

## THE BEAUTIES OF NATURE.

BY A. L. VAN OSDEL.

Beauty of every kind is formed to captivate, and there is this peculiar advantage in contemplating the beauties of vegetable nature, that we may permit our hearts to be ensnared by them without apprehension of a dangerous or dishonorable servitude. A taste for the beauties of nature is one of the best means of perpetuating innocence and purity of character. It diverts the attention from the turbulent scenes of fashion and folly, and superinduces a placid tranquillity of the mind highly favorable to the gentle virtues, and to the permanency of our most refined enjoyments. Rural scenes of almost every kind are delightful to the mind of man.

The verdant plain, the flowery mead, the meandering stream and the warbling of birds, are all capable of exciting emotions gently agreeable.

Our misfortune is that the greater portion of mankind are hurried on in the career of life with too great rapidity to give proper attention to the works of vegetable nature surrounding them. Let them that prefer it live in the city and mingle in the busy throng, bustling their way through the crowded thoroughfares, even though fortune attends them and they are permitted to be leaders in the fashionable circle. Yet, while I am permitted to penetrate through the maze of the woodland and can saunter over the farm (even though we have our misfortunes and occasionally suffer pecuniary loss, caused by the disaster of floods and ravages of insects), I will not repine that it is not my lot to spend my leisure hours in the picture galleries of a palace.

It is obvious on tuition that nature intended to please the eyes of man in her vegetable productions.

She decorates the flowers that spring up beneath our feet in all the perfection of external beauty. She has clothed the garden with a constant succession of various hues.

From the snowdrop to the moss rose the flower garden displays an infinite variety of shapes and colors. The beauty of color, though justly esteemed subordinate to that of shape, is found to delight the eyes of man more immediately and more universally, but when color and shape are united in perfection, he who can view them with insensibility must resign all pretensions to delicacy of perception. Such a union has been usually effected by nature in the formation of a flower; in fact there is not another single object in all the vegetable world in which so many agreeable qualities are combined at once; freshness, fragrance, color and shape. In almost every description of the seats of the blessed, both ancient and modern, the idea of a garden seem to have predominated.

The word paradise itself is synonymous with garden. The fields of Elysium, that sweet region of poesy, are adorned with all that the imagination can conceive to be so delightful. Some of the most pleasing passages of Milton's Paradise are those in which he represents the happy pair engaged in cultivating their blissful abode.

The poets have given us vivid descriptions of flowers and rural scenery, and though they are thought by some to have exceeded reality, they have scarcely equaled it.

Enter a modern shrubbery, formed of a selection of the most agreeable flower, ing shrubs, composed of an intermixture of the lilac, the laburnum, the jasmine, the magnolia, beside others of equal beauty, too numerous to mention, and consider whether there is anything described in the Garden of Alcinoüs, in the Fields of Elysium or in Milton's Paradise to be compared with it. Nature is no less remarkable for the accuracy and beauty of her works than for variety and profusion.

Defects are always discovered in the works of art when they are examined through a microscope; but the examination of a flower is like taking off a veil from the face of beauty.

The statement made in the inspired works of God, "that Solomon in all his glory was not arrayed like one of these," may seem to the ignorant a forced expression, but it is, in fact, one beautifully true. Take Solomon's most admired purple, or take the finest fabric manufactured by the utmost ingenuity of modern skill, and viewed through a microscope, it becomes hideous ropes and rags, while the "lily of the field," viewed through the same instrument, becomes infinitely more exquisite in its finish and beauty.

Flowers exhibit many powers and properties which the science of man has never been able to explain.

Some will instantly close up upon the slightest touch. Some will flutter, as if in alarm, upon sudden exposure to light, and some seem possessed of limited powers of locomotion. Pea blossoms always turn their backs to the wind; the heliotrope always faces the sun; the tulip opens its petals in pleasant weather and closes them during rain and darkness, and the pond-lily closes its pure white leaves at night, as if lies on its watery bed, but unfolds them again in the morning. Some open and shut at certain hours, and that so regularly as to indicate the time of day, like the sindrimal, a native plant of Hindoostan,

which opens at 4 o'clock in the evening and closes at 4 in the morning. Who can explain the phenomena of flowers? Who but must see that the hand and counsel of infinite wisdom are concerned in the production of these vegetable wonders?

