

April 1st Warm and delicious. The first spring chorus in full blast. All the old allurements in the air, all the old voices; blue-birds, robins, phoebes, sparrows, black birds, snow birds, crows, hawks, and, flying high overhead out of sight, a killdeer or snipe cries his disconsolate cry [~~crossed out: note~~]. Again the robins run about the brown fields their pert forms set off against the lingering patches of snow. Ice on the river begins to wear a ragged look, great rents in his coat here and there.

Last night at 6 a great gull went northward high in the air, uttering his cry, probably looking for open water.

For two or three days J and I

have boiled sap in the open air. It was small sugaring, but it was a good taste of the old delightful occupation.

The skunk cabbage in bloom yesterday, again it got ahead of me.

Between 4 and 5 P.M. ice moved down the river. All the premonitory symptoms had occurred during the day. The ice was restless and shifted about within narrow limits a good deal.

2nd Mild and overcast. In the afternoon a large flock of wild geese go northward, a noble sight, a great V cleaving the air.

3. My 48th birthday. How rapidly they come and go!

"Little did my mother think
That day she cradled me
The lands I was to travel in
The death I was to die"

Weather mild and still; sky obscured, much vapor and smoke in the air. Snow all gone. Great fields of ice floating down.
All the sparrows musical.

Health pretty good; legs nearly normal, more in harmony than one year ago, no lameness in either. Occasionally symptoms of numbness in ends of toes. Right arm lame for some weeks past, left a little lame. Heart flutters occasionally, but not so often as during the winter. Am probably stronger than last birthday. Arms both better than in the winter. Am not troubled

with sensations of cold in arms and legs as formerly.

Ought to have been home to-day, but the snow banks out there have kept me back.

The thought uppermost in all minds is the death of Genl. Grant, a brave, resolute, patriotic, unimpeachable, common-sense man, not shrewd or sharp in the worldly way; often victimized, but a noble solid character. He held together and kept his head under circumstances which broke or scattered more brilliant men. Much of pure adamant in him. How free from brag and bluster; how taciturn. I have seen him many times in W. between 1868 and 72, but I shall see him no more.

P.M. Grant not dead yet.

4 P.M. Warm and delicious; sit in my summer house and write this; trill of the sparrows all around; phoebe calls from under the hill; the sap clinks in the pan, the early April smell upon the air; the sound of a Good Friday bell from over the river.

Attended the funeral this P.M. of Irving Dennys wife, the daughter of John Sterling; poor girl died from neglect after confinement. Seldom have I seen death counterfeit sleep more perfectly. Old Mr. Capron in his sermon told us about Paradise - an intermediate land or place or garden between here and heaven proper when the soul waits for the last day and the resurrection of the body. Not till the soul gets its new or celestial body does it go to heaven. And all this because Christ on the Cross told the thief that this day he should be with him in paradise!

The good old soul believes it all - and it will not hurt him! Part of the day have boiled sap out in the bushes by the spring, Julian building his pond the while, near by.

Bees humming in the air. I sit here and read Greek history, with long pauses when my thoughts wander back to the old home and to ~~those whom I shall see no more.~~

4th A cold rain from the north, nearly all day in doors. Finished the 3rd vol of Curtis's Greek History to-day.

When one finishes this vol. his disgust with the Greek character is very strong. The downfall of Athens does one good, amid all his regrets. It comes as the proper fruit of Athenian folly and wickedness. Such fickleness,

treachery, duplicity, corruption, was seldom displayed by any people. Lying and bribery were the two weapons the Athenians most used, I fail to see the bravery or heroism of the Greek character. All their great exploits of which we have heard so much utterly pale before some modern feats in arms. Leonidas and his men died game at Thermopylae, but what folly to put so small a band there in the first place. Marathon appears to have been but a small affair.

At Salamis they were cornered and could not get away. The Greeks did not do more than well, while the Persians [crossed out: done] did worse than ill. At Plattaca the Greeks acted like fools. If the American democracy were capable of such folly as the Athenian

Demos we would have gone to the dogs long ago. ~~Th~~ Utterly helpless without a great leader and yet no sooner finding a man that could lead them than they got jealous of him and betray him to his enemies, or exile him, or condemn him in his absence. The people seem utterly incapable of self government, and the man who could govern them, they soon betrayed and ruined. The grand want of the Greek character was stability and conscience. Even Pericles, stooped to bribery. The Athenians all ran to versatility of intellect. They had no tenacity of purpose, no depth and fixity of character. They were the victims of every glib tongue that happened to wag. They were capable of fine things and of noble ~~sprits~~ spurts, but not capable of true

things. Their art, their poetry, and literature were great, but the meanness of the national character amid it all is unspeakable. That great poetry could be the outcome of such a people as that of Athens, discredits great poetry, and makes it very suspicious. The words of the Greeks were far more splendid than their deeds. They ran too much to tongue. They were all talkers and orators. Thus every man had to speak in his own defence in court. His attorney prepared his clients speech, but the client had to speak it. The orators wrought all the mischief of the state. In short the career of Athens does not credit democracy. The great man of the demos ought to have been horsewhipped soundly at least once a week.

6 Strong wind from the NW. sweeps the river like an immense broom; sweeps all the ice in a dense line along the east shore and holds it there and the waves grind it up.

