

In the Forest of Arden.

I have been reading a book of Hamilton Maibe's called *In the Forest of Arden*. It is a pretty cry for a halt in the busy rushing life of to-day. Here, there is hurry, tumult and vexation—the world too much with us—for rest and tranquil living we are out of tune—But in Arden—Old Triton blows his wreathed horn—in Arden is quiet and rest and peace and freedom of individual action and opinion; no dictates of fashion in garments or the number of them, no false friendships, each lives his true self, unfettered by custom or surrounding and sings the melody his soul was born to sing.

True, 'tis a fanciful place, but wonderfully real and alluring as you read of the way thither, the tarrying therein and the citizenship that is yours forever after.

"All the greater poets have been to Arden. Many of the prose writers show the same familiarity with the country in which they evidently found whatever was sweetest and best in life. All of us know some friend who is a freeholder there, the light of the Arden sky in his eyes, the buoyancy of the Arden air in his step, the purity and freedom of the Arden life in his nature."

Rosalind and her husband had often planned to go to the magical Forest, but an imperative call of duty here, a friendly desire there, always some intervention that seemed at the hour unavoidable had hindered them. This time, they said "let us be deaf now to all calls beside, let us go to Arden to-day."

"They had fancied the road thither would be long and hard, but suddenly they discovered that with the desire to go they were already within the boundaries of the Forest. What joy to escape the uproar and confusion of each day's living! It was like escaping the dusty mid-summer road for the shade of the woods, where the brook calms the day with its pellucid note of effortless flow, and the hours hide themselves from the glare of the sun! To make hearty play of life with folks whose thoughts were free as the wind and whose hearts were fresh as the dew, a life as rich and great as nature herself, there to abide till the old living should be cast behind and the new in their souls!"

"The first sensation to those who find themselves inside the Forest, is a delicious sense of freedom, a certain sympathy with outlawry in the first exhilarating consciousness of having gotten out of the conventional world, that world whose chief purpose is that all men shall wear the same coat and eat the same dinner, utter the same commonplaces and be forgotten at last under the same epitaph."

"There were no books in Arden. One does not need them, for our books are at their best faint and imperfect transcriptions of Nature and Life. He who has heard the mysterious and haunting monotone of the sea will never rest content with the noblest harmony in which the composer seeks to blend those deep elusive tones. He who has sat hour by hour under the spell of the deep woods, will feel that spell shorn of its magical power in the noblest verse that ever sought to contain or express it. There was that in the mystery of the woods which made all poetry pale and unreal; there was that in life as they saw it in the noble souls about them which made all records and transcriptions in books seem cold and superficial. In Arden there were—

'Tongues in trees, books in the running brooks
Sermons in stones and good in everything.'

"There were no clocks in Arden. How detestable to be hurried as we are, it is the most offensive way in which we are reminded of our mortality. There is time enough if we knew how to use it. One of the most delightful things about life in Arden was the absence of all haste, living was a matter of being rather than doing, and one shared the tranquillity of the great trees that silently expand year by year. The fever and restlessness were gone, the long strain of will and nerve relaxed, a clear knowledge of having strength and time to live one's life and do one's work, fills you with a deep and enduring sense of repose.

"Half the charon of people is lost under the pressure of work and haste; our noblest self is constantly obscured by mists of preoccupation and weariness. Someone with sufficient eminence to give his words currency ought to define life as a series of interruptions. In Arden life was pitched on the natural key, nobody was hurried, nobody interrupted, nobody carried his work like a pack on his back, instead of leaving it behind him as the sun leaves the earth when day is over and the calm stars shine in the unbroken silence of the sky.

"To Rosalind and her husband there was a kind of rapture in the real possession of their days, a sense of ownership of time of which they had never so much as dreamed when they lived by the clock. Those tiny, ornamental hands on the delicately painted dial are our taskmasters, disguised under forms so dainty. Silent themselves they issue their commands in tones we dare not disregard. Fashioned so cunningly they rule us as if iron sceptres. Moving within so small a circle they send us hither and yon on every imaginable service. They mark the brief periods of our leisure and indicate the hours of our toil. Days and nights they keep record beside us, ruling every season, pervading every day, re-

cording every hour, and doling out our birthright of leisure second by second, so that being rich we are always impoverished, inheritors of vast fortunes we are put off with meagre income, born free we are servants of masters who neither eat nor sleep, that they might never for a second surrender their ownership of us. There's no clock in all the Forest."

