

single remark. There have been classes of religionists, not wholly absent from our own country, and well known on the Continent, who have deemed it a merit to deny themselves every pleasure of sense, however innocent and delicate. The excellent but mistaken Pascal refused to look upon a lovely landscape ; and the Port Royalist nuns remarked, somewhat simply for their side of the argument, that they seemed as if warring with Providence, seeing that the favours which He was abundantly showering upon them, they, in obedience to the stern law of their lives, were continually rejecting. But it is better, surely, to be on the side of Providence against Pascal and the nuns, than on the side of Pascal and the nuns against Providence. The great Creator, who has provided so wisely and abundantly for all his creatures, knows what is best for us, infinitely better than we do ourselves ; and there is neither sense nor merit, surely, in churlishly refusing to partake of that ample entertainment, sprinkled with delicate perfumés, garnished with roses, and crowned with the most delicious fruit, which we now know was not only specially prepared for us, but also got ready, as nearly as we can judge, for the appointed hour of our appearance at the feast. This we also know, that when the Divine Man came into the world, —unlike the Port Royalists, he did not refuse the temperate use of any of these luxuries, not even of that “ ointment of spikenard, very precious” (a product of the labiate family), with which Mary anointed his feet.

Though it may at first seem a little out of place, let us anticipate here, for the sake of the illustration which it affords, one of the sections of the other great division of our subject,—that which treats of the fossil animals. Let us run briefly over the geologic history of insects, in order that we may mark the peculiar light which it casts on the character of the ancient floras. No insects have yet been detected in the Silurian or Old Red Sandstone systems. They first ap-