

or we visit them reluctantly, and of necessity. But when summer joys once more beam upon the world, what object more beautiful than the sunlit mountain raising his summit to the sky, bare and bold,—and surrounded by fertile valley, with all the varied forms of woodland beauty! There is here a mighty contrast, which throws its spell of enchantment around the contemplative mind, and cause man to feel what he can never express. Nor is the interest diminished by the moon spreading far in the distance, and skirting the blue horizon. The magnificence of the scene receives fresh additions from the placid lake, reflecting in its limpid waters, the foliage which crowns its banks and cooling the sultry air which plays on its glassy surface. Wood and water, in a thousand real or imaginary relations, enter largely into those suns which we have been led to regard as most attractive, and with which we have the greatest number of pleasing associations. The head land, with its rocky precipices, surmounting the aged oak, or the waving pine, is perhaps sublime in itself; but more than half the deep emotions of the beholder is derived from the rolling billow, which washes its foundations. Inanimate nature seems itself to live in the radiance of the summer sun.

In summer nature teems with animal existence. How many forms of life start into activity and enjoyment—how many beings feast luxuriously at the table which God has every where furnished. At this season we witness a splendid illustration of the sacred penman's address to Jehovah,—“Thou openest thy hand and satisfiest the desire of every living thing.” His creatures are innumerable, and innumerable are the blessings he has provided for them. From the tiny insect to the “noblest work of God,” through orders of existence which imagination cannot conceive, all are indebted to the same liberal benefactor and are filled with goodness by him who diffuses goodness throughout creation.

Shall we then allow our minds to dwell on the gorgeous beauty of Summer's dress, the luxuriance of her fruits, and the delicate penciling of her flowers, without directing one solitary aspiration of piety to the God of Summer. Having all these things richly to enjoy, shall man blind his understanding, against the perception of the link connecting them with Deity; thus depriving his own soul of the purest and most elevated felicity, and denying to his God the tribute of grateful veneration?

Need we point to the calm summer evening, as a season for delightful and profitable meditation! The mind that is not torn by evil passions, but well regulated in its train of thought, and susceptible of holy emotion, will feel the influence which is then spread around. The Christian at such a season, when he looks to earth, or air, or sea,—to the setting sun, or the gathering shades of night, will learn many a useful lesson, whilst he contemplates the work of his Father in heaven.

He may perhaps be led to reflect on the summers that have past and gone, and the friends that are gone with them, and pensive and sad he may “love to embalm their memory with tears;” but as the sun that sets in gloom to night shall rise in glory on the morrow, so believers who have gone down to the darkness of the tomb, shall awake to everlasting light and life. Can the Christian entertain this hope about his departed friends? then all is well. But he is also stimulated to duty for himself, that he may not be associated at last with those who utter the distressing complaint—“The harvest is past, the summer is ended, and we are not saved!”

This is the summer season, and it is the summer of life. Winter is coming, old age is approaching, death is perhaps, at hand; has provision been made for its arrival?

“But summer will return, in all her beauty dressed,
Nature shall rejoice again, and be by man caressed.

But ah! life's summer past away,
Can never, never hope return.
Cold winter comes with cheerless ray
To lean upon the dreary urn.
Then may I daily seek a mansion in the skies
Where summers never cease and glory never dies.”

A WORD FITLY SPOKEN.

The daughter of an English nobleman was brought under the influence of the followers of Wesley, and came to a saving knowledge of the

truth as it is in Jesus. The father was almost distracted at the event, and by threats, temptations to extravagance in dress, by reading, and travelling in foreign countries, and to places of fashionable resort, took every means in his power to divert her mind from “things unseen and eternal.” But her “heart was fixed.” The God of Abraham had become “her shield and her exceeding great reward,” and she was determined that nothing finite should deprive her of her infinite and eternal portion in Him, or displace Him from the centre of her heart. At last the father resolved upon a final and desperate expedient, by which his end should be gained, or his daughter ruined, so far as her prospects in life were concerned. A large company of the nobility were invited to his house. It was so arranged, that during the festivities, the daughters of different noblemen, and among others, this one, were to be called on to entertain the company with singing and music on the piano. If she complied, she parted with heaven and returned to the world. If she refused compliance, she would be publicly disgraced, and lose, past the possibility of recovery, her place in society. It was a dreadful crisis, and with peaceful confidence did she await it. As the crisis approached, different individuals, at the call of the company, performed their parts with the greatest applause. At last the name of his daughter was announced. In a moment all were in fixed and silent suspense to see how the scale of destiny would turn. Without hesitation she arose, with calm and dignified composure, took her place at the instrument. After a moment spent in silent prayer, she ran her fingers along the keys, and then with an unearthly sweetness, elevation, and solemnity, sang, accompanying her voice with notes of the instrument, the following stanzas:

No room for mirth, or trifling here.
For worldly hope, or worldly fear,
If life so soon is gone:
If now the Judge is at the door.
And all mankind must stand before
Th' inexorable throne.

No matter which my thoughts employ;
A moment's misery or joy!
But oh! when both shall end,
Where shall I find my destined place?
Shall I my everlasting days,
With fiends or angels spend?

