsequently increased, until, in 1847, the duty was 5s. 10d. if the brick were not more than 10 inches by 5 inches broad (when wet,) and 3 inches deep. If they exceeded these dimensions, the duty was 10s. the thousand. In 1842, the last year of which I can give return, tax was paid on 1,303,815,331 bricks; in England, Wales, and Scotland. All this is now repealed, and, I believe, that bricks of all kinds are, at this time, swimmers and floaters, so great is the buoyancy of the trade.

Many improvements have been introduced into bricks. We have now hollow bricks and perforated bricks. Many of us have seen lying round new buildings numerous white bricks full of holes. I am told that the chief gain here is lightness in carriage; and, when you consider how heavy a thousand of bricks must be, there will be an advantage in plugging out one-third

of the weight of each brick. There is, also, a better hold for the mortar; but there is no ventilation through them, as, in my simplicity, I used to imagine. The Labourers' Friend Society had some bricks which were mere thin shells, for partitions and slight buildings. The Babylonians and the Romans were before them in these dexterities. They both seem actually to have built Earthen jars into their walls, knowing how well a wide surface, though hollow, will support a weight. This Labourers' Friend Society has also some white glazed bricks to supersede plastering for cottage walls, which would admit of the walls being frequently washed down. I should fear that the inmates would want reconciling to these.

I shall not meddle much with brick-*laying*. I will only attempt to explain two terms which may meet the architectural student, viz., Flemish Bond and English Bond. You know that as you look at a wall the brick must be either long-way or end-way to you. If lengthways, it is called a "stretcher," if endways it is a "header." Now, the Flemish mode of joining or bonding the bricks is by putting the bricks themselves alternately, in each row, a stretcher and a header. The old English workmen used to put alternate *rows*, one row all headers, and the other all stretchers. It is said that King William the Third introduced the Flemish, or, as we may call it, the Dutch mode of building into this country; at all events that it was not practised in England before his reign. If this hold good it will give us a criterion by which to judge of

the age of a building. It is also usual, I may state, to put into many brick walls, slabs of timber to act as bond. It is doubtful whether this be advantageous. Wood ought to decay before brick; then the surviving material is injured by the shorter lived. Wood, too, shrinks and swells under the weather. Hoop iron is now used as a tie in preference to wood in all the best buildings. The great point, I believe, is to have the building *thick enough*. Some cheap builders take an unfair advantage of the capability of brick to overtax it. In Abbot's Langley, before we knew better, we carried up a school gable in nine-inch work. There should not be, even in an outhouse, I think, a brick erection less than fourteen inches, that is, brick-and-a-half, thick. We have built our last school, full eighteen inches through at the corners, or, as we call them, "coins"—"rusticated coins."

I should like to end my paper with some remarks more directly to the praise of bricks. I think I can do this in connexion with the railways which are now extending themselves through the length and breadth of every land. You know that it was said of printing, that, after all, the invention of the 16th century was the perfection of paper, to receive the stamping which had long been practised. I do not say, of course, that the construction of railways depended on bricks; but, I do *almost* say, that brick is as subsidiary to the railway as the paper is to the press. The line is not only an earthen mound, or bank, or cutting: it is a level way carried through the earth and over the

water. It is hard to see how this could be accomplished without bricks. Sometimes it is actually cheaper and easier to raise the whole line on brick arches than to make a new earthen road. Thus raised are the Greenwich Line, and the Extension Railway from Nine Elms to Waterloo, and, I believe, the Loop Line which lands those who get out at the Camden Station, in the middle of Fenchurch Street. But of other railways it is reckoned that the average of bridges is two-and-a-quarter in each mile, or nine in four miles. There are said to be very many viaducts in the country which contain each more than eleven millions of bricks, and there is one huge tunnel—the box tunnel on the Great Western—which contains as many bricks as are made in Scotland in one year, i.e., twenty seven millions of bricks. The Frenchmen said of Richmond Hill, “Take away your wood and take away your water, and where would be your view?” I say, “Take away your bricks and take away your mortar, and where would be your line?”

There is also another grand style of building, of which, I hope, we shall never be ashamed, and which is equally indebted to bricks; I mean, the wharves and warehouses of London. Of course, these *could* be of stone, but only at a great and unnecessary expense, which, generally speaking, the situation does not require; the bricks answer every purpose, and answer it well. I believe, too, by the judicious use of colour, they might be made ornamental. I do not rejoice to see those huge brick warehouses so close to St. Paul's.

We cannot be pleased to see the cathedral hemmed in by any masses of building. Besides, the church being of stone, we might *wish* all else to be of stone, too; but, in themselves, those warehouses are fine buildings, and there is an artistic introduction of some light blue colour which, had it been in brick instead of stucco, I should altogether approve. Were bricks studied as acceptable material, a great variety of effect might be produced by tinted bricks introduced on a light surface. In so doing we should only revive the practice of the best architects in an architectural age. I am again indebted to Mr. Evans for a sight of coloured drawings, contributed by Mr. Petit to the *Archæological Journal*. There I find a picture of a building at Rouen, in which there are panels. The colours in one small erection are no fewer than red of two sorts, purple, green, and yellow—the last three being glazed. While the train “slows,” as, I believe, the term is, near the Camden station, it might be just worth while to observe a row of shops or other small houses near the line, which have been erected in light brick with a bright red framing in bricks to the windows and other apertures. It answers my requirement as to simple, not unpleasing, substantial, and lasting, erections in brick.

I have thus come from the Tower of Babel to almost the last buildings of the last year. I have glanced at many subjects, and have hazarded many hasty and superficial remarks. I have been bold to do this in the idea that no private member of this society is supposed to lay down the law of taste either

to the society at large, or for the society. Sometimes, I believe, there is a positive advantage in a little rashness of assertion. It may lead to some discussion which may induce both parties to modify their views.

Now that I have done with the material or business department, I may try and wind up with some sentimental or moral reflection; and I would urge that in bricks and the use we have made of them, I see a good illustration of the National Character. Bricks are essentially English in their plainness—English in their practicalness—English in their lastingness, their “solidité extraordinaire,” as our Allies call it—and, perhaps, also peculiarly English in their hardness and dryness! They are English, too, in our associations—if the word ‘home’ be untranslatable English. That brick and mortar paradise (as some one has hastily called it,) must surely incline Englishmen to an indulgent consideration of its familiar material. It wants no beauty of imagination nor grandeur of design to connect these feelings with a house. They may be felt towards a house in a street, or towards a number in a row. There were few men who had a more poetic mind than Sir Walter Scott, for the appreciation of country scenery. Few men were more attached to their town houses. The entries in his diary show that he could personify even No. 39, Castle Street, and many are the expressions of tender farewell to “poor 39.” “It gives me,” he says, “a turn to leave the house.” We may then take pride in improving according to the



correct taste of this architectural day the plainest street house that may be our childhood's home. We may be encouraged to adorn it as well as enlarge it; to point it as well as to repair it; only on no account let us stucco it:—"Let Bricks be Bricks" to the end of time.



