

1880

May 14 Ingersoll came today.

17 Returned today from Auchmoody's lake whither we went on Saturday to camp in the woods. Had an idyllic time. The woods dry clean and delicious. What talks and yarns and mutual confession of sins. The time sped all too quickly. It seems like a beautiful dream. Some of I's experiences are very rich. I wish I dare to write them down. In the moonlight we floated up and down the glassy lake and mused and talked; then captured a little green piping frog by the light of a match. Have never heard this frog so far north before. In the woods found the little chickweed wintergreen in bloom. The honey bees were working on the blossoms of the white oak.

May 21 Went home to-day. Ingersoll with me. Father well and mother gaining a little. Very hot. Saw areas of meadow land down by the river covered with bluets -- they tinged the ground like a bluish hoar frost. Gathered handfuls of the Canada violet and found that they had a delicious odor -- suggesting apple blossoms. Wild ginger in bloom and the painted trillium.

23 Went up on Old Clump. Found the *Clintonia borealis* ready to bloom. Passed a delightful day.

The buttercup just appearing in the meadows -- the dandelions raising their globes of silky down everywhere -- in places making the slopes

white as with frost.

The bobolinks in all their glory their songs ring through my dreams. It is the most striking song in this part of the country at this season.

29 Started on my tour of bank examining this morning. At Hobart my Michigan friend joined me, and we rode well content through the delightful land. She was happier than I was. Her star was in the ascendant. To Andes and home the next day.

27 Over the mountain after trout to-day. Took a fine lot.

28 Back home to-day. In the morning Mother was being dressed as I left. She looked quite bright and well, but presently said "Oh, if only had right mind, if only had right mind" and began

to cry. Poor, dear Mother, how my heart yearns for her!

30 A steady delicious rain all day; the first of the month; a very dry and a very hot May.

June 6 More rain last night and this morning. A wet June so far. Sad, sad are my days.

[Two erased lines]

16 Home to-day with wife and Julian. Father and Cal. met us at the train. Mother greatly rejoiced to see Julian.

19 A delightful day in the woods with F.

21 Back home to-day. Mother a little better.

25 Start for head of the Rondout today with Ingersoll and family and my

friend F. A whole week in the woods by the beautiful stream. A prolonged pic-nic. Trout and wild strawberries every day. Such a time as seldom comes to a man, more than once in his life time. F. was very good, a tender, thoughtful, yearning, loving, intelligent woman. But that scene in the road when she accompanied me a short distance on the way for milk! How her face flushed, how her eyes filled, how her lip trembled! She was cut to the heart by my confession. When I returned she was cold like marble and looked as if she had had a fit of sickness. [~~crossed out: Bad weather~~] I slept near her that night in the

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tent (for it rained) but she made no sign neither did I. But the next day matters improved as I told her the whole history of the [erased word] and in a few days the skies bright again. She is a remarkable woman.

July 5 Cool for the time of year and very dry. A heavy sadness oppresses. The first cicada to-day.

7 A song sparrow nearly deprived of his gift of song -- can only get out a few faint notes, as if he had a terrible head cold, yet he sings as industriously as any.

15 Fine rain, this morning also. last Monday the 12th Julian can just put his chin on my table. He talks a good deal.

Honey-bees work on Sumac, the Alanthus, and vipers bugloss, and climatis.

21 Went to Lake Mohonk to-day, a cool, fine day.

Saw a humming bird gathering the down of the wild lettuce for its nest.

Near the Walkill saw a number of Red headed wood peckers, one a young one. Getting to be a rare bird.

Kingbirds apparently fighting their young about my apple-trees. The old bird alights on the back of the young, there is a great fluttering and squeaking and snapping of beaks, when the young takes flight. Is it to stir them up and make them fly about or is it to train them into the king-birds

peculiar mode of warfare?

"It is true however says Mr. Renan "that the farewell to happiness is the beginning of wisdom and the surest means of finding happiness" "There is nothing sweeter than the return of joy which follows the renunciation of joy." "It is better to be a human-being dissatisfied, than a pig satisfied." J. S. Mill.

Oct 4 Home to-day. Mother about the same. Father well. The common violet in bloom all over the fields. In the woods on the mountain I gathered a hand full of the Canada violet. It was distinctly sweet-scented.



The fall fearfully dry.

13 Nothing but light showers since June. The wells and springs all failing.

20 Home to see Uncle Edmund Kelly and Aunt Salina. They are old, but well and not much changed since I saw them in 1873. Mother was quite overcome to see Uncle Edmund.

Dec 20 Mother died today at 10:25. It is Father's 78th birthday. I came home Saturday night. Mother kissed me and seemed quite bright. She looked better on Sunday and Father said he felt quite encouraged about her. But in the afternoon she was taken with vomiting and grew worse. I was up with her nearly all night. Paroxysms

set in at 11 o'clock and continued more or less all night. The last words I heard her speak, or that she ever spoke was to Margaret, "go to bed, do go to bed" she said, as if she was half wearied with our efforts to relieve her. I went to bed at 2 a.m. but they called me at 4. While dressing I felt that the end was [~~crossed out: nigh~~] near. The paroxysms (of an epileptic character) grew more and more severe. I could not stay in the room. About 9 o'clock I went over to the stack where the boys had foddered the cattle. It was a relief to get out and look at cold impassive nature and the tranquil feeding cattle. I know Mother would not have

deserted my dying bed in that way but I could not stand it. As we returned Eden and I were standing out in the road on the big hill near the old pennyroyal rock, when they called us to hurry up. How my heart sank! When I entered the room, Mother was bolstered up with chairs and pillows and was evidently within a few moments of her end. The Doctor sat by her side and the family stood around silent or weeping. Mother was getting purple, the heart was beginning to fail, the eyes rolled from side to side, her breathing grew shorter and shorter and then ceased, her eyes closed; the lip quivered, and our dear mother was dead. It was a cold still winter day. Fathers grief is very

touching at times. But the clouds come and go quickly with him as with a child. Homer and Jane came in the evening of Tuesday.

22 To day Mother was buried. A bright cold day, the air full of glistening frost particles and a curious fog clinging to the mountain tops.

Mother looked as if wrapped in a profound calm and peace. Her features wore a more severe and noble expression than they ever had in life.

After they had carried the coffin down and placed it in the sleigh father stood by the window and looked out after it and I heard his agonized words, "I shall see her no more, my dear

wife, I shall see her no more." Few men have ever loved a woman more. he clung to her more than she to him. Mothers heart and life were devoted to her children, she could not do enough for them; but she was often curt and unkind to father. Not so with him; his children were secondary -- she was first always. "There was never a better mother" he said, "and never a better wife" He did not go down to the church; we thought it not prudent for him to go on account of his delicate health. Elder Hewitt preached one of his curious, incoherent sermons on the Elect -- such a sermon as poor Mother had listened to a thousand times and thought she enjoyed. In the course of it

he stated that he thought we should not know and love our friends and kindred, as such in the other world. He thought it contrary to Scripture. The reason was, that some of them might be in hell, in everlasting torment, and we could not be happy, even in heaven, if we knew this was so. Of course we could not. It was a poor foolish sermon in one sense, and yet it was sincere and heartfelt. The Elder thinks his own time is near.

25 It is Christmas and I have but one thought "Mother is dead." Her toil worn hands and aching heart are at last at rest. After life's fitful fever, she sleeps well.

30 Every hour in the day I see her image and hear her voice. In the night I awake and my heart cries "Mother", "Mother!" The saddest of all is that I can eat and sleep and read and laugh and go about my affairs cheerfully with Mother in her grave.

Very cold; ther. 10 below this morning. and at zero all day. Already six weeks of severe winter weather, but no deep snow.

31 Clear and cold with a regular Indian summer haze; therr. down to 7 below this morning.

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Jany 1st Clear, still and cold. Mercury down to 14 below at Hibbards. 10 below at my house. Yet how red and warm the sun

looked when he came up this morning, and what a soft warm haze has filled the air all day. Indeed these are the winter dog-days. Very cold all over the country: from 18 to 28 below in this part of the state. In Washington 14 below; in Richmond 12 below; In Jacksonville, Fla., 19 above. It is cold enough to freeze the dead in their graves.

6 Now comes the harvest of the cold weather -- snow, snow. These bright cold days and nights seem to have begotten unlimited snow in the upper air. The ice-harvesting in full blast on the river.



Everywhere I turn the image of Mother, her voice, form, features, ways -- is constantly before me. She appears always a little withdrawn, a little in shadow, as in life. Mother was not a bright, chirp, smiling woman, tho' as happy perhaps as most persons, but her happiness was always shaded, never in a strong light. The sadness which motherhood and the care of a large family, and a large yearning heart beget was upon her. I see myself in her perpetually. A longing which nothing can satisfy I share with her. Whatever is most valuable in my books comes from her -- the background of feeling, of pity, of love, etc. comes from her.

On the 5th they took my poor cow away to be slaughtered while I was in N.Y. I have had her 6 years, the best and handsomest cow I ever owned; clean limbed, sharp hoofed, round, deep buttocks, high-strung, tho' gentle, an easy keeper, full of cream and butter, but destruction to the trees when she could reach them.

10 Julian is my comfort, my life. How my soul clings to him. He is a remarkably bright, handsome and engaging child. He now just begins to use the word wish. Among other things he says "I wish you get me seven league boots" as he has heard me say my big boots were

seven league boots. He cannot understand the death of his grandma. He insists with great emphasis, however, that Grandpa is not buried in the ground. "Grandpa live" he says, "and coming to see Dudy this day."

15 It seems incredible that Mother should be dead. How many times during recent years when I was home, or she was here, have I charged myself to observe her well, to note all her ways and all she said, and show her every kindness, for before I saw her again she might be snatched away. I have tried to remember her last words to me and her last look when we parted, for my heart was full of a blind fear that they might really be the last. Well, she has lived her life, 72 years. How little she knew and saw of what there is in the

world to see and know, and how much she felt and underwent. Her life was one ceaseless round of toil from childhood. After she was married there was the housework and the dairy and a baby nearly every year. Early in the spring came the sugar making, then all summer the butter and the cheese; in the fall the cutting and drying of apples and the butchering; in the winter the making of clothes for the children, knitting, patching, etc. Then there was the spinning and weaving of both flax and wool, and the making of carpets, and a thousand other nameless tasks. How many summer days she spent in the fields and meadows under the burning sun picking

strawberries. One summer I remember she went away up to the old Clump, strawberrying. It was in early haying time. I had discovered the berries there after they were all gone in the lowlands. Then the raspberries and blackberries she picked! The day before her fatal stroke she picked a small pail of blackberries on her way home from Abigail's. It was just at dusk that she came home. I was standing in the door as she came in, much fatigued. That was the 5th of Sept. 1879. Those were the last berries she ever picked. That night as we all sat in the kitchen there was much talk, and some angry talk on the part of Margaret and Mother about another girl. Olly had left sick, and Margaret said they must have another girl.

Mother said she could do half the work; she could take care of the milk and butter just as she used to, or she could do the housework. She talked with much spirit. The next morning when she got up she put on her old work clothes as if she intended to take her half of the work. She went out doors and then came in and went to the stove to fill the tea kettle when her extended hand was arrested; the blow fell; her head dropped and she staggered to the fall, when father and Margaret caught her; her work was done. Great Nature said, "Enough. No more toil for thee. Thy rest is at hand."

18 Day after day and every day [crossed out: I] as I sit in my library I hear Julian training through the house, running from the pantry through into the dining room and back, for hours at a time, playing he is a train of cars; he toots long and loud and fills the lower part of the house with the sound of his feet and his whistle. When he is still than I know he is building cars and boats and houses etc. with his blocks in the window.

25 Solid winter weather continues, and the Indian summer haze in the air continues. Thermometer from 10 to 14 below this morning and yet the air looks like that of the softest October.

26 It is singular that in the winter the cold weather is not cold and the warm

weather is not warm. With the thermometer at zero and below the cold stings but it is no trouble to keep warm out doors or in; but as soon as it goes up to 25 and the wind blows from the S.W. one is chilled to the bones, and the furnace requires more coal to warm the house. No doubt it is true that in the South they suffer more from the cold in winter than we do in the North.

28 The first windy and tempestuous day of the winter: a roaring lion, thermometer ranging from 10 to 18 above; looks as if we were getting over the ridge toward spring. The cold so far has been so even and uniform



that there was nothing to start a wind; as soon as the heat of the sun begins to make an impression the winds will perhaps begin. Have nearly finished my White essay, begun last week.

Feb 1. A terrible day, thermometer down to 2 above this morning and at 8 at noon and the wind blowing a gale from the north; the sky overcast with one unbroken [~~crossed out unseamed~~] seamless cloud. The ice-harvesters unable to work.

2 Bright and still and very cold -- down to 6 below at my house. The express trains this morning make a sharp hissing and sissing sound as if the track and wheels were red-hot. Mrs. B. left for N.Y at 10 to-day. Lizzie gone also; a capital girl.

6 Clear hard, bright days, the thermometer at 20 or 22 in the middle of the day, and at or near zero in the morning. The soft Indian summer haze again filling the distance. This looks like a continuance of the cold.

8 Went home this day with Julian -- reached home about 8 1/2 P.M. Father very glad to see us.

9 "Fifty five years ago to-day" (1826) said Father, "I and your Mother were married" and his tears flowed afresh. "Fifty five years ago last Sunday night" he went on "I stayed with her the last time before we were married. I rode your Uncle Martins old sorrel mare over to her folkses.

Poor Father talks of Mother nearly all the time, and kisses her likeness many times a day. He cannot utter a sentence about her without breaking down before it is finished. He tried many times to recall where she had been one time a few years ago when he met her at the depot and was so glad to see her. He said "I suppose I was on a half cry. I wanted to kiss her, but I knew she would be mad. Seeing how overjoyed I was she said, "Chancey, don't be foolish" He says he seems to hear her every day when he is mourning saying, "Chancey, don't be a fool." Once he said as he was sleeping on the lounge, he heard her call him just as she had thousands of times in

life , and it woke him up instantly. "Oh! he said, no one knows how I felt.

He was quite poorly but improved much during my visit. Every night I woke up several times to hear him cough and cough in the room below me. As I was looking at him one day, he suddenly seemed like my former self. This is me I thought, not yet come into this body, narrowed and darkened in mind, old and deeply afflicted. I could see myself plainly in him. Father has great faith and no self-consciousness. He is reading the Bible through again, he said. He had been reading about Elijah and the false prophets and he told me the story. When he came to the

triumph of Elijah, how fire from heaven came down and consumed his sacrifice, and all the water, etc., he wept like a child. He believed all these things absolutely.

He told me that I nearly cost mother her life. She was sick all that summer. Mary Montgomery (now Mrs. Dart) took care of me the first few months of my infant life.

How minutely he remembers events of long ago. He came on the farm the 15 of April 1828. He remembers who built the wall out along the road beyond the old garden, and that he paid him twenty cents a rod for laying it up. He remembers all his oxen and horses, and what he paid for each team and where he got them.

9 Our first winter thaw set in to-day and continued with

heavy rains till Saturday night.

12 Saturday. returned home to-day. Julian not well.

14 Bright and not very cold. Julian better. (Hold him all one night in my arms.)

20 Quite warm and spring like. Snow still deep. The catkins on the alders seem actually to have started. I have measured them twice.

When I was home father asked me with great deliberation "John, do you suppose any body from these United States ever visited the country where Christ was born?" Father has asked that question several times before, and seems to not quite believe or realize my answer. I suppose it seems incredible to him that

such could be the fact. He said one day that if he had his life to live over again there was but one country he should like to see, but that he supposed he should not see it then, even if he had ever so much money, and that was the country where Christ was born.

26 Clear and cold -- ther down to zero this morning. Saw two blue-birds to-day, both males; they kept together.

Mrs. Booth came today.

27 Warm; saw two male blue-birds warbling and calling cheerily. The male bluebird can and does spread his tail as he flits about at this season in a way to make him look very gay and dressy. It alters his expression completely and made him look alert

bright, beau-like and every inch a male. The grass is green under the snow and has grown perceptibly.

Mrs. B and I walked in Holland's grounds. Saw the red-breasted nut hatch and heard his soft, baby-like piping. Mrs. B. was greatly delighted, a new bird to her.

Mch 1st Stormy, half snow, half rain, but indoors a [several words erased]

4 Stormy again; a bad day for the inauguration of Garfield. A brighter color has certainly come upon the willows and upon the osier cornel; the former are in places a fresh bright yellow; the latter a deep purple-red. Some of the willow trees look as if a



yellow setting sun were gilding their tops. I note them in the valley along the creek. I think the sumac bobs, too, are a deeper, fresher crimson or purple the berries are certainly more acid and lively. I even thought a red-squirrel that skipped along the fence in front of me had a fresher redder tinge to his tail.

6 Sunday. Warm and thawy. The prettiest thing I saw in my walk this afternoon was the willows [*S. discolor?*] [~~crossed out: along~~] back in Hibbard's marshy meadow. The catkins are just starting from beneath the scales or bracts, and the long slender wands, glancing in the sun presented a new and novel appearance. Each scale was like a tiny [~~crossed out: gl~~] mittened hand

pressing a perl, which was escaping from it, close to the willow branch. The mitten was black or very dark brown and the treasure it clasps is of a soft pearly whiteness. The wands were really decked with pearls.

7 A perfect spring day at last -- still, bright, warm and without a cloud. Tapped two trees; the sap runs, the snow runs, everything runs. Blue-birds the only spring birds yet. Thermometer 42 in the shade. A perfect sap day. A perfect sap day is a crystalline day; the night must have a keen edge of frost and the day a keen edge of [~~crossed out: wind~~] air and sun. Wind N. or N.W. The least

film, the least breath from the South, the least suggestion of life or cell growth, and the day is marred as a sap day. Maple sap is maple frost melted by the sun. 9 P.M. a soft, large starred night; the moon in her second quarter, perfectly still and freezing. Venus throbbing low in the west. A crystalline night.

8 Another crystalline sap day of melted frost, of liquid ice and snow, wind N.N.E. The veins of the maples fairly thrill. Under the maple by the spring there is a shower of sap from the branches where probably the squirrels have bitten them. Julian and I make a fire in the leaves by the old maple at the spring.

9 Rain, rain.

10 Crossed the river on the ice to Hyde Park. Cool and cloudy.

13 Sunday. Cloudy, still, soft, yet a good sap day. No frost in the air, but frost on the ground in the shape of new fallen snow. A sap snow; it has a magical effect upon the old trees.

Three robins to-day, the first of the season, though Ennis says he saw one on Wednesday.

14 4 P.M. The ice on the river has just started. Presto! what a change, the [~~crossed out: River~~] dead is alive again, resurrected. Where was that white rigid death-like expanse but an hour ago, is now the tender dimpling sparkling

water. All the forenoon I have noted the signs: the river stirred a little, put forth a little streak of water here and there, made breathing holes, as it were. At 3 o'clock, the ice was rent here and there, and shoved one piece upon another slightly; there was something alive and restless underneath them. Then by and by, the whole body of ice began to move down stream very gently, almost imperceptibly at first, then with a steady, deliberate pace till the whole expanse of the river in front of my house lay dancing in the light again. The resurrection of the river, but the dead, oh, the dead!

16 First song sparrow this morning, first black birds -- starlings with their "gurgle-ee" note.

17 April like weather. One sparrow yesterday -- dozens of them this morning, and all singing. Also, snow birds chattering, nut hatches calling and woodpeckers drumming. It not at the door of any grub he raps, but at the door of Spring.

Am writing my Thoreau article and doing fairly well.

19 The turtle-dove to-day.

20 Phoebe this morning -- heard her note before I was up. No chipmunks yet. Grass greening a little.

22 A sparrow morning, still, chill, overcast. Everywhere the song of the song sparrow and the jingle and chatter of the snow bird (himalis).

Some kind of spawn in a ditch full of water by the road side. Must bring some of it home and see what it turns out to be. I suspect lizards.

27 Roads dry and settled some days. Heard the first little frog at 6 P.M. back in Mannings swamp, thermometer below freezing.

To-night clear and windy; the big March bellows is working. Venus to-night is like a great lamp in the sky. The stars [crossed out: actually] seem brighter such nights, as if the wind blew them up, like great burning coals. Venus actually seems to flare in the wind.

28 A bright, clear, and rather dry and hard March day; the river ruffled and crumpled by the

wind. (The low platform cars Julian calls "mash-down cars," as if some one had sat on them and flattened them out.)

28th continued -- A day full of strong light, unusual; a strange lightness and clearness all around the horizon as if the wind made the day burn brighter. The wind probably purges the air and makes it clean. In the north, the Catskills white with snow stand out clear and sharp.

A day for purification by fire, to burn over the dry fields and weedy places. Have just returned from fighting fire of my own putting out this morning



back in Mannings field. See the smoke from fires all about, and smell the burning -- a good smell.

31The bright windy day brought 3 days of cloud and storm.

Snow and rain yesterday, and soft and squally to-day.

Am still working on my Thoreau article.

Heard a shrike to-night on my walk to the P.O. first thought it was a squeaking axletree or pulley wheel or something of the kind. It faintly suggested the warble of various birds. as usual the shrike was perched on the topmost twig of the tree in which he sat.

Two mornings since saw five swan flying over in single file, the first I ever saw; they looked

very large spread out on the sky -- like great geese. How gently their wings flapped. [~~crossed out: only~~] the tips of them apparently doing most of the work. They went North. It was a noble sight -- an express train bound for Labrador. The hens saw them first and asked each other curiously what birds those might be.

When you outrun your feet when your legs fail to keep up with your body and head: you fall

In some respects the city is more favorable to the production of literature than the country. There is more electricity in the mental atmosphere. But offsetting this is the [~~crossed out: tendency~~] life of clubs, and the tendency of men to get together and

chatter and chaffer. and talk and talk. and there is nothing that kills production like this incessant palaver and rubbing of your heads together. It is a kind of intellectual onanism.

April 3 Sunday. My 44th birth day. My first motherless birth day. She who gave me birth sleeps her last sleep. A clear bright dry and rather sharp day, wind in the north, as it has been most of the time lately. Julian and I still alone and peace reigns in the house. Finished my article on Thoreau and sent it off. In the morning saw the downy woodpecker at his spring drumming -- must make a note of it. In afternoon found the skunk cabbage in bloom; probably been in bloom over a week.

Bees busy carrying off flower from my meal barrel. The dust themselves in the bran and then while on the wing pack their flower into their baskets. In less than a minute the baskets on their thighs show quite a grist.

The chipmunk not out yet.

6 Cold and disagreeable. No good sleep lately. Mind full of undigested sleep. Unhappy. It is said the fireflies in China all flash in concert. Now, as far as you can see they all veil their lamps; then all flame out again, making a very pretty effect.

9 Saturday. Wife home to-day at 2 P.M. absent since Feb 2d. Pretty sad, much troubled about herself. Bright, dry days

from the north, but sad to me from want of sleep. Also wifes sadness reflected in me. Julian has a very bad eye.

First meadowlark today.

10 A gloomy house, a gloomy outlook. In the afternoon walked back of the hill. The finest fox-sparrow song I ever heard. How it went to my sad heart! Of all sparrow songs this is the finest. Either I have never heard the full song before or else this bird was an exceptionally fine songster among its kind. The song sounded strange and foreign to me. and I had to look sharp to be sure of my bird. It almost made me weep. It echoed in my heart and the thought of it clung to me long and long. So plaintive, so bright

and prophetic of what? sadness or joy? On Monday, I heard the same song near Hibbard's.

The hazel in bloom.

A pool full of skeleton fish (*Eubbranchipus vernalis*).

The clucking frog and peepers very lively.

11 Another meadowlark to-day. The past hard winter has evidently been very hard on these birds, very disastrous. They are late coming, and very scarce. A bright dry warm day.

12 Snow to-day, soft and moist. Snow all day.

13 Rain, rain.

14 First dog tooth violet to-day and first willow bloom.

15 First hepatica in the woods, near ice house -- sweet-scented.

6 Saturday. Home to-day with wife and Julian. Huge snow banks in the roads and woods -- have to drive through the fields in getting down to Abigails.

17 Boiled sap to-day in the woods with Hi Corbin; enjoyed it hugely. In Chases sap bush found the hepatica in bloom within a few feet of a huge snow bank; no yellow violets to be seen yet.

18 Back home to day.

19 To N.Y. and thence to New Haven.

21 A long walk with Mrs. Booth and Prof. Munger out to Woodbridge. A bright lovely April day. Found arbutus, blood root, hepatica, erythronium, and heard and saw the first swallow. My first real excursion into Connecticut, my ancestral state.

22 Back home to-night at 7 P.M..

24 Sunday. The warmest day of the season. 80 in the shade, with wind S.W. A walk back in the woods; found arbutus, dicentra, blood-root, hepatica, adder-tongue, and on the river bank near Sherwoods anemone and chickweed.

Domonie Sherman died today and also Pat Masters and Elias Elmendorf.

Two [crossed out cock] hen robins fight for 3/4 of an hour on the grass in front of the house; never saw so fierce a battle; they made the feathers fly; they panted like game cocks; at it again the next morning as fiercely as ever.

27 Plenty of yellow violets to-day in the sugar bush and in other woods; also claytonia and addertongue



in bloom. Saw honey-bees at work on claytonia.

The hepatica acutiloba nearly all white and nearly all sweet scented this spring. Some very large ones  $1 \frac{3}{8}$  inches across. Often a single blossom is distinctly fragrant as that of the viola blanda. In bloom about a week before the yellow violet.

May 1st. Came back to West Park to-day to look after skylarks. Marsh marigolds in bloom, shad trees in bloom, also apricot trees purple trillium in bloom. Father is well this spring and is fast ceasing to mourn openly for Mother.

4th Back to Roxbury today.

5 On the "Old Clump." Old snow banks yet in the woods here and there, the snow nearly as hard to

melt as sand; granulated snow. Long and long I sat on the mountain top, and looked down upon the old familiar scenes. The black throated green backed warbler in the woods.

8 Sunday: back home to-day.

10 Liberated the sky larks to-day. The experiment evidently a failure. Very warm 86 in the shade. Fruit trees in bloom. Birds all here.

On Saturday the 7th father went down to "church meeting." He had not been to the church before since Mother was buried. He was very anxious and even excited about going; began to lay his plans a week before hand. He shaved and dressed in the forenoon, and charged them

many times to have his dinner ready early and the horse fed and harnessed. It seemed almost as if he expected to see Mother instead of her grave. He was full of eagerness and of a sad vague expectation. He started about 1 o'clock, and was back by six. The day was warm and fine. He complained sadly of the neglected condition of Mother's grave, and charged Hiram to go and fix it up. On Sunday he went again to meeting. He also talked much about the death of Elder Beebe, and was much grieved by it. He has taken the Elders Signs of the Times ever since I can remember.

Grand father Burroughs had an uncle Stephen Burroughs who lived in Bridgeport Ct.

and who could build a ship and sail it around the world, father said. He lost a beloved son at sea, and event that nearly broke his heart. Ship, cargo, and son were all his, and were all lost.

11 Very hot -- Julian said the robins called him to come up in the clouds. He said some day he was going up in the clouds to sit down. He seems to think the clouds are a kind of woods.

12 92 in the shade. Foliage all out.

13 Found orchis spectabalis in bloom to-day.

22 A week of cloud and rain, the liquid shady side of May following a long dry spell. A walk to the woods with Hazen -- overtaken by a shower.

23 Dissolving weather; where two or three clouds are gathered together, it rains. It is water-affirmative, as Goethe says, The spirit of rain is abroad.

After supper looking skyward I saw what I never saw before -- a flock of birds or fowls very high, so high I could not make out what they were, tho' ducks were suggested, going north ward in Indian file, making a long fine wavering black line against the clouds. As they went on with great speed, swaying a little this way and that, they suggested a long slender worm or snake, an aerial serpent. I watched them till they became a mere thread and that faded out in the distant sky. They were at an immense hight. [crossed out: What were they?] as if launched

for Hudson's Bay. No where short of Canada will that arrow fall, and it must have been shot from the Gulf. What were they? (Swans.)

On the way to Po'keepsie noticed that some wet poorish meadows were covered with the wild geranium -- a pinkish tinge over the grass. It makes a very pretty field flower. Saw a weasel come down a tree and cross the road to the fence; then run up another tree nimbly as a squirrel, and down again; then along the top of the wall with great speed.

26 On my way to the P.O. discovered that the hive-bee is dependent upon the bumble-bee for the honey it gets out of the blossoms

of the locust. The bumble-bee bites into or pierces the flower at its shank and takes [~~crossed out: a sn~~] the first snack; then the honey bee comes along, searches for the hole and takes what is left. Neither bee makes any attempt to get at the sweet the regular way, that is, by the mouth of the corolla. It is singular that the columbine with its "horn of honey" is not rifled in the same way; but it is not, tho' the dicentra is.

30 First wild strawberries today; gathered them in Frothingams field, and brought them home in a cornucopia of burdock leaves; thought of mother constantly, of the days and days she had spent in the summer fields picking strawberries, me with her as a boy and as a man; the heat, the fatigue, and her figure moving slowly toward home with her pail or basket filled.

1881

June 2d Home to-day. Father well and hearty.

3 Started on the old round over the mountains to examine the banks: Eden with me. Weather cool and fair. Crossed Palmer Hill again about 4 P.M.

5 In the old hemlocks to-day, found the nest of the black throated-blue-back warbler, in a low bush -- 4 eggs.

6 Over to Batavia kill with father fishing -- clear, cold day. Father full of remeniscences and of talk about mother: told of the first time he ever saw her, etc. This was the road to Red Kill which they had traveled together so many times!

[a line suggests that the following passage should come at the end of the entry for June 3 above] When Eden and I came back from the banks we passed mothers grave about 6 1/2 P.M. We



paused and gazed silently upon it. I shall never forget the emotion it gave me to see that grave there where no new grave had been for so many years! Mother, mother, seemed to fill the air above it. Oh, can it be possible I thought, that she who gave me life, and who was so precious and real to me but a few months ago, lies there beneath that mound. The last time she [crossed out: was] ever [crossed out: in the b] visited the burying-ground I was with her. It was in August, a few weeks before her stroke.

11 Rain, rain, rain, Nature in a rut again. 5 days of rain and drizzle.

28 A disgust of rain. Not in years have I seen so wet a June. Farmers can't hoe their corn shower after shower till

the earth is full of water. My well is within a few feet of the top. The streams like April.

29 Saw three weasels (Ermines) back of the hill along a stone wall. They were hunting for eggs and young birds and went up a tree and explored its branches. pursued and abused by a brown-thrasher.

Saw a slight frost the 21st up Dry Brook to Smith's.

July 2 When President Garfield was shot I was fishing on Auchmoodies Pond with Ames and Northrup and did not hear the news till we returned at 5 1/2 P.M. In the P.O. as I inquired for my mail they said the President had been shot last night in Baltimore. I drove home much excited and

at 7 o'clock saw the particulars in a Troy paper that Amanda brought.

4 A sad Fourth; much depressed by the shooting of Garfield. Whether he lives or dies the event will be productive of incalculable injury. Great crimes are sure to repeat themselves; other presidents will be shot in the future, either by mad men or by assassins. We shall probably have an epidemic of shooting at once. When a thing has been done once it is much easier to do it a second time. The pent up madness and villainy will now set towards this new vent -- shooting distinguished men.

8 The clouds lift -- the President may pull through.

One of the heaviest rains last night I ever knew --. about 6 inches

of water fell.

10 Old Mr Martin down at the dock told me this anecdote about Si Terpenning -- a fellow not very well stocked with brains. He was hoeing corn for Mr. So and So, who told him to leave only four stalks in a hill -- all others was to be pulled out. When in the course of the day Mr. So and So came into the field he found indeed only 4 stalks in the hill but they were the smallest -- all the biggest had been pulled out. "That is the way to do it" said Si in explanation "pull out the big ones and give the little ones a chance." "There is a great deal of that kind of philosophy in this world," said old Mr. Martin [crossed out: e], reflectively.

12 Mid-summer approaches. I begin to hear the bobolinks "pip" in the air above -- the young birds are fledged and both old and young will soon begin to move southward. The meadows lilies spot the meadows with fire; the rye is golden on the hills; wild clematis just beginning to bloom; the smooth sumac (*R. glabra*) in bloom and yielding apparently much honey to the bee; the chestnut trees full of their yellow-white plumes and filling the air with their peculiar soapy smell; the linden's sweet breath is on the air; wild roses still linger, and what is unusual at this season, the earth is full and overflowing with water as in spring. So much rain I have seldom seen in summer.

1881

July 17 Start for home in buggy. Lark with me.

18 Reach home to-day about noon.

Stay home with wife and Julian. Father well and hearty. I work much in the hay field.

Aug 9 Drive to Furlow Lake today and prepare camp.

10 Wife and Julian and Gilder and family join me and Lark to-day. We remain in camp till Friday the 19th when I carry Julian who is sick, out in a pouring rain. Much alarmed about the dear boy, but in a few days he is better. The camping out experiment not entirely satisfactory. It is a mistake

to take ones family to the woods. They stand between you and the wild nature you are after, and between you and your male companions. Gilder and I could not, or did not, get at each other. We had no intimacy, no comradeship, no talks. Leave the women at home next time. The camp is for men alone.

27 Start back home to-day. Dry hazy and hot. Reach Olive at night and spend Sunday there where wife and Julian arrive in advance of me.

29 Came on home to-day. In Kingston lose Lark. He goes back to Olive, 10 miles where we spent Sunday arriving there next day, tired, dusty, and forlorn, poor dog!

1881

Sept 20 The Presidents death oppresses me like a personal bereavement. Mr. and Mrs. Brookman brought me the news this morning. I was coming up the hill with my hat full of peaches. When I saw the paper in their hands with its broad black lines I knew the dreadful tidings.

Never perhaps since the world began was the death of one man so widely and sincerely lamented. The last time I saw and heard Garfield was in April 1879 in the House of Reps. His speech was the most earnest eloquent and impressive I ever heard in that hall.

21 We go down to Ocean Grove and spend one week by the sea. The beach attracts me much. Its purity, its odor, its elemental



wildness, its rustling liquid drapery, the great white lace-like spreads which it is forever throwing and forever withdrawing from the smooth face or breast of the sand, etc. I never tired of it. Day after day I walk for miles on the beach, bare-foot, skirting the thin edge of the waves, alone, soliloquizing with the soliloquizing sea. Julian shovels and plays in the sand by the bathing pavilions for hours and hours, hoarding every shell or fragment of shell or smooth pebble as a great treasure.

Oh, restless ocean when thou art finally stilled I suspect death will have claimed all earthly things.

28th Back home to-night, and much distressed by the sore illness of my dog Lark, from the bite of a large Newfoundland dog.

1881

Sept 30 My dear dog Lark died to-day. I sat by him the last two hours of his life. So he too, is already of the past! Oh greedy and remorseless past, not even is ones dog safe from your all-devouring maw. This was (ah that fatal was) my third dog, and the most tender and affectionate of them all. Dog of the gentle heart! more a child than a dog! how much have I buried in the grave with thee! How can I again resume my walks through the old lanes and by-paths and wood roads [crossed out: without] where we have strolled together for 4 years past, summer and winter, without thy gentle comradeship? All the landscape for miles and miles we have read over and over

to-gether as two boys read a story book. No forest way or nook or retreat but knew us many times. The "Idyl of the Honey-Bee" was thine as well as mine. The "Notes of a Walker" were thy notes as well. It seems as if I could almost give my right hand to have thee back! A vital part of me is gone, something that knitted us to the fields and woods and that made life more sweet.

Lark was always child-like -- not puppyish, but like a proud and pampered child. He could not stand even the look of anger from me. Let me approach him any time or place and look sternly at him and he would throw himself upon his back and put up his little red

feet supplicatingly. There was no blame he would not take upon himself and humbly beg forgiveness for. He had no prowess, no courage, could hardly kill a squirrel unaided, yet how I treasured him in my heart. How pathetic now seem his wanderings with his faint, but yearning human and sagacious heart. When I lost him in Kingston on my return from Roxbury, and he made his way back, ten miles to Father Norths in Olive where, I spent Sunday, and where we had left wife and Julian! What trepidation, what bewilderment had he not suffered! The hostile dogs, the hooting boys, the threatening cattle, and the long dusty tedious way? If I knew where he passed the night, or

where he rested by day I think I would go there just to gaze upon the spot. The dry leaves upon which he made his bed and where he renewed his resolution not to be discouraged or to give up the search for me, would be precious to my eyes.

One's pleasure with a dog is unmixed. There are no set-backs. They make no demands upon you as does a child; no care, no interruption, no intrusion. If you are busy, or want to sleep or read, or be with your friend, they are as if they were not. When you want them there they are at your elbow and ready for any enterprise. And the measure of your love they always return heaped up.

Ah. well. I cannot help but mourn. My daily companion and comrade is gone. The door that opens and shuts but once to dogs as well as to men, has closed behind him and I shall see him no more, no more.

I buried him at the north end of the rock where my other dogs lie. In the afternoon I dug his grave, and in the twilight buried him, Julian looking on the only mourner.

Oct 1st Still very hot, therm 90 in the shade. A hot dry Sept. heat and haze and smoke and drought since Aug 24th -- the hottest month of the season.

Oct 2 Rain and gloom to-day. I cannot make Julian show or feel any regret for Lark. He says he does not want him

back because he was bit so bad and is dead. Another time he said "Poppy, why don't you have God come down out of the clouds and make another Lark?"

5 Thermometer down to freezing this morning -- a fall of nearly 50 degrees since yesterday forenoon.

While I was home in August Ezra Bartram, of whose mother father bought the farm, and of whom I had often and often heard father speak, came out from Michigan to visit the friends and scenes of his youth. He had been gone 52 years and was now 75. I was glad to see him. He had worked and played on the farm as a boy and his parents lie buried upon the hill. He went out beyond

the hog-pen to look for a stone he had marked with his axe just before he left. But the road and all was changed and he could not find it. In the barn he said I would find the print of a mans bare foot on one of the boards under the shingle near the peak. When his mother was building it, an indolent fellow whose name he told, came along and walked on the board as it lay by the rode side and left his mark. But I could not find the print. How strange to come back to the place of one's youth, after an absence of more than a half a century! To me, how much had passed there since he left.

In Michigan he took up a farm in the wilderness and began at



the stump. In the still autumn mornings, he said, they could hear the wild turkeys calling and gobbling in the edge of the forest all about them. Venison was their staple meat. ~~[crossed out: When a man]~~ Some one in the neighborhood would kill a deer every week and divide it up among his neighbors. The great trees were felled and burned in heaps. It was amusing to hear him tell about a famous yoke of oxen he had in those early days; they would draw any log he hitched them to. When they found they had their match, he said they would give their tails a kink, lift up their heads and go eh-h-h-h, then something had to come. He spoke of them with great affection. He said

they lost their first six children each at the age of about two years, or in teething time. Fever and ague would seize them during this critical period and so reduce them that they could not pull through. As the country got cleared up and improved the ague abated, and their next six children survived. The poor babies; pioneer babies, how ones heart yearns for them! Ezra is a great talker and is very jovial and entertaining.

Two old men who had been boys together, and who had met after more than 50 years had elapsed, father and Ezra Bartram -- parting for the last time on the

street. I sat in the wagon near by. Ezra shakes fathers hand again and again; leaves him and returns to him and says "In 20 years I shall come again" "I shall be under the sod long before that," replies father presses his hand again, puts his other on his shoulder, half embracing him, looks steadily into fathers eyes for a moment, says "God bless you, Chancy" and they part, these school boys of 60 years ago, never to meet again in this world.

Speaking of Wilson in late years I had often heard Mother remark that he used frequently to say to her that he wished he could see all the bread she had ever made piled in a heap. "Poor boy" said Mother if he could see all I have made since he has been dead he would see a big pile."

1881

Oct 8 Go home this morning. Reached home about noon. Father came down the steps to meet me. He is well and hearty. In the afternoon he and I go down to Abigails in the wagon.

9 On the Old Clump to-day and back to the cleared fields. Saw many yellow bellied wood peckers. A cool cloudy day.

10 Back home this morning.

22 Drove across Dutchess Co. from Benton's whither I went on the 19th; a soft, nearly clear October day full of color and full of a sense of the coming sleep of things.

Nov. 10 A bright mild delightful November day. Finished the Po'keepsie banks yesterday.

25 A bright clear day -- Snow on the ground. All alone in the house since last Saturday, wife and Julian in Troy. How many days and nights of solitary confinement have I spent in this house! The sad, sad thoughts and remembrances how they find one out and prey upon him in solitude!

Dec. The dog is a slow walker.

15 To P. to look after a defalcation in the Po'keepsie Nat Bk. Finished my article on the bank question for The Century last night; ink was hardly dry on last pages when I was ordered to P.

18 Sunday -- A clear Indian summer day: thermometer 50 bees out of hive. a day like

October.

You can have no flame till you first have gas or vapor.

1881

Dec 19 Home to-day, the same as one year ago, to be present at Father's birth-day, his 79th. A warm soft day. Homer and the hired man met me at the depot: reached home about 8 o'clock. Father came down on the steps in the darkness, listening for my voice; he is glad to see me. Mary Jane and her girl, Ursula, present.

20 Still bright and mild. As I was working up in the shop, getting out shelves for my new study, father came up at 10 1/2 o'clock and with choking voice said the hour had just arrived at which Mother died one year ago. I paused in my work, silent and sad.

At dinner all the family were present -- all the living. Father, Eden, Hiram, Curtis, myself, Abigail, Jane. Father is well, and eats and sleep as usual. In the afternoon, Abigail, Jane, and Hiram went down to Mothers grave.

In the evening Father told again of the man he saw hung in Delhi when he was a boy. The people all turned out, far and near to see the hanging. It was better than a circus and drew immensely. There was a tremendous crowd. Grand father and Grand mother and several of their children went. When the man swung off Aunt Mary, then about 17 or 18, fainted dead away and dropped to the ground.

21 Still, warm and bright. Go hunting foxes up on the mountain.

But little snow in the wood. Saw where a wood pecker, perhaps the hairy, had just excavated a [crossed out: dry] snugery in a dry tree. His new chips strewed the snow. Saw two 'coon tracks and followed them a long way down the side of the mountain. Chipmunks lively yet. No foxes, but a good tramp. Back home in the afternoon.

1882

Jany 1 Rain Rain, the ground is overflowing. No frost in the ground, no winter yet, not a particle of ice in the river; the grass still green.

5 Cold for the past three days, down to zero this morning. Ice beginning to form on the river. The earth bare and frozen like a rock.



5 The first day in my new Study; moved in yesterday. My books in their new places last night. I contemplated them with a strange, sad feeling, my faithful, silent companions!

11 Soft and mild for 3 days past. Snow last night for the first in several weeks. Large fields of thin, slowly moving ice in the river. A remarkably mild winter no far.

13 The universe, eternity, the Infinite, is typified by the sphere: the earth is the symbol of the all, of the riddle of riddles. We speak of the ends of the earth, but the earth has no ends. In a sphere every point is a centre, and every point is the highest point, and this explains the puzzle of time and space. There never was

a beginning of time and there never will be an end. Time always is. Any number of trillions of years hence, and any number of trillions or quadrillions of years past, and you are just as near the end or the beginning of time as now and no nearer. This moment is the centre of time; this instant is the highest point in the revolving sphere. The same with that other form of time, Space. There is no end to Space and no beginning. This point where you now stand, this chair, this tree, is the center of Space: it all balances from this point. Go to the farthest fixed star and make that distance but the unit

one in millions and sextillions of such distances, and you have only arrived at Here. Your own door step is just as near the limit and no nearer. This is the puzzle of puzzles, but it is so. We cannot understand it, but then we can see why we cannot understand it.

13 Birds, not of a feather, flock together, in winter. There has just passed my door a loose, rambling, heterogeneous troop of birds foraging after the snow; snow birds, Canada sparrows, and gold finches on the ground, and kinglets and nuthatches in the trees above -- all drifting in the one direction; the snow birds and sparrows closely associated, and the other birds rather dissociated. Misfortune, or hard times, makes

all the world akin. A Noahs ark, with all species living on friendly terms, is not an improbable circumstance in such a rain. The birds I have just alluded to were probably not drawn together by any special social ties, but all were engaged in the same general hunt for food, and the activity of one species attracted or excited that of another. "I will look that way, too" said the kinglet and the nuthatch, when they saw the other birds apparently getting their fill.

