

End piece

Louise Beebe Wilder

It has been said by an eminent explorer that adventures are an indication of incompetency, of failure to foresee and provide against all possible contingencies; but he fails to point out that it is precisely this failure to anticipate every eventuality that makes adventure irresistible to certain minds, that provides the age-old impulse to leave the beaten path for new and untracked regions, geographical or mental. Were this not so, we should all be following cut and dried, or exact occupations like accountancy or compiling dictionaries.

Where there is no uncertainty, there can be no thrilling interest; never that delicious round-the-corner feeling, tingling and anticipatory, that is the portion of those

who advance, not knowing just what they are going to meet, or how they will meet it.

"Tomorrow is, ah, whose?"

That is the query that puts the eternal punch into the common round. It may be yours, it may be mine; it is ours to seek.

Nor need one fare to the far corners of the earth to find adventure. Adventure is of the mind – a mental attitude towards everyday events wherever experienced. One does not have to sit through the long night of an Antarctic winter with an Admiral Byrd to know this, or to explore uncharted airways. Adventure may be met with any day, any hour, on one's doorstep, just around the corner; it may lurk in the subway, on a bus top, in the garden. Particularly in the garden, for gardening, whether of window-ledge dimensions or a matter of acres, is fraught with adventure. It is not the peaceful pottering, "idly busy" occupation that some of its exponents would have us believe; it is a pursuit that requires patience for careful industry and research, courage for experiment and hazard; it requires of us curiosity, perseverance, hardihood.

Perhaps it will be thought that I am seeking to provide myself with an alibi when I insist that it is what I do not know rather than what I do know, that makes gardening eternally interesting to me, that keeps me turning horticultural corners after thirty years or more, and still with that alert exhilaration that I should not feel, if I knew what awaited me. If I knew more, I should enjoy less. Of this I am certain. That is not to say that one should not be ever trying to know, seeking the truth, but that one should never reach a state of serene content with one's knowledge, for that is the point where adventure ends and stagnation begins. 🌱

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View out of the wild garden at the Garden House, Buckland Monachorum

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