

[For the Maple Leaf.]

THE STUDY OF NATURE.

‘O Lord how manifold are thy works! in wisdom hast thou made them all. the earth is full of thy riches.’

There is no branch of earthly study which is so worthy the attention, not only of the scholar, but of every intelligent mind, as the study of nature. The diligent perusal of this *First Book*, written by the hand of the Almighty, will infix in the soul, beautiful and enduring lessons of the wisdom and skill of its great Author. Its teachings will enlarge the mental vision, elevate and purify the sensibilities, and furnish ample scope for the greatest activities of those faculties of the mind, which otherwise, would either lie dormant, or be employed in a manner worse than useless. It is certainly true, that by occupying our minds in studying the works of nature, we take the surest course to free ourselves from the thralldom of those narrow and contracted views, which a constant attention to our own physical wants is calculated to produce. And whatever has the tendency to draw away our minds, even for a brief season, from our every-day wants, and personal concerns, is elevating to the soul.

We have called this an *earthly study*, and so it is; for by the study of nature, we mean researches and inquiries concerning the globe upon which we dwell, and its myriads of inhabitants, from man, at the summit of the scale, down to the lowest form of animal life, and we would by no means exclude the vegetable kingdom from the field of our inquiry; yet, though it be an earthly study, it must lead the thoughtful mind upward from earth to the Great Being, who is the Creator and Upholder of this vast assemblage of animate and inanimate matter. We have here a vast field for research; so vast, that the longest term of years allotted to human existence will in no wise exhaust its resources. The more one learns here, as elsewhere, the more he may learn of the skill and wisdom everywhere displayed in the works of God. And no study can be more fascinating than this. Those who give themselves up wholly to it, as a pursuit, become so charmed with it, as to regard other branches of knowledge with disrelish. While it is, doubtless, both wrong and unwise to devote our energies exclusively to any one study, to the neglect of others, or of our ordinary duties, yet it seems strange that an in-