

Vol. 1

Diary From May 13, 1876

May 13 Standing in the road over in the woods, I saw a lively little shadow, cast by some object above and behind me, on the ground in front of me. Turning I saw the source of it - the red-start performing its astonishing gymnastics in a leafless oak tree. How it darted and flashed, its tail spread, its wings drooping, and its whole form instinct with motion. Its shootings and gyrations festooned the tree with a black and orange cord. It is the quickest and prettiest of the flycatchers. The game it took was certainly invisible. Each species of warbler, it seems, has its own range and prey. The insects this redstart took certainly could not have been taken by any other bird. In the lower branches and bushes the black-throated blue warbler was pursuing its game very leisurely, picking it up

at rest, and never taking it on the wing. About the orchards and open trees I saw the blue-yellow back probing the flowers and buds with its beak, either for honey or else a microscopical insect. The creeping warbler was scouring the trunk and branches for its food--not forcing a way to it like the woodpeckers, or probing deeply like the brown creeper, but picking it up, apparently on the surface of the bark and lichens. The ground warblers find their food on lone plants and shrubs. Each species has its own beat and range. The Kentucky warbler is often on the ground picking off worms or insects from the undersides of low, overhanging leaves.

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May 14 Nearby all the warblers are here now feeding as they journey northward.

May 15 There is always, more or less marked, a reversion to more primitive types, when a highly civilized people are transplanted to a new country. The cultivated fruit--resown on a new soil, relapses somewhat toward the crab. Culture, civilization, cannot be transplanted, except from one society to another equally refined. The European in America is a different man from what he is at home, and of the American in California the same is true. We are raw and crude, and develop and civilize just as fast as we develop and humanize our surroundings.

Subjects for essays:

Association

My Possessions

April

The Swallow

Strawberries

St. Pierre

Notes of a Walker

Roads

Rain and Dew

Dirt

18 Ah, me. how one changes! Once I greatly admired Higginson--when I was learning my trade as an essayist he seemed a master. Now I can't stand him at all. I have no patience with him, he is so thin and cold he does not smack at all of reality he has no hearty affiliation with anything. - Have just been looking over an old essay of his called "April Days," --a very thin [~~pellical~~] skin of facts and observations blown up with [~~a lot of~~] copious literary gas.

It [crossed out: was an] caused a little ripple of emotion in me to see them go by with the sunken steamer. They moved slowly and solemnly. It was like a funeral procession; there were the great floats and barges and boxes with their solemn derricks--the pall-bearers--and underneath them, deep in her watery grave [crossed out: they] had the where she had been for six months, they bore the sunken steamer.

May 24 A delicious bright, strong day. A frost last night in some places--foliage all out--the apple blossoms nearly all off.

H's poetry is simply respectable. It has no grit or defiance or wild untamable quality that Keats or Shelley and all lasting poets have.

May 28 A walk in the woods. Found the cypripedium, and a small orchis with a sweet, spicy odor like some rare perfume--sat a long time at the foot of the middle falls and read from Cowley's essays--They are capital--The one on Obscurity and on Solitude pleased me especially. A hot dry day--a fine swarm of bees at 3 o'clock. "A swam in May Worth a load of hay" says Smith.

June 1 These--yesterday and today--are the shining days. How the river dances and sparkles, how the new leaves of all the trees shine under the sun. The air has a soft lustre; there is a haze, [~~crossed out: but~~] it is not blue, but kind of shining, diffused nimbus. No clouds, but the sky a bluish white, very soft and delicate.

July 9 The hottest day I ever saw. The thermometer stood at 98 under the old apple tree, where there was apparently no reflected heat. Under the little plum tree it went up to 99 1/2 in the shade.

1876 June 27 A great event--father came to visit me for the first time. In the 74 year of his age and after I have been a housekeeper for nearly 20 years, father comes and sits at my table, and smokes his pipe on my porch and sleeps in chamber. I can hardly realize it. He is like a boy but remarkably well and hearty, has an enormous appetite, and it does me good to see him eat. Father is one of the most untravelled men to be found. He went to New York once when he was a young man and saw a man

hanged--then went to see the naughty girls who stole his purse containing five or six dollars, he says. He is absolutely without sentiment or self-consciousness. --is of the freckled sandy haired red-skinned kind. Cries easily, and loves a smutty joke. A man of unimpeachable veracity and in his way of strong religious feeling. He never took much stock in me--did not understand me--doubted if I would ever amount to anything (I was of the same mind myself) but now is rather proud of me. Never alludes to my literary work and apparently leaves this out in his estimate of me. We went to Po'keepsie. Father made friends with every body he saw; had an eye upon the horses and



commented upon them and knew any he had seen before as soon or sooner than he would a man. Oh. the questions he would ask people, and the remarks he would make! So untravelled! Oh! may he live to visit me many, many times!

July 16 Midsummer: the heated term apparently over--the air clear and pure and looking toward August and Sept. All day the indigo bird sings in the trees about, and all day the scarlet tanager sings also, and between them the wood or bush sparrow sings. The tolling of the crickets or nocturnal insects, has just begun, to go on increasing till fall. Wife gone to Elmira to the Cure.

Aug 1 If my writings have any of the freshness which many readers and critics profess to find in them, the secret is that my apprehension of the birds of a scene, of the open air, or what not, is not in the first instance a literary or scholastic one, but a real, personal one. I do not run after the birds in order to write about them, but in order to enjoy them and to satisfy a natural thirst for them, and I never know till after the fun is all over that I am "like" as the women say for an article.

Aug 5 Weather hot and dry. All day indoors, reading, musing, etc. What an industrious songster is the little bush or wood sparrow, cousin to the social sparrow. Indeed, a sort of rustic [~~crossed out: specimen~~]

country cousin of the latter bird--less neatly dressed and marked, but far surpassing it in musical ability. It begins early in spring--in April--and continues all summer. All through these August days I hear its plaintive trill. It is a simple, childlike strain, like a sweet and tender dirge. On hearing it, the image it calls to my mind is the wavelets of a pool from a falling stone reversed--running from the circumference to the centre. It begins slow but high and after a few notes runs rapidly to a point. Sometimes it varies it thus--whew, whew, whew--chee, chee, chee, whew. whew, chee, chee, etc., producing a very rich strain.

Aug 7 Heard the cuckoo calling for a long time at night out back of the barn--a true night sound, more fitting than by day.

8 Rose and I went to Sutcliff's pond and spent the day -- caught a fine string of black bass and found and gathered the incomparable white water lily - a delicious day that gave me the fresh new feeling all through that a bath does the body. -- Indeed, it was a sun and air bath. My eye and ear and touch reveled in sky, air, and water.

Aug. 20 Started for the woods with Aaron Johns -- Reached the head of the Rondout on Sunday. Camped there 3 days, -- then over to the Eastern Branch till Friday

morning -- thence out to Big Indian station, 23 miles at one pull. Had a jolly, --an idyllic time.

28 Aaron left me at noon today, and left me sad. The air is loaded with smoke, the day is obscure and dreamy. Our trip seems like a beautiful dream that ended too soon. A melancholy haze envelops my mind.

Sept 9 Left for Elmira to visit Wife. Stayed there till Tuesday 12th, when I left for the Centennial -- rode all the afternoon down the Susquehanna. It was new scenery to me and very beautiful -- the green water, the long still reaches alternating with broad, pebbly shallow places -- the bluff like hills, now on one side then on the other, and the long winding curves of the river. When we passed the Wyalusing I thought of father and mother, for many, many

years ago, while on their way to Uncle Henries, in a waggon, they had to ford this stream and came near being drowned. There were no bridges on the Susquehanna till we reached the Tunkhannock -- a stream like a fair Indian maiden.

Sept 17 One must clasp his subject close and warm -- must be enamored of it, must thrust his "semitic muscle" into it, and experience something like an intellectual orgasm, to do any good work. The first hard rain of the season-from the north east-today.

Oct. 9 A clear, cool day. Rose and I had a big hunt -- killed a partridge, a pigeon and a gray squirrel. Rose treed them all. Smith threshed the rye on the ground near the apple tree. The mellow thud of his flail was heard all day long. A neighbor

passing told him to shut some of his barn doors.

10 I think one begins to lose time after he is 35; at least it seems to me I did. The days and the years come faster than I was ready for them. It is clearly so now when I am hard on to 40. I am several years behind. I have not got through yet with '72 and 3, and 4, and here it is toward the end of the Centennial year. Not what is to be, but what has been, occupies now, alas, more than it ought.

How the [~~crossed out: autumn~~] nocturnal insects fail as the heat fails. They die slow. The Katy-dids begin in August very vociferously to cry "Katy-did", or "Katy didn't". towards the latter part of Sept they go much slower and [~~crossed out: say~~] cry simply "Katy," "Katy", with frequent pauses or resting spells. In October they gasp or rasp, "Kate, Kate"

or else "Katy" very low and feeble. Their cousins (what are their names) keep it up pretty well with that low under tone, a pulsing, tolling, or purring sound that fills all the air and that seems to come from no where, because it comes from every where. I notice it has a kind of rhythmic beat. It is the softest and most unobtrusive of backgrounds for the sharp rasping of the Katies to be projected upon. The Katies seem to answer each other, but these little green harpies blend their [crossed out: sounds] music so that it is a kind of pulse beat of nocturnal sound. In making it, they lift their wings [up?] and slightly cross them and rub them together.



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Oct 24 Went home on Thursday the 19th and returned yesterday. Father and mother well and hearty, though their increasing age was shown perhaps in their lessened sensibility to its approach. Father was not so full of reminiscences as usual, and talked less of dying than ever before -- did not once, I believe, predict his speedy dissolution. Yes, he did, too. I remember him saying casually "he could not expect to live much longer." Mother I noticed sat and held her head between her hands a good deal in the evening. She and I went to Channy's grave on Saturday the 21st -- The weather was very warm and pleasant all the time and continues so yet. Father and I walked down through the meadow one day to look at the young cattle. We stood awhile by the wall where the house of Ezra Bartram, Uriah's father, used to stand. Father

remembered the family perfectly, and the house also. Ezra died there when he was about forty of typhus fever, was sick only four days (could not have been typhus). Father told who laid him out. His [widow] worked very hard to support her family and now lies there on the hill beside her husband -- at rest for more than fifty years. Father told where the garden was and the barn and the blacksmith shop. -- Sunday evening Father was reading in his hymn-book. and said he wanted to read me a hymn. It was a comparison of Autumn and old age and was quite long and full of things that appeal strongly to people like [crossed out: father] him in whom the literary or artistic feeling or taste, does not exist, but who have strong religious feelings.and etc. [crossed out: Father] He read it with emotion in his peculiar, sing-song tone and I could see took it to himself. I shall

long remember him [crossed out: he] reading it. It was very sad to me. A few years more, at the longest, and he must indeed pass away, like an autumn leaf. My heart yearns toward him more and more as the years pass.

Oct. 30 A bright glorious day, but cold in the shade. In the morning I was attracted by the birds - snowbirds, sparrows, and goldfinches back of the barn in the bushes. Presently something alarmed the goldfinches and a large flock of them started up and flew around and alighted in the top of the elm. I looked for a hawk, but thought the birds did not behave quite as they do in the presence of a hawk. In a moment I heard one cry faintly in the bushes, then I saw a large bird which I knew to be the shrike or butcher bird with something in its beak. He disappeared among the thick bushes and then

in a moment or two emerged and flew up onto the maple and followed the birds with his look, threateningly. Not getting a good chance at one, he went further off among the low trees. On going around to where I first saw him I found a dead bird, a goldfinch, in its fall plumage, carefully disposed on some twigs. It was not impaled on a thorn, but was laid upon the shelf, so to speak. It was warm, and its plumage unruffled. On examining it I found the skin broken at the back of its neck. The butcher was evidently getting ready for a hearty meal. When he heard me coming he hurried back for his game, but I was too near and he made off without it flying up out of the bushes and apparently going off. I left the bird, but an hour afterward it was still there.

It was a picturesque incident to see the fish-hawk, or osprey, dive for a fish the other morning in the river near Marlborough. He went straight down feet foremost and was completely submerged in the water. I think the divided water united above him. Presently the tips of his wings emerged, then he recovered himself and got up with his fish -- a gold fish I should judge -- It was not large, but the hawk made hard work with it. I watched him for a quarter of an hour flying back and forth from one point to another, on each return getting a little higher, but taking a very easy grade; after 8 or 10 bouts he reached the highest land in the vicinity, but did not alight as I thought he would but was still on the wing. Was he waiting for the fish to die? Perhaps he could not perch and hold a kicking fish.

Oct 31st The difference between a photograph and a hand picture is this - The photo falls upon a dead eye, an eye with no brain behind it, and the picture upon a living, creating eye. The living eye sees more and farther than the dead eye of the camera, tho' maybe less accurately. It sees the expression, and the camera only the lines. (I wonder if this is so, or is it all in your eye).

In the depot at Poughkeepsie I saw a woman with a rabbit mouth - showing the ends of the two front teeth.

