

move forward ourselves towards the great crisis of our being, to catch an intelligent glimpse of the grand arena of nature, as exhibited in the creative energy of the terrestrial elements—the suggestive mystery of the quickening seed and the sprouting plant—the resurrection of universal nature from her wintry grave.

“A celebrated sceptical philosopher of the 18th century—the historian Hume—thought to demolish the credibility of the Christian revelation by the concise argument,—‘It is contrary to experience that a miracle should be true; but not contrary to experience that testimony should be false.’ The last part of the proposition, especially in a free country, on the eve of a popular election, is, unhappily, too well founded; but in what book-worm’s dusty cell, tapestried with the cobwebs of age, where the light of real nature never forced its way; in what pedant’s school, where deaf ears listen to dumb lips, and blind followers are led by blind guides,—did he learn that it is contrary to experience that a miracle should be true? Most certainly he never learned it from sower or reaper—from dumb animal or rational man connected with husbandry. Poor Red Jacket—off here on Buffalo Creek—if he could have comprehended the terms of the proposition, would have treated it with scorn! Contrary to experience that phenomena should exist which we cannot trace to causes perceptible to the human sense, or conceivable by human thought! It would be much nearer the truth to say that, within the husbandman’s experience, there are no phenomena which can be rationally traced to anything but the instant energy of creative power.

“Did this philosopher ever contemplate the landscape at the close of the year, when seeds, and grains, and fruits have ripened, and stalks have withered and leaves have fallen—and winter has forced her icy curb even into the roaring jaws of Niagara, and sheeted half a continent in her glittering shroud, and all the teeming vegetation and organized life are locked in cold and marble obstruction; and, after week upon week and month upon month have swept,—with sleet and chilly rain and howling storm,—over the earth, and rivetted their crystal bolts upon the door of Nature’s sepulchre; when the sun at length begins to wheel in higher circles through the sky, and softer winds to breathe over melting snows, did he ever behold the long-hidden earth at length appear, and soon the timid grass peep forth, and anon the autumnal wheat begin to paint the field, and velvet leaflets to burst from purple buds throughout the reviving forest; and then the mellow soil to open its fruitful bosom to every grain and seed dropped from the planter’s hand—buried but to spring up again—clothed with a new mysterious being; and then, as more fervid suns inflame the air, and softer showers distil from the clouds, and gentler dews string their pearls on twig and tendril, did he ever watch the ripening grain and fruit, pendant from stalk, and vine, and tree; the meadow, the field, the pasture, the grove—each after his kind arrayed in myriad-tinted garments, instinct with circulating life; seven millions of contented leaves on a single tree, each of which is a system, whose exquisite complication puts to shame the shrewdest cunning of the human hand; every planted seed and grain, which had been loaned to the earth, compounding its pious usury thirty, sixty, an hundred fold—all harmoniously adapted to the sustenance of living nature—the bread of a hungry world; here a tilled corn-field, whose yellow blades are nodding with the food of man; there an unplanted wilderness—the great Father’s farm—where He ‘who hears the raven’s cry’ has cultivated with His own hand His merciful crop of berries, and nuts, and acorns, and seeds for the humbler families of animated nature;—the solemn elephant, the browsing deer, the wild pigeon—whose fluttering caravan darkens the sky; the merry squirrel, who bounds from branch to branch, in the joy of his little life? Has he seen all this? Does he see it every year, and month, and day? Does he live, and move, and breathe, and think, in this atmosphere of wonder—himself the greatest wonder of all, whose smallest fibre and faintest pulsation is as much a mystery as the blazing glories of Orion’s belt;—and does he still maintain that a miracle is contrary to experience? If he has, and if he does, then let him go, in the name of Heaven, and say that it is contrary to experience that the August Power which turns the clods of the earth into the daily bread of a thousand millions of a thousand million souls, could feed five thousand in the wilderness!

“One more suggestion, my friends, and I relieve your patience. As a work of art, I know few things more pleasing to the eye, or more capable of affording scope and gratification to a taste for the beautiful, than a well-situated, well-cultivated farm. The man of refinement will hang with never-wearied gaze on a landscape by Claude or Salvator. The price of a section of the most fertile land in the West would not purchase a few square feet of the canvas on which these great artists have depicted a rural scene. But Nature has forms and proportions beyond the painter’s skill—her divine pencil touches the landscape with living lights and shadows, never mingled on his pallet. What is there on earth which can more entirely charm the eye or gratify the taste than a noble farm? It stands upon the southern slope, gradually rising, with variegated

ascend, from the plain—sheltered from the north-western winds by woody heights, broken here and there with moss-covered boulders, which impart variety and strength to the outline. The native forest has been cleared from the greater part of the farm, but a suitable portion, carefully tended, remains in wood, for economical purposes, and to give a picturesque effect to the landscape. The eye ranges round three-fourths of the horizon, over a fertile expanse, bright with the cheerful waters of a rippling stream, a generous river, or a gleaming lake; dotted with hamlets, each with its modest spire; and, if the farm lies in the vicinity of the coast, a distant glimpse from the high grounds, of the mysterious, everlasting sea, completes the prospect. It is situated off the high road, but near enough the village to be easily accessible to the church, the school-house, the post office, the railroad, a sociable neighbor, or a travelling friend. It consists in due proportion of pasture and tillage, meadow and woodland, field and garden. A substantial dwelling, with everything for convenience and nothing for ambition—with the fitting appendages of stable, and barn, and corn-barn, and other farm buildings, not forgetting a spring-house with a living fountain of water,—occupies upon a gravelly knoll, a position well-chosen to command the whole estate. A few acres on the front, and on the sides of the dwelling, set apart to gratify the eye with the choice forms of rural beauty, are adorned with a stately avenue, with noble solitary trees, with graceful clumps, shady walks, a velvet lawn, a brook murmuring over a pebbly bed, here and there a grand rock, whose cool shadow at sunset streams across the field; all displaying in the real loveliness of nature, the original of those landscapes of which art in its perfection strives to give us the counterfeit presentment. Animals of select breed, such as Paul Potter, and Morland, and Landseer, and Rosa Bonheur, never painted, roam the pastures, and fill the hurdles and the stalls; the plough walks in rustic majesty across the plain, and opens the genial bosom of the earth to the sun and air; nature’s holy sacrament of seed-time is solemnized beneath the vaulted cathedral sky; silent dews, and gentle showers, and kindly sunshine, shed their sweet influence on the teeming soil; springing verdure clothes the plain; golden wavelets, driven by the west wind, run over the joyous wheat-field; the tall maize flaunts in her crispy leaves and nodding tassels;—while we labor and while we rest, while we wake and while we sleep, God’s chemistry, which we cannot see, goes on beneath the clods; myriads and myriads of vital cells, ferment with elemental life; germ and stalk, and leaf and flower, and silk and tassel, and grain and fruit, grow up from the common earth;—the mowing machine and the reaper—mute rivals of human industry, perform their gladsome task; the well-piled waggon brings home the ripened treasures of the year; the bow of promise fulfilled, spans the foreground of the picture, and the gracious covenant is redeemed, that while the earth remaineth, Summer and Winter, heat and cold, day and night, and seed time and harvest, shall not fail.”

#### IV. Papers on Natural History.

No. 2.

##### THE ANIMALS AND FURS OF CANADA.

(From the Quebec Gazette, January 6.)

On Monday evening last, Lieut. Col. Munro, C. B., commanding the 39th Regiment, delivered a lecture on the animals and furs of Canada, to the men of his regiment, in the regimental reading room, in the citadel. The room was crowded to its full extent, and we record with pleasure a feature of those meetings, which we most ungallantly, but most unwittingly, omitted to mention before, proving how much the interest in these lectures is extending—and that feature is the presence of the ladies connected with the officers, and many of the wives of the non-commissioned officers and men. Col. Munro’s lecture was listened to with marked attention, and while its effect was highly pleasing and entertaining, we easily ascertained, from after conversation with several of his hearers, that much useful knowledge, many unknown facts, and a great amount of solid information had been communicated. He spoke in a tone of high feeling with regard to the over-ruling power of God’s providence, as manifested in all His works; pointed out the workings of that power, displayed in the care with which the meanest and the smallest, as well as the most important and greatest, insect and animal, were provided with all the appliances and instincts calculated to render them thoroughly adapted to each peculiar locality and climate. The Colonel stated that ever since he had entered the army, much of his leisure time had been devoted to the study of natural history, and that, as those studies opened up before him field upon field of knowledge and information, he felt a corresponding degree of interest and excitement, until the study became a source of unalloyed enjoyment and increasing pleasure. To illustrate his subject, Col. Munro had provided a great variety of pre-