

THE PROTESTANT AND EVANGELICAL WITNESS.

Farm and Garden.

Agricultural Drainage.

This is the period at which land being bare, and thus somewhat under farmer's control, under-draining may be attended to. Most important is it that deep gouts into arable land, stagnant water should be removed. Lands that last May were in consequence of too having clung to like the hair of Jesus until life was given, would have been grown with grass or grain had they been thoroughly under-drained in October. This, too, would have prevented drought, by converting the surface into a porous material instead of a compact hard block. It would have let the fertilizing gases of the atmosphere reach the roots of the growing crops. It would, in Spring, have warmed the lower portion of the soil, and started the decomposition of the old roots and other organic matters, which would thus have served as manures. It would have hastened the perfect breaking up of the mineral contents of the soil. It would have distributed more thoroughly manures in the ground, by letting all roots reach them, and diffusing their dissolved particles round about. It would have made the mechanical texture of the soil, what is known as *tilth*. It would have allowed the poisonous excrements of plants to be filtered away from them. It would have prevented fine grained perishing, and *measles* "running out." It would have enabled plants to turn up deeper furrows through sand and rich bottoms. It would, by preventing ice freezing in the ground, have saved wheat from being "frozen out." It would have allowed streams to set on land sooner after rains. It would have kept off the effects of cold weather longer in the fall. It would, by preventing acidic and other acids, have prevented the growth of such weeds as sorrel. It would have allowed rains and snows thoroughly to go through the soil and thus to leave their rich contents throughout it. On heavy lands it would have prevented the hard surface-crust, which is one of their principal drawbacks. It would have fitted fields for the pausing of cattle in wet weather without being trod up into clay—and it would have rendered them more healthful to man and beast by preventing the hurtful exhalations which come from sodden ground. If these considerations are not sufficient to decide the farmer to drain, more would be useless.

Many a man that is hankering after more land forgets that he has, underneath that which he tills, another farm and better than any he uses, and that its cultivation not only would add to his labors, but would lighten them—at the same time making all look beautiful, and greatly improving his herbage. Far easier is it to drain the land than to cultivate it. If we could persuade some of our farming neighbors to drain a field each fall, we should not wish to say anything about it to them or their neighbors another year. Millions of bushels of wheat that are expected next summer will never be had because of winter-killing, and midge, and rust that will result from standing in the ground. Let any man who doubts this only try with a plant in a flower-pot that has a hole in the bottom, and with another that has not, and we will let himself be the judge between us as to the effects of under-draining. Manures often disappoint those who apply them, merely because water in the ground prevents the circulation of air and the fermentation that are requisite for bringing them into use. Grases, too, that are understood to require a good deal of moisture, are injured by a superabundance;—they do not get air at their roots, draw up more water when they require nutrition, and are diseased by what to them is like fever and ague to man.

It is frightful to see how this country and the States are running down to bankruptcy through this extravagance. While in England the average product of wheat is 30 bushels per acre and in Scotland 20, it is only 16 in Upper Canada, and 10 in Lower Canada, with our comparatively virgin soils. Just as lands get old they get poor instead of productive. In the County of Bruce they average 20 bushels, in Brant, Halton, York, Oxford, Kent, and Peel, 18 and 19, and, as before said, for the whole Upper Province 16. The fact is, that instead of rains getting away through the ground they run off in surface streams, which bear in them the organic matters that are our dependence for supplies of food.—Toronto Colonist.

Miscellaneous.

Obedience in Children.

In many families, prompt, unquestioning, unquestioning obedience is not so much as expected. The children seem to have no sort of conception of what obedience is. The external forms of respect to father, mother and grandparents are not observed. The children may perhaps be occasionally told to say, "Yes, sir," and "No, sir," but no one sees that they say it, and as for "What, sir?" they never heard of such a thing. If their parents or older friends speak to them, they answer—if they choose, and when they choose, and as they choose. They are taught to interrupt the conversation of older people—because they are not reproved, or if reproved, it is only when continued "teasing" has exhausted the maternal patience, and the reproach comes with a kind of twang, and jerk, and spasm, which lowers the mother's dignity, injures the child's disposition, makes the visitor uncomfortable, and does no one any good. When these children are seated at the table, life is a burden to every one around them till their plates are filled. Of course no one means that this is evidently the case, but it is liable to be, and it is not, if because they are hungry, or are thinking of something else, or are preoccupied by *Providence*, or *the Devil*, or *she*, anything but because they are not allowed. Now, is it an easy master to satisfy their clamorous demand. One throws his biscuits on the floor because it is slightly burnt at the edges. Another wants to help himself to butter, and plunges in his own knife up to the hilt. A third dashes his wanted silver cup, and, hardly grasping the goblet or tumbler with both clutchy hands, and head turned persistently away from mamma's anxious, half-outstretched arms, blubbers over the contents in a way which is certainly not calculated to receive the approbation of fastidious people who are not "used to children." A fourth insists upon having a "grown-up chair" notwithstanding paternal remonstrance. And I have seen a father so far yield to the whim of a girl five years old, as not only to allow her to change her high for a low chair, but afterwards rise from the supper table and change chairs with her, though the two chairs were alike, and there was no possible reason for the child's preference.—Congregationalist.