The taste of the florist has been ridiculed as trifling, yet surely without reason, for who, upon this mundane sphere, is too wise to receive instruction from the works of nature?

Charney, the highly-gifted philosopher and statesman, while in prison by the orders of Napoleon Bonaparte, was converted from atheism into a belief in a Supreme Being by a flower. When he went into prison he did not believe there was a God. One day, as he was walking in the inclosed court or yard adjoining his cell, he discovered a tiny plant pushing its way up through a crevice in the stone floor. How it came there he could not tell. Perhaps the seed was blown over the wall by the wind. Shut in by the prison walls, away from all his friends, and not permitted to interest himself with either reading or writing, he was glad to have this little living thing to watch over and love.

With a microscope he examined the different changes in the formation of the plant. He soon saw some buds. He watched them as they grew larger and larger, and when the flowers at length came out he was filled with joy. They were exquisite in finish and beauty; had three colors in them, white, purple and rose color; and there was a delicate silvery fringe all around the edge. This serrated border in the petal of this flower displayed an accuracy of delineation which no pencil could rival; its fragrance, too, was delicious. He examined this flower more than any he had ever examined before, and the plant was something more than a mere pleasure to the prisoner. It taught him some things he had never learned before though he was a wise man. Among his scribbling on the prison wall he had written "All things come by chance." But as he watched the flower and contemplated what wisdom, what power and what benevolence had been exercised in arranging the chemical constitution and agencies of the plant, he felt convinced that it could not be the work of chance, and his faith in a world of chance being shaken, he added to the above described sentence the word "perhaps." But in time as he watched the varying changes in his flower, its phenomena, its stems and pistils, how one contained the germ of the seed, and the other the element of fertilization, so formed as to shed that element thereon and perfect the seed, which are the appointed means to insure the reproduction of the species when the plant dies. All this convinced him that there was a Deity, and he said his little plant taught him more than he had learned from the wise men of the earth. Hence, aside from the pleasure derived from the sight and fragrance of flowers, this illustration proves that a lesson can be taught by a single plant to the wisest men of the earth.

There is paradise in the works of nature, when we sit and contemplate the surrounding scenes and think, while this planet is cycling on according to the fixed laws of gravitation, endless forms most beautiful and most wonderful have been and are being evolved.

Nothing in form, function or constitution is defective in the floral creation, nothing left to chance or accident.

Fruitful lives, most flower in labor, And the years, are like the bees, Busy in the world of blossoms, Building up their victories.

### CHAMPION PEDESTRIANISM—THE RECORD.

The following will show the grand total scores made by the winners of the various six-day pedestrian contests that have taken place since 1878:

- O'Leary, Astley belt, London, March, 1878, 520½ miles.
- Rowell, Astley belt, New York, March, 1879, 500 miles.
- Weston, Astley belt, London, June, 1879, 550 miles.
- Corkey, first race for the championship of England, 1878, 521½ miles.
- Brown, second race for the championship of England, 1879, 542 miles.
- Brown, third race for the championship of England, 1880, 553 miles.
- Hart, Rose belt, New York, September, 1879, 540 miles.
- Murphy, O'Leary belt, New York, October, 1879, 505½ miles.
- Hart, O'Leary belt, New York, April, 1880, 565 miles.
- Rowell, Astley belt, London, November, 1880, 566 miles.
- Panchot, O'Leary belt, New York, March, 1881, 541½ miles.
- Hughes, O'Leary belt, New York, January, 1881, 568½ miles.
- Fitzgerald, Ennis race, New York, December, 1881, 582 miles.
- Hazael, contest at Madison Square Garden, New York, March, 1882, 600 miles.

