

BRITISH FERTILITY.

IN crossing the Atlantic from the New World to the Old, one of the first intimations the traveler has that he is nearing a strange shore, and an old and populous one, is the greater boldness and familiarity of the swarms of clamorous sea-gulls that begin to hover in the wake of the ship, and dive and contend with each other for the fragments and parings thrown overboard from the pantry. They have at once a different air and manner from those we left behind. How bold and tireless they are, pursuing the vessel from dawn to dark, and coming almost near enough to take the food out of your hand as you lean over the bulwarks. It is a sign in the air; it tells the whole story of the hungry and populous countries you are approaching; it is swarming and omnivorous Europe come out to meet you. You are near the searidge of a land teeming with life, a land where the prevailing forms are on the most copious and vehement scale; where the birds and animals are not only more numerous than at home, but more dominating and aggressive, more closely associated with man, contending with him for the fruits of the soil, learned in his ways, full of resources, prolific, tenacious of life, not easily checked or driven out,—in fact, characterized by greater persistence and fecundity. This fact is sure, sooner or later, to strike the American in Britain. There seems to be an aboriginal push and heat in animate nature there, to behold which is a new experience. It is the Old World, and yet it really seems the New in the virility and hardihood of its species.

The New Englander who sees with evil forebodings the rapid falling off of the birth-rate in his own land, the family rills shrinking in these later generations, like his native streams in summer, and who consequently fears for the perpetuity of the race, may see something to comfort him in the British islands. Behold the fecundity of the parent stock! The drought that has fallen upon the older parts of the New World does not seem to have affected the sources of being in these islands. They are apparently as copious and exhaustless as they were three centuries ago. Britain might well appropriate to herself the last half of Emerson's quatrain:

"No numbers have counted my tallies,
No tribes my house can fill;
I sit by the shining Fount of Life,
And pour the deluge still."

For it is literally a deluge: the land is inundated with humanity. Thirty millions of people within the area of one of our larger States, and who shall say that high-water mark is yet reached? Everything betokens a race still in its youth, still on the road to empire. The full-bloodedness, the large feet and hands, the prominent canine teeth, the stomachic and muscular robustness, the health of the women, the savage jealousy of personal rights, the swarms upon swarms of children and young people, the delight in the open air and in athletic sports, the love of danger and adventure, a certain morning freshness and youthfulness in their look, as if their food and sleep nourished them well, as well as a certain animality and stupidity,—all indicate a people who have not yet slackened speed or taken in sail. Neither the land nor the race shows any exhaustion. In both there is yet the freshness and fruitfulness of a new country. You would think the people had just come into possession of a virgin soil. There is a pioneer hardiness and fertility about them. Families increase as in our early frontier settlements. Let me quote a paragraph from Taine's "English Notes":

"An Englishman nearly always has many children, —the rich as well as the poor. The Queen has nine, and sets the example. Let us run over the families we are acquainted with: Lord — has six children; the Marquis of —, twelve; Sir W—, nine; Mr. S—, a judge, twenty-four, of whom twenty-two are living; several clergymen, five, six, and up to ten and twelve."

Thus is the census kept up and increased. The land, the towns and cities, are like hives in swarming time; a fertile queen indeed, and plenty of brood-comb! Were it not for the wildernesses of America, of Africa, and Australia, to which these swarms migrate, the people would suffocate and trample each other out. A Scotch or English city, compared with one of ours, is a kind of duplex or compound city; it has a duplicate interior—the interior of the closes and alleys, in which and out of which the people swarm like flies. Every country village has its closes, its streets between streets, where the humbler portion of the population is packed away. This back-door humanity streams forth to all parts of the world, and carries the national virtues with it. In walking through some of the older portions of Edinburgh, I was somehow reminded of colonies of cliff swallows I

had seen at home, packed beneath the eaves of a farmer's barn, every inch of space occupied, the tenements crowding and lapping over each other, the interstices filled, every coigne of vantage seized upon, the pendent beds and procreant cradles ranked one above another, and showing all manner of quaint and ingenious forms and adaptability to circumstances. In both London and Edinburgh there are streets beneath streets, or huge viaducts that carry one torrent of humanity above another torrent. They utilize the hills and depressions to make more surface room for their swarming myriads.

