

## AUTUMN.

Once more the beautiful Autumn! For days and weeks, the cricket has chirped at the door-step, and by the road-side, chanting sweetly and plaintively forth the prophetic dreams of silence: the katydids have rasped the night air to a harsher edge, and a deep stillness, felt in the soul rather than apprehended by sense, has calmly settled down upon nature. The sky, the atmosphere, the cool clouds sunning their brows in the day's descending glories, the fruit-laden tree, the maturing corn, the shorn meadows, are all pervaded—bathed and blent—by the very spirit of poetry. Thank God for autumn! Thank God for its deep still joy, for its dear associations, and for the new tension it gives to the heart's poor dangling strings!

The latter harvest comes apace. The fringed broom-corn tables will quickly be set for the harvesters, the burnished hoe will soon reveal the earth's treasured bulbs, the corn will be stacked and husked, the pumpkins will drowse and dream of gold in the sun, and on some still night, while all are sleeping, the frost will come down and softly put out the flaring lights of the autumn flowers. And the smoke, in a dreamy haze, will veil the front of the mountain, and hide the face of the forest, blushing scarlet as it bares its limbs to the dim light, and the hickory-nuts will peep palely out from their hiding places, waiting the loosening fingers of the rain, and troops of pigeons will hunt the stubble by the side of the forest covers and, from the distant hill side—ever and anon—the hunter's rifle will startle into faint resonance the sleeping echoes.

All these sweet sights and sounds will steal into the soul that keeps an open door, and make autumn there, for the soul, that like, and with, nature, has its seasons. The golden corn of years, experience ripens and hardens in the autumn air. The fruits of the soul's culture acquire flavor and mellowness in the autumn's reflective sun. And in the dim and smoky forests that darkle here and there in the spirit's mystic realm, a startling shot that questions the life that nestles in the foliage, and shock the echoes into dreamy replies.

A welcome, then to autumn! Let us imbibe its spirit, and wrap its mantle round us. Let us drink the full cup it raises to our lips. Let us, if we have never done it before, yield our being to our informing breath and moulding hand, for the spirits of grace and of God is in it. Day unto day uttereth speech, and night unto night sheweth knowledge. In every landscape and river and mountain and cloud are the elements of divinity. The fields are the preachers of Providence, and every good and beautiful thing is a minister from Heaven. Revelation itself is but the translation into human language of law, love and beauty expressed in things from the foundation of the world. To the first revelation let no one longer be deaf and blind. So, when the days of autumn shall have passed by, and another season sweeps down from the Throne with its severe ministries, we shall find our hearts in harmony with nature, and prepared to take her hand, and walk gladly and hopefully into a field of new experience.—*Springfield Republican.*

## INDIAN SUMMER OF LIFE.

In the life of the good man there is an Indian summer more beautiful than that of the seasons; richer, sunnier, and more sublime than the most glorious Indian summer which the world knew—it is the Indian summer of the soul. When the glow of youth has departed, when the warmth of middle age is gone, and the buds and blossoms of spring are changing to the sere and yellow leaf, then the mind of the good man, still ripe and vigorous, relaxes its labors, and the memories of a well spent life gush forth from their secret fountains, enriching, rejoicing and fertilizing: then the trustful resignation of the Christian sheds around a sweet and holy warmth, and the soul, assuming a heavenly lustre, is no longer restricted to the narrow confines of business, but soars far beyond the winter of hoary age, and dwells peacefully and happily upon that bright spring and summer which await him within the gates of paradise, evermore. Let us strive for one look trustingly forward to an Indian summer like this.—*Selected.*

## THE TESTIMONY OF TRUTH BY EMINENT MEN.

A CHRISTIAN writer has said: "Drink deep, or taste not," is a direction fully as applicable to religion, if we would find it a source of pleasure, as it is to knowledge. A little religion is, it must be confessed, apt to make men gloomy, as a little knowledge is to render them vain; hence the unjust imputation often brought upon religion by those whose degree of religion is just sufficient, by condemning their course of conduct, to render them uneasy enough merely to impair the sweetness of the pleasures of sin, and not enough to compensate for the relinquishment of them by its own peculiar comforts. Thus these men bring up, as it were, an ill report of that land of promise, which in truth abounds with whatever in our own journey through life can best refresh and strengthen us.

