

desire, to lose sight of the richness and variety of the prospects that offer themselves on either hand on the road.

(10.) We must never forget that it is principles, not phenomena,—laws, not insulated independent facts,—which are the objects of inquiry to the natural philosopher. As truth is single, and consistent with itself, a principle may be as completely and as plainly elucidated by the most familiar and simple fact as by the most imposing and uncommon phenomenon. The colors which glitter on a soap-bubble are the immediate consequence of a principle the most important from the variety of phenomena it explains, and the most beautiful, from its simplicity and compendious neatness, in the whole science of optics. If the nature of periodical colors can be made intelligible by the contemplation of such a trivial object, from that moment it becomes a noble instrument in the eye of correct judgment; and to blow a large, regular, and durable soap-bubble may become the serious and praiseworthy endeavor of a sage, while children stand round and scoff, or children of a larger growth hold up their hands in astonishment at such waste of time and trouble. To the natural philosopher there is no natural object unimportant or trifling. From the least of nature's works he may learn the greatest lessons. The fall of an apple to the ground may raise his thoughts to the laws which govern the revolutions of the planets in their orbits; or the situation of a pebble may afford him evidence of the state of the globe he inhabits, myriads of ages ago, before his species became its denizens.

(11.) And this is, in fact, one of the great sources of delight which the study of natural science imparts to its votaries. A mind which has once imbibed a taste for scientific inquiry, and has learnt the habit of applying its principles readily to the cases which occur, has within itself an inexhaustible source of pure and exciting contemplations:—one would think that Shakspeare had such a mind in view when he describes a contemplative man as finding

“ Tongues in trees—books in the running brooks—
Sermons in stones—and good in every thing.”