

Beauty as Revealed in Nature.

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Outline.

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References.

Byrants Poems.
Wordsworth's Poems.
Emerson's Poems.
Century Magazines.
Horne's Magazines.

As we press forward in the eager search for knowledge and truth, seeking wisdom from the study and experience of the great scholars of the Medieval and present period; reaching out for the more complex things that we think must mould our lives and make us truer men and women, we are apt to miss some of the simpler things, which, if carefully studied, might benefit us most. Therefore let us pause and view some of the first works of our Creator. Let us consider nature from our simple standpoint, and see what knowledge she holds in store.

Everywhere in our land is heard the rustling of leaves, the sighing of the trees, and the low, melancholy moan of the mysterious wind, which bids us to ponder upon the wonderful things around us. The earth adorned in an ever-changing robe, far and near, like gold encampments, reminds us of the precious coin for which men go to foreign lands and give up home, friends and their lives to possess. Our groves were God's first temples, and it was here, beneath the pure skies, and the branches of the gray old trunks which

mingle their boughs high in the heavens, that the humble worshipers first held communion with their maker. The trees of the forest rear a paradise upon the lonely plains, few places are found that are so dear for the song or chirp of the birds, and hardly a valley so desolate that a lily could not bloom therein. Green vegetation has covered the earth with the softest tinted carpet, and this life creeps into each nook and corner, making its appearance on the deep waters and in the desert lands, only to break for a few short hours in all its simple beauty, until the rolling wave, or the winds carry it away. There is nothing more inspiring than to enter the wild woods and view the haunts of Nature. It is there that we catch the spiritual music of the hills, the song of the mountain stream and the echo of the high, massive trees with their swaying arms that cross and twine each other until a dense foliage forms a protection for both man and beast. The oak, with its towering branches, shelters the tired and weary traveler who seeks a place of rest; the silent forest tells no tale of all the good it does. The

aged trunk, with its white limbs drooping with years, tells a story of toil and gladness; still its work is not ended, it lights up the home of the fisherman's hut, and warms the cold piercing wind that sifts through the widow's cottage. In the woods is perpetual youth. Within these plantations of God, a decorum and sanctity reigns, a perennial festival is dressed, and the guest sees not how he should tire of it in a thousand years.

Here we return to reason and faith and feel that nothing could befall us in life which nature could not repair, for she enters into all our moods.

To the attentive eye each moment of the year has its own beauty, and in the same field it beholds, every hour, a picture which was never seen before, and which shall never be seen again. The heavens themselves change every moment, and reflect their glory, or gloom on the plains beneath. Nature is so pervaded with human life that there is something of humanity in each and every particular; thus, as the solar system moves forward in the heavens, certain

stars open before us, and certain stars close up behind us, so is man's life. A typical example of humanity is represented in the swollen stream that speeds on its course, carrying the fallen leaves on, on, until they have written their annals in the rocks of coming ages; while the great river of time is drifting us on to eternity, taking alike the good or the bad. Again a still more beautiful illustration of the golden age is that furnished us by Autumn, when a delicate leaf, hanging on a twig, or branch by a mere thread, is typical of the aged ones, waiting the first cold sting of death, when they too must go with the perishing flowers.

God has placed us in the midst of nature, but how few catch the spirit, or the appreciation of the beauties which they possess, the simple insignificant flower, blooming by the roadside in all its fragrant sweetness, will by some be left unnoticed, and uncared for, while by others it would be an emblem of beauty. It is these things that Tennyson refers to when he says:-
 "There breathes for those who understand

A voice from every flower and tree,
 And in the work of Nature's hand
 Lies Nature's best philosophy."

The redman yearns for the life of outdoor scenes. His true home is in the forest, and his heart leaps with joy to roam the woods, and walk the foot paths which have become covered with moss and odorous with the spicy needles of the pines. Then there is no snowcapped mountains to awe him with the whiteness of their splendor, and the far off restless illimitable sea, makes him long to launch his canoe on her silvery waters. He roams the woods at his own freewill, and, like a roe, bounds 'over the mountain, by the side of the deep rivers and the lonely streams, his mind is often incapable of reasoning and questioning, and he stands in reverence and awe gazing at some of the wonderful things of nature, charmed by her simple beauty, unable to resist the power of the hills, the music of the waters, and the light and darkness that weave their spells on him.

