

Canada

VIEWS

OF

CANADIAN SCENERY,

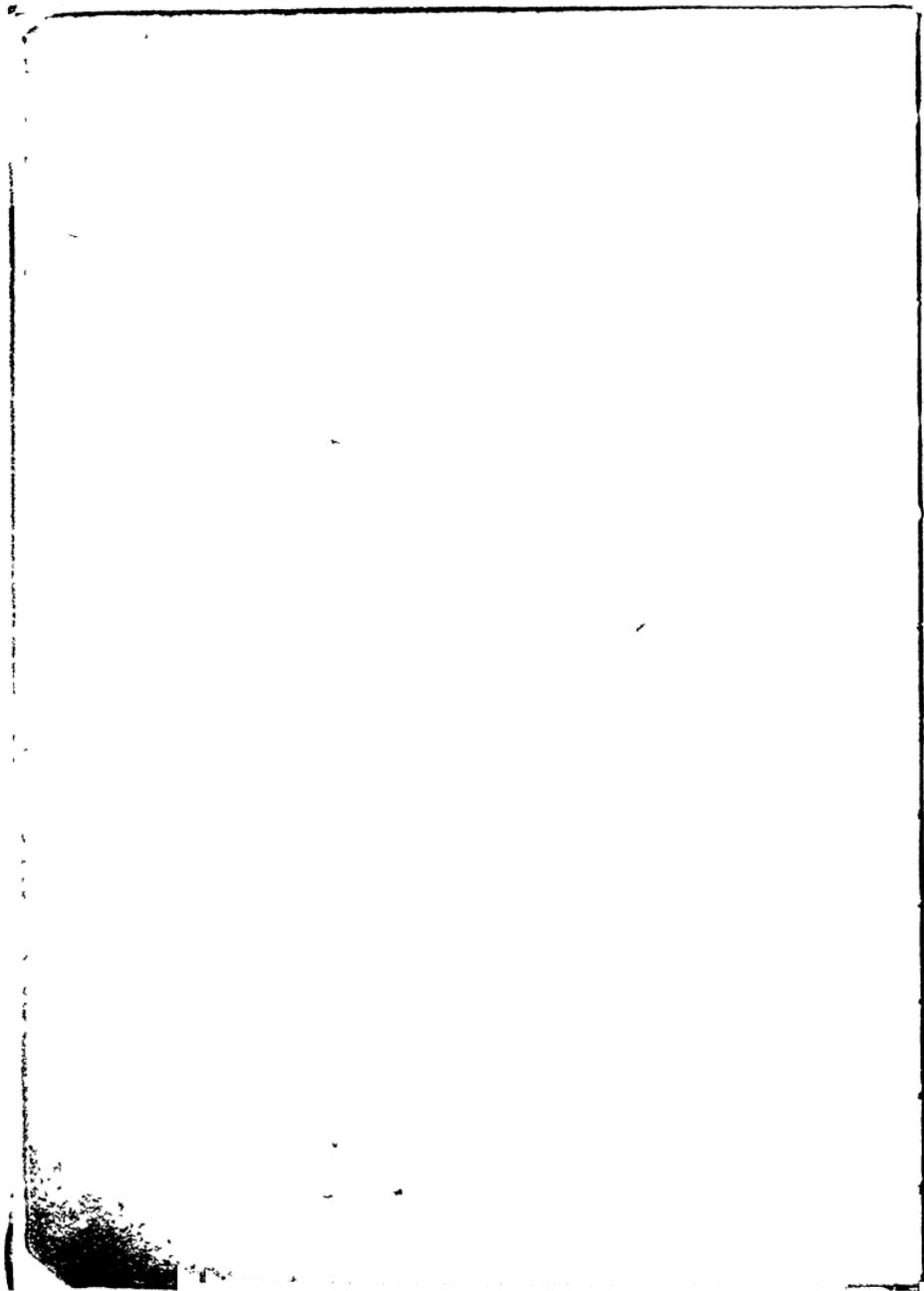
FOR

CANADIAN CHILDREN.

