# AUTUMN NOTES IN IOWA

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# AUTUMN NOTES IN IOWA

*The autumns of Iowa are somewhat peculiar in their beauty and serenity. The oppressive summer heat is over by the last of August, and from that time until the middle of November, the mellow softness of the climate, the beauty and grandeur of the foliage, the dry and natural roads that cross our prairies, the balmy fragrance of the atmosphere, the serene sky, all combined, present to the eye of the traveller a picture calculated to excite emotions of wonder and delight.*

— NEWHALL: *Sketches of Iowa,* 1841

## BOOKS BY SELDEN L. WHITCOMB

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*The Study of a Novel.* Heath and Company.

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*Lyrical Verse.* Grinnell Herald Press.

*Random Rhymes and The Three Queens.* Grinnell Herald Press.

*Poems.* Richard Badger.

*From a photograph by Cornelia Clarke*

COUNTRY ROAD NEAR NEWBURG

# AUTUMN NOTES IN IOWA

By

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TO THE MEMORY OF
HAL HOWARD AND EMMET BURLEW
BOYHOOD COMRADES OF MINE
BY HAWKEYE FIELD AND WOODLAND

# PREFACE

The following pages consist mainly of "nature notes," with such incidental attention to human affairs as seemed appropriate for this type of writing.

A reasonably extensive literature, aside from purely scientific work, has been produced in this field by Iowa writers. From L — 's *Journal of Marches*, written in 1834-35, to the recent excellent essays of Mr. Lazell, one may find many recorded observations of outdoor life in Hawkeyeland. Among works of notable value with which the writer happens to be acquainted, the article on *The Old Prairie Slough*, by the late beloved Charles Aldrich, seems very suggestive and a worthy model for other essayists; while Hamlin Garland's *Boy Life on the Prairie* should be considered a classic in every patriotic Iowa home. William Savage, with a certain propriety, has been called "The Iowa Thoreau." Unfortunately his extensive diaries are as yet accessible only in manuscript form. For permission to examine them and to include a few selections in this volume, the author is indebted to Hon. Edgar R.

Harlan, Curator of the State Historical Department of Iowa.

Of those interested in the Iowa literature of this type, some now live or have once lived in the state; others know nature in Iowa only by report. One reader may be stirred by the simplest mention of a flower or bird loved in childhood, or familiar now in everyday life; another may be alert to discover the relations of Iowa flora, fauna, and weather, from the point of view of personal observation, to those of Rhode Island, Georgia, or California. Some passages in our text suggest these interstate comparisons.

For all "nature fakirs" there exists the inexhaustible pleasure of comparison of data for different individual observers, for different localities, seasons, years, and generations. The new finding and the lost treasure both give a certain satisfaction. The cardinal now seems more frequent than of old in central Iowa, but in the Jasper County woods, can you any longer find the yellow lady's slipper, as in golden Junes of youth? Can you today listen to the April drumming of the grouse, or watch his long flight from snow-covered shrubbery in December?

All the data given in this volume as observations made at a specific time and place are bona fide personal records for that time and place. These are not strictly journal entries, however.

Some of the reflections and generalizations have been added to the original notes in later years, and the style of both earlier and later records has been freely revised.

The writer is grateful to all those who have furnished photographs for the illustrations. The photograph by Mr. Carl Stempel has been accessible through the kindness of Miss Selma Stempel. Miss Katharine Macy and Professor Charles Noble have read the manuscript and their interest and suggestive comment have been appreciated. Miss Edna Osborne has given valuable assistance in revision of the manuscript, and in preparation of the index.

If it were possible to thank all of the comrades of our Hawkeye rambles, early and late — college president, lawyer, doctor of medicine and doctor of philosophy, banker, Rhodes scholar, Indian lad, farm boy, bright Dutch woman from South Africa! Some are still living in Iowa, some are beyond the Atlantic or the Pacific; some have passed across a yet wider sea. Surely some of us who love the comradeship with nature find still deeper in our hearts the fellowship of man.

S. L. W.

Marine Station, San Juan Island,
Washington, July, 1914

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# SEPTEMBER

## SEPTEMBER

Now blooms the feath'ry goldenrod,
  The flower of Iowa's choice;
The katydid and cricket, too,
  Have lifted up their voice.
The works of Nature, careless-like,
  Are strewn in woods and field,
Spread out in a September sun,
  With every book unsealed.

(Tacitus Hussey, in *The River Bend*)

# SEPTEMBER

*"Pilot Rock," Cherokee County,*
September 22, 1887.

Last Sunday evening several of our gang and almost the entire family of our miller host walked to meeting. The service was held by the Wesleyan Methodists, in their very simple frame building, two or three miles down the road. One wonders if many of the picturesque phases of the country church in Iowa have been recorded by pen or brush. Within the state many a humble spire rises into the sunlight from an exposed knoll of prairie, or gleams through a sheltering grove of oaks or maples. "The Little Brown Church in the Vale" has attained more than local fame, but probably there are many others no less worthy still waiting for the imaginative insight of poet or painter. How many architectural details of external or interior plan, how many types of memorial for the dead, must have been brought overseas from Wales, Holland, Germany, Norway, to this land of new hope. The social life that centers in such churches might also furnish rich materials for sketch or story, crude as that life may be in some aspects. On the night of our visit, a sombre pleading from the pulpit was reinforced by abundant shouts, groans and wailings from restless men and women in the congregation. Timid young country girls and roguish farm lads added other tones of local color. All in all, it was a relief to leave the gloomy little room, dimly lighted by kerosene lamps, the people feverishly concerned with matters of medieval theology, and to pass into the wide calm of the autumnal night, under the brilliance of the abiding stars.

Yesterday, rain, rain, rain. After a morning's work along the line and an afternoon of indoor wrestling with "estimates," we fell asleep with the rain still pattering on the roof above the low farmhouse chamber. It has been a month of somewhat heavy rainfall. Ten days ago, after a night of steady pouring, we tramped about fifteen miles, to and from our work, along muddy roads and across soggy fields. How the transit tripod can bruise one's shoulder on the last homeward mile after a hard day! That night we came dragging into the yard pretty well fagged, but we had helped to establish a new Iowa town. Where a few weeks before stretched only the wide farm fields, there are now at least plotted streets and lots, the staked line of a side-switch, and an elevator and blacksmith shop actually built. *Quim-*

*by* is born and named, for better or for worse career than other Hawkeye towns.

The great storm of the month, not likely to have any local rival this season, came on the fourth. Late in the afternoon, after a quiet day, the wind rose to hurricane efficiency, and the rains fell heavily, dashing, slashing, crashing. The tents of O'Kieffe's camp were all blown down, and his men toiled like heroes to prepare supper, and search for drier regions in which to sleep. The Little Sioux, that had been like a meadow stream with low water, rose rapidly, and all night raged furiously by the bridge, mill, and farmhouse. The next morning the air was clear and calm, in almost ironical contrast with the effects of the storm. There were stretches along the roads where the water stood nearly knee deep, and for rods and rods along the dumps it was impossible for man or team to do any work. The river, flooded to the top of its banks, rushed roaring over the old log dam, pitching into the swirling foam below, broken timbers, tangled masses of vegetable wreckage, battered rowboats, and carcasses of farm animals.

In the hot August days we had many a refreshing plunge in the river. A week or so ago when we were putting in false work for the bridge and had to stand or wade, waist deep, in the stream for hours, the water was far too chilly for comfort. Today is very cold. There are many signs of the waning of summer. Already there have been a few sunsets with glorious autumnal coloring. The local watermelon season is about over. For three weeks there has been an abundant supply, and the men of both surveying and contractor's gangs have been liberal buyers from the farm boy who watched over a hoard of the fruit in front of the farmyard fence. Wild plums and wild grapes have been quite abundant in the copses along the river, but now only a few remain on the trees and vines. It was early in September, a few years ago, when the wheat was being threshed and the goldenrod was blooming all over the Dakota prairies, that we made our excursion to the banks of the Jim, bringing back a great basketful of wild plums. From the vines along the Jim or Turtle Creek, we brought back abundance of wild grapes,[1] and from both fruits the women folks made delicious jellies and preserves to sweeten the long territorial winter.

Along the sandy dumps of our roadbed one can now often see hundreds of bright-tinted, swift-footed tiger beetles, flashing in the sunlight. They seem characteristic of the season. The birds in general have become inconspicuous, not only in song but in presence. One afternoon not long ago we watched the flight of a large flock of cranes —

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[1] For a description of a similar excursion in Iowa about 1845, see Caroline A. Soule's *Pet of the Settlement*, Chapter IX.

silent, but with a shifting group formation interesting to follow. Occasionally a kingfisher still rattles along the river, or one gets a glimpse of a disconsolate flicker, flying from cornfield to road, with the manners of a culprit. A solitary flicker, with or without the piercing cry, is a common enough figure in the early autumn days, but sometimes members of the species gather in flocks at this time of the year. A few years ago, in September or possibly in August, near the center of the state, I saw a flock of a hundred or more feeding in a level, damp, roadside meadow, making a memorable picture, and one with little or no suggestion of autumnal melancholy.

*Cedar Falls*, September 26, 1891.

By the middle of the month the lessening hours of daylight gave a conspicuous promise of autumn; earlier and earlier rose the twilight chorus of the crickets. Practically all the field crops of this richly productive region, in a bountiful year, had been gathered, except the corn and the pumpkins along the corn rows. On the thirteenth a church held its annual harvest service, the pulpit, choir, and walls being decorated with ripe fruits and grains brought in by the farmers of the congregation. That afternoon the birds came eagerly to the bathing dish on our lawn, to a service after their own manner. The English sparrows dashed down with heavy, noisy flight, with bold chattering very different from the traditional British reserve. The bluebirds approached in family flock to dip and flutter in the shallow water, delighted certainly and apparently grateful. A social sparrow — no stranger to our lawn in days of the nesting period — ventured a very close approach to the observer. Near at hand, what a tiny creature he seemed, and of what sane and practical character. There was surely slight trace of sentiment in the expression of his eyes, in his pantomime, or in that energetic sally after a providential moth. A goldfinch or two, already in sedate fall plumage, cheeped busily about. A flicker, of heroic size in comparison with his comrades, closed undulatory flight at the rendezvous, balanced himself for a moment on the rim of the dish, took one drink, and departed without uttering a syllable. He has his long flexible tongue well under control — on occasion. While the smaller birds lingered at their bath, suddenly from a little distance came the harsh cries of a blue jay, and all the merry company flashed to sheltering trees across the street.

September in this prairie country is a month of variable character as to temperature. Last year, in Olmsted County, Minnesota, the month was unusually cold. On the seventh a fire was needed for comfort, indoors; on the twelfth we wore overcoats even at active work along the line; on the eighth the white frost glistened along the bridge timbers and other heavy frosts soon followed. By the end of the month the meadowlarks sang by clumps of faded goldenrod, near the borders of woods already rich in autumn tints. The panorama of the woodlands along the Mississippi bluffs, from Winona to St. Paul, seemed at its best in the very first days of October. The past two weeks here have brought us the most severe heated period of the year, the temperature rising into the nineties. The chirping of the crickets has a midsummery effect, and for a week or more the loud rasping calls of the katydids have been prominent every evening. The earth is dry. After a slight shower a few days ago the English sparrows and the bluebirds, ignoring the bath-dish on the lawn, dipped and dashed in the eaves-trough, a few feet from the chamber window. This morning a robin warbled his rain-song in vain.[2] "All signs fail in dry weather." But the geese are moving south. A friend reports a flock seen some two weeks ago — early birds, surely, for this particular season. Today from the heat and dust of the tennis court, we looked up to watch a considerable flock, and took comfort in the thought of the "crisp" October days that surely follow.

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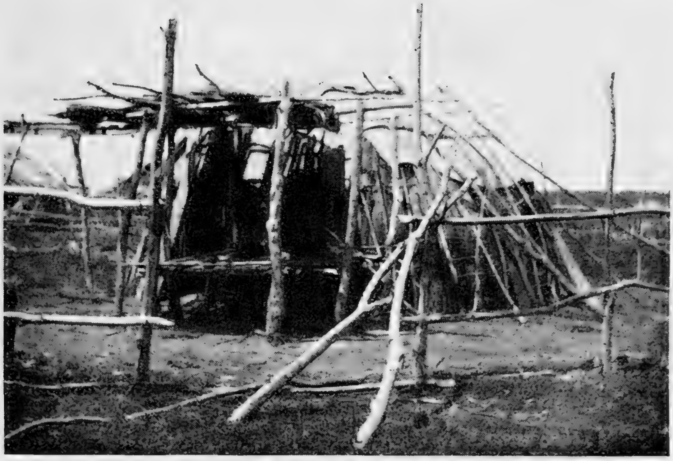
[2] See Appendix, Note 1.

*Sabula to Sioux City, circa* September 25, 1893.

After many months in the unceasing tumult of New York City, after a hurried visit, amid restless crowds, to the Columbian Exposition in Chicago, it was good to spend a quiet, beautiful September day crossing the old home state. The route touched no large town, but justified the familiar phrase "an agricultural state" by offering a continuous succession of pastures, orchards, and tilled fields, varied only by woods and villages. Perhaps the first morning sensations of freshness, calm, and above all, of wide expanse, dawned on a drowsy intelligence somewhere in the neighborhood of Marion. We were rolling then along the crest of a height of land, with miles and miles of fertile valley on both sides, bound on the dim horizon by low, blurred masses of woodland — "timber" or grove.

