

1883

Nov. 9 In the light of Darwins theory it is almost appalling to think of ones self, of what he represents, of what he has come through. It almost makes one afraid of himself. Think of what there is inherent in his germ; think of the beings that lived, the savage lower forms, that he might move here, a reasonable being. At what a cost he has been purchased; a million years of unreason, for his moment of reason; a million years of gross selfishness, that he might have a benevolent throb. "Bought with the blood of Christ" is the hyperbole of the Church; but every babe that is born today is bought with the blood

of countless ages of barbarism, and countless lives of beings; and this not figuratively, but literally. Out of an ocean of darkness and savagery, is distilled this drop of human blood, with all its possibilities.

- Probably the most selfish creatures in the world are to be found among the childless women, - all the love, and sympathy and helpfulness, etc. that nature meant to flow out toward offspring, turned inward upon themselves. They come in time to look upon themselves as the child of themselves, which they pity and pet and caress and indulge and for whom nothing in this world is good enough.

12. Go home today to see Uncle Edmund Kelly, very cold and windy. Reach home at noon in a driving snow squall. Father opens the door before I reach it, and greets me with copious tears. Uncle Edmund sitting by the stove with his hat on. Find him but little changed, except more silent than he used to be. Sits long without remark, and reads the paper as an old man reads, that is appears to read it all; with equal interest, a want of interest doesn't discriminate and select the news. Over 80 years old, the last of my uncles - all dead but him; very spry and quick for one so old; see grandfather very plainly in him; the look of Mother too and of Wilson. His favorite word an

adjective is "monstrous", as "She was a monstrous smart woman," "it is monstrous cold," "she suffered monstrous" etc. etc. He told me of his old uncle John Kelly, grand father's brother, that he was a monstrous queer man, lived in the woods in a little hut a regular hermit life, people used to take him food to keep him from starving. When walking along the road he would stop and stand a long time and look all around (I feel the same trait in myself). Uncle Edmund used to go to his hut; as soon as near enough, he could hear him talking as if there were half a dozen persons there. He had two children "off toward Albany" who used to clothe him, and who finally kept him with them, and he died there. When a young man Uncle Edmund used

to cut wood at the glass works in Woodstock during the winter; could cut and pick up 4 1/2 cords of stove wood in a day. He left for home Tuesday night: thinks he never will come again; I shall never see he and father together again; they parted that night just at sundown for the last time, Uncle Edmund with wet eyes and few words, father with copious tears and outspoken farewells - two men past 80, their wives dead, and nearly all their early friends and comrades in the grave. How wintry and desolate life did look to them both I know full well. Uncle Edmund had never before found mothers place vacant. He had been to the graves of all his Kindred on Red Kill, to his father and mothers and to all his brothers and sister's, as if to bid them a last farewell.

- The old home was pretty desolate to me, only Hiram and Father left, now that Eden and Margaret have gone. Soon, soon it will be only Hiram. On Wednesday Hiram and I walk over the mountains, through wind and snow to Edens near Hobart. A hard long tramp.

17 A bright cold hard day, a day like polished iron.

19 A soft mild Indian summer day; sunlight weak, many times diluted with autumn shadows, but tender and dreamy. No thoughts in me; only a vague longing and unrest.

- My best and truest friend among womankind, Mrs. Fanny A. Mead of Lansing, Mich., is dead,

since Oct. 25th. Nearly all night Nov. 15th I lay awake thinking of her. In many ways the noblest, most loving, most discerning, most charitable woman I have known in this world. She visited me here the latter part of August 1880. Her death nearly blots out the West for me.

- No matter how much learning, or force, or capacity of any kind [crossed out: you have] a man has a man has, unless he has that something which we call style - an apt and original expression and individual flavor of his own, he can make no permanent contribution to literature. Style is the precious spices etc. that embalm and keep thought. The iridescent hue of pearl is an effect of style - the manner of arrangement of the particles - not any new matter.

27. A succession of remarkable sunsets and sunrises for several days past, culminating to-night in the most remarkable sky-glow, or sky bloom I ever saw. I have seen sunsets for over 40 years, and never saw one like that before; a cloudless sky flushing crimson that spread nearly up to the zenith and reached far around to the south east - and that an hour after the sun had actually set. At 6 o'clock the western sky was yet dark crimson. In many cities, in N.Y. and in Poughkeepsie, an alarm of fire was sounded and the fire companies were out to extinguish the sun set. The reflection of a

distant fire upon a low clouded midnight sky, [crossed out: was] is not more marked than was this evening glow. The wonder was, [crossed out: such] the sky was cloudless the upper atmosphere itself seemed to turn to blood.

28. The same phenomenon again to night, only less pronounced. After sun-down a peculiar phosphorescent glow suffused the west; gradually a crimson bank formed far up from the horizon, which slowly crept down till it lay low in the west, and then near 6.P.M. dropped below the horizon. The mornings, too, have been exceptionally brilliant, the pale, phosphorescent glow of the east long before the sun appeared lighting up the world with the most peculiar effects.

Dec. 1st Day of great brilliancy; still cloudless, cold.

