

1889

March 5. Go to N.Y. to-day and spend one week in the city; stop with Gilder till Saturday, then go to Johnsons till Monday. Have a pretty good time. Meet Mrs Cleveland, Arlo Bates, Theo Roosevelt, George Kennan and others. Dine with Gilder at the Fellowcraft Club on Thursday night; hear speeches by Gilder Roosevelt, Kennan, Bates, Brigham and others. My name is mentioned with applause, but no speech follows. I am excused before I attend. At Johnsons met Mrs. Custer; a bright, charming woman. Weather windy and chilly

On Sunday walk with J. through Central Park, hear the first

sparrow song

11 Home today. Snow all gone, the river open and spring at hand. Return to P. for the night but I am done with P. for this season

12 Little Black makes her first trip to-day. Alone again in my house, Mrs B. and Julian in P.

14 Robins and blue birds here and very happy, no frost in the ground. A wretched day to me from the discovery that the Canada ashes have killed my raspberries and about 450 of my new grape vines. I am fairly [~~sick~~] made ill by the discovery. Work all day hauling off the ashes. A charming day, if I could only enjoy it.

15 No sleep last night from thinking of my loss. To have lost the value of money, would not have troubled me half so much. But I have lost something more valuable than money; the work of my hands is undone.

17 Saturday. Julian came up last night and makes my heart glad for a few hours. In the evening we discuss our family difficulties. He stoutly takes the side of his Mamma, and with tears in his eyes lectures me on my duty to her. He cannot see the merits of my side of the case at all. He takes entirely her view; it is the irony of fate. Well, it is best so. We return to P. to-gether.

19 Gray, overcast days with wind in the north. Storms coming up the coast. The skunk cabbage in bloom for some days.

21 Several days of chilly north and N.E. wind blowing toward the storm said to be moving up the coast. No sunshine for 3 days. Some snow last night Lonely and disconsolate these days Of all men I need a home, a fireside and congenial people about me. The first phoebe and the first peeper two days ago

22d Day of great beauty, sunshine at last; north wind still. Mrs B and Julian came home yesterday from P. We take up the old problem of housekeeping again, but with a girl in view. The ground is in good order to work.

23. Very lovely and dry for March. Go to P. In afternoon and spend a delightful hour in the woods back of Highland Station while waiting for train

24 Finer and warmer yet -- 62 degrees in shade; a perfect day. The hepaticas budded but tardy in coming. In evening walk over through the field and by the marshy places looking for spring tokens. An

ominous silence in the marshes One expects to hear the piping and clucking frogs on such spring days, but I hear only one faint hesitating note. It seems that neither frogs nor flowers will come in March Half this warmth in April will bring them both. I suppose there is some more potent quality in the sunlight at that time, even if the warmth is no greater. They are secured by time clocks and will not open till the hour strikes. The pussy willows are expanding, and I found hazel just showing its faint red star of a blossom. Heard a shrike in a tree back of Atkins. The mourning dove here.

- 26 A sudden change to cold, froze hard last night, still clear and wind in north. Dry. New girl came yesterday.
- 28 Rain at last from North West, much needed. Ground has been in fine order for work, but we have done but little. Planted peas on the 25th Yesterday I dug nearly all day among my grapes.  
Gloomy and depressed these days.
31. Looks wintry again; Snowing hard to-day. New girl left yesterday; a regular blow up again in the kitchen.

April 1st Welcome to April; ground white with snow; nearly all gone by night.

3d My birth days come and go just like any other days Nature seems to take no note of it! But what long sad thoughts are awakened in my mind. How inevitably my heart goes back to the old spot and to the memory of those whom I shall see no more! A cloudy day with thick air and slight showers from the west. I work part of the day under the hill in the vineyard



Not very cheerful these days for some reason. The light of the world seems surely going out for me. The fox sparrow sings but it hardly wakens the old response. Health pretty good, no unusual symptoms should probably sleep well if Mrs B. and Julian were well and did not cough at night. The liverwort in bloom down by the river. So goes my 52nd birth day.

7. Mostly bright days from the north, pretty chilly. To-day is clear, and in afternoon Julian and I go to the woods; no flowers yet; ants just out languidly

patrolling their mounds. Frog spawn in the pools. We sit a long time on a rock in the woods and enjoyed the genial warmth and the clean open woods, with the creek glancing and murmuring below us.

9 Bright dry cool April days from the north. The storms coming up the coast cause the wind to set in that direction. Pretty sad these days, probably some physical reason; my mind is turned to the past; the present seems thin and cold. Is this age?

-- There are some things we never get used to. I can never get used to my wifes tongue; it irritates me more and more as I grow older.

I am all raw from its constant lashing; and what is more I never expect to heal up. An ignorant, insolent, ill natured woman -- what is there in the universe worse than that?

