

scarcely any one will deny ; this, after a good deal of thought, is what strikes the writer as one of the simplest and most workable plans that can be adopted.

It will be a pleasure to hear from correspondents on this question.

Let it be discussed at county conventions ; and should discussion lead to action, the time may not be far distant when the union will be Provincial, not local, and nearly, if not quite, inclusive of every live man and woman in the profession.

THE WORLD'S PURIFIERS.

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METAPHORICALLY speaking, the beetle has been on its back for many a long year. Let me try to set it on its legs.

Perhaps no insects have been less understood than the beetles. Even Shakespeare, though he could find a compassionate word for the "poor beetle that we tread upon," could not find a kindly or appreciative word for it. On the contrary, he shared the popular belief that beetles are noxious, hateful, and objectionable beings, and baneful to mankind. In the *Tempest*, where Caliban reviles Prospero, he invokes—

"All the charms
Of Sycorax, toads, Beetles, light on you."

In the *Midsummer Night's Dream*, where Titania sleeps, her attendant fairies sing—

"Beetles black, approach not near."

I very much fear that the popular prejudice has not undergone very much change for the better, and that beetles of all kinds are generally detested, even if not actually feared. Yet, even considered as to outward appearance, there are no living creatures which are more graceful of form than many beetles, while many are adorned with colours such as no art of man can distantly imitate. Not even the brilliant plumage of the humming-bird can compare with that of many beetles which to the unaided

eye appear as if they were nothing but dull green or yellow, while the infinite variety of patterns with which their wing-cases are sculptured would make the fortune of a designer. It is true that a few of them are rather offensive to our nostrils, but, by way of compensation, there are quite as many which are gifted with perfumes such as we might only expect from the sweetest flowers.

As to their uses, it is not easy to say what may be the ultimate use of any being whatever, or the influence which it exerts upon the world in general. That each species of beetle must exert some active influence upon the world is evident from the fact that it exists. Had it no work to do, it would be withdrawn from the world, in accordance with the Divine law, which has no toleration for idleness.

I purpose in the following pages to take a few typical examples of the beetle tribe, and to lay before the reader some of the work which they do. I shall not, however, venture to say that they have no other work, or to define the ultimate object of the work which we see, whether it be done in their larval or perfect state of existence.

There can be no doubt, however, that Food is one of the chief agents employed, not only by the beetles, but by all living beings, including man himself, in carrying out the