

## THE CHILDREN'S HOUR.

BY LONGFELLOW.

Between the dark and daylight  
When the night is beginning to lower,  
Comes a pause in the day's occupations  
That is known as the Children's hour.

I hear in the chamber above me  
The patter of little feet,  
The sound of the door that is opened,  
And voices soft and sweet.

From my study I see in the lamplight,  
Descending the broad half stair,  
Grave Alice and laughing Allegra,  
And Edith with golden hair.

A whisper and then a silence;  
Yet I know by their merry eyes,  
They are plotting and planning together  
To take me by surprise.

A sudden rush from the stairway,  
A sudden raid from the hall!  
By the three doors left unguarded  
They enter my castle wall!

They climb up into my turret,  
Over the arms and back of my chair;  
If I try to escape, they surround me;  
They seem to be everywhere.

They almost devour me with kisses,  
Their arms about me entwine,  
Till I think of the Bishop of Ingén  
In his Mouse-Tower on the Rhine!

Do you think, O blue-eyed banditti,  
Because you have scaled the wall,  
Such an old moustache as I am  
Is not a match for you all?

I have you fast in my fortress,  
And will not you depart,  
But put you down in the dungeons  
In the round tower of my heart.

And there will I keep you forever,  
You, forever and a day,  
Till the walls shall crumble to ruin,  
And moulder in dust away!

## ADJUSTMENTS OF NATURE.

It has been remarked by several authors that everything is made to answer some useful end, and Dr. Paley has not only shown this, but has also shown that everything carries with it *prima facie* evidence of design and of the existence of a designer. He beautifully illustrates this by the comparison drawn between the watch and the stone. The first instance we notice in the adjustments of nature is in the simple substance, Water. What does man more need than water! He also needs it in large quantities, not only to quench his thirst and moisten his parching tongue, but also for the purpose of irrigation and the purification of the vitiated air; and for this great want we find a corresponding supply. Three-fourths of the surface of the earth is covered with water, and this by experience we find to be none too much. The rain formed from the evaporation of this vast expanse of water, costs no baneful influence upon the soil either by its extreme lack of plenty—there is a just proportion. We also need a large amount of water for cooling the warmer and warming the cooler portions of the earth, as well as for aiding in keeping the air in motion. But how does it come that there is just the right quantity? It is an adjustment of nature; a design of the great Creator.

Science has proved that water is composed of two elements, (oxygen and hydrogen,) which, if mixed in the right proportions, fires instantly with a terrific explosion.— Now how comes it that water happens to be just what it is, an extinguisher of fire, instead of a frightful combustible which from its quantity and general diffusion, would envelop the globe in a blaze in the twinkling of an eye. This is certainly an adjustment of nature, not only for the comfort of man, but also for the perpetuation of his species. A handsome adaptation of means to ends is seen in the bones of animals. How nicely are all the bones formed and placed for the motions they are intending to make. The thigh and shoulder points are of the ball and socket order, while at the knee and elbow the hinge joint is placed. Now how would it answer to have the ball and socket joint at the knee where a motion in but one place is needed, and the hinge joint at the thigh where motions in every direction are required? The Atheist will tell you that the bones were made, and the motions an effect of their peculiar construction; but we hold that the motions were adapted to the performance of labor and exercise, and that the motions were the *cause* and not the *effect* of this arrangement of the bones, and that in their arrangements there was a design, viz: the performance of labor. The bones of animals are so well adapted to the uses and habits of the animal, that Cuvier, the great zoologist and naturalist, could, by handing him the bone of an animal, tell its peculiarities, its form and size, whether it lived in the water or out, whether it was a flesh or vegetable consuming animal. Professor Agassiz projected an animal from a couple of bones, answering exactly to an animal found in the rock, which had lain there for perhaps ages before the creation of man.

Another instance in the adjustment of nature is in the amount of fuel everywhere laid up, both upon the surface and in the bowels of the earth. When fuel cannot be obtained upon the surface, we find a full compensation in coal, which has been laid up for ages past, or since that time when the earth was so verdant as to produce material for the inexhaustible coal beds, known by geologists as the carboniferous period. Now if this were one of the spots of chance, how, I ask, does it come that the mass of our timber is the fir, the hickory and the stately oak, instead of the bitter smoking willow, the bramble or the aspen—something that could not serve the uses of men. Or why was not the coal half phosphorus, or some other equally combustible material instead of what it is—a thing suited to the wants of man for which it was designed. Man wants heat for the production of which he must have fuel, and this has been provided for by the great Creator, who has given him the oak, the cedar and coal, instead of the stunted smoking, useless willow, or the flashing phosphorus. A man must be blind to reason, and a child of superstition and bigotry, if he cannot see an evidence of design in the works of nature around him. Have we indeed become so blunt in perception that we must, like the poetic and philosophic Shelley, who, in one of his best poems, exclaims, "There is no God."

We might cite another instance in the adjustments of nature, in the comparative abundance of the metals. We find iron of the most utility, and for this very cause we find it the most abundant.— Gold, did it cover the earth, would neither make the ploughshare nor the spade, not to mention the piston rod for the steam engine, the railroad track or the ponderous cannon. Iron is suitable for all the purposes of machinery, whereas gold is not, not only from its scarcity, but from its nature. If chance had had the adjustments of nature, we very much doubt whether she would not have substituted gold or some other soft material instead of the rigid iron. The Creator has also endowed it with a number of properties together, which no other metal possesses, viz: ductility, malleability, rigidity, tenacity and non-fusibility, to a great degree. Iron is the most useful and therefore the most abundant. Grass is plenty, because it forms the principal food of animals. We find that everything is abundant in proportion as it is needed; we may apparently find some exceptions, but a due knowledge will prove the rule. We might, indeed, follow up the adjustments of nature from one thing to another, *ad infinitum*, and in everything we would see laid upon in characters of light, clear manifestations of a Supreme Being.

## A BEAUTIFUL PICTURE.

A MOTHER teaching her child to pray, is an object at once the most sublime and tender that the imagination can conceive. Elevated above earthly things, she seems like one of those guardian angels, the companions of our earthly pilgrimage, through whose ministrations we are incited to good and restrained from evil. The image of the mother becomes associated in his mind with the invocation she taught him to his "Father who is in heaven." When the seductions of the world assail his youthful mind, that well remembered prayer to his "Father who is in heaven," will strengthen him to resist evil. When in riper years he mingles with mankind, and encounters fraud under the mask of honesty, when he sees confiding goodness betrayed, generosity ridiculed as weakness, unbridled hatred, and the coolness of interested friendship, he may indeed be tempted to despise his fellow men; but he will remember his "Father who is in heaven."

Should he, on the contrary, abandon himself to the world, and allow the seed of self-love to spring up and flourish in his heart, he will, notwithstanding, sometimes hear a warning voice in the depths of his soul, severely tender as those maternal lips which instructed him to his "Father who is in heaven." But when the trials of life are over, and he may be extended on the bed of death, with no other consolation but the peace of an approving conscience, he will recall the scenes of his infancy, the image of his mother, and with tranquil confidence will resign his soul to Him who died that he might live—the Redeemer of the world.—*Selected.*