31st The last day of October, 76 — the night silvery and soft -- an indian summer night -- A moment ago a flock of fleecy clouds came rapidly out of the N.W. and obscured the moon, then passed on, leaving it all clear again. The nocturnal insects are

all dead -- the severe frosts 6 or 7 of the past few nights have nipped them. Just now I hear, barely audible, the faint note of a single purring insect. Of all that multitudinous band that made the nights pulse with sound, only this one remained. These creatures evidently go as long as life remains. When they stop purring they are dead.

Nov 1st Very soft and warm. In the woods back of Manning's I touched a match into the reversed top of a dead red cedar. It had broken off about half way up and hung down to the ground. As the flames began to mount, out jumped two dormice, looking so clean and innocent, their nest was in the close matted branches, composed of moss and dry stuff. They scampered away in opposite directions and disappeared under the stones.

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Nov 2 A soft, very warm, dreamy day -- a day I shall never forget, carried deep into my heart by a rare poetic and human experience. A lady that had known and liked me when she was a maiden of nine on the prairies, and whom I had known, but had forgotten, now a grown woman of twenty-nine [~~crossed out: met me by appointment~~] revealed herself to me by letter, and then met me by appointment and passed the afternoon with me on the hills and in the woods in sweetest, closest converse. She touched me very closely, and the day passed all too quickly. She allowed me to press her sacred lips and clasp her divine form to my heart. It had been twenty years since we had met, and we may never meet again, but I shall never forget her.

Nov. 8 A flock of goldfinches in their fall plumage, numbering at least a hundred, have been picnicking about my grounds for a day or two, on the ground among the rag weed, in the bushes and trees. This



afternoon they were congregated together, and all singing with a kind of suppressed glee, much in the same manner as they do in May or June. There are but few of our common birds that engage in this congregational singing. The snow bird sometimes does -- half chattering, half singing. The robins do it in a measure in spring, but I think of none other. How well I remember this goldfinch or "yellow bird" from a boy, along the roadsides on the thistles or dandelions, or in the orchard -- its peculiar flight in the air, the male circling around and around its course a series of short arches the wings being closed as the bird rises and opened again as it falls -- with that note always repeated as if it were automatic, "Per-chick-o-pee, per-chick-o-pee." Then on alighting, the note, "paisley", "paisley. It builds a sumptuous nest.

Nov 8 Wife returned from the Water Cure on the 2nd, after an absence from the 20th of July. She is in better health but still unchanged, still bent on making the kitchen rule the house; the chief end of man is to clean up his own dirt -- health, happiness, comfort, must give way before the broom and scrub brush. The election which took place yesterday concerned her far less than the washing which must be done today if the heavens fell. As a housekeeper wife has many excellent qualities, prudence, thrift, good cookery, etc. etc., but she is never master of the situation, is always mastered by it, and what makes it so [crossed out: prov] exasperating, can never be made to see it, but calls you a fault finder if you hint it. The extreme literary woman who cares nothing for the kitchen, and the extreme housekeeper who cares for nothing else -- which is the worst?

9 Last fall a chipmunk had his den in the side of the bank above the garden. I used often to see him, especially in the morning, carrying in corn which he stole from Manning's field. He would spin along from his den to the big maple, then from it to the stone wall next the corn; then back again with distended cheeks. One morning I paused to watch him. He came out of his retreat and cocked himself up to see if ~~do~~ the way was clear, standing with his forefeet pressed to his breast, precisely as a dapper little gentleman might with his hands thrust into his vest pockets. Then dashed off toward the tree. When about half way or 10 or 12 yards from his den, he suddenly turned tail rushed for cover with the greatest precipitation. As he disappeared a shrike or butcher bird brought up suddenly ~~at the~~ in front of his door.

Half a breath more and the bird would have overtaken him. What would have been the result I am curious to know. This bird has never been known to attack chipmunks to my knowledge. But the squirrel was scarred and saw the bird just in time to reach cover. The bird hovered a moment in front of the hole, as if disappointed, and then went off.

Nov. 13 A perfect November morning -- clear and motionless. The air is like a great drum; sounds arise on every side and are heard afar. The blasts back in the cement quarries ten miles distant, are like the stroke of a giant drum stick on the hollow and reverberating air. Just as the sun first showed his firey brow above the horizon a gun was discharged over the river. On the instant a shrike, perched on the top-most spray of a maple

by the roadside set up a harsh kind of call or whistle, suggesting certain notes of the blue-jay, followed by a crude warble. Then he flew away toward the east. It is now 9 o'clock and beyond Crum Elbow the eye cannot reach for the haze and vapor. The crows caw and fly high above the earth. Many bird notes come down out of the air from invisible passengers, that of the purple finch, and that of the tit-lark, ~~[crossed out: its]~~ a band of the latter blurting out snatches of song, the first I ever heard - very pleasing. As I stood over back of the hill, a ~~[crossed out: partridge]~~ quick rushing sound behind me made me jump, when I turned and beheld a partridge sailing like an arrow through among the cedars into Crosby's lot. Some hunters had started her further along the ridge.

Dec 5 A day of wonderful brightness and purity -- tapering off of the cold snap during which the thermometer sank to 10. The Fishkill Mts. are nearly hidden by the haze, and the river valley this side is beginning to be obscured by soft white vapor -- a day for one to take his skates and go to the ponds and still reaches in the streams and woods and let himself loose on the transparent ice. Such a day I went once with dear Channy, and about this time of year to Rock Creek. With what glee we flew up and down the winding stream. It was Dec. '71.

Dec 29 December has been a rugged winter month -- steady cold and plenty of snow since the 15th -- ice on the ponds said to be 15 inches thick.

When an essayist can do nothing

else, he can generalize.

Woman will argue against the thermometer -- she can feel, she guesses. She will argue against the rule and square -- no need to tell her the room is so many feet this way, and so many that -- it is too small, she can see, she guesses.

Is God less an artist than Shakespeare? But what [~~crossed out: hornet work~~] a mess he has made of it according to the sects and the vulgar religionists. [~~crossed out: he does make~~]

Without a centre-board your sailboat slides upon the water it does not take deep hold of it -- you cannot beat up to the wind. What is the centre-board of a man's character -- will, integrity, depth of purpose. or what?

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Jan 4 You crimson-coned, delicious strawberry, shaped after the human heart, you are the type of the true poem. Your seeds are the germs of meaning and suggestion the poem holds imbedded in the soft vascular flesh of human passion and emotion. Then your sub-acid and aromatic flavor, your tonic properties, your uncloying barbed sweetness, your keen edge, your liquid dissolving texture, your lyric something, like a piercing wild birds note, your incomparable freshness etc. make you the suggestion of the poets heart.

5 I find it quite impossible to make my pump hold water from one day to the next. I write away to-day and am very full of my theme and the stream of ideas flows freely; but if I am broken off for a few hours



or by a night's sleep, I am nearly dry again and must pump and pump next day a long time to bring the column up again and often have to prime a little by reading a page or two of some virile author.

9 Evening, Just finished Turgenieff's "On the Eve" -- Have not been deeply moved by the book -- was too much preoccupied. [crossed out: but] It is not a story woven of many colors, but of a few simple strong colors -- is elementary [crossed out: but has] quite destitute of the hair-splitting and elaboration and painting of our novels; it is in a low key, but has here and there traits of greatness. One of his characters says, speaking of beauty: "The old masters -- they never hunted after it; it comes of itself into their compositions. God knows whence, from heaven or elsewhere. The whole world belonged to them; but we are unable to clasp its broad

space; our arms are too short." Of a certain opera singer he says, She suddenly passed that limit which it is impossible to define, but beyond which is the province of the beautiful." "Death," he says, "is like a fisherman who has caught some fish in his net, but leaves it for awhile in the water; the fish still swim about and fancy themselves to be free, but the net encircles them, and the fisherman seizes hold of them whenever the fancy takes him." The current English novels are brighter and smarter etc, but this has a charm and a value which they have not. Man is less sophisticated here than in England or America.

What command, what god-like symmetry and strength in those Greek faces that has never reappeared in the human countenance. The strength at the junction of the

nose with the brow -- that straight high embankment -- it fills me with envy. The modern face as a rule is weak there - the arches are [~~crossed out: not-so-strong~~] crushed -- the brow does not rest upon such a pier of strength. It is the difference between the vaulted arch and the lintel.

I ask for a candle to read by and they give me a Roman candle.

If the moderns are not great in creative works when compared with the ancients, it is to be said that modern criticism is much more creative than was the ancient or any up to the time of the great Germans.

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Jan. 27 In youth how completely one is under the paternal wing and shielded from the cold, the loneliness, the desolation of the world. He has the true nest feeling; its outer rim is the

boundary of the world to him. I go back home now and try to get back the old feeling -- try to settle back in the [crossed out: natal] natal spot and hide my head behind the old barriers, but no use; father and mother are still there with their whitened locks and are the same, but I am not the same. One can never go back -- that friendly wing can never cover him again.

There are things that cannot be condensed much, among them water.

Jany 30. An earth of mid winter and a sky of mid October -- sun bright and warm [crossed out: and] with a soft shining haze filling all the spaces. How lustily the crows caw! To the north I hear through the still dense air the whirring sound of a threshing machine suggesting a mid-summer mower. Still I am

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oppressed with the disappointment of the Fishkill business. I am no poorer than before, but to have lost even imaginary riches -- is a loss. So my genius you and I will not part company yet--we will [~~crossed out: take up~~] and resume the old delicious tasks once more.

Feb 1st The third of our warm indian summer days -- if the snow were gone it would be very warm; would it be like spring or fall?

7th The spring weather continues -- still windless days, full of a blue soft vapor. I tapped two trees on the 5th Sap runs finely and the deep snow is slinking away beneath the fervid eye of the sun. The air is full of distant sounds, as in spring or fall. Last night I sat a long time on the wall in the gloamin with my pail of sap thinking of my youth and trying to get back the boys feeling when

he wriggled home from the woods with his pail of sap, or sat down and cried when he spilled it in the snow or at the crossing of the fence. O for some of those magic silver dimes and quarters that glowed in my pocket when the boy sold his little cakes of sugar in the spring! That was real money. It seems as if I had never seen any since those boyish days. I think father yet owes me a few dollars of that heavenly coin that I loaned him thirty years ago. But he can never pay it back in this world.

Feb 11th The fair weather continues without a break -- all sun by day and all stars by night. The indian summer haze very marked -- which settles the point in my mind that this haze when it appears in the fall is in no way connected with the foliage

as has been thought by some. It is likely to appear any time when the atmosphere is still and the sky clear.

One of the peculiar sounds here is the croaking of the great ice-frogs on the river rip, rip, they go in the still nights, and again when the sun first strikes the ice in the morning. It is a singular sound. Thoreau calls it a "whoop", Emerson a cannonade, and, again, "the gasp and moan of the ice-imprisoned flood." Sometimes it reminds me of a huge gong, then of a giant staff beating the air. It seems always in the air and to proceed from something in swift motion -- it ricochets like a cannon shot and glances from side to side. It starts

sometimes from under your feet, and rips or explodes and vanishes in the distance. Then again it seems like a grunt, as if some great ice-god were turning over in his sleep.

Feb 17 Returned yesterday from Phila. where I spent the night of the 15th with Walt at Mrs. Gilchrist's. Never saw Walt look so handsome -- so new and fresh. His new, light gray clothes, his white beard and hair, and his rosy, god-like, yet infantile face all combined to make a rare picture. After ten o'clock we went up to his room and sat and talked till near one o'clock. I wanted him to say how he liked my piece on him but he did not say. We talked about it, what had



best go in, and what were best left out, but he was provoking silent about the merits of the piece. Speaking of his poems, he said it was a very [~~crossed out: b~~] audacious and risky thing he had done, and the wonder was, not that they made their way so slowly, but that they had got any foothold at all. When the conditions were all considered, and the want of anything like matured and robust esthetic perception in this country remembered, it was a great success to have effected a lodgement at all. It [~~crossed out: one~~] is a feast to me to look at Walt's face -- it is incomparably the grandest face I ever saw -- such sweetness and harmony and such strength -- strength like the Roman arches and piers. If that is not the face of a poet, then it is the face of a god. None of his pictures do it half justice.

18 "Look anywhere, or at any object in nature long enough and intently enough" said Gilder the other day, in confirmation of a remark of my own, "and you are sure to see something." Coming up the hill yesterday from the river, I saw a wood pecker on one of my apple trees, when I bethought me to put Gilder's remark to the test; so I paused and looked intently at the woodpecker, and I saw what I had never noticed before, namely what a facial expression the back-head of the woodpecker has. As I fixed my eye upon him, he seemed to be looking in my direction or away from the tree, as he moved up and around searching for his food in the crevice of the bark.

The two dark lines on each side of his head come to a point behind as they do in front, so that the motion in front is repeated behind. It occurred to me that this might be a provision of nature for the birds better protection -- its enemy would think the bird was looking in his direction while it was really absorbed in searching for his proper food.

