

A radiant vision met his startled sight,
 Robed in the beauty of immortal light ;
 The Angel of the Lord with glory crowned,
 He saw—and sank in silence to the ground ;
 His strong heart heaved ; in quick succession came,
 Dark, bitter thoughts of burning grief and shame ;
 His country's wrongs, his strange degrading toil,
 To seize his own, as 'twere some robber's spoil,
 His starving children's oft repeated cry,
 Oh, father ! give us bread, or let us die !
 Withered his soul, and not one murmur broke
 From his pale lips as thus the angel spoke :

"Thy God is with thee, Gideon !—cease to fear,
 "Thy country hails her great deliverer here.
 "So Heaven shall nerve thy arm the land to
 save,
 "And Israel cease to be the oppressor's slave."

"If God be with us," Gideon promptly cried,
 "Midian no longer shall our woes deride ;
 "By all the wonders that our sires have told,
 "The glorious miracles in days of old ;
 "When God his people led with outstretched hand,
 "Through the dire plagues of Egypt's hostile
 land ;
 "But spoiled and trampled, God forsakes us now,
 "And tyrants triumph o'er their prostrate foe ;
 "And oh, dread Lord, this feeble arm, though
 brave,
 "Would ill suffice a fallen land to save ;
 "Poor in Manassah is our low estate,
 "And I, the least, upon my kindred wait."

"Fear not, the Lord can raise thy mean degree ;
 "Tis thine to burst the yoke of slavery,
 "Thy people's rights and freedom to restore,
 "And rise the avenging champion of the poor
 "Go in thy might, thou man of valour, go,
 "Thy God is with thee, and the vaunting foe
 "Shall fall beneath the force of Israel's sword ;
 "Have I not called thee—Gideon !"—saith the
 Lord.

The warrior felt his lofty spirit rise,
 As that high mandate, sent him from the skies,
 Rang on his ear, and still before his sight,
 Floated the radiant form of life and light,
 Whose words like fire within his bosom burned,
 When on the chosen chief, the angel turned
 His glorious visage ; and that glance from Heaven
 To Gideon's soul a higher hope has given,
 Than man in human cause ere felt before.
 He bends that God with rapture to adore,
 While thoughts sublime, and inspiration high,
 Flash through the speaking glories of his eye.

"Then, blessed Spirit from the realms of light,
 "If I have favour found in thy pure sight ;

"Then tarry here, until thy servant bring
 "A grateful tribute to heaven's mighty King."

The gracious stranger smiling gave consent,
 And Gideon joyful on his errand went.
 He sought his humble home—with zealous care,
 Unleavened cakes and flesh his slaves prepare,
 And ere the sun declined upon the plain,
 He stood beneath the ancient oak again :
 "Gideon, all hail !" the white-robed angel said,
 As on the rock the proffered gift he laid—
 "Here build an altar to the living God,"
 He cried, and struck the offering with his rod ;
 The trembling earth confessed the awful shock,
 And fire sprung fiercely from the rugged rock ;
 Consumed the flesh, and in the spiral light,
 The angel vanished from the warrior's sight ;
 Who pale with wonder, heard a voice from high
 Proclaim—"Bold Gideon, wherefore dost thou
 fly !

"The Lord is with thee, and thou shalt not die !"

ÆSTHETICS OF THE VEGETABLE WORLD.

INEXPLICABLE is the nature of beauty. Only in the feeling does the susceptible soul become conscious of it ; and to the logically arranging, scientifically connecting, and theoretically deducing understanding, it remains ever a foreign closed territory.

"Where all the wisdom of the wise man leaves him blind,
 There plays in free simplicity the child-like mind."

When, with our observation and experiments, with analyses, conclusions, and proofs, we have unravelled nature into a plain, intelligible tissue of substances and forces, beauty and sublimity enter upon the field, unite the disjointed once more into a single whole, and mock our endeavors to comprehend the eternally incomprehensible. We explain it not, yet it is true ; we comprehend it not, yet there it is. The pure heart speaks out unhesitatingly what the acutest intellect never finds.

"The heavens declare the glory of God ; and the firmament sheweth his handy-work. One day telleth another ; and one night certifieth another."

No matter ; that which we cannot comprehend, cannot explain, may yet, perhaps, be so far capable of arrangement and demonstration, that we may come to understand where and why the incomprehensible necessarily enters into joint possession of our spiritual life. Though we cannot develop the nature of beauty in itself, yet it may be possible, perhaps, to discover what it signifies for us mankind, under what shape it appears, and what its influencing elements are.