17 To Sister Jane's to-night on my way to Stamford to examine the new bank.

18 Pretty cold. Homer took me up to examine the bank.

19 Home to father's this morning

on the early train. Hiram met me at the depot. Father was in tears when I entered the house; he could hardly speak, he was so glad to see me. He is better but coughs up a great deal of phlegm yet. He eats and sleeps well, but mourns for Mother more than usual, perhaps because he is so closely confined to the house. He asked me twice as he did before when I was home, if I thought mother had changed much in her grave. I saw that he did not want to believe that she had changed. He said the soil was dry and sandy. Father sleeps alone back there in that hall-bedroom -- a most dismal place. I could hear him cough up

in the chamber where I slept. I looked in upon him night and morning lying there alone. A little while and he too will be gone. Those splint-bottom kitchen chairs, he said, he got of old Mr Carroll, Enos Carrolls father, when he and Mother first went to keeping house. He brought them home on horse back. When I left for home next morning, his tears flowed afresh.

All great poems and works of art have the quality of the broad day light. We may not always understand them, yet the mind sees clearly. But in much poetry (in Rosettis) there is somewhat murky and foggy, an opaque hindering something mingles with and

enfeebles the light

It is said that the Chinese have never made a barrel. The barrel is a good measure of civilization.

To find a mole above ground is as rare occurrence then to catch a weasel asleep, yet one May day, walking through the fields, I surprised a mole on the surface.

Feb 1 A heavy snow yesterday and last night. 18 inches on the level.

4 Another heavy snowstorm from the north -- 14 inches, very light. Snow leg deep everywhere.

13 Myron Benton left for home to-day. Came here on Wednesday. I met him in P. Much talk down in my little house and trying of our teeth as usual.

upon the old uncrackable nuts. The logico-metaphysical lines in Myron's mind much stronger and deeper than in my own. The inward eye of his mind is very clear.

27 Julian just now asked, "How many hours you have to wait to go way across the ocean"

A suggestion of spring this morning. Clear and soft and hazy. The blue-bird (here all winter) has the amorous warble of spring. The purple finches sitting in all the apple trees indulged in fine, half suppressed chorus song; it was very pleasing. My little wood pecker has not begun to drum yet. A hard snow covers the ground. Ice men



began to put in poor, 6 inch ice on Saturday, in front of me. A sun-dog las yesterday afternoon; and a soft rosy glow diffused over the clouds [crossed out: thi] at sunrise this morning, reaching nearly to the zenith -- Do those signs indicate fair weather?

First chipmunk to-day, back on Mannings ridge.

28 Fair and spring like. The first sparrow song this morning before sunrise. My little wood pecker began his drumming about 7 o'clock at the old stand. His first notes were uncertain and at long intervals; but presently he warmed up and at 7 1/2 was beating a lively tattoo.

The hawks (hen hawks) screaming to-day and circling about each other, high in air. It is their mating season.

1882

March 1st A steady, heavy rain from the south with much fog -- the fog the result probably of the snow on the ground and the ice on the river. 3 P.M. a day of powerful rain, threatens a flood.

Had my hair cut yesterday, felt weakened and reduced in vitality in the afternoon -- Wonder if the old myth about Samson and his locks is true after all. and that we lose our strength when our hair is cut?

Finished my [crossed out: "Observations of Nature"] "Signs and Seasons" to-day, begun two weeks ago. Writing is like fishing, you do not know that there are fish in the hole till you have caught them. I did not know there was an article in me on this subject till I fished

it out. I tried many times before I had a bite, and I done much better some days than others. Stormy days, either snow or rain (tho' snow is best, ) were my best days. I did not know I had that bank article in me till Gilder told me I had and commanded me to write. The same is true of the Thoreau article, and indeed of nearly all my articles; they have been discoveries and have surprised me.

2 Ice broke up last night. River strewn with the wreck of winters domains this morning. Great flocks of herring-gulls on their way up river to see what they can find. The muskrats built unusually high houses last fall but yesterday rain submerged them all but three (there were 7 in all).

Ice ran down all day: the flood in the river overpowered the tide and pushed it back. No cake of ice has returned. A high hole to-day, and back of the hill several little pipers probably newts as they did not sound like the hyla. Some in the swamp, filled with ice, snow and water, and some in the woods.

At 3 P.M. comes a dispatch from home that Hiram Corbin lay at the point of death. my spring thus nipped in the bud. A deep gloom suddenly covers everything.

3 Today I go home, doubtless to find Hiram dead, the corpse of a dear and beloved friend at the threshold of spring.

A typical spring morning, still motionless dissolving. The air

full of blue bird notes and the calls and warbles of the purple finch. The river and the landscape veiled with a soft, vapery haze; the sky flecked with summer clouds. At sunrise an unusual sight in the east. A heavy bank of black cloud lay low on the horizon just when the sun was to come up. Against a saffron sky this cloud rose up like a mountain. Presently its outline began to glow. Some god took a brand from the sun and limned it upon the sky. The effect was precisely that of an arrested chain of lightning. Conceive the vivid zig-zag flash that lays open the clouds of a summer shower, caught and pinned fast upon the sky and you have this phenomenon. It was a mere line, jagged, intense

that shot up from the horizon on the one hand and described a zig-zag course a few degrees above it and then plunged down. From beyond this the sun sent up great broad bands or radii of light, the cloud in the meantime keeping its somber, blue-black appearance.

10 A.M. The wind has just sprung up and like magic the vapor, the haze, the enchantment is dispelled; the river is ruffled and made to show its dirty hue. Afternoon very windy, night windy also.

4 Reached home about dark last night. Hiram Corbin died in the morning about 5:40. To-day very windy with strong light all around the horizon. Go over in Hiram's sap bush

in the morning after looking upon his dead form, and muse about the woods where he has spent so many days. How the wind roars over the trees, swaying them this way and that. A good sap day. The snow all gone. No wild flowers yet.

5 Sunday. To-day poor Hiram is to be buried. A storm seems to be approaching. At 10 o'clock a strange phenomenon about the sun, 4 sun dogs of great brightness thus

[drawing with the following labels]

1 a bright crown to the circle about the sun

2 and 3 sections of rainbows

4 a mass of soft light.

I go over again in Hiram's sap bush and sit long and long amid the trees. The owls hoot dismally in the hemlocks, the crows caw loudly; all portends a great storm.

The woods full of red-headed wood-peckers, probably a dozen in the

sap-bush; hear of them in other low woods; doubtless the beech nuts attract them.

Elder Hewitt preaches in the afternoon a rambling incoherent sermon over the poor boys remains. He is buried beside his mother who died in 1859. The last time I saw him in life was Dec 21 when we all went hunting up on the mountain. Hiram stopped by the big rock in the woods where the fox usually crosses, and said he would stay there while Jim and I moved on. There, standing beside the rock in the winter woods, is the last glimpse I had of him. He was a generous hearty man, open of heart and open of hand. Many a camp and tramp have we had together, and now he has lain down for the last time.



6 Back home to-day. The storm proves but light. The ominous owls and sun dogs of little account after all. Left father well.

8 Day of great lightness and clearness, cold wind from the East. Predict snow for to-morrow.

9 Morning dawned with deep blood red in the east very early. Snow storm set in at 8 A.M. Brilliant aurora last night.

12 First red shouldered starling this morning, which told me it was time for the skunk-cabbage to blossom. In my walk found the ground about the head of Hibbards pond studded with them; probably out yesterday. Heard the first partridge drum also near Ackers. The pussy-willows showing their pearly buttons. The only new observation of my walk was the

angularity of the branchings of the hickory thus [drawing] Yesterday observed that the fruit of the bitter-sweet that looks so like a flower has a fine perfume, suggesting arbutus and violets, thus in a double sense, it is like a flower. After the snow storm the other day I noticed wherever the snow lay unmelted upon the ponds and pools these curious spider-shaped marks [drawing] little and big everywhere and quite uniform in shape.

The most rain and high water the past winter I ever knew. Great floods in the West and along the Miss. causing incalculable suffering and loss.

12 Turtle dove today.

Mch 17 Advice to a young writer and to myself: Come to the point at once, and if what you are trying to say has no point, don't say it.