Mch 1st Feb. has been a remarkable winter month -- cerulean days all through -- excellent sugar weather, a Washington sky, but not the W. earth. Today is cloudless, still, and the sun is warm - the perfection of a spring day. The bluebirds have been here some days.

5 Robins here today. Wild ducks on the river some days ago.

7 Crow blackbirds here today. A flock of wild geese alighted in the river in front of us, were pursued by a gunner but did not let him get near enough for a shot.

A strange sadness and melancholy possesses me on account of father. I fear he is going to die. I can't keep him out of my mind at all. I see my own health is below par, which I hope accounts for my sadness.

15 Father better and my foreboding and presentiment gone -- so much for one's forewarnings. I notice that the male bluebirds were here this year 8 or 10 days before the females. A fine male has been lingering about my house and trees for some time, apparently waiting

the arrival of his mate. He calls and warbles as if he felt sure she was within ear shot and could be hurried up. Now he warbles half angrily or upbraidingly, then beseechingly or coaxingly, then cheerily and confidently, the next moment half plaintively. He lifts his wings and flies from point to point. This morning I saw a female here. They flew together on an old apple tree and seemed to examine a hole in its decayed trunk. I heard a fine lisping confidential, caressing warble, whether from the male or female I can't say. Then the female flew to a near tree and uttered her plaintive homesick note. The male went and got some dry grass or bark in his beak and flew toward the old tree, but the female said "nay", and flew away in the distance. When he saw her going

or, rather, heard her distant note, he dropped his stuff, and crying out, "wait a minute", "hold on" "one word, please" flew swiftly in pursuit.

Mch 21 A great event -- Walt came home with me from N.Y. Friday night, the 16th, and staid till 4 P.M. this afternoon. Had our second winter while he was here -- deep snow and thermometer hovering about zero for two days and nights. Harry Stafford came with Walt. They cut up like two boys and annoyed me sometimes. Great tribulation in the kitchen in the morning. Can't get them up to breakfast in time. Walt takes Harry with him as a kind of foil or refuge from the intellectual bores. Walt is mending, and said he walked better the morning he left than he had before for 5 years.

1877

April 13 Went home on Saturday the 7th, returned to-day. Found mother and father well -- apparently heartier than in the fall. Father milked and done chores as usual. I thought him less childish than is his wont. I got home about 7 1/2 in the evening. Prince barked significantly, then the hound, which brought out Willy and Father: as I drew near, in the duskiess I heard Willie say, "I bet it's Uncle John". On Sunday we gathered the sap and boiled it in the woods. I enjoyed it much. Willie took me to examine the banks -- to Hobart on Monday, then to Delhi; and thence to Andes on Tuesday, and home Wednesday by 10 A.M. The weather was fine -- a succession of clear, blue days of almost unnatural brightness, crystalline days from the north

that made the "wise ones" predict more snow. The roads were dry; and I enjoyed the ride very much through the naked, sunlit land. The mountains were yet all covered with snow, and at several places where we crossed them, we encountered huge drifts. The grass was greening a little in the spring runs, and the plow was being started here and there. Nearly every sugar camp had its smoke, and its glittering tin buckets hung to the trees. We saw a butcher bird with a sparrow which he had brained; he flew from the fence to a near apple tree with it in his beak; he thrust it in the fork of a small limb. We saw a wood-chuck also. As we crossed Palmer hill the sun was just setting and the scene before us



was memorable -- all the distant mountain peaks struck and transformed by the setting sun. We passed through the school [crossed out: house] district where dear, dead Channy taught four years ago. There is a new school house there now, and the old building he occupied is gone. How wistfully I looked upon the scene, and the brawling brook that ran before, upon which he must so often have gazed. Friday morning at 6 A.M. I left for the down train. Mother got me my breakfast. The boys and father were in the stable milking. As I turned to take a parting view of home out on the knoll, I saw father and Hiram emerging from the stable door with the pails of milk; Charly was going up the steps; the robins sang loud up in the sugar-bush where a tin bucket just smitten

by the sun, sent back a tinny flash. The snow, dirty and dissheveled, belted the side of the hill above the house. I went down across the lots. It was a typical April morning: the sun light white, the trees nude, the fields bare and sere; How the sparrows sang, how the robins laughed; how the phoebe-birds called!

April 15 This is the 10th clear, dry, crystalline day: all signs indicate a drought: the north wind is having it all its own way.

18 The yellow red-poll warbler here this morning with its lispings, shuffling warble

The drought broken today by a gentle leisurely rain from the south.

It is a singular fact that in the South the same

birds run more to beak and claw, and in the West to tail. The beak and claw, I take it, mean ferocity, and the tail means brag. The West is windy, the South fierce and hot.

One of the most delicious April odors is the smell of the first warm rain. The cold, drenching odorless rains of late winter or of March [~~crossed out: have been all gone by~~] "are over and gone," the weather has been dry say for two or three weeks; we have had a kind of vernal drought; the roads are dusty, and the streams again shrunken; innumerable forest fires have loaded the air with smoke; the wind shifts toward the South and we have our first vernal shower, warm and gentle late in the day, and what a fresh renewing smell; ones nostrils are not half large enough to take it

in; the smoke, with the poison taken out of it by the rain, is an important element.

April 22 Rose and I went to the woods -- windy and warm after the rain. The frogs or toads were spawning over in Manning's swamp. We found Corydalis, Blood-root, dog tooth violet and liver-leaf in bloom. Rose found a black snake behind the wall sunning him self, and barked violently, dodging every moment as if he had always delt with snakes and knew how they strike. I killed the "sarpent" with a stone. The woods were quite birdless -- only a troop of chickadees and kinglets, yes and by the creek the first water-thrush. We sat down by the middle falls and listened to the roar. A tall crooked tree

opposite attracted my eye and I remembered that last fall I had looked at it as I sat there as a likely tree for bees. I thought so now and running my eye up into the top, lo and behold! there were the bees very brisk about their entrance in its decayed top. So we found a bee tree without stirring from our tracks. Next Sept. we will see what sweet it holds.

A robin has nearly completed her nest in my porch, and phoebe has built under the eaves on the gutter spout. The first swallow today, flying along northward in the most business like manner.

23 Barn swallow here today. What a flood of summer in his first twitter.

26 Chimney swallows here today. A mess of asparagus today.

at sundown saw a large band of them circling about the old chimney.

27 Dog wood in bloom -- Currant and raspberry bushes quite green, the former ready to blow. The season 8 or 10 days earlier than last year, and 3 weeks earlier than 2 years ago.

The finest April I have seen for years. Only 3 rainy days so far -- a succession of cerulean days, more beautiful than words can tell. In the morning the river looks like a great cool shadow. When the sun first strikes it, the burnished surface looks dusty -- fine particles of floating matter.

It is the general impression that the winters are less severe

and the springs earlier than they were 50 or 75 years ago; yet when I was home father told me that the year Wilson was born - 1830 I think -- the spring was very early. Grandfather and Grandmother were out to Rochester and they wrote to father to meet them at Canajoharie on the first day of May at the "Conal". Father started the last of April with his team and waggon, and when he reached the valley of the Schoharie, the apple trees were all in bloom, and when he got home, they were in bloom there. He missed Grandfather and Grandmother; they arrive there one day ahead of him and hired a man to take them to Roxbury, paying him eight dollars. Father remembered

the eight dollars. Money was hard and slow those days and he doubtless thought how acceptable it would have been to him to compensate him, in a measure, for his time and expense of nearly 4 days. This was 47 years ago. Father was then [~~crossed out: several~~] ten or more years younger than I am now.

29 Sunday -- A warm day after last night's rain -- things growing on a jump; a mist of yellow-green creeping over the forest trees, cherry trees in blow -- violets, spice bush, red wake-robin or wild peony in blow and the alder swamp over by Black Creek yellow with marsh marigolds.

May 10 New book came today. Like the dress much and am very well pleased with all the pieces, but the last -- the one I set my heart



on. It general [~~crossed out: turns out~~] happens that the father's pride turns out the worst of all.

May 15 Father North came to see us -- an old man, nearly 76, but quite chirp and not a bit childish as I see. I enjoyed his society much.

13 Foliage two-thirds out; apple trees showing the pink -- the season very dry with cold north wins all this month. A heavy frost on the 4th. Many of the warblers, the oriole, the humming bird here. The warblers as the red-start, the black-throated blue, and green, always come about this time, no matter whether the season is early or late.

17 Birds nearly all here -- the cuckoo and tanager this morning; the yellow birds holding their jubilees in the trees below the house; the orioles fill the air with their pipings; the

King birds are here, and nearly all the warblers -- saw the Blackburnian and Chestnut-sided this morning. I have been on the lookout all spring for the White-crowned Sparrow, and yesterday on my way to New Paltz I suddenly saw plenty of them and today they are here.

20 No rain this month. Very dry and very hot. I notice nearly every day bands of blue jays going silently about, coming quite near the house, whether on a piratical expedition, in quest of birds' eggs, or what, I can't say, but I suspect they are egging.

I notice the Whippoorwills keep back from the river; I have yet to hear one this side of the road, while just

back of the hill in the woods, they are very noisy. Why do they shun the water ?

The look of my rooster is enough to make a hen miscarry.

May 27 The third anniversary of dear Channy's death. Walked to the woods in memory of him. The thought of him attended me.

Found the whippoorwill's nest and the nest of the black-throated green warbler.

June 1st No rain yet; things drying up. Mr. Carpenter left me today--a modest, hearty , thoughtful young Englishman.

6th A glorious rain at last -- all the afternoon and part of last night, and this forenoon. The ground must be now drenched to its marrow; the rain mainly from the north and N.E., accompanied by slow, deep toned thunder.

7 The rain still pouring: the ground will soon begin to run over; we are bound to have more than enough now.

In respect to observers, the great mass of men are like the rank and file of an army -- they fire vaguely in the direction of the enemy, and if anything is hit, it is as much a matter of chance or of general principles; but here and there is your keen observer; he is the sharp-shooter -- his eye discriminates, picks out; he sees what he fires at, and hits what he sees; his eye and his bullet go to the same mark. To individualize is the secret of observation. In one sense the great poet and the great naturalist are the same -- things

take definite and distinct shape to them -- they are capable of vivid impressions. The naturalist walks the real world with his eyes open. He knows a man from a stump at once; the poet walks the ideal world and his eye disintegrates in the same way.

Jun 15 Went home again on the 13th to attend sale of Curtis's farm. Found father and mother pretty well. Mother has worried and grieved herself nearly sick over the failure of Curtis. "To look up at his back fields" she says, "and think they are to be his no more" Looking through the kitchen door that evening I saw her busy washing a huge pile of [crossed out: p] milk pans, standing there where she had stood and washed pans for over 50 years. Her face looked quite haggard

and discouraged. It [crossed out:impressed] revealed all the care and toil and trouble she had gone through. As she came in it brightened up and she looked more like herself.

Mary Jane came back with me; the first time she ever visited me; it was quite an event. Poor Mary Jane has had and still has her troubles.

Father brought me down to the depot in the morning, hurrying down the hill to catch the train.

Aug 5 My beloved dog, Rose Mary, Rose, died this morning from poison -- strychnine -- in less than an hour. I do not need to write it in my diary to remember it -- it is burnt into my heart. Oh, a bitter day. None may know what that dog was to me. He and Rab were my

children, and my only comrades. I am quite desolate. Wife is away under peculiar circumstances, and the house is struck with death. We dug his grave this afternoon -- Aaron and I -- but tonight he lies in his bed at the foot of the stairs for the last time. His life was identified with mine as that of no human being ever has been or perhaps can be. He seemed more than usually affectionate and demonstrative in the morning when I got up. Did he have a presentiment of his coming fate? He came to my bed side and whined and licked my feet all the time I was dressing and came near tripping me up as [crossed out: I] we came down stairs.

6. Aaron and I returned from our Canadian trip on Saturday afternoon, the 4th of Aug. having

been gone since Monday, July 16th, a long hard trip of 2300 miles, and not very agreeable or satisfying, except the week spent in the woods on Jacques Cartier River, 65 miles north of Quebec.

8. Aaron left me this morning. I am sad and [crossed out: op] depressed to the very marrow of my bones. The thought of my poor dog keeps me from sleeping.

15 Got an new dog in P. with which I am trying to bridge over the chasm -- have named him Lark.

30. Went home on the 23d and stayed till 27th. Father and mother well. Went to Deposit by way of Stamford and Delhi.

Sept 23 Went to Washington Thursday night, the 13th, returned Sept. 19th Herbert Gilchrist with me. Mother came down the night



of the 11th, her 69th birthday, and stayed till [Monday?] the 24th Wife is still absent, gone since July 26th.

Oct. 2 Weather still dry clear and warm. Herbert G. left me today. Yesterday saw and heard chimney swallows high in the air -- today heard the white-throated sparrow.

