

April 13 A day of great brightness and beauty, but sharp; froze hard last night. While waiting for the little boat plucked my first hepatica, a small handful of them down by the river. Dear, welcome flower. Very happy these days improving my new lot. Blessed is the man who has a lot to improve, or who has some real occupation.

How trivial and flitting the new generation seems to one -- of no account. The people whom we find upon the stage when we come into the world -- the old established people, they seem important, and like a part

of the natural system of things. When they pass away what a void it leaves. Those who take their places, the new set, how inconsequential they seem . But they are for the most part the same class of[~~crossed out: people~~] persons, and will seem permanent and important to others as the old people did to us. So it goes.

-- The Andover Review says that "in Christ God reconciled the world unto himself" How curious and absurd this jargon of the theologians does sound to an outsider. And jargon it is. Theology and the theological view of the universe is precisely the

the antipode of the natural or scientific view. There is no sense or reason in it. It comes down to us from the dark ages. It ruled the minds of men before science or the rationalistic view of things was born. Think of what trouble poor God took to reconcile [crossed out: him] the world to himself; what a curious and intricate scheme he concocted -- worthy a theologian He got himself born of a virgin, then grew to manhood, then became an itinerant preacher, then got himself crucified by the Romans and buried, then came to life again etc. etc. -- all to reconcile the world to himself, that is to appease his own anger

20 April continues cool with very beautiful days now and then; no warmth yet. Last night I found the last remnant of snow bank on my grounds, no bigger than my hand. Very busy and happy on my new lot. Work hard all day, and sleep pretty well at night. The fox sparrows sing all about and cheer me. And the purple finch -- how finely he sings these days.

The death of Matthew Arnold which came without warning the other day, has been constantly in my thoughts since. does it give a sad tinge to this April, or does April beautify and render more significant

his death? It does really seem to put a seal upon him as I think of him as I go about my work and hear the happy birds and see the grass springing. April can make even death beautiful.

I look upon Arnold as the greatest critic of English literature, such steadiness, directness, sureness of aim, and elevation, we have not before seen. He had the best qualities of the French and he had something the French have not. He was not at all a miscellaneous man; he stood for certain definite things; he was like a through train always on time and only fetching up at important points. His poetry is wonderfully good, only for some reason it does not melt into

one and stick to his mind, as it ought to. As with all first-class men, his death leaves a vacancy that no one else can fill.

April 27 The perfection of April days. Yesterday and today were and are ideal days. And a perfect day in April surpasses all others. Its sweetness, freshness, uncloyingness, and a sort of spirituality can be had at no other time. Still, brooding days, when every sound strikes musically upon the ear. The high-hole now his long loud call comes up from the fields on all sides. At night the full moon rises red and warm and the toad begins his long drawn and to me musical tr-r-r-r-r-r-r-r

Very busy these days setting out currants. This morning the river is like a great mirror. This labor in the field gives me a keener relish for Nature. I get such glances from her, stolen glances. One may have too much leisure. But the laboring man does not get sated with Nature. He has not time. To him she is like a mistress who never fully indulges him.

April 29. Sunday. Very hot, 85 degrees in the shade; hot and dry [~~crossed out: all the~~] since Wednesday. Julian and I get our first arbutus to-day. Several of the little warblers here. Oriole came yesterday, but silent.

May 1st Overcast -- light rain, cool. Go to P. to meet Mulford. He does not come.

6th A cool week with frost one or two nights; getting dry; no rain to speak of for several weeks. Very busy at the new lot. The summer birds are arriving fast. Wood thrush yesterday. A walk through the woods with Mr Buck and Mr Mason. Violets in bloom. The adders tongue unusually late this season. Often find it before arbutus. Maples late. These things vary much different seasons. Shad trees in bloom.

22d A cool May so far, and very dry up to the 12th; then a fine rain. Apple trees in bloom for a week past, just beginning to drop their petals. The world very beautiful now, like fairy land. Still at work in the fields, and quite well and happy. One cannot keep his love for the land, the soil, without work. Work brings him close to it; he embraces it and loves it and strikes his roots into it.

