bleak and desolate faces. At the Land’s End course grey tufts of unna (similar to the beards of old apple-orchards) are pensioners on their cold hospitality, being continually wet with spray and buffeted with the storms of centuries.

Little as external influences affect granite, time and weather gradually round off their hard and angular outlines. Wherever water can settle, a circular hollow is formed, which froth from time to time enlarges, till such natural freaks as the Men an Tol near Penzance, or King Arthur’s Cups and Saucers at Tintagel, are the result. Another effect of weather upon granite is often to be seen in the rounded boulders of granite districts, piled one upon the other in picturesque confusion, as their softer edges have decayed. The Cornish Cheesewring is an excellent example of this.

Among the most striking objects in a granite district, where stiles, pigsties, and churches are built alike of this durable stone, are the granite fences. These are well-nigh indestructible in their solidity; and after the lapse of many years, becoming overgrown with heather, fern, and stoncrop, and with their interstices gradually filled with the mould resulting from their decay, they almost acquire the character of the natural rock. It is a curious speculation, how far the independence and sturdy nature of the inhabitants of a granite country is due to the character of the district. Certain it is that the children of such a soil possess a hard-headedness of their own which at once distinguishes them from their less rugged neighbours. The Highlander does not differ from the Lowland farmer more than the Cornish miner does from the sleepy Devon rustic.

From the decomposing quartz and felspar of granite districts, the soil is rendered almost worthless in agriculture, presenting thereby a strange contrast to countries where decomposed hornblende predominates. At the Lizard, for instance, where the soil is of this character, corn crops are specially fine; land produces a high rental; and it is upon record that a single acre of this district has produced the extraordinary crop of ninety bushels of barley.

If the decomposed felspar does not improve the fertility of a granite district, it adds to its wealth in another way, as it becomes that greasy whitish substance known to commerce as kaolin, or china clay, so essential in the manufacture of the finer kinds of pottery and porcelain. About St. Austell and Carelaze, in Cornwall, kaolin forms the staple commodity of the district. All the streams run like milk-and-water where it is extracted; and could a deposit of kaolin only be discovered on the outskirts of London, it would be invaluable to the dairymen, and much cheaper than chalk or calves’ brains. Upwards of 81,000 tons of this substance have been exported in a single year from the granite districts of Devon and Cornwall.

We will end with a brief enumeration of some more useful products of granite: apatite, tite, meerschaum, asbestos, rock-crystals, cairngorms, beryls, and other precious gems. Hard and unpromising as a chip of granite looks, like many other equally uninviting subjects, it yields an abundant harvest of knowledge to the careful investigator.

M. G. Watkins.

METROPOLITAN IMPROVEMENTS, ARTISTIC AND STRUCTURAL.

A FORTNIGHT on the Continent is not lost upon the Londoner, if he is of an observing turn of mind, and has not yet hardened into a Briton of that type which sees nothing away from home worth copying. The first journey abroad opens his eyes to the fact, that there are other cities worth seeing as well as his own Metropolis; and he gradually finds out that, with all our wealth at home, we do not make as good use of it as some of our neighbours. After the light and pleasant cities he meets with in his foreign rambles, London strikes him as being monotonously dull, grimy, and monotonous; and if he begins to examine the reason why, he cannot help coming to the conclusion that the Briton, with all his money, is in some respects a very stupid animal. At all events, he is terribly dull in all that pertains to urban ornament; and he cannot help concluding that very many metropolitan sights he once thought were very great lions, are in fact, compared with those of other cities, but very little puppy-dogs. London may be the biggest city in Europe, but most certainly it is the ugliest. In most other great capitals, there is an organised structure visible; it has a backbone, limbs, and a head; but London is nothing more than a vast agglomeration of houses, thrown together by chance, with thoroughfares meandering about without rhyme or reason, like the paths on a village-green. We owe this want of plan undoubtedly to our parochial system, which has cut the town up into districts often having interests totally opposed to each other; and we have but very lately found out that a great city can no longer be managed in this fashion, and have appointed a sort of central government, in the shape of the Board of Works.