5 A terrific rainstorm last night -- filled up my half-finished well and raised the devil.

25 Plenty of rain, too much. Only one frost yet; the Katy didds still quite vocal in the woods.

The other night heard a peeping toad in the marsh back of the hill -- looks as if a certain kind of tree-toad did go into the swamp to hibernate.

Noted the European maples -- all the tops brushed with gold -- deeper in the green still prevails.

1877

Nov. 6 Finished the Canada piece begun three weeks ago. Our first hard freeze tonight. New girl came this afternoon, and I resign the dishcloth to her willingly -- the 12th girl since we moved here 3 1/2 years ago. and we have been whole seasons without any -- beside the precarious help picked up about here, including the girl that wet her bed and chewed tobacco.

14 New girl gone -- another takes up the task.

18 The end of a week of Indian summer. The peach trees have not shed all their leaves, nor the apple trees either. Went to Elmira the night of the 11th; returned the 16th. The 13th was bright and warm and I walked over the hills there beyond the "Cure" and through the woods, filled with long [crossed out: pensive] long

thoughts. Sat on a stump on the edge of the woods a long while and sunned myself.

At Walden on the 15th to examine the bank -- walked down in the evening and discovered the Walkill, and stood on the bridge half an hour listening to the roar of the water below me. How fascinating it was. It set me to spouting poetry (when no one was in sight). The roar of the water always seems to set one going. The Walkill is a very noble picturesque stream at this point.

Solitude is only more and closer company than one can have elsewhere -- the company of ones self. Ones best companions are those that affect him like his own walking thoughts and sympathies -- himself seen at a little remove. The lover of solitude understands well Thoreaus dry

remark that [~~crossed out: he~~] in his hut there on Walden Pond "he had a good deal of company, especially the morning, [~~crossed out: especially~~] when nobody called." Solitude is a severe test of a man, but it is no doubt necessary to ensure deep and fast colors of the spirit. Those [~~crossed out: that~~] who are most alone are most like themselves. Travel and society polish one, but then a rolling stone gathers no moss. and a little moss is a good thing on a man. It gives him a local flavor and coloring that one likes. -- Solitude makes one a shining mark for the arrows that men dread, misfortune, the loss of friends by death -- he must meet them alone, unprotected.

The lover of solitude sows himself wherever he walks -- the woods and fields and hills and lanes where he strolls come to reflect himself. There is a

deposit of himself all over the landscape where he has lived. He likes to go the same route each time, because he meets himself at every turn. He says to the silent trees, or gray walls, or still pool, or the waterfall: "we have met before. My spirit has worn you as a garment and [~~crossed out: the~~] you are near to me." He is such a lover of the earth that a new landscape looks alien to him; after a time, may be a long time, it becomes colored, or more properly, enriched more or less by his spirit. The mountains where one was born remind him of his father and mother and he has a filial yearning for them. When father and mother are gone I know I shall have a sad pleasure in the look of the hills where they lived and died.

It often happens that I have many un-occupied hours or days

upon my hand in strange towns and cities. I walk out into the country and over the hills and along the roads with long, sad, yearning thoughts. Why sad? I don't know. I gaze longingly into the houses and upon the farms and homely country scenes and occupations. What do I want, what does my heart crave? I don't know. But I know I leave myself all along the road and I know I send out messengers that never return.

As the bird feathers her nest with down plucked from her own breast, so one's spirit must shed itself upon its environment before it can brood and be at all content.

25 No frost for a week. Abigail came Tuesday and stayed till Saturday, had a good visit with her, but am distressed with her report of father's failing health.

The fewest birds this fall of any fall I remember to have seen days and days pass and I scarcely see more than a sparrow or a snowbird or two. What a contrast to the English landscape at this season, when the birds and fowls are so numerous that they produce an positive effect [~~crossed out: to any beholder~~] upon the scene. Have seen but one shrike this fall, and that in Elmira. A few fox sparrows were here 8 or 10 days ago.

Much of Walt Whitman's poems may be said to be negative poetry. It certainly is not prose. Neither he nor anyone else would think of putting it into a prose disser-

tation. In fact it has not in the least the exact and demonstrative spirit of prose. It is the method and spirit of poetry always.

Nov. 27 A moist rather warm November day. Today was buried Woolsey the blacksmith -- a sober upright hard-working man. I paused by the cemetery gate tonight as I went up on my walk and looked upon his newly made grave. His form and presence and voice came vividly before me. Peace to his soul! His tongue stammered, but his hammer never faltered till disease and death seized him. Now his anvil is cold and his fires have gone out.

Today too is the 25th anniversary of the death of my little sister Evaline the youngest of the family. A quarter of a century has passed. and mother and father are still living. She would have been a woman now, doubtless



with children of her own. I have thought of her much to-day and called up that sad far-gone time. I helped Wilson skin a fox in the morning; he had caught it in a trap in a hole in the rocks, and he too has been in his grave thirteen years.

In the woods today heard everywhere the small tree-toads piping (not toads but the newt). This is proof positive to me that they do not go to the swamps to hibernate, but winter in the woods, either in hollow trees or on the ground. They seemed low down, as if on or near the ground, I can never get near one. I watched and waited long today, but they would not croak when I was about.

Nature as she manifests herself in the weather, is as much a creature of habit as a man or a woman. If she miscarries once, she will miscarry again and again. When it gets to raining, it seems as if it would never stop

and when the drought comes it seems as if the world would dry up. In either case, nothing less than a revolution can bring about a change. In a dry spell I often think that if things could be well shaken up by an earthquake, or some tremendous explosion the spell would be broken and the rain would come. The Elements get in a rut and can't get out. How hard it tries to rain in a dry time! If it could only begin, if it could only take the first step

We talk of communing with nature, but 'tis with ourselves we commune. Nature has nothing to say. It all comes from within. The air supports combustion, but 'tis the candle that burns, not the air (?) Nature furnishes the conditions -- the solitude, and the soul furnishes

the entertainment. The "something more deeply interfused" is interfused then and there by the beholder.

All lovers of nature are lovers of solitude, and hence of themselves. They muse and dream and commune with themselves. They interpret themselves, not nature. She reflects their own thoughts and moods. You find in Nature only what you bring to her. If you are joyful, she is joyful; if you are sad, she is sad. The religious soul finds Nature very religious. To the scientist she means science, and to the poet she means picture and parable. She is all things to all men. People admire my birds, but it is not the birds they see, it is me. I put myself in them. Shelley's lark is Shelley, Keat's nightingale is Keats. Who has seen or heard in Nature what Wordsworth did. She is a book printed full of his own thoughts.--

nothing is hers but the paper.

Nov. 29 Began my rain piece today.

Dec. 1 Caught a little screech owl this morning as red as a fox. Heard the blue jays under the hill among Mannings old apple trees and on going down that way saw them one after another peeping into a large hole in one of the trees. The blue-birds also came and peeped in and said very plainly that there was something in there. The jays were quite melodramatic about the hole and advertised the lurking place of the poor owl as loudly as they could. I clambered up and peeped in and I saw something, too. On poking it with a stick I heard its bill snap. There was an opening below, and as the owl worked down, I reached in

and seized him carefully. He made no struggle but clasped my finger a little too sharply. He is very red and catty. I have put him up in the wash house chamber.

5. My health is perfect these crisp December days, exquisite, keen as a razer, and out of this fine and delicious feeling I am writing my essay on rain. I write from 10 till 2 or 3 o'clock, then after dinner, which I help get, I walk 4 miles in great glee, my dog and I. Then read Boswells Johnson in the evening, or the paper. I try to keep my appetite for my work eager and fresh. (one year later -- Rain piece not so good as I had hoped)

8 A change has come over the spirit of my dreams. I am on the crest of the wave no longer, but in the hollow. Cant write a word, and have not for 3 days.

It is ebb tide with me. I am not sick, but empty. My literary appetite is gone. Oh, my Rain, when will you pour down again.

8 Hiram came Thursday night. To-day -- Sunday, we had a long tramp back in the woods and up toward Black Pond. -  
- No snow or cold weather yet.

Dec 15 "We cannot understand a great man all at once. It takes, strength, effort and perseverance; and it is singular that what pleases us at first sight seldom captivates us any length of time" From Memories, a story of German love. Chicago 1876 (a German story)

16 Dec so far has been nearly all Indian summer. To-day is clear soft and warm like October. The bees were out of the hive and humming through the air by 8 o'clock. In a spring back in the woods

Hiram and I saw a frog. The river was so still this morning that as the gulls flew up and down, one could hardly tell which was the bird and which its shadow.

How telling and significant the nose is! I observe that no one feature changes so much as the nose as the man develops. The child's nose is a mere shapeless lump of flesh -- it seems driven up. As he grows and develops, it comes out. At puberty there is a marked change in it. I know a woman's face clear cut in all except the nose -- that is crude and unfinished, and it tells the whole truth about her. A snub or turned up nose is a terrible calamity. Avoid it as you would a pestilence.

18 In writing, I observe that it's great point to get a nest egg. When you have made a beginning -- got one good sentence, or fact, or observation

you add to it with comparative ease. 'Tis the first step that costs" as the French say. I want to write an essay on "Solitude," but I have my nest egg yet to get.

25 Christmas -- Saw a phoebe bird today between here and the dock.

1878

Jany 1st Clear and sharp -- not a flake of snow anywhere. Finished my paper on Rain today, began a month ago. Have worked on it about 2 weeks in all.

26 Returned from Washington today, whither I went 2 weeks ago.

27 Soft and warm; bees out of the hive like May; the bluebirds call as in spring.

29 A clear sharp day -- Saw three eagles today. Two were sailing around and round over the river by the dock. They approached each other and appeared to clasp claws, then swung



[round] and round several times like two schoolgirls hold of hands.

Feb 2 Subjects for essays

Solitude

Home

Sunday.

3 Thermometer to zero this morning. A clear sharp day -- a long walk to the woods through the knee deep snow, carried Lark on my shoulder part of the way. No one had yet been to the woods -- only a big dog whose track we saw. We started up several partridges over in the cedar lane. Coming back found where several had passed the night in the swam under the snow. No two slept together, each alone in his snowy bed, and each one defiled the sheets. Saw a robin in the cedars above the schoolhouse [crossed out: and]

besides cedar birds, bluebirds, snow birds, purple finches, and Canada sparrows.

Feb 16 Returned from home yesterday whither we went on the 6th. Found father and mother and all the rest of them well. Snow very deep, but weather not very cold. Had two fine hunts. Must write a piece about the last one and call it "a White Day and a Red fox." Father eats and sleeps well. Mother worked nearly all the time. Father told me about his Grandmother Every. She was a high strung ugly old dame. When Father and Mother were first married, they lived at Grand fathers. and old Granny Every [~~crossed out: was~~] lived there too. One day Mother went down to the spring to wash and took her baby (Hiram) with her and sat him on the ground by her. Grand mother came and got him and carried

him to the house. This made old granny mad: "Let her take care of her own brats" said she. Grand mother said he had as good a right there as she or granny had. This made granny very mad, and she went out on the hill and hid herself in some buckwheat and had to be looked up and got back. She died while at the house of her son out in Windham or Durham, and is buried there.

Homer told me this anecdote about Levi Jenkins whom we saw as we came back from Margaretville. It was many winters ago. He lived in Batavia Kill, and being short of fodder and grain for his cattle, used to poach a little upon Harve Keators oat-mow. Keator suspected some one was stealing his oats; so one cold snowy night he watched for the thief. About 10 o'clock Levi came with his oxen and sled. The barn, by the way, was remote from Keators house.

Levi got up on the mow and began throwing down the sheaves of oats, counting them audibly and talking to himself the while. "There that makes [~~crossed out: seven~~] four shocks" said he: "I guess that is all will stay on." "No, I [~~crossed out: reckon~~] guess I can carry a few more. One, two, three, " until seven was reached. "There" he said, "four shocks and seven sheaves, that is all I can carry." "How many did you say, Levi" asked Keator, who knew him by his voice. "Four shocks and seven sheaves, by God" said Levi. Poor Levi, the affair cost him his yoke of oxen; he gave them to Keator (~~crossed out: who~~) Keator was a hog) to say nothing about it. How surely a good and wise man would have said to Levi "go, and steal no more." He [~~crossed out: was forced to it by his poverty and his~~] did it for love of his cattle and team.

Immortality is something to be [crossed out: argued] reasoned about and proven, is it? a question to be established by a subtle metaphysical argument? Then away with it, and away with all such questions. If they do not prove themselves, like the day or the night, or health or disease. if they are not self evident, I will have nothing to do with them. What do I care for a metaphysical hell, or a metaphysical heaven. If I have existed without my body, then I shall exist again without it. If I have not, then what can you prove by argument, or what assurance give? Where was the flame before the candle was lighted? Where will it be when the candle is fresh out? We are immortal, just as every force and atom in the universe is immortal -- this is self-evident, beyond this there is nothing to be said. No force in me was created at my birth, or in my subsequent growth, but only gathered

from the out-lying universe and organized into the being I am; and no force will be lost at my death, but only scattered again, to shift and reappear in other forms. We settle back into the deep as a wave settles back, or as it breaks and is lost upon the shore. The waves run and run, the force or impulse that fills and makes them is co-equal with the universe.

