

## OUR WEEKLY GOSSIP.

At length the Commissioners appointed for the direction of the great Industrial Exhibition have determined on the form and materials for the building in Hyde Park. The huge absurdity of their Building Committee—based on a singular depreciation of the Architects of England, and which threatened to take possession of the Park in a shape so questionable as to have raised a very storm of question—is happily dismissed to the limbo of all wild fancies; and the Commissioners having decided to live in a glass house, will we suppose be careful that no more stones be thrown by parties acting in their name. It will be no easy matter, we apprehend, to allay the ill feeling which the eccentricities of this Committee have brought about the ears of the Commissioners,—and we only hope the consequences of their “vaulting ambition” may not yet visit the Commission in the shape of further trouble and vexation. But with their brick and mortar Babel is gone, we apprehend, every argument on general grounds which could be urged, in defence of a few private interests, against the occupation of the best site which London yields for the grandest purpose that for many a long day she has conceived. The materials now to be used are of a kind easily accumulated and dispersed,—transportable to and from the site intended with little injury to the place and its approaches. The plan which has been finally adopted is one proposed by Mr. Paxton,—and is in fact nothing more or less than a conservatory on a gigantic scale. The materials being wholly glass and its framings, will not, according to Mr. Paxton's estimate, exceed in weight a fourth of the materials which would be necessary to the erection of a brick building,—and three-fourths of the pressure attending transport are thus at once removed. The advantages of light and its regulation by calico shades, easy ventilation, and immunity from risk of fire, are suggested as further recommendations of the scheme; and the erection will have a light and cheerful appearance, without subjecting us to the peril of European criticism on the score of some “great feature.” The plan of Mr. Paxton evades the sort of difficulty in which we were placed by the circumstance of the Building Committee having challenged the world and decided in its own favour.—His plan is no doubt greatly to be preferred to the brick and mortar and the “great feature” of the Committee:—but still, this construction will, in our opinion, be far more costly than the occasion demands. No doubt, however, this is a consequence of the magnificence of the Committee's own scheme. They have pitched the idea of a building for the Exhibition so high, that no designer can get down to the tone of mere common sense and common requirement.—Let us, however, if we are to accept this scheme at this cost, take guarantees for the due execution of the first and against any future augmentation of the last. Let the person—and there must be such a person—to whose supervision the execution of the work by the contractors shall be intrusted, be invested with full authority and discharged from all control. His appointment presupposes intelligence, integrity, and competent skill,—and to these should be attached full and undivided responsibility. Let us know distinctly where to look for the redress, or on whom to fix the blame, of anything that may be wrong. Neither he nor any man or body of men should have power to alter, or modify, or tamper with the plan agreed on by the Commissioners; and to insure this, the officer whose distinct duty it is to watch over its execution, should have no facility for passing his responsibility to some one else when we are in search of it on behalf of the public.

One or two other moves have been made in reference to this Exhibition which the manufacturers of England may lay to heart or not as they will. In the first place, Prussia, taking a hint in her own way out of our great scheme, is about to establish in Berlin a permanent Exhibition of the most remarkable productions of all nations, to serve as models for her national industry. In all probability this hint will spread; so that the various capitals of Europe will have a sort of universal museums,—indexes, as it were, to the geographical page at which any particular manufacture is most easily, or cheaply, or excellently producible.—In the next place, the proposals to which we some time since alluded for the transfer to America of selections from our own forthcoming Exhibition, have taken substantive form, and been submitted to the City Local Committee. The improvements in connexion with manufactures are said to be “their first object, and the profits of the Exposition are to be given to that American city which will make the most liberal arrangement for its reception. In other relations the undertaking is intended to be thoroughly commercial, and strong inducement is held out to all the Euro-

pean nations by proposing the vast and increasing market of the Transatlantic continent for the display and competition of their productions. The occasion will, it is calculated, be earnestly embraced by our own manufacturers for impressing their American customers with an increasing sense of the immense variety and excellence of the productions of the looms and the lathes, the moulds and the anvils, the chisels and the gravers, and all the other apparatus and implements of the mighty industry of England.” It is worth while further to quote a couple of sentences from the American documents transmitted.—“It is for the advantage of the maker that his goods should be seen in a very extensive and growing market, where expensive articles are in demand and of ready sale; it is also the interest of the American consumer to see the goods in his own country, where, if they are superior to the growth and manufacture of that country, a paramount and extensive patronage is sure to follow.”—Well then, it is for the English manufacturers to consider how far they can afford to stand aloof from a competition like this. If they choose to sit sulkily apart while the world is in motion,—why, the world will pass them by. There is no Protection possible against such a Spirit as has been evoked. At present England stands at the head of this great movement. If she fall into the rear, it will be the fault of her manufacturers:—and let them count the cost in time.