"The sun shines in Arden, and the rain falls, and the wind blows, but it is all a part of the great whole, and the Arden life could not be understood and enjoyed with any one of its stops unplayed. The storm and the rain and the sunshine alike are a part of the comfort in the heart of the great Forest, for after all it is not the storms and the cold which make life hard and give nature an unfriendly aspect, but the things in our human experience which give tempest and winter a meaning not their own. It is the loss and sorrow and weariness and disappointment which weigh upon us on dark days and give them their gloom, and cold its icy edge, and work its bitterness. All weathers are pleasant and endurable when the heart is at rest. There were rainy days in Arden, but never a gloomy and one, there were cold days but none that chilled the soul."

All through their stay Rosalind and her husband felt strangely a curious sense of familiarity and homeness, as though they had been born therein and were "coming to their own again." And surely what else is it but that this free fount of nature was ours once, and we have strayed far from its borders, barriers of all the claims of days, and years shutting out our view of even the line which its foliage makes above the horizon.

These two could not remain in the Forest. There was work to be done which might not longer be delayed, duties to be met which might not longer be evaded. So they came back, but not, not as they entered. Day by day they stepped into the old places, fell into the old habits, until all the broken threads of life were reunited and they were apparently as much a part of the world as though they had never gone out of it to find the nobler, happier sphere.

But they were never again the same. Something had dropped from their lives that could never come again. "There were no more vexations, nor hurry nor misunderstandings. Gradually came a clear consciousness that though in the world they were not of it, nor ever again could be. They were not lonely, they were far happier than they had ever been in the old days. When they compared the peaceful serenity of their hearts with the perplexities and annoyances of their friends they were filled with ineffable pity, and more and more as the days went by they found the life of the Forest steal into their old home. The monotony was gone, and weariness and depression crossed the threshold never again. There was within and about them a peace and joy, for there is this consolation for all those who have once been to Arden, that having proved one's citizenship there one can return at will. Once possessed, these things are ours forever, neither care nor change nor time can take them from us, for from henceforth they are part of ourselves."

How good if more of us could journey to Arden, and bring back its tranquil air for our daily living, the independence of thought, the courage to do what we rightly leisurely can of work outside and inside our homes, and to say a decided, cheery "no" to all demands that hurry and enslave us. To do no more than is really needed to bring ourselves, our families and our friends the comforts of health, necessities of dress, and satisfaction of appetite; and be free to read, to think more, and oftener to walk out into the clear air, by shores of lakes, on banks of streams, under green trees and God's blue, anywhere.

It is not the Arden of Shakespeare's creation, with Rosalind and Orlando and Touchstone and Audrey in gay sprightly play of life. For this Forest Retreat has a message for you, and it leaves it in your heart as you read, stealing through every page is a longing for its tranquil leisurely existence.

"It is not to be confounded with that mystic Quietest doctrine of life which Molinos and Fenelon and Madame Guion set forth."

Theirs was a stagnant living, a meditation and an ease that resulted in carelessness of Home and Friends and the public Weal, and failed of what life truly means.

Nor is it the Omar Khayyam plaint for
A book of verses underneath the bough,
A jug of wine, a loaf of bread and Thou
Beside me, singing in the Wilderness—
O, Wilderness was Paradise anon!"

But it is a strong, healthy, earthly sense of what it means in a spiritual sense when the "Kingdom of God is within you," not to seek to escape life here because we are heirs to another, and to keep the sanctity of that "other worldliness" on our brows as though we were but pilgrims here, but to take all this upon us leisurely, serenely, joyously. The shackles of demand and custom will drop from off us. The work and the play and the beauty of living take on a different and a deeper meaning, care and foreboding flee away. There is only one other freedom like it, and the two are indissolubly linked and the one but an outgrowth of the other. Whom the Sox makes free is free indeed. G. D. M. L. R.