Feb 26 I take it a great compliment when my friends, those who have known me longest and best, say of my writings "they sound just like you; I see you in every page" as a doctor who knew me when a boy, and who knew my people, has just written me. This removes much of the Thoreau charge; if it is my flavor, then it is not his. I really see very little of Thoreau in myself. There is a whiff of him now and then, in a few

of my pieces, as in "Exhilarations of the Road" I know his quality is very penetrating and contagious; reading him is like eating onions, one must look out or the flavor will reach his own page. But my current is as strong in my own channel as T's in his. He is as liable to catch it of me as I am of him. Thoreau preaches and teaches always. I never preach or teach. I simply see and describe; I must have a pure result. I paint the bird for its own sake and for the pleasure it affords me and am annoyed at any lesson or moral twist. Even the scholar in me (a very poor one he is) must not show his head when I am writing on natural themes. I would remind of books no more than the things themselves do.

1878

Feb. 26 While on a visit to Washington in January, I went on an expedition down the Potomac with a couple of friends, Peck and Eldridge, to shoot ducks. We left on the morning boat that makes daily trips to Mt. Vernon. The weather was quite chilly cold and the sky threatening. I have seldom seen such clouds as those were fail to bring rain. They were boat like and boat shaped. They had well-defined keels, but they turned out to be only the fleet of Aeolus. The sky came through and the sun shone before noon. We saw numerous flocks of ducks on the passage down, and saw a gun (the man was concealed) shoot some from a "blind" down near Fort Washington. Opposite Mt. Vernon, on the flats, there was a large "bed" of ducks. I thought the word a good one to describe a long



strip of shallow water thickly planted with ducks. One of my friends was a member of the Washington and Mt. Vernon Ducking Club that have their camp and fixtures just below the Mt. Vernon landing.

Must try and finish this sketch in a short article for the Country.

26 Spring is very near. Sap runs very briskly. The male blue birds have been warbling their impatient amorous warble for several days, calling their mates. Sky clear blue, wind gusty, snow nearly gone, ice on the river getting poor.

27 A warm cloudless day; the bees humming about the hive, sap running on a jump. Found grasshoppers half an inch long hopping about on the grass. Smith and Emma started for home to day. Ice has just moved down and filled up the canal.

1878

Mch 2nd Heard song-sparrow sing today. Crow-black birds here. Blue-birds mated, apparently it is only an engagement till the female consents to enter the box or knot-hole that the male has been urging her to so long, then it is a marriage. She is his then. It takes two or three days to bring her to the point.

6 I fear the clerk of the weather has been making another wrong deal of the cards and is giving us April when the almanac calls for March. It has been an April month so far. Meadow larks, robins, blue birds, black birds here, and ducks on the river, chipmunks out of their dens 4 days ago. Today is warm and bright with a brisk southerly wind.

9 Returned from N.Y. today Gilder with me -- heard the "peeping toads" for the first.

10 Very warm. Thermometer at 73 in the shade; grass greening perceptibly. Phoebe-bird here early in the morning. In walking out at night Gilder and I found a toad fumbling along side of the road.

Heard the little frogs or toads in the woods -- the same of last Dec.

15 The remarkable weather continues -- May rather than March -- no frost -- lilac buds swelling -- grass greening -- birds joyous. Only two months of winter -- Jany and Feb -- the shortest winter I ever knew anywhere.

Saturday 16 No break in the astounding weather. Every one says "did you ever see such weather?" and every one answers. "No it beats all I ever saw" A frost last night, but today is just perfect.

1878

March 16 Smoke seems to be the equivalent of flame: When the fire bursts out, the smoke is gone. I think that, intellectually speaking, I have many smoky days. When a little more draught, a little excitement, a lucky hit or thought, or may be a determined effort, [~~crossed out: to~~] would cause the flame to come forth. Something like this always occurs with me when I write. I begin by smoking and feel discouraged, but by and by, if I put the screws on, the clear leaping thoughts and the glow comes. But for the past 3 or 4 days I cannot get beyond the smoke. The combustible matter in me is very soggy for some reason. Mainly, I think, because Spring is here.

Mch 22 Made garden today -- the ground in fine order -- planted onions, peas, and spinach.

Saw the bluebird carrying straws into her box today.

I am persuaded the blue birds copulate on the wing.

23 Bees carrying in pollen to-day, dusty as millers. Warm and delicious. The clouds have a summer look.

24 Saw High hole this morning. Turtle doves in the afternoon.

25 A cold snap -- mercury down to 17 this morning. At the corner down to 10

26 In estimating a man the Romans asked, after other things had been considered, is he fortunate; has his career been marked by good fortune. Some old Roman took his name from his luck and was called Felix -- felicity, I suppose. For my part

I have often thought of my good luck -- how much better things have turned out with me than I expected or had reason to expect except in the matter of the [erased word]. Could I have known 20 years ago all the good things that were in store for me, I should have been spoiled. My writing has brought me more fame and money than I ever dared hope. For the past 15 years I have had a good income -- the last five years as high as \$3500 per annum -- and have been almost entirely free to follow my own tastes. If fortune had only filled the measure of my expectation I should today have been deeply in debt, if indeed I had been able to keep my place at all. But she has exceeded my expectations four-fold. and "yet I am not happy"

30 This spring has had but few reverses so far -- no snow and but one severe freeze.

Smith and I are planting the peach trees and telling yarns. To-day is without a cloud or a speck. What a morning it was! So still and the bird voices so jubilant! Robins, phoebe birds, blue birds cow-birds sparrows all singing and calling, and the medley of notes now and then shot through with the [~~th~~] smoothe strong [~~???~~] piercing [~~note~~] shaft of the meadow lark. It is bliss to be alive and be out-doors. That indescribable spring air is over all -- that quality of newness and firstness. The sunlight is white, the naked branches shine, the deepening tinge of green about the yard and in the moist places in the field.

31 Sunday -- so warm that it might be the 1st of May instead of the last of March. Heard partridges drumming to-day. Caught a hyla and saw indeed that it had the toes or feet of the tree toad. [crossed out: I give it up.]

April 3 My 41st birthday. Spent it in Washington on business with Mr. Royce, a warm pleasant day. Saw Walt April 1st and again the 5th. Think he is mending.

7 Home again from W. yesterday. In the woods today found arbutus and dicentra in bloom Blood root and liverleaf said to be in bloom also.

15 Returned from Elmira to-day after a week's absence -- a fearful neuralgia in my arm and shoulder, the severest pain of my life last night.

16 Am better. Cut some



asparagus today. The season very advanced. A mist of green over the currant bushes.

Heard the hermit thrush at Elmira in the glen above the "Cure" April 11th.

18 Saw the dog tooth-violet in bloom to-day. Took the treetoad out of the old apple tree to-day -- think he wintered there.

23 Saw and heard a lot of chimney swallows to-day high in air. I do not seem to be getting much out of the April days. I am down at the heel physically shoulder and arm give me much trouble. The peach trees are in bloom and the cherry trees, plumb trees, pear trees, and current bushes. A very remarkable month. The most noticeable bird song from passing birds, is that of one of the kinglets, in the woods and groves and orchards. All day I hear the sweet piercing note

of the meadow lark -- like a light silver shaft shot from a strong bow

24 Barn swallows high in air today.

25 Cliff swallows squeaking overhead to-day  
Yellow-red poll warbler here also.

27 In Nature it is the middle of May, and many birds, as the wood thrush, oriole, cuckoo, king bird, tanager, and many warblers, ought to be here, but are not. They evidently go by the Almanac and will not come till the appointed day. May birds will not come in April it seems, no matter what the season may be.

29 One week of warm, steady south wind and uninterrupted cloudiness, much moisture

but until yesterday and last night not much rain. Very growing weather. The apple blossoms nearly all out. The distant woods begin to look like some rare new cloth.

30 Went home to-day -- got home at one o'clock P.M. Noted a different smell in the fields as I went up across them, from these about here. -- the smell of my boyhood; it whirled me back quickly to that long gone time. The breath of the cattle was different too. and the odor of the ground. Father and mother well. They were all at dinner. Mother looks better than one year ago. Father went up through the woods after the heifers that night, and came back much tired. He had been running.

May 1st Went over the mountain with H.C. fishing, caught 30 trout.

Saw lots of wild flowers in bloom as we went over the mountain corydalis, claytonia, trillium, etc. Saw a snow-birds nest with eggs beside the road in the woods.

2 Today Willie started with me to examine the banks -- got back Friday night -- had a successful trip -- counted 10 woodchucks between Hobart and Delhi.

4 Willie and I went over in Meeker's Hollow fishing -- the best day I have spent for a long time, caught 10 lbs of beautiful trout -- 103 in all, three times as many as I ever caught there when a boy -- The heat and perspiration cured my arm and shoulder. A long heavy pull of three miles home over the grassy hills and through the leafy woods.

5 Last night and today a very heavy rain -- 3 inches of water -- the earth is more than full -- runs

over at every outlet. A freshet in the stream and rivers.

Came back home today -- foliage all out -- apple blossoms nearly all off the trees -- things look like the first of June.

7 Went to Coxsackie today -- had a nice drive over the country back of the town with the cashire.

8 Very warm and moist; things growing in a jump. All the birds here, the oriole piercing my heart with his note. The whippoorwill last night.

9 Another heavy rain. "To him that hath, more shall be given" etc.

11 Went to New Paltz today -- very cold -- Saw number of White crowned sparrows along the road as I did a year ago on the 16th -- a distinguished-looking bird.

Sunday 12 Found the cyripedium in bloom today -- quite a little company of them back in the woods near the wood-road.

A cool windy day -- fire in my grate in the afternoon.

Thoreau was curiously attracted by the Indian, and half envied him. He went to Maine chiefly to study the Indian, I suspect. He was always looking for their relics and finding them; he had an eye for arrowheads. This is a marked point in his character. He was a sort of cross between Emerson and an Indian.

Saw, heard today many brown thrashers (the mocking thrush). He says, "Croquet. croquet, "hit it, hit it" "come to me," "come to me," "you're out" you're out, "wicket!" "wicket!" with many other cries and squeals and calls, besides much sweet music.

13 Quite a frost last night.

14 A heavy frost last night formed ice 1/4 inch back of the hill by Crosby's barn --

much damage to crops and vegetation back from the river. In Shandaken it is said to have formed ice one half inch thick -- has probably killed all the fruit in Delaware Co.

[crossed out: 15] To New York today, much troubled; saw for the first time my own

17 Vegetation all out but weather still cool. The Sycamores are not yet quite clothed.

Have been hearing for several days in the trees about the song of a robin with the single note of the quail in it. For some time this note alone attracted my ear and I thought surely there was a quail crying "white" "white", without the "bob". Then I saw how it was. Did the robin learn it of a quail? It comes in every time, and is out of time and out of tune with the rest of

the song. It is as if you heard the note of the quail through the song of the robin, the note of the former bird taking a piece clean out of the strain of the latter.

Sunday 19 Lark and I went on a long walk through the woods -- found the nest of a robin, a King bird, a bush sparrow -- a hawk, a gray-squirrel and started a rabbit from her form. Beside Lark has a "tussel" with a mink and the mink got away. I first saw the mink coming up the creek along on the rocks and stones. I sat down and waited for him to come up, but when within a few yards of me he saw or smelt me and ran under some large stones. Then I poked him with my cane, and he came boldly out in Lark's face. Lark caught him but dropped him in a hurry, both dog and mink



crying out, and then he escaped as quickly as if he had dropped into the earth. Where he went to I have no idea. He made a strong, not disagreeable smell and gave us an adventure.

The sweet scented orchis in bloom.

I have discovered the secret of happiness -- it is work, either with the hands or the head -- something to do. It is the only safe and sure ground of happiness. The moment I have something to do, the drafts are opened and my chimney draws, and I am happy. The trouble is generally that we do not know when we are happy.

25 A fine swarm of bees to-day. It made me prick up my ears when I saw the queen amid the mass of bees. She is a superb creature. Before you have seen the queen you wonder if this or that bee which seems to be a little larger than the rest, is not her. But

when you have seen the queen you do not doubt a moment. You know it is she and can be none other. Long, elegant, shining, feminine-looking. How beautifully her body tapers. The drones are large bees too, but coarse, blunt, broad shouldered, masculine-looking. They have a strident masculine hum. The queen is not a sovereign in any strict sense, but the mother of the swarm, and they cling to her as to life. Among all those 30 or 40 thousand she is the most precious bee.

26 Another fine swarm today. Ingersoll came up last night. To the woods to-day and much loafing under the trees.

27 The fourth anniversary of dear Channies death -- a warm, cloud-flecked summer day -- and I am sitting in my room with thoughts of him-- the young Channey playing about the floor.

Never help a chicken out of the shell; he will come to naught if you do. if he is a strong healthy chick, he will get out himself -- Moral easy.