A few hours later we whirled through the "Reservation." The old word "savages," so commonly used in early records of Western life, might perhaps apply in a degree to the speeding, shouting Indians we had watched a night or two before, under electric lights, in the great tent of Buffalo Bill's Wild West Show. Along these low river lands this calm morning, the dignified individuals or stolid little groups of red men gave a very different impression. To the writer, a glimpse of the Tama village readily excites vivid memories of



*From a photograph by Cornelia Clarke*

INDIAN TEPEE NEAR TAMA

the Musquakies as they appeared in his boyhood, nomadic visitors to the towns and streams of Poweshiek County. Down the main street often passed a straggling procession of the tough little ponies, the grim looking braves, and the weazeny squaws, some of them with pappooses strapped to their backs. Often into the very penetralia of the paleface's dwelling glided the gaily-clad Indian women, in moccasined feet, requesting, rejecting, communicating mainly by gesture and by deep grunts of approval or annoyance. Once our neighbor's great Newfoundland, "Bruno," routed a little band of begging squaws at his master's gate, and their alarmed, scrambling retreat down the old board sidewalk of "Wyant's Row" made quite a comic scene. One spring there was a temporary encampment in the Sugar Creek woods — a tepee, a tent, a silent adult or two and a cheery looking little boy of seven or eight years, when I saw it. The boy, with the sharp eyes of his race, watched me gathering spring flowers, and soon came smiling to my side, and helped me collect spring beauty and bloodroot for my botany can.

Today everywhere the great cornfields stretch away in mild golden glory, for the most part still in tall rows of military precision, though some fields are in shock. "Corn!" How we boys once wondered at the strange meaning given the familiar word in the Bible; how we strove to learn the exact significance and the flavor of that other word "maize," which to this day probably seems a trifle snobbish to some of us. It may be a matter of vexation to Hawkeyes, also, that one of the best essays so far written on the great grain — Miss Edith Thomas's *Mondamin* — hails from so far east as Ohio. But the corn-belt is spacious. The King nods across southern fields to King Cotton, and far northward offers chivalrous greeting to the brown-haired flax. His domain proper ranges westward to the lands of the prairie dogs, and his colonies, weak or strong, make a chain across the continent. On September sixteenth, some forty years ago, Miss Cooper wrote, in southern New York, "The maize-stalks are drying and withering as the ears ripen. . . All through the summer months, the maize-fields are beautiful with their long, glossy leaves; but when ripe, dry, and colorless, they will not compare with the waving lawns of other grains. The golden ears, however, after the husk has been taken off, are perhaps the noblest heads of grain in the world; the rich piles now lying about the fields are a sight to rejoice the farmer's heart." She adds two paragraphs on the history of the pumpkin, and on its relations to corn — "When they are harvested and gathered in heaps, the pumpkins rival the yellow corn in richness; and a farm-wagon carrying a load of husked corn and pumpkins, bears as handsome a load of produce as the country yields.'' But who has yet written the complete poem of the corn, with all its episodes — the field stripped by hail; the contented cattle gleaning; the crow perched at summit of stalk; the wind-bent shock robed by snow?

Some fields are already black from the fall ploughing; in others the ploughman halted a weary team, waving a crumpled hat and watching us till we passed from sight, or bent steadily above the furrow, disdaining to notice the indolent travelers. These figures of man and team against the broad, open landscape soon vanished, and we were racing through some little village where half the inhabitants seemed ''down to the depot,'' to watch the limited pass, and where the brown pouch flung from our mail-car leaped along the platform like a tumble-weed across windy, fenceless prairies.

Across the state — by slough, creek and river; by meadow and pasture, hedgerow, garden, grove, and orchard; stubble-field, rich black loam; weeds, flowers; by red men, white men, black men; by country school and village church. Never for many miles at a time is the land really level even to the traveler's eyes; always soon appear the long slopes, the low, rounded hills, or the steep banks along a stream. Turning to the human interest, what suggestion of local history lies in such phrases as ''Coon Rapids'' and ''Sioux City,'' what fancies of life beyond the seas are roused by such names as Gladstone, Cambridge, Huxley, Melbourne, Madrid, Manilla. Night fell on us amid the broken, untilled borderlands of the Big Sioux and the Big Muddy — in a region of scarred bluffs and deep ravines, where the evening shadows were heavy under the hills and the sunlight lingered on long, high trestles across semi-mountainous streams. So we sped, curving and curving, climbing and descending, into the darkness, toward the land of the Dakotas.

*Grinnell*, September 26, 1901.

About nine o'clock this evening, Curtis and I strolled across the open moonlit fields to a familiar willow hedge, remote from roads and houses, where we built a low fire of cornhusks and willow twigs, and roasted field corn and wild crab apples. We picked the crab apples from a little clump of scraggy trees reminding one of the stunted trees, with crowded branches twisted into fantastic curves, along some windy, sandy reach of lower Cape Cod. The "puckery," oily but acid flavor of the fruit, uncooked, provides some sensation of the wild and primitive. Our roasting process also was rather primitive, yielding results of value to the imagination rather than the palate. In early days, however, wild crab apples, with wild grapes and wild plums were not despised by pioneer housewives. Mention of these fruits, as characteristic of the prairie autumn, is frequent in the early records of traveler and resident in this region. The grapes are noticed by Pittman, before the Revolutionary War, and in later years by Flagg, Woods, and Mrs. Farnham.[3] Flagg writes of "extensive groves" of wild plum and crab apple. Probably the general character of these "groves" has not changed much since 1838. In her list of fruits, Mrs. Farnham includes papaws and persimmons.[4] Nowadays, grapes from well-trimmed vineyards, plums and crab apples from carefully nurtured orchard or yard have practically destroyed any lively interest in the fruits in their native state, except in the minds of roving boys or others with a poetic fancy for things wild and smacking of the untilled soil. Once when the fruit was ripe, Curtis and I were nearing a little thicket of wild plums along the edge of a farmer's field, when the farmer appeared, driving a wagon across the field and shouting and gesticulating, apparently in a very angry state of mind. We confessed as he drove up, but he was not concerned with a few plums; his warning had been for town boys with guns, in the big cornfield, "after his chickens."

The boys are probably gathering black walnuts in the Jasper County woods these days. It is the season, also, when one may walk or wheel along country roads to some remembered patch of hazel shrubbery, and fill one's pocket with the brown nuts — having modest hope that some few may prove edible. Mrs. Farnham writes of the "corylus" unfolding its young leaves, and describes the hazel copses at some length, as making "one of the most picturesque features of our landscape." A few days ago, in hazel brush along a hilly, little-traveled road, a half mile or so from any house, we found an unexpected reminder of summer — a somewhat frayed dickcissel nest, with one blue egg still intact though ancient. Someway this solitary abandoned egg produced on imagination a deeper sense of the wastefulness of nature than the thousands of battered osage oranges, the innumerable plums and grapes and nuts that no man or beast would ever enjoy, and that no kindly soil would ever nourish to growth.

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[3] Compare the footnote on page 24.

[4] See Appendix, Note 2.

*Charles City to Marshalltown*, September 9, 1906.

In the park square at Charles City this morning, the waddling grackles were silently feeding on the ground and a red-eyed vireo sang in subdued strains from the trees. Along the river banks the heads of western ironweed, lifted on tall stems, flourished in quite conspicuous mass, and a monkey-flower almost within the water added a bit of rich color. "Violet-purple," Gray's *Manual* calls the corolla of this species. Low in a dry old borrow-pit near Mason City a prairie gentian in fine bloom suggested coming days of frost on this "warm" day. It was probably the abundance of flaring golden composites that led Flagg to write, in 1838, that the autumnal bloom of the prairies is of yellow character. The statement remains true in part, at least for the rapid traveler over dry open country, but one must not forget the liberal display of purplish tints, and certain pronounced effects of white, particularly in the woods or in low, damp soils.

It was a hot, dusty ride, in a train of common coaches only, down the familiar road from Mason City to Marshalltown today. Men shuffled uneasily in their seats, some of them in their shirt-sleeves, and weary mothers murmured to peevish babies. The conductor exclaimed, "This is the worst possible sort of day," and consoled himself for his hard present duties by planning an early fishing trip, with a friend aboard. The cars were crowded with young folks on their way to colleges and universities, and with "just folks" returning from the Minnesota State Fair — a portion of that exodus which annually creates a bedlam for a few days at the St. Paul Union Station.

This railroad has had a rather varied history for the forty years or so of its existence. The writer vaguely remembers a scene in his early boyhood when the people of his town, with the famous man for whom it was named, gathered one day to greet the first train to arrive from the north. In those remote days some of the engines were named instead of numbered, and appeared in a certain poetic personal character to the village lads. How often one boy cried out to another, ''There's 'C. C. Gilman' just coming in'' — or perhaps it was ''going for good.'' Some years the road, like others, suffered much from flooded streams. Once at least the restive waters surged far beyond their proper channel till they stood — was it ''up to the car windows''? — high over the tracks at the Marshalltown station. Just before the St. Louis Exposition, much regrading was done along certain portions of the road. The Italian laborers were picturesque figures, and their bake-ovens, dug into the clay banks of the cuts, looked curiously foreign and primitive. Curtis, who had spent a year or more in Italy, once tried to get some of the workmen to talk in their native Neapolitan, but for some reason conversation seemed a lost — or concealed — art with them then and there.

Today in the northern pastures the cattle stood in still groups, languidly, under the scrub oaks; farther south they had waded deep into the sluggish sloughs. For long distances the burning piles of worn-out ties increased the heat. Yet one remembered how the right-of-way in spring was decorated with orange puccoon, violets, strawberry blossoms, and later showed extensive gardens of white anemones and purple spiderwort. Now, except where some employee has his little patch of potatoes, or where the fires of the section-gang have devoured and blackened, there are almost continuous belts of autumnal blossoms — sunflowers, goldenrods, bright asters, and vervain being prominent. Beyond, are cornfields dotted with pumpkins, the glare and rumble of threshing scenes, and once or twice a kingfisher speeding above a pond.

*Des Moines*, September 9, 1906.

The sumac foliage is reddening, and the locusts along the low banks of the Skunk near Colfax are already tinged with yellow. Sumac seems to have been among the plants most frequently observed by the early travelers in the prairie region. It is mentioned, for example, by Woods, in 1822, and by Flagg, in 1838. Miss Cooper begins her rather elaborate account of autumnal foliage in mid-September. One finds these entries for the month: "September 12: The woods, generally, are green as midsummer — but a small shrub here and there is faintly touched with autumnal colors. . . September 25: The woods are still green, but some trees in the village are beginning to look autumn-like. . . September 27: Decided white frost last night. The trees show it perceptibly in a heightened tint of coloring, rising here and there; some single maples in the village streets are vividly crimson. But the general tint is still green."[5]

But summer often calls out her reserve forces of heat at this time of the year, as if in final angry effort to win the battle against the challenging autumn. Or is it in requital for the hours autumn stole from her in July or August? A day or two ago a temperature of 102 degrees was reported from Bismarck. Early last month in a morning stroll about the capitol grounds there, while the blossoms of milkweeds and lepachys, and the young Arkansas kingbirds still in the nest gave witness of summer, the mercury was only a few degrees above the freezing point. Today, with a maximum of 92 degrees, is said to be the hottest day of the year in Des Moines. But there is no midsummer sultriness, and a fair breeze was blowing in Union Park. There the tree locusts sang in strenuous rhythm, but the phœbe strains of the chickadees recalled cooler hours of spring and winter. A scattered flock of perhaps a score of robins was feeding in the park meadows, and the frequent notes of the bluebirds had, to fancy, the languor of fall rather than of summer. The grackles in congregation were making spirited conversation across the street and one heard the rattling alarm, not the vigorous "quirk," of the red-headed woodpecker. Swifts and nighthawks — sailing in numbers above the city toward evening — were among the few birds we noticed with voice or manner suggestive of summer at its height.

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[5] See Appendix, Note 3.

"A Well," says Carlyle,[6] "is in all places a beautiful affecting object, gushing out like life from the hard earth." Today certainly, one found the cold spring water in the Park, with its strong taste of the tonic iron, a welcome refreshment. How picturesque the children were, scrambling down the steps to the spring, or waiting in line, cups in hand, for their turn at the impartial fountain. One does not probably often think of the prairie country as a region of springs, but it has its fair share. Personal memory recalls a Minnesota farm, where the milk was always deliciously cool, freshly brought from its shelter by the "Big Spring"; the trickling stream from the bank of a railway cut, in a walk from college town to woods, at which many a scholar of note as well as many a section-hand has halted for a drink; the flowing waters in Washington Park, Chicago, where on a blistering day a group of Hawkeyes gathered for picnic reunion found a temperate solace and stimulus. In Burlington, the visitor to Crapo Park as he passes the cave spring under the arching bluff is told a pretty legend of Indian chief and milkmaiden. In some poetic sense, the idealistic Icarians found a center for their domain of three thousand acres in the community spring, still visible beneath the tall cottonwoods at the crossing of lane and highway.[7]

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[6] In *Heroes and Hero-Worship: The Hero as Prophet.*

*Mason City*, September 3, 1907.

Walking up the main street here today, one noted dozens of great ''waterbugs'' dead on the sidewalks. These are perhaps the largest hemiptera commonly seen in town quarters in the state. They are considerably bigger than the ordinary cicadas — and those famous insects are rather more frequently heard than seen by most of us. The june-bug by its noisy methods and very considerable hitting power produces an exaggerated impression of its size, and of course it is not really a ''bug'' but a beetle. There seemed to be little bird song here today, except for a few feeble strains from a warbling vireo. Of this species our own favorite memory is of certain summer morning hours, when we listened to its fluent song in a fine old orchard, on the edge of an Iowa town, and watched its charming movements to and from the dainty pendent nest.

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[7] A spring reported as unfailing in dry weather, on January 1, 1913.

