

as seen in an afternoon sun on a clear day in the middle distance of your landscape. The light green feathery topmost branches of the rounded birch and maple and oak and elm, as the light falls on them and through them, form shadows and shades of green no pigment can truly imitate; the deep-toned pines, quite black in the shadows, rise high above the wealth of buoyant green masses towering over one another, rolling away into the distance, swell upon swell, the edges here distinct and clear against the shadows beyond, here lost melting into innumerable other edges; and beneath all and in the near distance the delicate-hued aspens show their white slim branching stems, and in one low corner there is a faint hint of the ochreous catkins of the willow. Suddenly a cloud obscures the sun; at once the shadows deepen, the greens are changed, the feathery edges through which the light was transmitted lose their clearness of outline, and each tree, with the loss of light, seems to nestle closer to his fellow. But it is vain trying to describe Nature's pictures. To be felt they must be seen. And in pictures that can be felt Nature is inexhaustible. Her every square inch, as her every square league, is a scene provocative of an emotion which we cannot explain, cannot name.

I cannot begin to tell of all that I see. The trees and bushes change their tints every twenty-four hours, so rapid is the growth; the wild cherry throws out its delicate white sprays against the deep green spruce and cedar; the balsam emits a scent all its own; woodpeckers of all hues, some with flaring red top-knots and throats, bold, quick-moving fellows, come and knock at the trees about your tent three, four, and five hours before breakfast time; the oriole shows you his orange-gold breast, bright in the sunlight, in the highest twig of that tree just over your favourite shady nook; the agile chipmunk will steal and eat a biscuit under your very nose; the minnows fight for the scraps you throw them close to the rock on which you sit and watch; even the blood-thirsty and hungry-looking perch lurks slyly near by watching your every movement and frightening the fleeing minnows by disputing with them their right to a snatched mouthful. All is not peace you see, reader, even here. Far from it. Strife there is everywhere. That perch reminds me of this. He gobbled yesterday a minnow too big for him. It certainly was a most curious sight. Two-thirds of the unfortunate minnow's body stuck out of its captor's mouth and wriggled violently from side to side, so violently as sometimes actually to disturb even the solid perch's equilibrium and cause him to show his glittering white belly and blood-red fins. It was a tragedy in more than one act, for another perch, equally blood-thirsty and hungry-looking, glided stealthily up and made incessant snatches at the protruding tail of his friend's quarry; and the cunning way in which this friend dodged the onslaughts was most amusing. A strange thing this universality of strife. It is everywhere. That fragile trillium had to fight its way through the world—literally. And the fight tells on its appearance. In the woods it is tall and slim, stretching up its head for the sunlight which comes sparingly through the trees. In the meadows it is short and thick. This stump of mine contains a million battle fields. The mosses fight for its sap, the worms eat into its wood, in its bark the mites hide from the birds, it itself fought with its fellows for air and sunshine and moisture; the very earth it grows on fought once long ago with the ocean which broke up its rocks into sand and soil. Strife, strife everywhere. Who can understand it? Is "strife" only another name for *process*? Is it synonymous with change, with perpetuation, evolution; with birth, growth, decay; with *becoming*, in Hegelian phrase? Is it through strife that all things progress, tend towards some unknown goal? But strife means pain, often unmerited pain. Ah! here I feel the ground slipping from under my feet. The problem of the existence of pain I give up. All I can say is, if change, evolution, life itself, be impossible without strife, and strife without pain, that pain must be borne. Ha! I am about to sin again. But I have not quite entered the confines of metaphysics this time, I hope.

There are two creatures, however, of whom I cannot bring myself to speak approvingly or even politely. One is the mosquito. What volumes of diatribe could I not pen upon this thorn in the flesh, this messenger of Satan! What series of ejaculatory imprecations have I not uttered against him, what murderous threats? His pertinacious pugnacity is astonishing. (I can only ascribe it to his having Anglo-Saxon blood in his veins!) Big words you think, reader, with which to rail at so puny an enemy. Yes, but indicative of the huge force necessary to overcome him. I must have put forth muscular power to be measured only by foot-tons in chasing and slaying my foes. And what was disheartening was, they seemed to be numberless. My tent was no sooner rid of some fifty score than a new and hungrier host took their places. They seemed to fill the created universe. Not a corner was there wherein I could be free of them. At the bottom of a full and lighted pipe they may not exist, for I have heard they have a distaste for tobacco; but in no other place in the infinity of tri-dimensional space would I undertake to say they were not. The other is the whip-poor-Will. The whip-poor-Will makes me tired—not in slang phrase but in sober truth. Has any one ever seen this beast—or bird, except in museums stuffed and labelled *Caprimulgus vociferus*? I could almost believe in disembodied spirits revisiting the glimpses of the moon as I listen nightly to his ceaseless, unsatisfied, importunate "whip-poor-Will," "whip-poor-Will."* I have sat patiently by my camp-fire from eight o'clock till half-past eleven trying to compose my soul in quietness through the dinning of two rival whip-poor-Will's in vain. What did they want? Would to all that is quiet and calming somebody would procure it for them. I would soundly trounce a score of Will's if by that means I could put a stop to their cry and gain me peace. At half-past eleven I gave it up exhausted. I

* I find, on enquiry, that this is really the belief of the Indians (*vide Cyclopaedia of the Natural Sciences*, "Natural History," by Wm. Baird, *sub voce*). Strange that the same thought should have entered my mind.

got up at four the next morning looking forward with anticipations of keen delight to a long pleasant day, and the first thing to greet my ear was one of those same two rival whip-poor-Will's still at it.—I am naturally kind-hearted. Above all I cannot bear the sight of any brute creature in pain. But that whip-poor-Will's neck I think I could wring.