This Board has not been established too soon. If we look at the map of London, and endeavour to discover the anatomy of its thoroughfares, we are at once struck with the utter
jumble it presents. Two or three streets run irregularly east and west, but not one single street places the north and south in anything like direct communication with each other. Petty thoroughfares, crossing each other at every conceivable angle, permeate the whole mass, and cause a loss of time to its inhabitants which must amount to hundreds of thousands in the course of the year. All this confusion is caused by every man having a right to do what he likes with his own, without regard to the general welfare of the community. All this irregular action it will take years to correct, even if the central power is used mercilessly. Our purpose, however, in this paper is not so much to point out the developmental errors of our civic construction as to call attention to the fact, that in the new Board, devised to correct them, there is no power to deal with what, for a better known term, we must call the esthetic element.

As a rule, Englishmen know nothing and care nothing for art, unless it be for the purposes of ostentatious display. Men of business like to boast that their dining-rooms are hung with pictures of masters who command the highest prices; but put them to decide on any matter of artistic detail, and they are completely at sea. There are, however, plenty of individuals among us as capable of giving an artistic judgment as can be found on the Continent, and it is a very great pity that the Metropolitan Board do not avail themselves of their aid when a question of art comes before them. Look, for instance, at our public statues. There is not one of modern date in London that can by the merest courtesy be called a work of art. The very feeble style which characterizes them all, the attempt at simplicity of drapery to hide feeble modelling, must no doubt be accredited to the pitiable condition of statuary art; but beyond this we may justly complain of the want of judgment in the manner with which statues, and especially equestrian statues, are placed, with reference to the spectators. It must be obvious that a figure on horseback should be seen somewhat on a level, or at least but a little elevated above, the public eye. Yet, absurd as it may appear, no modern equestrian statute has been erected that has not been hoisted high over the heads of the passers-by. Without referring to the monstrous statue at Hyde Park, which, together with the arch it crowns, looks monstrously like a French time-piece for the land of Brobdingnag, we may instance the smaller statue of the Duke in front of the Exchange, and the royal rider who strides his horse in Pall Mall like a circus man at Astley's. Wanting in fire, as both these works of art are, their weakness is made truly ludicrous by the error of placing them without any railing around their pediments. The consequence is that the Briton, with his love to come to close quarters, looks up at the statues from directly underneath, and of course sees the whole design foreshortened, the effect being most ludicrous. There is no particular merit in any of the equestrian statues placed in the midst of our west-end squares; but our forefathers took the precaution to erect the square railing at such a distance as to prevent the effect of any such disastrous foreshortening.

It is a very moot question whether statues should be placed in any crowded places at all. On the one hand, it may be urged that if they are intended as memorials, they should be placed where they may be the reminders to the greatest number. But it does not follow because we pass an object that we see it. Possibly more people pass in front of the Royal Exchange than in any open place in the world. Yet we very much question if, among the daily flood of people, one per cent. notice the statue of the duke. A certain altitude of mind and freedom from surrounding bustle is necessary to the due appreciation of a work of art. Possibly, for this reason, some of the later monuments to eminent men have been erected in secluded places. The latest of these is that to Franklin, on the border of the garden of the Athenaeum, and in the view of persons passing towards the Duke of York's column. There are some points about this statue which strike us as indicative of the poverty of "public thought," if we may so speak. The daring adventurer, for the sake of solving a great geographical riddle, should surely have deserved a memorial with loftier inscriptions than we find upon its base. Bassi-relievi are, without doubt, a great advantage as a means of telling the story of a statue; but certainly there is nothing in a funeral, in which the mourners are dressed in bear-skins, which may be considered illustrative of the great problem to the solution of which the Arctic navigator fell a martyr. To our mind, in a national scientific monument of this nature, it was not in the best taste to inscribe only the names of the officers who perished. Every man, down to the cabin-boy, deserved well of his country; and the omission of the other names brands the statue with that invidious mark which evinces, to our mind, the narrow spirit in which it was erected. The monolith to Speke in Kensington Gardens offends less against good taste; but did the discoverer of one of the sources of Old Nile deserve no noble words for the secret he has ransacked?

