

time or circumstance, but *voyageurs* of an age and time more remote, of an age of boundless aspiration, faith and enterprise. We may be the trapper tracked by malignant foe, or relentless Brave hunting down the enemies of his race. We may live in imagination and in fact a life which, save to the devotee of canoe and wild, has faded forever into the past.

The impressions of a childhood spent in the country become bedimmed after long years of city life. "Shades of the prison-house" have closed about us. But the distinctive calls and flight of birds are eagerly heard or recognized anew, never now to be forgotten, for they are indelible by reason of an awakened and maturer interest. The infinite voices of solitude, the sifted silence of vast forests, have a new and graver import, carry a weightier message to the heart. Our knowledge of life is deeper now than then. We are not in a passive, receptive state merely; but learning, comparing past and present experience, filling in the lacunæ left by a one-sided life. To hear for the first time in years the whip-poor-will, some still night, thrash out its plaintive lonely call across some little cove, is like the striking on the ear of some rich voice from the past, flooding the mind with memories long since thick-blurred, but startled now into intense life as the bow awakes the strings—the memory of youthful pleasures and expeditions, older loves and losses, of hopes long since realized, forgotten, shattered. It is a voice from out the silence, from out the darkness renewing the past. Just as dream life is often more interesting than waking life, so this life of the woods, far removed from the conditions of ordinary existence, yet presents by subtle, often very illusory reflexes of thought, a more interesting side of the life we have left behind. This rustic life, scarce refined into simplicity, ever invites a new point of view: many an essay on social reform is conceived in the woods.

What pleasure can equal that of paddling along streams and lakes

amid forests unknown to canoe or hunter, or woodsman; of disturbing a repose so ancient, so stupendous! The giant awakes from his mighty sleep: by countless indications he expresses it. His thousand sentinels tremble and quiver and lisp with their myriad lips the message of your profanation; his attendant beasts draw back deeper into his shaggy folds; his birds both great and small—the emblem of his freedom and his choir by night and day—jar with discordant notes of surprise and mistrust. The giant never more may sleep; unending wakefulness must end in decrepitude at last, and no forest voice in all its purity be heard.

And those long days of paddling under alternating shade of passing cloud or friendly slope, or fully exposed to wind and sun; drawing slowly up to points whose sentinel trees beckon to you for miles, only to pass you on to the next, far descried in the distance; slipping over shallows, past picturesque groups of cattle massed on sloping plaques of green, and trees ramparted by cloud on blue; rousing great cranes which sail deridingly near you and away across the intervening wood to settle among the reeds of the stream's next bend (often enough indicating your general direction)—days of joyous expansive life, of myriad impressions of fancy, colour, shape!

Noon brings satiety of exertion for the time; hunger, importunate, demands a stop. This is the lazy interval of the canoeing day—it is the seductive Lotus-land of ease, of toil forgotten because much has been accomplished, and time or end presses not; of sweet languor so soft that sleep would deaden it into forgetfulness, but which the day-dream heightens into phantasy of whimsical, toying, far-faring thought. Will those summer flies, with forward-steady droning flight, never move on? Poised there, wings humming into haze, moving neither forward nor backward—are they lost souls straining ever thus on some bootless quest? Alas, no!