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Poet's Corner.

For the Potter Journal.

AUTUMN.

The bright hues of Autumn are fading,
The forrest trees looking forlorn;
For southward the dim sun is wading
Through dark clouds that omen a storm.

The "last rose of Summer" has perished,
Regales us no more with perfume;
Those beautiful scenes we have cherished,
We fancy have faded too soon.

The cold winds are ruthlessly flinging
The remnant of Summer away;
The warbles are gone with their singing,
To warm Isles of beauty away.

I would follow where frost never blighteth
Those Isles of perennial bloom;
Where the Nightingale ever delighteth,
To pour his sweet strains to the moor.

The streamlet may wander as gaily,
Sing as sweet o'er its pebbly bed;
But thither I wander not daily,
The primrose and aster are dead.

No cool wood-land bower delights me,
To rest on its moss-covered seat,
Or joy-stiring wood-thrush invites me
To list to his melody sweet.

I sigh when the Summer is waning,
When Autumn takes up the sad strain
Of short days, naked woods and dull raining,
Looking out through the cold window-pane.

All Earth-born enjoyments are fleeting;
Why then should I sigh o'er the tomb,
Where the lovely ones gone are but sleeping
To wake in fresh beauty and bloom.

Sigh not! though cold is coming,
No, though it be dreary and long;
We have garnered since Summer's bright coming,
To cheer us through every storm.

Reverent thanks to that Fountain of Love
Who those blessings so freely bestowed;
His arm is around and above,
His sunshine illumines our road.

ENCILDOUS, Pa., Nov. 1859. M. M.

Educational.

The Study of Nature as Connected with Mental Improvement.

A LECTURE

Delivered before the Potter County Teachers' Association on Wednesday Evening, Nov. 16th, 1859, by Rev. J. H. PARSONS, Pastor of the Presbyterian Church in Coudersport.

"The human mind," says Dr. Todd, "is the brightest display of the power and skill of the Infinite mind with which we are acquainted. It is created and placed in this world to be educated for a higher state of existence; and the object of training such a mind should be to enable the soul to fulfill her duties well here, and to stand on high vantage-ground, when she leaves this cradle of her being, for an eternal existence beyond the grave." The means and facilities for the development and cultivation of the mind, God has provided. The great Book of Nature he has spread out before us, and the law written in our hearts, as well as stamped upon every page of Nature's book is, "read and be wise." "Know thyself," said the Greek; says Nature, "know God by studying his works;" and to incite us to seek after this knowledge, there were implanted in the human mind, desires and longings for something higher and better than that which we now enjoy—desires which are not met by the things of sense, but which can be met and satisfied only by the possession and enjoyment of this higher knowledge—the knowledge of God, and the enjoyment of his favor. The mind of man was not made to be fully satisfied with the things which relate solely to the preservation of his physical being and the gratification of his animal desires, but the fact that he possesses a reasoning, or philosophic nature, which finds its true scope for exercise in studying into the mysterics and the wonders of the universe, and in searching for the first and final causes of all things, proves the superiority of the intellectual over the sensual part of his being, and indicates to him the source or sources whence his highest enjoyment is to be found, and the way by which it is to be secured. To know and to enjoy God, is the source of man's highest and truest happiness, and this knowledge is obtained by the studying of Him in his works and in his Word. Although it was not intended that man should find his highest good in the things which perish, yet God has adapted the natural world to his nature and wants, as a creature of sense and reason, and made it capable of partially satisfying his desires in order to lead him to investigation. Every new acquisition of knowledge richly repays the mind for its efforts made to obtain it, and thus tempts it along in its search after truth. Unlike many human productions, filled with dry propositions, abstract reasonings and crazy speculations, which often tend to darken knowledge and conceal the truth, is the Book of Nature richly illustrated on every page, in infinite diversity, presenting no two views alike, but like the kaleidescope, varying the picture and re-sketching the scene at every turn. Thus would God make the study of himself in nature, one of the chief sources of our enjoyment. He clothes the earth with beauty, to please the eye and to feast the tastes, in order to induce us to enter the Temple of Science where are stored unfathomable treasures of knowledge.

