

GETTING CLOSE TO NATURE

As One Who Understands It, John Burroughs Writes of the Beauty of the Country.

To take the birds out of my life were the lopping off so many branches from the tree; there is that less surface of leafage to absorb the sunlight and bring my spirits in contact with the vital currents. We cannot pursue any natural study with love and enthusiasm without the object of it becoming a part of our lives. The birds, the flowers, the trees, the rocks, all become linked with our lives and hold the key to our thoughts and emotions. I certainly have found "good in everything"—in all natural processes and products—not the "good" of the Sunday school books, but the good of natural law and order, the good of that system of things out of which we came and which is the source of our health and strength. It is good that fire should burn, even if it consumes your house; it is good that force should crush, even if it crushes you; it is good that rain should fall, even if it destroys your crops or floods your land.

Plague and pestilence attest the constancy of natural law. They set us to creating our relations to outward nature. Only in a live universe could disease and death prevail. Death is a phase of life, a redistributing of the type. Decay is another kind of growth. The show and splendor of great houses, elaborate furnishings, stately halls, oppress me. I impose upon me. They fix the attention upon false values, they set up a false standard of beauty; they stand between me and the real feeders of character and thought. A man needs a good roof over his head winter and summer, and a good chimney and a big woodpile in winter. The more open his four walls are the more fresh air he will get, and the longer he will live.—John Burroughs, in the Century.

FALSE IDEAS OF PERFECTION

Absurd Development of Muscle Has Little Part in Production of Perfect Athlete.

A recent portrait of a lumpy athlete, who invites others, and not without success, to try his system of physical development, shows that the false idea of physical perfection which obtained for so many years, and which demanded huge and knobby muscles of its disciples, has not yet quite died out. This type of manly perfection, once useful perhaps to hang armor upon, was thought to possess the sanction of the golden age of artistry when the lubberly Farnese Hercules came to light, to be hailed as a supreme product of the Greeks. We know it now for an example of decadent Greek taste, fit companion of the absurd and sensational Laocoon. It is naught but a type of the strong man of vaudeville with his clumsy masses of beef and his brain of a spoiled child, fit only to push his awkward dumb bells into the air, an enviable sum of achievement truly after a lifetime of work by a civilized human being. No less than strength, are speed and grace demanded of the ideal athletes, likewise a face of refinement and intelligence to tell of a brain within to comprehend art, music and literature, and the ability to plan victories either of peace or war. Look upon the Apollo Belvidere, which embodies the true dreams of health and mental and physical efficiency, with its face of exquisite beauty above a form whose lines are tranquil poetry, yet shadow forth their readiness to start into sinewy vigor when the call for action comes. Even the Indian, the perfect savage, never resembled the Farnese monstrosity, the emulators of which find their place in modern life so much better filled by the derick.—New York Medical Record.

CLING TO OLD DESIGNATIONS

Sporting Language That Was Used in the Middle Ages is Still Good Form Today.

Much of the language used in various sports is our inheritance from the middle ages. Different kinds of beasts when in companies were distinguished by their own particular epithet, which was supposed to be in some manner descriptive of the habits of the animals. To use the wrong form of these words subjected the would-be sportsman to ridicule.

Many of these terms have passed away, but some of them are still retained. This list from the middle ages is still good usage today. A "pride of lions," a "lope" of leopards, a "herd" of harts and of all sorts of deer; a "bevy" of roses, a "sloth" of bears, a "singular" of bears, a "soudner" of wild swine, a "route" of wolves, a "hurras" of horses, a "ray" of colts, a "stud" of mares, a "team" of asses, a "burden" of mules, a "tenm" of oxen, a "drove" of kine, a "flock" of sheep, a "trite" of goats, a "skulk" of foxes, a "down" of hares, a "next" of rabbits, a "clowder" of cats, a "shrewdness" of apes and a "labor" of moles. Also of animals when they retired to rest, a hart was said to be "harbored," a roebuck "bedded," a hare "formed," a rabbit "set." Two greyhounds were called a "brace," but two harriers were called a "couple." There was also a "mute" of hounds for a number, a "kennel" of raches, a "litter" of whelps and a "cowardice" of cats.

This kind of descriptive phraseology was not confined to birds and beasts, but was extended to the human species and the various propensities, natures and callings.

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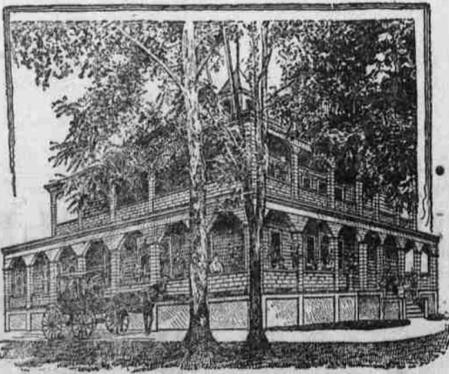


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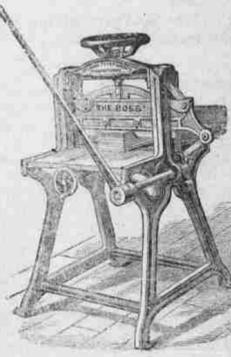
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