HAMILTON, G. D.

PRINTED FOR THE AUTHOR, AT RUTHVEN'S BOOK AND
JOB OFFICE, KING-STREET.

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MORNING IN SPRING.

“Wake Child of Earth! The blush of dawn is fading on the bosom of the wave—wake Child of Earth—arise go forth and tell me what thou beholdest.”

“I see amid rosy clouds in the east the sun broad and bright, rising above the horizon. The water beneath his rays is trembling in golden light—the spires of the churches gleam as if they were covered with fire. Now he is ascending higher; the purple shade is vanishing from the western brow of the mountain, and in the green fields near thousands and thousands of dew-drops are glittering in his beams.”

“Look around thee, Child of Earth, yet again. What more dost thou behold?”

“Around me I see the gay blossoms of the fruit trees, and the sweet opening flowers of Spring. I see cattle leaving the inclosures where they rested through the night, and scattering over the fields where the green young grass is springing. I see men going forth to labour

bearing tools of different sorts—saws, and planes, and pickaxes, and spades. In a field newly ploughed I behold the husbandman, he is moving at an even pace, flinging as he walks, handfulls of pease on the ground, they are falling into the furrows that the plough has made.”

“Knowest thou why he does this? Why does he thus scatter pease, which are good for food, among the furrows where no hand can gather them?”

“They are not to be gathered—they are thrown into the bosom of the earth and they will be hid there for a season, to grow, and to produce more, many more. From each pea will spring up a stalk, it will grow, and bud, and blossom; from the blossoms will come forth pods, and within the pods young pease will swell and ripen; then he will reap them—he will reap more, many more than he has now sown.”

“Listen, Child of Earth,—the air is in motion around thee,—listen, and tell me what thou hearest.”

“I hear the soft sound of the forest

trees waving in the western breeze. Beside me, amid the flowery branches, I hear the glad voices of birds. I hear the lowing of cattle on the plains, and the bleating of sheep on the mountain. Now on the hard beaten road I hear the rattling of wheels, and now the tread of passing horses, each bearing his rider swiftly along.—They are gone, and I hear more distinctly the murmur of the mountain brook.”

“Let us go and look from its own mossy bank, on the stream whose murmur thou hearest. The hawthorn is budding beside it—the wild cherry is waving her blossom above its rippling current. See how joyously the stream rolls on. Its little waves are tossing their foam in the sunshine, dashing against the smooth stones, or whirling in dimpled eddies round them.”

* “Why are those stones so smooth? They are all smooth, and many of the small ones are round. On the green bank I behold stones, but they are rough—some of them have sharp edges, and

none of them are rounded like these. Why are those stones so smooth?"

"The flow of the water has smoothed them; hour after hour, and year after year, its swift current has past over them, and sometimes, swollen by the melting snows and falling rains, it has descended in a torrent, moved them from their places, and driven one against the other. Thus it has smoothed and rounded them. Let us follow the brook yet farther. Here it is shaded by a lofty elm tree, the banks are nearer to each other and the current is deeper. See how the water is bathing the drooping points of the faded grass, laving the roots of the bushes and sweeping sidelong in its course the tall reeds within its reach. Yonder the wild lilies are already budding beside it; let us take some up and carry home to plant among the spring flowers; but where is the brook gone now? Is it sparkling in the sunshine or rippling in the shade? Is it laving the bending grass and the roots and the reeds within its own pebbly channel?"

“No, the brook is there no longer, it has been turned from its course; it is confined between planks, and long planks are laid beneath it—it is flowing swiftly but quietly over the straight smooth wood.”

“Did the rushing of the brook form for it this new bed? Did it sweep down trees of the forest and lay them thus in its course? Did its little waves raise on each side the boundaries that now confine them?”