Let us notice briefly, the beauty, order, arrangement of parts, and adaptation of means to ends, as seen in the Creator's works. God loves beauty, and he has implanted the same love in his intelligent creatures. He clothes the earth with vegetation, not only to satisfy their animal wants, but also to minister to their higher intellectual desires; and the beauty and charms of Nature, are scarcely less needful to their highest enjoyment as spiritual beings, than are the fruits of the earth to their physical existence. Let us look, first, at the provisions which God has devised for clothing the earth with vegetable beauty. The mind does not love sameness and uniformity, and hence the Creator has provided an almost infinite variety of plants and trees, to gratify this love of diversity. There are no two species of plants, or even two individuals of the same species, which are exactly alike, but they all differ with each other, in color, shade, or mixtures of color, or in form, size or arrangements of parts, so as to furnish an almost infinite variety of separate and distinct objects for the eye to behold, and the mind to contemplate. Look at the means he has devised for the propagation of plants, by which to perpetuate verdure and beauty. When he formed the grass and the tree, he ordained that they should each bring forth seed after its kind, that no plant or tree might be wholly lost or destroyed. What an abundance of seeds each plant produces; which shows how much God loves beauty, and how ready he is to gratify this love in his creatures. Notice, too, the provisions he has made for the dissemination of the seed. The seed of the maple is provided with a *samara* or wing-like appendage, by which it is blown by the wind to a distance. The dandelion, the thistle, the milk-weed, the garden lettuce, and many other plants, produce seeds having a parachute, by which they are borne by the wind to distant parts, o'er hill and dale, and scattered far and wide. The seeds of the berry are imbedded in a juicy pulp, which furnishes food for birds and animals, and by them are distributed. The burdock, the hound's-tongue and the tickseed, produce fruit, or capsules provided with awns or hooked prickles which catch upon every moving object that touches them, and thus they are borne away to be deposited in fresh soils. The mechanism of the touch-me-not is most wonderful. Its capsules are furnished with several strips or longitudinal bands, which serve both as a covering for the seed, and as a means for their dissemination. When the seeds are fully ripe, these bands or strips have a constant tendency to coil into spirals, so that the least pressure, or touch upon one of them, disturbs the equilibrium of pressure sustained by the others, when they instantly collapse, and scatter the seed in every direction.

