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THE KEY-NOTE.

Knock as long as you like at Nature's door, she will never give you an intelligible answer—for the best of all reasons: she is dumb—A living soul—that is responsive, and above all a woman's soul.—*Tourguenieff*

Many are Nature's voices; each wind has a different tone,—
One carries an echo of laughter, another a sigh or a moan;
Trees as they whisper together, waters that run to the sea,
Have speech of their own,—but never a voice that replies to me.

Once on a summer morning, when Summer was at her best,—
Roses crowning her forehead, pearls of dew at her breast,—
I fell on my knees before her, I kissed her beautiful feet;
“Speak to me, Mother Nature! teach me your wisdom sweet.”

Jabble of brooks responded; bees went murmuring by;
Trill of a lark rang faintly down from the distant sky;
They mocked my fond desire; I longed for a vital word,
Not for a leaflet's rustle, or the far-off song of a bird.

And, baffled and disappointed, I said, “I will seek no more,
I will stand and knock no longer, O Nature at your door;
Entreating, you would not answer; calling, you would not come;
And this is the hopeless reason; nature is deaf and dumb!”

Then from my aimless yearning, that could not attain its goal,
I went as the blind go, groping, and found out a living soul,—
Found out a soul responsive, that brought to me unaware
Oil of joy for me, mourning, wine of life for despair.

Now—oh, beautiful wonder!—the mystery has grown clear,
The inarticulate voices have meaning for my ear;
Love is the magic key-note, and by its subtle art
All that I sought of Nature I find in a woman's heart.

—*Mary Bradley in Lippincott's.*