“No, the brook did not, for it could not do this; if swollen by melting snows and falling rains, it had torn up trees of the forest and borne them down from the mountain, it would, as the waters subsided, have left them scattered around; it would not have laid them thus, nor could its little waves have raised those planks that now on either side confine it like a wall; how could they have cut the solid log into straight and regular boards? The brook did not make for itself that channel.”

“Thou then that knowest the brook

did not make that channel, canst thou tell who did ?”

“Man has made that channel—the traces of his hand are there ; his saw has divided into planks the solid log—it was he who made the nails and the bars which secure them, and he it must have been who fixed them firmly there. Man has made that channel.”

“And why did man turn from its own pebbly bed the stream that murmured so sweetly there ?”

“He has turned it from its course to make it lighten his own toil. Here it is flowing silently, but not far off I hear the sound of dashing and falling water,—let us go forward and see. It is falling on a large wheel, and the wheel is so formed that the force of the falling water drives it round. I know that wheel is turning a millstone,—they are grinding wheat within those walls, for I see sacks of grain going in, and carts loaded with bags of flour standing without. Man has turned the stream from its course that it might assist him in preparing food for himself and his children.”

“Did man then make the brook which he takes to aid him in his toil? Did he form the waters of the stream whose course he thus controuls?”

“No, man did not make the brook, for he did not make the mountain; the brook comes from within it—I have seen it at its source. I beheld a tiny rill trickling from the rock, and little springs oozing from the ground, they met and mingled their waters—these waters form the brook. Man did not make the brook for he did not make the mountain.”

“Did man then make the sun? Did he form the gay clouds that thou sawest floating round the cradle of the morning? Did he pour on the trembling bosom of the water the flood of golden light?”

“No, man did not make the sun, for he cannot even get near it. The sun is miles upon miles away, far in the east or west, or high above our heads. Man did not form the clouds I saw, for, he cannot drive away one bright cloud, nor, when it is vanished, can he restore it. How could man pour from the sun

the tide of light—he that cannot even approach it? Man did not make the sun. But answer me thou who hast thus questioned me, answer me now—who was it that made the sun, and the brook, and the mountain? Tell me if thou canst, for I would like to hear?”

“Would’st thou know Child of Earth, who it was that made the sun, and the brook, and the mountain? Go seek the records of creation—the page of truth is unfolded before thee—read, or listen child of earth, if thou canst not read, thou canst hear?”

EVENING IN SPRING.

“Look around thee, yet again!—Where now is the sun that rose in beauty in the morning?”

“The sun is still shining bright but he will not set in splendour, he is sinking low in the west, and there a bank of dark heavy clouds is waiting to receive him. Whence come those dark clouds that

thus stretch themselves out in the pathway of the sun?"

"First, ere I answer thee, tell me where now are the myriads of dewdrops which in the morning glittered around thee?"

"They are gone long since, the heat dried them up; an hour after sunrise I stood in the fields where they had glittered and there were none left; the heat of the sun had drank them up, they were all dried away."

"Yet, the heat did not drink up the dewdrops, though it raised them from the grass on which they glittered: they rose in vapour, and in vapour they now float in the regions of the air."

"Why then did I never behold them rising?—I have wandered in the green fields, in the warm summer mornings, and I never saw the dewdrops rising; they all seemed to vanish away."

"That vapour was too fine, too subtle for thine eye to discern; but bethink thee, child of earth, thou hast ere now seen vapour rise. Not many days are

past since thou stoodest with thy father on the banks of a wide and smoothly flowing stream; barks of different kinds were floating on its bosom, and thine eye was watching with delight the approach of one yet distant; no rowers with sweeping oars urged it on, no sails filled by the favouring wind impelled it—the wind blew down the stream, and yet, against stream and wind, that bark came rapidly on—it drew near,—it paused, and when again it departed, thou wert among the throng that trod its lofty deck. Again its course was staid at a spot where billets of wood, cut from the neighbouring forest, were piled on the bank of the stream. The crew threw into the vessel part of that wood, what did they want with it there?”