24 Still cool with light rain. The apple bloom is beginning to strew the ground. My spring work about done; begin to feel as if I could lay off a little.

On the whole it has been better for me than a trip to Europe. Every drop of sweat I let fall into these furrows came back to me in many ways. My sleep seems restored and my interest in things is much keener.

-- One reason why this country is uninteresting to the cultivated foreigner, is that it is mainly the work or result of the modern industrial democratic spirit, while Europe [~~is the~~] was mainly fashioned [~~by the~~] during the age of poetry and romance, the age of chivalry, of lords and ladies, before the "average man" with his industries and rail roads and prose had come to the front.

All the vest[crossed out: a]iges of that previous age are profoundly interesting to us, because we see [crossed out: it] them afar off; [crossed out: it] the age belongs to literature and poetry and art and romance. Man had not then lost the perception of and the desire for beauty. In this country the mass of the people are [crossed out: ???] entire strangers [crossed out: of] to the sentiment of beauty; they deform whatever they touch. Will it always be so?
-- I believe mind to be just as insep[crossed out:e]arable from matter as Electricity is; it is not matter but a property or quality of matter. Electricity is not a thing; it is probably a mode of motion, of molecular motion.

May 30 Go home to-day on morning train. Walk up from station with a burden of shad. Reach home at 11 1/2. Hiram and his men are seated on the stone steps waiting dinner. The old place looks green and fresh, apple trees just blooming. In afternoon walk over to Curtis's place to see Abigail. No one at home. Sit a long time on the door steps wrapped in thoughts of the past, and in gazing upon the familiar landscape about me. It is all sweet and good and I enjoy being alone at such a time and place. Walk up through the woods, the dog following me. He trees a woodchuck up a small smooth sapling.

the chuck keeps his hold as long as he can, but presently his feet begin to slip; he can keep up the pressure no longer, and down he comes into the dogs jaws.

-- 6:45 p.m Out on the hill in the woods on my way again over to see sister Abigail, the fresh green familiar scene about me, the hermit thrush singing in the mountain above me, the bobolink in the meadows, the air still and delicious; sky nearly overcast, robins warbling here and there, cattle lowing, orchards in bloom, fresh plowed land all about the distant landscape. Oh, that hermits flute, how it pleases me!

31. Warm and still. I walk up the road early in the morning to hear the bobolinks in the meadows, how they do sing, and very nearly song of my boyhood, only some slight variations. But the song up there towards the sky above the hill meadows is new; it is the song of the shore lark; presently my eye discerns the happy singer 2 or 3 hundred feet in the air flying round and round; when he utters his crude halting lisping song he flies in a peculiar manner, tail spread and very conspicuous, and wings slowly flapping. The song is only a faint copy of the sky larks. The bird sings 5 minutes after I [crossed out: see] discover him, then nears the

Earth singing at intervals till within a hundred feet of the ground when he plunges straight down in true sky lark fashion. Then I go up on the top of the big side hill where the boys are plowing, dragging and sowing oats. Here I sit a long time and immensely enjoy the scene. Charley Grant is there and with his blind eyes sees the landscape in memory thirty years back. I tell him what is in this direction and what in that, and he seems to see it all again. Hiram sows the oats, and while waiting for the plow, sits in deep meditation on the wall. Then I go up to the Old Clump and spend [crossed out: a couple of] an hour on the top; three hermits are

in song as I go up. The spring beauty in bloom on the summit. In the afternoon I go attended by a throng of memories, over to the stream below the school house and fish a little, and dream a good deal; take three fine trout, which are as well as three hundred, I walk over [crossed out: ???] about the site of the old school house and in the field where we used to play ball 40 years ago, and think of many things. I am tempted to go up to the spring where we used to get water, but I do not go. The spring is doubtless there, but where are the childish faces it used to mirror? Dead, many of them and scattered far and wide, the others.

I return by Angie's house and sit ~~[crossed out: and]~~ an hour with her and John, then home again.

June 1st A bright lovely day rather cool. At 9 a.m. I leave home and go down through Chase's fields and woods to the church yard. I sit a long time at the graves of my dead. It seemed for a day or two afterward that I had seen father and mother, so vividly did their images rise up before me. Two men at the stable across the way finally disturb ~~[crossed out: me]~~ and annoy me much. One was telling the other about his bakly horse, his voice was harsh as a grater and he kept

the air blue with oaths. I moved away and after a while came back again. Just such June days thousands of them they had seen, but not here they lie. I noted that [crossed out: Aunt] Aunt Olly died on the 2d of June 1839. The new made grave of H. K. Jr beside father's makes me remember that I had half hoped, half feared that my own place would be there.

At 11 am I walk up to the village and pass the rest of the day with Smith and Emma. S. and I walk up the copper mine in the late afternoon. Then we try for trout, but get none. I stay all night and take early train

for Homer Lynch's in the morning. Find Jane well; Homer in the lot dragging, not so well as when I last saw him; he is fast breaking, killed by overwork, or reckless work and exposure. In the afternoon we drive to Edens, Ursula with us. Edens folks well and at supper when we arrive. Margaret looks bad; she too is breaking.

3 Sunday. Cool and bright. Chant comes over with Hiram's team and I go back with him, a fine drive over the mountains. Stay at Hiram's all night.

4 Leave home at 7. Hiram and I. H. walks down with me to the village, where I take the train for Olive.

As I enter Father North's door I see him sitting in a chair looking old and feeble. It has been over a year and a half since I have seen him. He looks up and recognizes me, and is very glad to see me. He can hardly walk. I help him up and into the other room. We sit here several hours together. He talks of the past and of the time he used to cradle and reap, and gets quite animated over it. Also of wrestling; back hold was his favorite hold. As I help him walk across the floor, he says, jocosely, that he is done dancing.

June 20 Go down to West Point and with Denton and others make an excursion to tamarack swamps. A hot day. The great purple fringed orchids in bloom in the swamps, very fine. Am taken with a bad head ache; go home with E. P. Roe, who keeps me over night and treats me very kindly.

24 Very hot and dry. June has been a pretty dry month. Showers all around us to-day but only a sprinkle here.

28 An old fashioned rain from the N.E. and N. began in the morning slowly and has rained moderately till this midafternoon. Drew in the last of the hay yesterday.

A good year for clover. Never saw more clover. A great deal

of white clover, and being pretty dry, the bees have made clover honey.

30 A bright cool morning, June rounded and full. Curr[~~crossed out:e~~]ants nearly ready. This mornign the bees are busy in the chestnut trees gathering pollen. The trees by the road near Gordons, hum like a hive.

A cuckoo calling a long time this morning in the old apple tree by the house; had a good view of him, the black billed species. In calling his manner and motions are much like a dove or pigeon in cooing. I have often noticed a

certain resemblance to the pigeon in his eye and head, and now the resemblance is confirmed by his way of calling or cooing. He inflates his throat quite as much as the dove does and makes a visible effort to produce the notes. His tail moves at every note. The remote ancestor of the cuckoo is nocturnal in his habits, which the pigeon is not.

July 7 Go with Mr Van Cleef up to Balsam Lake and spend three days; a very agreeable time. Cool and delightful. Eat and sleep at a great rate; take about 50 trout from the lake in all, nearly as many casts for each trout as it takes bullets to kill a man in war. On Sunday the 8th, go to top of Balsam mountain and get a glimpse of my native hills from the observatory there. Heard the hermit thrush; about the lake heard the veery, olive-backed and wood thrushes, the latter most common. On Sunday while fishing on the lake saw some small object

swimming across the glassy surface. As I came near I saw it was a mouse, the meadow mouse. He dipped beneath the water as I came near, I saw it was a mouse, the meadow-mouse. He dipped beneath the water as I came near, but came to the surface again in a twinkling. His legs went so swift I could hardly see them. I put out my oar and he crawled up it. Then from the oar he came to my hand and cuddled up in it as if he was cold fixing his feet and cleaning himself and eyeing me keenly. After holding him awhile I put down in the boat where he remained nearly an hour, when he got disconcerted and boldly plunged over board and set out for shore again. The meadow mouse is quite at home in the water, only he cannot stay long beneath the surface.