- The soul is not something superadded to the body, is it? [~~crossed out: It is~~] Is it not rather a growth and product of the body as much as the flower is of the plant - or the flame of the lamp? Growing as it grows and decaying as it decays?

Dec. 6th Fine days and nights lately - a sort of sterner Indian summer - an austere, but serene Indian chief. Walking along the road in the bright Dec. quiet I pause and hear the fine rasping of squirrel teeth on a hickory nut, or butternut. New ice on the ponds, but the earth beneath is not thoroughly chilled yet, and it doesn't last. The bluebirds and nuthatches

discover a little owl at the bottom of a hollow in an apple tree below my study, and by their cries advertise to me [crossed out: of] the fact. I peep down and see the rascal with closed eyes, simulating sleep, but suspect he is watching me through those narrow slits.

Dec. 9 [Section torn from the page]

- People who try to explain Carlyle on the ground of his humble origin, shoot wide of the mark. "Merely a peasant with a glorified intellect, says one irate female. It seems to me he was the least of a peasant of any man of his time, a man of truly regal and dominating

personality. The two marks of the peasant, are stolidity and abjectness; he is dull and heavy and he dare not say his soul is his own. No man ever so hustled and jostled Kings and emperors about, and made them toe the mark as did Carlyle. It was not merely his intellect that was towering; it was his character, his will, his standard of morality - and of manhood. He is naturally imperious and haughty. There is no taint of the peasant in him, I remember well his long, slender soft hand, and can feel it yet in my own, a certain coarseness of fiber he had, as have all strong, first class characters, the fiber of the royal oak.

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[crossed out: the ills of life]

Arnold

His vision leads his feeling; he sees first and feels afterward or tries to feel, not always with success. There is no struggle or conflict in him. He is not beaten back by contrary winds, nor carried swiftly and joyously ahead by fawning winds. He is calm and mildly contemptuous in a world of Philistines.

Dec. 12 No snow yet, not much cold - no ice on the ponds. Peculiar, brilliant, phosphorescent sunsets and sunrises, with clouds at sunset of light olive green. How local, how circumscribed limited seems the sunset, and sun-rise - each a particular phenomenon confined

to this one spot - a universal fact appearing as a special and particular fact. Much meaning in this. Thus the triumph of poetry, of art, is to house and locate the universal so, make the sun-rise and sunset special to you and me. The great universal facts of life and death appear peculiar and original to each one of us, but, behold, all men have the same experience. The rainbow is immediately in your front, spanning your own fields or native valley, but the man beyond the valley sees it spanning his just the same. Every man is a center of the world - all the facts of nature point to him, and he is bound to

read them and to meet them from his own point of view. But it is well to remember that others have their point of view also, and that the clouds that appear so dull and leaden there in the south or north, are just as glowing in the sun set to people who see them from the right angle, as ours are here in the west.

13 Still bright and nearly clear, but chilly - the air full of a shining haze. The eastern skies all aglow again this morning - at one time a luminous crimson along the rim of the horizon that spread upward and suffused all the eastern skies with a peculiar phosphorescent light.

18 We speak of the motion of the heavenly bodies, but really this is not motion in the concrete as we know it upon the earth - it is rather motion in the abstract - a motion that is equivalent to eternal repose. See them bowl along there, without effort, without friction, without inertia or resistance overcome, changing their places with reference to each one another, yet not changing their places in absolute space. Universal motion is equivalent to universal rest. When my boat moves with the tide it is practically at rest; if the shores moved too, then motion were abolished. There is no motion without

place, without a fixed point and in astronomic space there is no place, no fixed point, no up, no down, no over, no under.

I expect we shall find out by and by that there is no waste or expenditure of heat by the sun in warming the solar system, as we understand it on earth, anymore than there is an expenditure of force in holding the earth in its place, and the other planets in theirs. It is something more subtle and transcendental than the warming of your house. The rays that go off into space probably carry no heat, it

becomes heat only when it is caught by the planets, which supply, as it were, the female principle. I am yet convinced that the sun is an actual burning or conflagration, though all that comes from it may be turned into heat upon the planets. (I can no more than hint the point I am driving at)

20 A cold day, four or five inches of snow upon the ground, first floating ice in the river, and clouds gathering for more snow. The third anniversary of mother's death, and father's 81st birthday, and I am not at the old place as is my wont, but

here in my ground-attic, writing on literature and science, with thoughts far away from home.

From a letter to M.B.B [Myron B. Benton]

We have all felt and spoken of the priestly and sacerdotal character of Emerson and have seen and felt his value to the spirit and that he was much more than a mere man of letters, but to say he has written the most important prose work of the 19th century, and yet that he is not a great writer, a great expressor, and that he is less in this respect than Addison, is absurd. If he is not a great man of letters, he is a great man speaking through letters, which is perhaps quite as important. His literary gifts were not an equipment that he could turn in any direction.

He had no literary faculty that he carried about on his finger like a falcon, and with which he could hawk all manner of game from mice to pheasants, like Voltaire and Swift, but he had a power and at times a largeness of utterance, that these wretches never approached. You may say Bacon was not a great essayist, and yet the wisdom and learning of a great mind [~~is~~] are revealed in his essays. Perhaps Arnold is correct. Not to be a mere writer, but man writing, would please Emerson best.

"Indeed the scientific critics like Taine leave a very large spot in my literary palate untouched. In literature, in history, we do not so much want things explained, as we want them portrayed and interpreted. And the explanation of these experts is usually only clever thimble rigging. If they ferret the mystery out of one hole they run it to cover in another. How clear is Taines explanation of those brilliant epochs in the history of nations, when they produce groups of great men and give birth to their great literatures. Why, it is only the result of a "hidden

concord of creative forces," and the opposite periods, the nadir, is the result of "inward contrarities." Truly a rose by any other name would smell as sweet. What causes the inward concord etc, so that we can lay our hand upon the lever and bring about a crop of great men at a given turn, the astute Frenchman does not tell us.

23 Very cold - 8 below this morning, and zero all day. At dark thermometer began to rise and fine snow soon began to fall.

25 A white Christmas - Earth, sky and air, all white, a foot of snow and a hoar frost covering

trees and rocks, left by the white fog, a bad headache yesterday.

26 A whiter world I have never seen, only the undersides of the limbs of the trees and their trunks showing any shade. The air still and filled with a white motionless fog - less a fog than a kind of white opaque condition of the air itself - very peculiar. Yesterday the white fleecy air lifted a little, just clearing the tree tops, and hovered there like the vapor of snow, and about 4 o'clock snow began to fall gently from it - and continued till 8. It is a condition of high frosty mountain tops, become general.

Every writer has his peculiar note, It is the scientific note or the religious note, or the note of criticism or of conventionality, or of good fellowship - In Emerson there is always the heroic note. In all his writing and speaking [crossed out: this is] this note predominates, the electric touch of brave deeds, of cheerful confronting of immense odds, the inspiration of courage and self-reliance. Perhaps his match in this respect cannot be found in literature, certainly not among ethical or didactic writers. If in his earlier essays this note seems to us now, a little too pronounced, savoring just a little of tall talk, it did not seem

so when we first read [crossed out: them] him. It was as clear and frank and sweet as the note of the bugle. Carlyle once defined poetry - as the heroic of speech; a definition that would not suit Mr. Arnold, but which describes well much of Emersons poetry, and so many of those brave sentences in his essays.

In Addison we get the note of urbanity, in Franklin of worldly prudence, in Bacon of large wisdom, in Pope of polished common sense, in Cowley of - discontent, in Swift of arrogance and scorn, in Arnold himself of critical disquietude. In Carlyle the note is one of sorrow and lamentation. In Emerson we come at

once upon the chivalrous, heroic attitude and temper. No scorn, no contempt, no defiance, but brave counsel and chivalrous service. Books, he said, "are for nothing but to inspire," and in writing his own books he had but one purpose in view, namely to inspire his reader, to break through the crust of custom and conventionality and the commonplace - much more pronounced when he began to write than now, to scatter his torpidity and spur him to higher and nobler thinking and acting.

There are words of prudence, words of enlightenment, words that cheer and comfort; words that divide one thing from another like a blade, words that are like lamps to show us the way; and there are

words that are like banners leading to victory. Emerson's words are banner-words, beautiful, cheering, rallying, inspiring, seconding and pointing the way to all noble endeavor. What audacity of statement, what courage of affirmation what intrepidity of mind. "Self-trust" he says, "is the essence of heroism" and this martial note pulses through all his writings. ~~[crossed out: In]~~ This passage one might think was written for Walt Whitman, had it not been before the fact: "Adhere to your own act, and congratulate yourself if you have done something strange and extravagant, and broken the monotony of a decorous age."

Jan 5 To N.Y. to hear Arnold lecture on Emerson last night. A large fine audience; lecturer introduced by Curtis, the pensive Curtis, in a "neat little speech." Curtis is the cosset of the elocutionary graces. He fondly leans and sighs upon and languishes upon their bosoms! Arnold put his M.S. up high on a rack beside him, turned to the audience, [crossed out: gave a] let off a sharp glance in my direction through his one Cockney eye glass, straightened himself up and after a delay that was a little too long, lifted up his voice and spoke his piece - voice too thick and foggy - has none of the clearness and grace of his literary style; hence his lecture is better in the reading than in the hearing. There is something almost like pudding in an Englishmans throat when he speaks from the stage.

- Met Rev. John Wood in the afternoon at Houghton, Mi and Co. An Englishman of a lower order - not pleasing to look upon - shapeless in face and body - plump, with a suggestion of frowziness. Mouth also full of pudding - comes near to dropping his h's - the British softness, unctuousness - fat in the tones of the voice, and not lean like us or is it fog and mist and smoke and beef and beer etc. Did not know of Grant Allen. I remember that William Rosetti did not know of Roden Noel.

- I have found that there are two ways to get the heat out of your fire wood - first by sawing and splitting it yourself, then by burning it.

6th In writing my whole effort is to put myself in communication with the truth. If I can, then my sails fill, if not, how futile I am. I have no talent but to see and state the thing as it is.

8 Cold, dark, lowering days. Lifes skies dark also, a few days ago all so bright. Again must I face the inevitable. Let me be calm, and see that it is best also. A despatch from home to-day at 4 P.M. that Father has had a stroke; is probably dead now. The blow I have so long dreaded and have been schooling myself to meet has at last fallen. In a few hours I shall know the worst. It is his time to die, and he has long been looking and waiting for

the end; it is best so, but oh! how can I lose him from the world, my father! Be still, my heart, be still. It comes to all men, and have not I known it would come to me. When I was leaving him last summer he said with a great burst of emotion, that he hoped it would please God to take him with a stroke. I recall the whole scene vividly; he was approaching the table, where the rest of the family had seated themselves for dinner; I was standing near the door. His tears came fast and his voice was choked with emotion. How many times sitting alone in my study, during the bleak winter nights have I said over the names of my dead, his name always

hovering near, as if so soon to be added to the list. How many times, while Mother was still living, have I at night felt suddenly drawn towards them, as if I must at once be with them; they were there now, but would soon be gone; why did I tarry here? and I would start from my chair and pace the floor. How many times while home with them, did I look at them and listen to them, as if with the eyes and ears of future years when they [crossed out: should] would be gone; as if to anticipate the crying want I should then feel to see and hear them, and store up memories of them that would then appease my aching heart. "Oh, listen" I would say, when I heard their [crossed out: talk] voices at night in their

bed, "so soon you will want to hear those voices and they will be forever still." Now hers is still, and maybe his too, and the kindness and affection I have shown him during these years, will bear its own fruit - in my heart. Twenty-three years ago, in winter, I was summoned home by his illness and expected to find him dead. I was all night on a freight train from New Hamburg to Rhinebeck; how dismal, how wretched. The stage had gone when I reached Rondout, and I got Mr. Gibbs to take me out to Olive; then father North drove me to Roxbury. At Pine Hill I saw John Powell, Jr, he said father - and my heart stood still while he finished his sentence - was better, as the fact proved.

Jan. 21 Stern rugged winter day and the cold snows cover a new grave beside Mothers. At rest at last, after 81 years of life. The event he so long predicted and waited for, and I think toward the last began to long for, came, and came as he had hoped. No suffering, no lingering illness to make trouble in the house. I went home on the 9th. Drove up from the station in the moonlight in a whirl of wind and snow. How lonely and bleak the old place looked in that winter-landscape by moonlight - beleaguering winter without and death within. Jane and Abigail were there with Hiram and some of the neighbors. Father had died at seven in the morning as I had learned at Kingston by

telegraph. How the wind howled and buffeted that night, and the steady roar of the mountain like that of the sea came to me in my sleepless chamber. How often in youth I had heard that roar, but with what different ears, as I snuggled down in my bed while mother tucked me in! Early in the morning I went quietly and with composure and looked upon my fathers face. Never had I looked upon his face before, in the morning before he had arisen without speaking his name, and I could not refrain from speaking his name now, and speaking it again and again. The marble face of death, what unspeakable repose and silence there is in it. I saw more clearly than ever

before how much my own features were like his. The nose the same, only in his case cut away more at the nostrils. The forehead too precisely the same. Head nearly as large, as mine, feet and hands smaller.

It was his time to die; it is better so, and the reason said, yes, yes, but oh, the heart! The time for its [crossed out: dead] loved ones to die never comes.

Father had been as well as usual up to the hour of his stroke. The only change noticed in him in the last days of his life, was an increased longing for mother. The sense of his loss and his desolation seemed to become more acute and he talked of her much, with profuse tears. That last day he asked for pen

and paper to write to me and to Uncle Edmund, but did not write. He ate his supper as usual that night and between 7 and 8 o'clock went out [~~crossed out: to the privy~~]. John Grant went with him to help him over some slippery places in the path. Then in due time went out to help him in. As he neared the privy door he saw father lean heavily forward as if just risen from the seat and then fall, or slowly pitch down in the corner of the privy.

Hiram and his man were putting up grain, against going to mill on the morrow, in the Grainery near by. Grant called to them and they together got father up and into the house. He could not stand and could not speak. When asked if he was hurt he nodded yes. They got him to bed

and he fell into a slumber from which he never awoke; lived about 36 hours, becoming more choked in his breathing toward the last from phlegm etc but died easily about 7 A.M. Jan. 9. apoplexy, affecting the right side. While Hiram was putting up the grain, he heard father call to him several times, probably to help him around some wood after Grant had left him. This was the last he ever heard his voice in this world.