“They wanted it to make steam—that bark was a steamboat; I saw the engine house. Beneath a huge vessel filled with water, they made strong fires; the heat turned the water into steam; the steam moved the engine and the boat; it was to make steam they took the wood.”

“And when they let the steam escape where did it go?”

“It rose rapidly and with a loud hissing noise—it rose high up, and we saw it like smoke far away in the air.”

“Hast thou not then seen vapour rise? Thus, though more gently, wherever there is heat and moisture does vapour still ascend. From the dank marsh, and from the transparent lake, from the dew-sprinkled fields, and from the calm bosom of the summer sea, vapours are still arising, and those bright drops which at sunrise glittered around thee, may still in viewless vapour be hovering near, or be lodged in the bosom of yon western cloud, or high in air, borne on the wings of the south wind—may be hastening away to descend in rain on mountains far remote from ours. Look up now and tell me what thou seest?”

“The sun set in gloom, but the moon, the fair young moon is high in the heavens; one star, one lonely star is sparkling near her. Now she is sailing on, passing swiftly over the white fleecy clouds that are scattered in her path.”

“Is the moon indeed passing the

clouds, or is it the clouds that are sweeping past the moon?"

"The moon is passing the clouds, I see her moving?"

"Look again; stand between the spreading boughs of the chesnut tree, and look at the clouds and the moon."

"The clouds are moving, they are moving swiftly, for they have already passed by; but the moon is not standing still, she too is moving, for at sunset I saw her on the eastern verge of the sky, and now she is high in the heavens. The moon is beautiful and bright, but why does she change so often, there is nothing of all we see that changes as she does. People speak of the new moon—have we then every month a new one?"

"No, it is still the same moon, and she neither grows nor decreases—we say the new moon—we say too, the moon waxes and wanes; yet the moon is unchanged; but the mild light she sheds over us is not her own, it is the light of the sun, reflected back from her surface."

"How can the light of the sun come

to us from the moon? I see her now, bright above my head—is not that lustre her own?”

“Bethink thee whence came the radiance that gleamed from the spire in the morning—has that spire any light within itself—was that lustre its own?”

“No, it was the radiance of the rising sun that shone from around it.”

“Marvel not then that the moon can thus shine with borrowed light; wait till she is at the full, and then I will tell thee why it is that she seems to wax, and to wane.

EVENING IN AUGUST.

“Return young wanderer, return!—the doors of thy home are unfolded to receive thee; evening is closing in gloom, and there is no moonlight now; why art thou lingering thus, amid the darkness and the dews?”

“My feet are not in the damp grass, and I do not feel the dew; I am stand-

ing in the porch, watching the distant fires gleaming bright amid the shadows of night."

"Knowest thou why those fires gleam? Canst thou tell what feeds the blaze?"

"Yes, I know, for yesterday I was there; there in the new lands where the fires are burning now. Men, with strong handspikes were moving the wood, the trees they had felled and chopped into lengths in winter; they were piling them in different parts of the field, placing one above another, so that the fire might consume them. Yesterday it rained, and the wood was too wet to burn; to-day the sun has dried it, and now the fires are blazing bright—there are more than thirty fires. See where the flames are running up high in the air—they have caught the three old pines that stood near the little hill where the wild gooseberries grew, they are blazing bright and high, but I am not afraid; there is no wind, and even if the wind should rise, there are no woods between us and them. I am watching the gleaming fires, but I am not afraid."

“ And if there were woods between us and them, why shouldst thou fear ?”

“ Then the fire might catch the standing wood, and if the wind blew this way, the fire would come burning on, burning on ; the wind would blow stronger, the flames would roll on, burning up the forest, and if they could not be stopped, they would burn up the house. I was in a house near the bank of the Etchemen* when the fire caught the distant woods. People knew the fire had caught, but they did not know how fiercely it was burning. It was noon, and we were sitting in the cool parlour listening to tales of another land. All at once smoke rolled past the windows, and we heard the shouts of men ; they were calling for axes and water, and sounding the horn, and hallooing for other men to come, and I ran out, across the field, and up a bank, and climbed up a stump and stood on its broad top, and there I saw the fire blazing and rolling on through the forest. Still, as it caught the trees, their green

* Pronounced Eshmaw.

heads shrivelled up, and the flames rose high above and around them, and blazing branches broke off, and fell down, or were borne on by the wind to set fire to other trees. The men threw down the fences, they threw every thing, that was standing between the house and the woods, to the ground; what they could not pull apart, they cut with their axes; and some were carrying up water, and some were on the roof of the house keeping it wet and sweeping off the falling flakes of fire. The wind did not blow strong where I stood, but as the fire came nearer I could hear wind roaring amid the flames, and see the trees bending before it as it swept on. When the fire died away, that wind was gone. I asked why there had been such a wind among the burning trees, and they said the fire had helped to make it, but they did not tell me how. How can fire make wind?"

"Tell me first, what wind is? and then I may tell thee how fire can make it."

"Wind—wind is not like any thing else—I cannot tell what wind is. When

the branches and clinging vines hang drooping in my path, I can push them aside, or raise them up and pass under ; when the winter's snow falls on me, I can shake my cloak and it flies off; but I can do nothing with wind. I see the branches waving as it passes, but I cannot see it; I feel it blowing my straw hat, and driving me on, or pushing me back, but I cannot catch it. I cannot tell what wind is."

"Wind is air—air in rapid motion."

"Then the air is not in motion to-night, for there is no wind. What is it that makes air move?"

"Come in—leave the hall-door unclosed—come where the lamp is shedding its soft light around ; we will light a candle and pass on, we must carry the candle to light us through the long passage. This door is shut—do not shut it close again, leave a little space open, and set the candle close to it."

"There is wind now—a little wind. Is the candle like fire? Can it too make wind?"

“Put the candle on this table—now place where it was, the little hand that raised it.”

“It was not the candle that made the wind come; I feel it now, blowing on my hand; the air that was at rest is in motion; what has made it move?”

“Shut the door, now tell me does the air here feel like that in the porch?”

“No, it is warmer, it is too warm here; they have had a large fire on the hearth and the logs are burning still. Did this fire make the wind? How could it stir the air without?”

“The fire heats the air—the warm air rises, and the cold air rushes in to take its place.”

“Does air rise too? Does it rise and go away like steam?”

“No, not like steam, it rises only as other air flowing in, fills its room. Open wide the door—now the warm air is rising and spreading itself above, and the cold air flowing in below.”

“Then no place is ever left without air.”

“No, over all the wide surface of the globe, there is no space without air; if there were, no creature could enter it and live. Air is above, and around, and within thee; ever changing, ever blending its different parts, ever in motion,—sometimes so softly that thou canst not perceive it; sometimes so gently that it only fans thy cheek; sometimes so rapidly that thou canst not stand before it. Much more wilt thou hereafter learn concerning the air; but now thou knowest what I said I would tell thee—thou knowest how the fire helped to make the wind in the burning forest.”

S U M M E R, N O O N.

“Listen again, Child of Earth! is it the song of the birds, or the murmur of the stream, that thou hearest now?”

“No, these sounds are neither the murmur of the stream, nor the glad voices of birds,—I hear music, the soldier’s

music, but it is sad and mournful. It comes nearer—I see a cloud of dust rising above the hollow; they are coming—they are coming. Let us go to the high bank where the elm tree hangs over the road, and see them pass again. What is that!—what is that! all covered with black that they are carrying? The cap and the sword of a horseman are lying above the black cover, and a horse without a rider is following close behind!”

“The soldier who used to ride that horse, will never, never mount him again! He is dead!—he is lying stiff and cold, in a narrow coffin, beneath that black pall; they are carrying him away to put him into his grave. The cap, and sword, and the horse without a rider, shew that one of the troop is gone—that he who was wont to use these, will need them now no more.”

