

*ONLY A LEAF.*

I have often heard children say, "Only a leaf," or, "Only a straw;" but do you know what a leaf really does? It pumps water from the ground through the thousand of tiny tubes in the stem of the tree, and sends it into the atmosphere in the form of unseen vapor, and this mingles with the vast quantities of vapor already in the air and forms clouds, which, later, fall as rain.

Of course the same water that is pumped by the leaves would in the course, of time find its way to the sky as vapor without the help of the leaves, but it would require much more time. The water would have to sink into the earth and find its way to brooks and rivers through under ground channels and thence into the sea, and there wait its turn to be evaporated by the heat of the sun.

It has been estimated that every square inch of leaf lifts 0.035 of an ounce of water every twenty-four hours. Now if all the leaves of a large forest tree were spread out upon the ground, they would cover about 5 acres, or 6,272,650 sq. inches. Multiplying this by 0.035 (the quantity pumped by every inch), gives us 2,252 ounces, or about eight barrels. So much for the work of one tree in twenty-four hours. Now take a large forest, and see what a quantity of water can be pumped by its leaves. Surely they are not to be despised. The trees on an acre would give several hundred barrels, and an acre of grass or grain would yield about the same results.

But a leaf or blade of grass also works for the good of man in another direction. They carry great quanti-

ties of electricity from the air to the earth, and from the earth to the air, and a single grass blade carries more electricity during a thunder shower than do the lightning rods on the house. The ends of the leaves and blades are all delicately pointed, you have noticed, and these points are just fitted to receive the electricity from the air and give it off again. Sometimes it happens that there is more electricity in the air at a particular place than the leaves and trunk of the tree can safely carry off, and then the tree gets overloaded and is shattered, or "struck with lightning," as we say.

*CHURCH DOORS SHOULD STILL STAND OPEN*

A SONNET.

Church doors should still stand open, night  
and day,  
Open to all who come for praise or prayer,  
Laden with gift of love or load of care,  
Nimbused with gold or flaked with locks of  
grey,  
Miser or snow-white bride, or pallid clay,  
The blithe, the sad, the uncomely as the  
fair,  
Each on his sacred errand wending there,  
Nor even the mighty and strong be turned  
away.

—*Alfred Austin.*

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