8 To Coxsackie to-day; mild, with rain in the afternoon.

9 Clear, cold, windy. Quite a freeze last night. Ice all disappeared from the river.

11 Start for home on early train. Bright and mild. Reach home at noon. Hiram well ditto Smith and Emma. Begins to snow in afternoon and snows nearly all the time for three days. No sugar weather as I had hoped. Very chilly, sloppy, and dismal.

13 Go to Edens to-day. Bleak and wintry. Eden much better, quite another man in looks and feelings.

14 Examine the bank at Stamford to-day and then to Sister Janes. Homer away. Don his old clothes and do the chores, - clean stables, fodder the cows and milk.

15 Back home today, disappointed in my trip; no boiling of sap in the woods, no trout and not all the banks.

16 Very bright and crisp; beautiful weather; boil sap again in the little pot out by the spring. The fox sparrow singing all about, indeed a regular fox-sparrow day.

17 Dazzlingly bright again, but cool and crisp - quite a freeze last night. Fox-sparrows again musical.

19 Cool frosty nights and dazzling days; dry north wind.

First hepatica to-day, Sunday. Robin and phoebe building their nests. Ground getting dry; wild onions greening the ground; grass but little started.

Elm buds swelling, so that there is a suggestion of a swarm of bees amid the branches. Days very charming, but quite profitless to me; the sun has put out [crossed out: my intellectual] the minds fires. Shadowless April days!

20 To Millerton to-day and then to Bentons. Bright and hot.

21 At Bentons till noon. The perfection of April days, bright, placid, hot. Walk with Myron over and along the wooded ridge west of his house; find lots

of hepatica in bloom, many of them sweet scented.

Home in the afternoon; the plow at work in many fields; an ox lolling with the heat. All the springy depressions in the fields getting green.

22. Calm and lovely as a dream no wind, no cloud, the sunlight pouring into the earth and the heat quickening everything. The bush sparrows trilling in the distance.

First swallow to-day. Thermometer 82 degrees in the shade in N.Y. 87 degrees.

23 Blood root and dicentra to-day. Still hot but with pushing south wind.

No thoughts and but little reading these days.

Arbutus this afternoon.

24. To Andes to-day. Bright and warm. A good ride over the mountains. The heel of a snow-bank here and there; streams very full, grass greening in the spring runs and moist slopes; the poplars with their green catkins all out.

25. Stayed at Margaretville, and go fishing in forenoon up Weaver Hollow, a secluded valley I had never before heard of; fine rapid trout stream, too full and not quite clear; the farm house, the hurried anxious farmer, his father low with paralytic stroke, the good talkative boy who goes with me along the stream etc. Take 30 trout. The beautiful falls, a pair of them; find the yellow violet and spring beauty just opened. Day very bright and cooler.

At Stony Hollow, six Kingston girls get on the train with bundles and baskets of Arbutus. Such a lot of arbutus I never before saw brought out of the wood; they had enough to fill a clothes basket; it perfumed the whole car. They must have made a clean sweep. In fact they were hoggish. I asked one of them if they were going to deck a public hall with it. In the vicinity of all the large towns the wild flowers exterminated by this senseless greed of the girls and boys.

May 1st Slow cold rain all day from the north. Foliage about the same as last year at this time. Infant leaves on currant bushes, apples trees, cherry trees, maples trees, willow trees, etc. In-doors all day working on bank reports; a fire of peach-tree wood in my fire place.

- The contrary of natural religion is not revealed religion, for all truth is revealed truth, revealed from the inner [crossed out: ?] consciousness of man; but the contrary of it is artificial religion like the scheme of salvation propounded by the Churches.

3rd Bright day but cool. The trio of maples over the fence just ready to shake out their tassels. Julian and I take a walk to the woods, over by the falls. Still find some fine arbutus on the northern slopes of the woods. Find violets and dandelions in the field. The green warbler, black and white creeping warbler and one or two others in the woods.

- Think of the vital processes going on in the body of each of us! the known and the unknown or inexplicable processes! Check or derange those processes and we are sick; stop them, and we die. What we call the mind or soul is just as much a result of these processes as is our appetite or our animal heat.

10. Sunday. Weather cool. Cherry blossoms out; the tops of the forest trees just lightly brushed with yellow-green. Bees working on the sugar maples.

The past week cold and wet.

Went to Pat Jarvis and Walden, and spent a day at Houghton farm

14 Cool, overcast; worked all day at cleaning study etc.

15. A soft bright day; a mist of foliage on the fruit and maple trees. Some maple leaves an inch long and broad, and others with buds not yet open; dandelions dotting the grass everywhere, warblers and other birds all here. The piping of the oriole very noticeable in front of my study. No signs of any mental activity.

May 18

- I find it impossible to believe that I shall be anything more after I have left this world than before I came into it, or that the future can be anything more to me than the past has been. How can it be? If I was nothing before I got this body, how can I be anything after I have lost it? "Whatever I am, I am of my body." Whatever I owe to it, I shall lose after I am done with it. One's moral or intellectual immortality is clear enough; not a motion of one's hand can be destroyed after it is made. But this kind of immortality amounts to nothing; one wants a real immortality. Hamlet

and Lear are immortal too in this sense; but we crave an actual continuance of consciousness and identity.

- Soft warm brooding may days; apple and [crossed out: other fruit] pear trees in full bloom; all the birds jubilant; yet no thought, no incident to fix the beautiful day in memory, and make it a permanent possession.

