

any chance the direction of the Gulf Stream were to be deflected upon our coasts, instead of away from them, and we were left free from the chilly sway of winter, and had flowers and fruits instead of ice and snow, whether this would make us poets and artists or not, it is hardly worth while to speculate. Be it our consolation to know that if we reap not the advantages, neither do we bear the ills, of a southern sky. If our climate is rigorous and severe, it produces the homelier and hardier virtues. If our people have but half the year to do their work, and if to the other half nature closes her bosom to them, and refuses to bring forth food for man or beast, these conditions create forethought, prudence, care for the future; and our people emerge from their struggle with adverse circumstances with a sense of self-reliance, and an independence of character, which are not so marked where nature lavishes spontaneous gifts, and where man has only to hold out his hand to receive. There is no situation without its compensating advantages, so that, if ours imposes great inconveniences, we have at least what may be called the climatic virtues, those which arise from a successful struggle against difficulties—difficulties not too great to be overcome, but sufficiently great to develop certain valuable qualities, which are found only where struggles exist. It is gratifying to see how well our people have fought their battle.

Already the earliest and most difficult stages in agricultural progress have been passed. Comparative ease and comfort have taken the place of previous privations and toil. Our people find, with this improvement in their circumstances, new wishes and desires springing up. They begin to yearn for the beautiful in nature and art, and it is in stimulating ascent aspirations for further improvement that societies like this find their proper sphere.

It is only within the last day or two—I make the confession with some shame—that I came to know of the existence of this society, which was formed some weeks ago, and has since been pursuing its course of quiet usefulness. I confess I was at first struck with the conjunction of objects indicated by its title. There did not seem to be any visible connection between Poultry and Flowers; and though each of these objects was of consequence by itself, it seemed an odd association of ideas. But on further consideration, I see that the association of Flowers and Birds is not a novelty in the world, and was by no means an original idea with the society.

You will all recollect the beautiful picture, in the Song of Solomon, of the departure of winter; when the Royal Poet, in reference to the hope of a coming spring, a hope which in a month or two hence we may be cherishing here, says, "Lo! the winter is past and the rain (if Solomon had been a Nova Scotian, he would have said not the rain but the snow), is over and gone, the Flowers appear on the earth, and the singing of Birds is come."

But a greater than Solomon uses the same juxtaposition of Birds and Flowers to adorn and illustrate his discourse. In the sermon on the Mount, our Saviour says: "Consider the lilies of the field, how they grow, they toil not, neither do they spin, and yet I say unto you that Solomon, in all his glory, was not arrayed like one of these." This simple flower, spread with lavish hand o'er every field, possesses an artless beauty, whose

excellence no human heart can rival. At the same time and in the same discourse, the Divine teacher illustrates his idea by a reference to birds.

"Behold," says he, "the fowls of the air, for they sow not, neither do they reap, yet your Heavenly Father feedeth them."

The flowers of the field, the birds of the air, are both applied to illustrate the glory of God and the dependence of man.

So, again, the immortal author of *Paradise Lost*, "the sightless Milton," as Wordsworth calls him, that noble poet who was compensated by his Heavenly Father for the physical blindness from which he suffered by the power of mentally seeing visions brighter and more glorious than were ever beheld by mortal eyes—that glorious old poet, in his picture of a coming morn, uses the same conjunction of flowers and birds:

"Sweet is the breath of morn, her rising sweet,
With charm of earliest birds, pleasant the Sun
When first on this delightful land he spreads
His orient beams on herb, tree, fruit, and flower."

And, again, when he wished to express the idea of everything which, in ordinary circumstances, could delight the soul of man, he adds:

"But neither breath of morn when she ascends
With charm of earliest birds, nor rising sun
On this delightful land, nor herb, nor flower,"
could make up for the absence of something else on which his heart was set.

And, again, in the description of the happy event when Eve gave her consent to become of one flesh with our first progenitor (the oldest precedent for a practice so extensively followed ever since) he says:

"Joyous the birds, fresh gales and gentle airs,
Whispered it to the woods, and from their wings
Flung rose, flung odors from the spicy shrub."

All poetry abounds in allusions to flowers. Heber, in reference to the winter passing away, and from the same stand-point as the writer of the Canticles, speaks beautifully of that season as the one

"When Spring unlocks the flowers,
To paint the laughing soil."

Shakespeare, who never fails to catch the spirit of a beautiful idea, and whose poetic soul must have glowed whenever he thought of the lovely image of the lily in the Sermon on the Mount, describes it as—

"Wasteful and ridiculous excess,
To paint the lily o'er."

Or, carrying the idea on a step further.

"To throw a perfume on the violet."

It appears, therefore, that so far from the association of the two branches to which the society devotes itself, being original with our friends, it may be proved, by these lawyer-like citations, that it was done of set purpose, and that the Society is justified by the precedents and doctrines clearly laid down in the books. The love of flowers is one of the surest indications of refinement. Look around among your neighbors, and find me some one who delights in the cultivation and care of flowers, I will undertake to say you will find a person, gentle, humane, refined. If a woman, she will be

"The very mark and model of her time,
The mould in which female face is formed."

I must, however, give one warning to the unmarried ladies who take an interest in this subject. If you are afraid of standing too high in the opinion of the other sex, if you dread the consequences of having to reject

and repel the addresses of endless admirers, don't cultivate flowers, don't show a taste for those scenes.

"Where daisies pied and violets blue
And lady-smocks all silver white
And cuckoo buds of yellow hue
Do paint the meadows with delight."

For, if you do, you must take the consequences which will inevitably result, however distressing it may be, to witness the pangs of your disappointed and broken-hearted admirers.

But I fear you will think it time to have a truce with nonsense—

"Revenons a nos moutons."

I have congratulated the society on its successful debut, but I must not forget there is a word or two which ought to be said of your President, and this not for the information of the society, who know all about him, but for the benefit of persons who are only beginning to take an interest in the subjects to which Mr. Downs's life has been devoted. Of him it may be observed that he has already achieved a more than Provincial reputation. Many years ago when comparatively little interest in subjects of this kind was felt among our people, he established a place at the head of the North West Arm which was one of the attractive objects of Halifax in former times. Guided by an instinctive fondness for animals, he made an admirable collection which he kept up for years. It was, though small in extent and maintained mainly by private means, the show place of Halifax, and would have been a credit to a community much more wealthy and advanced than the Halifax of that day. As a taxidermist, Mr. Downs is celebrated all the world over. At this moment the museums of the King of Italy contain many moose prepared by Mr. Downs and sent there on the order of the late Victor Emmanuel. A Polar Bear is also a contribution from the same quarter. There is not a sovereign in Europe that does not own one or more moose heads prepared in the small and unpretending establishment at the Dutch Village. Mr. Downs brings to the Society the experience and skill of a life-time spent in creating and diffusing a taste for the objects which the society is intended to encourage. The other gentlemen who are associated with him are inspired by similar feelings, and it is not too much to expect that they will be able to effect an improvement in the public taste on which they can look back with satisfaction.

It is but right, after detaining you so long, and, I am afraid, wearying you not a little, to ask Mr. Downs or some other gentleman connected with the society, to give you the benefit of a few practical remarks, after which nothing will remain for me but to declare "the exhibition open."

The following is a list of the awards by which parties requiring fowls or eggs for hatching may learn from whom they may obtain just what they want. Those who obtained prizes got them entirely on the merits of their stock; there could be no partiality, as the rules governing the Exhibition were so strictly carried out that it was next to impossible for the judges to know to whom each individual coop belonged: