

**THE HEART OF NATURE;  
OR, THE QUEST FOR  
NATURAL BEAUTY**

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The heart of nature; or, The quest for natural beauty by Sir Francis Younghusband

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**SIR FRANCIS YOUNGHUSBAND**

**THE HEART OF NATURE;  
OR, THE QUEST FOR  
NATURAL BEAUTY**



THE HEART OF NATURE

*BY THE SAME AUTHOR*

**THE HEART OF A CONTINENT**

A Narrative of Travels in Manchuria, across the Gobi Desert, through the Himalayas, the Pamirs, and Chitral, 1874-1894. With Maps and Illustrations.

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ROYAL ASIATIC  
SOCIETY

THE  
HEART OF NATURE

OR

THE QUEST FOR NATURAL BEAUTY

BY SIR FRANCIS YOUNGHUSBAND

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## PREFACE

THE value of Knowledge and Character is duly impressed upon us. Of the value of Freedom we are told so much that we have come to regard it as an end in itself instead of only a means, or necessary condition. But Beauty we are half-inclined to connect with the effeminate. Poetry, Music, and Literature are under suspicion with the average English schoolboy, whose love of manliness he will share with nothing else. Yet love of Beauty persists in spite of all discouragement, and will not be suppressed. Natural Beauty, especially, insists on a place in our affections. Derived originally from Love, and essentially and inseparably connected with it, Natural Beauty acknowledges supremacy to Love alone. And it deserves our generous recognition, for it is wholesome and refreshing for our souls.

The acute observation and telling description of Natural Beauty is at least as necessary for the enjoyment of life as the pursuit of Natural Science to which so much attention is paid. For the concern of the former is the character, and of the latter only the cause of natural phenomena; and of the two, character is the more important. It is, indeed, high time that we Englishmen were more awake than we are to the value of Natural Beauty. For we are born lovers of Nature, and no more poetic race than



ourselves exists. Our country at its best, on an early summer day, is the loveliest little home in all the world. And we go out from this island home of ours to every land. We have unrivalled opportunities, therefore, of seeing innumerable types of natural objects. By observing Nature in so many different aspects, and by comparing our impressions with one another, we ought to understand Nature better than any other race. And by entering more readily into communion with her we, better than others, should realise the Beauty she possesses.

I am conscious of having myself made most inadequate use of the splendid opportunities my travels afforded me of seeing the Beauty of Nature. So I am all the more anxious that those following after me should not, by like omission, commit the same sin against themselves and against our country. We owe it to ourselves and to mankind to give full rein to our instinctive love of Natural Beauty, and to train and refine every inclination and capacity we have for appreciating it till we are able to see all those finer glories of which we now discern only the first faint glow.

And if any other country excel us in appreciation, then it behoves us to brace ourselves up to emulate and surpass that country, and learn how to understand Nature better and see more Beauty. For in love of Natural Beauty, and in capacity for communicating that love, England ought to be pre-eminent. She above every other country should come nearest to the Heart of Nature.

F. E. Y.

*June, 1921.*

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