20. Many of the rarer warblers here this morning, feeding on some minute insect in the apple trees. The bay breasted, the chestnut sided, the speckled Canada, the black capped, and two or three other kinds I am not so sure of, all in one apple tree.

24. Moist soft weather with, but little rain. The week of bloom just ending; foliage nearly all out; the cyripedium in bloom, yellow and pink.

- Finished Newmans Apologia began a week ago; not much in it for me, dry and uninteresting as a book on politics, occupied entirely with artificial questions and issues; nothing vital or real in it; it is indeed all a discussion as to whether Santa Clause comes down the chimney or in at the window; on reading the Fathers, Newman was converted to the opinion that he comes down the chimney after all. It seems incredible that such a man

could lay such stress upon such questions! But the style of the man and his tone and temper are admirable; here his real Christian spirit shows itself

26.27.28.29.30.32 - Passed these days in a humdrum kind of way, lamenting the dry weather, reading a little, writing a little, working on the road, with an occasional walk to the woods, no event, no thought, to fix and perpetuate the memory of these flitting May days in my mind

(Yes, I read Robin Hood to Julian and enjoyed it hugely.)

June 1st Warm, soft, moist after the fine rain of yesterday. The clover just beginning to bloom; bird songs subsiding a little. Reading now and then in Stevenson "An Inland Voyage" very bright and very light. It does

June 1st 85.

not penetrate the mind at all. What is the matter with it? So much wit and fancy and good nature and good writing ought to make a deep impression. It has no proper earnestness or seriousness. The author is constantly on the stretch to be bright and entertaining. It is this that occupies him and not any serious purpose to give us a vivid truthful picture of the river and country. He is occupied with himself and not with objects about him. Hence his fine things seem to have no root. His thoughts are parasitical. You never know how much he means, or how much to believe. Indeed the fault is a very fundamental one. See that thou avoided the like of it.

June 3. A perfect summer day, lustrous, quiet, temperate. So fresh the foliage, so fresh the grass, so fresh all things; so pellucid the river, so blue the sky, so ruddy the clover, so busy the bees, so fragrant the locusts, so peaceful the country roads, so inviting and dense shadows - the sentiment of full fresh virgin nature everywhere; real Robin Hood days - days of romance and legend and a jolly life under the green wood tree.

- Wanted: a [crossed out: an] scale to weigh my words with; one of my ever present faults is a want of deliberation in speaking and writing, I am

cautious in everything except in what I say. In conversation I need to charge myself to think well before I speak; and in writing to deliberate long before making a positive statement.

- Everything that floats upon the water, sooner or later comes to the shore. One's consciousness is his shore, beyond it and ever yielding up things to it, lies the vast gulf of unconsciousness, where race, family, climate, nature, play such a part.

June 6th To-day Myron Benton and I start for the woods; hope to meet Van Benschotens at Furlow lake; find on arriving at Arkville that they have left; telegraph them and meet them at Phoenicia at 4 P.M. Then up Snyder Hollow to Larkin's once more. Sleep in the woods at our old camp; find the beds and all as we left them last August, not a stick disturbed.

7. Start for Slide Mountain at 7 A.M. determined to assault it on the northern and steepest side; Andrew guides us to the forks or foot of the mountain, a five mile walk through an old wood road; a long and hard climb up the mountain, up the range upon which Slide sits. A dash of rain by and by. Two

hours bring up on the top of the range, with Slide towering on our right, black and bristling with spruce; frequent signs of bears on [crossed out: in?] the side of the mountain. After a while we reach a dense growth of spruce nearly on level ground; how hushed and strange and secluded it is. Here we pause and eat our lunch; the pretty painted trillium all about. This quiet grove is the hush before the storm; from its edge rises the first battlements of the mountain. These we scale, and then scale others and still others; it is up and up, "hitchity hatchity; up we go" all rocks and moss and brush and logs; an hour or so of this

and we are at the top, and all mountains bow beneath us. What a prospect! The leaves grew smaller and smaller as we ascended; the season later, and later. Indeed on the top we fairly overtook the fleeing spring. The claytonia and adders tongue were just in bloom, flowers of April; the yellow birches had just put out their tassels; a species of shad bush, or June berry, was just in bloom. Strawberries were ripening in the valley, and April flowers blooming on the summit. Near by we found an ice cave and plenty of ice and cold water. Neay by we found an ice cave, and plenty of ice and cold water, a new thrush too, Bicknells thrush. The strange song arrested my attention at once - a thrush song

plain enough, but in a minor key - very fine, attenuated like fine wine, and singularly resonant like the veery's; very common all about the summit. No other thrush there. The black-capped warbler too, and snow bird. Pass the night comfortably in the hut; at gray dawn the rain routs us. Rain soon over, sun out again at 9 A.M. Van B and his brother, after studying the map beneath us, under my direction, start for head of Rondout; a bold adventuresome tramp. Myron and I pass the day and night there. Wind shifts and a cold wave is upon us; we calk up the hut with balsam boughs, but at 9:30 P.M.

the cold routs Myron; he has a chill, his teeth chatter; he fights the cold the rest of the night, aided by our scanty supply of decayed wood. I sleep beneath the piled on boughs fairly well, tho' the wind is icy cold. At dawn Myron crawls into my nest and I replenish the fire and the store of wood. Breakfast at 6. finishes our supplies, and at 8 we start off the mountain in a snow storm; round pellets of snow as in Nov. fall fast. We go straight down the Slide; it drops down beneath us and is lost in the fog; presently the wind whirls up the fog, and what a prospect is before us! After a hard pull down

and down we reach the creek, and then at noon reach Larkin's hospitable habitation. [crossed out: The]

10 To day we pitch the tent in the old spot, and pass three delightful days there; plenty of trout, and a cup of wild strawberries. Calculate that at least 10 lbs of trout are daily taken from the stream.