How the river dances and sparkles this morning.

11 Thirty five years ago this day I began my first school in Tongore, Ulster Co. I walked down the [crossed out: even] afternoon before from Shokan. Near Olive city I met Warren Scudder, a neighbor of ours at home. How good he looked to me, a familiar face in a strange land. I could have hugged him. He had been down below to deliver a yoke of oxen he had sold. I remember the

peeping frogs were calling, and this too was a voice from home; they had not woke up yet when I left home.

Of the first school I remember [crossed out: the] perfectly the faces of many of the scholars; they are as distinct before me as if I had seen them yesterday. Many of them are now dead -- two or three of the boys were slain in battle at Gettysburg. Of my subsequesnt schools I remember but few of the faces.

12 This is one of the delicious April morning when life tastes so sweet; warm, moist (after a slight shower in the night), hazy, the sky full of soft indolent clouds, the river placid and the

birds jubilant. The little bush sparrow chants his delicious song this morning, the kinglet's tiny wren song is in the evergreens, the robins are vociferous. This is the time when the robins have their squabbles; what a racket they make with wings and voice when rivals meet in jealous frays! The meadow lark too, she is here, and her blade like note, keen and piercing comes up from the meadows. And the high-hole, [~~crossed out: ???~~] quick, quick, quick, quick, he calls, and brings back my youth. The long-drawn tr-r-r-r-r of the toad has been upon the air for several days. Stop and listen and you hear the downy

wood pecker at his drum. This too is a very welcome sound to me.

How I delight to see the plough at work this morning. The earth is ripe for it, fairly lustrous for it, and the fresh turned soil looks good enough to eat. Lew is ploughing the currants and Travis is ploughing beyond them for grapes. I look after them and help mark out the grape trenches. Plucked my first blood root this morning -- a ~~fl~~ full blown flower with a young one folded up in a leaf beneath it ~~and just~~ only just the bud emerging, like the head of a pappoose protruding from its mothers blanket -- a very pleasing sight.

I always suspect either the honesty or the intelligence of the man who claims to see the reasonableness of the Pauline, or popular Christianity. Paul says that "No man can say that Jesus is the Lord except of the Holy Ghost." Neither can he, and as this witness has not been vouched safe to all men, there are a good many honest people in the world, indeed an increasing number of them

who cannot say that Jesus is the Lord. The preliminary twisting of the mind by which this becomes obvious they have never been subjected to. They see Jesus to be a great teacher and prophet, and that he must have been a most marvellous and lovable personality, but further than this they do not see.

April 14 Sunday. Bright and cool wind in north. Julian and I walk to the woods. Find a little arbutus; vines mostly barren this year. A rather eventless walk. Weather keeps dry; but little rain the past 4 or 5 weeks.



21 Wonderfully beautiful and delicious -- a river of glass and a sky of soft vapory blue; a mist of foliage on the maples and fruit trees Currant bushes just ready to shake out their blossoms. rye fields and vivid emerald.

Slight thunder showers yesterday, rain much needed; no rain for weeks; weather warm; birds jubilant. All the April wild flowers out. The little anemone, trembling and blusing like delicate high bred schoolgirls. In the woods an hour yesterday afternoon, found arbutus and other sweet things Busy the past week setting out grapes, patching up the vineyards, and putting in a new lot [crossed out: back] in raspberry field.

In Langdons woods the trees

begin to show their outlines, the willows a vivid green. The swallow arrived on the 15th this year. Am correcting proof of "Indoor Studies", take but little interest in it.

25 Again the maples shake out their tassels; again in the morning their perfume falls upon me as I walk beneath them. Peach and cherry trees in bloom. No rain yet; very dry. Have rented house and vacate it to-morrow; probably a sorry time before me, yet I know that I have got the best of some of the domestic furies.

28 A fine rain at last from the S.E.

Am again living in the old house, Julian and I. Mrs B. in P. Think I shall enjoy change. A bad head ache this afternoon.

30. Spring comes on apace. Brown thrasher 3 days ago. Pear trees in bloom. Apples showing the pink. The woods covered with a faint mist of yellowish green. Plowed under the rye; getting ready to set out the grape-vines.

1889

May 1st A cool day, nearly clear in forenoon, hazing up in afternoon. Things very green and fresh. Begin setting grape vines in afternoon.

Very well suited with new domestic arrangements; think the change will have a good effect upon my health. Nothing to irritate me now about the house -- no womans tongue to blister me.

5. Clear and warm -- the first real May day. Maple leaves nearly out. The flickering leaf shadows are born again and the woods are beginning to wear a thin veil of them. Julian and I walk over to the

hemlock canyon and loaf about a couple of hours. The showy orchis just ready to open. The maples are humming with bees. No orioles yet; heard a bobolink this morning before I was out of bed.