One of the fascinating things about following flower lore or bird lore as a lifelong pastime, is the delight of carrying childhood memories into later years, when the burden and the heat of the day are oppressive. Today even some of the common weeds here are rich in associations of boyish hours in front-yard, back-yard, pasture, and street-side. Here is ''sweet clover.'' We boys did not add ''white,'' for in our day and locality the yellow was practically unknown or else neglected. Nor did we ever call the plant ''melilot,'' appropriate as that name might have been. How early in our career its tall stems, its pungent scent, its not indelicate racemes were familiar and beloved. Here is mayweed — ''dog fennel'' if you will, but not with our approval — and a glimpse of its sturdy plebeian form brings back strangely familiar though dim sensations of summer evening drives along dusty country roads where weeds grew rank, the dickcissel sang from almost every fence and wire, showing the yellow of his breast to match the yellow disks of mayweed. Here are the green spikes of common plantain. The appearance even of the stamens — anthers and stalks — was vividly impressed on boyish memory. The leaves had their own functions in the world of boyish play. The stout ribs were always wonderful, often separated from the blade that their identity might be more clearly defined. The fruited spikes made part of our harvest; we wondered at the compact rows, and stripping off the grains, handled them as a farmer might sample the quality of his new wheat.

Down in the channel of the Shell Rock, near the bridge of the principal street, sunflowers are the most gaudy blossoms, but far more delicate, though robust, are the rose-purple masses of false dragonhead. This plant has a wide habitat, but while not distinctive of this region it offers one of the most brilliant flower effects to be found along some of our Iowa streams at this time of year.

In small Iowa towns, if a stranger is directed to "the park," he is likely to find it a rectangle occupying one block in the business section, surrounded on from one to four sides by commercial or public buildings. This type is found in scores of communities, with minor variations in plan of walks, in fountains and bandstand, and in the nature and grouping of herbs, shrubbery, and trees. In county-seats, the court-house sometimes fills a portion of the space, and the grounds are known as the "court-house park," or "the court-house square." Here, the home of county government is across the street from the park, which is nevertheless a typical parked city square. It is traversed by diagonal paths meeting at the center, which is adorned with a swan fountain, with flower urns on the edge of the basin. The larger trees are mainly soft maples and elms. Wooden benches are scattered over the areas, while a wooden, gaily-painted bandstand, with a miniature dome, has served for the minstrels of summer evening concerts. On one side of the park there is a memorial to the local Civil War soldiers — an iron-gray monument some twenty-five feet high, with the figure of an infantry-man at the summit and names of individual soldiers with the roll of their battles inscribed on the sides. Flanking the monument are small cannons, mounted on brick and stone masonry. The supreme marvel of that other village park where we boys once played pom-pom-pullaway, crack the whip, one-two-three-one, and ate ice-cream and strawberries on a May evening, is missing here. It was a "liberty-pole," nearly or quite a hundred feet tall, mast-style, with a "landing," erected and cherished by an old man-o'-war's man, stranded in some manner out here on the prairies, midway from sea to sea. On the Fourth a noble flag floated from the tip from the cannon salute at dawn, through the reading of the Declaration, passing of parade, merriment of afternoon sports, till the last farmer's team started homeward, and the last rocket had flared against the night sky.

Landscape gardening and its allied arts are apparently making excellent progress in Iowa. The parks of Des Moines are dignified, even noble, in situation and plan, rich in plant and bird life, and of high value to the social life of their city. Along the great border rivers of the state the high bluffs offer frequent sites adapted for spacious and varied recreation grounds. Slowly also, the state is erecting monuments memorial of the great events and great persons of her history, from the days of early exploration to those of her recent prominence in the national councils. The days will soon pass, if not already passed, in which the stranger can with fairness say of the citizens of Iowa:

They have no love for bird or flowers,
  No reverence for their past;
They sing not, "Nature, Art are ours,
  We cherish, hold them fast."

Of fighting chief and praying Marquette
  Along the mighty Stream,
From days of feverish toil and fret
  They save no hours to dream.

Wild roses bloom above their great
  Who lived and died for truth,
But they mould not for a nobler fate
  The spirits of their youth.

Man lives not for himself alone,
  Needs beauty more than bread —
'Tis a people lost till they atone
  To the unborn babes and the dead!

*Grinnell*, September 6, 1907.

It seemed good to one coming from the Lake Superior region to reach again the land of abundant meadowlarks. They are still numerous here — stately, alert figures on the slopes of pasture hills — though their song has only faint reminiscence of its spring vigor.[8] The warbling vireo sings in quite spirited tone occasionally, but the robin's tune is rather subdued, and the catbird merely mews near its summer nest in the barberry hedge, decorated now by plentiful scarlet fruit. The goldfinches dip chattering above the garden and a hummingbird still hovers, darts, and sips among the trumpet vines.

In the fields north of the campus are pastures where low, dry hills rise above the meandering sloughs and a small ice-pond. Here one now finds a considerable number of herbs in varied bloom — on isolated stalks or in social masses according to specific habit. Boneset is thick along the border of the slough. In boyhood days we gathered it in the autumn, to dry in the shed attic, preparatory to making medicinal tea in days of "spring fever." We called the plant "thoroughwort," and any other name was a sign of plebeian training; just as we challenged with "rhubarb" the vulgar taste which spoke of "pieplant." Among other blooming plants here are asters, goldenrods, sunflowers, coneflowers, yarrow, arrowhead, sneezeweed, evening primrose, blue vervain, lousewort, ironweed, Indian mallow, lobelias, loosestrife, gerardia, and trumpet weed. Some are at the height of inflorescence, others long past their prime. The ironweed now ranges from the royal purple of vigorous bloom to the dull brown of faded heads, in a series of delicately graduated shades. Interest in autumnal colors among herbs is not limited to blossoms. The chocolate-brown tints of dock foliage are familiar and welcome at this time of year; the masses of smartweed in the swamps are often almost purple; the open involucres of aster heads have a silvery shine. Today in these fields the fruit of several species of milkweed hang unopened, still green, but a little later the silken coma and the bright linings of the pods will bring pleasure to many eyes. Last year at this date, the pods were already opening in the northern part of the state.

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[8] See Appendix, Note 4.

Flagg writes in 1838 of the prairie goldenrod "spreading out into a 'field of the cloth of gold,' " and among other flowers of the season mentions asters, arrowhead, blazing star, "all species" of lobelia, *eupatorium*, gentians, including the fringed, and sunflowers "in rich variety." Woods writing of Illinois in 1822 mentions dock, fennel, goldenrod, snakeroot, gentians, balm, horehound, sage, coriander, peppermint, and pennyroyal —

*From a photograph by Mary Chamberlain*

A Back-yard at Grinnell

seeming to have some special interest in the mints.

At five o'clock yesterday afternoon, thousands of people were on the fairgrounds; at eight o'clock the place was like a banquet-hall deserted and the fair for this year was over. As a beautiful sunset lingered beyond the rolling fields, the maple rows along Frisley Road, and the dark Sugar Creek woods, four nighthawks sailed silently above the grounds, the insects rendered a continuous musical program, and a mile away the church bells were ringing for the midweek prayer-meetings. In one booth some farmer folks were serving supper, making plans meanwhile to drive home with the children, "do the chores," and return for another load. In a small tent a palmist was still busy, and the light within threw fantastic shadows on the thin walls. Gas lights soon flamed and flared here and there, and a lantern will-o'-the-wisp wandered about the gypsy camp — some six or seven canvas-covered wagons at one side of the grounds. The man and woman of the merry-go-round were counting up receipts; venders were crying "the last chance" to waning audiences; the gypsy queen was making final strenuous but futile appeal to the curiosity of a lingering country lad or two. The grounds were strewn with the customary litter from three days of lively pastime. The weather had been favorable, and the secretary turned his key in the office door with a satisfied air. In a light wagon a group of Indian men and women, who a short time before had been amusing the crowd with native dances on the judges' stand, were preparing for the twenty-five mile drive homeward to the "Reservation." The gypsies were to remain on the grounds over night, traveling the next day along country roads westward to another local fair. At various booths they were asking, of comrades of a week, "Where are you going next?" A man answered, "To Grundy Center." A woman responded, in the drawling, weary tone of one who had experienced the vicissitudes of fortune, "To Marengo. We have given up Newton — he thought it wasn't worth while to sue them; might make trouble for another year." In the town trees the katydid uttered his own precise, insistent phrases, so far as one knows taking no thought of the morrow.

*Des Moines*, September 7, 1907.

Yesterday through the car windows, appeared the canvas-covered wagons of the fair-ground gypsies, in far-stretched caravan crawling over the Jasper County hills. The most distinguished flower of the right-of-way was the rose-red blazing star, in frequent brilliant patches. Blue vervain fringed the borders of the sloughs, ironweed nodded in low meadows, wild bergamot formed miniature forests on the slopes of upland pastures, while arrowhead showed its green leaves and white blossoms down by muddy waters. Lousewort clung to the grassy banks of cuts, and goldenrod was "everywhere." The coneflowers still appear in large numbers, but a great many of the yellow rays have fallen of late.

This morning the trolley took us past thistles, sunflowers, smartweed, great masses of white sanicle and purple lobelia, past a park of noble oaks, and vineyards with heavy clusters and withering foliage, to the Fort. A warm sun shone in a perfectly cloudless sky. From the dusty crushed-rock pavements the noonday glare was like that of a desert; and a very summery heat was reflected from the bright red, shadeless brick walls of the houses of officers and the barracks of rank and file. From the large, level parade, treeless, close-mown, with a few fruited dandelion heads and no bloom except for a little white clover, the crickets were chirping, while over its expanse hovered white, orange, and monarch butterflies, and locusts and grasshoppers sprang from the grass on every side. The parade is on somewhat high ground; from it one gazes far off over farm groves, ripe cornfields with tall stalks tipped by light brown tassels, and a wide expanse of rolling prairie beyond. Five or six miles across fields and meadows rose the great dome of the Capitol, at that distance silvery rather than golden in the brilliant sunlight. Soldiers in blue and others in brown khaki moved singly or in small groups across the parade. A young guard rested in the shade of one of the small elms while the two privates he was commanding passed into the scorching heat with lawn-mower and sickle. Mule teams were mowing the lawns between the officers' row and the trolley station, while another team was drawing a mowing machine farther out to a wide meadow. Summer-like, too, was the sharp crescendo of the cicada, mingling with the piercing cries of a flicker.

Beyond the stable yards, with their hundreds and hundreds of cavalry horses, near the western border of the Reservation, is a considerable area of swampy ground, today almost a tropical jungle of tall weeds. The brown-headed cattails are fully ten feet high, and so are the stout sunflowers, with two goldfinches busy about the giant heads. Here are bindweed, white-involucred spurge, blue vervain, tangled masses of yellow wood-sorrel, a clump of the "smallest of asters" — a familiar weed with none of the beauty one associates with the genus. The bumblebees are on the thistle heads, and big black-and-gold spiders lurk near the centers of their large wheel webs, geometric, traversed by a thousand delicate spokes. A golden array of striking long-bracted tickseed-sunflowers is characteristic of the locality and the season.

Standing before the long riding-hall and looking through the open doors at the farther end, one views the prairie landscape like a framed picture. But the foreground is dramatic rather than pictorial, for cavalrymen are training their horses there. The government mules serve for the mowing machines, but these nobler animals are learning to lie down at command, to hear without alarm the close report of a pistol, to carry double, to remain lying quiet when another horse and rider approach at a gallop. This sunny morning the riding hall itself is deserted, save for one young soldier training his horse to take the hurdles without shying. Over and over the performance was urged, encouraged by the rider's strong pull at the bits, by curses, and now and then by caressing of the tossing head and shivering neck. These were scenes of strenuous activity, but not far beyond the hall is an old orchard, a reposeful relic of the days when the grounds belonged to individuals — men of peace.

*McGregor*, September 9, 1908.

A few days ago we camped — in a hotel — at Clear Lake. Thence we marched — by train — about thirty-seven parasangs, to the borders of the Father of Waters. The route lay through the southern part of Winneshiek County, whose capital, Decorah, has no small reputation for landscape beauty. The county contains other postoffices with picturesque names — Burroak, Bluffton, Canoe, Castalia, Festina, Fort Atkinson, Hesper, Plymouth Rock, and Washington Prairie. Its principal streams are the Upper Iowa River, the Turkey River, and Canoe Creek. By leaving the train at Fort Atkinson and walking a few miles northwest, along the valley of the Turkey, we might have reached Spillville, a small Bohemian settlement on the banks of the river. It was in this village, one is told, that Dvorak composed the larger part of his ''New World Symphony,'' as well as a quartet and a quintet for strings, all embodying his theories of the true materials for American music. In our supposedly prosaic state, the mingling elements of this story are surely worth a passing attention — a Bohemian composer, working with enthusiasm in a Bohemian settlement on a river named for the most stately of American game birds, in a county named for an Indian chief; his composition based on melodies of African Americans, and boldly called the ''New World Symphony.''

