

man, increasing his nobility and power with his advance in knowledge. And hence it is, that the man who has even a slight acquaintance with the phenomena by which he is surrounded, and the causes from which they flow, feels himself raised above the great mass of mankind. He is conscious that the attributes of mind form the true and characteristic dignity of our species, and that their health and energy are the highest distinction of individuals. The laurels of the warrior are but the ensigns of our mortality; the achievements of the philosopher are, in some degree, evidences of our divine origin and immortal destiny.

But if there were no other personal advantage to be derived from acquainting ourselves with the physical constitution of the world in which we live, and if philosophy had no ulterior benefits to confer, the pleasures resulting from the pursuit would be sufficient of themselves to allure to the study. To satisfy the love of knowledge, a principle deeply implanted in the human mind, is in all cases a reward for toil, though the pleasure we derive from our pursuits is intimately associated with the kind of knowledge to be obtained. In the study of nature we seek to know that which engaged the attention of the Supreme Mind, and this thought makes us peculiarly conscious of the dignity of the pursuit.

When we have grasped a few of the general laws of nature, an additional satisfaction is derived from a contemplation of their harmony. The scenes by which we are surrounded are no longer inadequate to our gratification, but in every change we are able to trace the combination of causes from which it proceeds. The mind, intent upon its purest gratification, is ever waiting for instruction, and seizes upon every phenomenon as an illustration of causes with which it is already acquainted, or deduces from it one with which it was before unacquainted. Thus, in the very pursuit of his inquiries, the philosopher finds his reward.

But the physical sciences confer benefits on society as well as on the individual who is devoted to the investigation of them, and to the enlargement of their boundaries; and this they do, not only by providing rational amusements and methods of well employing time, but by enhancing the comforts and diminishing the number and amount of the evils of life. There is so intimate a connexion between the physical sciences and the arts of life, that it is almost impossible that