

CANADA HARVEST.

The following remarks are as suitable for Nova Scotia as Canada. We are indebted for them to the editor of a very respectable journal denominated 'The Church,' published at Cobourg, Upper Canada.

"Thankful indeed ought we to be that it hath pleased a gracious God to 'give and preserve to our use the kindly fruits of the earth, so as in due time we may enjoy them!' 'Thankful ought we to be that, while the same measure of success has not crowned the labours of the husbandman in a neighbouring country, and while even in our land some minor crops have not yielded their 'fruits of increase,' the crop of crops—that which emphatically is called *the staff of life*—that which is of most vital consideration, both as regards our sustenance at home and our trade abroad—has been plenteous beyond anticipation. With how many arguments for gratitude and contentment are we here furnished! In the course of the last few years both Scotland and Ireland have suffered occasionally from dearth and scarcity, and Famine has uplifted on them her gaunt and colourless features. Here, indeed, one season his fallen short of another in productiveness and plenty; but, altogether, the channel of God's mercy has never yet been dried up to us; and we have generally been strangers to the calamities and wants that have scourged some portions of the mother country, to the hurricane and tornado that have blasted the fair islands of the West Indies, and to the famine that recently in Eastern India has been carrying off its victims by thousands.

Our forefathers of 'merry England' were wont, when the fruits of the year were gathered in, to invite their tenants and labourers to the festive board, and, with the various accompaniments of rustic merriment, to celebrate the Harvest Home. Far be it from us to decry the venerable and hearty customs of our father-land, or to think lightly of those usages and old ceremonials which, with an undoubted mixture of evil in them, have nevertheless entered so largely into the composition of the English character, such a conservative reverence for antiquity and time-honoured tradition! Though we look upon innocent festivities in commemoration of God's mercies as accordant with customs related in Scripture, and calculated to promote a genial spirit of cheerfulness and contentment, we are not going to recommend our readers to revive the rejoicings of the English Harvest-Home. We rather call upon them to shew their thankfulness by communing with their own hearts—by contrasting God's goodness with man's un-worthiness—by combining watchfulness and prayer for the expulsion of every favourite sin—and by doing all that lies within their power to restore tranquility and unity to their divided country.

A modern custom, however, has recently sprung up—or an old one has been revived—in England, which is worthy of imitation by Christians in every part of the globe. At the conclusion of the harvest-year, a time is appointed for a week-day's service:—the farmers and villagers, clad in their best attire, walk in procession to Church, and a sermon suitable to so joyful an occasion is delivered by the clergyman of the parish. The procession part of this custom may not chime in with the habits of this country; but to the main feature of it, the religious thanksgiving, there can be not only no objection, but there is every motive to commend it to our reason and affections.

He who loves to illustrate the Book of Revelation by the Book of Nature—books, both of them, accessible to the simple as well as to the learned,—cannot walk through a harvest-field, without perceiving a throng of Scripture images pass rapidly, like a panorama, before his mental eye. First is seen the altar of Noah, and the ear seems to catch the voice of God proclaiming the welcome intelligence that "while the earth remaineth, seed-time and harvest shall not cease." Reuben, in the days of wheat-harvest, finds his mandrakes in the field, and brings them to his mother. Joseph dreams his dream, and tells his brethren how his sheaf arose and stood upright, and how their sheaves stood round about, and made obeisance to his sheaf. Ruth stands amid "the alien corn," malleclad in her native modesty and virtue. The scene shifts, and the standing corn of the Philistines blazes with the firebrands which the foxes let loose by Samson have scattered. Again there is a change, and the men of Bethshemesb, in the midst of their wheat harvest, are smitten for having looked into the ark of the Lord.—Connected with the harvest-field, we have also the beautiful and pathetic tale of the Shanammite's son;—how "going out to his father to the reapers," this, her only child, was stricken with disease and died; and how Elisha, the man of God, stretched himself in prayer over the insensate body, and in answer to his strong crying and tears, the life of the child was restored, and he was delivered again to his rejoicing mother. And as we proceed onward in our recollections of the Holy Volume, and arrive at the words of our Redeemer himself, full many a beautiful reflection will suggest itself to us, when meditating in the harvest field at eventide, or moving among the reapers while they busily ply their task! Our spiritual harvest is plenteous, but the spiritual labourers are few. The end of the world will come, when men will be the harvest, and angels the reapers;

when the Saviour and Judge, fan in hand, will throughly purge his floor, and gather his wheat into the garner, at the same time that he burns up the chaff with unquenchable fire."

