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A handsome heater.

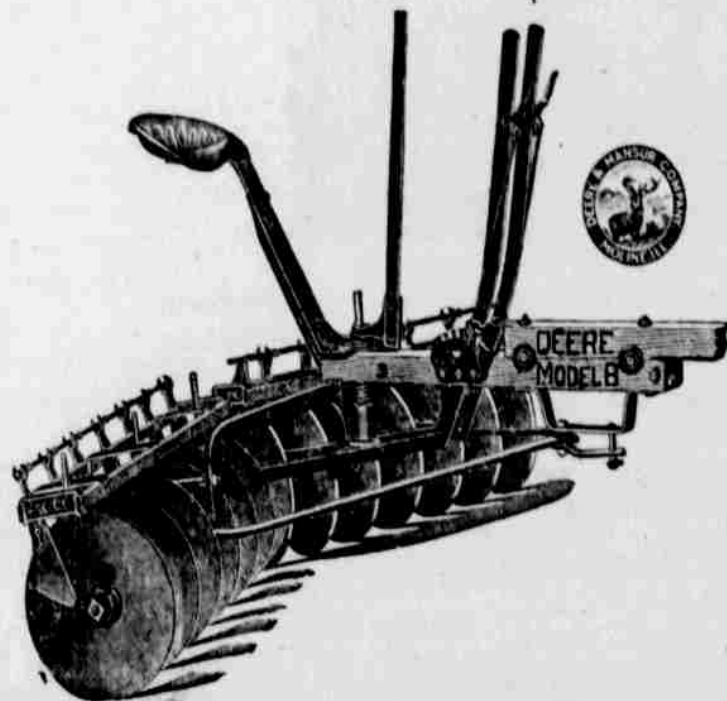
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The John Deere Disc Harrow

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WINEGAR & LORENCE, Monmouth

Reveries in the Woodland

Theme of a sermon delivered Sunday, prompted by a vacation experience.

Weary with life's perpetual struggle I turned to Nature for recreation, and found the object of my search and something more. How good it seemed there alone in the great primal woods to float on an ocean of dreams and simply rest. But soon from the chaos of my languid fancies ideas began to clothe themselves with form, and all the forest had a voice, and also a message. I found "tongues in trees, books, in running brooks, sermons in stones, and good in everything."

The idea first to unfold itself before my mind was the apparent heartlessness of Nature. Why should that brown thrush up there in the tree top pour out rich melody when my heart was torn with grief and loss? And even as I looked, with tear dimmed eyes, a hawk pounced upon the little creature and literally tore him to pieces. Was there to be no protest against this outrage? None! Save the splash of a few drops of blood on the sear leaves below there was only silence. With eyes averted, and a Sphinx-like mystery on her face, Madam Nature sat beside her temple door, absolutely indifferent. Out yonder her puppets creep and crawl, and fly and grow, knowing one reckless law—the survival of the fittest. But, after all, there is profound wisdom in the law, despite its seeming heartlessness. It has given to civilization many valued treasures.

Dawn in the woods was a

revelation. The birth of day made all life appear fresh and new, as when from whirling star dust God called the world into being. The faint twitter of birds awakened me from dreamless slumber to witness the opening of the flood gates of morning light. Yesterday's clouds and yesterday's bitterness were quite forgotten. I lived in the time that was mine to enjoy, and discovered the secret of a happy life.

With wide-eyed wonder I gazed at the giant trees, as they stood out sharply against the background of night. The "king of day" had illuminated the tallest trees first. Well, men are like trees. Some are tall and straight, overlooking multitudes; others are low, and crooked, groveling in the underbrush of life, content with mere existence. He who by thought, and aspiration, and concrete deeds vaults highest into the azure dome of truth shall be first to see, and shall longest enjoy things really worth while.

Looking from pillars to rafters and beams of God's first temple, I saw that men are like trees in their interlaced, interlocked interests. It's something to me if my neighbor is low and base, or good and noble. His weakness hinders, his strength helps, me.

Noting that a number of trees were lying like mourners, prone upon the ground, I began to investigate the probable cause of their fall. The first tree inspected had broken because the heart was badly decayed. The individual, too, whose heart is morally rotten will fail to stand before

the storms of life. Another tree had gone down because it was shallow rooted. It had evidently been a rapid grower, but had sought "lines of least resistance". In sharp contrast there was an oak, near at hand, that had been a "plodder," pausing, perhaps for a decade, while its roots encircled a boulder. Thus anchored it stood erect, defying the winds. Woe to the shallow rooted, and the morally rotten in the forest of life!

And then I saw an aged monarch, in the last stages of decay, surrounded by scores of infant trees. He had come to his death in a good old age, revered by all the neighbor trees. Had his existence been in vain? Ask the young trees. It is not a long reach to a helpful lesson just here. The life well-lived will never cease, but will reappear in other forms. Somebody will climb upward, and flourish in God's pure air and sunlight because we lived, and loved, and died.

A gust of wind carrying downy seeds past me provoked further reflection. Nature is extremely clever in carrying out her purposes. With hooks and sails and wings of wind she scatters far and wide her varied forms of life, locked close in seeds. You shall not fail. The good you seek is seeking you. No thought, or word, or deed is lost. No well-lived life is spent without avail. The Creator still reigns.

Plunging into a mountain stream that flowed through the forest, I shouted aloud from the very joy of living. I had found a fountain of youth, and felt strong for any burden, braced for any effort. Then I listened and heard the rushing waters sing, "You, too, shall go on forever, and shall forever be glad in ageless life".

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