

of the British Isles to be told that the building stone is of such softness that one with a pen-knife might cut out the key of the arch of the old Brig o' Doon, and that the secret of nature in England is "granite grown ripe and mellow, and issuing in grass and verdure." He carries the New World along with him into the Old, and compares the two in detail. He notes the greater horizontal spread of leafage under the less fervid sun of England; the bumble-bee is more hirsute than its American cousin; the trout are less beautiful than those in the brooks at home; the wild flowers are more abundant, but inferior to our own in point of variety and delicate sylvan grace; he hears "little birds with big voices," brilliant songsters, but wanting in the qualities of wildness and plaintiveness which distinguish the songs of our native birds.

Some time since Mr. Burroughs took to task several of our poets for certain alleged infractions of the letter of the law according to the naturalist's rubric. It is pleasant to find this flagellator of the peccant muses relaxing from his severity, as appears by some later comments on the subject. If any one have doubts as to Mr. Burroughs's genial attitude toward the poets, let it be observed with what zest the descriptions of the British nature-loving bards are verified by our rambler through their haunts. Wordsworth's golden daffodils, Tennyson's speedwell's darling blue, Burns's modest crimson-tipped flower, Wordsworth's skylark, and even poor Keats's nightingale wooing to oblivion, are tenderly identified with the living bloom or bird. Yet withal, our pride for what is our own in nature receives a justifiable gratification when Mr. Burroughs confesses to have found the British muse of rural poetry "a gentle, wholesome, slightly stupid divinity of the fields"; and when, touching upon the vaster woodland privilege of our poets, he attributes to such of our nature-poetry as is not imitative a "piny, woodsy flavor that is unknown in the older literatures." It is for the grateful reader, inhaling the pungent and invigorating aroma of "A Spray of Pine," to add John Burroughs to the number of our poets who have caught the desiderated balsamic flavor. Poet also, in spirit if not in metrical form, when he chants of the sea — its sounds, waves, breath, and its dual nature of suavity and

cruelty. His resonant notes on this theme make a great proportion of the scannable rhapsodies we have heard about the sea seem thin and artificial.

It is not alone the wholesome and alluring tang of wildness, nor the fine observing faculty bent upon nature and her operations, nor yet the sturdy and stirring quality of his style, that so wins us to Mr. Burroughs. 'Tis the strong heart-beat, the generous glow of sympathy felt in all he writes, that completes the charm for us. The author of "Winter Neighbors," who, sitting in his rustic study, and hearing the soft foot of the little gray rabbit under the floor, thinks he feels her good-will and hopes that she feels his, surely meets all requisitions of the great prayer test —

"He prayeth best who loveth best  
All creatures great and small."

He would seem a true naturalist, in the royal sense of the word, who reckons man as the crowning-piece of his studies in nature. Burroughs should be loved wherever home and homely life are loved, for the beautiful things he says in "Roof-Tree" about the new house and its building,—"Another four walls to keep the great cosmic out-of-doors at bay," and "The heart moves in long before the workmen move out."

It is a fashion to speak of Thoreau and Burroughs in one connection; but when we have taken account of a common love of nature, a common assiduity and painstaking in natural-history study, there remains a wide world of difference in the moods and motives of the two. Thoreau, it will be remembered, had lost a bay horse, a hound, and a turtle-dove, clew to which no inquiring of travelers availed to discover. Burroughs has no fugitive or fugacious property of this sort. He is rich in tangible, present having. Thoreau heard for years a night-warbler whose species he was unable (or cared not) to distinguish. There will always be a few who, listening at the suggestion of Thoreau, will catch the strains of this Arabian bird embosomed in night and austere serenity, but more will hear with Burroughs the multitudinous carols in the sunny fields, or along the border of the breezy woods.

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