13 Break camp this morning and off for home. Stop in Olive to see Father North. Take him some trout. The old man pretty feeble and lame, but making a brave fight of it with his 84 years upon him.

18 Hiram came to-day after an interval of 6 or 7 years. All that is left of the old home. How

much came with him! father and mother and all the past. We sit about and talk and are silent.

19 Robert Scoular, from Alloway on the Doon - to day. A most hearty Scotchman. How much came with him too! Burns and Carlyle, and the flavor of that bonny land. Never saw [crossed out: ??] such youthful enthusiasm in a man of 65; just the opposite of Carlyle in some ways; admires and enjoys everything and every body. Stays two days and a night.

20 Finished haying to-day; hay light, but all in without a drop of rain; getting very dry.

22nd Hiram leaves for home this morning. I go with him over to the depot.

24. Dry, dry and hard; no moisture in the sky; but light showers and dashes since early in May.

27. Hot, hot, dry, dry, dry! "And the heavens that is over thy head shall be brass, and the earth that is under thee shall be iron."

- Concrete existence, the life that now is. Is the immortality of which we hear so much, a kind of abstract existence? Every word we speak, or motion we make, or thought we think, is indestructable, and therefore immortal? Thus is Hamlet as immortal as Shakespeare. I can conceive of no other kind of immortality. What I am, what I stand

for, that is my identity, is immortal; having once been the idea of it is indestructible and must ever be. But is this existence? is this anything to me? No: life is concrete. Does desire, does appetite exist after it is satisfied? Yet it is not destroyed. The fact that it was appetite still exists, as an abstract idea, and that is all. The proof of immortality seems to amount only to this.

- Organic nature as we see it has grown to be what it is, by ceaseless experiment; by putting out and trying in every direction, the fittest, or the luckiest alone surviving. Such a waste as there has been, from the human point of view, is appalling, race

devouring race, tribe devouring tribe, to the end of time. There is nothing like intelligence in nature, as man [crossed out: ?] shows intelligence. Nature goes on all fours. Every possible chance is hers and she tries them all. See the competition going on among the plants; which does Nature favor? all and each. Nature, in her method and aim, is always typified by the sphere, which you cannot say begins here and ends there, but which begins everywhere and ends everywhere, or more properly has neither beginning nor ending; neither is it of any form, tho' it holds all form. The ways and method of Nature

are well symbolized by the fact that the rain falls upon the rivers and ponds and seas, the same as upon the land. Evidently it does not rain to make the land alive, but the land is alive because it rains. It is not to make the grass grow that the showers come, but the grass grows because the showers do come.

30. Cool. overcast, all day. The thought of father and mother has been much with me this day. How vividly their forms and voices have been before me! Perhaps it was my reading in the Bible in the Psalms, that set my mind to thinking of them.

July 1st Cool, clear, windy day. As dry a June as I ever saw, and a dry May.

Jul 4. No rain yet. Very cool lately, almost cold at night. A bright dry day so far. Strawberries hang on yet, raspberries ripening very slowly and poorly. Julian happy with his fire crackers. Plenty of long sad reminiscences of the past, but no live thoughts of to-day.

P.M. Portentous clouds and loud cracking thunder, but only a slight shower in the face of such a drought.

The days are without incident or complexion to me.

Jul 7 Fine rain at last that goes down to the roots of the springs and wells, and of the big trees. Julian and I rode home in it from P. - all the way in a mud-puddle. A rain out of the S.W. for nearly two hours. All the afternoon the clouds were marshalling and massing there and about 4 P.M their skirmish line was sent out; then presently the whole [crossed out: ar] body was in motion.

8 "How do we know" said Julian as I was putting him in his bed last night, "that the crust of the earth is getting thicker and thicker down to the centre?" I explained to him by the analogy of a cooling body or molten [crossed out: mettle] metal. "Ain't it strange," he said, "how much

we find out about the Earth, the moon, and the sun!" "Papa, are we sure there is a God?" "Pretty sure," I said, "though he can never be seen by ~~th~~ our eyes,"

12. Cool, clear summer weather. Chestnut trees hoary with bloom, rye fields ripe for the cradle, the grass ripe for the scythe. Am reading Prof Seeley's "Natural Religion"; a thoughtful suggestive book, no page of which the reader can skip. More meat in it than in all the books ~~I hav~~ on religion I have ever read. As literature it lacks perspective: the author has not Arnolds art of definition and of setting his thought forth so that the mind sees all around it and sees it entire.

- In Emerson, one rarely hears the voice of clear simple reason and common sense; but the voice of poetry, of fable, of courage, of wit, etc. E. does not clear and discipline the mind, but he feeds and braces it up.