A MARYLAND MAN who wanted to do something in memory of his wife has erected a church spire and put four big bells in it. The people in that locality will keep that woman's memory green for years to come.

## SET A THIEF TO CATCH A THIEF.

That the police in Louis Philippe's time had need of honest, or even half-honest, men is proved by one of M. Claude's anecdotes. It still retains the marks of Vidocq's influence, and his moustons lay loose on the scent of thieves were hardly better than the same they tracked. M. Allard was the first to do justice to the odious prejudice that in order to be well acquainted with the ways and doings of rascals one must be a bit of a scamp one's self. He rightly believed that to impress the enemies of society with respect and apprehension it was necessary to oppose to their vices an absolute example of honesty, and to face their shameless profligacy with an irreproachable line of conduct. Before Allard's time there were certain indications who received with one hand their share of stolen booty, and with the other their informer's pay. It was not rare to see an indicator breakfast on the proceeds of a theft, and sup with the money paid for its discovery. As an instance of the style in which things were done: After a considerable theft committed in the residence of a distinguished personage, all the police agents de surete were set to work to arrest the thief. He was soon taken, and at once conducted to the house he had robbed, in order to give an explanation of the way in which he had operated. Two days after the confrontation the master of the house perceived that an emerald set round with diamonds, worth 10,000 francs, had disappeared from his bedroom. The fact was communicated to one of the heads of the police de surete, who suspected that the author of the theft could be no other than one of his own agents. His object, therefore, was to discover the perpetrator of the second robbery. New Year's day was close at hand. The chief of the spy brigade assembled his men, and addressed them in a language which, if not classical, was to the purpose. "You know, my lads, we shall soon have to go and wish M. le Prefect a happy New Year. I expect you to clean yourselves up for that day, and to put on your smartest bibs and tuckers. If any of your jewelry is up the spout, or your best portable property in your uncle's keeping, you will get it away for the ceremony. I don't want you to come in a shabby turnout, as if you were only a set of mangy canaille. 'Tis all very well to go about town in deshabille, but our superior ought to see what steady and respectable coves we are. You understand me, I take the liberty of presuming. If any of you want money to get your Sunday things out of pawn, you have only to say so, and I will advance it. Allez: Be off with you; make yourselves scarce." On New Year's morning the agents, fresh rigged from top to toe, awaited their leader at the Hotel de la Prefecture. The first thing which caught the eye of that sharp-sighted genius was the stolen emerald sparkling on the suspected agent's shirt-front. "You are an ass and a booby, monsieur," he whispered, at the same time taking forcible possession of the jewel. "There are fire-eaters at the Bagne who are innocent compared with you. But I have pity on your family. Only let this teach you a lesson," and, sticking the emerald in his own cravat with a dignity worthy of Robert Macaire, he wore it in the Prefect's presence, omitting, in the interest of his agent's honor, to restore it to its rightful owner.—*London Society.*

## HEAD SIZE VS. BRAIN POWER.

Among the recently-published statistics of head measurement, as inferred from the size of hats, are the following: Lord Chelmsford, 6½ full, Dean Stanley 6½, Lord Beaconsfield 7, the Prince of Wales 7 full, Charles Dickens 7½, Lord Selborne 7½, John Bright 7½, Earl Russell 7½, Lord Macaulay 7½, Mr. Gladstone 7½, Archbishop of York, 8 full.

These measurements are reproduced from statistics by Mr. F. F. Tucker, and the contemporary in whose columns they are reproduced is responsible for the remark: "Whatever may be the case with regard to brains, it would scarcely seem from these figures that hats are any true criterion of brain power." It would be strange, indeed, if any moderately intelligent person supposed the hat, or even the head, could secure the measure of brain power. The late Dr. Pritchard finally disposed of the notion that cranial measurements could be accepted as brain measurements. Since his day the student of cerebral development has ceased to rely on what used to be called "phrenology." The chief point of interest as yet elicited from the direct investigation of brain measurements would seem to be that the cerebral organs commonly found in the class of brain workers show evidence of being locally and specially developed, and probably, as a physical consequence, are irregular and for the most part unsymmetrical.

