

Nature's Perpetual Spell

As I think back over the few years of my existence, I cannot help wondering when I developed my great fondness for Nature and all Her many creatures. Perhaps it came when I was a young boy wandering aimlessly through fields and woods with my dog, Clover, by my side. The woods and fields seemed to offer endless excitement for a young boy who loved exploring and hunting in them. I still remember my joy upon finding the small cave, which I explored for many days thereafter. Nature at this time seemed to be a wonderful place of refuge where a young boy could think about life undisturbed. In that rough land of thorn bushes and fallen trees imagination had full reign and it was easy for a boy to return to any period in history and become a hero.

Maybe this meager beginning was supplemented in later years when I read so many books proclaiming the beauty and virtues of Nature. It seems as if every great writer has his own modest way of complimenting the out-of-doors. I soon began to wonder why so many great writers picked nature as their subject. Was there not some deeper thought in the forest that had escaped me in my youthful wanderings? Soon I realized that there is a certain intangible quality in the wild terrain which makes man feel closer to the real aim of life. It may be that this is just the primitive instincts of our Stone Age ancestors acting on us, but I would like to think it is something higher and more noble than this.

As I studied Biology, Physiology, and Zoology, I began, to appreciate the beauty of Nature even more, and to see Her intricate perfection manifested in each individual of Her realm. I was amazed at the vastness of Her realm and the special skills she gave to each of Her loyal subjects.

I believe that if the writer's view of the forest and her inhabitants and the scientist's facts are combined in the right proportion the greatest appreciation and admiration of her elegance and complexity can be attained. In my opinion, science merely states in a more exacting way why some animal or plant is beautiful or amazing; while a writer tends to state this in a more general way, which can be better understood by the layman. Often a man becomes too specialized in one of these fields and tends to forget the value of the other. I sincerely hope that I never fall victim to this circumstance which narrow's one view of life and therefore narrows the character of that person.

Man alone can fully appreciate the loveliness of his surroundings and realize he is a special part of them. Other animals merely exist, while man realizes his existence and, therefore, can appreciate the beauty in it. After one studies man in relation to other animals, he cannot help but feel that man is the ultimate form of life. This knowledge leads a person to the realization that he should cherish life and try to fully understand it. This fact has brought me to the conclusion that I should try to see and admire as much of this earth as is possible before I depart, for who knows where. Since most of us possess excellent facilities for traveling (car, strong

legs, etc.). I think we should see as much of this heavenly sphere as possible without sacrificing other important functions of our life. In this way our boyhood rambles do not diminish but rather grow more numerous and more interesting.

I shall continue to study Nature through the soft-spoken words of authors, the hard facts of science, and the realistic events of actual experience. This fondness of the out-of-doors may pursue me into my career, but I cannot be sure, since I have many other potent interests equally fascinating. But whether it does or not, I hope I will never be deprived of its benefits.

The fields open to young men and women who love the wilderness vary from forestry to medicine. Most of these fields are highly rewarding, since the person in doing his job is either preserving beauty or God's beautiful creatures. In this field of endeavor the rewards are more often contentment and the feeling that you have served someone, than of a pecuniary nature. Many a man has found the serenity of the forest much more tempting than a large salary and has been happier for it. By this I do not mean that it is wrong to be ambitious, for ambition to succeed is one of the virtues of a smart young man, but for some people ambition leads to contentment rather than wealth. Nature brings contentment to me and for this reason I shall never rest until I am in full possession of a part of it.