One day, in my walk through the Trosachs in the Highlands, I came upon a couple of ant-hills that arrested my attention. They were a type of the country. They were not large, scarcely larger than a peck measure; but never before had I seen ant-hills so populous and so lively. They were living masses of ants, while the ground for yards about literally rustled with their numbers. I knew ant-hills at home, and had noted them carefully, hills that would fill a cart-box; but they were like empty tenements compared with these, a fort garrisoned with a company instead of an army corps. These hills stood in thin woods by the roadside. From each of them radiated five main highways, like the spokes of a wheel. These highways were clearly defined to the eye, the grass and leaves being slightly beaten down. Along each one of them there was a double line of ants—one line going out for supplies and the other returning with booty—worms, flies, insects, a constant stream of game going into the capitol. If the ants, with any given worm or bug, got stuck, those passing out would turn and lend a helping hand. The ground between the main highways was being threaded in all directions by individual ants, beating up and down for game. The same was true of the surface all about the terminus of the roads, several yards distant. If I stood a few moments in one place, the ants would begin to climb up my shoes and so up my legs. Stamping them off seemed only to alarm and enrage the whole camp, so that I would presently be compelled to retreat. Seeing a big straddling beetle, I caught him and dropped him upon the nest. The ants attacked him as wolves might attack an elephant. They clung to his legs, they mounted his back, and assaulted him in front. As he rushed through and over their ranks down the side of the mound, those clinging to his legs were caught hold of by others, till lines of four or five ants were being jerked along by each of his six legs. The infuriated beetle cleared the mound and crawled

under leaves and sticks to sweep off his clinging enemies, and finally seemed to escape them by burying himself in the earth. Then I took one of those large, black, shellless snails with which this land abounds, a snail the size of my thumb, and dropped it upon the nest. The ants swarmed upon it at once, and began to sink their jaws into it. This woke the snail up to the true situation, and it showed itself not without resources against its enemies. Flee, like the beetle, it could not, but it bore an invisible armor; it began to secrete from every pore of its body a thick, whitish, viscid substance, that tied every ant that came in contact with it, hand and foot, in a twinkling. When a thick coating of this impromptu bird-lime had been exuded, the snail wriggled right and left a few times, partly sloughing it off, and thus engulfing hundreds of its antagonists. Never was army of ants or of men bound in such a Stygian quagmire before. New phalanxes rushed up and tried to scale the mass; most of them were mired like their fellows, but a few succeeded and gained the snail's back; then began the preparation of another avalanche of glue; the creature seemed to dwindle in size, and to nerve itself to the work; as fast as the ants reached him in any number he engulfed them; he poured the vials of his glutinous wrath upon them, till he had formed quite a rampart of cemented and helpless ants about him; fresh ones constantly coming up laid hold of the barricade with their jaws, and were often hung that way. I lingered half an hour or more to see the issue, but was finally compelled to come away before the closing scene. I presume the ants finally triumphed. The snail had nearly exhausted its ammunition; each new broadside took more and more time, and was less and less effective; while the ants had unlimited resources, and could make bridges of their sunken armies. But how they finally freed themselves and their mound of that viscid, sloughing monster, I should be glad to know.

But it was not these incidents that impressed me so much as the numbers and the animation of the ants, and their raiding, buccaneering propensities. When I came to London I could not help thinking of the ant-hill I had seen in the North. This, I said, is the biggest ant-hill yet. See the great steam highways, leading to all points of the compass; see the myriads swarming, jostling each other in the streets, and overflowing all the surrounding country. See the under-ground tunnels and galleries and the over-ground viaducts; see the activity and the supplies, the whole earth the hunting ground of these insects and rustling with their multitudinous stir. One