Without doubt, Trafalgar Square combines
the greatest number of advantages for the sites of statues of our great men to be found in the metropolis. There is space in plenty there; yet, for some unknown reason, the "First Commissioner," who claims the allegiance of the public statues, has removed from this site the noblest statue it possessed. Why Jenner, who deserved well of mankind, should have been removed from this noble site to the damp corner of the Long Water, where "worried" nursery-maids alone see it, we do not know. Trafalgar Square may be made a perfect open-air Valhalla, if properly managed; but it surely is absurd to place the open space under the care of the Board of Works, and the stately under the Woods and Forests. What unity of design can possibly result from this conflict between two such touchy Boards as these? If the space is to be given up to military and naval heroes, well and good; but it certainly is a great slight to the benefactor of humanity to move him from pillar to post at the mere whim of a chief commissioner. Sir Robert Peel said with truth that Trafalgar Square was the finest site in Europe, and we cannot help thinking what the Emperor Napoleon would have made of it if it were situated in Paris. Why, we ask, should its dreary waste of asphalt remain undecorated by trees? Acacias in boxes and orange-trees enliven similar open places in Paris, and why not here? Imagine, good reader, how bright it could be made by the judicious combination of marble statues and bright verdure, and by the introduction of fountains, so constructed as not to play upon you with all the force of a fire-engine in windy weather.

We certainly do not understand the value of open spaces in the metropolis. With squares in the midst of the most densely inhabited parts of London, with a population asphyxiated for want of air, with crowds of little children, ash pale for want of light, we lock up in the most selfish manner immense reservoirs of oxygen, we hedge round gardens blooming with trees and flowers with iron railings, in a dog-in-the-manger spirit, that strikes the foreigner with astonishment. Lincoln's Inn Fields covers four acres, and all the boast we can make about it is that it is exactly the size of the base of the Great Pyramid. Close at hand is the dismal district of Clare Market and Drury Lane, where children die like flies in autumn, for want of such a space. Are there no means of bringing the want and the thing wanted together? This is no sentimental question, but one which touches the life of the citizen; for what occurs in Lincoln's Inn Fields and other metropolitan squares occurs in every large city in the three kingdoms. We saw, with regret, the other day, that the Horticultural Gardens would no longer be opened freely to the public on Wednesdays as hitherto, and the reason assigned for this withdrawal of a great favour is, we fear, at the bottom of the reluctance to open to the public the enclosures of the squares. It is asserted that boys at the destructive age took advantage of the liberty to turn it to license. Under present arrangements probably this argument is valid; but if these spaces were always open, there would be no rush, and, with a little care on the part of the police, no destruction. Open spaces that, formerly, were scenes of riot and confusion, are now no longer so, since they have become planted and placed under guardianship. Kennington Common, for instance, and Paddington Green, once eye-sores to the surrounding inhabitants, are now blooming parterres, in which the whole neighbourhood takes delight. There is a society which holds annual exhibitions, and distributes prizes for plants grown in areas and on window-sills. This is an amiable and good movement; but whilst we brighten our dull basements, let us not forget that there are scores of acres of pleasure-ground scattered about London, which are blooming deserts, where the foot of man or woman is heard but at rare intervals.

Leicester Square, which has long been the scandal of the town, will, we hope, ere long, be turned to some good account. Its present tattered condition is due to some law-suit which is not yet decided, but will be settled soon, we hear. What a splendid site for a flower market—a light glass structure, the centre of attraction for fair women, who, like so many bees, would certainly be attracted by such a floral temple.

The greatest metropolitan improvement which has taken place within the present generation, is undoubtedly the introduction of landscape gardening and the method of flower embellishment in our parks. Of old it was thought that grass and trees were sufficient; indeed, the park was the idea on which these open spaces were planned. But as our population has increased, they have gradually been transmuted into pleasure-gardens. In the month of June the long walk in Regent's Park, and the walks on the east side of Hyde Park, cannot be matched for brilliancy of color and tropical foliage by the Kew Gardens, or some of the great pleasure-grounds of the nobility. But the Woods and Forests have not been contented with this improvement, and now the variation of the ground is the improvement aimed at. The park near Hyde Park Corner has in this respect been entirely transformed. The level grass rises into hillocks and pleasant undulating swards, crowned
with noble shrubs. All the old rubbish of the town rapidly undergoing demolition, is used to build up an agreeable variety not only in Hyde Park, but in St. James's and Regent's Parks. If the plebs are denied the Horticultural Gardens, they are free of quite as delightful places of recreation, and being free of them, we see that no damage is the result.