A child's life depends much on the influence of Nature. Goethe says that every child should see a pretty picture and hear

a beautiful poem each day. Much of the deterioration in City life is due, partly at least to the fact that Children grow up to manhood and womanhood without coming much in contact with nature and objects of beauty. They see brick and stone pavements, but get very few glimpses of fields, mountains, valleys, and streams. As nature does not speak through brick walls or stone pavements, the child's life must be barren indeed if it has no chance to frequently absorb into its being the loveliness of its great mother. Character is made up largely from what passes before the eye, and he who would grow, who would feel his soul expand should never let a day pass without trying to see some beautiful thing; the artificial, sordid, cold and calculating side of life is not what we want. The mind feeds largely upon the material which the eyes bring it, and if they bring beauty, the mind can form noble images, if they bring nothing but dust and reflection from brick walls, busy stores, and stifling tenements, it cannot build up a

magnificent character.

The youth in his daily rambles, ponders over the questions of nature, and lingers by the bank to watch the swan playing on the quiet stream; the jay bird alights to wash his plumes, and the stealthy roe laps the clear water and gently shies away.

The boy amuses himself by watching the gophers carry the nuts which the breeze flings to earth, when the wind is sweeping the broad forest in its summer prime.

Wordsworth says, "If in youth man lies on the lap of the great Earth Mother, something passes into his life which later experience and the worldliness which may come with years can never utterly abolish or destroy".

Much of the beauty of his poems is probably due to his early surroundings; and early companionship with nature gave him a kind of primitive and unreasonable rapture, which in later years was changed into a more profound and conscious love. He learned to watch and note in nature that to which other eyes were blind; and to a mind thus trained, the scenes through

which he passed and among which his life was spent furnished never cloying food. His continental journeys left only deep impressions, which were answered by those at home. His deep and tender love for nature never faltered. In his later writings he has said, "I have learned to look on nature not as in the hour of thoughtless youth, but hearing often times the still sad music of humanity, not harsh nor grating, though of ample power to chasten and subdue."

The true lover of nature is he whose inward and outward senses are still firmly adjusted to each other, who has retained the spirit of infancy, even into the era of manhood; and his intercourse with heaven and earth becomes part of his daily food; this may come nearer applying to Wordsworth than to any other writer, but to some extent we find it in Bryant for to him beyond all other modern poets the earth was a theater upon which the great drama of life was everlastingly played, and the remembrance of this fact called out the inspiration that led him to write the

beautiful poem entitled "The Crowded Street."

The true artist sees the gleam of beauty, and studies it, until the brush reveals to the eye the same loveliness that God hath given; he awakens the soul to a given activity by reproducing with the chisel and saw the true beauty of nature. Nature not only plays a part in the fine arts, but she is also the omnipotent agent in the construction of useful arts. An engineer built Eddystone Light-house on the model of an oak tree as being the form in nature best designed to resist a constant assailing force, so Dollond formed his achromatic telescope on the model of the human eye. The first and last lesson of the useful arts is that nature tyrannizes over our works, they must conform to her law; or they will be ground to powder by her omnipresent activity. She is ever interfering with art, and you cannot build a house as you will, but as you must. Man seems to have no option about his tools, but merely the necessity to learn from nature what will fit best; and he takes his tasks so minutely from imitations of her, that

his works become, as it were, hers, and he is no longer free.

The highest praise we can attribute to any writer, painter, sculptor, or builder, is that he actually possesses the thought or feeling with which he has inspired us. In landscapes, the painter should give the suggestion of a fairer Creation than we know, the detail he should omit and give us only the spirit and splendor.

The beauty of nature brings to mind the pure and only one who taught the aged trees to form a circling bower, who laid these infant roots and cared for the delicate spray. The kings of the earth, in all their majesty, are not arrayed as the Creator hath clothed the broad mountain side. He speaks to us through even the faintest forms of life, and His likeness is revealed in all his works. As God himself was pleased with his earthly paradise when he had created it, how much more should man who has been endowed with its divine richness, reverence and care for the beautiful things around him.

"Loveliest of lovely things are they
On earth that soonest pass away.

The rose that lives its little hour
Is prized beyond the sculptor's flower."

If we would conceive of the beauties
around us, let us go forth under the
open sky, and list to nature's teachings.