

T H E Z E P H Y R

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-- Trees --

I think that I shall never see
A poem lovely as a tree.

A tree whose hungry mouth is prest
Against the earth's sweet flowing breast;

A tree that looks at God all day,
And lifts her leafy arms to pray;

A tree that may in Summer wear
A nest of robins in her hair;

Upon whose bosom snow has lain;
Who intimately lives with rain.

Poems are made by fools like me,
But only God can make a tree.

-- Joyce Kilmer.

Holly Conservation.

Members of the Outdoor Nature Club have reason to feel encouraged over the interest that is being manifested in the club's campaign in behalf of holly conservation. Expressions of approval and offers of cooperation are coming in from persons and organizations in all parts of the country. Most effective work is being done by the Wild Flower Preservation Society of America. The Garden Club of America is also using its influence in awakening public opinion, and the American florists and horticulturists, at their recent convention, went on record as being eager to stress the use of flowers, cultivated plants and other substitutes for holly in Christmas decoration.

Among other societies which have commended the purpose of this campaign are the National Congress of Parents and Teachers, the Girl Scouts, the Associated Mountaineering Clubs of North America, the American Institute of Park Executives, and numerous Audubon Societies, Federations of Women's Clubs, Civic Clubs, and scientific institutions.

Valuable suggestions and cooperation have been received from Dr. John C. Morriam, President of the Carnegie Institution of Washington, and from Dr. Henry Fairfield Osborn, President of the American Museum of Natural History. When the big trees, those ancient monarchs of the western forests, seemed doomed to disappear before the advance of industry, Dr. Osborn started a powerful movement to save many of them for generations to come with the slogan "Save the Redwoods!" Fully understanding the present status of the holly tree, Dr. Osborn now urges the nationwide use of the slogan "Save the Holly!", in a letter approving the Outdoor Nature Club's work.

With such general approval, it would seem that the rescue of the holly tree from impending oblivion is almost assured, but such is far from being true. The use of holly at Yuletide is a custom which has existed for ages, beginning at a time when trees were to men almost as the immeasurable vastness of the seas is to the trickle of a leaky faucet. A custom of such long duration, through generation after generation, becomes so deeply rooted that it is difficult to stop it even for the comparatively brief period necessary to work out a satisfactory solution of the problem it forces upon us. A closed season of just a few years, enforced by public opinion, will stop the rapid disappearance of our Christmas symbol and give opportunity for the propagation of holly in sufficient quantities to provide a wreath for every home, without the necessity of raiding our woodlands and destroying trees more valuable as features of our natural scenery over a long period of years than as Yuletide decorations useful only for a few short days.

A Timely Thought

One of the big problems of this country is the control of insect pests that are causing millions of dollars of loss annually to farmers, orchardists and forest owners. It is generally conceded that, apart from the natural parasites of these destructive insects, the best ally of our producers of food and wood are the insectivorous birds. It is absolutely necessary that bird sanctuaries be established if we are to increase bird life in this country, and these areas should be publicly owned. The town forest is an ideal bird sanctuary because it is permanent. The public learns to know the birds, and a sanctuary in each community would not only educate the public to the value of bird life but it would insure a proper distribution of these feathered friends of the producers. -- Harris A. Reynolds, of American Forestry Assn., before the National Conference on Outdoor Recreation.

An Example We can Follow

On the outskirts of London, and within half an hour's journey from the city, is one of the most beautiful bits of woodland in England. Few Americans, or Londoners either, have ever visited the place, or even know of its existence.

It is a bird sanctuary, a veritable land of song, which is carefully fenced and guarded by keepers night and day, and where many kinds of British birds live and nest unharmed. The wood lies in the Brent Valley, and was purchased for London two years ago and established as a permanent memorial to Gilbert White, the author of "History of Selbourne", by the Selbourne Society of London. The sanctuary, however, has been in existence for just twenty-one years, and in its nineteen acres, in the boughs of its many oak trees and the coppices of hazel, owls, willow warblers, bluetits, goldfinches, nightingales, blackcaps and many other birds may be seen.

Were it not for this sanctuary, many of the shy types of birds, the nightingales particularly, would have deserted the ever-growing city of London. -- Nature Magazine.

Houston's Opportunity

It is rather difficult to believe that there are many adults, as well as innumerable children, in Houston, who hardly know the difference between a wren and a buzzard, who cannot distinguish between a wild grape vine and a cluster of poison ivy, and who might easily mistake a polecat for a chipmunk. Studying nature out of books is like learning to swim on dry land. One could no more enjoy the beauty of wild flowers or the color and grace of wild birds by visiting the litter-strewn picnic grounds about our city than he could learn to play golf on the tower of the city hall. The natural beauties and attractions of our city are factors in its growth which rank with its mild climate and splendid industrial advantages. This is clearly shown by the recent development of suburban residence additions preserving the natural beauty of each tract as a special feature. However, only a few of our citizens are privileged to avail themselves of an opportunity for a home environment such as only nature, with its unequalled sources of rest, interest and inspiration, can provide. Nor can many of us afford the time and expense necessary for an annual trip to our great national parks, towards which millions of tourists journey every summer. But we must heed the call of the outdoors that is so strong within us. Fortunately, the foresight of our municipal administration has caused provision to be made for this natural attribute and privilege of all Americans. Along the North bank of Buffalo River stretches our recently acquired Memorial Park. A large part of it is already cleared, and offers ample space for fine golf courses, baseball diamonds and recreation grounds. The remainder is covered by an almost virgin forest, rich in native plants and inhabited by a great variety of interesting wild creatures. It is hoped that proper steps will be taken to assure the perpetuation of this untouched bit of Southern woodland, the preservation of its original vegetation, and the increase of its wild life.

