

THE SONG OF THE SUGARING.

By JOHN FRASER.

The sun has arisen, and crimson the snow
On the top of the mountains and valleys below,
From his throne in the azure he smiles out with glee,
And is bidding the frozen up brooklets be free.

He peeps through the woodlands, all leafless and still,
And kisses with gladness the brow of the hill;
And the life blood is coursing, both rapid and free,
Through the bountiful veins of our own Maple Tree.

Grim winter's receding, and joy-giving spring
Sends red-breasted robin again on the wing.
Then up I to the labor give in your adhesion,
O 'tis charming to reap the first fruits of the season.

Hie away to the forest! to sugaring away!
The time has arrived for the yearly foray;
We wound with intent, but no malice have we,
We love, prize and cherish our bountiful tree.

The blood of the Maple this day shall escape,
O! it's dearer to us than the blood of the grape:
In our homes it can ne'er be the mother of sorrow,
Nor cheer us to-day while it frets us to-morrow.

Dear Maple of spring-tide the harbinger green,
Of summer the glory, of autumn the queen,
Enshrined in our homes it is meet thou should'st be
Of our country the emblem, O beautiful tree.

Then urge on the team, the work has begun,
The forest spreads out its rude limbs to the sun;
The woodpecker's tapping both eager and fast,
For insects to furnish his early repast.

We gather the sap amid sunshine and snow,
And while tailing and bailing our hearts overflow,
To think that we're free from vile slavery's stain,
And drain from the Maple instead of the cane.

Our wives and our children shall join in the sport,
And our young men and maidens attend Cupid's court
In the grove where the youthful affections shall glow,
While the young ones make candy on top of the snow.

Then let our rejoicings reach Heaven's high throne,
Who gave us to reap where we never have sown;
And though God in his infinite mercy doth reign,
We here are the lords of the forest and plain.

Montreal Transcript.

SCIENCE.

Leaves from Gosse's Romance of Natural History.

(Continued from our last number.)

TIMES AND SEASONS.

A friend who has resided in Burmah informs me that there at midnight the stranger is often startled by the loud voice of a species of gecko, which is frequently found in the houses. Its cry is exceedingly singular, and resembles the word "tooktay," pronounced clearly and distinctly as if spoken by a human tongue. It is a source of much alarm to the natives of India who accompany Europeans to that country; as they believe that the bite of the little lizard is invariably fatal.

None of these sounds can compare in terrible effect with the deafening howls that penetrate the forests of Guiana after night has fallen,—the extraordinary vocal performances of the alovattes or howling-monkeys. They go in troops, and utter their piercing cries, which Humboldt affirms can be heard in a clear atmosphere at the distance of two miles, in a strange concord, which seems the result of discipline, and incomparably augments the effect. The same traveller informs us that occasionally the voices of other animals are added to the concert; the roarings of the jaguar and puma, and the shrill cries of alarmed birds. "It is not always in a fine

moonlight, but more particularly at the time of storms and violent showers, that this tumult among the wild beasts occurs."

I linger on these tropical pictures, where nature appears under aspects so different from those of our clime. Here is another on the Amazon:—"No clouds obscured the sky, and the millions of starry lights, that in this clime render the moon's absence of little consequence, were shining upon us in their calm, still beauty. The stream where we were anchored was narrow; tall trees drooped over the water, or mangroves shot out their long finger-like branches into the mud below. Huge bats were skimming past; night-birds were calling in strange voices from the tree-tops; fire-flies darted their mimic lightnings; fishes leaped above the surface, flashing in the starlight; the deep, sonorous baying of frogs came up from distant marshes; and loud plashings inshore suggested all sorts of nocturnal monsters."

Yet another, by the same pleasant writer, on the banks of the same mighty river:—"The flowers that bloomed by day have closed their petals, and, nestled in their leafy beds, are dreaming of their loves. A sister host now take their place, making the breezes to intoxicate with perfume, and exacting homage from bright, starry eyes. A murmur, as of gentle voices, floats upon the air. The moon darts down her glittering rays, till the flower-enamelled plain glistens like a shield; but in vain she strives to penetrate the denseness, except some fallen tree betrays a passage. Below, the tall tree-trunk rises dimly through the darkness. Huge moths, those fairest of the insect world, have taken the places of the butterflies, and myriads of fire-flies never weary in their torch-light dance. Far down the road comes on a blaze, steady, streaming like a meteor. It whizzes past, and for an instant the space is illumined, and dewy jewels from the leaves throw back the radiance. It is the lantern-fly, seeking what he himself knows best, by the fiery guide upon his head. The air of the night-bird's wing fans your cheek, or you are startled by his mournful note, 'wac-o-row, wac-o-row,' sounding dolefully—by no means so pleasantly as our whip-poor-will. The armadillo creeps carelessly from his hole, and, at slow pace, makes for his feeding ground; the opossum climbs stealthily up the tree, and the little ant-eater is out pitilessly marauding."

If the sounds of night possess a romantic interest for the naturalist, so do those animal flames with which it is illuminated,—

"Stars of the earth, and diamonds of the night."

Mr. Kirby, the most accomplished of entomologists, speaks in rapturous terms of our own homely little glow-worm. "If," says he, "living, like me, in a district where it is rarely met with, the first time you saw this insect chanced to be, as it was in my case, one of those delightful evenings which an English summer seldom yields, when not a breeze disturbs the balmy air, and 'every sense is joy,' and hundreds of these radiant worms, studding their mossy couch with wild effulgence, were presented to your wondering eye in the course of a quarter of a mile,—you could not help associating with the name of glow-worm the most pleasing recollections."

It is however, in America that these "diamonds of the night" are observed to advantage. In Canada I have seen the whole air, for a few yards above the surface of a large field, completely filled with fire-flies on the wing, thicker than stars on a winter's night. The light is redder, more candle-like, than that of our glow-worm, and, being in each individual alternately emitted and concealed, and each of the million tiny flames performing its part in mazy aerial dance, the spectacle was singularly beautiful.

A sight in every respect similar, though doubtless dependant on a different species, occurred to me in ascending the river Alabama from the Gulf of Mexico. As the steamer passed booming along under the shadow of night, the broad belt of reeds which margined the river was thronged with myriads of dancing gleams, and the air was filled with what looked like thousands of shooting stars.

Beautiful, however, as these spectacles were, I had not known what insects could effect in the way of illumination till I visited Jamaica. There, in the gorgeous night of a tropical forest, I saw them in their glory. In the glades and dells that open here and there from a winding mountain-road cut through the tall woods, I have delighted to linger and see the magnificent gloom lighted up by multitudes of fire-flies of various species, peculiarities in whose luminosity—of colour, intensity, and intermittence—enabled me to distinguish each from others. I delighted to watch and study their habits in these lonely spots, while the strange sounds, snorings, screeches, and ringings of nocturnal reptiles and insects, already described, were coming up from every part of the deep forest around, imparting to the scene a character which seemed as if it would suit the weird hunter of German fable.