On Friday the 11th we buried him beside Mother; a snowy misty day. Elder Hewitt preached the funeral sermon, a thorough-going old school Baptist sermon arguing and proving the doctrine of election and foreordination etc and having his fling at all other church denominations, such a

sermon as father delighted in, and would no doubt have preferred should be preached at his funeral. It was very foolish from my point of view. The old Elder has more spirit and fight in him than ten years ago, when he preached Chancey B's sermon, and less feeling and sentiment. He had been near unto death then, but now his health is good, too good for his preaching. I remember this sentence: "A spring cannot rise about nature" meaning above its source, "They both now in Earth's soft arms are reposing" where we all in due time shall also repose. Diverse and separate in life, in death we become one. My father was so much to me, not perhaps in reality, for he cared nothing for the things I did, and knew me not, but from

the force of the filial instinct and home feeling in me. He knew me not I say. All my aims and aspirations in life were a sealed book to him as much as his peculiar religious experience was to me. Yet I reckon it was the same leaven working in us both. The delight he had in his bible, in his hymn book, in his Church in his creed, I have in literature, in the poets, in nature. His was related in his thought to his souls salvation hereafter, mine to my souls salvation here. Father was a serious man and full of emotion; his tears always came so easily! He had no art to conceal anything; was as frank and transparent as a child; no deceit, or guile, or craft, no self consciousness, hardly any sense of shame; Mother used

to say had no decency, and no manners. "All I ever had" father would rejoin, "I have never used any of them." Had no concealment or shyness; would ask people and strangers, such personal questions! If he met a stranger in the road would often ask him his name; would ask women their ages, or ask people what they did for a living, or what wages they got, or what their politics was. He used to speak in "Church meeting" and tell his religious experiences after the manner of his sect, always I imagine with choking and tearful emotion. He never prayed openly in his family, tho' when younger frequently read the bible aloud and sang hymns. Once when I was a lad, I overheard him praying in the hog-pen at night. I think it

a time of more than usual religious excitement with him, and he went upon his knees in the hog-pen then nearly empty, I imagine, as it was winter. I heard and ran away. Knowing it was not for me to hear. He was violent and bigoted in his religious opinions, speaking rudely and contemptuously of other denominations as did the Elders of his church. "The Signs of the Times" was his religious paper for over 40 years, and he would read those long lugubrious "experiences" of the sisters and brethren with deepest emotion.

A harshness in his temperament, red hair and freckled complexion when young, yet such a tender streak in him. Such a fountain of tears! He was harsh and severe with his oxen or horses, or cows when they were ugly, "lugging" the

cows and whipping the oxen at a great rate, and yet such an affection for his teams after all. He could tell every yoke of oxen or span of horses he ever owned and relate many incidents about them. I well remember the sickness of one of his horses, when I was a boy, had the "horse distemper" and how assiduously father watched and nursed it and finally pulled it through. Yet he had no mercy on a healthy horse and could whip it till it fell dead I verily believe. (I could too).

Father made a great deal of noise about the farm, had great strength of voice and could send it over the hills a mile away; was indeed a noisy man, halloing at the cows, the sheep, the boys, and in drawing rocks with the oxen, you could have heard

him a great distance. He never went away from home, while I was a boy on the farm, without stopping out on the "big hill" and calling back to us some command, or renewal of some order, generally entirely superfluous, always to the annoyance of Mother if she was beside him, his voice was so loud and harsh. Often he would call twice before he got out of sight. Even last summer, he used to exercise his voice, by starting the cows from the upper pasture, a quarter of a mile or more, away.

Father had no enemies, no quarrels; never lied or cheated or stirred up strife. His word was as good as his bond.

He had a kind of selfishness, but it was like that of children,

thoughtless and uncalculating, and related mainly to appetite. He was a hearty eater, and at the table would always pick for the best. He would always take my biggest trout, and the next biggest and the next if I would give it to him, as I usually did. It never occurred to him to decline a thing on the score of manners. Mother used to say it was "hoggishness" and he would not gain say her. I doubt if he ever said "thank you" to any person in his life; I certainly never heard him. I took him and sent him many little things in his latter days, which he always accepted without remark. His was not a brooding, silent, self-conscious nature; exactly the reverse. He had no sentiment, and would snort

at what you call poetry, and yet was much of a real poet himself. His faults were like those of children and in his old age, he became childish to a degree. His intelligence and judgement were yet good, when appealed to, but his will, his self-control, his force and authority as a man, were feeble. His curiosity was always great and continued to the last.

Father never had much faith in me, the least of any of his children. He saw I was an odd one, and had tendencies and tastes from the first that he did not sympathize with. All the other children he helped with money when they began life, but me. When I wanted help as I did twice or three times in a pinch, he refused; and as it turned out I was the only one of his children, that could or would

help him when the pinch came. A curious retribution, but one that gave me pleasure, and him no pain. I was better unhelped, as it proved, and better for all I could help him. He went according to his light, and perhaps I loved him the better for denying me. I never laid up anything against him, not even the fact that once while I was away to school, and got short of funds, and wanted \$5 to help me out, he would not send it, tho' mother berated him soundly for it. Hiram sent me the money and I worked in haying and paid him back. Father did not like my tendency to books; was afraid, as I once found, that I would become a methodist minister, his special aversion.