"In a great democracy of free people, the protection of wild life and the preservation of all other natural resources, which under-lye the national prosperity and happiness, must depend finally, as does the stability of the government itself, upon the support and willing service of every citizen." -Theodore Roosevelt.

 "SAVE THE HOLLY!"

Why bother about saving the holly?

Because it is an integral part of the national heritage, passed into our hands by our fore-fathers. In mythology, in history, and in art, it has gladdened mankind with its beauty and symbolism. Through its association with Christmas, it symbolizes the finest impulses of the human heart * the spirit of charity and brotherhood - which is in reality the spirit of our great nation towards the other peoples of the world: "Peace on earth, good will to men." The holly tree is not ours. It is a precious possession of the whole American people, and we of the present day have no more right to use and destroy it than we have to sack the treasury, pillage the art museums and desecrate the shrines and monuments entrusted to our care

Is the holly really in danger of extermination?

The New York Botanical Garden reports that the holly has already entirely disappeared in several states where once it was abundant. There is still some holly in the heavily wooded regions of the southern states, but automobiles, good roads and human greed will wipe this out in an incredibly short space of time. It was necessary to pass strong laws in order to save some wild game for the sportsmen of this and future days, although only a portion of our population follows the sport of the gun and game birds can take wing and fly to any place of refuge they may find. But there is no law protecting the holly, and no escape for it. Firmly rooted in its native soil, its gleaming foliage amid the barren woods invites the attack of every thoughtless person - man, woman or child - and holly gatherers pass in endless processions from every city and town in the holly regions. Those who cannot go out and wield the ax for themselves purchase holly from the bough-laden trucks of holly vendors. Carload after carload of holly is shipped to the larger cities, and whole groves of trees are laid low to decorate dance halls, department stores, and even churches, for a few short days. The amount of holly required for the usual decoration of a large room or banquet hall nature cannot replace again in five hundred years. Can anyone doubt the result of such universal, unremitting devastation?

Can the holly be saved?

To answer in the negative would be to doubt the intelligence and determination of the American people. As mentioned on another page of this bulletin, organizations and individuals in all parts of the country have united in this effort to "Save the holly". Once the situation is thoroughly understood - everywhere - the bedecking of buildings with holly branches will meet with general condemnation, and the display of holly in homes will be recognized as an indication of coarse selfishness and disregard for the rights and opinions of society. After all, there are many substitutes which can be used without despoiling the woods. Those of us who cannot get along without the holly can plant a holly tree of our own, and have its cheery, living form, instead of a lot of torn, withered branches.

"SAVE THE HOLLY!"

During the past season, many sections of the Southwest have suffered ruinous visitations of grasshoppers. Literally thousands of dollars have been invested in poisons and labor to overcome the greedy hordes, and yet the toll they have taken has been great indeed. The simple truth is, poison is but a poor substitute for the millions of shore birds, such as curlews and plovers, which used to subsist largely on grasshoppers, and whose sharp appetites were an unwritten guarantee against widespread damage. We, the people of the United States, have played havoc with our precious heritage. We have slaughtered our birds and animals and felled our forests and permitted pollution to kill the fish in our streams. We have boasted time and again of our greatness, and, boasting, have lost sight of the fact that God's works are His memorials, dedicated not exclusively to us, for our vanity and selfish delight, but to us for our reasonable enjoyment and for the benefit of those to come when we are gone. -- John William Stayton, in Holland's Magazine.

Our next outing, set for Sunday, December 21st, will be the most important field trip of the year. On this occasion, our club will join in a nation-wide bird census, conducted by the Natl. Association of Audubon Societies. The list of birds seen will be sent in to Headquarters for comparison with other lists from all parts of the country and publication in the official magazine, Bird-Lore. Our census must be complete, and to properly represent Houston, should be one of the best sent in. For this reason, all members, and especially those interested in birds, are urged to go on this trip, equipped with field-glasses. Details of the trip are being worked out by the Outing Committee. It will be in the morning, rather early, as that is the time birds are most active. Members who expect to participate in this woodland census will please get in touch with the secretary by Saturday, the 20th, so that all details can be worked out in time. Our Christmas bird census last year was very successful, more than 250 birds of 40 different varieties being seen.

"...Here were scores of feathered friends, migrants and residents, lively and chipper, retiring and plaintive, gaudy and gay, musical and raucus, full-throated and thin-toned, tiny and great-winged, yet all birds, caressed by the breezes, chilled by the "northers", whipped by the passing storm, frenched and sometimes frosted, harassed by man and beast, admired by the artist and the nature-lover, and all of them God's gift to us -- Our Christmas Birds." (L.H. Daingerfield).

The kodak is helping to save the wilderness. It is one of the most influential factors in promoting a rational and refined view of the flowers, the birds and the trees. It throws the robe of beauty artistically over everything. Through it the search is led for Nature's best; it reveals fairyland and develops an appreciation of the beautiful. The carrier of the kodak finds inspiration in Nature's garden and unconsciously becomes its protector. The kodak carrier is never cursed by those who follow after. It requires more skill to focus a kodak than a rifle upon big game; the triumphs of picture taking are infinitely greater than the triumphs of the trigger. Picture taking will help soften and subdue the savage heart of man; it is destined to displace the rifle in outdoor literature, and will help the wilderness win our hearts. Some time the rifle's deadly echo will fade for the last time from the endless melody of the wild, while Nature's varied bugle song will ebb and flow on forever. -- Enos A. Mills, in "Rocky Mountain National Park."