19 Phoebe here this morning.

April 3 My 45th birth day. Clear crisp and delightful. All day in the old sap bush at home boiling sap. Father, Julian, and Hiram there much of the time. How delighted I am again amid the old scenes and at the old occupations. Now on my 45th birthday my hair is about half gray, beard ditto; mustache unchanged, except on close inspection, where three or four small gray hairs appear. Health good, [~~crossed out: but~~] and much of a boy yet at heart, but the boy is growing more and more sad with longer

and more frequent retrospection. Indeed the past begins to grow at my back like a great pack, and it seems as if it would overwhelm me quite before I get to be really an old man. As time passes, the world becomes more and more a Gethsemane, a place of graves, even if ~~[crossed out: I]~~ one do not actually lose by death his friends and kindred. The days do not merely pass, we bury them; they are of us, like us, and in them we bury our own image, a real part of ourselves. With what longing and regret we look back athwart this cemetery of the years where our days, many of them so beautiful and happy and bright, lie hushed and still. They cannot rise, they cannot come back to

us; they were the offspring of our loins. Many of them we have entirely forgotten the look and aspect of; we cannot recall what they were like, and [~~crossed out: etc., etc.~~] this makes us sad. Occasionally a word, a forgotten tune or air, or a perfume brings [~~crossed out: comes to one~~] back for a moment the buried past, and a mournful thrill goes through the soul.

4th Went a fishing along the old stream in the West Settlement; bright and really April weather; caught no fish, but caught many memories of other days.

6 No wild flowers yet. Back home to-day after nearly two weeks absence.

Father well and hearty as usual. I tried to get him to go over to see grand fathers house with me, but he would not; he said it

he said it would only make him feel sad. He talked daily about mother and mourned for her. Old Hayes used to live there below grand fathers; he moved to Ohio.

14 Found arbutus and disentra just beginning to bloom on the western slopes; liverwort not yet in bloom in the same locality.

Have actually secured passage to England for us all, to sail May 6.

A spring so far of very low temperature -- not one warm day -- thermometer seldom above 40 -- often below 30.

17 On this day the claytonia was found in bloom by Ed in the sap-bush.

19 Today claytonia abundant in

the sap bush, and hepatica in bloom. Down in Chases sap-bush found plenty of hepatica and claytonia in bloom; no yellow violets there yet, but in Abigails sap bush found four yellow violets just piercing the mould; flower stalk an inch long, and flowers about half open, leaves rolled up.

20 To-day in a very favorable spot found yellow violets in our sap bush just up; the bud and the leaves seem to pierce the mould simultaneously; the rain of last night brought them up; warm for the past three days; they will be in bloom in about two warm days, making them about 4 or 5 days behind the claytonia; The first hepaticas pinkish white, and sweet scented.

April 21 How surely a man is fast rooted in the age in which he lives. After 35 or 40 his interest is almost entirely in the past. He cannot move forward into the new generations and share their interests and hopes and prospects etc.

The first effect of putting wood on the fire is to check the fire.

25 Cold dry hard April days, frost nearly every night.

26 Am writing on Carlyle and hitting the mark now and then. Just this moment my wife calls me to drop my Carlyle and come and shake the carpet a Carlylean task that makes one wrathful: I will whip the seam open!



Apl 28 Emerson died last night at 8 1/2 o'clock. At that hour I was sitting with Benton in his house, talking of him and his probable death. With Emerson dead it seem folly to be alive. No man of just his type and quality has ever before appeared upon the earth. He looked like a god. That wise serene, pure inscrutable look was without a parallel in any human face I ever saw. Such an unimpeachable look! The subtle, half-defined smile of his face was the reflection of the smile of his soul. It was not a propitiatory smile or a [crossed out: smile] smirk of acquiescence, but the reassuring smile of the doctor when he takes out his lancet; it was the sheath of that trenchant blade of his. Behind it lurked some test

question, or pregnant saying. It was the foil of his frank, unwounding wit, like Carlyles laugh. It was an arch, winning, half playful look, the expression of a soul that did not want to wound you, and yet that must speak the truth. And Emersons frank speech never did wound. It was so evident that it was not meant to wound and that it was so true to himself, that you treasured it as rare wisdom.

29 To Cossackie to-day to the bank. Not very satisfactory.

30 Sunday. To-day Emerson is to be buried, and I am restless and full of self-reproach because I did not go to Concord. I should have been there.

Emerson was my spiritual father in the strictest sense. It seems as if I owed nearly all or whatever I am to him. I caught the contagion of writing and of authorship before I knew his books, but I fell in with him just in time. His words were like the sunlight to my pale and tender genius which had fed on Johnson and Addison and poor Whipple.

It is a bright clear, cool April day; the grass green, but no foliage, hardly buds on the trees yet, except on the elms, willows, and tamaracks. I must devote the day to meditating on Emerson, the greatest and most typical of all New Englanders.

May 2 Snow flakes in the air to-day and yet the shad blows are out and the columbine nearly so. A whippoorwill to-night.

The last night in my little hermitage before sailing. Every morning, if I have slept well, I am glad I am going, and every night I am sorry; thus does the day make and unmake us. To-night the old ties draw strongly, and I am sad.

Aug 9 Sailed for Scotland May 6th. Arrived there May 17 at noon; good passage. Returning sailed from Glasgow [crossed out: May] July 28 at 5 P.M. Landed in N.Y.

Aug 8 in morning; good passage. Reached home last night. Shall have many things to write about my trip.

Aug 15 Wednesday. Home to-day. Very hot. Reached home at noon. Father badly afflicted with rheumatism; very glad to see me. Last night he says he watched for me till

8 o'clock, then went to bed much put out I did not come. He seems hearty, except this rheumatism. He said he dreamed of mother the other night, the room in which she was was colored like the rainbow and was filled with light.

17 Out to see Jane and Homer to-day. Eden with me. Weather cool and dry.

18 Stopped in Olive to-day to see Father North. Old man pretty feeble, tho' still active. Fell to sleep [crossed out:at the table] after dinner while we yet lingered at the table. Too lame to come and see me he says.

26 There is probably no truth whatever in the notion or theory that heavy canonading will shake up the air and shake out showers, because the present season, during the building of the West

Shore R. Road, there have been incessant heavy explosions all along the Hudson, yet a drought began about July 5th and still continues, along this whole region.

Aug 30 A clear warm dry day; the air filled with a soft, brooding, white haze. The shrill sounds of the locust every where. Excursion boats on the river. The moon at her full night before last. The last of the August days but one. Very dry. Am writing a little on my English impressions. Poor sleep last night --Julian coughing with a cold all night.

Sep 1st Soft, misty, dissolving rain. Orioles calling or whistling as in May. The weather like May.

a spider's web is a trap to every thing but a spider.

The writings of Emerson and Thoreau drew readers to seek them personally. My books do not bring readers to me but send them to Nature. I take credit to myself on this account. I seek always to hold the mirror of my mind up to Nature that the reader may find her lineaments alone reflected there. I remember that this is one of the great merits of the "gentle Shakespeare"; himself you see not, only the great world compacted and idealized as in a Claude Lorraine mirror. Shakespeare I take it, was really a gentle spirit; who never obtruded himself, who made little impression upon those who knew him, so that the memory of him was quickly lost; far less as an egotist say than

Ben Jonson and with less striking personality -- all his vast power working in a kind of impersonal way, -- just the contrary say of such a man as Carlyle.

Sept 4 A little bird bathing in a tree hung with rain drops. How she rushes about among the foliage that clothes the long sprays, and dips and flutters, and receives the mimic showers on her half spread wings. A morning bath in the bejewelled trees.

6 Daily Julian plies me with all sorts of puzzling questions. "Papa, where is the end of the road." "Papa, how would you like to be over made (made over) and [crossed out: fixed nicer fixed?]" "How would you like to have sixty thousand hands" "How would you like to



people in a pipe when water comes through." "How would you like to live with a elfunt" (elephant) etc. etc "What would you do if a whale swallowed you." "What would you do if I drowned myself." etc. "What would you do if you had to make bread and work?"

What a singular intellectual quality Beecher has! watery, dropsical, inflated when tried by the highest standards; wonderfully copious and seemingly original, but seldom touching just the right spot in just the right way.

12 Heavy rain all day yesterday and last night, a soaker. The 25th anniversary of our marriage. Wife asked me if I remembered that we were married 25 years ago to-day. I said no, I had forgotten it like many other of my youthful follies.

No sleeper is disturbed by his own snoring.

Every day, when Mother visited me here, would she watch for the passage of that one o'clock train that carried Eden and Walker to Channy B's dying bed side in Brooklyn [crossed out: in] May 1874. It seemed to have a sad, strange interest to her. She would gaze after it long and wistfully, tho' perhaps not one car was the same as bore them. But she knew it not. No other train had such significance to her as that. I find the same trait strong in myself.

23 The second day of a terrible almost unprecedented rain. Yesterday 6 inches of water fell, and to-day since 10 1/2 o'clock it has been pouring in the same way -- wind North N.E. A sort of a monster universal thunder storm. The thunder at no time seems

near or violent, but as if it was general, very deliberate and composed. This will strengthen and keep alive the belief in the Equinoxal storm for a hundred years, unsupported by another coincidence. I do not remember ever to have seen two days of such rain and the days so dark. Thunder at intervals both days. Had the ground not been rather dry a terrible flood would ensue. Nearly one foot of rain in the two days -- 6 inches yesterday, over 5 in. to-day, and perhaps one or two on Thursday -- In parts of New Jersey the fall was 17 inches! The storm came up the coast and went on through Maine; was about 150 miles wide.