From Clear Lake to McGregor some eighty or ninety species of plants in bloom were noted. Goldenrods and asters, as befits the season, are among the most conspicuous. Greene enumerates twenty kinds of goldenrod and thirty-eight kinds of aster found in the state. The goldenrods seem to vary more in form of inflorescence than in coloring; the asters are of all shades of white, violet, purple, and amethyst, as well as distinctly varied in height of stem, size and style of head, and social habit. Bring a sprig of prairie goldenrod to a southern maiden, and one may likely hear her say: "Why, that isn't anything like our Georgia goldenrod." Repeat the process with a girl of Ontario, and she may exclaim, "Perhaps this *is* your goldenrod, but it isn't half so fine as our Canadian species." Among our own varieties, the flat-topped ones look heavy and plebeian compared with those of more delicate racemose inflorescence; and the zigzag has quite an unusual and freakish appearance, suggestive of humorous caprice in nature when she planned its form. Surely one of the most brilliant asters now in bloom is the "New England." It is abundant along the roads about Charles City, and near Beulah its deep red-purple blossoms were grouped for miles and miles on both sides of the railroad, in one place making a unified color effect in a meadow an acre or more in extent. It sometimes has a strong but not unpleasant scent. Goldenrods and asters are among the last flowers to fail before the winter cold in the prairie country, as popular poetry has often recorded.[9]

The coneflowers are out in force. In woods near the shore of Clear Lake, a great clump of the "tall" species merited the popular name, for some of the stalks were seven or eight feet high. In this or that locality one readily finds the "sweet," the "thin-leaved," and the "Black-eyed Susans." Many kinds of mint are now blooming; probably none with more brilliant effect than the false dragonhead, now found in masses of pinkish-red bloom along the Cedar at Charles City, and the Shell Rock at Mason City. Sneezeweed is flourishing. This somewhat inartistic popular name might well be rejected for the resonant *helenium autumnale*, suggestive both of the season, and of the far-famed "matter of Troy." Along the valley of the Wapsipinicon, west of New Hampton, the beautiful cardinal-flower brought back memories of the cranberry bogs of Cape Cod, with some of these grand lobelias adding their colors to those of ripe cranberries, and of the red dresses worn by the pickers.

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[9] See Appendix, Note 5.

At Charles City one specimen of yellowish gentian was found which Greene records as "not common." Its former scientific name was *gentiana alba*, though apparently it was never called white gentian. The change to *gentiana flavida* is an example of alterations the amateur will favor, because they indicate more accurately some prominent characteristic of the plant in the field. Along the bluffs here the harebell is in bloom. With the writer, it has been associated with the wide treeless plains of Saskatchewan and with the rocky shores of Lake Superior, gray with fog, rather than with the homeland; but says White of Selborne, that region yields the richest results to the naturalist which is most carefully examined. Here also is its relative, a giant by comparison, the tall bellflower. Along the grassy summits of the high bluffs there yet linger a few blossoms of the smaller enchanter's nightshade, though the plant now seems to be mainly in burry fruit. There is something poetic in the English name, but the Latin name is almost a poem in itself — *circaea alpina.* The last edition of Gray's *Manual* gives its habitat thus: "deep woods, Labrador to Alaska, south to Georgia, Indiana, Michigan, northeastern Iowa, and South Dakota," and Greene notes it as "not common." Numerous other herbs and trees which the Hawkeyes may claim are found only in this section of the state — considered by many to be decidedly our most picturesque region. The river bluffs here are majestic. One may find routes for a ramble which are almost mountainous in general character; may wander till clear sense of distance and direction are lost, nothing appears but silent timbered summits and silent valleys with few residents, and with a sensation of excited bewilderment, one asks for guidance to the homeward path. In this section of the state the deer lingered late,[10] today in certain streams the brook trout are said to flash and rise and strike; here grow the balsam, the white pine, the canoe birch.

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[10] See Appendix, Note 16.

This is the time of year for the flocking of butterflies as well as birds. At Clear Lake hundreds of the small white and yellow kinds were fluttering, in intricate design, a few feet above the level of the main business street. Here today twelve or fifteen monarchs were sailing among the trees along the summit of the bluff, as if searching comrades for the long trip southward. The writer once saw the gathering of the hosts, in central Iowa, in September if memory is correct. Thousands of monarchs were clinging to the leaves and branches of the large soft maples of a country grove some distance from any road or house. They seemed very restless, detachments of a few scores or hundreds continually flying from the trees into the air for a few rods, then returning, as if uncertain whether to go or remain. The preparation for the southward flight of these butterflies is so conspicuous and interesting that even the large city dailies sometimes give a report of it. Two years ago, about the fifth of September, the *Minneapolis Journal* devoted perhaps a quarter of a column to an article on the subject by Miss Florence E. Lillie of St. Anthony Park. Miss Lillie told the reader of the distant goals of the flight — Florida, Central America, etc. She also stated that in 1905 she found six monarch eggs laid in September, hatched them indoors, and that the insects emerged from the pupa stage as butterflies in October, but were chilled to death by an unexpected drop in temperature about New Year's Day.[11]

Dragonflies also were darting along the sides of the bluffs today. We watched the flight of two tree locusts and heard the antiphonal calls of others. It is surprising how rarely one sees these cicadas unless by careful observation, even when their rasping notes are almost deafening.[12] Tonight the loud insect chorus along the shores of the moonlit river was persistent — soothing or vexatious according to one's temperament and mood.

Of the towns just over the Mississippi from our state, probably none are more interesting historically than Nauvoo and Prairie du Chien. The statue of Marquette alone might make a visit to the latter town worth while to every lover of the story of the Great Stream. Landing today from the little ferryboat, it was something of a botanical surprise to find abundant clumps of the stout gum-plant in vigorous bloom on the flats between the shore and the village proper. This plant has a certain attraction in its very boldness of contour, coarseness of flower and involucre, and decided "stickiness." The genus, named Grindelia, after a Russian botanist, is a western one in the main. One finds its representatives on the plains east from the Rockies, and on the clay or gravel bluffs of San Juan and Whidby Islands, in Puget Sound. Greene gives *Grindelia squarrosa* — the "broad-leaved gum-plant" — as "not common," and the writer has so far never observed it in Iowa.[13]

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[11] See Appendix, Note 6.

[12] See Appendix, Note 7.

James Rischell, in Black Hawk's *Autobiography*, says of the Foxes: "As late as 1763, their village at Prairie du Chien was more substantially built and provided with evidences of a higher civilization than any other Indian town in the Northwest." One can yet see Indians paddling across the river to the prairie of the dogs. It was somewhere in this vicinity also — just where is not clear from the *Autobiography* — that after the great massacre of Sacs along the Wisconsin River, the defeated Indians attempted to cross the Mississippi to possible safety. Black Hawk narrates the incident with characteristic simplicity: "As many women as could commenced swimming the Mississippi with their children on their backs; a number of them were drowned, and some shot before they could reach the opposite shore."

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[13] See Appendix, Note 8. Lewis describes it as "Taken at our camp at the Maha vilage August 17th 1804."

*Dubuque*, September 13, 1908.

Among some fifteen blossoming herbs noted along the streets here to-day is galinsoga — a rather curious little composite, now in flourishing bloom, bearing the name of a Spanish botanist. The Mexican War left some interesting heritage to the then new state of Iowa in the form of names for counties — Buena Vista, Cerro Gordo, Palo Alto. In other ways the war of 1898 has made familiar to Iowa people a considerable number of Spanish proper nouns not generally known before. But on the whole, the influence of the Spanish language on our life seems far less significant than that of the French. In this city, at least, associated with the French people from its origin, and no distant neighbor of Julien, Lourdes, Bellevue, Lamotte, and Martelle, Dr. Mariano Martinez de Galinsoga seems at first thought a somewhat alien name.

In a plot of Dubuque copied at St. Louis in 1843, lead is a prominent item in the records of location marks. We read, for example: "A: un chêne ayant pour témoins des morceaux de plomb;" "F: divers trous fouillés pour l'exploitation du minéral de plomb," etc. Conspicuous also in this map are the five islands and the great sweeping curves of the River. De Quincey, in a note to *The English Mail-coach*, objects to praise of the Mississippi based on its size. "The Tiber," he writes, "has contrived to make itself heard of in this world for twenty-five centuries to an extent not reached as yet by any river, however corpulent, of his [the American's] own land. The glory of the Thames is measured by the destiny of the population to which it ministers, by the commerce which it supports, by the grandeur of the empire in which . . . it is the most influential stream." One might reply by pointing out that De Quincey's own tribute to both Tiber and Thames is based on quantitative standards largely, but let that pass. Few Americans of any degree of culture are inclined to lessen the practical or poetic glories of any worthy English or continental river. Many of us have lingered in affectionate spirit by the peaceful meadow reaches of the Tweed near Abbotsford, and watched with delight the boatmen of the Seine, from the environs of Notre Dame de Paris. One at least has followed with almost passionate zest the wanderings of the Duddon from its source to the sea. Our danger today, one fancies, lies rather in the opposite direction — in ignorance of the true majesty of our own home waters, in hurried commercial life ashamed of silent meditation before the grandeur God has granted us for our own. Spirit of the English opium-eater, come some beautiful early summer morning, and look upon the stream of your former disdain from the forward hurricane deck of a slow-moving steamer. Yonder are picturesque villages nestled along noble bluffs, halfway between water and sky; yonder a gigantic raft of logs from forests haunted by deer and moose is floating down to serve the people of far-off commonwealths. On one side of our curving, zigzagging path, lie sandbars dim in the distance, where a stately heron now stands alone, unconcerned with national jealousy or literary strife. Festoons of frail mist linger along the western shores, or search like conscious spirits for a pathway inland through the ravines hollowed in the majestic headlands. Surely you, who fashioned such weird, wonderful cadences of musical prose from mere nothings of memory, will admire and reverence what Nature — or more than Nature — not the American, has here wrought for the inspiration of all responsive souls.

It is said that lead was seen at Dubuque by Le Seuer in 1700. Julien Dubuque came thither from Prairie du Chien in 1788 — making the first white settlement within the present area of Iowa. Black Hawk writes of the year 1833, "Passing down the Mississippi, I discovered a large collection of people in the mining country, on the west side of the river, and on the ground that we had given to our relation, Dubuque, a long time ago. I was surprised at this, as I had understood from our Great Father that the Mississippi was to be the dividing line between his red and white children, and he did not wish either to cross it. I was much pleased with this talk, as I knew it would be much better for both parties.'' Black Hawk often refers to the mines, and speaks of his own people as occasional workers in them.

Spaniard and Frenchman both may suggest the great Church of Latin Christianity. On this Sunday morning, crowds of men, women, and children are passing along the hilly streets to worship in the cathedral. Not many miles from the city, but yet remote from the comparatively stirring scenes here, is the Trappist Monastery, affirming, however feebly, in however mistaken manner, that the life of the spirit is more significant than the life of the flesh. As yet Iowa has no Matthew Arnold to record in noble verse the profound imaginative and spiritual sympathy even a skeptical scientific age may have with such a hermitage. We have with us daily the pressing concerns of the price of corn, the programs for women's clubs, the plans for town additions, the latest cures for neurasthenia. Yet even in Iowa, even today, there are men who have rejected the world, who have given themselves in the ancient manner to the Kingdom of Heaven, and rise in the earliest hours of the morning to pray for the redemption of man.

*From a photograph by Carl Stempel*

THE MISSISSIPPI NEAR FORT MADISON

*Muscatine*, September 14, 1909.

Coming down from the northern part of the state a day or two ago, among the evidences of the season observed from the car window were the golden masses of partridge pea, the cutting down of long ranks of corn, the fall ploughing, the gleaming white of a buckwheat field. Approaching the river from the west, we passed sunflowers, goldenrods, arrowhead, blazing star, the brown heads and foliage of a large cattail swamp — then came the less poetic but characteristic extended watermelon fields, with green or whitish fruit dotting the vines so that the total effect of a field suggested a flat, gigantic, punctate leaf.

This town is old for this region, and probably somewhat conservative. It has its share of historical interest and natural beauty among the river towns. Some of the old homes here have sent out well-known scholars and writers to the great world. Along the bluffs are some stately mansions that in site, view, furniture, and mural decorations would not shame an old-world aristocracy. Richman closes his interesting essay on "Mascoutin" with this imaginative reference to Black Hawk and his great rival: "Here, doubtless, on many occasions has he stood upon the commanding heights overlooking Mascoutin island and the Mississippi river, and gazed with awe upon the magnificent and extended prospect. . .

Here also the eloquent and wily Sac chief Keokuk used to hunt and dwell; the name Keokuk lake still serving to designate an expansion at one point of the waters of Muscatine slough." From the point of view of the more remote counties of the state, it was near here, also, that the death of Black Hawk occurred, the desecration of his grave, and years later, the destruction of his very bones by accidental fire.

One may see the pearl fishers of the great River dredging from their peculiar boats as far north at least as McGregor, but the principal button factories in the state are now located here. One reads at intervals in some Iowa paper of the finding of a pearl of great price, either in the Mississippi or in some tributary stream. Such news adds a spice of romance in a commonwealth a satirical writer has declared "hopelessly sane." The wild turkeys and deer have vanished; but now and then a golden eagle or a timber wolf appears to give one a sense of the irreducible wildness of nature, and the pearls wait yet for those who search and can find.

This section of the state has a floral if not a faunal character somewhat different from that of the northeast counties. Of our large number of native trees, for example, according to Greene the habitat of the white pine, the balsam fir, the American yew, and the canoe birch is limited to the northeast portion. Probably comparatively few citizens know that these trees are natives within our borders. According to the same authority, the pecan and the redbud are at home only in this southeastern part of the state.[14]

Today the apples are ripe in the orchards, the katydids are in emphatic voice along the well shaded streets, the sunlight is bright, with quite summery warmth. It is pleasant to ramble in leisurely fashion down the long highway bridge that leads to Illinois. It has no great structural beauty, but refreshing breezes blow over it, and it affords wonderful views of wooded islands and shores far up and down the river. There are boats in mid-channel, and there are sandbars where perhaps a great blue heron may soon alight. In Muscatine the bridge rises out of a fairly busy city street; at the eastern terminus it leads into a country road, without sign of town or village. The banks at the Illinois end are now aglow with yellow composites, and the air is heavy with the scent of fetid marigold. With reference to the acquisition of our national domain, we have passed in this bridge journeying from the days of Napoleon, from the soil of the Louisiana Purchase, to the days of George the Third, to the "Territory of the original thirteen states as recognized by Great Britain in 1783."

