

AUTUMN

The sand-glass has run; the knellis rung; the year is passing its prime; nature's covering is shed and changed; cruel searching Aquilo sends out his forerunners to eliminate the more sturdy survivors of a generation whose time is already sped, so that in the coming conflict the hardy only shall contend for their existence; the bright and profuse color scheme tones down to the less varied, more sober shades of the new season; old King Sol rides not so high his fiery course across the heavens; all brute nature, according to the divinely constituted plan, arms itself for the fray, or flees the clash of nature's tragedy, for, "Tis Autumn, the season of the passing, the approach to the death."

"Yesterday's flowers am I, I drank in the whole earth's fruitfulness to make of it the fragrance of my soul, that shall outlive my death." So sang the simple hayflower, as it went down before the sickle of the singing maiden; nature was dying in the plant. Millions have seen death and have not known its beauty, and how many more, unheralded, have lived and died perfections of their kind! For verily, "Many a flower is born to blush unseen, and waste its sweetness on the desert air." But even as these, simple and retiring, wither and decay, so the most refulgent orchid, the purest lily, in this season of nature's devastation, becomes sick and droops and dies. Now sapped of those weak forces so futile in the face of the blast, now stripped of that ornate vesture which, in its beauty diverted the eye from its frailty, the plant goes down to death undeeded as the weed. However, its more lofty brethren assume for it the shades of staid mourning. In red and bronze and gold, the trees stand solemnly, their swaying branches chanting the dirge for those that have gone while prescient of their own retreat to the bleak nakedness of hoary winter.

As if to defy the onslaught of its perennial foe, the bushy evergreen but changes its coat and stands erect in

line of battle, a worthy antagonist in the array. Stealthily, through the undergrowth, the furred company wends its way in search of food or water, or a couch whereon it may rest in security from the sharp eyes of its relentless enemies. So kindly is the order of its existence, that now it receives from nature a change of vesture blending perfectly, in most cases, with the surroundings in which it is accustomed to dwell. 'Tis in this season of Autumn, the season of universal change, that the four-footed denizens of the forest shed their worn out garments to don others.

Even as the beasts, the birds of the air that dwell in northern places, suffer a variation. For those of the feathered tribe that remain in the regions undergoing a marked change of temperature, the law ordains that the plumage of summer's brighter hues gives way to the somber shades of autumn and the white of winter. Such happens in the case of the brown owl which moults and takes on the garb of the countryside in late fall and Winter. Again the law commands that others shall not remain, and every autumn, the migration takes place, depriving the northern regions of the feathered songsters who never become inured to the rigors of a barren, snow-bound clime.

And, as if he would imitate that which he sees around him, man betakes himself to countries more congenial. Endowed as he is with reason, he is much more capable of contending against the forces brought to bear against him than are the lower members of creation. In those parts around the equator and the poles, man prepares himself for the struggle with the greatest care.

Sad Autumn! Sombre Autumn! See the myriad of fallen leaves that quiver restlessly in the gentle breeze. Listen to the plaintive call of the distant wolf wandering mateless over the rugged ranges. Hear the subdued twittering among the half-naked branches. See our plumed friends wheeling with the speed of the wind across the still blue sky. Where are they going? Will they return? Busy Autumn! Fruitful Autumn! Mark the chirping of

the squirrels scurrying to and fro, storing up their winter's supply. Watch them! Do they gather many nuts? The winter will be a long one. Do they gather few? 'Twill be short. What is Bruin pawing at? Ah! A well stocked honey comb. With the bard, we sing the falling leaf, the fading tree. Good-bye to summer, good-bye! Gentle Spring, the season of the birth has gone; glorious Summer, the season of life in its tide, has run; and now, to prepare for the season of silence, comes Autumn, the season of the passing, the approach to death.

Joseph P. Hatty, '26