In no work of art do we more plainly see the proofs of design than we do in the means which God has devised for clothing the earth with verdure. The locomotive displays great ingenuity and skill in its contrivance and construction, but it is an awkward and clumsy affair after all. With intelligence to direct, it can do some things very well; but the little touch-me-not may defy human ingenuity to contrive a better apparatus than it possesses, for the sowing of its seed. The watch is a very ingenious piece of workmanship, and can be made to keep very good time; but there is nothing in the works of art, which is so beautifully adapted to the end it subserves, as the little parachute of the dandelion and the thistle. Men paint their houses to improve their looks, and ornament them with carved work and mouldings to contrast with naked corners; they hang up pictures in vacant spaces to give beauty to their dwellings. But when God would conceal anything offensive to the eye, as a barren knoll, a rock or a stone, in this his earthly habitation; he covers it over with moss and verdure of many a form and hue. The little invisible moss-spores, flying through the air, are caught by the rain drops and brought down to the earth. One of these little seeds falls upon a rock and vegetates, forming a little plant, no larger than the head of a pin, and resembling a black speck or stain of some colored fluid. The sun scorches and kills it, but it still adheres firmly to the rock, making an extremely thin soil for the growth of another moss-spore of a larger species. Another rain brings down other seeds, which fall upon the prepared soil and germinates, and dying leave another layer of earth; and so one after another layer is formed, till in time the rock becomes completely covered with moss, with a thick mass of dirt underneath, upon which other seeds of phanogamous plants, brought by birds or wind, lodge and grow; and often times we find large trees growing upon naked rocks---probably once moss covered—with their roots extending over their sides into the earth. Thus would the Author of Nature conceal what is barren and unsightly, that he may cause beauty and verdure to grow, to delight the eye, and to supply the wants of his creatures. When one plant dies it furnishes soil as well as nutriment for the growth of another species. The fungi upon dead trees, the mold upon decaying matter, the rust upon wheat, and mildew upon cloth, are all vegetables whose seeds or spores, constantly floating in the atmosphere, lodge and grow wherever they find a soil or substance adapted to them. Their design seems to be, to cover up and conceal dead or decaying substances, and also to remove the poisonous matter generated, by absorbing it and giving it to the atmosphere to be carried away, lest the noxious vapors shall exert their deleterious influence upon other plants, or upon animals. The toad-stool and the puff-ball, two as unsightly, lack-lustre looking plants as we find, are more curious and wonderful in their formation, arrangement of parts, and design, than anything which man can construct or contrive. They grow only in soils that contain in excess animal or vegetable substances which need to be removed, for the benefit of the remaining plants. They are little messengers to perform nature's dirty work, purifying and cleansing the soil, and ministering to the health and growth of other more beautiful and honorable species of plants. That they may not cease to grow, when and where they are needed, they are provided with the means for their propagation, to an almost infinite extent. The smoke, which issues from the puff-ball when pressed, consists of infinitely small seeds or spores, each of which is capable of producing another plant of the same species, yielding seed after its kind.

Thus it is throughout the entire vegetable kingdom,—whether in the visible or in the microscopic world—each tree, plant, mold or mildew is provided with the means for its propagation, and its seeds grow and vegetate in the place, and at the time appointed for them; to give beauty, food and health to some other plant, to creature, or to man. They are all beautiful, curious and wonderful in their design and in their adaptation of means to the ends which they subserve. And they know their appointed times. Men mark the changes of the seasons by the almanac, or by signs; but the little seeds which lie concealed beneath the surface, know when it is time to spring forth better than the almanac. The embryo plant or tree sleeping in the germ of the seed needs no one to tell it when to awake to unfold its leaves to the breezes, and to perfume the air with its sweet exhalations. It knows the difference between November rains and April showers. The vernal winds and summer sun can awaken it from its hibernal sleep when nothing else can. The flowers know when to put forth their petals, and they are all beautiful in their time. They delight the eye, they please the smell, they infuse joy into the soul. They unfold their leaves and look up to receive God's blessing. The sunshine rejoices then, the rains wash their faces, and they smile with beauty, and send up silent praise to their Maker. "He hath made everything beautiful in his time." The world is full of the displays of His wisdom and goodness.

Notice again, the magnitude, grandeur and magnificence of God's works as compared with those of man. When a king wishes to build a palace, he sends out his masons and carpenters, who, with axes, chisels, planes and augers, and various implements, erect what they consider a magnificent structure—a mansion of great dimensions and great splendor. Yet God not only furnished all the materials used in its construction, but see how he prepares a place upon which to set it. The little coral insect prompted by instinct, and wishing for a habitation to dwell in, builds his little limestone cell—scarcely a half of an inch in length—upon the sand at the bottom of the ocean. His progeny—they being very social creatures and fond of society—construct their dwellings by the side of the first and attached to it. This forms a little cluster of houses, which gradually increases till it becomes a village, and then a city. They continue to build, extending and enlarging their dominions outward, and upward, and strengthening their foundations as they rise, till after many thousand or million of years, they reach the surface of the ocean; when they cease to build higher, but continue their operations outward, and around on every side, forming an immense coral rock, resting upon the bottom of the ocean and reaching to its surface. Notice now the different agences God employs in this magnificent work. The little coral insects build the masonry and lay the foundations. The waves of the sea wash upon the rock, dirt and leaves and floating substances, which decaying, form the beginning of a soil. Sea-plants now grow upon it, and dying, add to the thickness of the soil. Other plants grow and so on for ages. During all this time, the insects are at work, enlarging their boundaries. The plants increase in number and variety, continually adding to the soil. In time the island becomes a nesting place for sea-birds. Parachutic seeds floating upon the wings of the wind from distant countries, fall upon this incipient island and vegetate. Birds from distant inhabited lands flying over the wide waste of waters, bring with them seeds of various plants and trees, from which forrests spring up, and at length after ages have rolled away this island becomes an uninhabited wilderness of luxurious vegetation. After a time a sea-faring man, seeking his fortune on the stormy deep, discoveres this wild waste in mid-ocean, and carries back the news to his native country. A colony is now sent to the island—a nation springs into existence—a king is appointed, and he builds his palace. Now which is the more grand and magnificent work, that of the king, or that of the King of kings in preparing a place for his vice-gerents palace?