The road bridges of Iowa in general do not make a very strong esthetic appeal, yet some of them are not without interesting associations, at least for native sons. Under the small wooden bridges over creeks and sloughs the phœbe builds year after year, sheltering often the cowbird's young with her own. From the rough planks one may look down in winter on sheets of slaty ice, white-edged, or brown weed stalks bending under snow or encased in shining frozen rain. The long, high-roofed inland river bridge often has quite a charm, especially when approached by a woodland road suddenly turning to cross the stream. The horses' hoofs ring loudly on the heavy flooring. Perhaps some stroller stands leaning over the railing, gazing at dark waters, peering into pools where the catfish famous over a county may be lurking — sometimes seen, never yet a captive. An old rowboat may be moored by the dense shrubbery along the bank. At night one drives cautiously toward such a bridge, listening for other approaching teams; gazing off, perhaps, far down stream hoping to catch a gleam from the light in the home farmhouse. In times of great freshets the lesser bridges are frequently swept bodily from their moorings, and landed in a neighboring cornfield; while against the end supports of the larger structures great masses of drift are lodged, and the waters beneath are angry with swift current and foamy whirlpool, dark with soils stolen from the crumbling banks, and rising till they threaten to flood the floor.

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[14] See Appendix, Note 9.

# OCTOBER

## OCTOBER

She is coming! She is coming!
  Crowned with leaves of crimson dye,
With grape stains on her beauteous lips,
  And laughter in her eye;
Dodging the fast falling nuts
  Jack Frost is scattering free,
While fire, unconsuming, rests
  On every bush and tree;
With smoke-veiled face now smiling o'er us,
Our dear October stands before us!

(Tacitus Hussey, in *The River Bend*)

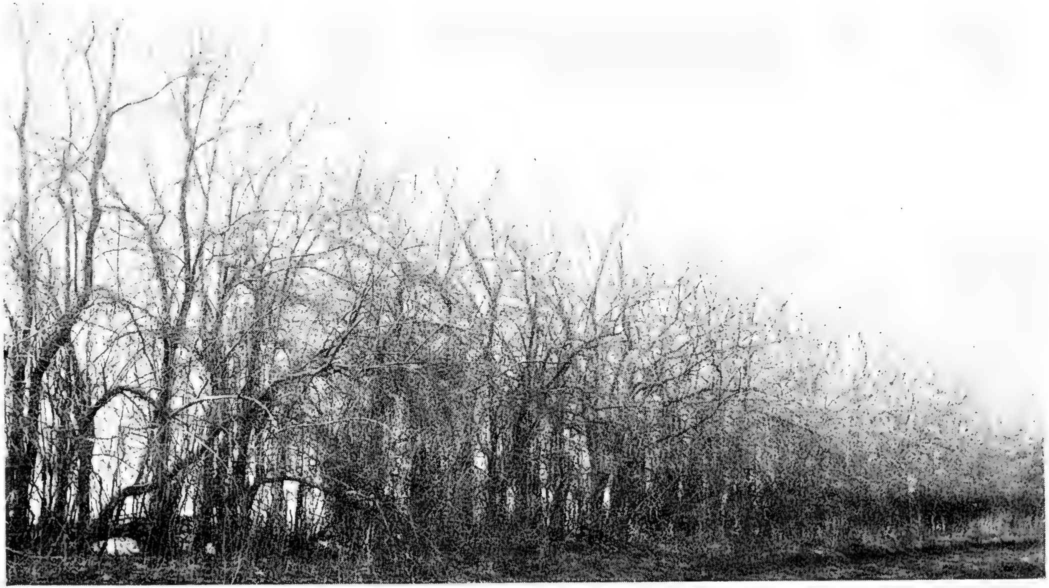
# OCTOBER

*Grinnell*, October 11, 1884.

October is supposed to be an especially beautiful month in this region, but it is sometimes disappointing. A private record for last year shows only about ten days of fine weather, a good many rainy days, and more or less haze, mist, fog, sleet, and snow. In 1880, the sixteenth was as "cold as winter," but from the eighteenth to the twenty-first we had clear, crisp weather, nearly ideal for the season.

Today some of us followed the course of a little stream from the edge of town, southwestward, to the Sugar Creek woods. The boys of the town are familiar with Sugar Creek, Big Bear Creek, Little Bear Creek, and some of them with Rock Creek, and many a nameless "slough"; but we have nothing in the neighborhood that we call a brook. The dictionaries do not seem to define these terms for small streams according to our local usage. Here we think of a "brook" as belonging to a more hilly region than ours, with a rapid current, tumbling over boulders or winding about rocky precipices — a type of waterway found way back east or up north or way out west. Yet this stream of our ramble today has reaches of fairly deep channel for its size, flows here and there over sandy bars, pebbles, small boulders; has miniature waterfalls that make a gurgling sound, and all in all has more of brook character than many of the streams near town.

In the higher hard clay or loam banks there are holes where we look for bank swallow nests in the spring. The principal trees near the channel are willows and gnarled wild crab apples — now with fruit about as ripe as it ever gets, though green and hard. On the levels above the slopes of the valley are osage hedges along the borders of farm fields, where in places one can find bittersweet and wild grapes. On the more open summits the prairie chickens sometimes gather in the spring to hold their love tournaments — curious proceedings in both sounds and movements. From a hillside now and then one can pick up a sparkling geode. After crossing a rough, rather remote country road, the stream runs through a hilly farm owned by a man who lives in town. He is a graduate of an eastern college who came west not to seek his fortune in the usual sense, but to recover the lost fortune of health. There are few if any log cabins now left in this vicinity, but the small house on this farm is suggestive of pioneer life, and the farm, not close to neighbors, composed of some rough hilly lands,



*From a photograph by Cornelia Clarke*

Osage Orange Hedge

and near fairly heavy timber, always seems in some degree lonely and hazardous.

We saw one flock of ten or twelve meadowlarks, some of them singing in tones that suggested a longing for the warmer south. The horned larks in flocks of fifteen or twenty were darting about the pastures, persistent in their faint warblings, while now and then one would light on a fence and sing a monotonous ditty over and over, with much enthusiasm. A large hawk, perhaps a marsh harrier, was sailing in low, wide circles, finally sweeping down to a fence post, where he tipped his big body up and down till he found equilibrium. The bluebirds are now in family flocks, keeping fairly close together, singing only the delicate notes that seem to suggest languor or pathos. In the woods the white-throated sparrows were flitting about, on or near the ground, silent except for occasional low call notes. They appeared to be rather shy. Thousands of grasshoppers were lively in and over the grasses. Here and there a late sprig of goldenrod shone with undimmed brightness, and there were a good many violets in the fields, though not in the profusion of spring days. The violets have been blooming for about two weeks.

*Davenport*, October 25, 1885.

For a few days here we have had perfect October weather — calm, clear skies; clear, sweet atmosphere bathing the terraced bluffs, the broad river winding between wooded banks and the spires and walls of Davenport and the sister cities across the Mississippi.

About the sawmills one finds scenes quite unknown to the inland country. Along the shore lie great log-rafts anchored, waiting for the endless chain and the roar of rapid steel teeth. Lumbermen stalk with the nonchalance of the expert over the dipping, heaving, slippery logs, selecting, one by one, the next victims for the hungry jaws. At least once in a lifetime, a person can watch with keen interest the dumb, creeping approach of the monsters up the long runway, listen to the snarling crescendo and groaning diminuendo of the destroyer — and shaper, maker — and whiff with zest the scents of water-soaked bark, newly cut lumber, and mountainous heaps of sawdust almost as fragrant and as golden as the straw stack beside the thrashing-machine. The logs all bear the brand of some company; from the northern forest where the axes fell to these shores where cant-hook, peavey, and chain guide to the great saws, this industry is a private one.

There are in this neighborhood reminders of a more destructive industry, and one too important and extensive for private control. At old Fort Armstrong a few cannon and mortars still frown down the river. We visited the Arsenal. Here are perhaps a dozen very large, bare, forbidding looking buildings, filled with machinery, ammunition, and other military equipment. In the yard are hundreds of cannon, most of them of recent make and intended for service, but some of them trophies of the Revolutionary, Mexican, and Civil wars. Some are decorated with coats-of-arms, and bear inscriptions in English, French, or other foreign language. The cannon were all unmounted, and so appeared strangely to one whose chief ideas of big guns were gained from Fourth of July saluting specimens, or from pictures in books. Near at hand are pyramids of cannon balls and shells, packed with mathematical precision. Just now there are only some sixty men at work in the arsenal shops, but one is told that in emergency the plant could equip about 2,500 fighting men a day. The present force is engaged in making harnesses, stoves, etc., for other arsenals and for the army posts. To the peaceful common citizen the whole place seemed a rather drowsy one, and the business one involving wasteful expense, but the loyal officer who conducted us about the grounds declared if the government entered into war within a century it would pay to maintain this arsenal.

We listened one day to an instructive lecture by

Professor Frederick Starr, an enthusiastic young naturalist from Coe College. The famous Academy of Science here is an interesting place to visit for anyone who cares for natural history. Here at present among other objects can be seen a few live rattlesnakes, the first ones some of us had seen in Iowa, though we were born and had always lived in the state.

To one living in the central prairie counties, the hills here seem semi-mountainous, and a few days spent partly in climbing them, up and down, brought aching muscles, and a sense of having had quite a novel experience. About the only birds to greet us on this visit were a chickadee, singing his ''real song,'' and a robin volunteering a brisk, merry farewell to the season from the top of a tall poplar.

*Grinnell*, October 22, 1886.

Walked to the woods on the nineteenth and on the twentieth. A few frogs still continue their croaking, which for some reason nearly always gives one a sense of loneliness. Insect life is yet in almost summer richness. The belated sprays of goldenrod are haunted by little greenish beetles, about a quarter of an inch long; and on one sprig we found a single *lytta atrata* crawling. On the ground the black carabidæ run to cover. One or more of these beetles can often be found under a stone, a piece of lumber or a bit of bark, and they seem abundant till late in the season. Among other kinds of beetle commonly seen here, but in summer rather than in autumn, are the lightning-bugs, the june-bugs, the ladybirds, the whirligigs, and carrion beetles. Some kinds of bugs are still lively, and small moths, little white and yellow butterflies with an occasional monarch represent the lepidoptera. A hawk-moth, a firefly, or a june-bug would now be almost as much out of season as a snowball or an apple blossom. In the little pools of the borrowpits along the railroad half-grown tadpoles hide under the weed roots, and gyratidæ dart about with many sudden changes of course. Once in a while one of these impulsive creatures when disturbed will shoot to the bottom of the pool, plunge its head into the mud and wait there, apparently in fear, like a child with its head under the pillow in a thunderstorm. Grasshoppers and locusts are numerous; and the shrill voices of the crickets rise on every side. With a little patience one can approach very near a singing cricket and watch his method of procedure. When your eyes are less than a foot from his wing-fiddle, there is something amusing in the way he lifts his upper wings, making an acute angle like that of a house-roof, and moves them out and over the edges of the inner wings. There is something in the process that suggests a rehearsal rather than a full public performance.[15]

Goldfinches, mainly in dark winter plumage, are now busy feeding on weed seeds along the roads. We saw one flock of about twenty-five and lesser groups, welcoming the familiar "I've cheated ye," "I've cheated ye." One flock of six bluebirds seemed to linger about a particular fence post as if loath to leave it. When we approached quite near them, four birds, perhaps the young, flew off. Finally the other two left the perch, but one of them rose and sank in graceful lines not far away, soon returning to a telegraph wire just above the post. In the post we found the nest — a perpendicular hole in the top about three inches wide and ten deep. This "old home" did not seem to merit so much affection as the birds apparently felt for it. The bluebirds are not always in melancholy mood at this time of year; one day we saw one chasing another in lively playful manner, and on sunny days they sometimes sing with somewhat of the spring fervor. The horned larks are in the fields, in flocks, tsipping and flitting from the ground as one approaches, but we heard no sky song. The killdeer was still here on the third, and juncos and white-throated sparrows were in town in flocks when the month opened. The sparrows sang a little, which seems a rather rare favor in their autumnal visits here. Today we heard a robin. The solitary robins lingering into late October or into November are very different birds from the firstcomers of some sunny, thawing day of early March or late February.

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[15] See Appendix, Note 12.

The goldenrod now in bloom seems all of one species — a tall-stemmed one. The red clover is in bloom everywhere though nowhere in summer profusion. White clover, dandelions, yellow wood-sorrel, and shepherd's purse are among the few familiar plants now in bloom. Coming home across the open rolling fields we gathered quite a bouquet of violets, looking carefully for them in the gathering dusk and picking them with chilling fingers. These were of the kind the boys call "bird's-foot," with parted leaves very unlike the rounded leaves of the "wood violet," and usually with blossoms of much lighter color than those of that species.[16] The blossoming plants we found in the fields this month had exceedingly small leaves and short stems. A long, hot summer followed by heavy rains, without heavy frost, may account for this October bloom. Two years ago both the field violets and the wood violets were in bloom in this month. As for the robins so for the violets, the rather rare autumn blossoms, seen the same day with goldenrod, make a very different appeal from the May flowers, sharing attention with strawberry blossoms, puccoon, false indigo, and buttercups.[17]

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[16] See Appendix, Note 13.

[17] See Appendix, Note 22.

*Cedar Falls*, October 31, 1891.

The first half of the month brought a few pleasant days, with sunsets of more or less autumnal beauty, but many days were cold and rainy. Most of the insect voices passed with September, and the orchestral music of the birds dwindled to feeble passages on a few minor instruments. For a period, one heard almost daily the practical notes of the nuthatch; the robin chirped a little now and then; once the song of a meadowlark came in at open windows, as full and clear as in spring. The bluebirds lingered to the middle of the month — long enough to greet the returning snowbirds, who flitted in wayside bushes, showing white feathers prophetic of winter landscapes. Grapes from the abundantly provided vines of our host were among the delicacies of the season. The bloom of red clover with the contrasting gold of corn and pumpkins gave almost the only rich coloring in the world of herbs. By the tenth, the leaves were falling in considerable numbers along the streets, but there was yet no brilliance of foliage.