12 Eventless days, mostly occupied in pulling weeds, hoeing and lounging about; full of sad thoughts about Walt Whitman, expect each day to hear of his death, and trying to taste the bitter cup in advance so as to be used to it when it really comes. How life will seem to me with Whitman gone I cannot imagine. He is my larger, greater earlier self. No man alive seems quite so near to me in many ways.

14 A letter from Walt; he is better and my spirits revive. Weather very dry; no rain to speak of since early May.

19 A fine pouring rain [crossed out: the] to-day, began at 4 in the morning; how delicious it was to hear it come down. Rained till nearly noon; then a smart shower at 6 p.m. Wet the ground pretty well.
July so far very cool, especially the nights

24 Digging our potatoes for market, price high (3.75 dollars) but yield poor, owing to dry weather. May get back the expense and a little more, in which case the fun of the thing will not have cost me anything. All my hoeing, watering, killing of bugs, on Sunday and nights, will not cost

me a cent

Nights still very cool, getting very dry again.

In the potato patch a big spider with a young toad, body of toad about one inch long, spider has fangs planted in the back of the toads neck, toad soon succumbs, spider easily drags him along; when the toad is dead he leaves him and retreats into the shade under a weed. Toad soon turns dark color. Did the spider suck his blood? He did not come back and claim his prey.

When Johnny was cultivating the grapes, one of the native mice starts up with her young clinging to her teats and scampers away.

25 Whitman still improving, so says a card from Phila. A great load is lifted from my spirits.

-- Think of the myriads of peoples that fill the past, the great ocean. There in that sea of faces I see father and mother; how precious they look to me. Oh if they could only draw near and speak!

-- The little mouse I saw swimming in Balsam Lake did not get as wet as a domestic animal would have [crossed out: done]. It was quite dry save on its legs and belly. Its fur shed water like a duck's feathers.

26 the July days go by and bring me little pleasure or interest. I pull weeds by spurts, read a little, and look after the farm work. I crave and need above all some one to talk to, some comrade, and quite a different home life from what I have, not the least companionship seems possible between me and wife, and Julian is still too young to meet the requirement.

Aug 1st A warm day after the rain of last night, a stingy rain, considering our needs. A great downpour in P. and in R. but only about 1/2 inch here. All summer the showers have [~~crossed out: went~~] gone round us, as they

do nearly every summer. We get the skirts of the showers that go south and north, but seldom does a shower strike us fairly. Digging potatoes to-day, and pulling weeds, and long sitting i the summer house with book or magazine. But little relish for reading and none for literary work.

2d A cool, still smoky day, a real August day with a hint of fall.

3 I miss the indigo bird this summer; have hardly heard one; usually [~~crossed out: their~~] his not is very noticeable the long August days. I hope no ill has befallen him.

4 A smart thunder shower after a very hot forenoon. It came black and portentous out of the north west, a very carnival of thunder and lightning. Have not heard such rapid explosives for many a day. Certainly no before this season. An inch of water fell in a brief time.

-- How completely the world was once dominated by theological ideas, but how surely these ideas and ideals are passing away, and the world is coming under the sway of an entirely different class of ideas -- the ideas begotten by physical science and naturalism.

The Evangelical churches [crossed out: ???] are slowly but surely giving up their theology, outgrowing it, getting ashamed of it. It is [crossed out: ???] moribund. [crossed out: and] They are trimming their sails to catch the new forces. Only the old mother Church, the Catholic, still abates not her superstitions. She has faced and weathered many a storm and she thinks she can weather this one, but she cannot. This is the flood, the deluge, and she must either float or be buried beneath the waves, or to vary the figure, it is not merely a change in the weather; it is a change like the going off the ice age

Aug 5. While walking amid my new vineyard and lamenting the damage done by the rain, my attention was attracted by a ~~bi~~ strange bird note high in the air. Presently I discovered the bird circling around as if undecided which way to go. It seemed lost. After a moment I know it to be an English sky lark. Its size, flight, and strong, harsh call note, were those of the lark. It finally went northward. We have not bird that looks just as that did as it flew swiftly across the sky.