Nothing is worth a thought beneath,
But how I may escape the death
That never, never dies!
How make mine own election sure,
And, when I fall on earth, secure
A mansion in the skies.

Jesus vouchsafe a pitying ray,
Be thou my guide, be thou my way,
To glorious happiness!
Oh! write the pardon on my heart!
And whensoe'er I hence depart,
Let me depart in peace!

The minstrel ceased. The solemnity of eternity was upon that assembly. Without speaking, they dispersed. The father wept aloud, and when left alone, sought the counsel and prayers of his daughter for the salvation of his soul. His soul was saved, and his great estate consecrated to Christ. I would rather be an organ of communicating such thoughts in such circumstances, and aid in the production of such results; I would rather possess wisdom thus to speak as occasion requires, than to possess all that is finite besides. What hymn, what thought in the universe could be substituted for the one then uttered? The time, the occasion, the thought expressed, the hallowed and “sweet manner” of its utterance, present a full realization of all that is embraced in our idea of fitness. That, surely was “a word fitly spoken.”—*Baptist Advocate.*

NATURAL HISTORY.

THE OSTRICH.

The ostrich is the largest of the winged tribes, generally measuring seven feet in height from the top of the head to the foot, and when the neck is fully extended, seven feet from the head to the tail. It seems to be a connecting link between the quadruped and the fowl. “It presents,” says Dr. Roget, “of all birds, the greatest number of exceptions to the general rules which appear to regulate the conformation of birds, and in many

of its peculiarities of structure it makes some approach to that which characterizes the quadruped.” “The animal,” says Mr. Kirby (*Bridge-water Treatise*, 459), “whose external form approaches nearest to the ostrich, is the camel; a resemblance so striking, that, from a very early period, they have been designated by a name which connects them with this quadruped. In many particular points, besides general form, they also resemble it: the substance and form of their two toed feet, a callosity on their breast and at the os pubis, their flattened sternum, and their mode of reclining. It is singular that these birds associate with beasts, particularly the quagga and zebra. The new world, which has a representative of the camel in the lama, and of the hippopotamus in the tapir, has also a peculiar ostrich of its own, which is called the ‘handue’ (*Rhea Americana*); so that, in Africa, Asia, Australia, and America, there is a distinct genus of the present order—each, as at present known, consisting of a single species. With respect to their functions, not much has been observed.—They are said to live a good deal upon grain, fruit, and other vegetable substances, and the handue is fond of insects. Probably others of them may also assist in restraining the incessant multiplication of these little creatures. The ostrich may be said almost to graze, though it is very eager after grain; but its history is too well known to require any further enlargement upon it.”

The wings of the ostrich cannot raise it from the ground, still they greatly accelerate its flight; but its chief muscular power is in the legs, which are remarkably thick and strong, and well fitted for rapid progression. The feathers growing out of the small wings are all unwoven and decomposed, as are those of the tail. The ostrich has not various feathers—some soft and downy, next the skin; and others of a more firm and compact consistence, which cover the former; and others still longer and of greater strength, on which the movements of the animal depend: and the feathers are of one kind, bearded with detached hairs or filaments, of no utility in flying. Besides the peculiar structures of the wings, the ostrich is pressed down by its enormous size. Buffon calculates the weight of a living ostrich, in middling condition, at sixty five or eighty pounds; which would require an immense power in the wings and motive muscles of these members, to raise and support in the air so ponderous a mass. Thus, by her excessive weight and the loose texture of her feathers, she is condemned, like a quadruped, laboriously to run upon the surface of the earth, without being ever able to mount up into the air.

The ostrich is admirably fitted for running.—The greater part of the body is covered with hair, rather than feathers; the head and sides have little or no hair; and the legs are in like manner almost naked. The large sinewy and cloven feet, which have only two toes, of unequal size, resemble the horny feet of a camel. The wings are armed with two spikes, like those of a porcupine.

These feathers throw great light on a part of the description which Jehovah gives of the ostrich in the book of Job: “Gavest thou wings and feathers unto the ostrich?” Dr. Shaw translates it; “The wing of the ostrich is expanded; the very feathers and plumage of the stork.” According to Buffon, the ostrich is covered with feathers alternately white and black, and sometimes gray by the mixtures of these two colours. “They are shortest,” says he, “on the lower part of the neck, the rest being entirely naked. They become longer on the back and the belly; and are longest at the extremity of the tail and the wings.” Dr. Shaw says: “When the ostrich is full grown, the neck, particularly of the male, which before was almost naked, is now very beautifully covered with red feathers.—The plumage, likewise, upon the shoulders, the back, and some parts of the wings, from being hitherto of a dark grayish colour, becomes now as black as jet, whilst some of the feathers remain an exquisite whiteness. They are, as described in Job xxxix. 13, the very feathers and plumage of the stork; that is, they consist of such black and white feathers as the stork, called from thence *pelargos*, is known to have. But the belly, the thighs, and the breast do not partake of this covering, being usually naked; and when touched, are of the same warmth as the flesh of quadrupeds.”