William Calway, Gloucester.

Manufacturer of all Classes of Portable Buildings in Wood, Iron, and Cement Slabs.

A particularly interesting industry is that carried on by Mr. William Calway, proprietor of the Severn Works, Gloucester. This industry, which has the distinction of being the only one of its kind in any importance in the county, is of comparatively recent origin, although it has already become known in almost all parts of the kingdom.

In 1881 Mr. Calway, who had for some years taken great interest in poultry, began the breeding of prize fowls, soon becoming a very successful exhibitor of some eight or ten breeds. It was as a fancier that he first felt the need of more suitable poultry apparatus and foods than could then be obtained, and in 1887 he began to manufacture them at Sharpness. From a very small beginning the business grew rapidly, new features being constantly added, the larger part of the appliances being of his own design. His reputation has now become firmly established among the leading breeders of the day, as well as among the aristocracy, and in the principal technical and agricultural colleges his methods and appliances are adopted and lectured on as representing the highest achievements in their line. It should be added here that he is not only a manufacturer, but he has but recently perfected, and for which he has obtained provisional protection. He has introduced a method of constructing houses of cement slabs, the finished structure having the picturesque appearance of the so much admired half-timbered houses, but having the advantage of being much more solid and durable. By means of this invention the cost of a home or any other building is reduced to the price of the usual temporary wooden or iron structure, while in comfort, durability and ornament they are equal to brick edifices.

The slabs of which the houses are constructed are a composition of granite and cement, cast in blocks 2 feet 6 inches long by 2 feet in width and 2 inches thickness. The slabs have a very smooth face, which can be painted or distempered, as desired. They are thoroughly seasoned and are practically non-porous, the house, therefore, having no damp walls, being fit for occupation the day it is finished. Another advantage is the reduced number of men that can do no trouble to insulate them where a wooden building could not be insulated at all. Local authorities will accept these buildings for erection in their districts where they absolutely refuse to allow a wooden place to be erected. Still another advantage—and one of the greatest importance—is the facility with which a building may be transported and erected. The actual work of erection, indeed, may be carried out by the owner himself, with the assistance of one or two laborers. For the home trade the price includes erection.

A workman’s cottage can be built for about £125, and a six room residence, with offices, and with a verandah round two sides, for about £225. It is gratifying to know that these new buildings have already elicited a great deal of favourable comment from all quarters, and Mr. Calway has received a number of orders for them from throughout Great Britain and the Colonies.

In 1903 Mr. Calway removed his works to Gloucester, where he has secured the larger and more convenient premises made necessary by the continuous growth of his industry. His premises in Tuffley Crescent comprise offices, several workshops, and timber drying sheds, with sufficient reserve ground to permit of larger buildings now in contemplation. From having started but a few years ago with one man only, he now employs a number of skilled workmen, whose energy is fully taxed to execute the orders that are being constantly received.

This is all the more remarkable when it is remembered that he has created what is practically a new industry, particularly as regards the cement slab buildings, which, as has been stated, mark a radical departure from conventional architecture.

For a fuller reference to Mr. Calway’s varied manufactures the reader is referred to his elaborately illustrated and attractive catalogue, which will be posted to any address upon request. It is but just to add that his business methods have been marked by a consistent integrity which has no doubt been an appreciable factor in his success.

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A.—Shows Framing.
B.—The Concrete Slab which is 2 ins. in thickness.
C.—The Crossed Capping which covers the exposed part of framing.
D.—Stops which keep the Slab in position.
E.—An Air-space.
F.—A Batten to which the inner lining is nailed.
G.—Inner Lining.