

The Canadian Beaver.

The beaver is amphibious, but is more at home in the water than on land. He is an exceedingly strong swimmer, an old one being able to remain under water for several minutes at a time.

These dams are wonderful structures, and are made with great engineering skill; they are frequently seven or eight feet high, measuring from the bottom of the creek or lake in which it is formed, about six or eight feet thick from the base, and, if necessary, as much as three hundred feet long.

The houses are formed of the same material as the dams, being conical, and measuring at the very base from ten to fourteen feet in diameter, by about seven or eight feet high.

They have very strong teeth and jaws; with their four "cutters" they gnaw down large trees, some being as thick as a man's thigh; nor does it take them long to do this.

Their mode of eating is to cut a small tree, which they generally drag to the water, then sitting on their haunches, they hold the stick horizontally to their mouths, turning it quickly between the fore-paws; in this way the bark is peeled; the stick, if required, being used in their works.

Beavers have their young about the first of June, and breed once a year; these number from one to eight, very old beavers having but one or two at a time. They are pretty little things, about the size of a rat, and are easily tamed, but on account of their mischievous propensities, are not favorite pets.

A Woman's Tact.

A lady saw a driver, angry with his horses for some fancied offence, about to lash them severely. She interrupted him by inquiring the way to a certain street, to a certain man's house, both of which she knew very well.

Japanese Christians.

Three hundred and twenty-four years ago Xavier and his fellow laborers commenced their wonderful labors at Nankai, Japan. Here, however, commenced, in 1579, and were continued for nearly two and a half centuries, those terrible efforts of the government to stamp out the very name of Christianity.

Five years ago two hundred of the descendants of the former Christians, living in the villages of Utsunomiya, were summoned before the authorities of Nagasaki and required to recant.

Four years ago one hundred and twenty-five of the same villages were seized and put on board a Japanese steamer lying in the harbor. It was currently reported, and fully believed, that it was the intention of the government to take them to sea and drown them.

Three years ago four thousand of the villagers of Urakami were seized and sent in several vessels to different provinces, where they were treated with varying degrees of rigor.

The most reliable informants in Nagasaki testify to the peaceable character of these villagers, and declare that at the time of the arrests no charges of insubordination or rebellion were made against them.

In company with several others I visited Urakami and saw these poor people. They told us that their lands had not been restored to them, and that they were dependent upon chance day's work for their daily bread.

Curiousness of Butter and Churning.

The art of making butter is by no means of modern date; thus, the derivation of the word from the Greek *butteron*, and the again from *boma*, a cow, and *uros*, cheese, (literally cow's cheese) sufficiently indicates. But although the word is of Greek derivation, it was late before this people had any notion of it.

But the principal use of butter among the Greeks and Romans was an ointment and a medicine. The Romans were accustomed to anoint the bodies of their children with it to render the pliable, and then Burgundians extended its applications by using it as a hair oil.

neither could endure the other. We are not told what kind of ointment it was, but we can safely assert that the butter must have been very rancid.

The ancient Christians of Egypt burnt butter in their lamps instead of oil, and in more recent times, it was used for the same purpose in Roman Catholic churches, during the Christmas festival, to avoid the great consumption of olive oil.

It is evident from the early history of butter that the Greeks and Romans did not use it to any extent in cooking or in the preparation of food, but Aristotle, a poet who lived shortly after Hippocrates, mentions a banquet where the Thracians ate butter, to the astonishment of the Greeks. But the article formerly called butter was only and impure, wanting the firmness and consistency of that of modern times.

The natives call it *shea toulou* or tree butter, and large quantities are made.

Life in Australia.

Rev. John Graham, an English clergyman, for some years resident in Australia, in the course of a lecture recently delivered in London, gives the following sketch of life in Australia: Life in Australia, he said, had its poetic and its prosaic side, but it was fact and not fiction.

What you trust us to be, trust Him to be far more. This will not be thy greatest nor thy last temptation. The wisdom of God is, as it were, playing with thee and training thee, if thou livest, for real war.

Dr. Todd's Workshop.

A wonderful workshop is that little room in the First Church parsonage where the revered Dr. Todd so deftly wrought in his leisure hours. At each of the windows stands a lathe; in the centre of the room is a miniature buzz-saw; on a shelf a steam-engine hardly as large as your two feet, but of full half-horse power, and perfect in every part, with brass and iron cylinders and rods and cranks, shining like gold and silver.

Bamboos.

There is no tree known on earth which subserves so many purposes as the bamboo. The Indian obtains from it a part of his food, many of his household utensils, and a wood at once lighter and more capable of bearing greater strains than heavier timber of the same size.

The softest of the bamboos is the Sammot. In the tracts where it grows in the greatest perfection it sometimes rises to the height of 100 feet, with a stem only 18 inches in diameter at the base. The wood itself is not more than an inch in thickness.

Contributors and Correspondents.

Mr. Laing's Settlement.

Editor BRITISH AMERICAN PRESBYTERIAN. My DEAR SIR, Mr. Melville, in answer to "Spero," has shown on what moral, but not on what Ecclesiastical principles Mr. Laing is eligible "to a call in our church."