When a lad of about 14 I wanted a grammar and an Algebra, but father would not get them, tho' I coaxed and Mother coaxed and scolded both. I was going down to the village on some other errand and wanted his consent to get them then. He peremptorily refused, but after I had got out on the big hill, by the old "pennyroyal rock," he hallowed to me and said I might get them, mother, in the meantime had made it so hot for him. But my blood was up and I did not get them, but waited till I made some money by making and selling maple sugar in the spring, and then paid for the books myself, and the books were all the sweeter by reason of the

maple sugar money. And he was a loving father all the same, and my debt to him I never could repay. He nearly always said no to his children when a favor was asked, but could not often keep his ground; children and mother to back them, usually carried the point. Coax long enough and hard enough, and he was pretty sure to give in. He never whipped me but once in his life, and that very mildly as regards the blows, but very harshly as regards the manner. I had let a cow get in the meadow, and run through the tall grass, which I should have and could have headed off. That was while we yet milked in the road, nearly 40 years ago. Forty years ago this winter (in 1844) he was getting out the timber for

the new barn, getting up in the morning and doing his chores and eating his breakfast before day light, and then with his oxen and dinner pail off into the hemlock woods of old Jonas More's and working all day, for many weeks, cutting and hauling the trees to the saw mill. He was no hunter or fisher, but in his earlier days, delighted in horse-racing. He used to say that he was a "dreadful saucy mean boy" full of oaths, and full of impudence to his Elders, but after he "experience religion" all of that was changed. His favorite by-words, were "by-fagus," "dark as podunk," or dark as a pocket.

Many visions of him about the farm in other days come to my

sorrowing eyes. As a child of 3 or 4 years, on a long ~~summer~~ warm spring day, I ~~see~~ look up on the side hill, and see him striding across the furrows, a bag slung about his shoulders sowing grain, probably oats. This is about my earliest remembrance of him. The hired girl had thrown my hat or bonnet down the steps and I stood crying upon the "stone work," and looking hill-ward. ~~when the "stone work"~~ I see him again in his old age, probably 66 or 8, following the team out in the clover-meadow - dragging in oats. Back and forth, back and forth all day I see him go, the dust from his drag, (for it was very dry) streaming far behind him - the last memory I have of him engaged in the "Springs work." At night he came in dusty and tired. Gradually he gave up work

still milking, and husking corn in the fall. After Mothers death he sold the farm to Eden, and ceased work entirely. Probably his last work was in cleaning the bugs off the potatoes about the house. Hiram says he husked one stout of corn out by the new barn that fall before he died.

Father laid claim to few of the virtues or graces; delighted to tell a good story against himself as well as against another. He owned he was a coward, and would make a poor soldier. When the posse came in Anti-Rent times, he ran under the bed, and they said left his feet sticking out. He always laughed when the story was told.

No hypocrisy or pretension about father; he had more virtues than he lay claim to.

Well, we shall meet again: our dust in the Earth, and the forces that make up our Spirits in the Eternity of force. Shall we know

each other then? Ah! shall we. As like knows like in nature. I dare not say farther than that.

- A little scene last spring, when Hiram was about buying Eden out. We were standing near the kitchen stove; father asked if it was so, and seemed to feel a sudden pang on being told it was. "Oh, boys" he said turning to Hiram and Eden, his tears choking him, "Stay as you be, stay as you be as long as I live." Unkind as Eden had been to him, and poorly as he had succeeded with the farm, father could not bear the thought of seeing him leave the old place.

Father's grand father Ephraim, had two brothers; Eden, who was rector of a college in N. Hampshire, and Stephen, who lived in Bridgeport

Ct, and was a ship builder and ship owner and Captain. Eden had a son Stephen, who turned out badly and finally brought up in State prison. My great grandfather was named Ephraim; he had [four] five sons; Eden, my grand father, Daniel, William, David and Curtis, and three daughters. Grandfather lived with his father near Quaker Hill in Dutchess Co. during the Revolutionary War. He was a small boy (born in 1770) and was once scared by a soldier who ran after him on all fours. The family moved to the "Nine Partners." Grandfather helped his father clear some land there on condition that he was to have part of it. This he did not get. Great grandfather then moved to Stamford on the town ship, and lived and died and is buried there. Grandfather soon married and

came here when he probably in 1795, or thereabouts, cutting a road through the woods.

Father said his uncle William had told him that the family was Welsh - came from Wales, which is probably true. I note many Celtic traits in them, and in myself - these probably lead all others.

Feb. 10 A severe disagreeable winter so far, like last winter. Entirely exceptional, as it was the "off year" and a mild winter was due. Not happened before for the 10 years I have lived here; ice on river one foot thick; thermometer has touched from 10 to 14 below zero.

- How apt we are to regard our private attractions and repulsions as laws of nature, affecting all

mankind!

Finished yesterday Carlyle's "Frederick," begun in the Dec. What an experience to read such a work! It colors ones days and all his thoughts. By far the most striking and effective historical work I have ever read. If all histories were as vivid and entertaining as this I should read nothing but history henceforth. A great Carlylean poem and a fit and artistic completion of his career as a writer. Having preached so long and so vehemently about the strong man at the helm, the divine right and the imperative need of the government of the ablest, etc, he cast about him for an example, and having found the nearest approach to it in Frederick, he devotes the rest of his days to portraying him to showing his life and his work; his obedience to the stern behests

of duty, and the love and obedience of his people to him. The last of the Kings, he says. He makes one thoroughly love and admire Frederick. In many ways he was the embodiment of the Carlylean ideals.