ASTRONOMICAL CAUSE OF SUMMER.—Summer is, both in the literal and the metaphorical sense, the season of blossoms; and as the blossoms make the fruit, the time of them is really the most important of the whole. In our middle latitudes, there is a very beautiful instance of design and adaptation in this. The grand stimulating agent in all terrestrial action, at least in a natural view of it on the surface of the earth, and the intensity of this action, is made up of two elements,—the portion of the twenty-four hours during which the sun is above the horizon, and the altitude of the sun above that horizon. Both of these, in either hemisphere increase as the sun declines towards that hemisphere, or rather as the hemisphere inclines to the sun; though, as the first of these is the apparent result of the second as a reality, our using the one expression or the other does not affect the result. The increase or decrease of altitude is the same, with the same change of declination, in all latitudes; but the variation in time above the horizon increases with the latitude: consequently, the higher the latitude the greater the change of solar action with the same change in declination. The change in declination increases from the solstice to the equinox, and diminishes from the equinox to the solstice. Thus the increase of the solar action begins to slacken at the vernal equinox in March, and gradually diminishes till it becomes 0 at Midsummer; after this the decrease commences. This, however, only in so far as depends on the altitude of the sun; for the other element, the time which the sun is above the horizon, goes on increasing till the longest day, or day of the solstice.

Thus, in the advanced part of the summer, there is a diminished increase of the momentary intensity of the solar action, and a lengthening of its daily duration. What is given to the presence of the sun above the horizon, is taken from the absence below it; and thus, as the summer advances towards the longest day, all that works by the action of the sun works with less increase of intensity, and for a longer time. After the longest day is passed, both elements of the solar action diminish, slowly at first, and more rapidly afterwards, until the summer merges in the autumn. Near the equator the changes are comparatively small, and they increase with the latitude; and the differences in this respect are what may be called the celestial differences of the character of summer in different latitudes; but terrestrial causes modify these so much that the practical results as observed are very different from what the celestial theory would give.

Still, any one who thinks but for a moment, will not fail to discern how beautifully the season of bloom is secured from violent action, either the one way or the other. This is enough to convince us that the action which goes on in the production of nature during the summer is really the most important of the whole year; for it is performed with the maximum of power in the agents, and the minimum of disturbance in their operation. That resistance of winter, which but too often shrivels the young leaf and blights the early blossom in the spring, is vanquished, and completely stayed from making any inroad, till the seasonal purposes of nature are accomplished; and the ardour of the stimulating causes which have vanquished this destructive one are slackened, so that they may not injure that which, during the struggle of the early part of the year they have preserved.

All this, too, is accomplished by means so very simple, that their simplicity proves the most wonderful parts of the whole; for it is nothing more than the planes of the annual and daily motions of the earth intersecting each other at an angle of about 23° 28'; and the line of intersection passing through the equinoctial points of the annual orbit."—*Mudie's Summer*.

GOODNESS OF GOD.—When God created the human species, either he wished their happiness, or he wished their misery, or he was indifferent and unconcerned about both. If he wished our misery, he might have made sure of his purpose, by forming our senses to be so many sores and pains to us, as they are now instruments of gratification and enjoyment; or by placing us amidst objects so ill suited to our perceptions as to have continually offended us, instead of ministering to our refreshment and delight. He might have made, for example, every thing we tasted, bitter; every thing we saw, loathsome; every thing we touched, a sting; every smell, a stench; and every sound, a discord. If he had been indifferent about our happiness or misery, we must impute to our good fortune (as all design by this supposition is excluded) both the capacity of our senses to receive pleasure, and the supply of external objects fitted to produce it. But either of these (and still more both of them) being too much to be attributed to accident, nothing remains but the first supposition, that God, when he created the human species, wished their happiness, and made for them the provision which he has made, with that view, and for that purpose. Contrivance proves design; and the predominant tendency of the contrivance indicates the disposition of the designer. The world abounds with contrivances, and all the