In whatever department of the creation we choose to direct our attention, the more we see and know of Nature's works, the more we shall find to excite our wonder and admiration. We might also glance through the animal kingdom and observe the perfection and beauty of the structure, arrangement and diversity of parts, in the animal frame—the adaptation of means to ends to effect locomotion, sensation, and the preservation of the life and health of the body, by the absorption and removal of poisonous and deleterious substances, and the supply of new materials for building up the waste places in the system—the nerves, the tissues, the blood vessels, the brain, or the heart. Or, we might look at the universe above us, and notice the immensity of the heavenly orbs, their number, and the exactness and precision of their revolutions. We might descend into the bowels of the earth and see how God planned and constructed the globe upon which we live. As we are walking along the road, our eye alights upon a stone having in it the print of a shell or scollop. The question naturally arises in the thoughtful mind, how came it there? When was it formed? How many years or ages is it, since that print was occupied by a living, moving animal? Where was it born and when? What catastrophe or upheaval of nature brought it to its untimely end? The philosopher, by the careful study of the various rocks and formations, and layers of earth, is enabled to trace—with sufficient accuracy for credence—the footsteps of the Almighty, from the time he said, "Let us make man," even up to the "beginning," when "the earth was without form and void; and darkness was upon the face of the deep;" and as it will serve to illustrate the beauty, the grandeur and magnificence, as well as the wisdom, power and benevolence of the Creator, permit us to give the theory of the creation of the globe, as developed by Sir Humphrey Davy. "The globe, in the first state in which the imagination can venture to consider it, appears to have been a fluid mass, with an immense atmosphere revolving in space around the sun. By its cooling, a portion of its atmosphere was probably condensed into water, which occupied a part of its surface. In this state no forms of life, such as now belong to our system, could possibly have inhabited it. The crystaline rocks, or as they are called by geologists, the *primary rocks* which contain no vestiges of a former order of things, were the result of the first consolidation on its surface. Upon the farther cooling, the water, which more or less had covered it, contracted, depositions took place, shell-fish and coral insects were created and began their labors. Islands appeared in the midst of the ocean, raised from the deeps by the productive energies of millions of zoophytes. These islands became fitted to bear a high temperature, such as palms and various species of plants, similar to those which now exist in the hottest parts of the earth. The submarine rocks of these new formations of land became covered with aquatic vegetables, on which various species of shell-fish, and common fish, formed their nourishment. As the temperature of the globe became lower, species of oviparous reptiles appear to have been created to inhabit it; and the turtle, crocodile, and various gigantic animals of the Saurian, or Lizard kind seem to have haunted the bays and waters of the primative lands. But in this state of things, there appears to have been no order of events similar to the present. Immense volcanic explosions seem to have taken place, accompanied by elevations and depressions of the surface of the globe, producing mountains and causing new and extensive depositions of the primative ocean. The remains of living beings, plants, fishes, birds, and oviparous reptiles, are found in the strata of rocks which are the monuments and evidences of these changes. When these revolutions became less frequent, and the globe became still more cooled, and inequalities of temperature were established by means of the mountain-chains, more perfect animals became its inhabitants, such as the mammoth, megalonyx, megatherium, and gigantic hyena, many of which have become extinct. Five successive races of plants, and four successive races of animals, appear to have been created, and swept away by the physical revolutions of the globe, before the system of things became so permanent as to fit the world for man. In none of these four formations have the fossil remains of man, or any of his works been discovered. At last man was created, and since that period, there has been little alteration in the physical circumstances of the globe. The more that we discover of creation, the more conspicously does uniformity of design appear to pervade every department. We perceive here, the physical world gradually improved and prepared for man."