Praying Mothers.

A great deal has been said about woman's rights, and many women have lectures and written in advocacy of the right of women to hold certain public offices, and to vote. But in our view no one can possess so much influence and does so much to move society as a wife, praying mother. Almost every biography of the great and good, records the fact, that the *mother* of the saintly was blessed with a praying mother. And if the multitude of men who are influencing the world by their good words and works, were joined if they had praying mothers, the influence would be almost universal.

At the recent convention of Young Men's Christian Association of Troy, attended by about 250 young men, those whose mothers were praying women were asked to rise, and nearly all rose up to testify to the value and efficacy of a godly mother's prayer. At the services connected with laying the foundation stone of the new church for Mr. Spurgeon, his father, who was one of the speakers, very feelingly alluded to the fact that for his son's religious impressions and subsequent usefulness the church was indebted to the earnest and untiring exertions of a praying mother. What encouragement their testimonies give to mothers to continue their efforts to train their children for Christ! These incidents further meet the thought, that mothers who do not pray for their children are not only neglecting a duty, but losing a means for promoting the happiness and usefulness of their offspring.

A Quaker's Cure for Swearing.

On one of my visits to Mr. Jay, when speaking of Cobbett, and his strong prejudices against many persons, especially Quakers—for whom Mr. Jay entertained great respect, so much so that he sent me to a Quaker's school, where I was the only scholar not of that persuasion—I related to him the following anecdote, which I had from Cobbett's own lips, as illustrative of his prejudices against Quakers, whom he abhorred as reptiles. "I once," said he, while residing at Long Island, in America, accompanied by a well-dressed young gentleman of large frame, who easily out-shone the habit of swearing, which he often declared that he would give half his fortune to get rid of. "This desire came to the ear of a Quaker, who thereupon had an interview with the young gentleman, 'I can cure thee of that bad habit; whereas thou canst not hold the Quaker's hand and give it a hearty shake, saying, 'How can you perform that miracle?' The reply was, 'I can tell thee, I have heard that thou art going to travel this day for a period of six weeks; thou art just my size; nobody will know thee; thou shalt come to my house, put on the cocked hat, the coat without buttons, the knee-breeches, and the shoe-buckles, and thou will find that the strangeness of the dress will have such an effect on thee when thou art going to talk, that it will restrain thee from swearing—as thou perhaps knowest, my friend, that we Quakers never swear.' The young man cheerfully assented to the proposal, and accompanied the Quaker to his house, where after changing his clothes, he took his departure in the garb of a Quaker and went his way rejoicing. The period of the young gentleman's tour was elapsed, the Quaker still abiding, started on the road to meet him. Having met him, he said, 'Well friend how hast thou got on?' The reply was, 'Very well.' Hast thou gone on much with that dress on thee?' inquired the Quaker. The young man rubbing the sleeves of his coat, replied, certainly not, and stranger still, I feel no inclination to it."

The Drunkard's Soliloquy.

Having passed by the inn, I observed some one at a short distance, busily engaged in buttoning wood, apparently in a dialogue with himself. I drew near unobserved, and heard the following:—"Who am I? Aye, and what am I, but a wretched, shunned and despised by the wise and the good? My estate wasted; constitution destroyed; affairs in ruin; friends abandoned; children naked and hungry; wife in tears and confusions; appetite gone; visage, blotted and disgusting; hands and knees tremulous; reason debased, and manners become vile; character annihilated. My acquaintances pass by me like strangers. I am tormented by disease; harassed by law-suits; teased by creditors; collared by sheriffs; mocked at and hunted by tramps and blackguards; I am a hated, filthy scoundrel; only to the lowest brute. Nay, the wild brute is exalted, is noble, compared to a wretch like me. In all that is esteemed honorable, respectable, and worthy in society, I am the mere cinder of a crucible; the very paltry dregs of sloth! Curst intemperance can hold on no longer. She is about to resign her worthless charge. The horrid grave opens upon me and yawns for my prey! Despair seizes me! My brain is on fire! Away then, let me drown and sink undrowned in the ocean of misery!"

"Father, O father!" exclaimed a sudden and wild voice. The knife fell to the ground, and a ragged, though lovely boy rushed into his embrace.

Plants sleep as well as animals; the attitude that some of these assume on the approach of night is extremely interesting to those who delight to study the beautiful phenomena of vegetable life. Some plants exhibit signs of sleep more marked than others. The leaves of clover, incense, and other plants close as the sun approaches the horizon; and in the honey locust this characteristic is particularly striking and beautiful. The delicately formed leaves close in pairs at night-fall, and remain so until the rising of the sun in the morning, when they gradually expand to their fullest extent. It is in common garden chickweed (*stellaria media*) that the most perfect exemplification of the conjugal love and parental care of plants is observed. At the approach of night the leaves of this delicate plant, which are in pairs, begin to close towards each other, and when the sleeping attitude is completed these folded leaves embrace in their upper surfaces the rudiments of the young shoots; and the uppermost pair (but one) at the end of the stalk are furnished with longer leaved stalks than the others, so that they can close upon the terminating pair and protect the end of the shoot.

To obscure Window Panes.—If one ounce of powdered gum tragacanth, in the white of six eggs, well beaten, be applied to a window, it will prevent the rays of the sun from penetrating.

To Stop Mousie Holes.—Stop mouse holes with pieces of common hard soap, and you will do it effectually. Rats, roaches and ants will not disregard it.

Ayer's Sarsaparilla.

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54. History of Central Asia	73. Gymnastics—Out-of-Door
55. History of Central Asia	74. Antiquities
56. History of Central Asia	75. Gymnastics—Out-of-Door
57. History of Central Asia	76. Antiquities
58. History of Central Asia	77. Gymnastics—Out-of-Door
59. History of Central Asia	78. Antiquities
60. History of Central Asia	79. Gymnastics—Out-of-Door
61. History of Central Asia	80. Antiquities
62. History of Central Asia	81. Gymnastics—Out-of-Door
63. History of Central Asia	82. Antiquities
64. History of Central Asia	83. Gymnastics—Out-of-Door
65. History of Central Asia	84. Antiquities
66. History of Central Asia	85. Gymnastics—Out-of-Door
67. History of Central Asia	86. Antiquities
68. History of Central Asia	87. Gymnastics—Out-of-Door
69. History of Central Asia	88. Antiquities
70. History of Central Asia	89. Gymnastics—Out-of-Door
71. History of Central Asia	90. Antiquities
72. History of Central Asia	91. Gymnastics—Out-of-Door
73. History of Central Asia	92. Antiquities
74. History of Central Asia	93. Gymnastics—Out-of-Door
75. History of Central Asia	94. Antiquities
76. History of Central Asia	95. Gymnastics—Out-of-Door
77. History of Central Asia	96. Antiquities
78. History of Central Asia	97. Gymnastics—Out-of-Door
79. History of Central Asia	98. Antiquities
80. History of Central Asia	99. Gymnastics—Out-of-Door
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88. History of Central Asia	107. Gymnastics—Out-of-Door
89. History of Central Asia	108. Antiquities
90. History of Central Asia	109. Gymnastics—Out-of-Door
91. History of Central Asia	110. Antiquities
92. History of Central Asia	111. Gymnastics—Out-of-Door
93. History of Central Asia	112. Antiquities
94. History of Central Asia	113. Gymnastics—Out-of-Door
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100. History of Central Asia	119. Gymnastics—Out-of-Door
101. History of Central Asia	120. Antiquities
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103. History of Central Asia	122. Antiquities
104. History of Central Asia	123. Gymnastics—Out-of-Door
105. History of Central Asia	124. Antiquities
106. History of Central Asia	125. Gymnastics—Out-of-Door
107. History of Central Asia	126. Antiquities
108. History of Central Asia	127. Gymnastics—Out-of-Door
109. History of Central Asia	128. Antiquities
11	