

THE LEAFLESS WOODS.

BY WILLIAM ROSS WALLACE.

I know how beautiful it is
Where forest leaves are green,
And little silver-throated birds
To music turn the scene.
With poet-winds that in their joy
Make every bough a lyre,
Whose harmony is sweeter far
Than Art's divinest wire.

O, what an ecstasy is his
Who hears that music roll,
If a true love of Nature makes
An altar of the soul,
From which perpetual incense soars
In praise and prayer above,
To Him who sits the Father-Lord
Of Wisdom, Light, and Love!

But, mighty woods! is't only when
Your robes are on that ye
Can to the true, religious heart
Give glorious ministry?
For it must birds forever sing?
And winds weave delicate tunes
Beneath the proud unclouded suns
And azure-tented moons?

No, mighty woods! though bare ye wave,
Though all your crowns are lost,
And round ye, like o'rtortured souls,
And writhing clouds are tost—
Yet still ye have a ministry,
And still ye shake the heart
With feelings beautiful and grand
Beyond the touch of Art.

What lesson's in your leafless boughs!
Though bare, they wrestle still
With all the stern, unpeyting storms.
Nor sink beneath the ill;
So when misfortune strike the soul,
If truth and courage reign,
He nobly takes each iron blow,
And smiles at all the pain.

Yes, winter woods! 'tis yours to roll
Grand music for us still,
If a true love of Nature makes
An altar of the will,
From whence perpetual incense soars
In praise and prayer above,
To Him who sits the Father-Lord
Of Wisdom, Light, and Love!

INSECT LIFE.

A LECTURE DELIVERED BEFORE THE
MECHANICS' INSTITUTES OF PORT HOPE,
NEWCASTLE, WHITBY, AND BELLEVILLE,
BY THE REV. DR. SHORT OF PORT HOPE.

(From the Home Circle.)

The more fully we become acquainted with the works of the Almighty, the more we are struck with the remarkable proofs of benevolent design which meet us at every step. "That which may be of God" outside of the book of Revelation "is manifest in them." "The invisible things of Him from the creation of the world are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made, even His eternal power and Godhead." His power, wisdom, goodness and love, are strikingly and beautifully exhibited in the wondrous pages of the Book of Nature.

The three kingdoms of Nature, as they are technically called, Animal, Vegetable and Mineral, afford us ample fields of research; in which the interesting and the amusing are so blended with the useful and the practical, as to supply us with abundant sources of pleasure and profit.

Natural History and Natural Philosophy should form part of a liberal course of education. The rising generation ought to be so well grounded in the elementary principles of Natural Science, as to make it no less agreeable than beneficial to them to follow up those studies to a fuller extent, as opportunity may be given them in after years.

Young persons who have happily acquired a taste for these most interesting and improving researches, will feel independent of the mischievous tribe of novels, and the silly, and often much worse than silly, tales, with which our modern literature is flooded. Instead of dribbling away their inestimably precious time in what may be appropriately styled the mental dram-drinking, and the soul-enservating dissipation of the common run of light reading, they will have their mind strengthened, as well as informed, and their intellect advanced towards the elevated height of which it is capable, by that kind of reading which "mixes the useful with the sweet." Thus, the every day duties of life will not be interfered with; on the contrary, the gently stimulating and refreshing, but not engrossing, amusement and recreation afforded by such reading, will assist them in discharging every duty of their station effectually, agreeably and happily.

Among the various scenes of animated nature unfolded to us in the study of the Animal Kingdom, none are more curious, or more fraught with interest, than those of *Insect Life*.

Some persons, possibly, may suppose that insects are beings too minute and insignificant to be worthy of much thought. It is evident that those who are of that opinion have never given the subject full consideration. If they think upon all the damage that is done by the weevil for instance; they must admit that the nature and habits of insects are worth studying with a view to prevent their ravages.

Professor Hind says; "It is difficult to arrive at accurate conclusions respecting the annual cost of maintaining destructive insects." France, where great efforts are constantly made to diminish the numbers of these terrible foes to the agriculturist, upwards of £400,000 have been paid out of the government chest in one year to armies of men, women and children, for their labors in extirpating these pests. This large outlay occurred during a season in which destructive insects prevailed to an unusual extent, threatening the country with famine. It has been asserted on very excellent authority, that the damages done by the insects in France alone amount on the average to \$50,000,000. This sum, immense as it appears to be, is actually approached in some years in the United States. The damage done by the wheat midge in 1854, exceeded, undoubtedly, \$18,000,000 throughout the Union. When to the injuries committed by the

pest just named those of the chinch-bug, Hessian fly, wire-worm and the host of insects preying on fruit trees are added, \$30,000,000 would not cover the cost in that year. The quantity of human food annually consumed by insects in France is equal to the entire consumption of the nation for a period of five weeks, and two species alone are computed to consume annually more than would feed three millions of men. These considerations show the importance of insects, and others may be instanced to prove their value.

Let any one who is inclined to undervalue insects reflect on the quantity of silk it takes to cover our modern crinolines, and say whether any idea of insignificance can properly attach to an insect to which so valuable and so costly a production is due.

One of the richest dyes we possess, is furnished by the cochineal insect. And let every lover of sweet things recollect, that the manufacturers of honey are insects. Not only do we owe them this most agreeable and useful product; but bees-wax, so much sought after for many useful purposes, is supplied by their industry.

If the small size of insects be assumed as a reason for counting them less worthy of study, the fallacy of such an idea is evident from the fact, that *minuteness*, no less than *magnitudo*, displays the Almighty working of divine power.

The wondrous vastness of the material universe extends, in each direction of minuteness and of magnitude, far beyond the ken of mortal vision. As the revelations of Astronomy exhibit to us our Planetary Systems, with the Sun and its circling worlds, we learn with surprise, that this is but one of the multitude of Solar Systems, that revolve around some enormous central source of attraction; and the distance of these systems from ours, and from each other, is figured by an array of numbers which the power of calculation may enable us to write down on paper, but the quantity represented by these figures, no human intellect, however gigantic, can comprehend. As the science of Astronomy has advanced, it has enabled us to ascend in the scale of the sublime from magnitude to magnitude, each successive discovery reducing all former standards to comparative minuteness, until the understanding and the imagination are equally confounded by the stupendous spectacle which the material universe presents, and the mind is lost in the immensity which is the theatre of the creative and beneficent power of the Most High.

As the human intellect utterly fails in the endeavor to reach the idea of infinite magnitude, so when it turns in the opposite direction, and tries to imagine the extent of infinite minuteness, it is equally baffled. How small must be the ultimate atoms of which the subtle agent light consists! What mortal power can separate from each other the component particles of electricity? A grain of musk is a small quantity, yet it will scent a large apartment; in every portion of which, the atoms of musk come in actual contact with the nerves of smell. And still, after centuries have elapsed, the grain of