Hardly had we tasted these joys before summer was upon us, filling the air with the subtle fragrance of luxuriant foliage. The smell of a forest today brings back to me my whole childhood with all its delight in woodland life. Next came autumn with the gifts of the fruit trees, the vines and the nut trees. The splendor and majesty of the autumnal world in its brilliancy of color were deeply felt by me as a boy, and no words can frame such feelings in a child’s soul.

“The pleasures of the country child throughout the year are those which can remain with him his whole life long. We cannot lose Nature, and if we have learned in childhood to love and understand her we have in her a strong and guiding friend to the end. There is for the country child no artificial stimulus in the pleasures which Nature yields,—nothing which can bring a harmful reaction, but only that which builds strongly into his normal development. He is filled with the same exhilaration that a bird feels when it flies from tree to tree, fairly bursting with song. I look with pity at the city children clad in satins and velvets, demurely led by the hand through city parks and streets. What stimulus is there to a child’s imagination, what food for growth in such an inane and vapid existence? How tame, colorless and lifeless is such a childhood. And when old age comes, what will there be for such a boy to go back to and to relive? They are rich children, these little princes and princesses of fortune, but how poor they are in reality! No,—let us surround the child, first of all, with natural and not with artificial pleasures; let us give it that which is its birthright,—the world of Nature which teaches only truth. Then when the end of life draws near, and the afterglow of the retrospective hour has come, that soul can return with joy and even still with growth to the dreams of the early days, and the circle of the life’s span can be completed in peace and beauty. For second childhood should be a time, not of weakness, but of renewed spiritual aspiration, and to life in the country must we look for the realization of this ideal.”

**SPRING: A JAPANESE POEM**

**A**
LONG the margins of the meadows,
Throughout the wooded hills,
Like wind-blown crimson clouds,
Stray the blossoming Judas trees.

*HENRI FINK*