



DEVOTED TO TEMPERANCE, SCIENCE, EDUCATION, AND LITERATURE.

VOLUME XXI. No. 22.

MONTREAL & NEW YORK, OCTOBER 22, 1886.

30 CTS. per An. Post-Paid.

THE SLOUGH OF DESPOND.

Now I saw in my dream, that just as they had ended this talk they drew nigh to a very miry slough that was in the midst of the plain, and they, being heedless, did both fall suddenly into the bog. The name of the slough was Despond. Here, therefore, they wallowed for a time, being grievously bedaubed with the dirt: and Christian, because of the burden that was on his back, began to sink in the mire.

Then said Pliable, Ah! neighbor Christian, where are you now?

Truly, said Christian, I do not know.

At that Pliable began to be offended, and angrily said to his fellow, Is this the happiness you have told me all this while of? If we have such ill speed at our first setting out, what may we expect betwixt this and our journey's end? May I get out again with my life, you shall possess the brave country alone for me. And with that he gave a desperate struggle or two, and got out of the mire on that side of the slough which was next to his own house. So away he went, and Christian saw him no more.

Wherefore Christian was left to tumble in the slough of Despond alone; but still he endeavored to struggle to that side of the slough that was still further from his own house, and next to the Wicket-gate; the which he did, but could not get out, because of the burden that was upon his back. But I beheld in my dream that a man came to him whose name was Help, and asked him what he did there?

Sir, said Christian, I was bid go this way by a man called Evangelist, who directed me also to yonder gate, that I might escape the wrath to come; and as I was going thither I fell in here.

Help. But why did you not look for the steps!

Chr. Fear followed me so hard that I fled the next way, and fell in.

Then said he, Give me thy hand. So he gave him his hand, and drew him out, and set him on sound ground, and let him go

on his way. Then I stepped to him that plucked him out, and said, Sir, wherefore since over this place is the way from the city of Destruction to yonder gate, is it, that this plat is not mended, that poor travellers might go thither with more security? And

he said to me, This miry slough is such a place as cannot be mended. It is the descent whither the scum and filth that attend conviction of sin do continually run, and therefore it is called the slough of Despond: for still, as the sinner is awakened about his lost

condition, there arise in his soul many fears and doubts, and discouraging apprehensions, which all of them get together, and settle in this place; and this is the reason of the badness of this ground. It is not the pleasure of the King that this place should remain so bad.

His laborers also have, by the directions of his Majesty's surveyors, been for above these sixteen hundred years employed about this patch of ground, if perhaps it might be mended; yea, and to my knowledge, said he, here have been swallowed up at least twenty thousand cartloads, yea, millions of wholesome instructions, that have at all seasons been brought from all places of the King's dominions (and they that can tell, say, that they are the best materials to make good ground of the place, if so be it might be mended); but it is the slough of Despond still, and so will be when they have done what they can. True, there are, by the direction of the Lawgiver, certain good and substantial steps placed even through the very midst of this slough: but, at such time as this place doth much spew out its filth, as it doth against change of weather, these steps are hardly seen; or if they be, men, through the dizziness of their heads, step beside, and then they are bewildered to purpose, notwithstanding the steps be there; but the ground is good when they are once got in at the Gate.—Pilgrim's Progress.



THE Canadian Baptist makes mention of a blacksmith who rose during a recent revival service and said, "I have heard a good many tell, during these services, about the prayers of their mothers being answered; but no one has said anything about praying fathers. It is a good thing that there has been so many praying mothers, but I am determined, by the help of God, to live so that my boys shall say they had a praying father." May the Lord raise up many such fathers.

RESERVE CHRIST with all your heart. As there is nothing in Christ that may be refused, so there is nothing in you from which he must be excluded.