# Axe in Hand

## Vocations

### Philosophy

#### We classify ourselves into vocations, each of which either wields some particular tool, or sells it, or repairs it, or sharpens it, or dispenses advice on how to do so.

#### But there is one vocation—philosophy—which knows that all men, by what they think about and wish for, in effect wield all tools.

#### It [philosophy] knows that men thus determine, by their manner of thinking and wishing, whether it is worth while to wield any.

### Intentions

#### Without this clear view of treetops, one cannot be sure which tree, if any, needs felling for the good of the land.

##### If it were for the good of the land Leopold would not chop down the tree.

#### It is a matter of what a man thinks about while chopping, or while deciding what to chop.

##### Immanuel Kant

#### A conservationist is one who is humbly aware that with each stroke he is writing his signature on the face of his land.

### Bias and Reasoning

#### I find, first of all, that not all trees are created free and equal.

#### I have an a priori bias; I always cut the birch to favor the pine.

### Birch Rant

#### Planted pine himself, while birch planted itself

##### If pine was natural seedling he’d like pine even more.

#### Birch is abundant while pine is scarce

##### Bias for underdog

#### Birch only lives for half as long as pine

##### Legacy

#### Pine shelters and birch feeds grouse

##### Bed more important than board

#### The pine will ultimately bring ten dollars a thousand, the birch two dollars;

##### Money factor

#### Loves all trees, but loves pines

## It is often assumed that whoever owns land must forsee, compare, and decide upon with the calm assurance that his bias will, on the average, prove to be something more than good intentions.

### The wielder of an axe has as many biases as there are species of trees on his farm.

### He goes on to persuade the reader given more evidence of how his bias for aspen, the tamarack, and the ancient cottonwood all benefit the tree.

### His biases are more numerous than neighbors.

### His plant biases are in part traditional, or passed down from previous generations.

### Our plant biases reflect not only vocations but avocations, with a delicate allocation of priority as between industry and indolence.

### Our biases are indeed a sensitive index to our affections, our tastes, our loyalties, our generosities, and our manner of wasting weekends.