"Spero" would like to ask another question about the late settlements at Dundas. Did Mr. Laing receive his appointment to preach in Dundas from the Presbytery of Hamilton, and if so, was Mr. Laing's name forwarded to the Presbytery of Hamilton by the committee of distribution? If not, then there was another violation of law, and if not, then Mr. Laing, according to his own teaching immediately before his retirement from the Convener'ship of the Home Mission Committee was ineligible for a call. (See recommendations of Home Mission Committee in their Report appended to the Minutes of 1872.)

Unless there should prove to be a great need for it, Mr. Editor, this is the last communication on this subject from Spero. Nov. 21st, 1878.

Scientific and Useful.

WHOLESOME WATER.

Of surface waters Professor Newberry observes—"There is much apprehension in the public mind in regard to the purity of the water of streams which drain the surface of our own and other countries. Water in itself is a disinfectant, and a large volume of water, when exposed to the air, so rapidly 'flushes' itself by the oxidation of its organic impurities, that when cooled and settled or filtered to remove its suspended ingredients, the water of most of our streams is even more palatable and wholesome than that taken from wells."

NEW WAY OF CLEANING SILVER.

According to Dr. Eisner, water in which potatoes have been boiled exercises a remarkable cleaning influence upon silverware of all kinds, especially spoons that have been blackened by eggs. Even delicately chased and engraved articles can, it is said, be made bright by this method, even better than by the use of the ordinary polishing powder, which is apt to settle in the depressions, requiring particular care in its removal.

TYPHOID FEVER AND HYGIENE.

Sir William Gull, in a lecture on typhoid fever, recently delivered at Guy's Hospital, argues that the disease is as preventable as ague, and that the time will come when death from it will be as rare. He says it is caused by a virus of nature, which may get into the healthy body, increase in it, and destroy it. It is an accidental condition, and not one of the ordinary processes of nature. The origin of the disease is somehow or other connected with drainage; it has therefore been called the filth fever, and to get rid of the filth is to get rid of the fever. Dr. Gull asserts that no one can approach a case of typhoid fever without paying some attention to hygiene. This, he claimed, was of the greatest importance, and with it he would prefer to carry any one through the disease by wines and soups and fresh air, rather than by the use of drugs.

DRY EARTH AS BEDDING.

A correspondent of the *Ohio Farmers* says it is well established that dry earth is of the greatest benefit to the comfort of stock when used as bedding. Any farmer can fill a large bin during warm weather with road scrapings, powdered clay, or common soil. This may be strewn on the floor of a stall to the depth of three inches, and litter for their bedding laid on it. Thus the urine will be absorbed and the nitrogen saved, for dry earth is so powerful an absorbent that a flooring of this sort will not be sufficiently saturated as to require replacing for a long time. Then this saturated earth is worth more than its weight of fresh manure. The plant food thus saved from the stables is fully doubled in quantity and value, and is in much better condition for use.

WHAT IS THOROUGHBRED.

What we call the thoroughbred horse was created in England by importing mares and stallions from Arabia and Barbary, and by the judicious crossbreeding of the foreign with the native blood. Through contents on the turf and the right kind of crossing, the horse was gradually improved, or elevated to a high standard of excellence; and these improved horses were then recognized as the progenitors of an aristocratic race. Equine heredity has been made a science, and the birth and pedigree of each horse of high breeding has been preserved in the "Stud Book." Usage has decreed that an animal which can show an uncontaminated pedigree for five generations shall be classed as a thoroughbred; that is, no drop of cold or coarse blood must appear in the veins the origin of which cannot be found behind five successive periods of reproduction. Five removes from a common parentage refine the blood and make it aristocratic.—*Turf, Field, and Farm.*

INFLUENCE OF FOOD ON POULTRY.

The influence of the food of poultry upon the quality and flavor of their flesh and eggs, has not been taken into consideration; but it is now well ascertained that great care should be exercised in regard to this matter. In some instances it has been attempted to feed poultry on a large scale in France, on horse flesh, and although they devour this substance very greedily, it has been found to give them a very unpleasant flavor. The best fattening material for chickens is said to be Indian corn-meal and milk; and certain large poultry establishments in France use this entirely, to the advantage both of the flesh and of the eggs.—*Poultry World.*

VARIETY OF FOOD.

The *Scientific American* is of the opinion that we require variety in our food. It says experience has proven that, for some reason unknown to science, variety is essential to health after reaching the age when we are free to choose our food. The perpetual recurrence of the same edibles, even though their number be considerable, becomes in all periods of life except infancy, not only wearisome, but positively injurious. Salt pork, salt fish and potatoes, with pies, poor bread and Japan tea, are the staples of food of thousands of families during our long winters. It should be understood how needful a change of diet is from time to time. Fresh vegetables, particularly in the country, are readily obtained and preserved, and should be unsparingly used. The edible roots, as turnips, carrots, onions and beets, and cabbages, are as well worth preserving as the omnipresent potato. All these vegetables need thorough boiling, and more than they generally get.

Those deep sighs, in deep necessities, are the true great clamor and fervent cry before which the heavens are rent.

The faith that looks down into the perfect law of liberty, has "light for its garments," its very "robe is righteousness."

Mortality is the body, of which faith in Christ is the soul; yet not "terrestrial," nor of the world, but a celestial body, and capable of being transfigured from glory to glory, in accordance with the varying circumstances and outward relations of its moving and informing spirit.