

They are nearly always hard now, and cold, passionate indifference is the expression that she continually cultivates.

She has been trying to steel herself against any deep feeling whatever except her passionate love for Jack, and that only burns stronger with the passing weeks.

For worship is born into the heart of man, and because of it he cannot wholly banish feeling. Thus Madge, in her hour of bitterness, doubt and scepticism, tossing anchorless on a troubled stormy sea, has concentrated nearly all the force of her strong nature into a vast, all-

masterful love for her brother Jack. Without knowing it she has already placed him on a pedestal and, metaphorically speaking, bowed down in complete self-abnegation before her idol.

"Thou shalt have none other gods but Me," thundered the Mighty voice of the Creator from Sinai of old.

Aye, and down the long vista of passing centuries, the voice has thundered on, with its mighty import unweakened. In this enlightened nineteenth century, though men close their ears to it and scoff at it, the words still

retain their old solemnity, and continue to be spoken for us, as surely as for those Hebrews of old. And may we not expect, that, as surely as the idols of those ancient days were eventually overthrown and broken in pieces, so individually and collectively, amid much heart-burn, denunciation and frantic imploring, must the man-wrought idols of this present day lie in the dust.

What other course is there, if we will not turn from them ourselves, for is not the aim and end of man just a pressing forward to perfection?

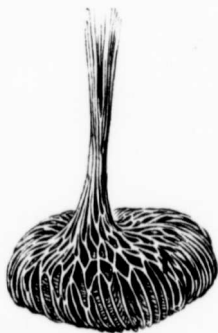
(To be continued.)

## RAMBLES WITH NATURE STUDENTS.

By MRS. ELIZA BRIGHTWEN, Author of "Wild Nature Won by Kindness," etc.

### SKELETON LEAVES.

FINDING a last year's bulb turned into a skeleton by the action of rain and wind and lying like a piece of lace-work on the surface of the ground, I picked it up this morning and have since then been looking for such other instances of woody fibre as it may be possible to light upon in the garden and fields.



SKELETON BULB.

Under my holly trees were some very perfect skeleton leaves, only needing to be bleached in a weak solution of chloride of lime to form charming sprays to place with other leaves under a glass shade.

Magnolia leaves may often be found thus turned into skeletons when they have been lying on damp ground for some months; but as these and other specimens are seldom quite perfect, the best way, if we wish for a case of really beautiful lace-like leaves, is to make them for ourselves by gathering well-matured specimens of suitable species, and placing them in a deep pan full of soft water letting them soak until the upper and under skins of the leaves are rotted, when they can be brushed off with a camel-hair pencil.

When the skeletons are bleached they should be dried between sheets of blotting-paper, mounted into a group with fine wire and placed under a glass shade.

The following leaves succeed well: holly, magnolia, pear, maple, poplar and sycamore.

Seed-vessels are very beautiful when carefully cleaned.

Stramonium, henbane, poppy, winter-cherry, butcher's broom, yellow-rattle, a bunch of sycamore keys, and a very old Swedish turnip

also makes a sphere of woody fibre of fine delicate network which few people would ever guess to be the framework of that homely vegetable.

### PALESTINE OAKS.

When we read of the oak-trees mentioned in Scripture we are apt, very naturally, to picture them with large, bright green leaves of the size and shape of our English oaks; but as this is contrary to fact I will describe the Eastern tree that we may realise its appearance more accurately.

An acorn, gathered on Mount Tabor, was grown by a friend of mine till the little specimen was old enough to be transplanted into my garden, where it now occupies an honoured place. Its leaves seldom exceed an inch and a half in length, of a dark green with prickles round the edges.

Unlike our English oaks, which shed their leaves in autumn, these trees are evergreen, and only mark the change of seasons by throwing out pale green shoots in spring. The acorn is small and has a somewhat prickly cup.

There are three species of oak in Palestine; the one I possess is *Quercus pseudococcifera*, which grows abundantly in Syria. Abraham's oak near Hebron belongs to this species; it measures twenty-three feet in girth, and the branches are spread over a space ninety feet in diameter.

During the severe winter of 1894-5, the weight of snow broke off one of its huge branches which, when sawn up, furnished sufficient wood to load seven camels.

We owe the ink with which we write to another Syrian oak (*Quercus infectoria*).

A small fly punctures its twigs causing irritation in the flow of the sap, and gall-nuts are formed in consequence. These nuts abound in tannic and gallic acid, and in combination with sulphate of iron and gum they form the constituents of our writing ink.

I have in my museum some of the huge acorn cups of the valonia oak, the third species, known as *Quercus agrifolia*; this tree is of great value, as its fruit is much used and largely imported for dyeing purposes as well as ink-making.

We read in Acts xx. 13, that St. Paul, parting from his disciples at Troas, was to meet them again at Assos (to which place they were going by ship); he, "minding himself to go afoot," would, in making this journey, pass through groves of valonia oaks which abound in that part of Asia Minor.



PALESTINE OAK.

I like to think of the great apostle taking that quiet woodland walk, possibly the last opportunity he ever enjoyed for undisturbed meditation and thought, alone amidst the beauty of nature.

### THE NAUTILUS.

The shell of the common nautilus, when divided lengthways, affords a beautiful example of delicate structure. It is the dwelling of a species of cuttle-fish found in the Indian Ocean.

The creature lives only in the upper compartment of its shell, whilst below it are thirty-six exquisitely graduated air-chambers lined with mother-of-pearl. This cuttle-fish has numerous tentacles or feelers on which it sometimes crawls like a snail at the bottom of the sea. It is a deep-sea dweller, but at times it rises towards the surface and swims through the water by drawing in air and then violently ejecting it, thus progressing backwards by a series of jerks. The shell is as hard and smooth as porcelain, and is marked outside by a series of dark brown wavy lines.

Dr. Oliver Wendell Holmes, in his beautiful poem "The Chambered Nautilus," draws a