- "Wordsworth's poetry," says Arnold, "is great because of the extraordinary power with which W. feels the joy offered to us in Nature, the joy offered to us in simple elementary affections and duties, and because of the extraordinary power with which, in case after case he shows us this joy and renders it so as to make us share it." That hits the nail exactly on the head.

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Thinking of Frederick it has often occurred to me how desirable it would be to be one of a people who had a real King like him, the father of his people, a sovereign man at the head of affairs with the reins all in his own hand, a man to reverence, to love, to fear; who called all the women his daughters and all the men his sons, and whom to see or to speak with was the event of a lifetime. Such a man gives head to a nation; he is the head, and the people are the body. Currents of influence must stream down from such a hero to touch the life of the humblest peasant. It is the ideal State; there is an artistic completeness about it. Probably this is why it so moved captivated Carlyle

inevitable and inexorable artist that he was. But how impossible to us! how impossible to any people by their own action and choice! We have no Frederick, or if we have, we do not know; neither does he. How to get him at the helm! how to trust him, and obey him? Our only hope is in the collective wisdom of the people, and as extremes so often meet, perhaps this, if thoroughly realized, is as artistic and complete a plan as the other. The "collective folly of the people" Carlyle would say, and perhaps during his whole life he never for a moment saw it otherwise; never saw that the wisdom of the majority could be other than the no-wisdom of blind masses of

of men. Authority, authority, authority, obedience, obedience, obedience, how those words forever sounded in his soul. [crossed out: It may turn out that the universe is a democracy and not a divine disposition that we are all parts of God and that a vast impersonal power rules - the totality of nature determines.] At any rate, there can be no doubt that the democratic movement, the coming forward of the people and the abeyance of single individuals, is a movement of the world of nature; an ocean-current that involves or is the result of, the deepest and widest causes, and there is no stemming it or guiding it; we must trust it. It is the decree of the Eternal. Carlyle never would or could see this; he lashed the sea like Xerxes with his Chains, but it heeded him

not. The Gulf Stream keeps on just the same. Ten fools, or a hundred fools are of course no wiser than one fool - but 10 average men will be wiser in their collective capacity and honesty than any one of the ten. They mentally check and balance each one another, and the result is something like one of Galton's compound (composite) photographs wherein the best features of many faces are combined into one. A nation has a character, a presence, an influence that cannot be found in the individual members. It is said of savage tribes that when they are most peaceable as individuals, they are the most warlike as a tribe and vice versa.

There are undoubtedly from time to time currents in human

affairs, that spring from no one mans will, and that no one man can stem or change. There are natural unseen forces at work that we know not of. Men in their collective capacity will be seized with a spirit that may be entirely foreign to them as individuals. Large masses come under the influence of natural law, and the natural law of mankind is to evolution, to grow, to mount, to expand. A people like ours, therefore though blind, will in the long run and on a large scale, be guided instinctively in the right channels. The impetus, the momentum of the race, is onward and upward. Doubtless, re-action and decay will come in time, but with science

and right reason, more and more in the lead, this tendency will be more and more counteracted. It was because of Carlyle's fearful bent or bias that he saw not these things. He had not a flexible mind. He saw certain truths with such force and he was precipitated [~~crossed out: himself~~] upon them with such vehemence that other truths, equally important, he saw not. If the majority is unsound; how are you to get sound action out of it? But is the majority unsound. If mankind, if the race is unsound, how are we here? Why have we not gone to the dogs long ago? Unsound on a question of philosophy, or of taste, or of literature, in fact, philosophically unsound or darkened, without doubt, but not morally

unsound, else chaos would have come long ago. Collectively sound in instinct, in tendency, in action but in the dark as touching the highest questions, but always able to see and to choose the light. Intellectually the majority is in the dark, or not in the fullest light, but Carlyle proceeds on the assumption that they are morally unsound. This is quite a different thing. Let a people like ours vote on a question of philosophy, or a principle of taste, or a question of mathematics or of jurisprudence, and I would not give much for the verdict. But on a question of primary morality, or right and wrong as affects conduct, character etc., and who doubts that they would be right? The light comes to the minority first, to the high peaks

but it surely spreads to the majority. But character in the end counts for more than intellect and the character of a people is often the stay and salvation of their leaders. Indeed in our times of keen intellectuality and preponderance of mental acumen, there is more danger that the leaders will prove weak, or dishonest, than there is that the people will prove blind. The majority must afford the stay and ballast to the minority. The people are not politically unsound. Can there be the slightest doubt that a man of shining preeminence, would always command their suffrage? Our most generous, our best selves, always come to the front on such occasions, and any given number of [crossed out: people] persons are sure to

vote above themselves, on the principle of emulation. It is doubtful if thieves and pickpockets would publicly vote for one of their own kind. In this country there is generally little choice between the two candidates, and the election hinges upon some mineor circumstance.

Feb. 13 Start for Washington today.

March 1 In W. since the 14th glad to be here again and see the old familiar places. But a pretty bad time so far; sickness a bad scare about Julian diphtheria in Aaron's family, cold winds etc.

On Feb. 24 took a walk to the woods with Dr. Baker, Prof. Ward, and Mr. West, along Piney Branch and Rock Creek. Hepatica in bloom.

skunk cabbage in bloom, frog spawn in the pools, a bright lovely day, ground frozen. My old haunts but little changed.

