

The Household.

A Lady's Letter.

To the *Editor of the CANADA FARMER* :

SIR,—In your last issue (October 15th) I find an interesting letter from "Cultivateur," on the subject of "The Ladies and the Canada Farmer." My hump of feminine esteem is gratified by "Cultivateur's" assertion that the reticence on our part, of which he speaks, is to be regretted. I had never thought of the possibility of such a case, but now that the subject is placed before us in that gentleman's candid and pleasant style, I am quite willing to confess that I think a little stirring up might do us good.

For my own part, I have been an interested reader of your valuable journal since its first publication, and like it better this year than ever. In our household it is eagerly looked for, and thoroughly read and studied. I believe it is the same in many, many homes, and that my sex are as anxious for the arrival of the CANADA FARMER as your own. If this be so, lack of interest cannot be laid to our charge. Neither do I think that, as a rule, we are unwilling to impart ordinary information which we may have found valuable to ourselves, but I do think the Canadian women, educated ones too, have a habit of thinking and saying, "Oh, everyone knows that," and thus information that might be of real value to others is often lost. I am myself guilty in this sense, since I should never have dreamt of writing for so substantial a periodical as the CANADA FARMER but for "Cultivateur's" reminder. But now, please, since you say we ought to write, you might give us a hint also as to the subjects for our feminine pens. Am I to enter on the poetical, and talk of our really beautiful Canadian flora, and of the glorious tints of foliage displayed on every side this autumn?—or must I keep to the practical, and tell you of the consternation of our new neighbours on hearing my father's plan of soiling cattle, and which in their opinion will assuredly lead us to ruin by a short track? Perhaps you may enjoy, as I did, hearing of the conclusion arrived at by some labourers here—that the boiled hoofs dug in under our young orchard were for the express purpose of raising calves by a new English method.

If the doings on our "farm of ten acres," or the comments thereon of an unusually ignorant neighbourhood, would be of interest to you, Mr. Editor, to "Cultivateur," or to any of your readers, gladly would I endeavour to vie even with my American cousins, and try to lift my grain from the mountain of opprobrium resting on our silent sex, and thus prove that we are willing and ready to do our share when once shown that our efforts are appreciated or required.

Thanking you, Mr. Editor, warmly for the pleasure and profit so constantly afforded us in your valuable paper, and thanking "Cultivateur" too for his kindly remarks, I am sincerely yours.

A YOPKSHIRE LASS.

Hull Township, Oct. 25th, 1868.

NOTE BY ED. C. F.—"Cultivateur" has also our thanks for having cited the above pleasant communication, which is proof direct of the truth of his assertion, that there is literary aptitude among the female readers of the CANADA FARMER to enrich its pages, if it could only be called forth. We hope that our fair correspondent will follow up this first letter by others in her own style, and we prefer leaving the choice of subject to herself. Anything in the range of domestic economy or rural affairs will be in place. We trust also that others of the same sex, stimulated by this example, will favour us with their communications.

The Chemistry of Furniture.

YOUR housekeepers do not always understand the theory of the chemical and mechanical action of different substances on articles of furniture. The substances from which furniture is chiefly exposed to injury are water, oils, alcohols and acids.

Acids act on marble. Marble is itself composed of carbonate of lime; that is, it is a compound of carbonic acid and lime. Now the carbonic acid has a comparatively weak affinity for lime, and most other acids will prevail over it and take its place when brought into contact with it; thus destroying the texture of the stone, liberating the carbonic acid, and leaving nitrate of lime, or sulphate or acetate of lime—as the case may be—in the form of a white powder in its place. But oils, alcohols and water produce no effect whatever on marble.

All varnished or polished surfaces of wood, on the other hand, while not injured usually by acids, are attacked by alcohol. Varnishes are composed of different gums and resins, which are generally soluble in alcohol. Many of them are made by dissolving the material in alcohol, so as to liquefy them, and then when they are applied the alcohol evaporates, leaving the gum or resin in a thin, even coating over the whole surface.

If any alcoholic substance comes upon such a surface, whether it be alcohol itself as used for lamps, or spirits of any kind, or even wine, which contains but a small percentage of alcohol, the varnish is attacked, a portion of it dissolved, and the brilliancy of the surface is destroyed.

Oil will not attack either marble or varnished surfaces, and will not do any injury except to naked wood or other porous substances which admit it into the pores, from which it cannot afterwards easily be expelled.

Water affects no substances except such as have open pores exposed, in which case it enters and causes the substance to swell, or such as are soluble in water, as glue in joints, and mullage or gum-arabic, used sometimes for attaching superficial ornaments to fancy work.

The practical lesson to be learned from this is, that housekeepers must take care in dealing with furniture to keep water away from everything soluble in water, oil from everything porous, alcohol from varnish, and acids from marble.—*Rural American.*

Poetry.

Our Fathers.

BY HON. JOSEPH HOWE.

Look for the dead! Your living hands may pile
Treasures of art the stately tents within;
Beauty may grace them with her richest smile,
And genius here spontaneous plaudits win.
But yet, amidst the tumult and the din
Of gathering thousands, let me audience crave,
Place claim I for the dead. 'Twere mortal sin,
When banners o'er our country's treasures wave,
Unmark'd to leave the wealth safe garner'd in the grave.

The fields may furnish forth their lowing kine,
The forest spots in rich abundance lie,
The mellow fruttage of the clustered vine
Mingle with flowers of every varied dye;
Swart artisans their rival skill may try,
And while the rhetorician wins the ear,
The pencil's graceful shadows charm the eye.
But yet, do not withhold the grateful tear
For those and for their works who are not here.