The testimony of God's servants is most abundant and striking, as to the happiness of a life spent in his service; and having once expe-

rienced this blessedness, nothing less can satisfy them. From age to age we can trace the same spirit. Hear the aspirations of the devout St. Bernard:—"Nothing, Lord, that is thine can suffice me without thyself, nor can anything that is mine without myself be pleasing to thee." "I find," writes Baxter, "that thou, and thou alone, art the resting-place of my soul. Upon the holy altar erected by thy Son, and by his hands and his mediation, I humbly devote and offer to thee this heart. It loves to love thee; it seeks, it craves no greater blessedness than perfect, endless, mutual love. It is vowed to thee, even to thee alone, and will never take up with shadows more!"

Let me give you the testimony left us by Coleridge, one of the most thinking men of his day. These are his words in the decline of life:—"I have known what the enjoyments and advantages of this life are, and what the more refined pleasures which learning and intellectual power can bestow; and with all the experience that three-score years can give, I now, on the eve of my departure, declare to you (and earnestly pray that you may hereafter live and act on the conviction,) that health is a great blessing, competence obtained by honourable industry a great blessing; and a great blessing it is to have kind, faithful, and loving friends and relatives; but that the greatest of all blessings, as it is the most ennobling of privileges, is to be indeed a Christian."<sup>1</sup>

Another eminent man, distinguished for his unwearied zeal in behalf of the practice and doctrines of Christianity, Lavater, pastor of the church of St. Peter, at Zurich, in Switzerland, has given us this interesting witness to the satisfaction afforded by the religion of Christ:—"Believe me, I speak it deliberately, and with full conviction; I have enjoyed many of the comforts of life, none of which I wish to esteem lightly: often have I been charmed with the beauties of nature, and refreshed with her bountiful gifts; I have spent many an hour in sweet meditation, and in reading the most valuable productions of the wisest men; I have often been delighted with the conversation of ingenious, sensible, and exalted characters; my eyes have been powerfully attracted by the finest productions of human art, and my ears by enchanting melodies. I have found pleasure when calling into activity the powers of my own mind; when residing in my own native land, or travelling through foreign parts; when surrounded by large and splendid companies; still more, when moving in the small, endearing circle of my own family; yet to speak the truth before God, who is my Judge, I must confess, I know not any joy that is so dear to me, that so fully satisfies the inmost desires of my mind, that so enlivens, refines, and elevates my whole nature, as that which I derive from religion; from faith in God, as one who not only is the parent of men, but has condescended as a brother to clothe himself with our nature. Nothing affords me greater delight than a solid hope that I partake of his favour, and rely on his never-failing support and protection."—*From "Hints for the Earnest Student," by Mrs. W. Fison.*

## THE PHILOSOPHY OF RAIN.

To understand the philosophy of this beautiful and often sublime phenomenon, so often witnessed since the creation of the world, and essential to the very existence of plants and animals, a few facts derived from observation and a long train of experiments must be remembered.

1. Were the atmosphere everywhere, at all times, of an uniform temperature, we should never have rain, or hail, or snow. The water absorbed by it in evaporation from the sea and the earth's surface would descend in an imperceptible vapour, or cease to be absorbed when it was once fully saturated.

2. The absorbing power of the atmosphere, and consequently its capability to retain humidity, is proportionably greater in warm than in cold air.

3. The air near the surface of the earth is warmer than it is in the region of the clouds. The higher we ascend from the earth the colder do we find the atmosphere. Hence the perpetual snow on very high mountains in the hottest climate.

Now, when, from continued evaporation, the air is highly saturated with vapour, though it be invisible and the sky cloudless, if its temperature is suddenly reduced by cold currents descending from above, or rushing from a higher to a lower latitude, its capacity to retain moisture is diminished, clouds are formed, and the result is rain. Air condenses, as it cools, and, like a sponge filled with water and compressed, pours out the water which its diminished capacity cannot hold. How singular, yet how simple, the philosophy of rain! What but an Omniscience could have devised such an admirable arrangement for watering the earth?

## THE ANSWERED PRAYER.

Many years ago, there lived in the north of England a pious lady who had an only son. She endeavoured carefully to train him up in the fear of God, and to sow the seeds of truth in his youthful mind. He was early destined by his father for the military profession, and

<sup>1</sup> Letters to his Godchild.