14 A fine rain from the south began this morning before we were up, and is still at 11 A.M. raining briskly.

One can keep a record of the weather, but how can he keep a record of his life? The days go by and leave no mark. Half of this summer month is gone, and I do not know where it has gone to; I have little or nothing to show for it. So many days of one's life are simply negatives, or neutrals.

Jul 20. Start for Delaware the at 2 P.M. with my horse, very hot and dry, stay in Olive all night.

21. Reach Lexington to day at 4 P.M. Stay with the Johnsons till 4 P.M. next day.

22nd Reach Hiram's to-night at 8 P.M. all well; very warm.

23rd Make the acquaintance of Miss Boswick this morning In the afternoon go up on the Old Clump with her; find a black quill going up; give it her and name her Raven's Plume; a fit name; there is something so black, intense and shining about her, and her heart bounds so [crossed out: at the sight] on

looking down from a height into the bosom of mountain forests. Pick a quart or more of wild strawberries on the clump. Miss B. wants to stay till the moon is up, so we do not descend into the valley till 8 pm. The hermit thrush in full song.

24 Rain. Seek shelter under the rocks while we are huckleberrying.

25 To Eden's to-night. Stay till the 30th working in hay each afternoon.

30 Drive over to Hiram's to-day. Afternoon work in hay; very hot; we go down to the spring to drink, and sit in the shade.

31 On Old Clump to day, and at night. Miss B. Abigail and I

go up and pass the night there. Very warm. Sleep but little; hear the Cuckoos all night; not an hour but they are calling. We all lie on the ground side by side wrapped in our blankets.

Aug 2nd On Old Clump again to-day all day, a long walk through the woods into the open fields, a day of poetry and romance. Miss B. takes to it all like an Indian maiden

3rd A day of cloud and rain. The beautiful scene under the rocks: the fire, her trim, enthusiastic, spirited figure, the brisk walk, the rain drops coursing down flushed cheeks etc.

4 Julian comes to day; We go on "Old Clump" again.

5 Down to the grave yard and a long pause beside mother's and father's graves. Then to the falls; spend the day thus.

6 Back to Edens to-day by noon. Stay there till 14th [~~crossed out: On th~~]

8th Go to Homer Lynchs to-day all of us, the day of Genl. Grants funeral.

9 Sunday in [~~crossed out: Eden~~] Spruce Swamp; pick lots of huckleberries - a most delightful time; wife very good to me.

14 To Hiram's to-day by train. On Pine Hill, exploring the rocks. Miss B. calls it her castle.

16 Sunday, a long time [~~crossed out: on~~] when the ground pine curls his

pretty wreaths. In afternoon on Old Clump with the Johnsons.

18 Back to Edens; wife in bad humor from hearing Anne's lies and slander.

20 Start for Deposit to-day. A pleasant three days at Oquaga lake with the Knapps and their friends.

25 To Hiram's again today. Stay till 31st; have many walks and pic-nics with the Johnsons and Miss B; an enjoyable time.

31st Start for home to day; Miss B. with me to take the train in Shandaken; the scene at Big Indian I need not record; it is burnt into my memory.

Sept 2nd Reach home to-day; terrible domestic storm that drenches and shakes things.

4th See Miss B. to-day in P for the last; much cut up by the unfortunate affair, very sorry for her and for all concerned. A noble, high minded girl, with a dash of the wild, the adventurous in her veins. I have never looked into a stronger, more unflinching pair of womans eyes. Farewell! You should have more pleasure than you will find in this world. To such as you the fates are only kind at intervals.

15 Days getting bright and warm - soft, tranquil September weather at last. Still unsettled in mind - domestic skies still overcast.

- What appears more real than the sky? We think of it and speak of it as if it were as positive and real a thing as the earth. It is blue, it is tender, it is overarching it is clear etc. See how the color is laid in it at sunset Yet what an illusion. There is no sky; it is only vacancy; it is only the absence of something. It is a glimpse of the Infinite. When we try to grasp or measure or define God, we find he is another sky, sheltering, overarching

palpable to the casual eye, but receding, vanishing to the closer search - the vast power or space in which the worlds float but himself ungraspable, unattainable, forever soaring beyond our ken. Not a being, not an entity, but that which lies back of all being, all entities, "How can anyone teach concerning Brahma [~~crossed out: Allah~~]" etc.

17 Mrs. B left this morning for New Haven; very unsettled weather with her yet - storm and rain by spells. What will be the up shot of it? Julian and I alone in the house.

19 Clear, warm and delightful for the past few days - but time profits me little

21 Came to Ocean Grove to-day J and I.

22nd Mrs B. came to-night.

29. One week now at the Grove. Bright placid days. Julian all day digging in the sand and building forts and castles, which the waves at night demolish. He is hungry for the shore and sticks to one spot as if he would devour it. I read a little, walk a little, and indulge in much reverie. Not very brisk in either mind or body.

Oct 1st Go down to Camden to see Walt. A long ride across the flat desert part of the state. For 20 miles or more after we turn inland and strike out directly for Camden nothing but a level sandy plain, once an ancient sea beach, covered with low scrub oak and pine. The pine woods usually had an under lining of short heathery growth of deep crimson or maroon color. Paths here and there of snow white sand. Find Walt stretched upon his back. "Come in, Sir", he says cheerily, hearing my voice in the doorway of his room, and taking me for a stranger.