6 Wet and drizzly; no work today. Read Stedman a little, but soon tire. There is something fine and choice about his prose, and yet it does not ventilate the mind like that of the great writers. On the contrary the air is rather close and the view narrow. But such a poem as his on John Brown really makes a breeze in the mind.

12 Rain, rain, and cool.

15 Dr Burroughs and family came to-day. Immensely tickled to see him, a man to love and follow.

16 A trip to the falls in the woods. Spend a couple of hours with the Doctor Julian and Johnny. Weather very hot and muggy.

17 Lawyer Proctor of Brooklyn calls and spends the day. Has some new things to tell me. He says some birds Earth them selves and some wash, and a few do both. The English sparrow does both, says that the mass of jelly like spawn in the pools in spring is by the liz[crossed out:z]ard; that it swells up after being deposited. Says the young of the box turtle keep under the ground till they are a few years old; are dirt color. A young farmer in N.J. told him this, which he

has found correct. That is why we never see any small ones of this species. He has switched a garden snake when a boy and seen the young come out of her mouth, and then run in again. He saw a cross between a monkey and a cat, and a cat and a rabbit. He is very prolix, but has real knowledge. He is a bachelor and says he has never known woman.

19 A delicious August day. We go to church in morning, and take a row on the river in the afternoon, a sweet day.

20 The good doctor and family leave to-day. Of all my relatives he it is whom I love most.

23d A clear, bright, vig[~~crossed out:e~~]orous morning with a decided feeling of fall; must have come near a frost last night back in the hills. Sleep nearly perfect these days, and general healthy very good.

From 24th to 27th at Onteora Park in the Catskills, a pleasant restful time.

Sept 1st Alone in this house once more. Mrs. B. and Julian at Hobard since Thursday. A heavy rain last night and this morning. Warm, with breaking sky now.

-- There seems to be some spirit or presence in the soil to which

vegetation acts as a sort of draft draught, just as the chimney is draught to the air in the room. This spirit or force finds an outlet and expression in vegetation. Hence when a tree or plant or vine gets established, how difficult it is to make anything grow beneath it. The current of growth seem to be all going out through the established vine. It is not merely a question of moisture and fertility, but the soil is preoccupied; its attention is all diverted into the old channel. Hence seeds lay dormant in the ground for years, with plenty of moisture and fertility about them, and only the vital force of the soil wanting. This finds an outlet through the other growths, check these and

the seeds germinate and spring up at once, like soldiers, to take the place of their slain comrades.

7 Very cold; a frost in some places back of the hill last night. Busy these days shipping grapes.

8 A heavy rain and warm. Go to P. to-day.

-- The new book or essay must either add to our knowledge, or else it must tell us what we already know in such a way as to make us enjoy it afresh. If it is neither new in matter, nor fresh in treatment we do not want it. Can my books stand this test? I believe they can.

19. Start for Camden to-day. Spend a few hours in N.Y. and then to Camden about 4 p.m. Walt is lying on his bed when I enter his room. He looks and speaks as usual. I stand by his bed side a few moments, his hand in mine, and then help him up and to his chair, where he sits amid a chaos of books letters and papers, as usual. He talks and looks almost the same as usual. Is alert and curious when I speak. I note his hearing is poorer than when we met a year ago. I stay an hour with him, and then, for fear of tiring him, go over to Phila. to see Gilchrist. Come back at night and find Walt bright and ready to talk as ever. But we soon tire him, and so leave.

20. This was one of Walt's poor days and I do not see him, tho' I call twice. Go to the grave of Franklin, and gaze at it long through the iron fence from the side walk. How much it calls up and suggests. Visit the old State House and Independence Hall also for the first time.