Hereafter, probably, light may be thrown on the subject of special or regional developments, both in regard to their personal growth and transmission by heredity. For the present, however, we can only say that neither the hat nor the head furnishes trustworthy indications of mental power and capacity; and that the only feature of interest as yet noted is the curious fact of unequal development and consequent want of symmetry.—*The Lancet.*

## BIRTH OF THE MOON.

At present, no doubt, the effect of the tides in changing the length of the day is very small, writes Prof. Ball in *Nature*. A day now is not apparently longer than a day a hundred years ago. Even in a thousand years the change in the length of the day is only the fraction of a second. But the importance of the change arises from the fact that the change, slow though it is, lies always in one direction. The day is continually increasing. In millions of years the accumulated effect becomes not only appreciable but even of startling magnitude. The change in the length of the day must involve a corresponding change in the motion of the moon. This is by no means obvious. It depends upon an elaborate mathematical theorem. I cannot attempt to prove this for you, but think I can state the result so that it can be understood without the proof. If the moon acts on the earth and retards the rotation of the earth, so, conversely, does the earth react upon the moon. The earth is tormented by the moon, so it strives to drive away its persecutor. At present the moon revolves around the earth at a distance of about 240,000 miles. The reaction of the earth tends to increase that distance and to force the moon to revolve in an orbit which is continually getting larger and larger. Here, then, we have two remarkable consequences of the tides which are inseparably connected. Remember, also, that we are not enunciating any mere speculative doctrine.

These results are the inevitable consequences of the tide. If the earth had no seas or oceans, no lakes or rivers, if it were an absolute rigid solid throughout its entire mass then these changes would not take place. The length of the day would never alter, and the distance of the moon would only fluctuate between narrow limits. As thousands of years roll on, the length of the day increases, second by second, and the distance of the moon increases, mile by mile. These changes are never reversed. It is the old story of the perpetual dropping. As the perpetual dropping wears away the stone so the perpetual action of the tides has sculptured out the earth to the moon, and still the action of the tides continues. To-day is longer than yesterday; yesterday was longer than the day before. A million years ago the day probably contained some minutes less than our present day of twenty-four hours. Our prospect does not halt here. We at once project our view back to an incredibly remote epoch, which was a crisis in the history of our system. Let me say at once that there is great uncertainty about the date of that crisis. It must have been about 50,000,000 years ago. It may have been very much earlier. This crisis was the interesting occasion when the moon was born. I wish I could chronicle the event with perfect accuracy, but I cannot be sure of anything except that it was more than 48,000,000.

## EDWARD EVERETT.

The late Dr. Chapin was once asked what he lectured for. "Fame," he replied, "\$50 and my expenses." Those were in the days when lectures were becoming popular. Since then Mr. Beecher and Mr. Gough have been paid from \$200 to \$500 for a single lecture. A correspondent of the *Cincinnati Gazette*, gossiping about the pecuniary success of Edward Everett's lectures, says: Everett was hardly a lecturer in the ordinary sense of the term, and yet his address on the character of Washington delivered in behalf of the Mount Vernon Association was of this nature.

The amount cleared by the deliveries of this address averaged \$400 for each occasion, and it was repeated one hundred and thirty times. In fact, Everett's oratory has done more for charity than that of any other speaker on record.

Including the Mount Vernon effort, the aggregate is nearly \$100,000. I may add, as a special feature, that his address on the early days of Franklin, which was repeated five times, yielded \$4,000 for charitable objects.

Another address which was repeated fifteen times brought \$13,500 for similar purposes. The eulogy on Thomas Dowse, delivered twice in behalf of two institutions, brought \$1,500.

Everett was the most accomplished man of his age, being at home in statesmanship, literature, oratory and the highest walks of learning.

