

very material, a person cannot create his own climate by operations confined to a single square mile of surface. If important effects are produced by the removal of a wood that covers one or two score of acres, what must be the influence on a whole country of a ruthless destruction of nine-tenths of its forests, and that, too, where the climate ranges between great extremes of heat and cold? If our knowledge equaled our desire for happiness, we should often shape our labors to different purposes. We boast of the discoveries, the improvements, and the intelligence of the age, of our numerous schools and the progress we have made in science and the arts.

"With derision might we meet the cry of our high culture; for all earnest moral reflection upon history would tell us, that we have yet scarcely straggled out of the mire of the lowest degradation and barbarism. From the hand of Nature man received the inheritance prepared for him, the vegetable and animal worlds, the dead matters, and their forces; and how has he managed this inheritance? If he shall have to render an account of it, it is to be feared that here, as everywhere, it will go hard with him.

"If we inquire for what purpose is the vegetable world, the parti-colored carpet of the earth intended, we find a threefold answer. The meanest purpose is undoubtedly to serve the common necessities of mankind, their nourishment and handicrafts, in a word their economy. I call it the meanest, because nature here merely satisfies for each individual what, however refined and glossed over by cultivation, are but animal requirements. The import of the vegetable world for the regulation of the numerous and comprehensive physical processes of the earth, appears indeed more lofty. The glow of the African desert, its

dry rainlessness, and the fullness of life in primeval forests, with their torrents of rain, obtain their peculiar characteristics through the vegetable world. Moisture and dryness of the atmosphere, warmth and cold of the soil, uniformity or variability of climate and the like, above all the life of animals, and finally of man in the mass, have their conditions in the luxuriance and the nature of vegetation. This import of vegetable life does not relate to the solitary, miserable individual, but to whole countries and regions, to many successive generations, the possibility and facilities for whose existence are intimately bound up with the formation of the vegetable world as a whole. Lastly, there is a third face, which the world of plants may turn toward us, without question the noblest and most exalted. It is like all nature, the symbol of the Eternal; behind this play of dead natural forces and their products, we adore a holy Author and sustainer. The vegetable creation is the rich altar-cloth of the temple of God, in which the recognition of beauty and sublimity of forms constitutes the worship.

"And man in opposition to the vegetable world? Alternating many things he has laid his hands upon it, and the great phases of his history are also catalogued on the green leaf of vegetation. But how has he husbanded it? Where no temporary profit was to be derived from assailing nature, or even from leaving it alone, where the question concerned merely the misery of a thousand or two of his future fellow-beings, he has, with barbarous rudeness, demolished and destroyed for thousands of years, often wickedly squandered the seed which God had vouchsafed, not for himself alone, but also for his successors."

"Beauty, the expression of the divine in nature, vanished before