In the evening see Walt for a moment to say good bye. He is partly undressed and ready for bed. He presses my hand long and tenderly, we kiss and part, probably for the last time. I think he has in his own mind given up the fight, and awaits the end.

21 To Brille on the Jersey coast three days with the Johnsons. Beautiful country, like England, and the sea roaring away there in the distance. Weather cool and fair.

24 Back home to-day and find that Mrs. B. and Julian came back the day I left.

Oct 6. Weather cool and wet; an unusually wet fall and cold, more rain I think, than even last fall. Health good these days, and my interest in the place, in grapes, and my vineyards etc. keener than ever.

10 The first glorious October day, full of light and beauty. Spent it on the housetop mending my chimney. How my eye did rove from the work in hand.

14 Still cold and wet; rain, rain, and yet no severe frosts. Too much cloud for frosts, but when shall we have our beautiful autumn days?

15 A glorious day, too bright.

16 Rain, rain.

-- After all would one not rather be a poet who could not be narrowed into a Cause, so large and sure and easy that no one could dispute him, tho' they might be indifferent to him. To excel on the common ground and with the

accepted means and tools -- that is the best -- "The Whitman Cause" sounds provincial.

18. Fine day, full of color.

19. Rain, rain, rain.

20. Fine morning, clearing after the rain and quite warm

21. Clear and windy, and cold.

22. Mild, partly over cast.

23. Cloud and mist and light rain.

24. Rain in the morning, clearing at noon.

25 A lovely day, still warm, and brilliant, too fine to last. moving stone wall, and plowing etc.

26 Fair day of cloud and sunshine.

27 Rain and mist and fog.

28 Fog and mist and little rain, the ground covered with just fallen leaves. Signs of a cold wave.

The gusts of wind bring down the leaves in great flocks. They look like the alighting of immense flocks of little and big golden birds. Maples will soon be stripped, some of them are so already.

29 Clearing weather

30 Bright and fair.

31 Fine day. go to P. in quest of a house for wife.

Nov. 1 A lovely day at last; a perfect Indian Summer day. Thermometer above 60 for the first time in many weeks.

2 Still fine. Myron Benton comes at 4 1/2 P.M. Suddenly the world and life looks different to me, so glad am I to see him. For a moment the atmosphere of long gone days is over things again and the old joy in life comes back.

3d Cloud and light rain, clearing cool and delightful in afternoon. We go to P.

4 A perfect Nov. day, bright, cool still, no cloud, no wind, charming.

5 Fine day.

6 Warm, cloudy, threatening rain in fore noon, clearing in afternoon. Election day. Vote again for Cleveland; long since sick of high tariff.

7 Fine day. Election news bad.

8 Cloudy; slow rain in afternoon.

9 Warm, with slow rain in forenoon.

10 Mist, fog and rain.

I notice that the wild carrots blooming this fall are quite pink; shows how a cool mild climate gives more color to the flowers as in England

12. Go home to-day to see about Hiram's affair; an overcast Nov. day; drink again at the old fountain of youth; look again upon the dear familiar scenes. Walk over to Curtis's old house and down to J. S. Carroll's in afternoon.

13 Down to Olive this morning to see father North, doubtless for the last time. The old man on his back in bed; tells me he is almost gone. But he gets up in afternoon and sits in his chair, jokes a little and looks at times quite like himself, and his mind seems unchanged, except a weaker memory. Slowly his sun is setting, and in a few months at most must vanish in darkness. A bright lovely day.

the soft grindstone cuts the steel faster than the hard. It gives itself away more liberally.

Nov 25 Sunday. The past week cold, clear and hard. Tuesday night the mercury fell to 18 degrees.

Wednesday was clear and cold, Thursday the same, Thursday night another cold wave which sent the mercury down to 10 and froze over all the ponds, and made skating. Friday clear and cold and dry. Saturday, still, overcast. To-day a fierce wind from the north, almost a gale with snow which set in about noon. The flakes drive horizontally through

the air. If this is but the introduction to winter, what prospect before us. If these days are the foothills, what are the mountains to be? How chilling the river looks through the veil of snow, lashed and foaming down there.

