

## THOUGHTS BY UNCLE VAN

The readers of the "Maple Leaf,"—a magazine so decidedly Canadian,—may not be particularly desirous of an acquaintance with one, whose corporeal appearance, national predilections, social and political education, form a contrast with their own. Admitting that there may be a shade of difference in some points,—I can confidently assure the readers of this magazine,—a few pages of which may occasionally contain some of my cogitations, that the Constitutional peculiarities common to my most worthy and distinguished ancestors, peculiarities which may have been retained by their descendants, shall in no way render my acquaintance with them less agreeable and profitable. It is pleasant to see, that the feeling of animosity which has been somewhat characteristic of the great nations from which we claim our origin, is giving way to a very different spirit; a spirit which will pervade the nations of the earth, and transform the grand divisions of the Globe, and its subdivisions, into natural and agreeable demarkations of separate homes of the same great family. I have long endeavored to aid in putting down, and banishing into oblivion, every feeling which checks the course of that fellowship which should exist between man and man; and at the same time, have wished to contribute to the happiness and improvement of all those, whose acquaintance and friendship I have the good fortune to enjoy. If then, you are disposed to reciprocate such feelings, and sentiments, you will not complain of the publisher's arrangement, and the acquaintance thus informally brought about.

When we are able to hold captive to our will such inclinations, as are calculated to mar our happiness, and retard our improvement, we certainly have accomplished much. We have brought our minds and hearts into a state highly favorable for receiving, or imparting instruction. To such the effort required for the acquisition of knowledge is pleasing and exhilarating. There is no easy way to obtain knowledge, "Other things may be seized by might, or purchased with money; but knowledge can be gained only by study." It may be quite true, that the approach to the temple of learning is by slow graduations, up an acclivity of which the ascent undoubtedly requires a stern and steady effort. If we wish to become eminent in any branch of knowledge, or in any pursuit whatever, we shall find it necessary to toil, and take advantage of all the means within our reach. But this instead of being a repulsive task, can be made the source of the purest and most delightful enjoyment. There is no department of learning so calculated to awaken the dormant energies of the mind, and call into vigorous action the latent virtues and sympathies of the heart, as the study of Natural History. This branch of science is admirably adapted to the flexible mind of the young. While it fixes their attention, it captivates the heart, and cultivates its graces in a natural and agreeable manner.

Nature is loveable, whether exhibited in the foaming cataract, or the solemn grandeur of the wood, or the delicate tints of the flowers with their entrancing fragrance. The music of birds echoing through the shadowy arches of the forest, or sounding out clear and enlivening on the pure