may be pardoned, in the presence of such an enormous aggregate of humanity as London shows, for thinking of insects. Men and women seem cheapened and belittled, as if the spawn of blow-flies had turned to human beings. How the throng stream on interminably, the streets like river-beds, full to their banks! One hardly notes the units,—he sees only the black tide. He loses himself, and becomes an insignificant ant with the rest. He is borne along through the galleries and passages to the under-ground railway, and is swept forward like a drop in the sea. I used to make frequent trips to the country, or seek out some empty nook in St. Paul's, to come to my senses. But it requires no ordinary effort to find one's self in St. Paul's, and in the country you must walk fast or London will overtake you. When I would think I had a stretch of road all to myself, a troop of London bicyclists would steal up behind me and suddenly file by like specters. The whole land is London-struck. You feel the suction of the huge city wherever you are. It draws like a cyclone; every current tends that way. It would seem as if cities and towns were constantly breaking from their moorings and drifting thitherward and joining themselves to it. On every side one finds smaller cities welded fast. It spreads like a malignant growth, that involves first one organ and then another. But it is not malignant. On the contrary, it is perhaps as normal and legitimate a city as there is on the globe. It is the proper outcome and expression of that fertile and bountiful land, and that hardy, multiplying race. It seems less the result of trade and commerce, and more the result of the domestic home-seeking and home-building instinct, than any other city I have yet seen. I felt, and yet feel, its attraction. It is such an aggregate of actual human dwellings that this feeling pervades the very air. All its vast and multiplex industries, and its traffic, seem domestic, like the chores about the household. I used to get glimpses of it from the north-west borders, from Hampstead Heath, and from about Highgate, lying there in the broad, gentle valley of the Thames, like an enormous country village—a village with nearly four million souls, where people find life sweet and wholesome, and keep a rustic freshness of look and sobriety of manner. See their vast parks and pleasure grounds; see the upper Thames, of a bright Sunday, alive with rowing parties; see them picnicking in all the country adjacent. Indeed, in summer a social and even festive air broods over the whole vast encampment. There is squalor and misery enough, of course, and too much, but this takes itself away to holes and corners.

II.

A FERTILE race, a fertile nature, swarms in these islands. The climate is a kind of prolonged May, and a vernal lustiness and raciness are characteristic of all the prevailing forms. Life is rank and full. There is plenty of sap, plenty of blood. The salt of the sea prickles in the veins; the spawning waters have imparted their virility to the land. 'Tis a tropical and an arctic nature combined, the fruitfulness of one and the activity of the other.

The culmination and embodiment of it all is in Shakspeare. He implies just such a teeming, racy, juicy land and people. He indeed smacks of the soil. He is rich in lime and phosphate, and in the humus of the heart—copious, fertile, healthful, mellow, unctuous, prolific. One sees in England, clearer than ever, that the moral and intellectual value or equivalent of this fertile island is in his pages.

The teeming human populations reflect only the general law: there is the same riot and prodigality of life in the lower types, the same push and hardiness. It is the opinion of naturalists that the prevailing European forms are a later production than those of the southern hemisphere or of the United States, and hence according to Darwin's law should be more versatile and dominating. That this last fact holds good with regard to them, no competent observer can fail to see. When European plants and animals come into competition with American, the latter, for the most part, go to the wall, as do the natives in Australia. Or shall we say that the native species flee before the advent of civilization, the denuding the land of its forests, and the European species come in and take their place? Yet the fact remains, that that trait or tendency to persist in the face of obstacles, to hang on by tooth and nail, ready in new expedients, thriving where others starve, climbing where others fall, multiplying where others perish, like certain weeds, which if you check the seed will increase at the root, is more marked in the forms that have come to us from Europe than in the native inhabitants. Nearly everything that has come to this country from the Old World has come prepared to fight its way through and take possession. The European or Old World man, the Old World animals, the Old World grasses and grains, and weeds and vermin, are in possession of the land, and the native species have given way before them. The honey-bee, with its greed, its industry, and its swarms, is a fair type of the rest. The English house-sparrow, which we were at such pains to in-