But why, it might be asked, did God spend so much time and labor, and make such an outlay of means, calling into requisition so much wisdom and power and skill in the construction of this visible creation which is to last for so short a time? Why did he make everything so beautiful and perfect? Why did he devote so much time and labor to decking and ornamenting this his footstool which is to be burned up? Would not a simpler and plainer world, without flowers, without singing birds, without glorious sunsets, without so many curious and wonderful things in the bowels of the earth—would not a plainer world without these extras have answered the purpose of short lived and perishing creatures like ourselves? Why did he lay the foundations so deep, filling the earth with treasures of gold and silver, and crystal gems, and rocks laid in the most perfect order and symmetry. Why did he create the shell-fish and the coral insect, which died millions of years before Adam saw the light? Why did he make the lilly of the meadow, and paint it with his choicest colors, and the violet, the queen of beauties? Why did he fit up such a splendid and beautiful world? For the same reason, doubtless, that the affectionate wife keeps her house neat and tidy—furnishing it with conveniences and comforts more than she alone can enjoy. She does it to please herself, doubtless, but more especially to please her husband whom she loves.—God, likewise, loves his creatures, and he has prepared this world for their habitation. He supplies it with everything we need for our comfort and enjoyment. He has made provision for every want of our complex nature—both for our physical our intellectual and spiritual being. He gives rain and sunshine, and fruitful seasons supply the wants of our animal nature. He robes the earth in beauty to gratify our higher intellectual desires and tastes. He called into requisition his wisdom and his almighty power in contriving and executing the framework of our globe, to furnish aliment for our reasoning and philosophic natures. He sent his Son into the world to work out our redemption and to minister to our wants, as spiritual and immortal beings. Thus would God manifest and communicate himself to his creatures. Though we may not behold his ineffable glory as did Moses, yet we may behold him in other aspects and manifestations as Moses did not. Those things which the prophets and kings desired to see, but did not see, and those things they desired to hear, but did not hear, *we* are permitted both to see and to hear, as they have been revealed to us in the gospel of His Son, and as unfolded to our view by the light of science. We may behold the greatness, the wisdom, and the omnipotence of God, though less dazzlingly displayed than was his manifest glory exhibited to Moses—whenever we will, and in every object we contemplate.

One of the old philosophers while discoursing upon the wonders, and the boundlessness of the universe of nature, suddenly stooped down and laid his hand upon the ground, and, addressing his pupils, said—'there are objects enough beneath my hand to occupy a man his life time to study out.' But there are some, perhaps, who would smile at such a remark, and wonder what the philosopher had beneath his hand that was so very curious and wonderful. There is a great difference in men's tastes as well as in their capacity for the appreciation of the beautiful and wonderful in nature.—There are some men who have souls no doubt, but which are so dried up and shrivelled by selfishness, that they can see no beauty in anything which does not look yellow like gold, and they can hear no music in nature, which does not ring like silver. But those who can see nothing in nature to love and to admire, and in beholding it, are not led to praise nature's God, are poor unfortunate ones. They are brutish—they have debased their manhood. They are mere animals, having prostituted their Maker's noblest work to sensuality, and to the lowest and most grovelling pursuits. But there are those of very limited scientific attainments, who can notwithstanding see God in nature. Still the *philosopher* has not lived who has *begun* to see the infinitude of his being, the extent of his wisdom and the