Next to the parks we are bound to admit that the improvements now being carried out by the Metropolitan Board of Works are the most important. The Thames Embankment may be likened to the vertebral column, or backbone, of the new structural development which London is assuming under the guidance and superintendence of the Metropolitan Board of Works. Its beauty is beginning to appear, but it will be years before the true beauty of this great thoroughfare will declare itself. Of course there will be a row of trees sheltering the walk near the river-wall, and what this boon will be to the people on its banks, when the river once more flows clear of sewage, we can scarcely yet appreciate. The Thames— is one of the noblest navigable rivers in Europe, but strange to say, until very lately, no person within the metropolitan limits ever set foot upon its banks. Indeed it was only from the bridges that we could perceive that it had banks at all, and those were strewn with dead dogs and cats, and all the refuse of a great population. The embankment on either side of the river will open up a splendid boulevard, swept clear from end to end by the fresh breeze following the river's flow. The sanitary value of this new channel of oxygen running through the heart of the metropolis is incalculable. It is a great pity that the embankment is not carried past Westminster Bridge, as only a short space intervenes before we find the roadway again running beside the river as far as Chelsea College; beyond this, again, we have Cheyne Walk, and a little labour would be sufficient to connect the Hammersmith and Chiswick malls into one esplanade from east to west, which would be unmatched in Europe.

On the opposite side of the water we believe it is contemplated to continue the embankment up as far as Battersea, with landing piers at the new park. The old river will look picturesque once more; and if our steam-boat proprietors only possessed a touch of the picturesque, "Citizen No. 2" need no longer be the hideous thing it is, but as tasteful as a Venetian gondola. Possibly now that a little embellishment is finding its way into the age, and modifying its utilitarian spirit, we need not despair of some change for the better in this respect. A steamer may be built after the manner of a Roman galley, and yet do her twelve miles an hour, and carry quite as many passengers as the grimy river-boat now does.

On the Surrey side of the water, the noble street running from Westminster Bridge to the Borough Road is another thoroughfare formed, or rather forming, under the same auspices, which promises to alter the whole character of this once dismal quarter of the town. Passing along the line of route the other day for the first time, we were struck by its noble proportions and the beauty of many of the buildings already completed. It is observable, that in whatever part of London a house is pulled down, it is being replaced by a far loftier and handsome structure. In the City some of the new buildings are of great beauty. We would especially refer to a noble Italian structure on the north side of the Bank, on which ornament is lavished with a hand as profuse as on any Florentine mansion of old.

The abundant use of coloured marble is a very remarkable architectural feature at the present time; such also is the complete abandonment of the classical style, or rather the so-called classical,—for, with the exception of some of the work of that true artist, Decimus Burton, there is not a classical building in London with the slightest pretensions to purity or beauty, not even the British Museum or the new public offices in Downing Street.

This abandonment of the classical style is much to be praised. Without a clear pure atmosphere it never can retain that chastity on which so much of its beauty depends. Even a Roman building, such as St. Paul's, becomes a caricature when made party-coloured by the incrustation of soot, washed here and there by the action of the wind and weather,—like a chimney sweep who has given his face "a lick and a promise." The corroding action of time, and even the impurity of the atmosphere, on the contrary, gave in many instances an additional interest to Gothic lines, adding that appearance of antiquity which they seem to require. It is certainly odd to find even warehouses erected in the style of the Renaissance, and in the Lombardian manner; but they at least make our streets look picturesque, which is a feature they have not possessed for ages.