He put up his hand as I approached, and then recognized me, "Oh, John, it is you is it; how glad I am to see you," His eyes are running from the effects of some drops just applied to them, and he can hardly see. He looks the same as usual, but he moves with much more difficulty than when I last saw him, and his eyes very bad for a week now. He had resigned himself to being blind, he said, but now his eyes were improving; right eye pretty good, left much congested and nearly useless. I took his hand and he arose from the sofa and

walked to his big chair by the window, and I sat opposite. Here we spent the most of the day engaged in talk. Walt talked as well as usual, and was just as cheery and buoyant as ever. Told me about O'Connor, who left him but yesterday; is much disturbed about him, fears he is breaking up. O'.C. it seems can hardly walk, "jellatin legs," a tendency to pitch to the right all the time, talks as brilliantly as ever etc. I get 100 oysters of a street vendor, and we have an oyster dinner to-gether. Walt eats very heartily; too heartily I think and tell him so.

How delightful to be with him again; it does me immense good; I feel like a new person. It satisfies a kind of soul and body thirst. I grow like corn in July for the next two or three days. Leave at 3 1/2. Walt drives me to the station with his new horse and buggy. The first time I ever saw him drive. He is very proud of his present.

2nd Leave Ocean Grove this morning at 8; spend the day in N.Y. and reach home at 7 P.M.

3 A lovely day, still and bright, like a dream.

- On the beach the waves at times come wallowing ashore like a great flock of sheep; the wave breaks far out and then

comes that rushing line of tossing leaping wooly heads and shoulders; they are not steeds, but a wild mob of wooly headed sheep.

Oct 9. Cool gray days; no wind, no sun - days to sit indoors by an open wood fire, and read and ruminare. Very cool fall so far; but little frost, yet no warmth. A peach wood fire in my fireplace for past 3 days. Good weather to go forth too, and walk or hunt. How still it is; how slowly the clouds move, how the birds call and shout and dart and sing. They seem of a sudden vastly multiplied, jays and crows very noisy, chestnuts dropping

apples dropping in the orchard, leaves [~~crossed out: shapely?~~] slowly dropping from the trees. When a big apple falls, there is a sudden rustle amid the branches, when it lets go its hold, then a mellow thump upon the green sward, and the King or Pippin lies there in the grass, dependent upon the tree no longer, its arboreal life rounded and ended, now it mellows and mellows to make itself a tempting bait for man or beast, and so ends.

In afternoon Julian and I go for chestnuts. Find I can throw a club or a stone nearly as well as ever; no lameness in arm or shoulder. Got a fine lot of nuts. The big fine nuts Julian called "Alexander the Greats."

- How much there is in race! Suppose Mexico, and the South American states, had been settled by the English and the Germans, instead of by the Spaniards and Portuguese, would there not have been a vastly different outcome? Spain begot these countries in the height of her power and splendor, but the ~~[crossed out: seal of]~~ fatal germ of her decadence was upon them; the race was spent.

Emerson says, "no man ever stated his griefs as lightly as he might." There was at least one man who stated his griefs as strongly as they could be stated, and that was Carlyle.

10 Day of great beauty - the peace and splendor of October at last. All day indoors examining the Fallkill Bank.

11 Another day of great beauty. What is it that has melted and diffused itself through the air? Pearls or opals and rubies? What a tone, what a sentiment pervades space and glorifies all things

12 Julian's first day in school. I went up with him. A great event to him - and to me. What long, long thoughts it set going! My first day at school was more than 40 years ago. I only remember going along the road with Olly Ann and asking her as we came to each house who lived there. I remember also I was afraid of any person I saw coming along the road. How well I remember a suit of clothes Mother made for me to wear to school in those early miocene days. It was made of striped bluish-purplish cotton cloth, and had little ears or epaulets on the shoulders that flapped when I ran

Julian said he would not mind going to school, if he was not so dumb about his book. He knows so much about other things that he seems to think it a disgrace that he should know so little about his book. If he lives to look back to this day 40 years from now, how strange and far off and incredible it will seem to him!

Oct 13. It is dangerous work to make a definition, or to prescribe bounds to the meaning of a word. Dr. Bushnell defined the supernatural as anything whatever it be, "that is either not in the chain of natural cause and effect, or which acts on the chain or cause and effect in nature from without the chain."

The Duke of Argyle points out that according to this view, a steam-engine is a supernatural work, because it is made by "acting on the chain of cause and effect in Nature from without the chain."

20 One of Julian's mates in school is named Ox Lynn; at least so he calls it.

- The brightest, lightest writer of whom I have any knowledge - Voltaire.

22. A still, overcast, motionless day after the heavy rain of yesterday. The brilliant foliage on the maples, or covering the ground beneath them, almost takes the place of sunshine.

They indeed shed a sort of mild radiance or glory, that tempers the heavy shadow of the day in their presence.

- Mrs. B. advises me to give up writing and do something else for a living. She advises me in the same spirit that the wife of a cobbler, or carpenter might advise her husband to give up his trade and try some other!

Nov 1st First hard frost last night; hurt grapes.

