

eye, awaken admiration and delight.
In the forest around me are

Lithe squirrels darting here and there,
While wild birds fill the echoing air
With songs of liberty.

As I walk through the country the strange variety of flowers and weeds, of many of which I am sorry to say I do not even know the names, amazes me. And this is only one of many successions of plant life on the same spot. During the season there are several such successions, from the early trilliums and May-flowers of the spring to the russet mulleins of late autumn. There seems to be a continual struggle for existence of the varied forms of life around me, each tiny plant having sturdily to elbow its way among a number of eager competitors.

Heretofore my knowledge of nature has been derived chiefly from books, and I am ashamed that it is so meagre and unsatisfactory. It wonderfully takes the conceit out of a man to sit down among such teeming life and find how ignorant of its wonders he is. I think of Tennyson's flower in the crannied wall, of which he says :

"I pluck you out of the crannies ;
If I knew you all in all,
I should know what God is and man
is."

The best of books is the open page of nature. If I sit perfectly still the little squirrels gambol fearlessly about me, and the shy woodpecker takes no heed of me, as with impatient rat-a-tat he raps on the hollow tree as if demanding if his insect prey, on which he purposes to make a meal, is at home. There a bird poises for a moment on a tall spray of goldenrod, swaying with the motion like a skilled acrobat, as he is. Now a strange insect has hopped upon my page, with a sort of hump on his back and no apparent head, but instead a sort of carapace or buckler, held like a Roman soldier's over his shoulder. How I wonder what he is. A magnificent coleopteran—a sort of insect Black Prince—in splendid dark bronze

armour picked out with gleaming gold, hops by. Now an inquisitive hymenopteran, or something of the sort, runs over my hand, feeling all over its surface with his vibrant antennæ. What an extraordinary length of proboscis—if that is the name—this fellow keeps coiled up in his head like a watch-spring. Then a "daddy-long-legs"—I don't know his Latin name—races over the page. Now a "walking-stick" scurries over my sleeve. As he falls upon the ground I can scarce detect his figure, so closely does he resemble a dead twig. Others simulate withered and weather-stained leaves.

Then the varied sounds of nature's choir—a choir invisible for the most part—blend in such subdued harmony. First a soft "to-weet, to-weet," then a hoarse "caw, caw" of a crow, then a low, clear, sweet whistle, then a trill and warble surpassing the vocal gymnastics of a trained cantatrice ; and through all sings on the strident note of the grasshopper—a sort of insect Paganini playing his monotonous tune upon a fiddle of only one string—the self-same song that Sappho sang of two thousand years ago.

Behind and beneath this infinite wealth of life dwells the great Source of all things. In Him all nature lives and moves and has its being. *Behind every secondary cause dwells God, the great First Cause of all, the underived Source of all energy and life, which are but manifestations of His will. "O Lord, how manifold are Thy works ! In wisdom hast Thou made them all ; the earth is full of Thy riches."*

LADY BRASSEY'S DONATION.

It will be remembered that Lady Brassey has more than once laid the readers of this MAGAZINE under great obligation by her generous donation of valuable engravings for use in its pages. Through her distinguished courtesy the Editor has been permitted the use of *all* the engravings—nearly a hundred in number—of her popular "Voyage of the Sunbeam," and of a large number from her splendidly illustrated "Sunshine