

PART I, CHAPTER VIII

Review

This chapter was cut for the third (1909) edition, although about half of the text was rearranged, revised, and worked into the first chapter of Part II. While the revised text shows a refinement of Bailey's thought, and the chapter may have always arguably been a better stylistic fit for Part II than for Part I, some of the rhetorical force is lost in the transfer. This presents in full the brief, lyrical chapter as it appeared in the first edition.

IN the increasing complexities of our lives we need nothing so much as simplicity and repose. In city or country or on the sea, nature is the surrounding condition. It is the universal environment. Since we cannot escape this condition, it were better that we have no desire to escape. It were better that we know the things, small and great, which make up this environment, and that we live with them in harmony, for all things are of kin; then shall we love and be content.

All men love nature if they but knew it. The methods and fashions of our living obscure the universal passion. The more perfect the machinery

of our lives the more artificial do they become. Teaching is ever more methodical and complex. The pupil is impressed with the vastness of knowledge and the importance of research. This is well; but at some point in the school-life there should be the opening of the understanding to the simple wisdom of the fields. One's happiness depends less on what he knows than on what he feels.

There are men and women who pursue science for science's sake without thought of its relation to human lives. They are the explorers of the intellectual sphere. Immensely do they extend our horizon. They add to the store of subject-matter. They make progress possible. But these persons must always be the few. They are a professional class. Most persons desire those things which have relation to the ideals of living. To them, science as science is of little moment. They cannot pursue it. It is dry. But it may be made a means of giving them closer touch with nature. If pursued too far or in too great detail, it may repel rather than attract. What we teach as science drives many a person from nature. We must reach the people; but we can reach them only by looking from their point of view. Most persons cannot be investigators. In the school-life there must come a reaction from the too exclusive view-point of science.

In the early years we are not to teach nature as science, we are not to teach it primarily for method or for drill: we are to teach it for living and for loving—and this is nature-study. On these points I make no compromise.

The best living must always be a striving for ideals. The day of the idealist is not passed. It is here. We must not allow the phenomenal development of our material progress to obscure it. We must rise to higher ideals. We must educate the child for the life of the next generation. A good teacher has the gift of prophecy. The twentieth century is coming in with a spiritual awakening. One sign of this awakening is the outlook nature-ward. The growing passion for country life is a soul-movement.

More and more, in this time of books and reviews, do we need to take care that we think our own thoughts. We need to read less and to think more. We need personal, original contact with objects and events. We need to be self-poised, self-reliant. The strong man entertains himself with his own thoughts. No person should rely solely on another person for his happiness.

The power that moves the world is the power of the teacher.