28 Four years ago to-day mother left here for the last time. I can see her as she walked up across

the grass from our house to Emmas to put on her things. She was weeping. That night before too in the kitchen, when she talked about things of long ago. Elder Jim Meade etc., how it all comes back. I was sitting by the window holding the baby, and she was standing or sitting near the clock. Dear little Lizzie Bennett was there too, but wife was morose and silent

[October] 4 Go out home to-day with wife and Julian, a bright, lovely day. At the crossing near Roxbury village a first class American rail-road crossing tragedy. A wagon with a man and two women struck by the flying train and smashed to pieces. One woman killed, and the other woman and her husband about the same as killed. Such

a terrible calamity, wreck and ruin and death, and not a passenger on the train knew that anything had happened [crossed out: till] or felt any shock, till the train began to slacken and came to a standstill. The only unusual sound I heard was something like a limb raking [crossed out: f] lightly along the bottom of the car. The train backed up and there lay a few feet to one side, the fragments of a wagon piled upon the body of a motionless horse; the other horse was rushing wildly about the fields with part of the harness hanging to him. We looked again and there lay the body of a woman upon her back, her face and hair besmeared with blood; then the body of a man in the same position and state; then thirty feet away the body of another woman, ditto. Her pulse fluttered, but her staring eyes were fixed in death. Not a groan, not a sound

not a movement in this scene of ruin and death. The womans scalp was torn completely from her head and fell back like a night cap; the man was cut in the head also; both were breathing heavily and bleeding profusely. We lifted them into the car and hastened to the station. It seems the team got beyond control of the drivers as the train came up in their rear and literally ran into the engine, striking it on the side as it was crossing the highway. What a sight for the engineer to witness!

Reached home about 12 1/2 P.M. Father pretty feeble with rheumatism and general debility. In the afternoon Julian and I go on the hill where the boys are cutting the corn, Eden, Curtis, Hi K., and Ed [EBK: sons of Curtis]. It calls up old times.

5 To day I drive over to Delhi and examine the bank and then to Andes. The tints of autumn spot the woods. The sumac burns like fire. By the woods the cool smell of the blooming witch hazel in the air.

6 To day I pause by Mothers grave.

7 On the mountain with Eden and Willie to-day with the hound, very fair and warm; the woods delightful.

8 To day father and I walk up on the hill. He is quite feeble and his sun is fast setting; already the clouds and vapors of the low horizon begin to envelop it. I forgot to say that the first day we came, he and I also walked up the road to the orchard and stood and talked by the orchard bars. It touched me keenly in the evening when he said, on my speaking about the "Old Clump" that he had been to the "Old Clump"

for the last time; he should go there no more. As boy and man, he had been there hundreds of times, tho' he and I were never there together. His last visit there was in the fall of 1879. He seems to have no fear or even dread of death, but speaks of it as one would of a distant journey he was contemplating. He said he wished to visit mothers grave once more -- As usual he had some anecdote about old Rove, the famous dog he owned early in his housekeeping days. The renown of old Rove for prowess, intelligence etc eclipses all subsequent dogs that have lived upon the farm. He was the Achilles among dogs. Father still remembers who laid the wall on this side of the orchard; it was John Simmons father.



1882

Oct 13 The muskrats are building their nests, began them probably about the 9th or 10th. No frost yet. Chestnuts falling without a frost, and leaves falling too.

The pines -- white, yellow, red etc shed their old leaves this year in October --also the white cedars the same.

A photographer in P. told me the light of autumn was not quick, the slowest of any season of the year. It was quicker even in the winter. In the fall there seems a predominance of yellow in the light, even on the most sharp and brilliant days.

28 A day of lustrous beauty. The maples are like great torches. Only two light frosts yet.

1882

Nov.27 Nov. a fine month; many Indian summer days -- Katydid's musical till Nov. 1st. Had a picnic in the open air to cut a bee tree after elections. Thermometer 65.

Our first considerable snow on the 25 -- fair sleighing yet. The winter is coming very gradually, but surely. A steady advance lately.

Thirty years ago to-day my little sister Evaline died

How strange becomes the habit of regarding ones parents as permanent, a part of the frame of things. I still have a strange, incredulous feeling when I think of mother as dead. [~~crossed out: She and father~~] And then I go home I do not seem to miss her as much as I ought; she is there still in the

look of everything. She and father are so much a part of the place, or rather, everything was so much a part of them that to me they will both always be there; the house, the trees, the outbuildings, the roads, the fields, the furniture in the house, the air and look of the rooms, the distant hills and mountains, were all father and mother, and as long as these remain, they will remain.

Nov 30 Clear and bright after two nights and one day of a driving snowstorm. The world white; the air motionless

It is not so much what we see when we go to walk or go to distant countries, as what the things seem suggest to us. We all see about the same things; to one it suggests much, to another very little. When the writer goes

to Nature, he does not get the material for his article; he only gets the seed corn for it; he grows the crop afterward. The facts he gets are only half -- they are less than half -- he must unfold or complete them out of his own heart.

Dec 15 Snug, but not severe winter weather so far. During Sept. Nov. and thus far in December, have been writing up my English impressions, much more in me on the subject than I expected.

19 Started for home this day to be with father on his 80th birth day; am hindered by floating ice in the river and miss the 2 P.M. train. Pass the night in Rondout, a miserable night.

Dec 20. A bright sharp [crossed out: day] morning with storm brewing -- a thaw, the weather report says. Reach home between 12 and 1 P.M. Hi K. meets me at depot, Eden gone hunting. Hiram over to Tom Smiths. Willie at school. Abigail meets me at the door. Father is lying down on the lounge. He rises weeping, as I enter the room; have never seen him so feeble tho' he is better than two weeks ago; has lost flesh since my last visit in October. He coughs and raises a great deal of phlegm -- left arm nearly useless from rheumatism. He weeps a great deal. cannot speak of anything

serious without weeping; the faintest shade of emotion brings the tears. He talks feebler than usual and rarely indulges in a joke, unless they tease him about some woman, when he can still put all the proprieties to flight. He says he cannot bare to hear the fiddle now, tho' he was once very fond of it. His appetite is good enough and he sleeps very well. I could occasionally hear him cough in the stillness of the night. Father told me again about his uncle Channy Avery, who with his wife and family of seven children was drowned in Shandaken by the rise of the

Esopus Creek, the 20th of April 1800 and perhaps 14 or 16. The creek rose rapidly in the night and retreat was cut off in the morning. Uncle Channy tried to fell a large tree and make a bridge, but the water drove him away. The house, which it seems was [~~crossed out: im~~] very imprudently placed on a tongue of land near the creek, was carried away with most of the family in it. His uncle swam to a stump with one little boy on his back there he stood till the water carried away the stump, when he again swam with his boy for shore, but a lot of drift wood engulfed him and all was over. Two of the children were never found.

Their bones doubtless rest somewhere in the still waters of the lower Esopus. Father has seen where the family were buried. It is somewhere above Shandakan Centre. This uncle was his mother's brother. "Aint it wonderful" Father said, and repeated often, "that I have lived to be 80 years old; that the God of Heaven has spared my life so long. Yet I can say with the prophet "my days have been full of evil," and his tears flowed freely.

21 To-day I helped father down to the barn; he wanted to see if the boys were going to have hay enough. When he entered the barn I knew well what a flood of



recollections and associations came over him. It was the old barn that stood there when he and mother came on the farm. Here he had kept his stock and thrashed and done his work all through his early and middle life. How familiar was every beam and timber in it to him, and the mows of hay and the cattle were just as he had had them. He wept and said, "Oh if your mother could only have been spared to me in these last years." Everything that brought up the past centered at last in thought of her. In this barn Father always sheared his sheep and mother always plucked her geese. One time while we

were shutting up the geese in early summer, we saw a man coming slowly along the road out on the "big hill". It proved to be uncle Charles Kelly, the only recollection I have of the old man.

Homer and Mary Jane came to-day. Homer is quite a superior man in some ways; but he has no impartiality of mind -- no power to weigh or test evidence on any question beyond his own immediate experience. He refuses his assent to the most elementary principles of astronomy and geology and yet believes in witches!

22 To-day we all go down to Curtise's. Father and I ride side by side. After dinner I leave him.

and take the train to Arkville. Go up and see Smith and Emma. and pass the night. A bad headache but much talk etc.

23 Reach home to-day at 1 P.M. Mrs. B. still refuses to talk.

25 A dull Christmas, but mild.

28 My poor horse shot today, a cripple since last Aug. from some strange and incurable injury to her hip or thigh. A sad day to me. She was a noble animal and I was much attached to her. Last night I gave her hay for the last time and knew it was the last. Dick Martin did the bloody deed with his gun. With dogs

horses I have the worst luck.

Mrs. B in a towering rage, tho' she says she says she wanted Fanny killed months ago. When she saw me sharpening a knife to examine her hip with she said she felt like using it on my throat. Not long ago she said if she had strength enough she would kick me out of doors - How many days of my life, how many of my essays has the evil temper of that woman marred. [? She is capable of but two emotions - ? and tears.?