- How prone we are to look upon the sun as an appurtenance of the earth. How it seems to attend the earth and to swing around it to light and warm

- A baby or a young child has not, when danger threatens, the instinct of the young of animals or birds, namely, to remain perfectly motionless till the mother makes a move, and then to follow her. When the cow hides her calf, you may almost run over the calf and it will not move till its mother appears. The other day in the woods I came upon a brood of half grown partridges. As I stood looking [~~crossed out: a~~] intently upon a certain point, my eye gradually made out the form of a partridge squat upon the ground not 12 feet

away. The old bird did not even wink, so motionless was she. A step forward on my part and she was off in a twinkling, and instantly, all about my feet, her young burst up. They were within reach of me, but not one stirred till the mother gave the signal.

it on all sides. How immense seems the earth, how small comparatively the sun! See it setting behind the hills. The sunset and the sunrise are such great facts to us! Xenophanes, according to Plutarch, thought the earth had many suns and many moons. An eclipse of the sun, he said

Nov 2nd Heavy rain from the north; all the ground running over; four or five very heavy rains since August.

- "I hold that city or state happy" says Plutarch p. 20, vol 11, "and most likely to remain democratic, in which those that are not personally injured are yet as forward to question and correct wrongdoers, as that person who is more immediately wronged." This is just where we fall short in America. Indeed, we do not even grumble when we are injured ourselves.

8 Another heavy rain; everything afloat again. I do not remember such frequent heavy rains during any fall since I have lived here. Thunder too, which means a warm fall.

Last night Julian asked me, "Papa, which is the best business, to be a finder out about the earth and stars, or to be an artist?" I told him how much the artist Herkimer was said to have made during the few months he spent in this country (\$25,000) which seemed to impress him much.

Nov 13. One of those still, shining, opaline November mornings; warm as May; the air full of sounds - the distance all dim with white haze. Mrs. B. cleaning house. Her idea of a fine day is that it is a good wash or a good cleaning house day. Not one walk or ride has she had this fall. Reading now [ages?] Gibbon, Argyles Reign of Law, Ruskin, the Bible and writing on religion.

- How many writers are merely local and temporary, a pleasure and a convenience for the hour. They are like the branch roads that run only local trains, while the great authors are like trunk lines which connect for distant points. Their books may not accommodate every man; they are for the through travelers; every age has use for them. Aristotle and Plato - what world-authors are these. I am reading Gibbon to-day - here too is a trunk line: "The splendid bridge that connects the old world with the new" said Carlyle to Emerson.

- Arbitrary authority, in the main, ruled the ancient world. As an illustration, they deliberately built cities and filled them with people. Most of the ancient cities were built off hand in this way. Modern

cities are all growths; they are, as it were built by nature. St Petersburg was perhaps the last of the arbitrarily built cities, no, Washington was the last.

- Strange to say, we see letters before we do words we see particular facts before we put them together in a generalization.

- I cannot bring myself to apply to God any terms that we apply to man such as will, purpose, design, love, intelligence. They are all inadequate; yet, they don't fit at all. God is not anthropomorphic. It is the presenting as such that makes infidels and atheists. That any conceivable man, or God-man should govern the world as it is governed is what we cannot believe; hence

we reject the notion of God altogether and admit only a vast impersonal, unconscionable power.

- Nov 25. Two days and one night of heavy snow - the first of the season,
- must have fallen near 20 inches, - from the north, apparently a local storm, unheralded by the weather prophets. Six or 8 inches of heavy wet snow on the ground this morning.

Dec 8 A cold snap - down to 4 at the corner, down to 10 or 12 here.

9 Rain, rain.

- The doubts, the misgivings, the despondencies, which our "converted" brethren have, are probably precisely analogous

to the ups and downs which the literary man has - the same thing working on different emotions. [crossed out: Th]
[crossed out: His] The dark, barren days, of the pious souls when hope all but expires, when God withdraws his
countenance when the devil whispers all manner of suggestions in his ears - what are they but the literary man's periods
of sterility when he thinks it is all over with him - when nothing he has done looks good, when it is all bad etc. But
when the mood returns again, and his genius flows once more, how different it all looks, and is.

Dec 13. Sunday

The biggest snowstorms are usually gentlest in their beginning. Every appearance of a big storm now. Yesterday was bright and sharp; walked to P. Now at 11 a.m. a tiny flake or flakelet slowly falls to the earth here and there out of the dark still sky. We shall see if the prophecy is sound. Flock of robins here and cedar birds and blue-birds, Jays very noisy in the trees about.

14. [crossed out: 15] Snow storm turned out to be a heavy rain - another of the periodic down pours of which we have had so many this fall.

- Prayer is practically a belief in miracles - a belief that the world is not governed by immutable law, but that God may be persuaded or stirred up to step out of his way to do what he would not otherwise do

Yet prayer is a good thing for those who can have faith and pray in all sincerity. They shall surely be blessed. All sincere belief tends evermore to fulfill itself. If I believed in ghosts I should doubtless see ghosts. People always have. If I believed in answer to prayer, and could pray, my prayers would be answered - when I asked only for spiritual good. But if I prayed

for victory over my enemy on the eve of battle and believed that God listened to me and favored me, I should fight the better and stand a better chance of winning. Whatever begets enthusiasm and warms the soul up, as sincere prayer often does, is a blessing. We think the dew comes down from heaven, but it rises from the ground; so the answer to prayer rises within the soul itself. The answer is already within you, the heat of prayer calls it to the surface and makes you conscious of it.