The past week and part of the week before, at work in the old house, George R. and I. Have it now nearly ready for the masons.

Dec. 2d Bright and lovely. I sit a long time on the old elm tree out by the spring and gaze upon my new land and plan and speculate about the future of my vineyard. In afternoon Julian and I go over to Sterlings and walk with Henry over

his land, advising him about planting vineyards etc. Coming back old Mr Sterling walks ith us and shows us the old road through the woods. the old Scotchman, I felt tender toward him, Scott and Burns and Carllyle walked beside me in him.

9 Much dark damp cloudy weather the past week, but no severe cold, and no snow. Plastered the old house.

10 A melting snow all day; an inch or two remaining on the ground.

14 Ground bare and hardly frozen, mercury down to 16 degrees this morning. A cold wave upon us.

15 Bright, clear, sharp, exhilarating move some trees.

-- The best prose, the best criticism of whatever sort, is always creative like the best poetry. A page may be eloquent and brilliant and not be creative, I think Lowells prose is seldom creative. Matthew Arnold's is much more generally so. Arnold often quickens and satisfies one's deepest sense. Goethe's criticism was often creative, so was St Beuves. Mr. Stedmans? I doubt it. Emersons prose at its best is creative. This is the test or proof that it is good prose. It feeds and stimulates the spirit. Creative prose gives me a sense of life and reality like that of nature. Ones mind is brought in contact with something [crossed out: real and wo] palpable and warm. Mr Birrell comes near

the creative touch at times, but I am not certain that he really has it. Indeed, I am not certain that any British critic, now that Arnold is gone, has it. I note it at times in Amiel's journal. The writer of creative prose always in producing it, experiences a kind of intellectual orgasm, as does the reader, if he be capable of it, in reading it. Vital prose is but another name for creative force.

-- How many of the notions of mankinds are like the common one that the sun puts out the fire. The sun does put out the fire to the eye, but not to the pot above it. Its [crossed out: own] greater light eclipses the lesser light of the fire,

but in no way does it check it.

17 Heavy rain of 36 hours or more. Ground chock full of water and frost all out. One of my tile drains unable to carry off the water.

Last night Julian finished his school composition, and sat in his chair by the stove and read it to me. It is about "Papas Dogs", he has been at work on it many days. It is quite a production.

19 Bright sharp days, floating ice in the river; no snow to be seen.

21. Bright and pleasant. Go up to the school in afternoon to hear the speaking, compositions, etc. Julian is very anxious I should be on hand to hear him. He is quite embarassed when his turn

comes, but he does well, decidedly the best of all of them. He speaks two pieces and reads his essay. His essay made them laugh. It was the second one he has written. His other described his tramp from Highland home two winters ago. It also made them laugh, he said. I am glad to see his mind take this turn. He does not look far off for a theme, like the other boys, but writes about something near at hand, that he actually knows about. His essay was in my own vein, and vastly more promising than anything I ever did at that age. It was areal piece of writing about my dogs. How curious it was to me to see him stand up there and read an original essay!

22. Clear and cold, mercury below 10 degrees. Ice on the river stationary this morning (11 am). The bare naked earth aches with cold.

23 Bright and milder.

24 Lovely day without a cloud, looks like Indian Summer. Drive to P; roads dry and dusty. Thermometer about 40 degrees.

25 The mildest, finest Xmas I have seen in many, many years, soft and mild as October. Bees out of the hives. Thermometer 50 degrees on north side of the house. Feel well and enjoy standing about in the genial warmth and looking out into the soft hazy day, and upon the brown earth.

26 Still warm and pleasant. Bluebirds call in the air.

27 A warm rain out of the south west threatens to be severe. Reading "Tom Brown" to Julian these nights, and get very much excited over it myself. J. seems to think much about Martin, the "madman" as the boys called him.

Dec 30. Day of great calm and beauty. A perfect winter Indian summer day. Here and there a floating mass of ice in the river like a stray cloud in a summer sky.