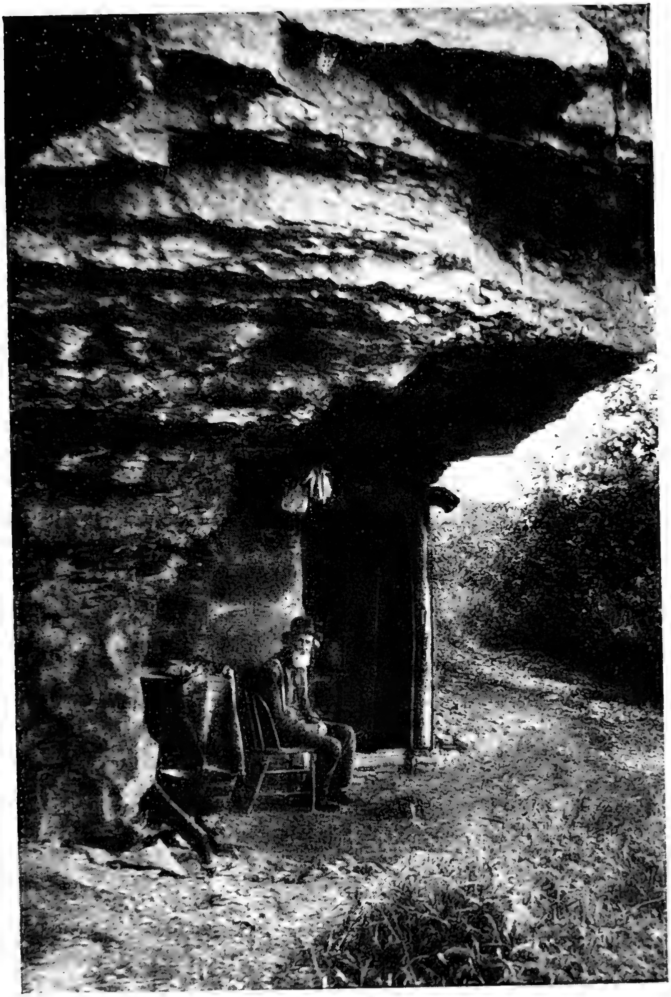
Suddenly, it seemed, about the middle of the month, the hard maples began to show golden tints, and in a few days were in all their glory. Coming home from church on the eighteenth we passed through a kind of arcade or cloister fashioned by maples with low-hanging branches. There was then full sunlight and one seemed to be admitted into some sanctuary of sylvan deities, bathed in an entrancing, weird, mystic light. There were, however, some places along the walks where maple fruit lay so thickly that it was almost impossible to pass without slipping. As the days passed, faster and faster fell the general foliage over lawns, walks, and parkings. Bonfires gleamed brightly at twilight. The children soon had ample materials for the many games they enjoy with fallen leaves — house-making in which ground plans are sufficient, without walls or roof; fox and geese in the wheel with many a leafy spoke.

On the seventeenth the air seemed full of small brownish beetles often seen at this time of year. On the twenty-fifth, after wintry days when a heavy overcoat was needed and tennis playing in low shoes was sacrifice to the god of grit, summer temperature returned — for a day. The grackle flocks have not been noted now for a week or more. Today a blustering cold wind is blowing the dust through the smallest cracks and whirling the fallen leaves into fantastic heaps. The hard maples show only bare branches. Scarcely a bird note can be heard, and even the jays seem to skulk about the gardens as if forlorn or ashamed to remain when so many fellow birds have departed for the winter. Tomorrow comes November.

*Sioux City, circa* October 5, 1893.

The group of commonwealths either traversed or bound by the Missouri River includes seven states; the group bearing similar relations to the Mississippi includes ten states. The unique relations to one or both of the great streams of Montana, Minnesota, Missouri, and Louisiana are familiar to everybody, or can be seen at a glance on the map. Missouri and Iowa, again, are the only states among the fifteen which in a geographical sense may be said to possess both rivers.

A certain kind of half humorous, half serious discussion of the comparative greatness of the two rivers — begun how long ago? — enters into popular conversation from time to time. Looking north and slightly east from this town one can see in imagination the sources of the Mississippi, some three hundred and fifty miles away, in a region of prairie lakes and woods. The river remains essentially a prairie stream from its source to its meeting with the great tributary if not clear to the sea. Considered locally its channel is an almost continuous series of curves, but conceived in a large way with reference to the geography of the entire United States, its course for so long a river is in a remarkably direct line. The sources of the Missouri are nearly or quite a thousand miles from these bluffs by which one wanders today. It rises in a mountain region, absorbs the waters of many



A Cave Dweller on the Missouri

British tributaries and its general course is marked by four conspicuous changes of direction. For many hundred miles of its upper course it is a river of plateau and plain rather than of prairie proper. Its familiar nickname, ''Big Muddy,'' is to a certain extent appropriate, but one ought not to forget that its current carries along with loam and clay washed from thousands of miles of crumbling banks, waters that rushed from foothill springs and mountain cascades.

Placid as the river is today, and commonplace as one may consider the Nebraska cornfields on its western border, only a bold imagination would attempt to summarize its poetic interest, past and present, martial and industrial, geological, biological, and human. Some ten or twelve years ago a friend descended the river by steamer from Fort Buford to Bismarck — or perhaps lower. On a recently preceding trip the steamer's progress had been interrupted by a large herd of buffalo swimming across its path. Three years ago several wagonloads of refugees came hurrying into a Dakota town on the Jim, fleeing from the terrible Sitting Bull, who was on the warpath ''beyond the Missouri.''

There are noble hill sites here for private residences and public buildings. Between the hills picturesque ravines wind down toward the valley, with bruised slopes that give evidence of heavy freshets. Standing on a bridge across one of these ravines, gazing down into woody gloom, one was told by a passer-by that a murder had been committed there the night before. It seemed a place that might well be chosen after darkness fell for deeds of crime, or better for romance, of no mean order. Perhaps drink bore no relation to this particular murder, but today one can count at least fifteen places along Fourth Street where liquor is openly sold. Though the fact gives no true index to life here, some Iowa citizens probably think of Sioux City chiefly with reference to its corn-palaces, its Indian name — and the Haddock murder.

Late this afternoon a wagon drawn by small, scraggy horses — perhaps they should be termed ponies — passed slowly along one of the principal business streets. On the driver's seat was a benevolent looking old Indian, in cap and other somewhat dilapidated paleface clothing, and wearing eye glasses. In the bottom of the wagon squatted two Indian women, one with a small child, the women appearing in dress and manner much less happily adjusted to civilization than the driver. The equipage disappeared, the ponies still moving at a slow walk, into the hill country back of the city. Not much in this quiet incident suggested Sitting Bull, the Spirit Lake Massacre, or any event or prophecy of terror symbolized by the word "Sioux."

*Grinnell*, October 27, 1902.

The fickleness of April is proverbial. Looking over local October records for the past few years, one is forced to admit also the changeable temper of this month in our region. The truth seems to be that each month has a comparatively small number of constants and a large number of variants. The weather is probably less determinate than the processes of bird and plant life, vary as these do to some extent from year to year, and dependent in part as they are on the weather. Pope criticized Spenser for attempting, in *The Shepherd's Calendar*, to individualize each of the twelve months; the Augustan boy poet resting content with the four seasons in his *Pastorals*. Possibly Pope was right, for English conditions; at least when one reads the October of the *Calendar*, one finds absolutely nothing that gives distinctive character to the month.

Last year and this, October has given opportunity for much pleasant outdoor life — rambles across fields, campfires by hedges, wheel rides over hard, smooth roads, drives to richly colored woods. From such excursions one brings back golden brown oak branches, a pocket full of hazel-nuts — the nuts of less certain quality than the burs —, perhaps large scarlet haws from some woodland thorn tree, or chains of bittersweet from hedgerow or thicket. The sharp, stout spines of some of the thorns are in their way almost as beautiful as the fruit. The "climbing bittersweet," also known, according to Gray's *Manual*, as "waxwork," has this interest, rather unusual for our more familiar plants — there are only four species of its family in the United States. The *Manual* does not often abandon scientific description to indulge in literary comment, but it has this to say of *Celastrus scandens*: "The opening orange-colored pods, displaying the scarlet covering of the seeds, are very ornamental in autumn." More ornamental, some may think, when seen in crisp October air decorating some roadside shrub or forest tree, than on the parlor mantel or over the living-room picture. While many delight in the fruit of this species, probably few know its June blossoms; just as many rejoice in the blossoms of asters and goldenrods who give little attention to their fruit. The *Manual* gives no habitat for the species, but it must have a wide range east and west. It is found in New England, and may be gathered late in October along the banks of the Solomon, in western Kansas. Along with wild roses, some of the thorns,[18] mountain ash, and "buckbush," it is among the plants best known for their red or yellowish autumn fruit.

On these October rambles if one does not admire such treasures, one may watch the cottontails leaping along the road, listen to the spring-like calls of the bob-whites, or, early in the month, stroll into some friendly farmer's yard for a feast of watermelons or of grapes now full sweet and purple tinted — of the good fruit, the last seems the best. One may enjoy the scarlet ivy foliage and the red-golden tints developing on the hard maples. Last year some hazelnuts brought home one day were spread out on a level area of roof to dry in sun and air. The village squirrels discovered them in surprisingly short time, and made spirited and frequent predatory excursions to the store. The antics of the squirrels were worth far more than the nuts. Search in the right place and one may find violets, as in the years of auld lang syne. Two years ago they were in bloom in this vicinity on October twenty-ninth. Opportunity for a walk might surely have given a November record.

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[18] See Appendix, Note 14.

But not all October days are favorable to country expeditions, if one demands stimulating air, tinted sunsets, or dry roads for feet or wheels. There come days even near the close of the month not merely of rain or threatening clouds, but of warm, heavy atmosphere, wilting, languorous. On the seventeenth this year after a fine morning a heavy thunderstorm passed over in the late afternoon and evening. It was so dark at four o'clock that the electric lights were needed. October is not infrequently the season of first snow fall, though this is sometimes recorded, for poetic purposes, when amounting to little more than a few flying flakes. An interesting snowstorm occurred here on the twenty-fifth of the month in 1898. One awoke to look out on a white world, and snow fell more or less all day, driven by fairly strong winds. Surprised citizens trudged along the sidewalks carrying new snow shovels. Many branches of trees were bent till they touched the ground, large limbs were broken off by the weight of the snow, and there were many other wintry effects not often seen in October.

There are many fine moonlit evenings during the month, favorable to strolling lovers, boys playing shouting games of search, campfires gleaming cozily by mid-field hedges. Hallowe'en is often a festival when outdoor sorceries are as natural and as thrilling as those indoors with sheeted ghosts, candles in hollowed pumpkins, nuts, apples, and cider, festoons of bittersweet, scarlet branches of oaks and maples. The heavens in October declare their glory not merely by flooding moonlight, sparkling stars, and meteors, but now and then in rarer form not peculiar to the season. This year near the middle of the month there was a total eclipse of the moon; many years ago a brilliant comet, visible at four or five o'clock in the morning, flamed in the eastern skies during the latter half of the month and into November.

*Albia to New Sharon*, October 20, 1906.

At seven o'clock the low morning sun was shining beyond pastures and meadows. The strong light defined sharply the beaded heads of the tall wild sunflowers, the scattered clumps of milkweed stalks, gave almost summery greenness to the great mullein leaves, stained with rich mahogany the weed masses in the swamp, and silvered the milkweed pods with their exposed tangles of silk. The dry herbs and shrubs are not without interest at this time of year in lieu of blossoming plants. The high sentinel mulleins, in great variety of form, the traceries of aster and goldenrod stems, the unlighted candelabra of the vervain, the miniature forests of the buckbushes, are carved into sculpturesque relief by clear air and favoring sun. Neither are autumn colors missing today. Although the osage hedges are dark and the boxelders nearly bare, the small willows along the streams are partly yellowish green, partly in clear lemon yellow, partly in bright green. For many miles our route is flanked by low, rounded hills, intersected by small ravines, and now the summits and slopes are quite brilliant with the fine russet and bronze tints of the scrub oak copses. These oaks also still show some green or yellowish green.

Here and there is a bit of richly scarlet sumac. Through one field of yellow-brown corn a highway bridge gleams in conspicuous white. The cabbage fields, though unpoetic perhaps, show rows of vivid almost startling green, against a background of predominant brown. The right-of-way, recently burned off, runs for miles and miles on both sides of the track in charred brown-black ribbons, embossed with hummocks of soil and root clumps.

In some of the wide cornfields are harvesting teams, the horses nibbling the standing corn while the farmer hurls the gathered ears with a dull thud against the high-boarded side of the wagon; in others the cattle are breakfasting, stretching out their heads to reach an ear, and twisting their necks to wrench it from the stalk. In the cornfields, too, are small flocks of meadowlarks, active but songless. One catches an occasional gleam from the white tail feathers of a bird just rising or alighting. There are scattered pumpkins in the fields and a great heap of them at the corner of one field. Many gossamer threads float over the barb wire fences; a large hawk sails slowly above the woods and a large, loose flock of crows is passing leisurely. ''As the crow flies'' indicates a brief line of direction, but by no means a modern rate of speed. Old birdsnests are now exposed in hedge, bush, and tree. It has been dry, roads are somewhat dusty, and one sees few recently ploughed fields; the dull black surfaces of dry marshes must serve as substitutes for newly turned furrows. Here too are black railroad embankments in which coal slack has been extensively used. These banks and the arrival at ''Coalfield'' remind the traveler that he is passing near a considerable area of coal mining; but this carload of freshly cut cordwood, and the dark masses of fairly heavy timber whence it came, are perhaps of more poetic suggestion than the mineral fuel. The streams are all open and flowing, though with little water. Streams and ponds are littered with fallen foliage and in one village several children are out early raking yard and parking and burning the dead leaves.