The Man Aloft In the Lookout.

S. C. MITCHELL.

When Charles Sumner died, in 1874, Senator L. Q. C. Lamar, of Mississippi, was assigned a somewhat prominent part in the funeral obsequies. On this account the Senator was severely criticised by his Mississippi constituency, owing to the bitter prejudices then existing in the South against the New England statesman, because of his pronounced attitude toward us during and after the war. When the Mississippi Legislature again met, Lamar appeared before it to make his defence against the unreasoning aspersions of his character and motives to which the incident had given rise. He began by telling his fellow-citizens that he in no wise pretended to natural abilities or vision superior to that possessed by them. "But," said he, "the vantage ground which you had given me enabled me to see the wisdom of my accepting the invitation to speak at Sumner's funeral. The captain of a ship sends aloft a boy to scan the horizon and to call back to him whatever objects are visible. Though the boy is not equal in experience and power to the captain, yet he, with field-glass in hand, has a certain advantage from his very station in the lookout, commanding the sweep of the whole horizon. From the lookout at Washington it seemed plain to me that reconciliation between the sections of this Union was the right policy, and that must be my sole defence."

The happy figure which the Senator used in portraying the relation of the formative thinker to the people will bear further scrutiny. What are some of the requirements which we may rightly make of the man aloft in the outlook? Knowing the possibilities of the vantage ground which the formative thinker occupies, what responsibilities grow out of his station? The first element in his responsibility is

FRANKNESS AND FEARLESSNESS

in reporting what he sees. Owing to fog or defective vision, the outlook may fail to discern certain objects that bode ill to the ship, and yet be free from blame; but nothing can excuse him from his bountiful duty to speak out clearly what he does actually see. Concealment or cowardice in this respect means woes unnumbered to ship and crew. This is a truth as old as Ezekiel: "If the watchman see the sword come, and blow not the trumpet, and the people be not warned, and the sword come and take away any person from among them, * * * his blood will I require at the watchman's hand."

All the evils of democracy, like so many hydra heads, grow out of demagogism. The life of democracy is discussion, and in such an interchange of ideas what is valuer than truckling? Cant is the canker of intellectual progress, and especially so in a society based upon republican principles, wherein the vital power resides in individual initiative and the force of public opinion. It is not required of a thinker that he shall be infallible—it is the function of the people to judge of the correctness of his conclusions; but it is imperative not more to scan the prospect than to make known the things within his vision. "These are the men to employ, in peace as well as in war—the men who are afraid of no fire except hell fire." Let us put a premium upon courage; for without courage a man will not only stifle his convictions, but—by the working of the well-known law of disuse—cease to have convictions of intensity and worth. "Woe to you," a voice warns us, "if you do what others think right, instead of obeying the dictates of your own conscience; woe to you, if you allow authority, or prescription, or fashion, or influence, or any other human thing to interfere with that awful and sacred thing, responsibility."

The second element in the responsibility of the formative thinker is the necessity of

SINKING SELF.

The man in the lookout must peer into the offing, with no thought of his own comfort, no matter whether hail or tropic heat beat down upon him. Indeed, just in proportion to the stress of the weather, the dangers of the night or the ruggedness of the coast, must his vigilance be intent, and that means the less concern for himself. Truth and self-interest rarely pull together under the same yolk. Self-denial is a maxim known to science no less than to religion; for truth can be wooed and won only by the singleness and supremacy of affection that mark the ardent lover. Self-interest is no less hurtful in the quest of truth than prejudice. In fact, prejudice is only the mental aspect of self-interest. "As for that numerous class who, instead of aiming at truth, have merely aimed at glorifying themselves, their arrows will be found to have recoiled, and to be sticking their deadly barbed points into their own souls. Alas! there are many such pseudo-Sebastians walking about, bristled with suicidal darts, living martyrs to their own vain-glory."

Hand in hand with such disinterestedness must go

INDIVIDUALITY IN THINKING

Many times have I heard the lookout call back, "A light to port," or "A sail to starboard," when it must have been evident that the officers on the bridge had simultaneously discerned the object in the offing. But