

a nourishment from 'it scarce inferior in effect to a coating of manure; while the countryman gratefully acknowledges the assistance it renders him in conveying from distant parts of the forest his fire wood, and material for building. These and many other circumstances contribute to render the season of winter pleasurable in no slight degree, and it is thus we think that a ramble in the wild forest at such a time may be productive of much enjoyment and engender thoughts and feelings eminently calculated to fill the heart with gratitude towards the Great Author of life in its various forms.

After a long continuance of deep snow a week's thaw has cleared the ground pretty well, and a day or two of hard frost now makes what remains but a hard crust, crisp and substantial enough to bear the weight of an ordinary person. We enter the forest, that wilderness of trees which has never suffered cultivation at the hand of man. Here Nature reigns supreme, and in the fastnesses of this sylvan waste, both bird and beast can live and rear their young in comparative peace and safety. The first objects which strike the eyes are the trees growing in a pleasing state of confusion. Here a grove of spruce; there one of beech;—now a clump of poplar, and again, a vigorous growth of maple, or as is more usually the case, the whole interspersed presenting an ever-varying prospect. A tree of any kind would afford in itself hours of study for the contemplative mind. A seed falls to the ground, but a small speck of vegetable matter; the rains beat it into the earth, and their grateful moisture like a draught to the fevered frame, nourishes and brings to life the latent power of vegetable growth within. It sprouts, and the genial rays of the summer's sun warm and invigorate its parts, and ere the bleak and winter's blast again chills all nature, a goodly shoot stands up in the infancy of a future forest king.

The wanderer in the North American forest cannot fail to observe that with the exception of a few of stunted growth, most trees grow to a good height before they throw out any branches. The reason of this is clearly seen. All vegetation appears to love light, and where the sun sheds its brightest beams, there do the trees and plants flourish in perfection. Now in our dense forests, the trees, especially the spruce, grow so closely together, that although it may be a bright sunny day overhead the matted mass of branches above effectually screen from the perfect light of day all the lower part of each tree, and you may walk a long distance through a tract of such trees without coming to an opening where a clear view of the sky may be obtained. It is thus that a young tree shooting up in the shade ascends rapidly upwards, and in this, to all appearance unnatural growth, succeeds at last in reaching the mass of branches above, through which it struggles, and having gained the full blaze of day, throws out under such vivifying influence a bunch of branches of small size, very unlike what they would have been had the tree grown from the first in the open ground. For lumber, these tall forest trees are of course superior to those grown in the open, because the long and branchless stem yields many feet of good plunks, while the latter have nearly as much branch as stem—more ornamental than useful. Place such trees, however, when young in an open space where the light and sun can fall upon every part alike, and you will see that in all directions, a few feet at most from the ground, branches will grow out luxuriantly and the tree instead of towering up all stem as it were, will in years to come on arriving at maturity, present a vast shrub-like mass of many branches, affording in summer time when in full leaf a grateful shade for bird and beast.

"Whir-r-r"—hark! what is that. We have flushed a partridge. Ah! there it alights on that leafless pine branch. "T'wit, twit, twit" see how it erects its head