

JOHN BURROUGHS.

I. THE MAN.

John Burroughs was born in Roxbury, N. Y., April 3rd, 1837. His father's farm lay in the lap of a high bald top mountain in the hilly region of New York State, and on the rugged sides of "Old Clump" the boy spent many a day tending sheep. School privileges fifty-four years ago in rural districts were nothing to boast of, but such as they were John had the benefit of them till he was twelve years old. During the next three years he wrought on the farm in the summer and attended school in the winter. When he was fifteen years old, the desire for knowledge awoke within him more intensely than ever and his heart was set upon the study of algebra and grammar. The problem now was, how to secure the books. His father though a fairly prosperous farmer did not hold very liberal ideas on the question of education. Had not his son learned to read and write? Had he not mastered Dayboll's arithmetic including the famous "sum" of the hare and the hounds? What more could be desired. Evidently the books were not forth-coming from that source. But John Burroughs had too much of the strength of his native hills in his disposition to be easily discouraged; and by tapping sugar maples and selling the sweet produce he was able to buy the coveted volumes and some others in addition.

The study of algebra and grammar so whetted John's mental appetite that he became desirous of attending a boarding school in an adjoining town. At first the father consented. With the alacrity that is born of hope the son hastened through the Fall ploughing. But when the time came for him to go, the father having counted cost refused to send him. Again was the lad thrown upon his own resources. He applied for a district school, secured it, taught six months, saved fifty dollars, and in the winter of 1853 attended the seminary at his own expense. For the following ten years the young man gave himself to teaching, and in 1864, at the age of 27, he became a clerk in the treasury department at Washington, which position he held till 1873. His