

THE ZEPHYR

Monthly Bulletin of the Outdoor Nature Club of Houston, Texas.

September, 1926

Vol. 3, No. 9

A placid lake, a flowing stream,
A rustic hut beneath the pines;
Where mossy branches shade the beam
And grapes and tangy muscadines
And white magnolias gleam
Amid the leaves. No jarring sound
Mars Nature's calmly restful mood.
Like bearded sages gathered round,
The ancient oaks in quiet brood
O'er Nature's guarded ground.

It is now a universally accepted principle that the natural resources of America are the property and heritage of the whole people, not of a single generation, nor of a particular group or class of citizens. While all share in the responsibility as custodians of this national treasure, and all have equal rights in its wise and economical use, there are numerous divisions of our national wealth for each of which a certain type or group of citizens must be held particularly accountable. For instance, the sportsman, though not having sole dominion over the wild life of America, has from the beginning drawn heavily upon the teeming wealth of our woods and waters, and so he is liable in heavy measure for the perpetuation of this part of our natural resources. Whether or not he fully discharged this duty in the past is no longer a matter of importance: The sportsman is awake now, and is taking on his share of the burden.

But what about the wild flowers, and ornamental trees and shrubs? If the sportsmen chiefly are responsible for the game birds, animals and fishes, then surely the women bear a correspondingly heavy responsibility in regard to those wilderness assets that affect our happiness and welfare in an esthetic sense. The women of America have done splendid work in every field of conservation except that one that lies nearest their own doors. If the snowy robe of the dogwood disappears from our spring woodlands; if the gentian, the lady-slipper and the arbutus bloom no more; if the gleaming, symbolic American holly follows the passenger pigeon into the mists of oblivion - then upon the women must fall the blame, for theirs are the eager hands that gather in the dogwood's alluring loveliness, theirs the eyes that delight to gaze upon Yuletide wreaths and holly boughs draped in elaborate display. Whether the garlands and bouquets that add charm to the home shall in the future be gathered from our gardens or torn from the unprotected woodland, it is up to the women to say.

Already many representative groups of American women have taken a definite stand in favor of saving the wilderness beauties, a statement issued by the Daughters of the American Revolution being particularly noteworthy. But there is need of general, concerted action everywhere, if much good is to be accomplished. Judging from past experience, lovers of nature have no doubt that such action will soon be forthcoming, and that the women of Texas, of the South, and of America, will continue to lead the way on the upward path of conservation.

Clippings and Comments.

The Ozark Wild Life Association has been formed with its first purpose to cooperate with the state and national authorities in protecting the colorful wild life of the hills, and with the dream of a future great plant preserve in the heart of the Ozarks, with every native tree, shrub, vine, fern and flower, growing upon it under natural conditions. Plans are already taking shape for the purchase of a tract where the Ozark Wild Life Preserve will be developed. -- Nature Magazine.

Many Audubon societies, outdoor clubs, wild flower preservation societies, and other bodies interested in wild life conservation, own tracts of wilderness devoted to the perpetuation of native birds, animals and plants in their natural environment. Such privately controlled preserves, held and administered for a special purpose by forces interested primarily in that one purpose, are generally more effective than public parks, which must meet a diversity of needs - educational, social and recreational - and which are subject to radical changes in character in the course of their proper use by the public. All public-spirited citizens should be interested in the establishment of ample parks and recreation ground but the preservation of wilderness areas in a natural state, primarily as treasuries of native species of plant and animal life, is a special duty of lovers of nature, individually and collectively. As an organization with higher aims than the mere entertainment of its members, the Outdoor Nature Club is undertaking the task of establishing such a nature sanctuary in some one of the comparatively unchanged woodland areas still existing in the vicinity of Houston. This important work has been entrusted to a special committee, and it is expected that reports showing definite progress will be submitted at future meetings.

If the Waltonian ideal is to be perpetuated, the study of conservation should be introduced in the public schools to inculcate in the minds of the youngsters a knowledge of the necessity of conserving our natural recreational areas. It will be impossible for the coming generations to understand and love the out-of-doors unless its beauties and advantages are pointed out to them early in life. Some states are recognizing the value of this early education, and are including conservation as a public school study, with good results. -- Outdoor America (Izaak Walton League).

A carefully planned course in nature study has been introduced in the Houston public schools, and with the work in the hands of interested and capable teachers, our young people will have every opportunity to learn about the influence Mother Nature exerts upon the lives of individuals and nations and the importance of conserving her wondrous gifts.

The Outdoor Nature Club joins in extending a cordial welcome to the American Institute of Park Executives, the American Park Society, and the American Association of Zoological Parks and Aquariums, whose members will meet in convention here in October.