
The Natural History of Sex

clue to their origin and their functioning, their structure and their beauty, far subtler than we suspected before. Yet, before spending even a single day in such laboratory observations and their elucidations, we may learn much in the fields or in our gardens. Indeed, for the main idea and attitude of our sex-studies, we have literally but to "consider the lilies." Not cut lilies, however, as both churchman and botanist have been mostly wont to do, there upon altar, here upon study table; but, quite literally, "how they grow"—leaf and flower, nutritive and reproductive, self-maintaining and species-maintaining. Here is not only the simple rhythmic unity of biology, but the organic basis of morals; and it is largely from losing sight of this that the long succession of "systems of moral philosophy" which its professors so faithfully chronicle, so learnedly comment upon, have lost their hold upon men, or have never gained it.

Honestly considering our lily, however, at its climax of perfection, in stature and blossom, beauty and fragrance, what is its secret? The symbol of purity; but why? Because it has something to be pure. Search nature through; there is no more open and simple yet magnificent expression of sex, naked and unashamed, in all the organic world. Whereas, is it not in the shirking of all such life-facts that there lies the most fatal weakness of our moral philosophy books, as of all conventional sermonisings,