

HOUSES IN GREAT CITIES.

(Concluded.)

HE would propose a very simple model house for the metropolis, such a one as he would if he could build for himself. He would commence the reformation from the basement. The basement saps the health of the occupants of the house more than any other deteriorating influence. The basement walls and rooms are, however clean, always at fault on the score of dampness. They are surrounded by damp earth; into them all the rain which falls near the house splutters down. The pipes which convey the water from the roof and closets find at the basement their easiest points of leakage. Kettles, pots, and all vessels containing fluids here boil and cool. Their vapour is given forth and condensed. Clothes are here put to the fire, crockery set up to dry-sinks are deluged and scrubbed. All this wet passes by evaporation, with the help of a great fire, to the upper part of the house. At night the condensation ensues. In the morning the dripping walls are re-heated and the process goes on again. A lady he attended in the west of London suffered from neuralgic pains. He put his hand on the balustrade as he descended the stairs and found it covered with moisture. He told his patient that the builder was here wanted more than the doctor. A great authority was of opinion that malaria, fever, and ague were sufficiently accounted for by dampness. No doubt colds, exhaustion, toothache, &c., are either caused or aggravated by living above wet basements with fires in them to draw up the water, so that the occupant of the house is in a worse position than if he lived in a city raised on piles above a lake. The food in the damp air is rapidly decomposed, its particles carry infection through the house. The basement in good houses is also often made the sleeping place of women and children. Philanthropists sleep night after night over these catacombs. He had seen a house where 16 servants slept in underground beds, who could never at any season of the year see to dress without artificial light. The Barons of the Middle Ages took the precaution to cut off from all communication with themselves those who passed their lives in their dungeons. Now the laement properly should be an arched subway with a free current of air through. It should no longer be a living-place, a cooking-place, a laundry, bottle vault, refuse store, larder, servants' bedroom, drain-trap, and lavatory. It would consist of three arches, each of which through flue openings would communicate with the air. One of the arches would lead to the staircase at the back of the house to form the servants' entrance. In the basement would be placed the closed bin for receiving, by an outer shaft, all the refuse of the house. In the basement would be a closed tumbling bay in which the soil pipe would discharge. Through the basement the water pipe for supply of the house and the gas pipes would enter, and two at least of the arches might be fitted up with good furnaces or stoves, into which air derived from the upper part of the arch might be drawn and heated, purified, and passed into the upper part of the house. Nicely fitted, the basement rooms might be turned into hot air rooms, like the Roman baths, or to other useful purposes. But about the basement part there would always be this provision, that it could never be entered by a direct shaft communicating and forming a distinctive connexion with the rooms of the house above. The next change would be in the staircase. This change is not easy in houses, as at present constructed. But in new houses it should never be omitted. In the present construction, the staircase is the shaft of the dwelling through which all the products of respiration, combustion, and other forms of volatile impurity rise from the lower to the upper floors. It holds an open communication with all parts, and while it allows for the diffusion of every volatile impurity and damp, it prevents all possibility of maintaining through the house an equitable and agreeable temperature. It is the great source of draughts and it lessens the size and comfort of every floor. It enforces that all the water-closets shall be included actually in the living part of every dwelling—one of the most unwholesome and objectionable of all modern arrangements. The staircase should be placed in the rear of the house in a distinct shaft or tower of its own, leading straight from the ground floor to the upper part above the level of the house. At each floor there should be a door, and each flat would be independently lighted, warmed, and ventilated. Through the shaft the ventilating tubes could be carried, a lift, closets, and lavatories would be in the shaft. All that should be out of the house would be in this shaft. In the third floor should be the kitchen and servants' dormitories. From a spare boiler in the kitchen hot water should pass into any floor. The kitchen would have its own sink, opening into the dust shaft. The cock loft above, so called because it is the crown or cap of the house, is now misapplied and misconstrued. Here is a pointed roof, beneath which one is roasted in the summer and frozen to death (there is actual experience of this fate) in winter. Here upon a firm, almost level, asphalted roof, Dr. Richardson would raise a garden covered with brick and glass. Into this the stair-shaft would finally enter, and if any impurities reached this covered garden with its summer temperature always derived from the kitchen just beneath, the impurities would be eaten by the plants. Here the children and other inmates of the house would play and find relief from the monotonous contemplation of one or two rooms of limited size (Applause.)

THE CHURCH IN AMERICA.

We have received from a respected correspondent a portion of a letter referring to an article which appeared some months since in our columns, and of which the writer evidently mistakes the drift. We alluded to non-Catholic America, and did not take into consideration the effects of the Faith upon the great Republic. We have much pleasure in publishing the extract forwarded to us, and which contains much that is valuable and cheering:—

You pointed to an editorial in a recent issue of the *TABLET*, headed "A Nation's Bane." The writer speaks as if we were galloping head, neck, and heels to the devil. I suppose we have some wicked sinners amongst us, the same as in every other country. I hardly believe America is quite as bad as he writes it down in the *TABLET*. I think it speaks well for the country the rapid growth and spread of the Catholic faith, and, if we be allowed to forecast the future by the light of the past, we may, without presumption, predicate for Catholicity a career of usefulness and glory and influence far-reaching and all-pervading on American soil, hitherto unequalled, even in the most triumphant days of our holy and venerable Mother.