roduce, breeds like vermin and threatens to become a plague in the land. Nearly all our troublesome weeds are European. When a new species gets a foothold here, it spreads like fire. The European rats and mice would eat us-up, were it not for the European cats we breed. The wolf not only keeps a foothold in old and populous countries like France and Germany, but in the former country has so increased of late years that the Government has offered an additional bounty upon their pelts. When has an American wolf been seen or heard in our comparatively sparsely settled Eastern or Middle States? They have disappeared as completely as the beavers. Yet it is probably true that, in a new country like ours, a tendency slowly develops itself among the wild creatures to return and repossess the land under the altered conditions. It is so with the plants and probably so with the animals. Thus, the chimney-swallows give up the hollow trees for the chimneys, the cliff swallows desert the cliffs for the eaves of the barns, the squirrels find they can live in and about the fields, etc. In my own locality, our native mice are becoming much more numerous about the buildings than formerly; in the older settled portions of the country, the flying squirrel often breeds in the houses; the wolf does not seem to let go in the West as readily as he did in the East; the black bear is coming back to parts of the country where it had not been seen for thirty years.

I noticed many traits among the British animals and birds that looked like the result both of the sharp competition going on among themselves in their crowded ranks and of association with man. Thus, the partridge not only covers her nest, but carefully arranges the grass about it so that no mark of her track to and fro can be seen. The field mouse lays up a store of grain in its den in the ground, and then stops up the entrance from within. The woodcock, when disturbed, flies away with one of her young snatched up between her legs, and returns for another and another. The sea-gulls devour the grain in the fields; the wild ducks feed upon the oats; the crows and jackdaws pull up the sprouts of the newly planted potatoes; the grouse, partridges, pigeons, fieldfares, etc., attack the turnips; the hawk frequently snatches the wounded game from under the gun of the sportsman; the crows perch upon the tops of the chimneys of the houses; in the east the stork builds upon the housetops, in the midst of cities; in Scotland the rats follow the birds and the Highlanders to the herring fisheries along the coast, and disperse with them when the season is over; the eagle

continues to breed in the mountains with the prize of a guinea upon every egg; the rabbits have to be kept down with nets and ferrets; the game birds—grouse, partridges, ducks, geese—continue to swarm in the face of the most inveterate race of sportsmen under the sun, and in a country where it is said the crows destroy more game than all the guns in the kingdom.

Many of the wild birds, when incubating, will allow themselves to be touched by the hand. The fox frequently passes the day under some covered drain or under some shelving bank near the farm buildings. The otter, which so long ago disappeared from our streams, still holds its own in Scotland, though trapped and shot on all occasions. A mother otter has been known boldly to confront a man carrying off her young.

Thomas Edward, the shoemaker naturalist of Aberdeen, relates many adventures he had during his nocturnal explorations with weasels, polecats, badgers, owls, rats, etc., in which these creatures showed astonishing boldness and audacity. On one occasion, a weasel actually attacked him; on another, a polecat made repeated attempts to take a moor hen from the breast pocket of his coat while he was trying to sleep. On still another occasion, while he was taking a nap, an owl robbed him of a mouse which he wished to take home alive, and which was tied by a string to his waistcoat. He says he has put his walking-stick into the mouth of a fox just roused from his lair, and the fox worried the stick and took it away with him. Once, in descending a precipice, he cornered two foxes upon a shelf of rock, when the brutes growled at him and showed their teeth threateningly. As he let himself down to kick them out of his way, they bolted up the precipice over his person. Along the Scottish coast, crows break open shell-fish by carrying them high in the air and letting them drop upon the rocks. This is about as thoughtful a proceeding as that of certain birds of South Africa, which fly amid the clouds of migrating locusts and clip off the wings of the insects with their sharp beaks, causing them to fall to the ground, where they are devoured at leisure. Among the Highlands, the eagles live upon hares and young lambs; when the shepherds kill the eagles, the hares increase so fast that they eat up all the grass, and the flocks still suffer.