“Is he dead!—Why did he die? There has been no war,—why did that soldier die? I saw that dark dappled horse, I remember that I saw him. I remember how proudly he held his head,

and how the horseman looked that sate upon him. A breeze waved the branches of the elm tree and the soldier looked up as he drew near; his eye was bright and his lip was red and smiling. I know that soldiers are sometimes killed in war, but there has been no battle here,—why then did that horseman die?”

“Child of the dust! do soldiers die only in battle? Seest thou the summit of yon mountain? Five times since thy young eyes first opened to the light, have the snows of winter whitened it, and six times has the warm breath of spring dissolved those snows, and sent them in streams to the plain. Look now at that passing troop—when a hundred winters more shall have shed their snows on the mountain, not one of that troop will remain—not a man of the band be left. The mountain will stand in its place, and the streams continue to flow down its sides; but, though there should be no war, one by one, these men will die, and be laid in the dark grave,—soldiers are men, and every man is mortal,—when we look at

him, even in the hour of his birth, we know that the day of his death will surely come."

"Why, must man die!—he, the last and the best of all the works of God? Why must man die,—he, to whom the garden of Eden was given?"

"Ere long thou wilt learn why man must die—why the garden of Eden is his no longer; but turn thee now from the road and tell me what gentle sound that is among the blossoms around the arbour."

"It is the murmur of bees, they are humming about among the flowers, hovering over the half-blown roses, and the tall larkspurs, and the sweet smelling mignonnette."

"Yet we have no bee-hives near; what are those bees seeking for? they must have come from far."

"They have come to get wax for their cells, and to suck the sweet dew out of the tubes of flowers. I see some of them with the yellow wax on their little limbs, and some half hid in the crimson bells of

the balsam, and some searching with their tiny trunks the white blossoms of the jessamine, they are wandering from flower to flower, seeking for wax and honey."

"Look now towards the line fence, where the young Ash tree stands, and tell me what thou seest?"

"I see the cattle and horses coming down the lane from the pasture, now the last of them are come out of the little grove."

"Why, in the heat of the day, do they come so far from the grove where they love to shelter from the noontide sun?"

"They come to drink; the pools where they used to quench their thirst, are dried up or muddy, and they come to drink at the trough beside the spring."

"And why has the dark chesnut Foal left his companions? what seeks he at this end of the field? why does he lean over the fence as if he wished to cross it?"

"They took his mother to the village this morning, and they would not let him

go with her,—he is watching, he is listening for his mother,—see how he is listening! now he hears her neigh, for he himself is neighing. I hear her—I hear her—she is neighing, and he is answering her,—now I hear the sound of the wheels, the cart is coming nearer and nearer. How glad the colt is! he was looking and listening for his mother.”

“The bees come to seek among the flowers for wax and honey—the cattle have come to quench their thirst at the clear water of the spring; the foal came to look and to listen for his mother—but the brook—the mountain brook, why does it descend to the plain? It takes no part of the grass or the reeds that grow on its banks, it seeks not the nectar of the flowers—there is nothing that it loves in the green fields through which it flows,—why then do the waters of the brook leave their own cool cells in the mountain, to wander away on the plain?”

“I know not why the cells of the mountain rills overflow—but the brook

descends because it must. The mountain slopes down to the plain—the waters of the brook cannot stay there,—they flow down because the mountain is higher than the plain and there is nothing to hold them back.”

“The mountain is higher than the plain, yet there are stones and branches lying on the slope. Go up its side to where the young hickory is growing—raise on the turf a little mound of earth; that little mound will remain there till some one remove it,—why then must the brook flow down?”

“Water is not like earth; I can heap up earth with my spade, but who is it that can heap up water. It cannot stay still—it always runs away unless there be something to hold it back. Water is not like earth it can never be at rest.”