31. A mild cloudy day, a sprinkle of rain in morning. Drive to P. plenty of mud.

1889

January 1st A bright warm lovely day, [~~crossed out: the~~] a copy of Xmas, no frost in the ground, no wind. Thermometer about 40 degrees.

2d Last night came Willie. Glad to see him, Eden's only child, about 23 years of age.

To-day cloudy and mild, sun almost got through several times.

3d The mild gentle weather continues. Hardly a cloud to-day. Thermometer about [~~crossed out: 50~~] 44 degrees. At no time during the fall did we have ten days of as fine weather as the past ten have been. This weather was due us long ago but got delayed somewhere. Outlook for ice on the river very poor.

1889

January 4 Still clear and mild. A strange winter calm. Is nature holding her breath, which will come by and by with de-doubled force?

5. Mild, overcast, with rain from the north at night.

6 Cooler, cloudy, with some rain. An eagle sat this morning a long time on the top of a tree down by the river. He looked as big as a turkey

-- I notice that in the shallower water along shore the time turns much quicker than out in the deeper channel.

9 The 5th anniversary of father's death; Sat in my study and wrote. Warm rain from 11 to 4.

10 Heavy rain again yesterday. Thermometer 50. Down to 40 to-day with high wind No frost in the ground, no ice on the river; river as free from ice as in May. The rye grows perceptibly.

Mrs. B. and Julian start for Poughkeepsie to-day to board, the rest of the winter. It is my plan that we keep house here no more. I am to stay here a week or so and try again to write something.

15 A day of sun and calm, a kind of heroic Indian summer, mercury down to 17 degrees this morning. No snow, not a speck of ice on the river. The little steamer Black resumes her trips to-day

I [~~crossed out: ???~~] sit in my study by the open fire and look over some essays with a view to printing a new vol. "Indoor Studies". In afternoon I burn brush and help about hauling stone. A great calm over all Nature; not a cloud in the sky. Much worried about my dog, "I-know" who disappeared very mysteriously Monday morning during my absence in P.

16 Another lovely mild, Indian summer day. Thermometer 40 degrees. "I-know" turns up at Dr Gills where there are two sluts in heat. I thought surely he would come home with me, but no, he is crazy, like a man desperately in love, there is not spot on earth like that one.

17 A warm rain from the S.W. last night and this morning. Sudden heavy spurts this forenoon. Bees out of the hive. Clear at night with a full moon.

18 Day like a dream; the river a mirror, the sky a benediction. Florida days almost.

Bees lively about the hives.

Few birds this wintter so far, only a lot of gold-finches about, a few snow-birds, chickadees, and nuthatches and now and then a troop of blue birds. No ice in the river for ten days or more.

First considerable snow about the 20th -- 8 inches, which drives me to Po'keepsie. Spend the rest of the month and

all of Feb. in P. writing most of each forenoon; write another essay on Science and Theology, and a paper on Lovers of Nature, and some miscellaneous stuff, mostly of a theological cast. Feel pretty well, but one bad head ache and one attack of winter cholera. Mrs B. in one of [crossed out: hr] her tantrums the last of Feb. Weather a moderate uniform winter temperature, but little snow and no severe cold; thermometer down to 3 below once or twice. River closed up about the 1st of Feb. ice 6 inches thick.

March 1st A bright lovely day, a good sap day; really feels

like Spring. Snow nearly gone. Walk over on the ice to Highland and back. Still life does not look very inviting to me.

3. Warm and spring like, rain in forenoon, only little patches of snow and ice left.

4. News this morning from Scotland that my friend Robert Scoular is dead. Made his acquaintance at Alloway in 1882. He visited me here in summer of 1886. A most hearty enjoyable Scotchman, a boy in enthusiasm and in his delight in life. While in this country everything he saw delighted him. Full of blood and spirits and health. I thought he would live to be 80. Some sudden stoppage of his breath by pressure on the bronchial tubes, probably from fat. What a delightful Sunday we once spent together on the "banks and braes of bonnie Doon", lying on the grass and strolling through the groves, listening to the birds!