The scenes along the coast of Scotland during the herring-fishing, as described by Charles St. John in his "Natural History and Sport in Moray," are characteristic. The herrings appear in innumerable shoals, and are pursued by tens of thousands of birds in the air, and by the hosts of their ene-

mies of the deep. Salmon and dog-fish prey upon them from beneath; gulls, gannets, cormorants, and solan-geese prey upon them from above; while the fishermen from a vast fleet of boats scoop them up by the million. The birds plunge and scream, the men shout and labor, the sea is covered with broken and wounded fish, the shore exhales the odor of the decaying offal, which also attracts the birds and the vermin; and, altogether, the scene is thoroughly European. Yet the herring supply does not fail; and when the shoals go into the lochs, the people say they contain two parts fish to one of water.

One of the most significant facts I observed while in England and Scotland was the number of eggs in the birds' nests. The first nest I saw, which was that of the meadow pipit, held six eggs; the second, which was that of the willow warbler, contained seven. Are these British birds then, I said, like the people, really more prolific than our own? Such is, undoubtedly, the fact. The nests I had observed were not exceptional; and when a boy told me he knew of a wren's nest with twenty-six eggs in it, I was half inclined to believe him. The common British wren, which is nearly identical with our winter wren, often does lay upward of twenty eggs, while ours lays from five to six. The long-tailed titmouse lays from ten to twelve eggs; the marsh tit from eight to ten; the great tit from six to nine; the blue-bonnet from six to eighteen; the wryneck often as many as ten; the nut-hatch, seven; the brown creeper, nine; the kinglet, eight; the robin, seven; the fly-catcher, eight; and so on; all or nearly all exceeding the number laid by corresponding species in this country. The highest number of eggs of the majority of our birds is five; some of the wrens and creepers and titmice occasionally produce six, or even more; but as a rule one sees only three or four eggs in the nests of our common birds. Our quail seem to produce more eggs than the European species, and our swift more.

Then this superabundance of eggs is protected by such warm and compact nests. The nest of the willow warbler, to which I have referred, is a kind of thatched cottage upholstered with feathers. It is placed upon the ground, and is dome-shaped, like that of our meadow mouse, the entrance being on the side. The chaffinch, the most abundant and universal of the British birds, builds a nest in the white thorn that is a marvel of compactness and neatness. It is made mainly of fine moss and wool. The nest of Jenny Wren, with its dozen or more of eggs, is too perfect for art, and too cunning for nature. Those I saw were placed amid the

roots of trees on a steep bank by the roadside. You behold a mass of fine green moss set in an irregular framework of roots, with a round hole in the middle of it. As far in as your finger can reach, it is exquisitely soft and delicately modeled. When removed from its place, it is a large mass of moss with the nest at the heart of it.

Then add to these things the comparative immunity from the many dangers that beset the nests of our birds,—dangers from squirrels, snakes, crows, owls, weasels, etc., and from violent storms and tempests,—and one can quickly see why the British birds so thrive and abound. There is a chaffinch for every tree, and a crow and a starling for every square rod of ground. I think there would be still more starlings if they could find places to build; but every available spot is occupied; every hole in a wall, or tower, or tree, or stump; every niche about the farm buildings; every throat of the grinning gargoyles about the old churches and cathedrals; every cranny in towers and steeples and castle parapet, and the mouth of every rain-spout and gutter in which they can find a lodgment.

The ruins of the old castles afford a harbor to many species, the most noticeable of which are sparrows, starlings, doves, and swallows. Rochester Castle, the main tower or citadel of which is yet in a good state of preservation, is one vast dove-cot. The woman in charge told me there were then about six hundred doves there. They whitened the air as they flew and circled about. From time to time they are killed off and sent to market. At sundown, after the doves had gone to roost, the swifts appeared, seeking out their crannies. For a few moments the air was dark with them.