“No, it can never be at rest, for it was not made to rest; it never rests except when the cold of winter, freezing the falling rain, sends it down in snow to spread over the earth its light and fleece—like covering, and the surface of the

streams and lakes hardening into Ice—preserves the water beneath from being chilled down to the bottom. Water was not made to rest; the mighty ocean ebbs and flows,—sometimes it rolls its waves far up on the shore, and then anon it withdraws them. Thousands of rivers pour into it their streams, yet it overflows not; from its bosom rise vapours, which float away in clouds; to swell with showers the rills and the rivers. Thus still while the earth rolls on in its orbit, must water continue to fall, and flow, and rise again—but canst thou tell what would arrive, if vapour should cease to rise.”

“Then there would be no rain. The clouds bring the rain. I remember when there had been no rain for a week, the earth in the wheat-field looked thirsty and parched, the pasture had lost its bright green, and the leaves on the cucumber-vines were pale and drooping. The rain came,—there had been clouds round the sun the evening before, and in the morning there was no dew on the

grass ; at noon the clouds gathered ; there was thunder and lightning and heavy rain—and then fell gentle showers ; all night that gentle rain fell, and in the morning every thing looked green, and glad, and beautiful. If there were no clouds, there could be no rain, and every plant and flower, every thing that grows, would droop and wither away for lack of moisture, and the insects would perish with them, and men, and beasts, and birds would die for want of food,—every thing on earth would perish if vapour should cease to rise.”

“Come now let us leave the bees and the flowers, and go to the garden on the west. What is that just coming through the ground?”

“It is a bean, one of the beans which were planted four days since, that they might bear green pods in the autumn ; I can see the tips of its first pale leaves peeping through the brown earth.”

“Move then the earth in the second row—what seest thou now ?

“Here is a bean that has been planted

with the speck uppermost, the leaves are not yet formed, the little sprouting root has curled over the swelling side of the bean to get down into the earth."

"And if instead of thus curling over to get into the earth, the bean should have sent the root straight up—could it grow?"

"No, the sprout would wither in the sun, it must go down into the earth, and the leaves must come up to the air. All plants try to send their roots into the ground. I saw in the field some scattered pease that had not been well covered, curling their little white roots over, to try to get into the earth."

