

SELECTIONS.

FARMERS, ATTENTION!

Gov. Oglesby, of Illinois, makes this capital observation on the literary advantages of farm life:

I'm on the verge of becoming a farmer. I want to get where I can read books. A farmer has more time to read than anybody else. The farmer hasn't been doing himself justice. What better right has any man for conveniences than a farmer? Why can't he have a bath-room and clean linen? "Oh, we don't live in town." You don't want to live in town to be comfortable. You don't need to live in town to be intelligent. This cheap street gossip and twaddle of the town ruins many a farmer's son. The best jurymen come from the farm, the best preachers, the best lawyers, the best statesmen, the best thinkers, all come from the farm. I am waiting to try the experiment.

In the busy season of the year when the farmer begins early and works late, he has neither time nor inclination for mental pursuits or literary diversion. But in seasons of comparative leisure, especially during the long winter nights, when he has much of his time to spend within doors, the farmer has exceptional advantages for self-improvement which he should not neglect. With improved implements for tilling the soil, and increased facilities for self-culture, with the leisure the farmer is generally able to command, there is no good reason why the agriculturist should not be the most, instead of the least, intelligent portion of the community. If many farmers within the range of the writer's observation spent half the time in reading that they do in loafing around stores and blacksmith shops, swapping yarns, not always of choice quality, and talking politics, fine horses, and the gossiping personalities that constitute the small change of town and village conversation, the day of their intellectual salvation would be nigh at hand. Intelligence is next to religion, and the preacher stands sadly in his own light who does not encourage his congregation to read.—*F. F. Haley in Guide.*

WORKING FOR THE FUTURE.

All the best things and treasures of this world are not to be produced by each generation for itself; but we are all intended, not to carve our work in snow that will melt, but each and all of us to be continually rolling a great, white, gathering snowball higher and higher, larger and larger, along the Alps of human power. Thus the science of nations is to be accumulative from father to son; each learning a little more and a little more; each receiving all that was known, and adding its own gain. The history and poetry of nations are to be accumulative, each generation treasuring the history and songs of its ancestors, adding its own history and its own songs. And the art of nations is to be accumulative, just as science and history are; the work of living men not superseding, but building itself upon the work of the past; all growing together into one mighty temple; the rough stones and the smooth all finding their place, and rising, day by day, in richer and higher pinnacles to heaven.—*Ruskin.*

A PARABLE IN THE MOUTH OF FOOLS.

The Rev. J. Ossian Davies, in a sermon recently published, tells the following:—"We once heard of a Baptist minister who was very fond of interpreting Bible histories and parables down to the minutest detail, and a Presbyterian neighbor professed to have been converted to his plan. 'And what passage was it that opened your eyes, my brother?' queried the Baptist. 'The parable of the man who went to his neighbor for bread at midnight,' was the Presbyterian's reply. 'Yes; and how do you expound it?' 'The man was an anxious sinner.' 'Yes.' 'The neighbor was a Christian.' 'True.' 'The bread he desired was saving truth.' 'Exactly so.' 'The bed in which he was found was the Christian Church.' 'Certainly.' 'And the children found in bed with him teach us children's baptism and church membership.' 'Oh!' exclaimed the Baptist, whose ardent faith in the spiritualizing principle suddenly began to cool down, 'that is carrying the process too far; you must stop before you come to that, brother.' Friends, there is a free and easy method of interpretation that tends to bring the Bible into ridicule." "Well," said Mr. Davies, "nevertheless, this is as good an argument for sprinkling infants as any we have heard for some time past."

Religion is worth nothing except as an act of freedom. A forced religion is no religion at all.—*Schaff.*

It is proposed to erect, in the city of New York, a church edifice which will surpass in size and magnificence anything heretofore seen or dreamed of on this continent. It is to cost six millions of dollars, at least, and, beginning with an estimate of six millions, it is probable that the final cost will not be less than ten millions. The enterprise is under the leadership of Rev. Dr. Nevin, though Bishop Potter is chairman of the trustees. It is proposed to make the building a national affair, and contributions are expected from members of all denominations of Christians. Already, it is said, a Presbyterian has subscribed \$100,000, providing (?) that "there will be nothing narrow or denominational in the undertaking." Of course there will be nothing more "narrow" or "denominational" than is the Protestant Episcopal Church; and if any one can find anything more narrow than that, we do not care to have it shown to us. "There will be nothing narrow or denominational about it," but who knows that when it is completed, a Presbyterian or Baptist minister will be allowed to preach in it?—*Journal and Messenger.*

We not only question the truth of his conclusion, but are impressed with the belief that if imbued with less of Calvin's spirit and possessed of more Christian charity, he would never have made such a statement.—*Baptist Weekly.*