His versatility was such that it deserved the expression which Johnson applied to Goldsmith, that there was nothing in literature that he did not touch, and nothing that he touched that he did not adorn.

Everett's memory was something really wonderful. As a preacher he frequently memorized the hymns to be used of a Sabbath, because it aided in reading them to the congregation.

He committed to memory almost everything that came under his attention for many years; in other words, what entered the eye was fixed on the brain.

## HANDLING A TENNESSEE CROWD.

A Michigan man who has a patent wind-mill went down to Tennessee last fall to see what he could do among the farmers of that State. Reaching a town in the central part of that State, he went to a dealer in agricultural implements and stated his desire to erect his machine and call attention to it.

"Well, it can be done, I guess," was the reply.

"But how had I best proceed?"

"Well, you kin put her up over on the hill thar. I don't know who owns the ground, but if you treat the crowd I guess no one will object."

"Very well."

"Next Tuesday is market-day, and there'll be heaps of folks in town. You want to be around early and treat the crowd."

"Yes."

"Set the old thing going and ask the boys over to drink something."

"Just so."

"You want to stand on a bar'l and make some explanation, of course, for it will be new to most of 'em. But don't talk too long. Make it about ten minutes and then treat the crowd."

"Yes."

"If you have to talk any more, tell 'em there's another drink ahead."

"I see."

"If the old man Jones comes in with his boys there'll be a row in the crowd. They shoot on sight. Keep your eyes peeled, and if you see any signs of a row ask the whole crowd out to drink."

"Yes, but—"

"Look out for dog fights. If one takes place you can't hold the boys a minute. Keep your eye on the canines. If you see a yaller purp begin to bristle up, ask the crowd to step over and moisten."

"Yes, but by that time the whole crowd will be drunk," protested the agent.

"Sartin it will, and that's what you want, of course. That will give you a chance to skip out and take your life along with you, and if you make a stop anywhere within 100 miles I'll send the wind-mill by freight—provided there's anything left to send! Nothing like knowing how to handle a Tennessee crowd, my friend. Did you ask me out to take suthin'?"—*Free Press.*

## AMERICA'S FIRST IMPORTATIONS OF LIVE-STOCK.

The following account of the first importations of live-stock into the United States is taken from an old copy of the *Irish Farmers' Gazette*:

"In 1610 four cows and a bull were, after a long and dangerous passage by sailing vessel, landed in Virginia from Ireland. These were the first domestic cattle seen in America. In 1625 eighteen ewes and two rams were introduced as a novelty into New York by the Dutch West India Company. The first horses landed in any part of North America were carried over to Florida by Cabeza de Vaca in 1527; they all perished. The wild horses found on the plains of Texas and the Western prairie are probably descendants of the Spanish horses abandoned by De Soto. In 1625 part of the trade of the Dutch West India Company was the carrying of horses from Flanders to New York, and that year six mares and a horse were safely transported from France to America. The London Company were the first exporters of swine from Britain to America; and in the year 1621 they carried on their vessels no less than eighty-four, which were all, on landing, allowed to roam at large, and feed and fatten on the mast, which was very abundant in the woods. They increased so fast that in 1627 the colony was in danger of being overrun with them; but the Indians acquiring a taste for fresh pork, and the novelty of hunting hogs, that calamity was averted. So important was it considered at that time that the cattle, horses and sheep introduced into the infant colony should be allowed to increase, that the Governor issued an order prohibiting the killing of domestic animals of any kind, on pain of death to the principal, and to the aider, abettor or accessory. In 1630 horned cattle, horses and sheep had increased to 30,000. In 1879 there were over 40,000,000 sheep, 30,000,000 cattle, of which over 12,000,000 were milch cows, 15,000,000 horses, 2,000,000 mules and 30,000,000 swine in the United States."

MAN'S A FOOL. It is settled as a rule, Man's a fool. When it's cold he wants it hot, When it's hot he wants it cold, Ever grumbling at his lot, Man's a fool. Ne'er content with what he's got, Always wishing what he's not, You may take it as a rule, Man's a fool.