28 A bowl full of straw-berries to-day.

29 Beautiful summer weather, getting rather dry. Robins chasing the cuckoo; a red eyed vireo driving a cowbird out of the tree in which I suspect its nest is.

An oriole so dead-bent on having a horsehair for her nest, that not finding one on the dung heap under the shed she boldly ventured into the stable in search of one. If the horse had been there I expect she would have tweaked one out of his tail.

Watched the bees in the forenoon.

In the afternoon Lark and I took a long tramp, going back by Irishman Rileys shanty and then over the moun-

tain by Brookmans wood. Musketoos terrible. Heard a rare thrush back here in the woods -- the grey-cheeked thrush I think. Its song reminded me of the veeries more than of any other, but it was low and slight, as if the bird were only humming the air. The first part was more broken than the veeries -- more like the syllabing of the Wood or Hermit, but low and fine, and not very effective. Saw a pewee attacking a Grey Squirrel on a tree.

June 8 Cold heavy rain. S. berries ripening very slowly. Weather very cool. Father North left us this morning.

In these Spring and early summer months my intellectual life is at its lowest ebb -- and I am not happy. I have no thoughts, nor any of the emotional life

out of which thoughts sprout. I merely vegetate.

14 Attended the funeral of Bryant to-day with Walt and Gilder. Walt and Bryant used to be old friends, and had many long walks and talks together before [crossed out: the latter] Walt wrote poetry -- after that Bryant was cold and distant.

17 A robin has occupied an old nest in my porch -- a nest two years old, apparently without repairing it at all. It is her second brood, I suspect, and she is not particular.

I observe that of the cedar birds, both sexes aid in building the nest.

The large tree-toads appear to go to the marshes in May to deposit their eggs. They were very noisy in the swamp this year the last of May.

In June I began to hear them in the tress again in the early evening.

June 22 Wife and I went to N.Y after baby -- Baby did not come but Walt did and stayed 3 or 4 days -- have not seen him so well since his sickness.

July 1st Baby came to-day -- a great event

20 Went home to-day with wife and baby. Weather very hot.

Aug. Early in August (the 6th ) Aaron came and he and I began our camping out. On the 12th started with horse and wagon. Camped on High Paint Aug 13 all night. Thence to the Rondout thence to the Neversink; thence home to Roxbury, Aug 17th.

Aug 21 Left home today with horse and wagon for Esopus. Father rode with me out to the Deacon Hill

blackberrying. I pressed him to come and see me, but he said he could not come; he had no clothes. Those shoes he said he had worn 2 years. I can see him yet as he stooped over the blackberry bushes, as I drove on. Reached home the next day.

24 Went to N.Y. to-day, had a nice time.

Wife and baby returned the 25th.

31 Father North came to-night with Lizzie to take care of baby.

Sept 1st Very hot; thermometer 90 in shade. Father North brisk and well for so old a man and full of talk of his early days on the farm -- the hard work -- hard fare, good times, etc.

8 A day without a cloud, a Sunday, indeed; the air filled with a soft white vapor -- a haze not yet ripened into blueness.

The leaves shine as in May. No wind stirring. -- a new clean, burnished day after a week of heavy rain.

Sept 11 Mother and Willie came last night on the boat. I waited a long time on the dock for the boat to come. "Today" said Mother "is my birth day. Today I am 70 years old." Yet she is well and active.

About the 12th of June noticed flocks of strange birds flying to and fro from above here towards Frothingham's. They proved to be red cross bills, a bird of the far north. What kept them here so late? I have never seen them before in these parts, or this side of the Canadian woods.



Sept 22 Sunday To-day is the funeral day of Charley Caswell -- to-day they put his body in the ground -- the ground that but a few weeks ago I saw him turning with his plough. Death has seldom despoiled the race of a nobler specimen of a young man. He was a young giant in strength and robustness. With his blond hair and fair skin he was like a young Norse Viking. I had not known very much of him and yet I loved him. He was the ideal of a farm hand -- worthy the muse of a Virgil or a Theocritus. He had the virtue and quality of all sweet country and rural things. How cheerful and happy! What a worker, what strength! But yesterday Aaron and I saw him cradling on the hill -- and remarked his fine manly form and power. How he walked up to the grain and through it! It was a delight

to see him pitch hay, but no fun to the one who had to mow it away. But perhaps his great mastery was best seen when he had hold of the ax. It was better than a play to see him make the white chips fly and the big logs vanish before him. They gave him a sweat one night when his disease, (typhoid fever) first began to wrench his bones. and in the morning he was missing from the house. After a while they found him up in the orchard lying on the ground. "A bad sign. A very bad sign" Mother said, and so it proved. The last day he worked he ploughed up on the side hill, but at eleven o'clock turned out and came with his team to the house -- he could plough no longer. and there his work in this world ended. My heart is full of unshed tears for the lost youth. I will go walk

over the hill and consecrate this day to the memory of him.

23 Tonight Smith and Emma returned from Charlies funeral. In the morning of Friday as Charley died in the afternoon, he put his arm up around his brothers neck and pulled his face down to him and kissed him. Smith said he knew then that the end was near. It seems as if the unconscious nature in him in that act bid adieu to the things of this world. [crossed out: Per] His death has weighed heavier on my heart than I expected it would. His death is no doubt upon the hands of the man that bled him. (Old Allaben -- may his liver turn to stone)

Sept. 26 Today is buried in far off Ohio Mrs. Johns, the wife of my friend Aaron. Monday night at 8:20 she breathed her last. A tender, gentle, high-minded, affectionate

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woman, whom I came to know 12 years ago in W. and at whose hands I have recd many kindnesses. She was one of the "wives" [~~crossed out: spoken~~] of referred to in my Rain piece. I saw her for the last time in the morning of April 5, 78 -- then much weakened and wasted by disease, but up and about her house. Oh. birds, find her grave for me in far off Ohio, and chant my love and my adieus night and morning upon it. Oh. grass, make it green and fresh as the memory of her in my heart!

Sept 27 Mother says the first time she ever saw cars was 24 years ago when she and father and Olly Ann and Walker were going to Pa. She and Olly Ann [~~crossed out: were~~] had got tired of riding and were walking up the French town mountain when they looked away off across the country and saw a train of cars -- on the Erie road, [~~crossed out: perhaps~~] probably.

..In the evening as we sat in the kitchen mother in answer to my inquiries, told me about old Elder Jim Meade and family. I myself remember him faintly, and the house where he lived which we passed in going to Uncle Martins. He was an old school Baptist minister and very poor with a large family. His oldest son Abner froze to death and Reuben Kelly with him "on the 10th of Jinnuary, 1823" said Mother. They were hunting and on their return in the early evening, and when near a house froze to death. Rueben, it was supposed froze first. Abner stood his gun against a tree and ran around the tree till he had beaten a hard path. A woman (Mother told her name) who lived near heard some one "hallo" as she went to the door for something, and supposed it was a neighbor driving his oxen. It is believed to have been

the freezing boys. Elder Jim had an appointment to preach in Dry Brook next day which he kept, though his son had not returned. The bodies were found early in the day, when George Jenkins was sent to Dry Brook after the Elder. He had just got up to ~~[crossed out: give out]~~ open the meeting by giving out a hymn when he saw George come in. His heart sank, for he knew there was bad news for him. He proceeded no further with the services but went home at once. The bodies were brought in a sleigh. Mother was there and saw and heard what Elder Jim said. He went out in the road and as he looked upon his son said "And this is my beloved son Abner who never gave me a cross or an unkind word, and he is frozen to death" with much more

said Mother which she had forgotten. He talked a long time, and at night walked the floor and wrung his hands and cried. More than a half a century ago. The Elder lived nearly 40 years after that.

28 Mother went home this afternoon. Smith and I rowed her over to Hyde Park. A clear, cool day. Lacking 2 days she has been here 3 weeks, and seems to have been happy all the time till the last day or two, when Ursula has been possessed of one of her devils and has not spoken to Mother.

30 Went to Saugerties to day.

Oct 2 The culmination of a domestic comedy to-day that has been long brewing: Mrs. B. packed her trunk to leave me, but broke down at last and said "Dear, dont you want me to go?" Sequel -- we took the baby out to ride!

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Oct 10 A fire in my grate to-day. Heavy, slow moving, gray clouds cover the sky. I look out of my window and note the yellow rumped warbler feeding in the little Norway Spruce in front of it.

The feeling of fall comes to me very suddenly sometimes. There comes a day the latter part of Sept or early in Oct, when cold, grayish blue clouds cover the sky, the trees are shaken by a cold raw wind, the rarer birds are gone, and the more hardy are flocking, and as you walk or ride along there suddenly comes to you a vision of a fire in a grate, of nuts and books and papers, and the charm of indoors beside ones own hearth. The summer is gone, and the steamer season makes itself felt.



Oct 18 The beginning of a change in the weather from very warm to cold and rain --The birds suddenly very numerous and friendly, robins all about the grounds piping and darting among the apple trees -- sparrows flitting and chipping around the house. A moment ago a sparrow came and tapped on my window and looked in roguishly upon me. Snow-birds are here too with their quick and almost spiteful ways.

19 The present is always the frontier of time -- raw, crude, unattractive; the past is the mellow land through which we have passed -- ripe, human, attractive. How wistfully we turn to it!

25 October days of wonderful clearness and beauty -- no frost yet. The trees and woods [~~crossed out: be~~] are fast being stripped of their leaves by the rude winds.

Nov 6 First severe freeze last night. Clear, but sharp today.

21 Mary, the girl, left this morning. She went home weeping. I sympathized with her deeply. She was a tender, sensitive, unfortunate girl who tried her best to please Mrs. B., but could not do it. She was needy -- had a child of her own to support, and merited far better treatment than she got in this house. She came down and rapped at my library door last night to ask if she could be taken to the boat this morning. When I asked her what was the matter, she could not speak for some moments for her tears. She went back up stairs sobbing. She got the breakfast but ate nothing. As ye judge others, so shall ye be judged. Let Mrs B. remember that.

28 Thanksgiving -- the day after a cold rain -- cloudy but mild. The ground full to overflowing with water.

29 Heard the little frogs in the woods to-day. Large flock of Red Polls feeding on the weeds out among the grape vines. The Red Polls have been here since sometime in October. On the 26th I saw and heard a solitary Pine Grosbeak. He flew above as I sat fishing in Auchmoodies pond.

Weather yesterday and today clear and beautiful -- a touch of Indian summer.

Dec 2 A violent storm of wind and rain from the S. east -- the most rain this fall I ever remember to have seen in one season. At 3 o'clock the rain ceased and a peculiar white fog arose; at 4 the sun came

out and between 5 and 6 I returned from a walk to the P.O. in a soft moon light. It was like May.

Dec 3 To-day is like a bright October day.

10 A black winter day -- two inches of sposh and snow, a thin white fog and a pouring rain. How the trees drip, how the little creeks foam and roar. Lark and I take a walk down in Frothingham's grounds and have a big chase after a rabbit, a troop of chickadees and kinglets are hopping among the apple trees as dry as if they dodged the drops of rain. There is the inevitable woodpecker, too: he is always in the rear of these birds.

Evening -- The heaviest rain known in these parts for 40 years -- 4 or 5 inches of water. Great damage; could

Mr. John Burroughs wrote us on December 4, "I have never before seen the muskrats build such large houses as they are building this fall. Is it a sign of an approaching winter of unusual severity? In a shallow pond which I pass nearly every afternoon in my walk to the post office, two of the 'lake dwellings' have been steadily progressing for several weeks; they are built of a species of coarse wild grass that grows everywhere in the pond. They are the shape of miniature mountains, very bold and precipitous on the south side and inclining very gently on the north. The builder evidently drags his material up this easy northern incline and thrusts it out boldly around the other side. But I notice to-night (Dec. 4) that the nests are assuming more the cone, or dome shape. One nest was abandoned and another started several rods away, I think because some Muscovy ducks were in the habit of standing upon it to preen their plumage. I have noticed also an unusual number redpolls (*Aegiothus linaria*). They began to be noticeable at my place in October flying about in loose flocks. They have steadily increased in number till now there is a flock of several hundred here, feeding on the seed of the courser weeds, like ragweed, pigweed, etc. Is this also a sign from the north, of coming cold? We shall know next spring what all these signs are worth." Judging from the severely cold weather which prevailed during the last half of December, we should say the muskrats and redpolls were very trustworthy prophets.

hardly reach, the Post Office in my wagon -- the creeks sweeping over the road -- Kays house and buildings in danger.

11 The river full of floating barns, fragments of houses, dead horses, chickens, hay, furniture, apples, cabbage, barrelled flour, pork, sausage, etc. etc.

12 Among the sufferers by the great flood were two families of muskrats in the pond by Kays. For two months they have been building their houses, working only at night. As I passed by day after day I saw the mounds slowly growing. They finally became very large and high by far the largest and highest nests I ever saw. Does it mean a severe winter I asked? One man said it meant high-water. At any rate the high water came

and crept up till it enveloped them. Tuesday night as I drove past only a few inches of the top of one of them was visible. Next day they were both gone -- not a vestige of them anywhere to be seen. Poor rats, winter at hand, and their houses swept away. But several poor families at Eddyville are in the same fix. The river was so affected by the flood that it overcame the tide at this point and ran down steadily for 3 days.

