

## LECTURE.

Delivered by Bro. the Rev. R. H. Starr, S. W., at a regular meeting of Doric Lodge, No. 121, Brantford.

BRETHREN,—As members of our Ancient and Honorable Order we believe in the Great Architect of the Universe. He has spoken to man in two voices. His revelation of Himself consists of two volumes, the volume of nature and the volume of the sacred law. On the former of these I propose to say a few words this evening. "God is a declaratory God, speaking in ten thousand voices, and the whole year is one Epiphany—one day of manifestation."

"Every bird that sings,  
And every flower that stars the elastic sod,  
And every breath the radiant summer brings,  
To the pure spirit is a word of God."

"Flowers, the noblest and the loveliest; colors, the most gorgeous and most delicate; odors, the sweetest and the subtlest; harmonies, the most soothing and most stirring; the sunny glories of the day; the pale Elysian graces of the moonlight; silent, pinnacles of aged snow in one hemisphere; the marvels of tropical luxuriance in another; the serenity of sunsets; the sublimity of storms;" these are but features in the warp and woof of the wondrous garment in which the Invisible enrobes His mysterious loveliness, and through and from which He speaks to His listening children. Nature, myriad-tongued, proclaims a God.

There is one feature, however, which makes the manifestation most clear, the voice most distinct; it is the *design* which is everywhere impressed upon the works of the Great Architect. On this I propose to say a few words. All the animal creation teems with marks of purpose and contrivance. To illustrate take

1. "The fowls of the air." The warm covering of birds, in order to meet their peculiar wants, must be portable as well as warm. Hence we find this order of creation clad with a feathery garment weighing, at most, about an ounce and a half. To understand how admirably this covering has been designed, remove the feathers from a bird and give it to man to clothe. His failure will prove the necessity of a higher intelligence than his—that of the great Designer and Framer of all things. But this covering would be of little use were the wet absorbed by the plumage. Instead of being a blessing to its possessor it would prove a curse. Hence we find birds supplied with a small oil-vessel from which the required protection against the wet is furnished for their plumage. To understand the efficiency of this provision, it is only necessary to watch a bird emerge from his morning bath and see how completely a shake or two will remove every particle of moisture from his coat. But further. Birds thus wondrously clothed must fly. This motion through the air would be effectually prevented by a heavy skeleton such as that of man. (Thus far all attempts at flying on man's part have been but abortive efforts.) Hence they are provided with tubes of thin bone surrounding a cavity filled with air. Again. Their pinions must be light as well as strong. Hence the barbs of the feathers have roughened edges so that they form one strong, continuous surface, almost imperious to the air they beat. The speed and endurance of certain species on the wing are enormous,—"Every feather is a mechanical wonder." Turn now to the beak of the bird, and see how wonderfully it is adapted, in the several varieties, to their respective habits and food. The wood-pecker's bill is "a pointed tool tipped with the hardest