

the particular stage of civilization of the inhabitants. Thus in the early periods of civilization, and before the aboriginal forests of a country have been cleared, wood has usually been the principal and almost the only substance employed. In proportion as the population of a country increases, wood becomes more and more scarce; and then brick and stone begin to be employed: but when the population has increased to a very considerable extent, those materials almost entirely supersede the use of wood, unless in the interior of the building: and hence, in this densely-peopled island, the half-timbered dwellings of our ancestors are daily becoming more picturesque^x.

The value of building-stone depending greatly on its hardness, but the difficulty of working it being increased proportionally to its degree of hardness, it ought not to escape our notice, in a treatise, of which it is the professed object to illustrate the adaptation of external nature to the physical condition of man, that many of the common forms of building-stone, though soft while yet undetached from the quarry, become hardened very considerably by exposure to the air: which change in their state enhances their value in a twofold sense; for, in consequence

^x Throughout the interior of Russia and of Siberia the greater part of the buildings in every town were, within a few years, entirely of wood.