1885

Dec 18 - Read today in the Academy of the death of Mrs. Gilchrist. Many a sad thought has it caused me. Just now I can see or think of no one in England but her; she is the principal fact over there, and she is gone. The only woman I ever met to whose mind and character I instinctively bowed. She was a rare person, a person of rare intelligence. I met her first in 1876 in Phila and saw her last in London in her home in July 1882.

Dec 20. Sharp, bright windy morning, a little snow on the ground, no ice on the river. 5 years ago today Mother died. Had Father lived, he would have been 83 years old to-day.

23rd It is no doubt inevitable that Whitmans poems launched as they are [~~crossed out: amid~~] in the midst of modern literature, should be adjudged and tried by the standards of such literature, but how different, how vastly different, they are from it! How the Sacred Books of a race or a people rise above the familiar songs and poems of that people. Whitmans poems are much nearer akin to the Sacred Books than any other modern poems. It will take ages to assign them their true rank.

- Bees out of the hive to-day.

I suppose there are times when every [crossed out: to] cultivated person turns to literature for consolation, for strength, for spiritual refreshment the same as our fathers turned to the Bible. What poets does he read then? not the more literary poets, the third and fourth rate singers, but the real bards. I can read Wordsworth, Emerson, Whitman, but not Byron or Shakespeare. I can read Tennyson and Arnold, though not when in my most serious moods. I cannot say that the poets help me as certain others do. Swinburne and Rosetti I cannot read in any mood.

Dec 29. A mild, dry, gray day, with rifts here and there in the low fleecy clouds showing the blue. When the sun shines through upon patches of woodland here and there the effect on the treetops is a peculiar warm ash color. Myron and his wife left this morning; Came on the eve of the 24th a pleasant visit from them. Yesterday walked to the woods and dug up a root of the showy ladies slipper, also, aplectrum and [sarracenia?] for Myron. Ground bare and frozen quite dry. River again like the face of the moon under the telescope.

Robins and blue birds still here. In the still morning

air, hear the sound of long weeping and wailing up at the parsonage, the stricken people bemoaning the death of Charlie Capron, who died on Sunday night after an illness of 48 hours only of scarlet fever. A fine manly youth of 15 years. All over the ~~[crossed out: heart]~~ earth, now and in all ages past, the same weeping and bemoaning the dead goes on and has gone on forever. Oh, the hearts that bleed and have bled! Only the eyes of the dead are forever safe from tears; only the hearts that are still are beyond the reach of this agony.

1886

30 Day of great brightness and beauty Ground dry and bare, temperature mild.

Jany 1st Much rain yesterday. To-day bright and mild; bees out of the hive; like a mild March day. Bluebirds here. Health pretty good, the best of any winter for a long time. But few of my peculiar symptoms, except occasional whirling in my head, which I do not like, and an occasional jump or flutter of my heart. Sleep has been poor during the late fall, but is better now.

2nd Bright and mild; flies dancing in the air; J and I go a hunting red squirrels.

5th Powerful rain last night, hell let loose, roads washed, and ground overflowing. Mild and clearing this morning; the thermometer at 50; all signs of an open winter; angle-worms crawling about as in spring; a little snowbird bathing in a clear puddle as in summer; clouds warm and indolent as July.

9 Mercury down to 9 with fierce wind and snow from the north. Many thoughts of father today, the second anniversary of his death.

Jan 12. Mercury down to 7 or 8 below zero this morning; the ice on the river like glass and whooping all night [crossed out: with] in glee at the cold; its savage exultant whoops and snorts went up first from one side then another. A glorious skate yesterday, the best I ever had on the river.

A high-hole calling this morning, - bluebirds yesterday and today. A day absolutely clear and absolutely still; thermometer only 3 or 4 above zero at noon.

13 Day like the above but a few degrees warmer.

14 Three remarkable days; perfectly clear and perfectly still, with the mercury hovering about zero; the purest of winter products like brilliant frost diamonds. Apparently very uniform all over the country, little inequality of pressure or temperature, so that there is no motion of the air. The great aerial ocean has found its level and is perfectly calm - the serene content of winter. Yet out of the sunshine comes peal upon peal of soft mimic thunder; sometimes a regular crash
a

as if all the batteries were discharged at once [~~crossed out: one~~]; it is the thunder of the ice on the river. [~~crossed out: If that icy expanse was a thin sheet of this metal~~] As noon approaches and the power of the sun begins to be felt the air is filled with a continuous mellow roar. The whoops or peals are as mellow as if made by a huge bee shooting past. The sound is like thunder in that it is in such swift motion; you cannot locate it any more than you can the hum of summer overhead; it is everywhere and

yet no where; there is a phantom character about it; the valley down there seems haunted with weird whooping voices. To the eye all is still and rigid and corpse like, but to the ear all is in swift motion. This ice cloud does not open and let the bolt leap forth, but walk upon the ice and you see its shining track through it, in every direction the ice is shot through with crystal lines where the force passed. Sometimes I fancy the sound is like the strokes of a gigantic skater, one who covers a mile at a stride and makes the

icy floor ring beneath him. His long tapering stroke rings out in your front, and then before you can think is heard
[crossed out: from] half a mile away. With what speed he goes, but that flash was not from his skate; it was the gleam of
a huge frost crystal.

Not merely by day, but all night long, the ice thunders. It is then contracting under the cold, naked skies, as by day it is
expanding, and a variation of the temperature either up or down, sets it going. A fall of snow and all is still, the icy
thunder is quenched.