This is what one leading Baptist paper has to say of Mr. Spurgeon's recent assertion, that in proportion as a denomination loves respect for Calvinism it recedes from Christianity. We ventured to say not long ago that Baptists no longer hold to Calvinism as a working conclusion and hold it very lightly as a premise; for which we were immediately taken to task by our amiable neighbor—the *Central Baptist*. Here is another Baptist paper of at least equal loyalty to its sect, which not only thinks that a man or a people may renounce Calvin while holding fast to Christ, but regards it uncharitable to say otherwise. As a matter of history the Calvinistic sects have suffered as much from division, heresies, apostasy and all the other ills that the church is heir to, as any other sects; some will say more—and it would be hard to gainsay them. The Calvinistic sects in this country have receded very far from each other, without coming much nearer to Christ thereby, we fear.—*Christian Evangelist.*

The Episcopal clergy of New York unite in commendation of a project to build a great cathedral in that city, several declaring, however, that there must be no transplanting of the English system. Dr. Huntington emphasized this, closing an eloquent sermon by declaring that the most attractive feature of the scheme was its promise of comprehensiveness. He spoke, indeed, as if he expects that the grand union of all evangelical denominations under the Episcopal banner will take place before the structure is finished. Mr. D. Willis James, a Presbyterian layman, contributes 100,000 dollars, believing that "an imposing cathedral in this great commercial and financial centre, where material things necessarily hold such sway, would teach a lesson of firm faith in the reality and value of things unseen." Dr. Robert Collier and other Unitarians are contributing; but the *Scottish American* points out that the Episcopalians form a very small minority in the United States, and that "it is simply great arrogance thus indirectly to ask for themselves such a national church." Our contemporary doubts much if the people generally will view the project favorably.—*Presbyterian Review.*

Never before have there been such manifestations of energy, enthusiasm and determination as have been shown by the May meetings in London this year. The Wesleyan Missionary Society's funds are slightly short, but there is no abatement of public interest in the object which the Society has before it. The Church Missionary Society (Anglican) never had before so large an income—\$1,173,195, and the London Tract Society has a total income of \$1,015,000 against \$335,000 fifty years ago. The Tract Society's publications are now in 186 languages, and during the year the publications themselves have amounted to 60,000,000.

Rev. Dr. Talmage, being asked to give his main idea in preaching, said:—"I have just one idea in preaching, and have had that in mind for twenty-five years, it is helpfulness. Every man in this world who is not a fool needs help. He needs it because of domestic troubles, physical ailments, depression from overwork, and a thousand other things. I start out with that idea always in the preparation and delivery of sermons, and have found people will come where they can get that help. There is a great sigh going up from the world, and the preacher should hear that sigh."

SWEARING BY PROXY.

That is a good story they are now telling at the expense of the Rev. Dr. Phillips Brooks, of Boston. This is the way it runs:—

The genial "Autocrat" was fishing one day in the yacht of a well-known character of East Gloucester, named Captain Cook, who follows the sea for a livelihood. In conversation Captain Cook informed Dr. Holmes that the last fisherman who had hired his boat was Dr. Brooks.

"He was very pleasant company," Captain Cook was kind enough to say; "but he swore a good deal for a clergyman."

"He did what?" inquired Dr. Holmes aghast. "He swore," stoutly reiterated Captain Cook. "Oh, nonsense, I don't believe it," said the Doctor.

"Well, what do you call this," inquired the old fisherman. "He got a haddock on his hook, and he had a great deal of trouble to get it near the boat. At last he landed him, and I said: 'Well, for a haddock, that fish pulled—hard.' 'Yes, he did,' said Dr. Brooks. Now, what's that but swearing?"—*The American Angler.*

After spending an hour here (at the Dead Sea), taking in the general features of the scene—for our time would not admit more than this—we passed on to our lunching place and encamped "on Jordan's stormy banks," near the ford where, in all probability, the tribes of Israel passed over, and near also to the place where our Lord was immersed. At this point several of our party went in bathing. Three of them were Pedobaptist ministers, and each immersed himself, saying, with *seeming* jocularity, "Well I have now been immersed, any way!" but I felt that under the apparent fun was hidden a solemn, if not superstitious feeling, and perhaps a prayer that God would accept this at their hands. I could not but think of the notorious pugilist, Dr. Ditzler, who learnedly argues that the current of the Jordan is too swift to allow of immersion! These Pedobaptist ministers will not say so. Moreover, it is well known that multitudes of pilgrims come annually to the Jordan, at this very spot, and immerse themselves. It is not to the credit of the Methodist Episcopal Church that it silently acquiesces in the reckless assertions of this pretentious disputant, who is either grossly ignorant or shamelessly reckless, and whose ridiculous pedantry has made him the laughing-stock of intelligent people. The breadth of the river is here from 80 to 100 feet. Its banks were nearly full, and the current rapid; yet there was no difficulty or danger in the act of immersion beneath its waters.—*Isaac Errett.*

