

POPULAR SCIENCE.

THE REIGN OF LAW.

BY THE REV. ERASTUS HURLBURT.

LAW is beneficence acting by rule. In the great truths revealed by God's works, there are marks of design and evidences of the reign of law. We look at the wonderful mechanism of the leaves of trees. In no other part of the tree is design so evident as in the leaf. It consists of two distinct layers through which the sap circulates. One of the most beautiful provisions known in nature is, that the foul air breathed forth by animals is purified and rendered salubrious by plants. If it were otherwise the world would become uninhabitable; but, as one writer remarks, every leaf, every blade of grass, nay, the finest of those green silken confervoid threads, which we see so abundantly floating in streams and pools of water, is incessantly occupied during daylight in effecting this most important change of pestilential air into an atmosphere of life. In the greater number of plants these vital cells are mostly confined to the under surfaces of leaves, but in water plants they are mostly on the upper surface. Were it otherwise, they could not perform the functions for which they are destined. Why is all this so? Is there not here seen the evidence of wisdom and design of the highest order?

The hump of the camel, and the callous pads on the legs, as well as the enlargement of its feet, with their convex soles, are all facts of great significance. The humps are supplies of nourishment provided for their long journeys. The abundant supply of fluid laid up in the cells of one of the stomachs is a beautiful provision, fitting the animal to endure a long deprivation of water. Their

convex soles permit them to tread easily on the loose sands of the desert, and the pads on the legs permit them to lie down and repose on the scorching sands of the desert. Such facts as these go to prove the reign of law, and God's wisdom is seen in his works.

Distinguished mathematicians say that the line of swiftest descent is not a straight line, but a particular curve called the cycloid. It is believed that it is by this very swoop that the eagle descends upon its prey. Who taught the birds of the air the line of swiftest descent, the discovery of which was believed to test the highest mathematical skill?

The beaver is amphibious; but is more at home in water than on land. His works are acknowledged to be a marvel of ingenuity and industry. Across the creek or natural lake he throws a dam. These dams are wonderful structures, and are made with great engineering skill. They are frequently seven or eight feet high, measuring from the bottom of the creek or lake; about six or eight feet thick at the base; and, if necessary, as much as three hundred feet long. Who taught the beaver his scientific habits?

Can we not see proofs of a designing mind in the formation of plants and animals?

We may not be satisfied in studying nature until we have passed from nature up to nature's God.

In nature there is a grand unity of principle which pervades the whole. If we take all animals which possess a backbone, whether we examine living or extinct forms, we find they are all constructed on the same