

THE EARTH CLOSET.

Only after the lapse of near six thousand years are human beings coming to discover some of the prime virtues of their "Mother Earth." Only of late has man learnt that the material spoken of in the declaration, "*dust thou art,*" has the property of so absorbing and assimilating to itself all offensive organic matter with which it comes into contact, and especially human excrement, that its use is an effectual abatement of the foulest nuisance that ever intrudes within or hovers about our homes. The dry earth system of disposing of the urinary and fecal discharges from the human body, is one of the most beneficent appliances of modern science, and cannot too soon be universally adopted. There is no mystery about it. It is simply covering the evacuation with dry earth: "only that and nothing more." Any common dirt dried by exposure to sun and air, or indeed air-dried merely, as it may be in a heap under a shed, answers the purpose. Let enough of this, and it requires only about a pint, be thrown upon the urinary and fecal deposit, and it will at once absorb the moisture, remove the odour, and commence an assimilating process, which will by and bye transmute all into a soil richly charged with fertilizing matter. This is the whole philosophy of the Earth Closet.

Any common privy may therefore be converted into an earth closet with very little trouble. Clean it out. Cover the receptacle beneath the seat with three inches of dry earth. Place a box of the same dry earth beside the seat, and after each use let a pint or so of it be thrown into the receptacle and the thing is done. A vile nuisance is abated. A source of disease is done away with. A cause of annoyance is removed. A valuable manure worth \$10 per annum for each person is redeemed from waste and turned to useful account. Man acts like a reasonable thinking being, instead of acting like a stupid, senseless animal.

The only trouble involved is the preparation of the dirt, and this is really very slight. The dirt must be sifted and dried. That is all. Any common iron sieve, with quarter inch meshes, will do. The sifted earth will soon dry in the sun or in an open shed. The same dirt may be used several times before its absorbent and deodorizing power is exhausted, and to render it as valuable as possible for manurial purposes, it is desirable that it should be as fully charged as it will bear with fertilizing matter. But this renders a comparatively small stock of dry earth sufficient for the purpose.

For in-door purposes the dry earth system is invaluable. To the sick-room it is indeed a blessing. Even in-doors it may be applied with but little expense and trouble. Thousands of poor women

and invalids would derive the greatest relief from the introduction of some dry earth arrangement within their houses; but they cannot afford any large outlay to obtain the boon. Large outlay happily is not necessary. A writer on this subject says:

"Any board box of convenient size, not less than eighteen inches deep, may be fitted with a movable or hinged cover, with an ordinary finished hole. Unless the box is water-tight, its joints should be filled with putty, white-lead, tar, or pitch. Three inches of dry earth should be spread upon the bottom. At its side there should stand a box of sifted dry earth or anthracite coal-ashes, with a small tin scoop or cup. After each use of the closet, enough earth should be thrown into the box to simply cover the faeces. A pint of earth is ample for the purpose. When this box is filled, its contents may be removed with a shovel and a corn-basket, and it may be kept in the good woman's bedroom with as little offence as the stove or the chest of drawers.

To those however who can afford it, many obvious arguments recommend something more convenient, neat, and effectual than the mere dirt box, whether out of doors or in-doors. Both in England and the United States ingenious machinery, and handy appliances, have been got up and are fast coming into general favor and use. A company called the "Earth Closet Company," has been organized in Hartford, Connecticut, for the manufacture and sale of the fixtures necessary for the most ready application of the system now under consideration. They have already a network of agencies all over the United States. During a recent visit to Chicago we had an opportunity of inspecting the various articles on exhibition in the sale-room of the agency in that city, and we were much pleased with the simplicity and effectiveness of the contrivances which have been patented by the Company. We present on the following pages some engravings that will illustrate the methods and appliances of the Earth Closet system, as practised and supplied by the American Company just named. The first engraving represents the Commode, for use in the sick-room, or indeed, ordinarily, if desired, in doors.

Better than any thing we could say in regard to it, is the following description of the Commode and testimony to its use, from the pen of Col. Geo. E. Waring, a well-known American writer and author of several valuable agricultural works. We quote from a pamphlet, entitled "Earth Closets and Earth Sewage," published by "The Tribune Association," New York:

"The form of the Earth Closet which first commends itself to enquirers is the portable Commode, shown in Fig. 15. This is a chair, containing, in its thickened back, the vibrating hopper for holding the dry earth, and, under the seat, a hod of galvanized iron (resembling an ordinary coal-hod) for