Look also at the crows, or rooks as they are usually called. They follow the plowmen like chickens, picking up the grubs and worms; and chickens they are, sable farm fowls of a wider range. Young rooks are esteemed a great delicacy. The four-and-twenty blackbirds baked in a pie, and set before the king, of the nursery rhyme, were very likely four-and-twenty young rooks. Rook-pie is a national dish, and it would seem as if the young birds are slaughtered in sufficient numbers to exterminate the species in a few years. But they have to be kept under, like the rabbits; inasmuch as they do not emigrate, like the people. I had heard vaguely that our British cousins eschewed all pie except crow-pie, but I did not fully realize the fact till I saw them shooting the young birds and shipping them to market. A rookery in one's grove or shade trees may

be quite a source of profit. The young birds are killed just before they are able to fly, and when they first venture upon the outer rim of the nest or perch upon the near branches. I witnessed this chicken-killing in a rookery on the banks of the Doon. The ruins of an old castle crowned the height overgrown with forest trees. In these trees the crows nested, much after the fashion of our wild pigeons. A young man with a rifle was having a little sport by shooting the young crows for the gamekeeper. There appeared to be fewer than a hundred nests, and yet I was told that as many as thirty dozen young crows had been shot there that season. During the firing the parent birds circle high aloft, uttering their distressed cries. Apparently, no attempt is made to conceal the nests; they are placed far out upon the branches, several close together, showing as large dense masses of sticks and twigs. Year after year the young are killed, and yet the rookery is not abandoned, nor the old birds discouraged. It is to be added that this species is not the carrion crow, like ours. It picks up its subsistence about the fields, and is not considered an unclean bird.

What is true of the birds is true of the rabbits, and probably of the other smaller animals. The British rabbit breeds seven times a year, and usually produces eight young at a litter; while, so far as I have observed, the corresponding species in this country breeds not more than twice, producing from three to four young. The western gray rabbit (*Lepus silvaticus*) is said to produce three or four broods a year of four to six young. It is calculated that in England a pair of rabbits will, in the course of four years, multiply to one million two hundred and fifty thousand. If unchecked for one season, this game would eat the farmers up. In the parks of the Duke of Hamilton, the rabbits were so numerous that I think one might have fired a gun at random with his eyes closed and knocked them over. They scampered right and left as I advanced, like leaves blown by the wind. Their cotton tails twinkled thicker than fireflies in our summer night. In the Highlands, where there were cultivated lands, and in various other parts of England and Scotland that I visited, they were more abundant than chipmunks in our beechen woods. The revenue derived from the sale of the ground game on some estates is an important item. The rabbits are slaughtered in untold numbers throughout the island. They shoot them, and hunt them with ferrets, and catch them in nets and gins and snares, and they are the principal game of the poacher, and yet the land is alive with them. Thirty million skins

are used up annually in Great Britain, besides several million hare skins. The fur is used for stuffing beds, and is also made into yarn and cloth.

But the Colorado beetle is our own, and it shows many of the European virtues. It is sufficiently prolific and persistent to satisfy any standard; but we cannot claim all the qualities for it till it has crossed the Atlantic and established itself on the other side.

There are other forms of life in which we surpass the mother country. I did not hear the voice of frog or toad while I was in England. Their marshes were silent; their summer nights were voiceless. I longed for the multitudinous chorus of my own bog; for the tiny silver bells of our *hyloides*, the long-drawn and soothing *tr-r-r-r-r* of our twilight toads, and the rattling drums, kettle and bass, of our pond frogs. Their insect world, too, is far behind ours; no fiddling grasshoppers, no purring tree crickets, no scraping katydids, no whirring cicadas; no sounds from any of these sources by meadow or grove, by night or day, that I could ever hear. We have a large orchestra of insect musicians, ranging from that tiny performer that picks the strings of his instrument so daintily in the summer twilight to the shrill and piercing crescendo of the harvest-fly. A young Englishman who had traveled over this country told me he thought we had the noisiest nature in the world. English midsummer nature is the other extreme of stillness. The long twilight is unbroken by a sound, unless in places from the "clanging rookery." The British bumble-bee, a hairy, short-waisted fellow, has the same soft, mellow bass as our native bee, and his habits appear much the same, except that he can stand the cold and the wet much better (I used to see them very lively after sundown, when I was shivering with my overcoat on), and digs his own hole like the rabbit, which ours does not. Sitting in the woods one day, a bumble-bee alighted near me on the ground, and, scraping away the surface mold, began to bite and dig his way into the earth,—a true Britisher, able to dig his own hole.