SHE KISSED IT.—Here is a pretty picture for our young readers. They many show it to their parents and grown-up friends if they will. Perhaps a look at it may do some of them good, as well as the little ones. "The teacher of a girls' school, away in Africa, wished her scholars to learn to give. She paid them, therefore, for doing some work for her, so that each girl might have something of her own to give away for Jesus' sake. Among them was a new scholar, such a wild and ignorant little heathen that the teacher did not try to explain to her what the other girls were doing. The day came when the gifts were handed in. Each pupil brought her piece of money and laid it down, and the teacher thought all the offerings were given. But there stood the new scholar hugging tightly in her arms a pitcher, the only thing she had in the world. She went to the table and put it among the other gifts, but before she turned away she kissed it! There is One who watched and still watches people casting gifts into His treasury. Would He not say of this heathen girl, 'She hath cast in more than they all.'"

Christian people should cultivate the habit of giving a candid and sympathetic hearing to what is said in the pulpit. Read the hymns at home. Never mind the clock; it will keep as good time without watching as with. Do not look out of the window or at the ceiling. Show that you are interested. You will make your preacher a better preacher thereby. He will take greater pains in preparation than ever, that he may deserve your attention. All can help in this way. The poorest can render more assistance than they think. A poor widow was lamenting to Lyman Beecher that she could do nothing. He said: "You can do something. You always help me when I preach." She listened as if an angel spoke. She drank in his words as the thirsty ox drinks in water. The tearful eye and quivering lip told of her appreciation and enjoyment. Every preacher has in his heart thanked God a thousand times for such hearers. They help from the start. The speaker feels the currents of their sympathy calling all his faculties into play, as the bursting buds feel the sweet influences of the Spring.—*Christian Standard.*

The older I grow and I now stand on the brink of eternity the more comes back to me that sentence of the catechism which I learned as a child, and the fuller and deeper its meaning becomes, "What is the chief end of man?" "To glorify God, and enjoy Him forever." *Carlyle.*

It may be said that the hardest thing in the world is to do just right one's self, and that the easiest thing in the world is to see where others fall short of doing just right. But there is no reason why one should shrink from undertaking to do the hardest thing, or should be satisfied with doing the easiest.

Lord Lawrence says:—"Christianity, wherever it has gone, and nowhere more so than in India, has promoted the dignity of women, the sanctity of marriage, and the brotherhood of man. Where it has not actually converted, it has checked and controlled; where it has not renewed, it has refined; and where it has not sanctified, it has softened and subdued."

A prominent American D. D. said to a Baptist editor:—"You probably are not aware of the fact that this man, in whose praise your paper speaks, gives both you and your paper a kick every chance he can get." The other man replied:—"I am aware of that, but his not liking me is no reason why I should not like what is good in him, and he would dislike me more than he does if he knew as much about me as I know of myself."

BRIEF MEDITATIONS.

The Christian will find his parenthesis for prayer in the busiest hours of life.

Faith will throw in the net of prayer again and again, as long as God commands and the promise encourages.

It belongs to the nature of the Bible that it was written for men of all time, and for all the experience of each single human heart.

In all things throughout the world, the men who look for the crooked will see the crooked, and the men who see the straight can see the straight.

It is well-known to all experienced minds that our firmest convictions are often dependent on subtle impressions for which words are quite too coarse a medium.

To one who said, "I do not believe there is an honest man in the world," another replied, "It is impossible that any one man should know all the world, but quite possible that one may know himself."

By no way so certainly as by the way of suffering shall you learn that apprehensiveness which alone can anticipate, and, it may be, avert, the stroke that threatens your neighbors.—*Mary Linskill.*

The friends of temperance in Canada have no reason for discouragement, but the opposite, on account of the recent voting in Parliament. The decisive refusal to repeal the Scott Act, or to weaken it by the insertion of wine and beer clauses, as well as the increased minority in favor of universal prohibition show that decided progress is being made. In view of the heterogeneous elements of which the Dominion is composed there is much to be said in favor of the view that the work of prohibition can be better done by provinces, if not by counties. It is a great point gained that there is henceforth no reason to fear any interference with the local option principle which is now under trial. There will, however, be much cause for both sorrow and indignation if the Government or Parliament refuse to make those amendments to the Scott Act itself which are so obviously necessary in order to give it a fair working trial.—*Canadian Baptist.*

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