

THE PROOF COTTAGES.

The Merchants', Farmers' and Mechanics' Savings Bank of Chicago advertised last autumn for specifications for cheap brick fire-proof cottages, such as it would be within the means of any mechanic to build who owned a lot. The bank lends a large part of its funds to mechanics with which to build homes, and hence the enterprise was, so to speak, in its line of business. In response to the advertisement, twenty-eight specifications have been received, on which a committee composed of Louis Wahl, N. S. Bouton, Mr. Grunius, Mr. Brew, and Sanitary Superintendent Dr. B. C. Miller is now passing judgment, and will award the prize of \$1,000.

The bank, according to agreement, owns all the plans and specifications, and will soon issue them with drawings in pamphlet form. The first cottage erected under any plan will be submitted to fire test—that is to say, rough floors will be laid, windows and doors put in, and a configuration started, and after all the combustible material has been consumed, it is specified that the walls and ceiling must be intact, so that the finishing can be proceeded with, without repairs, excepting to such parts as were intended should be consumed.

The officers of the bank and the committee to determine the prize are highly pleased with the results submitted to them by the architectural fraternity. Plans and specifications have been received from all parts of the country, and some wonderfully low figures are reached; a number of them proposing to put up fire-proof brick cottages for less than \$1,000.

Here are some specimens. A cottage to cost \$978 is 21x39 feet, and contains five rooms, a hall, a closet, and a pantry. The foundations are laid in clay, on plank, the walls are to be twelve-inch hollow, the partitions are to be of brick, the ceiling is to be plastered and then cemented for fire-proof purposes, with a cornice of brick. Doorsills and window trimmings are to be artificial stone. In front is to be a wide fence, and an asphalt walk will pass from the front along the side and at the rear to a brick-out-house and coal-house.

One to cost \$1,400, is a two story brick with basement, containing two large rooms on the first floor and three bedrooms above. The ceilings are to be of corrugated iron. This building is entirely fire-proof. Without basement it will cost \$1,300.

Another to cost \$1,500, is a handsome one story and a half cottage, for all practical purposes as good as two stories. The roof is to be of slate. On the first floor are a parlor, a kitchen, a scullery, and a bathroom and coal-bin. On the second floor are three bedrooms and a chamber.

There are plans for \$2,000 and \$2,500 houses, all fire-proof and equally cheap for their size; and also plans for stores with dwellings above, and places for rooms on the combination principle.

THE FIRST BLOOD OF THE REVOLUTION.—As this is the centennial year of the commencement of the revolution, everything pertaining to incidents of the year 1775 will no doubt be published in due time, and we will set the bell rolling by telling our readers where and by what occasion the first blood was shed.

It is generally believed that on April 19, 1775, at Lexington, the first blood was shed; but Westminster, Vt., has a prior claim in favor of one Wm. French, who, it is asserted, was killed on the night of March 13, 1775, at the king's court house, in what is now Westminster. At that time Vermont was a part of New York, and the King's court officers together with a body of troops were sent on to Westminster to hold the usual session of the court. The people, however, were exasperated, and assembled in the court house to resist. A little before midnight the troops of George the Third advanced and fired indiscriminately upon the crowd, instantly killing William French, whose head was pierced by a musket ball. He was buried in the church yard and a stone erected to his memory, with this quaint inscription:

"In memory of William French, Who Was Shot at Westminster March ye 12th 1775, by the hand of the cruel Ministerial tools of George 3rd at the Court house at 11 o'clock at Night in the 22 year of his age. Here William French his body lies, For Murder his Blood for Vengeance cries, His Country he loves, his Country he serves, That with a hand full of iron may grow, For Liberty and his Country Good he lost his life his Dearest blood."

THE FIGURES.—The Pall Mall Gazette says: "The ring finger, though the weakest in the hand, possesses its peculiar honor and dignity, as ladies will allow. Indeed, it has been held to be typical of their sex. An old writer describes the human hand as representing the life of the universe. The thumb stands for the Deity, without which the hand is powerless. The fore-finger is likened to the angelic creation, the middle finger to the man, the ring finger to the woman, and the little finger to the animal kingdom. These similes, if not very felicitous, are sufficiently quaint. In many other ways the hand has been supposed to be emblematic. The symbolism has penetrated to the nursery. A nurse will make a child put its two palms together, knitting them by closing the two middle fingers. In this position the child is told to separate the two thumbs, which it does with ease, and thereupon is told that 'brother and sister may part.' It is next asked to separate the fore-fingers, which also it easily does, and is informed that 'father and son may part.' Then it is required to separate the two little fingers, and upon doing this, it is told that 'mother and daughter may part.' It is now told to try and separate the two ring-fingers. This, as the middle fingers are locked together, it cannot possibly do, and is thereupon told that 'wife and husband cannot part.'

AND now they tell of a photographic apparatus by which a plate, kept permanent-sensitve, can be put in a pocket or the chain, and with which the holder secure the portrait in miniature of any one he or she may desire, and that too at the knowledge of the person inter-

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