In the matter of squirrel life, too, we are far ahead of England. I believe there are more red squirrels, to say nothing of gray squirrels, flying squirrels, and chipmunks, within half a mile of my house than in any county in England. In all my loitering and prying about the woods and groves there I saw but two squirrels. The species is larger than ours, longer and softer furred, and appears to have little of the snickering, frisking, attitudinizing manner of ours. But England is the paradise of snails. The trail of the

snail is over all. I have counted a dozen on the bole of a single tree. I have seen them hanging to the bushes and hedges like fruit. I heard a lady complain that they got into the kitchen, crawling about by night and hiding by day, and baffling her efforts to rid herself of them. The thrushes eat them, breaking their shells upon a stone. They are said to be at times a serious pest in the garden, devouring the young plants at night. When did the American snail devour anything, except, perhaps, now and then a strawberry? The bird or other creature that feeds on the large black snail of Britain, if such there be, need never go hungry, for I saw these snails even on the tops of mountains.

The same opulence of life that characterizes the animal world in England characterizes the vegetable. I was especially struck, not so much with the variety of wild flowers, as with their numbers and wide distribution. Find one of a kind, and you will presently find ten thousand. The ox-eye daisy and the buttercup that have come to us from Europe are good samples. The foxglove, the cornpoppy, the speedwell, the wild hyacinth, the

primrose, the various vetches, and others grow in nearly the same profusion. The forget-me-not is very common, and the little daisy is nearly as universal as the grass. Indeed, nearly all the British wild flowers seemed to grow in the open manner and in the same abundance as our golden rods and purple asters. They show no shyness, no wildness. Nature is not stingy of them, but fills her lap with each in its turn. Rare and delicate plants, like our arbutus, certain of our orchids and violets, that hide in the woods and are very fastidious and restricted in their range, probably have no parallel in England. The island is small, is well assorted and compacted, and is thoroughly homogeneous in its soil and climate; the conditions of field and forest and stream that exist have long existed; a settled permanence and equipoise prevail; every creature has found its habitat, every plant its home. There are no new experiments to be made, no new risks to be run; life in all its forms is established, and its current maintains a steady strength and fullness that an observer from our spasmodic hemisphere is sure to appreciate.

John Burroughs.

RECENT ARCHITECTURE IN AMERICA.

PUBLIC BUILDINGS. I.

THERE is a point of difference which marks off architecture from the other arts, and is commonly held to be distinctly in its favor. Emerson says it is "a mixed art whose end is sometimes use and sometimes beauty." More exactly, it is a mixed art whose ends are use and beauty interwoven. And this blending of the utilitarian with the strictly aesthetic insures to architecture a peculiarly unbroken life—insures that men will always build, though they may cease to carve or paint or sing. Perhaps this fact is not, however, so advantageous as is usually thought. Looking at the works produced when artistic instinct has been lost and dull gropings or mistaken aspirations have tried to play its part, and remembering that the world cannot so easily, with the advent of a better taste, rid itself of the architect's as of the painter's or the sculptor's legacy of failure, we may feel, perhaps, that it would be better if the art at times could cease entirely—could die to effort as it does die to success. But as no theoretical decision as to what might be for the best can alter the fact that building must go on, and as we know, I repeat, that its re-

sults are among the most permanent of man's creations, it is evident that in no art whatever have we so vital an interest as in this. With no art is it so essential that the people at large should be sufficiently enlightened to know good work from bad, and to encourage the good by public as well as by private effort. Doubly is this the case, moreover, since no art, be it noted, is dependent upon patronage in the same way as is the architect's. The result of ignorance in regard to architecture does not, as with the other arts, mean apathy alone and the mere loss of possible delight. It means the multiplication of wretched works that must remain for an unlimited period of time, to disgrace the memory of their generation and to corrupt the taste of later comers.

There is much good building going on at the present moment in this country, as it is hoped will be shown in these papers. If it were quite clearly perceived by the public to be such,—that is, if it were more evidently distinguished from the bad work flourishing beside it,—there would be less excuse for their preparation. That this bad work does so rankly flourish is by itself sufficient proof of a wide-