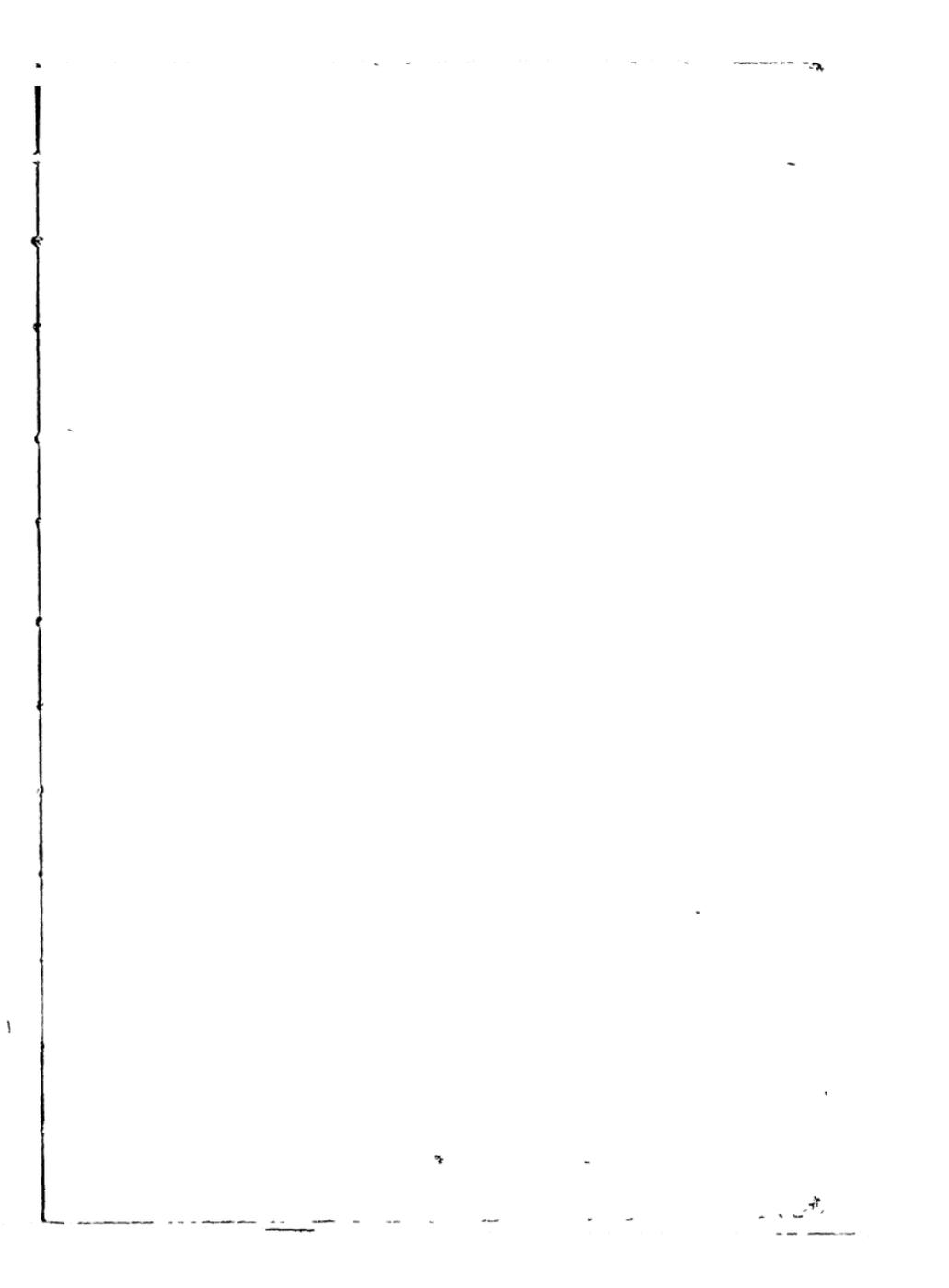
"Yet the bean does not know that the root would wither in the air."

"No, the bean has no mind, it knows nothing, but it has been made to grow thus."

"Yes, it was made thus to grow, and it was made to grow that it might furnish food for living creatures; nothing grows in vain, there is no plant that springs, that does not supply with food some

beast or bird or insect. Herbs and plants were made to furnish food for animals, and they grow according to their kind, and bring forth fruit in their season. Water was made that it might spread moisture over, and fertilize the earth; for this purpose it rises, and falls, and flows; every thing in creation has its purpose for which it was made, its part which it must perform; and Man, the last and the best of all the works of God, had he no part assigned him? Was he made in vain? Man had his part assigned him, the path prescribed in which he was to move. Man was formed to perceive and to enjoy all that is bright and beautiful, all that is sweet and lovely in creation, and to him alone, of all that breathe on earth, was given a soul to to know and to rejoice in his creator—but from him also was required obedience to the will of the Almighty—an obedience as perfect as that of the moon in her course—of the earth in her orbit—of the plant, which still pointing its roots to the centre, draws nourishment from

her bosom—of the air, which, formed to swathe the earth like a garment, keeps for ever flowing over and around it, fold above fold—of the vapour, which, even if imprisoned for a season, as soon as it can escape, bursts forth and soars away. A path was prescribed for man, but he was not, like the insensible atoms of creation, compelled blindly to move in it. To him the will of the Almighty was made known, and he was required to subject his own will to it. He had understanding to discern the good and the evil—LIFE and DEATH were placed before him. Turn again, Child of Adam, to the records of the past,—thou wilt learn what part he chose.”



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