Other men in days gone by have traveled to and from this section by more primitive methods of transportation than a railway train. We pass through Eddyville. Here Ezra Meeker arrived by team from Burlington in the fall of 1851; here he spent part of the bitterly cold winter that followed, and from here he set out in April, 1852, to cross the plains and mountains to Oregon, with ox team and prairie schooner. From Oskaloosa, William Edmundson started for California, in 1850, keeping a diary of the journey, not yet printed. The ox team was not a rarity in our boyhood days at Grinnell. The town boys sometimes played at driving oxen, part of the charm consisting of those magic shouted words, "Gee — Haw, Buck." This past September one could see the ox teams slowly wending their way toward Swift Current from the Mennonite Reserve seventeen miles away, and teams of four oxen disking in the unfenced fields. One was told that it was with these faithful creatures that some of the settlers along the Saskatchewan came to market, making the one hundred miles and more in about eight days. The ox like the crow is no symbol of mechanical speed, but rather of the slow, patient processes that alone can conquer the desert and forest for the needs of man.

*Des Moines*, October 21, 1906.

Last night the atmosphere was sultry and there were considerable flashes of lightning in the distance. This morning a few sprinkles of rain fell, promise perhaps that the period of drouth may soon end. The rivers are very low. The channel of the Coon shows mainly an exposed bed of silt, and over the Locust Street dam of the Des Moines the shallow water passes at one side leaving the other side dry. A number of fishermen were trying their luck in this neighborhood, some angling from the dam itself, some from the shores, while a negro in a dark flat-bottomed boat was pulling in a row of lines attached to a swaying cable fixed to the bank at one end. Fishermen in a fair-sized town are in a way even more picturesque than those wading in rapid streams in mountain forests, where the roaring of cataracts is heard instead of the rumble and clang of street traffic. Some of the fishermen along the docks of the Chicago parks are romantic figures, and their occasional camp-fires on the sands near some aristocratic hotel bring a strange sense of wildness into the artificiality of the great metropolis. To the layman this present season is not commonly associated with the sport or labor of fishing. He thinks more habitually of early spring expeditions, long summer days by river or by lake lily-beds, perhaps of lines or spears searching beneath December ice. A friend wrote from Clear Lake on the fifth of this month: ''Great numbers of fish are caught daily, mostly perch. We caught a large number this morning and sixty-two this afternoon, including two small pickerel.''

Along the trolley path to the Fort now are bare vineyards, the dull scarlet of raspberry bushes, and loose heaps of freshly cut kaffir corn. This grain and alfalfa are among the comparatively new arrivals in our state. In this central section in days long past, there were great fields of wheat, rye, and barley — many more than one is likely to find today. The town lad often tried his hand, to the amusement of his country cousin, at weaving straw bands and binding the wheat into bundles, on some hot summer day — processes which in these days of machinery seem almost as antiquated as making tallow candles or riding a high bicycle.

At the Fort the large plaza is still in rich green, with red clover in scattered bloom, crickets making low music, and horned larks warbling short subdued strains from their concealed shelter in the grass. As we strolled across this open parade ground about half-past five, we heard the bugles antiphonal across the half-mile or so of space; then came the deep roar and the wandering smoke of the sunset gun, the flag fell sliding from its tall staff — and officially the day was done. A little later, electric lights suddenly gleamed around the quadrangle and the moon rose beyond the barracks. Little groups of soldiers were walking about, or sitting on the piazzas of the grim rectangular military homes; but the scene as a whole produced a sense not merely of Sunday quiet, but of temporary desertion. Few horses were to be seen in the stable yards. Many of the troops had recently left for Cuba, and it is said a great crowd gathered in the city streets to see them off, for the movement of considerable bodies of regulars is still something of a novelty in the capital of this peaceful agricultural state.

The hardy little wood-sorrel is one of a very few herbs still in bloom here. In the street cars one sees groups of young women returning from parks or country carrying richly tinted oak branches.

There are enough bare trees along the river banks to give a sombre November effect. While October is known as the month of finest autumn foliage, for a complete survey September and November must be included. In Kansas, in some seasons, the coloring is very beautiful till the middle of November, and some striking and characteristic effects may wait till that month. Miss Cooper gives only the following note for November, dated on the third: "The woods are not absolutely bare, however, there are yet patches in the forest where the warm coloring of October has darkened into a reddish brown; and here and there a tree still throws a fuller shadow than belongs to winter." The region of which she writes is nearly in the latitude of central Iowa, and many kinds of tree which she mentions (though she rarely gives the exact species) are found in Iowa. All know the beginning and end of the process from summer greenness to winter bareness; but few have the patience or leisure to follow the stages in much detail. One might, if life were spacious enough for such pursuits, note each kind of tree, each favorite individual, year after year. Within the field of ordinary observation few better opportunities to revise and extend our color vocabulary are found than those afforded by autumn foliage. Miss Cooper's color terms are interesting. Such apparent inconsistencies as are found are probably readily explained by variations of locality and nature's caprice in the chronology of color development at this season.[19]

*Grinnell*, October 22, 1906.

Walking through the sleeping town a little past midnight, one heard from the tree-tops low, elusive bird notes, apparently of sparrow quality. Very possibly they came from white-throated sparrows, which were very numerous here a few days ago. These delicate nocturnal calls of migratory birds in the autumn, heard from the branches or often from wanderers in misty weather above the electric lights, have a strange fascination — that of the unknown, the transitory, the intangible. Night songs may be heard from various species in summer, but these dim call notes of passing travelers make a different appeal. Quite different in effect also were the bluebird's warble coming in at the window this morning, before one arose, the later prosaic labor-song of the nuthatch, and the loud, resolute if melancholy cry of the flicker borne along the afternoon wind. The myrtle warblers and the kinglets have been abundant here of late, but we saw none today. The autumnal migration of the warblers, partly because of the confusing condition of plumage in adults and young, is a branch of bird-lore in which the mere amateur is seldom proficient.

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[19] See Appendix, Note 15.

In the afternoon, it was "November-like," with clouded skies and a chilling wind from the north. The back-yard is littered with fallen leaves, and dead, damp foliage occupies the catbird's nest in the barberry hedge. The scarlet barberries are shriveling, though some decorated the table in the dining-room today. The asparagus bed is mostly of rich yellow color, mixed with some green, the effect being like that of tidal shore waters carrying yellowish masses of weeds and touched by sunlight and wind. The cherry and apple trees are still in fairly full, quite green foliage, one hard maple tree is bare at the top with scattered areas of leaves on the lower limbs, while the poplar and the box-elder are nearly bare, and the ash fruit clings to a leafless tree.

Hereafter follows a paragraph or two of sentiment, if not of sentimentality. Let the reader who will, look and pass. Low in the garden shelter — of current bushes, barberries, and the grape arbor — a solitary mockingbird lurked today, silent, with huddled form, as if cold, or frightened, or lost or lonely. This is a rare visitor to central Iowa, and seemed especially alien on such a chilly day. We have a very dim memory of a visit of this southern singer to another back-yard of this town, many years ago; but we never knew and never will know whether the memory rested on fact. It is even possible that the supposed stranger was only a catbird, shameful as that confession may be. But — while to the scientist nothing is so vexatious as uncertainty, to the sentimentalist there is charm not only in the first discovery, in the personal rarity that may be a neighbor's commonplace, but even in the uncertainties, the forever elusive. What poetry of the failing quest in the story of the woman from New England who sought here for years, with her revered eastern botany as guide, to identify the waterleaf blooming yearly under the wild plum thicket in her yard — who died, perhaps, with the secret still unknown. There is delight now in remembering those years when flocks of Harris sparrows whistled along the osage hedges in plain sight — yet were not so much as named in any of the bird books at our command. The first scarlet tanager, lying dead in a college student's hand in the Sugar Creek woods, had a little richer color than any tanager we have seen since. The "wood robin" pointed out by a neighbor one summer evening in our front-yard cottonwood, was more of a thrush than any later acquaintance of his kind; and the first Baltimore oriole whose nest we saw hanging from a branch of that same tree — have any other orioles had quite the same penetrating, thrilling voice, and brilliance of contrasting orange and black? The first discovered American bittern, heard afar booming across solitary meadows as spring dusk deepened into darkness, remains individualized among all birds. That summer tanager we saw or dreamed we saw, once and once only, has become poetic, a romantic myth, a disembodied spirit we would not wish to clothe in flesh and feathers. *Birds of the Orchard, Birds of the Seashore*, and *Birds of My Boyhood* — and yours, whose heart has not yet been entirely silenced by hours in laboratory, classroom, library, or office. The showy orchis, also, found but once in the familiar woodland, and never seen since anywhere, living or dead! Let some few such memories remain — haunting, fragmentary memories never to be rebuked, and never to pass into the clear daylight of science.

The mockingbird, however, is no mere dream in the annals of American nature-lore. As early as 1690, in spite of the fact that the nightingale and skylark continued to be favorite birds with American poets, a schoolmaster of Pennsylvania wrote — the bird itself a polyglot, why not in Latin? —

> Hic avis est quaedam dulci celeberrima voce
> Quae variare sonos usque canendo solet.

The ringing hexameters of *Evangeline* must be familiar to many who never heard the bird:

> Then from a neighboring thicket the mockingbird, wildest of singers,
> Swinging aloft on a willow spray that hung o'er the water,

Shook from his little throat such floods of delirious music,
That the whole air and the woods and the waves seemed silent to listen.

For twenty years or more Maurice Thompson made a special study of this song-leader among American birds, in its southern haunts, and in the extensive literature that had been devoted to it.

In the fields one can see mounds of fresh, soft, dark earth cast up by the still busy little moles. Along the country roads north of town, the crickets still sing in feeble voice, and a few purple asters bloom yet among the grasses. The familiar snowbirds dash about the shrubbery. Men with teams were gathering corn, and the golfers lingered in the pasture course as the darkness was falling. The sunset was of short duration, but showed the crimson coloring befitting the season.

*Lawrence, Kansas*, October 31, 1906.

A Grinnell newspaper reports that for ten days or so men have been hunting mud turtles along the nearby sloughs and creeks, for the city markets of the east. About seven hundred and fifty pounds have been taken from Poweshiek County streams, the average weight being five or six pounds, and the maximum (so far as reported) about thirteen. One would hardly consider the prairie wolf or the woodchuck ''game'' in the ordinary sense; these turtles might perhaps be added to the very brief list of present day wild game creatures in the state.

In the *Annals of Iowa* for January, 1905, Professor Herbert Osborn has an interesting article on *Recently Extinct and Vanishing Animals of Iowa.*[20] Looking back over the years it may be surprising if not shameful to recall how few wild creatures, omitting insects, birds, snakes, and fishes, some of us have known in our home state. Of course something depends on the sections with which one is familiar, something on opportunity to be in the wilder regions of timber, prairie, and water, by day and night, in season and out of season. Of quadrupeds other than those mentioned in Professor Osborn's article, the writer's Iowa acquaintance is limited to humble, well-known species — the cottontail, the woodchuck, the skunk, field mice, squirrels, moles, muskrats, etc. In other groups among animals more or less familiar have been turtles, snails, mussels, crayfish, bats — and that curious creature known to boys as the "mud puppy."

Of the rodents, the gray squirrels have of course become familiar in late years in our parks and resident streets, with the red squirrels apparently less numerous or less widely distributed. To some observers the flying squirrel is probably quite a rarity. The writer has only once witnessed its real "flight." The "ground squirrel" or "striped gopher" of common speech was formerly abundant on the campus at Grinnell, and constantly tempting the town boys into processes of snaring and "drowning out." Its alert erect form, its whistle, its scamper homeward through the grass, and its head emerging from the hole, were long too familiar to command much notice from adults. In the fields about Grinnell one occasionally sees another species of "ground squirrel" — quite a frisky, handsome creature, of fair size, reddish fur, and bushy, grayish tail.

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[20] See Appendix, Note 16.

Field mice are associated with nests of fine grass, tiny tracks across the snow, and silent forms pendent from the barb wire or osage thorn larders of the butcher-birds. The conspicuously arched underground paths of the pocket gophers about the yard and in the fields, were of deep interest every year in boyhood, when nature lore first made its appeal. The earth mounds of the moles were much more frequently seen than the diggers themselves, though occasionally a scurrying mole appeared — a being though so small, so peculiar and foreign to daily life that it gave one a curiously profound sense of the mystery and strangeness of nature. Muskrat houses are known probably to most Iowa boys in regions of quiet waters, and the swimming muskrat is one of the cherished early signs of spring.

In lieu of larger game, old-fashioned boys — perhaps those of today are like thereunto — were content at times to ferret out crawfish — "crayfish" — from their cylindrical, cavernous retreats in muddy banks; and to some of the more sensitive boys the frequent sight of crawfish corpses or of the detached claws may have given hints of the tragic struggle for existence.

Charles Aldrich, in his picturesque account of *The Old Prairie Slough*, describes the grayish-white belts or other geometric designs about the dried ponds and lake-beds, fashioned by thousands of lifeless shells. Such exposed signs of life that passed away before the plough came hitherward give one a sense of the vastness of nature's plan. Other records of life in remote periods the Iowa boy read, after his boyish fashion, in the trilobites of his geological excursion, and in the bones of the mastodon that digging workmen uncovered in "our village."

