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## NOTES ON THE STUDY OF BOTANY.

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*Mr. President, Ladies and Gentlemen:—*

The highest and most important object of all human science should be mental improvement, and the study of natural history, in particular field-work, when properly pursued, is assuredly adapted to strengthen, discipline, and develop the mental powers. It robs the mind of contracted ideas, induces us to take close as well as comprehensive views of objects, and teaches us to argue from facts, not from fancies. Though the study of nature in any of her forms is calculated to bring about these results, none of the natural sciences is as good for beginners as botany, the materials being everywhere abundant and inexpensive. To the average student, plants, possessing life, are more interesting than minerals, while animals, though affording the most striking marks of designing wisdom, cannot be dissected and examined without painful emotions.

One of the most apparent of the many advantages to be gained by the study of botany is that it systematizes the mind, by imprinting on it and establishing habits of order and exactness. It thus gives all the benefits of mathematics or logic without the drudgery which debars so many from pursuing the study of these sciences. System is essential not only in science, but in conducting any kind of business and in the most trivial affairs of every-day life: thus, the very logical and systematic arrangement prevailing in botanical science cannot but induce in the mind a habit and love of order, which, when once established, will operate in even the minutest concerns. The methodical habits of