7. The warm soft lovely May days continue -- a vernal Indian summer. Oriole yesterday, also king bird and cat bird. The week of bloom What rose garden is every orchard now. I walk through them with long sad thoughts.

11 The wave of [~~crossed out: bl~~] the orchard bloom has just passed over us, and I try to believe it awakened the old rapture

A hot wave has also just passed over us also; thermometer 90 and 92 in the shade on Thursday and Friday. Light shower Friday afternoon and a fine rain this morning, clearing off cooler in afternoon.

On Friday went up to Olive to see once more father North, no doubt the last time I shall look upon him in life. He is 88 years old; keeps in bed most of the time, mind nearly gone; he knew me and Ursula but still his apprehension was

feelbe and dim. But the past, his old home, his father and mother and brothers and sisters seem ever present with him. At times he thinks his father and mother are still living and wants to go back home. He calls the names of those who have been dead for 60 years and asks that they do this and that. When his brother came to see him he was determined to go home with him -- to the old homestead. It is very pathetic. His life for 50 or more years past seems to have left little impression but the days of his youth, his father and mother, how deeply these are engraved upon his mind. All the rest is on the

surface, but these are in the foundations of his being. I see the same thing in myself. The only permanent and real part of my experience -- that which is bone of my bone and flesh of my flesh is my youth, the old home, father and mother. As time goes on these are more and more in my mind, and the rest less and less.

The old man is pale and feeble and cannot last long. I carried him in my arms from the kitchen up to his room.

While waiting for the train in Kingston, saw in the Tribune the notice of the death of Willian O'Connor my old Washington friend and



co-defender of Walt Whitman. A man of extraordinary parts -- but lacking the sanity or moderation of the greatest men. I cannot write about him now. It is too great a subject.

24 Since my last entry the weather has been remarkably growing; frequent light rains and very warm -- not rain enough to affect the sprngs but to keep the ground very moist. We have been hoeing grapes, raspberries, and currants, have tied up young grapes twice.

Had Mr Cutler, A Sullivan county farmer and back woodsman to work for me 6 1/2 days; a quaint, racy, old fashioned

man (71) whom I much enjoyed; it called up the times of my youth at home. He was like the men father sometimes had to work for him. He always spoke of his wife, (now dead), as "my lady". I am sorry to have him go, but he is homesick for the hills of Sullivan. He was 4 years in the war; has a farm and does not have to work, he says. He has been and is yet a great bark-peeler. It was a treat to see him peel my grape posts. Curiously free from any sort of profanity, or roughness in his speech, a greater hunter and fisher also.

-- Later; It turns out that my old Sullivan Co bark peeler

is not so correct and proper in his language and manners for nothing; he is not off on a spree, or tear, he takes it out in a big drunk occasionally.

June 1st Violent wind from S.S.East the past two days, doing much damage to vineyards and to my young currant patch. Only light dashes of rain with the wind. Many wet days in May but no heavy rain here. Springs low -- none of my drains flow. Pulled the first ripe s. berry to-day. Cherries getting ripe. Julian and I tie up the young vines and hoe among the grapes. Mrs B. in P. Sleep well only every other night for the past weeks.

2d The fierce gale of the past ten days brought a torrent of rain in many parts of the country, and unparalleled destruction of life and property. Johnstown Pa was swept away and probably 10,000 ~~[crossed out: people]~~ persons drowned. Truly an awful calamity. The Potamac river was higher than it seems ever to have been before. The waters reached to the north side of Pa. Ave. The Esopus Creek very high, but the streams here not ~~[crossed out: e]~~ affected; the rain went in heavy columns like an invading army. Such wanton destruction of life by a storm makes the Heavenly Father cant, more canty

than ever. The worst human or inhuman fiend would not do such a thing, if he could.

Saturday 8th The past week cool and pleasant; bust pruning grapes and tying up young vines and setting posts etc. Cut our grass also.

On the 6th went down to West Point with Wife and Julian and spent the day a very delightful one with Denton. Saw the water seige battery work and the great black balls fly.

Rain to-day.

New book came yesterday; do not feel much interest in it.

June 11 Heavy shower this 4 P.M. The first down pour this spring, the first rain to reach the sources of the springs and wells and fill them up. Washed my side hill somewhat in the new vineyard. Wife came up to-day to clean up our rooms.

16 Very sultry the past week more rain yesterday; three showers, good smart ones; the weeds getting ahead of us. Some of young grape vines are to the top wire. Very hot to-day, but some air stirring. Raspberries getting ripe.

18 Rain, rain, rain -- and heat. A soaker to-day. The weeks are devouring us.

June 30. Sunday. A very hot day, nearly 90 degrees. Much rain past week, five working days. Things grow very fast. Julian and I bathe and then row up the river. Ship nearly all the currants this past week. My life is a busy one these days and not unhappy, better than last year.