

climate ; no books, no recreations, to turn to excepting the one unknown book of Nature spread out before him, which, however, is about the last he feels himself capable of perusing. He may know thoroughly the theory and practice of his immediate calling, but not having been taught to seek an acquaintance with any of the collateral sciences beyond his own, he looks on the teeming beauties of the external world with indifference, so that

“ A primrose by the river's brim
A yellow primrose is to him,
And it is *nothing* more.”

The topography of countries and physical geography of the sea are to him sealed letters. He may be wandering in regions where no physical inquirer ever set foot, and be surrounded on all sides by natural objects both inviting and instructive. But his eye had not been trained to an inquisitive appreciation of Nature, and it is just as much as he can do to take in a few salient points which, even by comparison with former experiences, fall dead on an understanding already dulled and surfeited by a profusion of much that is grand and beautiful in Creation. It is needless to remark what a panacea for idleness, and its often frightful train of evils, is the study of Nature, and in particular to persons so circumstanced. I am not, however, advocating its cause on the strength of being only a method of keeping one's hand out of a worse turn, but in the belief that the highest and most important object of all human science ought to be mental improvement (using the term in its most comprehensive sense), and that when pursued with a different aim its effects are often rather pernicious than beneficial. The study of Nature, in particular field-work, when properly cultivated, is assuredly adapted to invigorate discipline, and develop the mental powers, and thus supply materials for the grandest ultimate truths. It robs the mind of contracted and pigmy