20 Today father is 76 years old.

21 Our first genuine snow storm of the season, a white obscurity shuts down and hides all the distance. The snow is fine and deliberate and evidently means business.

23 Start for home to-day with wife and baby -- weather pretty cold.

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Jany 10 Returned from home to-day. Weather cold and stormy from Jany 1st but I had some big hunts and tramps over the mountains and some good sport fishing on the ice -- hooking up suckers. Father and mother keep pretty well. and mother as active as usual. Father had recovered from his severe cold and eats and sleeps well, but is quite childish at times -- cries on the slightest provocation -- the least thing that touches his feelings brings the tears and chokes his voice. I could see myself in him perpetually. As he sat reading and trying to sing from his hymn-book Sunday night, I thought I saw more dignity and strength in the lower part of his face than I had ever before seen in it.



He told me this about his Uncle William or "uncle Bill" who used to live up in the orchard, and then up in the head of Moore Settlement: Uncle Bill [crossed out: cam] often came to our house when Father first moved on the farm to stay Saturday night and go to meeting on Sunday. (He was a devout Old School Baptist) One night Mother heard him singing a hymn in his sleep; in the morning she told him of it.

"By night or day", replied he, At home or abroad, I am surrounded by my god."

He seems to have been a serious religious man who had little of this world's goods -- he was always poor.

Mary Jane said that Mr. Smith told her that when they first came to this country (from Scotland) they came through what we call "the long woods" (not much woods there now) As they were riding along David, a boy of 4 or 5 years, [crossed out: looke] after gazing on the wild desolate scene looked up to his mother and asked with great concern "Mother is there a God here?" To Any one who has seen that barren wild rocky gorge, the question seems very pertinent.

Mother told me this about Tom Keator (he was a prominent merchant in the village when I was a boy). When he was a boy of 7 or 8 years he was always threatening when he got mad to run away. and as he got mad pretty often his mother got

tired of hearing the threat. So one day she told him he should go off; she would hear that threat no longer; he should pack up and leave. She made him up a budget of his clothes and put them into his hand and sent him forth. He cried piteously, but she made him go: he turned in a ploughed field and stumbled and fell many times, but she was inexorable, till after she had punished him long enough, when she sent for him to come back; he never threatened to go off again.

Feb.7 It is a suggestive fact that growing plants -- wheat, corn, grass, etc., etc. draw more than nine tenths of their material from the atmosphere; sometimes, indeed, no more than one per cent

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from the soil, but how indispensable that one per cent is! All the efforts of agriculture are to supply [crossed out: th] it. Without that grain of earth or mineral substance, your great melon or squash, or nourishing grain could never be. An ounce of lime or magnesia or phosphorus balances a ton of the fluid gases. So does man in his life draw enormously upon the ideal yet how important that he have a grain or two of grit and draw something from the soil to give contour and firmness to his ideality.

Feb. 14 A clear cold day. One year ago Eden and I had our White Day and Red Fox hunt.

15 Clear and cold -- very cold. To day comes the sad sad news of the death of Walker Deyoe. But little over a week ago he was here apparently well, but I thought less

talkative than usual. Now he is gone and will come no more. it seems as if he was sad and oppressed when here. The last words I remember of his were his saying as we parted in the morning were that he supposed I would never come and see him. Smith and I and Emma happened to be standing in front of the stable door that evening when he came. He looked tired and pale. Last October he was here and we had a gleeful walk off over the fields and hills after chestnuts. How many times as a boy of 14 or 15 I have been out to "Walkers" How many times I have seen him and Olly Ann coming along the road to our house! Now Walker and Olly Ann and Channy B. are all gone. Emma alone remains.

17 Today they put Walker in the ground -- by this hour the earth has closed over him and he has forever gone from the light of day and from the eye of man. When an old and dear friend dies, one cannot realize it for a long time; it is like the amputation of an arm or a leg -- the severed member still seems to be in its place and we feel the hand or the foot as before. Walker was not especially near to me these late years, but he was the father of dear dead Channy, and once the husband of dear departed Olly Ann, and the past. Oh, the past has such a hold upon one!

19 Cold snowy winter weather and dull times with me -- no thoughts, no joy, no appetite for my favorite pursuits.

1879

March 3 The sun is getting strong, but winter still holds his own. No hint of spring yet; no sparrows or sparrow songs yet.

5 Warm and melting. The first blue-bird note this morning. How sweetly it dropped down from the blue overhead. The first spring sound of the season. Took Julian out on the hand sled how he did enjoy it! He is now nearly 11 months old. a remarkably bright and beautiful boy.

10 The first real spring day, and a rouser. Thermometer between 50 and 60 in the coolest spots; bees very lively about the hives, and working in the saw dust in the wood pile. How they paw and claw and apparently squeeze the woody meal; saw one bee enter the hive with pollen in his basket which he must have

gotten from some open green-house (got it from the saw dust.) And then the blue birds! It seemed as if they must have been waiting somewhere close by for the first warm day, [~~crossed out: for~~] like actors behind the scene, for they were here in numbers early in the morning; they rushed upon the stage very promptly when their parts were called. No robins yet.

Last night (Sunday) came Hiram also. To-day we have stood about in the genial warmth and had much talk. Sap ran, but not briskly it was too warm and still: it wants a brisk day for sap: frost and Snow with the warmth are not enough: there must be a certain crispness and tension also: there must be no doubt about the course of the wind which must be W.S.W.



1879

Mch 11 No frost last night; the morning damp and warm and still. The birds have come pell mell on the heels of the st warm wave. It seems as if some barrier had suddenly given way and let them loose. Song sparrows, cow black birds, blue-birds, and meadow larks here and hark what gleeful sound is that? The robins, hurrah, the robins [~~crossed out: are here~~] have come. A large troop of them following up the river valley stop in the trees near and it is like a summer picnic of children suddenly landed from a steam boat in the woods. -- they sing, shout, whistle, squeal, call etc. in the most blithesome strains. The cedar birds too are here in the apple trees pecking the frozen apples.

12 A change to more crispness and coolness, but a delicious spring [crossed out: weather] morning. Hundreds of snow birds with a sprinkling of song, and Canada sparrows are all about the house, cheeping and lisping and chattering and squeaking in a very animated manner. The air is full of bird voices; through this maze of fine sound comes the stronger note and warble of the robin and the soft warble of blue-bird. Whatever else they may have in Europe I doubt if they can ever have such a morning as this. A few days ago, not a bird, not a sound; everything rigid and severe then in a day the barriers of winter give way and spring comes like an inundation and the birds keep even pace with the flood. In a twinkling all is changed.

1879

Mch 12 It is a wise remark that I read yesterday in the London Spectator, vis: If it is the manner that makes the literary artist, it is the matter that makes the poet, as this generation understands poetry, -- new and ample thinking as opposed to mere verbal finish and polish.

15 Phoebe-bird here to-day.

16 Good sap day -- Hiram and I had a walk back in the woods; worked an hour or more trying to [~~crossed out: tumble~~] detach a huge rock from the ledge and see it tumble down; but were obliged to leave it; it hangs only by its eye-lids.

17 A deep snow -- 8 inches.

19 Nearly clear -- a good sap day. Hiram left this morning. I crossed with him on the ice; he was pretty skittish.

burned up the rubbish.

20 Sunday -- a day of great brilliancy after 3 days of rain and snow. While sitting on the border of the woods was attracted by a soft, uncertain purring sound in the dry leaves, which I soon traced to a spider. I saw and heard several; never heard a sound from a spider before.

The little piping frogs were in the fields and along the woods and in the woods; long and long I watched and waited to see and catch one, but gave it up, but on my way home in the cedar lane I saw one hop, then another, and still another. I captured them all. It never rains but it pours. In the marsh I caught another. They were of different colors but seemed to belong to the same species. Were they going

from or to the marshes? This is a mooted question.

Heard a blue-jay secreted in some pines and cedars indulge in a rehearsal that quite astonished me. It was a [crossed out: str] medley of notes worthy of the mocking bird, but delivered in a minor or suppressed key -- trills, quavers, warbles, etc. very sweet and musical, occasionally there was a note like that of the red squirrel.

26 These days I am happy. The days are perfection -- sweet, bright, uncloying April days -- and then Walt Whitman is here. He sits in the open bay window, reading, writing, musing and looking down upon Smith and [overwritten: I] me grafting the trees, or ploughing among the currants, or upon me alone wheeling baby Julian about the grounds. His white beard and ruddy face make a picture there I delight to see.

April 1st At Fredericksburg, Va. Ingersoll with me -- a bright spring day. We walked over the battlefield and through the Cemetery where 15000 of our soldiers lie

2d At Leesburg, Va. the day bright and windy. Examined the bank there.

3 My 42d birth day -- all day in Washington -- bright but windy with increasing cold. Started for home at night.

6 Froze hard last night, but increasing warmth during the day. Snow still deep in the shaded hollows in the woods. Heard the first peeping frogs to-day, with ice yet on some of the pools. One of the little pipers was in the fields some yards from the swamp.

9 Two swallows flying north to-day, hurrying as if to keep an appointment. A warm delicious day. Spent much of the day in the open air with baby Julian. Ploughed the garden and

Occasionally he comes out and strolls about, or sits on the wall on the brink of the hill and looks out upon the scene. Presently I join him and we have much talk.

To day the bees began working on the soft maple blossoms, but they have been carrying in pollen several days.

29 The yellow red-poll appeared to day. I see this bird for one day each year just before the buds burst into leaves, and that is all. Apparently it passes in one day or night. Heard tree-toad to-day in the apple tree. The Wood thrush to-day also and several other birds.

30 A most delicious April day -- the flower of the whole month. Walt and I drove over in the Russell woods and visited the falls. W. was much impressed with the scene, and made some notes.

[Note: the entries from May 8 - June 6 were out of order in the original journal]

1879

May 1st Pretty cool after the thunder of last night. The season about two weeks later than last year.

3 Walt left to-day. The weather during his stay has been nearly perfect and his visit has been a great treat to me -- April days with Homer and Socrates [~~crossed out: adde~~] for company.

4 Found a partridge's nest to-day with 4 eggs.

Father North came last night. He is now 78 and but little changed since last year.

6 Oriole came this morning; I heard him whistle before I was up. Cat-bird this morning also. The bobolink came yesterday.

8 To New Paltz to-day -- a delicious ride through the fresh, budding country. Saw again my old love the white-crowned sparrow; his clear ashen gray suit distinguishes



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It adds to the charm of the return of the birds that the new arrivals always first announce themselves in the morning. We do not see or hear them [~~crossed out: first~~] in the afternoon, but early in the day. The explanation is that they travel at night and stop to feed by day: hence they are always first seen in the morning.

May 10 Went home to-day. Father and Willy met me at the depot at noon. Mother and the rest of them all well. The season nearly two weeks later than at home. Snow banks yet lingering up on the side hill.

Sunday 11 Hiram and I went up on the Old Clump -- warm and dry. Father and mother went down to meeting.

12 Went fishing in Meeker

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Hollow. Frank with me -- caught 55 nice trout. Very warm.

May 13 Started on my trip to the banks, very hot, thermometer 86 in the shade, a hot dusty drive to Hobart and Delhi. To Andes on the 14. and home at night.

15 Came back home to-day.

19 A warm, slow, delicious rain -- much needed. Atmosphere loaded with moisture. Oh. so dank and muggy. Foliage all out except on the sycamores. Oh! what a growing time -- Nature all dew and rain and cloud and tenderness -- liquid May days at last

27 The 5th anniversary of dear Channies death -- I go to N.Y. on business, -- all day amid the lawyers, plotting and scheming with them. Saw Walt in the evening.

[Note: the entries from May 8 - June 6 were out of order in the original journal]

him from all other sparrows. In the others the brown tints are more marked. A yellow mist of foliage on the trees, the sugar maples loaded with their fringe-like bloom, which exhales a rich perfume.

May 9 To Coxsackie to-day - a bright warm day. The cowslip and wild peony in bloom.

New book came last night -- like it better than I thought I should -- The late pieces are richer in tone and color than the other books.

June 6 A walk in the woods: climbed a pine tree to examine a nest: it proved to be have been a crows nest, which the next year the red squirrel had made over into a nest and which was now occupied by a solitary bumble bee -- a queen bee just setting up her household.

She had one cell or sack built and a large loaf of bread or a lump of pollen half as large as a chestnut. First a crow, then a squirrel, then a bumble-bee.

7 Went to the head of the Rondout with Ames; a good time; plenty of trout and almost a surfeit of rocks and waterfalls. The scenery of the head of the R. I am convinced, is unequalled by any thing in the State.

