
THE NATURALIST AND THE CRICKET

There was a great naturalist, who had lived most of his life in the quietness and fastnesses of the forests, amid streams and rivers, trees, brush, mountains, valleys, and their inhabitants the birds, fishes and animals. In course of time certain affairs brought him to New York, and while there, a number of his admirers seized upon the opportunity to show their appreciation of his work by tendering him a dinner which was served in one of the great dining rooms of New York's greatest hostelry. The dinner, from a culinary viewpoint, was a work of art, and from any standpoint was a great success, but it was quite easily noticed that the guest of honor was not at ease amid the music, the noise inside and outside of the hotel, the hustle and bustle of the waiters as they moved about, and the rattle of dishes, for it was a far cry from the stillness of the forest home which he loved so much. Then suddenly his face brightened, and amid all this noisy noise, drawing to him the attention of everyone at the table, he said, "Oh listen to the cricket?" For a moment his hosts sat quite silent, for none of them believed that the chirp of a cricket could be heard where there was so much noise, even if such a thing as a cricket might be present. They uttered mild protests, then laughed a bit and told him he was "seeing things." However, the guest insisted that what he said was true and after a moment more of good natured banter he excused himself for a moment, left the table, walked over to the other side of the room, located the cricket in the wainscoting by the window, and taking out a pocket knife, pried the boards slightly apart and produced the cricket which he bore back to the table with evident delight. In the face of this proof there was nothing more to be said, and now instead of making fun of him as before, they waxed fulsome in praise of him who had been able to do that which to them seemed to be quite a marvelous thing.

This very modest man, after enduring the praise for some time and deploring it, said, "Why that is nothing. You see I have been

living in the midst of these little fellows and other denizens of the woods, and have become so accustomed to their voices and sounds that I can detect them where perhaps others cannot, but because I have thus cultivated my senses it doesn't follow that yours have not been equally cultivated though doubtless not in exactly the same way, and I shall prove this to you. I have cultivated my senses in one way, all of you in another way, but both equally so though along different lines,—mine along the lines of such as you have seen and yours along commercial lines. Now watch me." At this point he took from his pocket a silver quarter and spinning it in the air let it fall upon the marble floor and at the ring of the metal nearly all in the room turned their heads to see who had dropped the coin. He had proved his point. As the naturalist had trained his senses so that he was able to hear the cricket, so the others had trained theirs so they readily detected the ring of the coin.

Taking this incident as an example, it may be seen readily that we must train our senses spiritually if we would glimpse the things of Spirit and the spiritual kingdom, and this may be done even though the distractions of the material world are pestering us and disturbing us more or less constantly.

David sang, "Oh taste and see that the Lord is good." Job said, "I have heard of Thee by the hearing of the ear but now mine eye seeth Thee." Jesus was aware of the sweet aroma of Spirit. He felt the presence of God. He heard the voice of God saying, "This is my beloved son in whom I am well pleased." Paul too heard the word, "Saul, Saul, why persecutest thou me?" The Bible records many instances of the voice of God to the prophets who said "Thus saith the Lord . . ." or "The word of the Lord came unto me saying . . ." so and so. David sang, "He (God) restoreth my soul" (spiritual sense), and when God or Mind restores our spiritual sense, we hear, feel, taste, see, smell, and are conscious of the Kingdom of God and the things therein.

This cultivating of the spiritual senses was stressed by Jesus in no mincing words, for he referred to it as "the one thing needful." The occasion was when he was visiting at the home of his friend Lazarus and his two sisters, Mary and Martha. Martha, it is related, was "dull of hearing," while Mary was open minded. The latter was

sitting at the feet of her friend and counsellor, Jesus, listening to him as he spoke of the Kingdom of God and the things thereof. Mary was not only cultivating her spiritual sense of hearing as she listened intently to what he said, but without any doubt of successful contradiction she was trying to feel the presence of God, fairly tasting of His goodness, and endeavoring to see through spiritual sense those things of the spiritual kingdom of which the Master was talking so convincingly. At this point Martha broke in and said, "Lord dost thou not care that my sister hath left me to serve alone? Bid her therefore that she help me." Whereupon Jesus answered, "Martha, Martha, thou art careful and troubled about many things: but one thing is needful; and Mary hath chosen that good part, which shall not be taken away from her." This then would seem to be conclusive evidence that the cultivation of the spiritual senses was the "one thing needful," for surely that was what Mary was doing and this occurrence can lend itself to no other interpretation.

Pre-eminently this is what Jesus had marked ability to do. He cultivated his spiritual senses. He cultivated them at the expense of what we are pleased to call the material senses, which in fact are not senses at all, but non-senses, and just to the degree that the spiritual senses govern, they replace the so-called material senses. As he perceived the things of the spiritual universe the material sense of things disappeared. Jesus acted from the standpoint of the spiritual, or viewed things from the standpoint of God, Mind. He taught that "God is not the God of the dead, but of the living, for all live unto Him." So from that viewpoint of God, or Spirit, there were no dead, no sick, no storm, no want, no trouble. This was Jesus' viewpoint and where others believed they saw death stalking about, Jesus saw life. Where those who failed to use their spiritual senses saw a storm, Jesus with his spiritual senses saw peace. He saw health where others believed sickness was present, and where the others saw hunger facing them, Jesus saw a great abundance of what was needed, and so he was able to say, "Peace be still," "Sit down and be fed" (to thousands), "Take up thy bed and walk," and "Lazarus come forth," and all these things were seen to come to pass—not of course was it because he said so that these things

were so, but it was because these things were so that he was able to say so, for they were the truth of the Kingdom of God perceived by him with his spiritual senses, which others not having cultivated were unable to behold, just as the others about the room of the hotel were unable to hear the voice of the cricket easily perceived by the naturalist who had cultivated those senses which enabled him to do so.

This then is our task, the “one thing needful,”—to cultivate our spiritual senses. To do this we must go about it in the very simplest manner imaginable by using these spiritual senses to perceive first the lesser things of the Kingdom of God, and growing gradually to perceive the greater things of that Kingdom. Just as one cultivates his musical senses by learning the notes first, which are the primitive or simple things of the kingdom of music; then practising and practising until slowly but surely one perceives the great themes, symphonies, motifs and chords, and is able to play a Beethoven sonata or a Bach fugue, so one must cultivate the spiritual senses and do so by practising the primitive things or simple things of the Kingdom of God, the notes, as it were, and gradually after constant practice of these lesser things of the Kingdom of Spirit will the greater things of that Kingdom duly appear. Did not Jesus himself say, “If ye then be not able to do that thing which is least, why take ye thought for the rest?”

“If thou hast run with the footmen, and they have wearied thee, then how canst thou contend with horses? and if in the land of peace, wherein thou trustedst, and they wearied thee, then how wilt thou do in the swelling of Jordan?”