## TOPNOODY SQUELCHED.

Mr. Topnoody was much agitated over the reports of small-pox, and the other evening when Mr. Topnoody came in she said:

"Mr. Topnoody, are there any new cases of small-pox?"

"Yes, dear," he replied, serenely.

"Oh, where are they?"

"In Pittsburgh, dear?"

"Indeed? Have you been vaccinated?"

"Yes, dear, but I'm not afraid anyway. The small-pox has too much sense to take a big strong man like me."

"Oh, it has, has it? Well, Topnoody, I wish I had been the small-pox when I was young."

"Why, dear, I thought you feared it mortally?"

"I know it, Topnoody; but if I'd been the small-pox then maybe I would have had too much sense to take you, too."

Then she looked at him with that cool, insidious significance of a woman who has a man where the hair is short, and Topnoody got up and went out into the kitchen to start a fire.—*Stuebenville Herald.*

## PLEASANTRIES.

PAMPHLETS are hard to dispose of, but books are bound to sell.

When a couple make up their minds to get married it may be called a tie vote.—*Somerville Journal.*

SIR WALTER RALPH made his way to fortune and fame by politeness. He was not one of the Elizabethan ruffians.

The difference between a druggist and a farm laborer is that one is a pharmacist and the other a farm assistant.

IRISH epitaph: "Erected to the memory of John Phillips, accidentally shot as a mark of affection by his brother."

The ice-dealer's little venture: "You may talk about fine buildings, but it's the ice-house that takes the cake."—*Courier-Journal.*

THERE is a story told of a fine old Cornish Squire who only drank brandy on two occasions—when he had goose for dinner and when he had not.

JUDGING from the large number of young physicians being ground out by our medical colleges, we can no longer sing, "This world is but an M. D. void."

POLICEMAN, to group of small boys—"Come, now, move on, there's nothing the matter here." Sarcastic boy—"Of course there isn't. If there was you wouldn't be here."

SAID the leader of the train-robbers as he boarded the Pullman car: "Don't disturb the passengers, but seize the porter. He's got all the money in the crowd by this time!"

THE most horrible case of insanity in the Massachusetts Asylum is that of a man who imagines he is a Chicagoan. He gets up in the middle of the night to brag.—*Boston Post.*

NEVER despair. Many a boy who goes around with a yellow patch on his blue-pantalons may some day write a volume of poetry in blue and gold or have a silver plate on his door.

DID you ever notice the fact—of course you have—that a tramp who claims he has a good trade, but can get no work at it, in the winter is a brickmaker and in the summer a lumberman or an ice sawyer?

MISS HENRIETTA DEWCOME—in answer to your question about "unkissed kisses," we may say that we are prepared to un-kiss any kisses we may have kissed outside of the family for the last five years.—*Harvard Lampoon.*

BRIDGET (looking over the mantel-piece)—"What's thim, marm?" Mrs. Dotonart—"Those are cherubs, Bridget." Bridget—"Cheerups, is it? Mary Ann says as how they was bats, and I says twins, barrin' the wings."

HE came home the other night in a drizzling rain, soaked inside as well as out. "What excuse have you to offer," said his better half, "for coming home in such a beery condition?" "None, my dear," was his answer, "cept 'twas a very muggy day."

A MEMBER of a fashionable congregation called at a music store and inquired: "Have you the notes of a piece called the 'Song of Solomon?'" adding "Our pastor referred to it yesterday as an exquisite gem, and my wife would like to learn to play it."

A HOUSE painter who is at work on a scaffolding three stories from the ground falls from it upon the sidewalk, where he lies limp and apparently lifeless. A crowd of benevolent folk surround him and labor with him till his pulse returns and eyelids begin to flutter, when a Good Samaritan places a glass of water to his lips. The sufferer (feebly)—"How many stories has a fellow got to fall in this ward before he gets brandy, durn ye?"—*Paris paper.*

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