In every portion of the metropolis the houses are growing up to the sky; and it must be remembered they are replacing a London of the ugly periods of Charles and James II., when our domestic architecture was more hideous than it had ever been before, or is ever likely to be hereafter. In the Poultry and in Fleet Street we still see houses erected immediately after the great fire, many of them bearing the date 1668 upon their fronts. But there will be nothing to regret in the disappearance of this "London
after the fire”: it neither possessed the poetry of antiquity nor the conveniences of our later domestic architecture. It will disappear without leaving any mark behind of its bad taste. The only thing to be regretted is, that the new London that is arising is built on the old lines of thoroughfare, and that the old lines followed those that existed before the great fire. This is much to be lamented; the traffic is enormously increased, and will go on increasing year by year. What chance the sunlight will have of finding admission when such narrow streets as the Poultry have doubled in height, as is the case with some of the new houses already, we scarcely dare surmise. This is a matter the Board of Works should look to, as it involves a sanitary question of very great importance. The neglect to widen the Poultry is certainly an error of the gravest kind: it is the principal entry into the City from the west, and although it will be “turned” by the splendid thoroughfare that will be constructed next year from the Mansion House to Blackfriars Bridge, in continuation of the Thames Embankment, still the Holborn traffic and all the flood of carriages tending northwest must still use it. As regards the traffic, this street certainly required throwing back some ten feet, much more than Ludgate Hill, provision to widen which has been made, if we may judge from the pulling-down of the house at the corner of the street opening into St. Paul’s Churchyard, and the throwing back of the piers of the railway bridge.

It was promised that this bridge should be an ornamental structure, and now we see what idea of ornament the Chatham and Dover Company have. The only approach to embellishment of any kind is the City arms, and we suppose the engineer of the company imagined that the City authorities would accept their introduction as an undoubted work of art. May we here be allowed to ask if the foot-bridge which has been erected on each side of the railroad is ever to be thrown open to the public? The crossing here is one of the most dangerous in the City, and the cross-traffic, even to those who brave danger, causes the most annoying delay. The whole structure is an eye-sore, hiding the fine view we once had up Ludgate-Hill, with the dome of St. Paul’s beyond.

We have often admired this chance street-view, the only one which takes in the metropolitan cathedral from base to summit: but as we now look from Fleet Street, say from the corner of Shoe Lane, towards the cathedral, one of those extraordinary specimens of ill-taste, of which the advertising mania offers so many specimens, is afforded us. Gigantic posters, twenty feet long, in red, white, and blue, of a family grocer, and of the London, Chatham, and Dover Railway, with letters a foot deep, are so placed at the side of the bridge that it cuts in half, as it were, the view of the splendid dome, producing an effect which is incongruous and ugly in the extreme. If there were an officer whose duty it was to prevent such infractions of good taste as this, it certainly would be a great advantage. The dome could not look much more defaced if these gigantic posters were pasted directly upon it.

We wonder the Corporation of London have not availed themselves of this commanding site as an advertising station. What would not a celebrated tea-dealer close at hand give for the right of occupying the whole metropolitan world from its ample cupola to “Remember No. 1!”? The business of bill-sticking, as carried on in London, certainly should be put under some control. As it is, every vacant wall is taken possession of, every house abandoned to Chancery is seized upon, and made hideous by a mass of posters which would be sufficient to destroy the effect of the best architectural view.

A. W.

ALICE.

I.
In her golden chamber,
Golden with the sun,—
Where the roses clamber
Breathless, one by one;

II.
(O’er her casement creeping,
With their lavish grace;
Through her lattice peeping
At her happy face)

III.
Sitteth fairest Alice,
Reading calmly there—
Roses! bear no malice,
Ye are not so fair.

IV.
Bending o’er her missal,
Alice sitteth there—
Shamrock, rose, and thistle,
Carved in jewels rare.

V.
Clasp’d the velvet cover,
With a rare device;
Scrolls are blazon’d over
Gold and azure dyes.

VI.
Argent angels flying,
Peacocks’ eyes and wings—
Martyrs bravely dying,
Quaint and lovely things!

VII.
Rubies red and glowing,
Pearls and em’rald sheaves—
Sapphire rivers flowing,
Glitter through the leaves.