9 Came out of the woods to-day. Father joined us at Shokan and came home with me. It is his second visit to me now in his 77th year. He is well and has a good, yea, a strong appetite. But such irrelevant and disconnected questions as he puts! and, being a little hard of hearing, he worries one sometimes. He thinks as he has always thought

that he cannot live much longer, but speaks of his approaching dissolution [~~crossed out: with~~] in a matter of fact way. I called attention to his new boots. "Yes" he said, "they will outlast me." I spoke of his new coat, "I shall never wear another" he said with evident relief. "Where is your baggage" I inquired as when we left the train. "All I've got is on my back" said father. He is quite boyish and matters sit much more lightly upon him than they used to.

18 Father left for home to-day. I walked down to the dock with him after dinner. He was in a great hurry lest he be left.

24 Went home this - afternoon to begin my voyage down the Delaware. Stayed home parts of two days waiting for my boat. Father and

Mother well, but Abigail in a bad way. I am much alarmed about her.

26 Set out on my voyage this morning.

30 Reached Hancock this 10. a.m. and my voyage is over. Must try and write it up.

July 3 Back home to-day, having spent the 1st and 2nd of July with the Knapps and their friends at Oquaga lake.

13 Sunday -- Finished my account of my voyage to-day at noon, began last Monday.

22 A cool summer so far and an abundance of rain. A great deal of lightning and thunder. A heavy shower with incessant flashes and reports to-night, still raging this 9 p.m.

31 Start for home to-day with wife and baby Julian and black Mary.

August Home all this month. Wrote my paper on Nature and the Poets.

Sept. 6 Mother had a stroke of paralysis (on the left side) this morning at 5 1/2 o'clock.

14 Stayed home on account of Mother till to day. Her case seems all but hopeless yet. Father is greatly cast down.

Oct 19 The end of a most remarkable period of weather -- three weeks without rain, and of most intense heat -- hardly a let up in all that time, thermometer ranging from 80 to 83 in the shade day after day -- Hunted bees nearly all the time -- found 5 bee tress and enjoyed it much. Went over to Bentons the 8th.

Julian began to walk freely on the 14th, when he was 18 months old.

23 At Saugerties to-day.

24 A fire in my grate to-day. Snow flakes in the air this forenoon. A great change in the weather.

Hiram writes that Mother is out in the kitchen.

27 Went home today.

Found Mother improved.

When I came in the room she said "Oh John," and wept for some



moments, I was deeply moved. In a broken and disconnected way she told me how she heard the train, then thought of me, then all still, then in about half an hour the door opened suddenly and in I came! Poor Mother! her mind is in fragments, like a shattered vase, and she can only fit a few pieces together as yet, but she is improving and may be quite herself again by spring. Father well and glad to see me.

29 Back from home to-day.

Nov 3 Our first snow last night. Cold and raw.

9 Warm and moist. Father North here again.

In the woods to-day (Sunday), caught six or seven small peeping frogs. They were hopping about on the leaves all through the woods. Of course they

do not go to the [crossed out: s] marsh to hibernate but burrow in the ground.

Caught also a large black and white newt or triton -- an odd looking creature -- night spotted with moonlight.

10 To-day Smith and I found a bee-tree well down the Black Pond mountain: three feet of a hollow hemlock filled with white clover honey -- a most pleasing spectacle -- 24 pounds.

12 Warm and rainy part of the day. At night saw a tree-frog sitting on the stone work by the kitchen door. Caught him. Of course also they do not go to the swamps to winter.

14 Warm and windy. Went to Auchmoody's pond with Ames. Driving back just at dusk I heard a toad singing his long breathed tr-r-r-r-r, as in spring.

1879

Dec 1st Start for Boston this morning to attend the Holmes reception and breakfast.

2 In B. to-day with Ingersoll.

3 A good time at the reception, the Holmes festivities. Saw and spoke with Emerson -- he is the most divine looking man I ever saw; does not look like a saint, but like a god.

5 Home again to-night.

7 Sunday -- warm and pleasant after last night's heavy rain. Heard a small frog to-day in a bushy field.

13 Went home to-day. Eden was down in the village. Found Mother a little better. She can help herself more, but her mind is still in fragments and it gives her much trouble at times to get the pieces together so as to be

intelligible. But she realizes that her mind is not right. "All kind of crazy" she says, and "can't think." She says if she could only get her mind again and be able to [crossed out: w] go about the house it is all she would ask. Father was quite well. As we sat in mother's room Sunday night, I was telling Abigail something about the Holmes's breakfast, and reception. Father, who had been listening, said he had rather go and hear old Elder Jim Meade preach two hours if he was living, than attend all the fancy parties in the world. He said he had heard him preach some of his deep sermons when he did not know whether he was in the body or out the body. No doubt the old preacher had a strong natural eloquence. I have a dim remembrance of him. He was poor, had a small farm and a large family. His sermons were two hours or more long.

1879

Dec 19 Lena left to-day -- a german girl of rare virtues and excellencies. came back again Dec 23rd [erased words]

21 Thermometer down to 7 this morning. The river steaming in the piercing north wing.

1880

Jany 1st The winter still mild, sleighing good -- saw a large flock of robins to-day, hear of their being seen elsewhere in this county. The river still open.

10 A still warm morning, blue-birds calling from the blue sky above. Bees out of the hive and working upon some honey I gave them.

Sunday 11 Homer Lynch leaves for home to-day. He came on Thursday.

18 Still very mild and the river open. The south and

south west winds are having it all their own way this winter so far. Found a frog to-day back of the hill in a little spring run. I saw him by his efforts to conceal himself. A winter frog is much more rare than a winter fog.

19 A mild, soft, April like day -- blue birds calling and bees out of the hive.

23 Returned from Middletown and Walden to-day. Warm and bright like April. No snow and but little frost in the ground.

28 Still warm and spring like, caterpillars and ants creeping about.

30 How true it is that every person has his or her [~~crossed out: water~~] permanent water-level like a mountain lake. We can hold only just so much happiness. A streak of great

good fortune raises one for a short time, but we surely settle back again to the old water line; so ill luck, sorrow, the loss of friends and kindred etc. lowers one for a season; but we recover and come back to the old measure, be it little or big. How much I love Julian and ~~yet~~ what a god-send he is to me, and yet is not my water line permanently raised.

3 Myron came to-day and this afternoon and evening we have sat in a "tumultuous privacy of storm" and talked the old, old talks.

6 Drove to P. with Myron to-day in the cutter.

The time draws nigh when Smith and Emma are to leave. The thought oppresses me.

1880

Monday

Feb 9 A clear bright rather cold winter day and a sad one to me, for this morning Smith and Emma left me to come back no more. For five years have they been here, and much have they helped to fill up the chasm of time. Going up there in the evening and sitting in their little kitchen, was like going home; it was a touch of the old times. Smith has been much company for me at all times. He has written himself -- his honest silent, continent, manly self -- all over my little farm. His work here will abide long after we are both in the dust. Little Channy too, my heart clings to him. But they are gone, and another chapter in my life is closed.



1880

Feb 11 "Better to dwell in the corner of the housetop, than with a brawling woman in a wide house."

"Better to dwell in the wilderness, than with a contentious and angry woman."

"A continual dropping in a very rainy day, and a contentious woman are alike."

16 A clear, still, mild April-like day; no snow and not much frost in the ground.

27 Warm as May -- thermometer 60 in the shade. A gentle southerly wind, much fog in the forenoon; the afternoon clear and soft. A day when the crows fly high and seem bent on distant journeys. They caw and caw all round the horizon. Heard a little frog back in Mannings swamp; on the pond saw two

of those iron clad beetles darting about; Saw a spirited and protracted fight between two female blue-birds; they would fall to the ground and continue to fight there. They were apparently rivals for the favor of a male. The male followed the infuriated females about and warbled and called but whether protesting or encouraging, I could not tell; sometimes he would interfere, but whether to [crossed out: help] separate them, or to help the weaker side was also a mystery. I do not know how the matter came out. Lark had a big chase after a rabbit. I saw the rabbit sitting in her old place under a little cedar, and gave Lark the hint.

28 The first sparrow song this morning. The snow-birds also cheeping and chattering in true

Spring fashion. No ice, no snow, no frost in the ground. In the wood the hepatica has pushed its buds up very perceptibly.

Sunday

29 Very warm, overcast, still. Sat a long time on the fence back of the hill listening to the first spring sounds: shouts of laughter of the robins borne to me from a distant field, sparrow songs -- song sparrow, Canada sparrow, and white throat -- the note of the jack-snipe -- the ever-welcome call of the high-hole, blue-birds everywhere, black-birds flying over, jays crying, meadow-larks on the wing, little frogs piping in the marshes and in the edge of the woods, crows cawing, a hawk screaming, a red squirrel chattering. The after-noon clear and windy.

Mch 4 Very warm. thermometer near 70. Heard and saw the mourning dove to-day.

5 Thermometer at 70. Bees carrying in pollen (white), probably from Frothinghams greenhouse. Wind blowing a perfect gale; cold wave coming, I think. Grass beginning to start.

The baby better to-day.

8 Sleepless nights and anxious days on account of Julian. Am much alarmed about him.

10 Winter again; snow and cold. baby better.

14 Still wintry. Baby Julian nearly well.

Saturday 20 Home this afternoon. Walked up from the depot in a driving snow squall, 8 o'clock at night. Found Mother a little better than 3 months ago. She realizes more keenly her condition and longs to

have her right mind again. Father was quite poorly but picked up amazingly during my two days stay, and was quite smart when I left on Monday night. He says they will not have him around much longer.

23 At Homer Lynch's to-day -- boiled sap in the woods.

24 Back home -- to night. Julian quite well again.

The weather cold and windy, with snow.

29 March grows rugged towards the end.

April 2 Never saw an April come in more sweetly, yet never came an April to me more sadly. Two cloudless warm, still, dry April days. Heard the clucking frogs yesterday.

3d My 43d birthday -- a still damp smoky heavily overcast day with light rains in forenoon.

home, saw a toad in the woods, a new spawn in the waters since yesterday --probably that of the common water newts.

10 First arbutus and first dicentra in bloom to-day. Hepaticas quite abundant.

12 Went home this afternoon, pretty cold. They were all at supper when I arrived. Father looking well. Mother about the same as at my last visit.

13 Warm, clear, windy. Father and I go down to Abigails. Father on old Tom, I on foot. Father pointed out to me as we went slowly along where his father used to make sugar -- (now Chase's field), grand mother helping him, also where he had a great wheat crop in 1815, which he sold for \$2.50 a bushel.

In the afternoon I helped Hiram boil sap in the sugar bush.

14 Warm, clear, smoky with west wind. Go down to Dry Brook with Hi Corbin and Abigail. Very warm, caught a few trout. Found the coltsfoot in bloom.

15 Still warm clear and windy, quite dry. Went early up to the woods and started a fire under the pans; boiled sap all the fore-noon, while the boys gathered it. How delightful it was, dry, warm, breezy. The songs of the "well contented" birds came from all about, the field sparrows being most numerous. Father came up and we sat on the wood-pile and talked, and I told him about Julian. Willie brought me a jumping

mouse that he found drowned in a sap-bucket. He finds them nearly every day. Father was full of stories and reminiscences of the past. In the after noon came down to Olive.

17 Plenty of blood root in bloom to-day. Found sweet-scented hepaticas -- large, white, odor suggested violets.

18 To R to-day for the new girl, Lizzie. First swallow to-day.

19 First blue violet to-day.

20 A long walk through the fields and woods. Saw lots of honey-bees working on arbutus and I have said in the Pastoral Bees, that arbutus yielded no honey and did not attract the bees. The bees refused the honey I offered them and turned to the arbutus eagerly, drinking long, and apparently deep. Saw first bumblebee to-day also, on arbutus.



21 Shad trees in bloom to-day and apricot trees.

22 A long walk -- found the trillium in bloom, and the [crossed out: great] long spurred violet in bloom also a rock covered with a rank growth of the walking-fern. Heard the water thrush.

23 The red-poll warbler and the white crowned sparrow today, also the first dandelions.

25 Saw honey-bees working on dicentra to-day. They reach the honey by piercing the long spurs of the flower. I wonder they do not serve the columbine the same.

30 Found the downy violet. *V. pubescens* in bloom to day. Gray says June. Also the *V. canis*. (?) The long-spurred. *V. rostrata* in bloom some days. Gray says June.

1880

May 1st Cold. Peach and cherry trees in bloom, apples showing the pink, currants in bloom, maples in bloom.

2d Wood thrush to-day.

4 Very warm. 80 Oriole and bobolink to-day and orchard starling. White violets just appearing.

5 [entry is erased]

9 Birds all here -- the cuckoo early in the week -- first heard him at night, leaves nearly all out: apple trees dropping their blossoms. Spurred violet very common.

On the 7th heard and saw an English sky lark in full song up and up toward the clouds back of the hill over Hibbards meadow. Must write it up. The bird was trying to mate with the field or vesper sparrow.

10 Found the fringed polygala and the orchis spectabilis in bloom. The sweet white violets at their height. Hot. 86 July weather 86 and 87 in shade.