Not here? Oh, yes! our hearts their presence feel—
Voiceless, not voiceless, from the deepest shells
On memory's shore, harmonious echoes steal,
And names which in the days gone by were sweet
Are blent with that soft music. If there dwell
The spirit hero our country's fame to spread,
While every heart with joy and triumph swells,
And earth reverberates to our measured tread,
Banner and wreath should own our reverence for the dead.

Look up, their walls enclose us. Look around,
Who won the verdant meadows from the sea?
Whose sturdy hands the noble highways wound
Through forests dense, o'er mountain, moor, and lea?
Who spanned the streams? Tell me whose works they are—
The busy marts where commerce ebbs and flows?
Who quelled the savage? And who spared the tree
That pleasant shelter o'er the pathway throws?
Who made the land they loved to blossom as the rose?

Who in frail bark the ocean surge defied,
And trained the race that live upon the wave?
What shores so distant where they have not died?
In every sea they've found a watery grave.
Honor forever to the true and brave
Who seaward led their sons with spirits high,
Bearing the red-cross flag their fathers gave,
Long as the billows flout the arching sky,
They'll seaward bear it still—to venture or to die.

The Roman gathered in a stately urn
The dust he honored—while the sacred fire
Nourished by vestal hands, was made to burn
From age to age. If still you'd aspire,
Honor the dead; and let the sounding lyre
Recount their virtues in your festal hours;
Gather their ashes—higher still, and higher
Nourish the patriot flame that history dowers;
And o'er the Old Men's graves go strew your choicest flowers.

* Written on the occasion of holding the first Provincial Industrial Exhibition in Nova Scotia.

Miscellaneous.

Alcohol.

THE following extract is part of an article in the *Scientific American* on alcohol, regarded in a purely scientific point of view. We commend the facts stated to the thoughtful consideration of all concerned:—

"We judge of the nature of alcohol by its effects on animals and inanimate bodies. Take the latter first. Alcohol is one of the best, if not the very best anti-septic known. Matter, which could be by no other means so well preserved from decay, change of form, or alteration of structure, is held in *statu quo* by alcohol. Extracts of the qualities of herbs, minerals and animal substances, useful in medicine and the arts, can be preserved in their purity and power by no other agent so well. Beside its antiseptic qualities, alcohol is a stimulant, aiding in the effect of the drugs or extracts with which it is combined. It stimulates the physical forces of the human system when rendered inactive by disease; it is a 'force-pump,' a 'make-shift,' as mechanics would say; useful to keep the enfeebled body from the grave, and to impart new life to organs almost past sensation by other means.

And there its usefulness ends. It never imparts additional strength to the robust; it never made the old young; it gives nothing; it only acts on what there is. When pure, it is a deadly poison, antagonistic to life. Its effect on the lining of the stomach, intestines, and other internal organs—the mucous membrane—can be produced even up on the epidermis, or external skin, to such an extent as to blister. Alcohol does not assimilate—has no affiliation with the secretions of the human organism. It passes out of the stomach in precisely the same condition in which it entered it. It shows itself in the breath of the habitual drinker, in his perspiration, his evacuations. It is still alcohol. Part may be retained in the blood, which it thins and weakens. For a time it is held in the brain, stimulating it to unnatural activity; but it leaves the organ as it was before, or rather enfeebled by the task it performed while under the subtle influence of the wine spirit.

It is stated that rags, as a material for paper making, have been so far superseded by Esparto grass that seven-tenths of British paper is now made from it. The *London Times* is printed on paper made of this material.

PEAT MEADOWS are receiving much attention in Massachusetts. Many of them have passed into the possession of manufacturing companies. The peat is pressed in a machine, dried, and used for fuel, especially for furnaces.

SINGULAR FACTS IN HUMAN LIFE.—The average length of a life is about 28 years. One quarter die previous to the age of 7, one-half before 17. Only 6 of every 100 reach the age of 65, and not more than 1 in 500 lives to 80 years of age. Of the whole population on the globe, it is estimated that 90,000 die every day, about 3,700 every hour, and 60 every minute, or 1 every second. These losses are more than counterbalanced by the number of births. The married are longer lived than the single. The average duration of life in all civilized countries is greater now than in any anterior period. Macauley, the distinguished historian, states that in the year 1685—not an unhealthy year—the deaths in England were as 1 in 20; but in 1850, 1 in 40. Dupin, a well-known French writer, states that the average duration of life in France, from 1776 to 1846, increased 52 days annually. The rate of mortality in 1781 was 1 in 29; but in 1850, 1 in 40. The rich live on an average 42 years, the poor only 30 years.

AMONG THE CALVES.—Jim Smith was a noted auctioneer. One day he was selling farm stock. Among the articles to be sold was a heifer, very attractive in her appearance, and consequently "Jim" dwelt quite extensively on her many excellencies, winding up with the eloquent flourish that she was as "gentle as a dove." Thereupon a long, slab-sided countryman, whose legs were some twelve inches longer than his pants, approaching the heifer and stooping down, commenced handling her teat. Bossy, not relishing such familiarity, lifted her hoofs and laid "Greeny" sprawling some ten feet off.

"There," said "Jim," "that shows one of her best traits; she'll never allow a strange calf to come near her!"

"Greeny" meanwhile picked himself up, and giving his bushy pate a harrowing scratch, exclaimed: "No wonder when her own calf has been bleating around her all day!"