

Analogies
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Did you ever think how trees are like people? I wonder if that's the reason we love trees so -- feel such a sympathy and companionship with them! Do they have spirits which pervade us when we are near, or do our own dreamings and imaginings throw around them a mystic atmosphere; or is it merely to the egotism of human nature, which delights in seeing itself mirrored in all around, that we are indebted for our fancy? However that may be, certain it is that humanity is typified in the things of nature. In the gradual development, the budding and blooming, the influence of sunshine and showers; in their varied characteristics, their uniformity amid variety -- in how many aspects may we find a reflex of ourselves in trees.

Individual trees have their counterparts in individual human beings. Have we not all thus traced the likenesses of friends and acquaintances? Oftimes a beautiful, not unfrequently and amusing resemblance, is suggested.

The young pine tree, standing up green and fresh in the sunshine, against the clear blue sky, reminds us if a joyous maiden, whose bright, golden dreams are still fresh and glowing, and whose heart is "a nest of singing birds." The airy, graceful young aspen is of quite a different nature. Tossing its bright, silvery leaves in the breeze, flitting, now here, now there, with fickle, thoughtless caprice, it is the picture of a gay, saucy coquette -- such as one as *you*, my dear gentleman reader, remember to your sorrow!

The beautiful, symmetrical maple, as it rises before us, in the mellow sunlight of a summer afternoon, brings with it the vision of smiling, cheerful, blooming womanhood; the womanhood of her whom the sunshine of life has not enervated, nor its storms crushed, but to whom sunshine and storms have fulfilled their mission, in the development of the strength, harmony, and loveliness of her nature.

Those puny, slender trees along our city walks which are all boxed around, or whitewashed, which never seem to grow much, and hold more worms than leaves, suggest to our imagination similarly situated and similarly developed young men, with moustaches, scented cambric handkerchiefs, very small white hands, and soft voices, and who are seen usually in drawing rooms, by gas-light.

The Lombardy poplar forcibly reminds us of some prim, precise, elderly dame of olden times, who, having "done up" all her work, has attired herself in starched calico, clean cap, and newly ironed checked apron, and its bolt upright, darning stockings. Or -- to touch a more popular vein -- a godly collection of those same old poplars might suggest a stalwart Regiment of Unionists, armed, and ready to do battle against Secession.

How many people are just like the chestnut! Stern, sturdy old souls are they, with a rough exterior, but a sweet kernel within, if we would only have patience to penetrate the bur for it. Reader, did you ever see one of these great, wide-spreading, generous old apple trees, which boys delight in climbing, and which shower down their delicious fruit so prodigally, without thinking of some good-natured, genial, jolly old "Uncle John," who loves to play "I spy" with rosy cheeked boys and girls, and impersonate Santa Claus at Christmas?

Then there are any quantity of romantic trees, which remind us of romantic youths and maidens. There are the dark, wildly romantic, that grow on mountain tops, amid rocks, and look most natural in storms, or standing up alone with gray snow-clouds for a back-ground. And there are the light, dreamy, fanciful romantic, that shade pretty cottages, and rustle in the breeze, and are relieved in the morning by the deep blue sky dotted with fleecy white clouds, or at even by a hazy, delicately tinted sunset horizon.

But what a beautiful analogy do the fruit trees suggest; as they come to us laden with their golden offerings! The fragrant flowers of their youth have not died, but have become the fruit of their mature existence; even as the flowers of our youth -- our radiant hopes, our dreams and aspirations -- should ripen into the fruit of a noble and beautiful life.

Amid all this fresh, breezy atmosphere of youth, the massive old oak stands up a grand, well defined, living reality. As it rises before us in imagination it seems the type of a grand, noble soul, grown strong in battling evil, in contending for truth and right.

Trees, *en masse*, are like humanity *en masse*. They develop similarly -- the masses growing up, just as it happens, with a wild, careless freedom; the few carefully nourished and cultivated. The latter more symmetrical, individually more beautiful and harmonious; the former producing many of imperfect development, and many, too, of a strength, a grandeur, a higher beauty than the latter. The laws by which they are governed are similar. A sterile soil may stunt, adverse winds may bend, an uncongenial clime may blight; but in the dwarfed or crooked tree, and in the ignorant or embittered soul, we may discern the germ of what "might have been" -- the Ideal.

L.G.