contrivances which we are acquainted with are directed to beneficial purposes: evil, no doubt, exists, but is never, that we can perceive, the object of contrivance. Teeth were contrived to eat, not to ache; their aching now and then is incidental to the contrivance, perhaps inseparable from it; or even if you will, let it be called a defeat in the contrivance, but not the object of it. You would hardly say that the sickle was made to cut the reaper's fingers, though, from the construction of the instrument, and the manner of using it, this mischief often happens. We never discover a train of contrivance to bring about an evil purpose. Since, then, God has called forth his consummate wisdom to contrive and provide for our happiness, and the world appears to have been constituted with this design at first; so long as this constitution is upheld by him, we must, in reason, suppose the same design to continue. We conclude, therefore, that God wills and wishes the happiness of his creatures. And this conclusion being once established, we are at liberty to go on with the rule built upon it, namely, "that the method of coming at the will of God, concerning any action, by the light of nature, is to inquire into the tendency of that action to promote or diminish the general happiness."—*Paley*.

CONNECTIONS BETWEEN THE NATURAL FEATURES OF A COUNTRY AND ITS MORALS AND MANNERS.—Much depends on whether it is flat or mountainous, pasture or arable land. It appears from fact, too, that much depends on minor circumstances,—even on whether it is damp or dry. It is amusing to the traveller in Holland to observe how new points of morals spring out of swamps, as in the East from the dryness of the deserts. To injure the piles on which the city is built, is at Amsterdam a capital offence; and no inhabitant could outgrow the shame of tampering with vegetation by which the soil of the dykes is held together. While Irish children are meritoriously employed in gathering rushes to make candles, and sedges for thatch, "the veriest child in Holland would resent as an injury any suspicion that she had rooted up a sedge or a rush, which had been planted to strengthen the embankments." Such are certain points of morals in a country where water is the great enemy. In the East, where drought is the chief foe, it is a crime to defile or stop up a well, and the greatest of social glories is to have made water flow were all before was dry. In Holland, a malignant enemy cuts the dyke as the last act of malice: In Arabia, he fills up the wells. In Holland, a distinct sort of moral feeling seems to have grown up about intemperance in drink. The humidity of the climate, and the scarcity of clear, wholesome water, oblige the inhabitants to drink much of other liquors. If moderation in them were not made a point of conscience of the first importance, the consequences of their prevalent use would be dreadful. The success of this particular moral effort is great. Drunkenness is almost as rare in Holland as carelessness in keeping accounts and tampering with the dykes. There is no country in the world whose morals have more clearly grown out of its circumstances than Holland.—*How to Observe—Morals and Manners, by Harriet Martineau*.

INFLUENCE OF COMMERCE UPON MORALS AND MANNERS.—Upon the extent of the commerce of a country depends much of the character of its morals. Old virtues and vices dwindle away, and new ones appear. The old members of a rising commercial society complain of the loss of simplicity of manners, of the introduction of new wants, of the relaxation of morals, of the prevalence of new habits. The young members of the same society rejoice that prudery is going out of fashion, that gossip is likely to be replaced by the higher kind of intercourse which is introduced by strangers, and by an extension of knowledge and interests: they even decide that domestic morals are purer from the general engagemnt and occupation of mind which has succeeded to the *ennui* and selfishness in which licentiousness often originates. A highly remarkable picture of the two conditions of the same place may be obtained by comparing Mrs. Grant's account of the town of Albany, New York, in her young days, with the present state of the city. She tells us of the plays of the children on the green slope which is now State Street; of the tea-drinkings and working parties, of the gossip, bickerings, and virulent petty enmities of the young society, with its general regularity and occasional backsliding; with the gentle despotism of its opulent members, and the more or less restive or servile obedience of the subordinate personages. In place of all this, the stranger now sees a city with magnificent public buildings, and private houses filled with the products of all the countries of the world. The inhabitants are too busy to be given to gossip, too unrestrained in their intercourse with numbers to retain much prudery: social despotism and subservience have become impossible: there is a generous spirit of enterprise, an enlargement of knowledge, an amelioration of opinion. There is on the other hand, perhaps a decrease of kindly neighbourly regard, and certainly a great increase of the low vices which are the plague of commercial cities.—*How to Observe—Morals and Manners, by Harriet Martineau*.