

have; he watched with surprise and joy the blade—the beautiful blade—vegetation amid the inert earth, a product that rose to hopeful life amid the dark and damp soil—a lovely green shoot that resembled the dawn springing out of the night. How astonishing was that blade! If you took a diamond and raised it a foot or two and then withdrew your hand, the diamond, or the gold would drop upon the ground; and in the most costly things of earth, there was no prospective, no hopefulness. The beautiful blade on the contrary, showed itself out of the dreary breast of lifeless earth; showed itself, some morning of cloud and vapour, after thunder showers, and the angry lightning, and it indicated amid all this uproar and confusion, nothing but peace and promise. When Jacob sent his sons, the Patriarchs, to Egypt for corn, there was not a “blade” to be seen in that whole fruitful land of Canaan. It is but two or hardly three hundred years since the blade of the wheat was seen to rise out of the soil of this American continent. From this region the potato plant was sent to Europe, and within the recent tradition of man, Europe sent hither the corn-seed; it was committed to the virgin tundra, to the soil of the newly discovered hemisphere, and lo! by the blessing of God, it shot forth “the blade.” From the days of Adam, till that happy importation, the Divine hand had been restrained in blessing—no hill, no vale of vast America, had presented to the eyes of wondering man such a miracle as a single blade of wheat. The tithe-payer came from England—he sowed his seed, and it brought forth a hundred fold, and soon filled valley and plain—“for the blessing of God it maketh rich, and he addeth no sorrow with it.”

The *blade* of wheat is unlike the wild flower that blanches unseen—it still asserts to the eyes and understanding of man the duties of life and the perfections and bounties of God—it sprouts in civilized spots, it claims a wrought and well tended soil—industry and the arts are always its handmaids. Wherever that blade lifts its green aspiring shoot, there you may be sure see happy faces, domestic hearths, all the relations of life, all the sweet charities, all the piety and religion of man. What seems so natural to us—so much in the course of things, is in fact most surprising, and under the heavenly blessing, artificial. In the Arctic regions, no blade is born—ocean, which covers the greater part of the earth's surface, yields it not—the bare mountain heights cannot produce it—the arid sands of Arabia are not blessed by it—the swamp and the mineral soil refuse it harbor. It is only where the blessing of God is upon the land; that this