Only one hundred years ago, the Catholics of the United Colonies consisted of a few isolated groups, without influence, authority, or legal recognition; in the aggregate they counted about one in every thousand of the population. In 1810 the Catholics were estimated at upwards of 150,000, and the clergy 80, or double the number reported in 1800. Twenty years afterwards the laity had increased to 450,000, and the clergy to 232. The hierarchy, which only dated from 1789, at this time reckoned 13 bishops. In 1840 the Catholics increased over one million, and the priesthood to 432. In 1850 the Catholic population was estimated at two and a quarter millions, the clergy at 1800. The year 1860 added to the Church four and a half millions, under the charge of 2235 priests. The year 1876, the best authority, puts the Catholic population seven millions. In the year 1847, we had but 812 churches, several of which were small frame buildings. Many of these have since been pulled down, reconstructed, or rebuilt, and replaced by substantial brick or stone edifices. This in itself was a work of considerable merit; but when we reflect that since then no less than four thousand three hundred new churches have been added to this number, excellent specimens of solid masonry and architectural skill. The noble cathedrals especially which adorn Baltimore, Albany, Buffalo, Philadelphia, Pittsburg, Cincinnati, Boston, and other sees, are models of design, durability, and grandeur, of which any country or age might be proud. The same may be said, but with greater emphasis, of the Cathedral of St. Patrick now nearly completed in New York; that epic in marble, from the tall spire of which the glittering emblem of our salvation is destined, at no far distant day, to shine down upon a million faithful followers of the Cross. Eighty-seven hospitals, and two hundred and twenty asylums of various kinds, attest the practical charity and benevolence of the Catholics of America. The number of schools about one thousand, perhaps more. In the large cities most of the churches have a building for educational purposes attached. In the rural districts the basements of the churches are generally used for primary schools. There are also a number of what are called charity schools, generally under the charge of some of the teaching orders. New York alone boasts 24 of these schools, erected at a cost of four million dollars. There are 640 academies and select schools, with an average attendance of 60,000, for whose accommodation, as well as for the nuns and sisters who watch over them, an equal number of buildings, some very costly and extensive, have been provided. Though our seminaries and colleges do not show a proportionate rate of increase, either in numbers or attendance, the result, if taken by itself, is highly satisfactory. In the last century two of them only existed in the United States. Up to 1850 ten more were added. In 1874 we had 18 theological seminaries, attended by 1375 students; 68 colleges with over 10,000 pupils, and about 600 professors and teachers. Our deficiency here is plausible enough, but we will advance. Few persons who have not devoted special attention to Catholic matters, can form an estimate of the radical change which has been taking place gradually but surely in the American mind regarding Catholicity. Fifty years ago there were hundreds of towns and villages where professors of our faith, few and obscure, were looked upon with downright contempt; while a Catholic priest, because unknown, was regarded as little less than a monster of iniquity. In nearly all those places where formerly so little was known about our faith, are now to be found substantial churches, large and respectable congregations, zealous and respected priests, and, perhaps, one or more educational and charitable institutions. The rural American of to-day, who, with all his deficiencies, is usually a fair-minded man, being thus brought face to face with the things he had been taught to loathe, begins to feel the mists of prejudice lifted from his judgment, and ends by respecting the devotion and unaffected piety of those he lately contemned. Many other causes have likewise contributed to this desirable revolution in popular feeling, such as the annual visit of so many of our wealthy and influential citizens to Europe, where the ancient splendor of the Church may be seen in all its perfection. Godless education will not destroy America as the writer in the *TABLET* predicts, but I will predict if he takes a trip this way in a hundred years hence, he will find the grand old ship of state sailing the water of Catholic America.

About half-past twelve o'clock on Wednesday, 3rd January, the sea along the coast at Wicklow was observed to rise; beyond its usual height. About an hour afterward nearly the whole borough was submerged, the waves breaking over some of the houses. One house was completely levelled, and the furniture carried away. The inhabitants of the houses in Strand-street had to take refuge in the upper stories. Along the quay a strange sight presented itself. Timber was floating about in all directions and swept out to sea, one merchant losing about £50 worth. Several breaches are reported in the line of railway near Newcastle, and no trains can get past. The two o'clock train from Dublin was stopped at Kilcool, and all the up trains remained at Wicklow. Such a rising of the sea has never before occurred at Wicklow.

We learn that Mr. McLiskey, of Ratray-street, is clearing off his first-class stock of boots and shoes at unprecedentedly low rates. The sale will last for a month, and affords an opportunity to economical heads of houses of laying in a supply of capital shoe-leather for the winter.