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Browsings Among the Books.

ON WEEDS.

[From "My Summer in a Garden," by Charles Dudley Warner, a good book to read when one wants to smile often.]

I scarcely dare trust myself to speak of the weeds. They grow as if the devil was in them. I know a lady, a member of the church, and a very good sort of woman, considering the subject condition of that class, who says that the weeds work on her to that extent, that, in going through her garden, she has the greatest difficulty in keeping the ten commandments in anything like an unfractured condition. I asked her which one, but she said, all of them: one felt like breaking the whole lot. The sort of weed which I most hate (if I can be said to hate anything which grows in my own garden) is the "pusley," a fat, ground-clinging, spreading, greasy thing, and the most propagacious (it is not my fault if the word is not in the dictionary) plant I know I saw a Chinaman, who came over with a returned missionary and pretended to be converted, boil a lot of it in a pot, stir in eggs and mix and eat it with a relish—"Me likee he." It will be a good thing to keep the Chinamen on when they come to do our gardening. I only fear they will cultivate it at the expense of the strawberries and melons. Who can say that other weeds which we despise may not be the favorite food of some remote people or tribe? We ought to abate our conceit. It is possible that we destroy in our gardens that which is really of most value in some other place. Perhaps, in like manner, our faults and vices are virtues in some remote planet. I cannot see, however, that this thought is of the slightest value to us here, any more than weeds are.

(Several weeks later).—But another enemy had come into the strawberries, which, after all that has been said in these papers, I am almost ashamed to mention. But does the preacher in the pulpit, Sunday after Sunday, year after year, shrink from speaking of sin? I refer, of course, to the greatest enemy of mankind, "p-s-y." The ground was carpeted with it. I should think that this was the tenth crop of the season; and it was as good as the first. I see no reason why our mother soil is not as prolific as that of the tropics, and will not produce as many crops in the year. The mistake we make is in trying to force things that are not natural to it. I have no doubt that, if we turn our attention to 'pusley,' we can beat the world.

I had no idea, until recently, how generally this simple and thrifty plant "is feared and hated. Far beyond what I had regarded as the bounds of civilization, it is held as one of the mysteries of a fallen world; accompanying the home missionary on his wanderings and preceding the footsteps of the Tract Society. I was not long ago in the Adirondacks. We had built a camp for the night in the heart of the woods, high up on John's Brook, and near the foot of Mount Marcy: I can see the lovely spot now. It was on the bank of the crystal, rocky stream, at the foot of high and slender falls, which poured into a broad amber basin. Out of this basin we had just taken trout enough for our supper, which had been killed and roasted over the fire on sharp sticks, and eaten before they had an opportunity to feel the chill of this deceitful world. We were lying under the hut of spruce-bark, on fragrant hemlock-boughs, talking, after supper. In front of us was a huge fire of birch-logs; and over it we could see the top of the falls glistening in the moonlight; and the roar of the falls and the brawling of the stream near us, filled all the ancient woods. It was a scene upon which one would think no thought of sin could enter. We were talking with old Phelps, the guide. Old Phelps is at once guide, philosopher, and friend. He knows the woods and streams and mountains, and their savage inhabitants, as well as we know all our rich relations, and what they are doing; and in lonely bear-hunts and sable-trappings he has thought out and solved most of the problems of life. As he stands in his wood-gear, he is as grizzly as an

old cedar-tree; and he speaks in a high falsetto which would be invaluable to a boatswain at sea.

We had been talking of all subjects about which rational men are interested,—bears, panthers, trapping, the habits of trout, the tariff, the internal revenue. . . . the propagation of seeds in the wilderness (as, for instance, where were the seeds lying for ages that spring up into certain plants and flowers as soon as a spot is cleared anywhere in the most remote forest; and why does a growth of oak-trees always come up after a growth of pine has been removed?)—in short, we had pretty nearly reached a solution of many mysteries, when Phelps suddenly exclaimed with uncommon energy,—

"Wall, there's one thing that beats me!"

"What's that?" we asked with undisguised curiosity.

"That's 'pusley'!" he replied, in the tone of a man who has come to one door in life which is hopelessly shut.

"Where it comes from I don't know, nor what to do with it. It's in my garden; and I can't get rid of it. It beats me."

About "pusley" the guide had no theory and no hope. A feeling of awe came over me, as we lay there at midnight, hushed by the sound of the stream and the rising wind in the spruce-tops. Then man can go nowhere that "pusley" will not attend him. Though he camp on the Upper Au Sable, or penetrate the forest where rolls the Allegash, and hears no sound save his own allegations, he will not escape it. It has entered the happy valley of Keene, although there is yet no church there, and only a feeble school part of the year. Sin travels faster than they that ride in chariots. I take my hoe and begin; but I feel that I am warring against something whose roots take hold on H.

By the time a man gets to be eighty he learns that he is compassed by limitations, and that there has been a natural boundary set to his individual powers. As he goes on in life, he begins to doubt his ability to destroy all evil and to reform all abuses, and to suspect that there will be much left to do after he has gone. I stepped into my garden in the spring not doubting that I should be easily master of the weeds. I have simply learned that an institution which is at least six thousand years old, and I believe six millions, is not to be put down in one season.

To a Brown Thrush.

Dear little bird on wind-tossed bough,
Singing away through the pelting rain,
Happier far than I art thou;
When storms assail you ne'er complain.

"Cheer up, cheer up, cheer up," you cry.

Who taught thee thus to sing and sing?

In notes so clear, so sweet, so high,
Dear little bird with rain-wet wing.

Brave little bird that all day long
When skies are bright, or skies are gray,

Dost cheer me with thy matchless song
O, tell me, if thou canst, I pray,

Is this fond fancy but a dream,
That thou when summer days have flown

Wilt wing thy flight o'er vale and stream
To some fair spot that I have known?

Art thou a messenger that's sent
By some dear friend now far away,

To breathe to me of sweet content,
And sing to me when skies are gray?
—Alice D. O. Greenwood, in Our Dumb Animals.

Teacher (sternly): "Johnny, what is the matter with your eye? If you and Willie Whyte have been fighting again I shall give each of you a good whipping."

Johnny (with the victor's generosity): "Yes'm. But needn't mind about Bill; he's had his."

"I tell you I am glad I went on that trip around the world."

"So was everyone else that knew you."

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H. Cargill & Son, Cargill, Ont.

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A few of the best young bull prospects we ever had. They will please you. Will sell females too. Visit the herd; we think we can suit you. Particulars on application.

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Oakland—50 Shorthorns—Dual Purpose. Red Baron—81845—is for sale. He is one of our stock bulls, three-year-old and of an excellent milking family; also a good one 20 months; both red in color; good cattle and no big prices.

JNO. ELDER & SON, Hensall, Ont.
P.S.—Scotch Grey—72092—is still heads the herd.

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ISRAEL GROFF - Elmira, Ontario

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TREASURE VALLEY Shorthorns—Pure Scotch, of most fashionable breeding, Scotch-topped, of heavy milking qualities. Heifers and young bulls of show-ring form, high in quality, low in price. **A. G. Smillie, R.R. No. 2, Kippure, Hensall Sta., L.D. Phone.**

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