There are also other aspects of Nature not to be wholly lost sight of, though to one trying to escape from his fellow-men for a period not perhaps so interesting as the trees and the birds and the sky—I mean the inhabitants of the country. If not very remote from the limits of civilization and settlement, one not seldom comes in contact with men and women, after one's own kind indeed, but differing from one's self in some indefinable but enviable manner. They possess somewhat which we city folk have lost, and I know not by what word to name it. It is not exactly artlessness, nor kindly frankness, nor yet sympathetic freedom; and yet it is something of all these combined. We in towns have clothed ourselves with customs, with manners, with habits of thought and feeling as we have with fashionable garments—all after one pattern; they in the country move in no such fettering raiment. The result is, the simple grace of their thoughts and feelings awakens in us pleasure and emulation. Nay more, we would show them our appreciation of a grace we have lost, and, to rise to their level, to exhibit our brotherly-kindness, we doff, or do our best to doff, our constricting costume, and with frank eye and free speech try to be one with them. Rarely do we wholly succeed, however; and many are the types of Nature's children whom we remember with the kindest of feelings. One fair creature I shall not soon forget. On a hot afternoon during a long and dusty walk I stepped to the door of a cottage and asked for water. There was something so unconstrainedly and simply natural in the unlearned grace with which the healthy buxom damsel of some eighteen freckling summers who answered my knock hastened to grant my request, that the meeting was well worth the many miles I had trudged. There was every reason for embarrassment, too: the presence of a stranger whom, from his coarse holiday garb, it was impossible to relegate to his proper social or vocationary status; the evident difference, nevertheless, of intonation and language; the dearth, or rather absence of all common topics of conversation; and not at all least the stockinglessness of the girl (I espied two whitish—I cannot say more for them—ankles). But withal I think I was more embarrassed than she. She was comely, even picturesque. Her smiling lips seemed made for naught else but to smile—and perchance to press. "A hot day," she pleasantly remarked. "Very, but it does not seem to affect your looks;" and the compliment brightens the ever-dawning smile. "Let me drink to your health,"—again that smile. "Although I do not think I need." Ha! it rises now into the full sunlight of a gay laugh. A pleasant episode this; and somehow, as I go on again and leave that cottage far behind, I find myself thinking of that simple coming-together. It has left its influence upon me. Does not every coming-together of thinking minds and feeling hearts leave its influence, an influence only unperceived because, in the rush of city life, it is so frequent? What had she done to me? I was not the same man that I was before I reached that cottage. Had virtue gone out of that simple lass? Had she unwittingly raised me into a higher plane of thought and feeling? If so, by what power? Ah, that none can tell; the subtle influence of one soul upon another none shall explain.

But to return once again to the purest of Nature's beauties, what have I told you of the sounds, the colours, the smells of nature? The "smells," yes, I use the word advisedly; "scents" reminds me too much of waxed floors and orchestra chairs. The woods and the fields and the roadsides give you symphonies of smells, as if exhaled from innumerable, immeasurable, unplucked nosegays; smells, compared to which that of Milton's "tedded hay" would seem almost artificial. Then the colours. Ruskin, I believe, ranks the plumage of birds third in order of superiority; but I wish he could see the blue of that martin's back as he skims to and fro, east and west, over the water after insects: with the sun, deep to blackness, against the sun, glossy to iridescence. Never did I see such a blue. And I wish, too, that scarlet tanager had flashed by him at noon-day, as did it flash by me. Believe me, out of these (perhaps to some) insignificant beauties one can, if he so chooses, lay up "life and food for future years." And of the animals whose acquaintance I made I have told you next to nothing. I found myself once within ten feet of a rabbit and of a squirrel at the same time. They gambolled gracefully, unfeeling, to my delight, till one of those messengers of Satan (verily I believe sent to buffet me after having been caught up to a seventh heaven) trumpeted right in my left ear. I started; the rabbit and squirrel disappeared—of course. But here I must draw to an end. I have returned to civilized regions, to the region of newspapers, and business communications, and black coats, and gloves, and Church services; and away from my mistress—I will not write of her. I feel, however, that I can now understand something of what that deepest of Nature's poets meant when he said that "to these forms of beauty . . . he owed

that blessed mood,
In which the burthen of the mystery,
In which the heavy and the weary weight
Of all this unintelligible world
Is lightened—that serene and blessed mood,
In which the affections gently lead us on;"

and I heartily recommend you, reader who have patiently followed me thus far, to try a like experiment.

T. ARNOLD HAULTAIN.

WHEN publishers have the security they now lack, that in bringing out a book in decent form they will not be undersold the next week by a re-issue in an indecent form, they will go to the additional expense required for a book intended to be kept. The result will be the extension of the excellent practice of collecting books, and the revival of the trade of book-selling, which is now almost extinct.