A different sentiment in nature as you get reach the Potomac, more atmosphere, and more repose in things. A sentiment very agreeable to me.

March 7 Home again today.

9 Ice storm breaking down all the trees; crash, crash on every hand. The devils own winter so far, one of the worst ever known; a winter that would have given some good hints to Dante to be worked up in his Inferno.

13 Spring tokens; chipmunks out; robins, bluebirds and cow buntings here; the nuthatches calling their old calls in the morning; chickadees piping their plaintive love notes; ground coming through the snow; a promise in the air.

March 16 Sunday. The Biblical writings are the work of the oriental mind, of an imaginative poetical, exaggerative race, nomadic, wandering, uncivilized; and there can be no doubt but our practical, commercial, industrial, scientific, unpoetic Western races have made a fearful "mess" of them; have perverted and spoiled them utterly. Instead of ideal benefits, we have sought

practical benefits in them we have materialized and vulgarized these beautiful legends and poems. We want to save our souls by them, not here and now, but by and by. Think of the "plan of salvation", "the scheme of redemption", "vicarious atonement", and so on, which we have framed out of the teachings of Jesus. Nothing in any heathen religion or fetich of a barbarous tribe, rotating callabash, or what not, can be more preposterous, or farther from his real meaning. We pursue the good of the Bible, mechanically, and selfishly. The universe is a kind of police-court where one may bribe the judge with fine words or get off with a fine which another shall pay, or where a good advocate is of first importance.

Oh, my brothers and sisters, permit me to tell you, you are a set of asses. Your whole scheme of religion is base and selfish, and is as fictitious as the signs of the zodiac, or the constellations of the astronomers. The stars are there verily, but not the harps, and chairs, and bears, and dippers. The facts of truth and virtue and right conduct remain, too; they too are stars, but your silly schemes to get to heaven and cheat the devil, are inventions of your own cowardice. Be noble men and women, lead true and generous lives, and defy the universe to harm you. Jesus Christ is near, when you forget him and lead as original and fearless as life as he did, from within, not from without.

March 22 Back from examining banks on Erie Road this morning at 8 A.M. A bright calm lovely spring day after three days of storm. The river like a great strip of the firmament dotted with stars and moons in the shape of fragments of ice, all but motionless at this moment of near slack water. How the birds call, the old calls, the immemorial calls of spring, sparrows, blue-birds, etc. The call of the nuthatch is one of the most pleasing and spring like of sounds, as is also the fine drawn "phoebe" of the chickadees, like a silk ribbon of a sound.

The phoebe bird this morning down toward the ice house.

How the bees hum, as in summer!

2 pm A little red butterfly goes dancing swiftly by. A little piper under the hill.

- The speculative astronomers do not seem to consider that it is impossible for us to conceive of one planet falling upon another or of the planets falling into the sun. Up is from the earth, down is toward the Earth. Is not this equally true of any of the planets, or upon the sun? Then how can two planetary surfaces come together? Which up would negative the other up? The moon could not fall upon the earth as a meteor falls, or the earth upon the sun. Absolutely, is there any up or down?

March 24 Damp still morning, fog on the river. All the [torn page] and twigs of the trees strung [with] drops of water. The grass and [torn page] beaded with fog drops. [Animated?] nature vocal - the distant cawing of crows and crowing of cocks, call of nuthatches and sound of hammers and trains, nearer, the laughter of robins, call of high-hole, and note of phoebe, [crossed out: near] close by the trill and quiver of song sparrows call of blue birds and gurgle of cow-bunting. Two lines of ducks go up the river, one [crossed out: in the air] a few feet beneath the other - on second glance the under line proves to be the shadow of the upper. As the ducks cross a large field of ice, the lower line is suddenly blotted out, as if it had dived beneath the ice. A train of cars

across the river - the train sunk beneath the solid stratum of fog, its plume of smoke and vapor unrolling above it, and slanting away in the distance. A liquid morning, the turf buzzes as you walk over it.

Skunk-Cabbage on Saturday, the 22nd, probably in bloom several days this plant always gets ahead of me; it seems to come up like a mushroom in a single night. Water newts just out, and probably piping before the frogs, though not certain about this.

March 25 One of the rare days that go before a storm - the flower of a series of days increasingly fair. Tomorrow probably the flower falls - and days of rain and cold prepare the way for another fair day or days. The barometer is probably high today - the birds fly high. I feed my bees on a rock and sit long and watch them covering the combs, and rejoice in their multitudinous humming. The river a great mirror, dotted here and there by small cakes of ice. The first sloop comes up on the tide, like the first butterfly of spring; the little steamer makes her first trip and awakes the echoes with her salutatory whistle, her flag dancing

in the sun.

Now along the marshes and bushy water courses the red shouldered black birds - starlings sit upon the tree and alder tops, uttering their liquid reedy notes, and awaiting the females. They are first upon the ground, but know their mates will follow and that the pic-nic cannot begin till they arrive. These birds are surely close akin to the bobolinks and cow-buntings. In uttering their notes they make the same movements, a sort of spasm, and their voices are of the same quality.