To return a moment to the point of our departure. Many a Hawkeye lad — or lassie — has doubtless had as temporary pet some individual of some species of turtle; but it takes patience and a degree of skill to break records in most fields of human activity. Who between the Mississippi and the Missouri can truthfully relate a tale of turtles equal to that so modestly told in *The Natural History of Selborne*? That "old Sussex tortoise" is possibly still the most famous of his tribe, at least so far as long abiding with man is concerned. Before Gilbert White took it into his personal keeping, it had been "at home" for thirty years with a single family in a seaside county.

*Lawrence, Kansas*, October 28, 1913.

The twenty-fifth here was a typical golden October day, with summery temperature, bugs flying, and a monarch butterfly fluttering on a dandelion blossom; though the skies clouded early in the evening and a wild goose wandering above the electric lights cackled in prophecy of change. The next day enough snow fell to robe lawns and roofs, but it soon passed into rain. Some hours before noon today flurries of heavy damp snow began to fall. A little later sleet came pattering on the windows and heaping up on the roofs; then snow again, which fell nearly all the afternoon, driven before a cold north wind, covering lawns and streets, resting on the heavy green foliage of the pear trees, stripping the final foliage from the ashes, and making a strange background for the golden elms and hard maples.

From many other parts of the country early snows have been reported. On the fourteenth in Plymouth County, Massachusetts, snow fell on the unharvested cranberry bogs, destroying, growers estimated, fifty thousand barrels of the berries.

About the twentieth Davenport and Dubuque experienced snow, and it lay over the woods and rocks in the Ozark region of Missouri, while freezing weather ranged from the Texas Panhandle to Atlanta.

A Grinnell record made some thirty years ago today reads: "Some houses are already banked." The banking of houses was at that time a labor, one might almost say an art, familiar to many a village lad. It ranked with the making of soft soap, tallow candles, twisting paper tapers, gathering thoroughwort, curing hams, selecting sweet corn to dry, melting snow for soft water, mulching grapevines, trimming raspberry bushes, as an occupation classified as "work," but not without possible characteristics of a sport, if rightly managed. The process of laying and finishing off thirty or forty yards of banking might last several boys working at intervals after school, for a number of days. The tools and the materials were simple, almost as primitive as the purpose — to shut out the winter cold. Spades, spading forks, shovels, pitchforks, rakes, hoes, wheelbarrows were the implements; barnyard refuse, in later years flax straw, fallen leaves, "chip-dirt," loam from the garden and light strips of lumber with a few heavier boards, were the materials. The labor consisted in "assembling" implements and materials, in laying a solid, well-packed wall of the straw or refuse, in covering it with a thin, even layer of earth, and removing the debris — and cleaning and storing the tools. Skill consisted in making a bank of equal, approved height and slope clear around the house, and well-rounded curves at the corners — without waste of materials or labor. During the season, repairs must often be made. We used to watch the snows cover the banks and thaw there, water drip on them from icicles along the eaves-trough, and the icicles themselves fall and break to pieces on the slopes. In the spring removal of the entire banking was a rapid process, without much poetic interest, except as it reminded us that erelong the orioles would sing in the cottonwood, and the bees hum among the willow catkins. Humble labors, this of banking houses, and those others with which we associated it. How many of them still continue in these days of Iowa millionaires and automobiles? For some, the mere mention of them will always recall the mingled hopes and fears of boyhood, semi-pioneer days with rough daily tasks and sense of fellowship with all who "worked for a living," finding such pleasure as was possible in the work itself.

# NOVEMBER

## TO A NOVEMBER VIOLET

Oh Flower of Spring, that lingered here to cheer
  The briefer daylight of a ling'ring fall,
Speak to my darling of another year —
  Of vines that drape an humble cottage wall,
Of birds that build beneath its slanting eaves
  And swing upon the rose-branch at the door;
Of hope that bourgeons with the budding leaves
  And Love that waxes more and more.

(First lines from a poem in Hattie Leonard Wright's *At the Twilight Hour and Other Poems*, Fort Dodge, 1897)

## NOVEMBER

*Grinnell*, November 20, 1885.

It has been a clear, very warm day; pleasant weather for a ramble down the valley of Bosworth Creek to the woods. From the western hills, in this calm, clear air, unobscured by foliage, the town lay exposed in full relief two miles away, challenging one to recognize familiar buildings by the height of walls, shape and height of tower or spire. Extended in a single view, from fringe of small houses on the southern outskirts to the college buildings on the north, the town seemed to assume a new dignity. Small as it is compared with a real city, who could imagine all the life histories being written in its limits while we gazed at it from afar, for the time being mere spectators? The prairie country is not always flat. Some prairie towns are set on seven hills, more or less; some lie hidden in valleys, and one comes suddenly upon them, surprised to discover them, like a medieval knight who reined in his "steed" and beheld for the first time the castle-home of his future wife, dimly peering below through the river mist. But also characteristic is the straight, fairly level view across the prairies to towns seven, ten or more miles away. In Dakota, mirage sometimes gives one a temporary vision of towns twenty miles or more away, over the unfenced, unploughed lands.

In the fields today the red fruit of the wild roses made a pleasant contrast to the autumnal browns. It would require an artist to distinguish all the shades of brown now prominent in the landscape — lighter browns, almost yellow, of cornstalks, straw stacks and stubble; darker browns of woods, hedges, and many weed masses. A wind-tumbled patch of tall, thick meadow grass mingling brown with green, resembled waters in sunshine and breeze. From the cornfields came the sound of stalks crunched by the teams and feeding cattle, and the thump of ears against the boarded side of the wagons. The dry stalks stand conspicuously above the heads of men and horses — these being relieved as dark objects in a golden light. The insect voices are mainly silent, notwithstanding the warm weather, but a few crickets were chirping faintly, and some grasshoppers were lively. A solitary hawk was sweeping in low, wide circles over the fields — perhaps a marsh harrier, perhaps a red-tailed hawk. The only other birds noticed were crows, chickadees, and several flocks of tree sparrows.

The tree sparrow, or "winter chippy," is a neat, trim bird, with reddish crown and a dark breast spot; and is one of our most familiar winter species. After the blackbirds leave, ordinarily one sees few large flocks of birds except those of this sparrow. Though when alarmed they often fly into the trees, their name is not very applicable to their usual habits here in winter. They are most frequently seen down in the channel of some slough, or along the slope of a hill or even along the roads, feeding on the seeds of low weeds. They often chase one another through the weeds or shrubbery, singing in slight, broken sparrow strains; their notes reminding one of the tinkling of ice-clad weed-stalks — a delicate cymbal music. When feeding among the matted weeds of a slough, they are often quite silent, except for a very dim alarm note, and one might pass very near without discovering them. When the flock is aroused, long after the observer supposes them all flown a few more will generally spring up suddenly from their cover. They are also often found in the company of chickadees along the borders of woods. Their notes are richer in the spring, becoming a real song, and their April concert is one of the finest we have. Today we saw one loosely spread flock of perhaps one hundred and fifty birds, the outlying members being hundreds of feet apart. One bird flew to the top of a tall, solitary cottonwood in mid-field, entirely bare of foliage but beaded by the large winter buds. The sparrow remained there for three or four minutes, flirting his tail up and down, turning face about once or twice, and giving the thin, metallic alarm note every few seconds. His manner was that of a sentinel.

A few other birds have been about town or country this month. On the tenth, a large flock of blackbirds flew noisily over the town. It had been so long since we had seen them we supposed them gone. On the sixth a robin perched on a small branch of a tree in a vacant lot, preening his feathers. In a country walk on the ninth, a solitary gruff-looking shrike appeared on a telegraph wire. Last year we saw a similar one in the same situation, near the end of November, and from its size, shape, and manner thought it must be a great northern, though possibly it was only a belated loggerhead. Now and then goldfinches dart over, in flocks of twenty or thirty, chattering in quite lively fashion. They seem smaller than in summer, partly on account of their dull plumage, perhaps, or because the background is a bare, wide wintry landscape. Snowbirds are here in the usual flocks of from twenty to fifty, showing their dark plumage, like slaty ice, and flirting white tail feathers suggestive of thin lines of snow; repeating their metallic *tsips* among the garden bushes or orchard trees. The firm, undulatory flight of the hairy woodpecker is a frequent sight, and his resolute, penetrating *pimp*, appropriate to a heroic season, is often heard along the streets. The screaming blue jays are conspicuous, though never seen in considerable flocks; the white-breasted nuthatch is working day by day, grunting as he labors up the maple boles; and the quiet insect-like brown creeper is "busy as a bee." It is curious to note how many times the creeper is seen and heard in days of light rain or mist. He seems to be in the best of spirits on such days. The most characteristic real song of the month is the phœbe strain of the chickadee. On winter days it is delightful just because there are few other birds singing. In other seasons it has less charm, though always welcome.

*Cedar Falls*, November 29, 1891.

The later part of the month has been of rather wintry character. On the eleventh the wind drove blustering through bare branches and over bare fields lightly robed in new-fallen snow; at night the skies showed the moon and a star or two peering through wind-driven masses of white cloud. A few days later came autumn rains, dissolving the snow; then the cold returned, the winds whirled the chimney smoke to and fro in frosty air, passers-by walked briskly over creaking boards and wagons rumbled over frozen earth. For days not a bird was heard except the discontented jays. One needed to be careful of the house plants, removing them from the windows at night and placing them near the heat registers. Then more rain, pattering on the roof, rushing in the eaves-trough, bringing thoughts of the stormy seaside, deserted of city folks, watched by heroic life-saving men with night-long patrol by raging waters; thoughts of the muffled rhythm of whistling buoys and the deep bellow of fog horns. A week ago came one day of typical November desolation — dull, dead; the streets muddy, the air heavy and chilly without bracing quality, the sky covered with a solid, motionless curtain of dark cloud. Night before last the mercury dropped to twelve below; last night to fifteen below. The ground is again covered by snow, not thawing though the sunlight is brilliant, and still the only birds about town are the jays, screaming as if in defiance.

Weather records are considered dry, but when viewed comparatively, over a series of years and for different sections, they become almost fascinating to some minds. John Lewis Peyton writing of Mississippi Valley days in 1848 notes "the severity of the weather of early autumn at St. Paul." In later pages he gives some data for Illinois. At Springfield, on November seventeenth there were eighteen inches of snow, with a temperature of five degrees below zero. The next day, with change of wind the mercury rose to thirty-six above, and on the nineteenth came a furious nor'wester, with mercury dropping to fifteen below. On November twenty-fourth, four years ago, in central Kansas, after days when one sought the shady places for comfort, and after a very mild afternoon, a blizzard rushed down on us during the night. Early in the evening small birds, perhaps horned larks, circled and called pathetically above the town. All the next day the snow fell. On the twenty-seventh there were four or five inches on the level, with a temperature of twenty below. Friends arriving after a twenty-two mile drive across the open prairie were almost frozen. A year ago yesterday we drove for miles across unfenced lands in South Dakota, in the brilliant sunlight and mild air of a perfect afternoon, to visit the site of an ancient battle, in which Indians had a share. The earlier snows had passed entirely. The prairie swells were clad in brown grasses, sprinkled on some slopes by small granite boulders with bits of mica shining in the sunlight. Our spades struck into earth concealing the hastily buried victims of the battle, and uncovered jawbones, femora, and fragments of skull — to the bountiful, remorseless sunlight.

*Grinnell*, November 26, 1898.

November in this region has at least two phases to which she has accustomed her friends (or enemies), and she has presented both of them this year — the phase of Indian Summer, and the phase of real white man's winter. Early in the month and as late as the twentieth, some days have been clear and warm, pleasant for tennis or for long bicycle rides into the country, with tranquil skies, beautiful sunsets, gossamer threads shimmering over the cornfields. Some days have been a trifle too warm for the best mental or moral results. Four days ago when the snowfall earlier in the month was almost forgotten, we awoke to find the real winter — cold, sleet, snow, and wind. The first sleigh-bells of the season rang along the streets, and they are ringing tonight, under beautiful moonlight. From scanty records and uncertain memory, it seems probable that long-enduring snow and ice have been much less frequent in the Iowa November, during the past generation or so, than rain and sleet. On November twentieth in 1880, the wild geese were heard honking, through a snowstorm that lasted all day, and a few days later with two inches of snow on the ground, the first snowballing and first sleighing of that winter were enjoyed. In 1883, there were sleet storms on the twenty-first and twenty-second, and on the twenty-fifth, hail, with thunder and lightning — a somewhat unusual storm for the season.

The November notes in Miss Cooper's *Rural Hours*, though not extensive in comparison with those of other months, contain some very interesting matter. She records but little snow, and many pleasant walks throughout the month, a visit from golden-crested kinglets, feeding cattle, fall ploughing, green wheat fields, and the fading flowers of the year — asters, everlasting and wych-hazel. Mosses are also in flower. November, Miss Cooper says, "is considered one of the best months for fishing in our lakes."

The British November, at least in past centuries, seems a month of rain and frost and chilly winds, but of infrequent snowfall, if one may judge by certain famous literary reports. In *The Shepherd's Calendar*, Spenser gives very little direct description in *November*. Near the beginning of the poem, Colin speaks of "thilke sollein season," and the last line of the poem is Thenot's

> Now gynnes to mizzle, hye we homeward fast.

Evelyn in his *Diary* gives considerable attention to weather data between 1634 and 1706, having both the personal interest of an extensive gardener, and the scientific interest befitting so prominent a member of the Royal Society. The following passages give the reader fairly definite conception of November weather for a period of twenty years:

Nov. 2, 1684. "A sudden change from temperate warm weather to an excessive cold rain, frost, snow and storm such as seldom been known. This winter weather began as early and fierce as the past did late; till about Christmas there had been hardly any winter.''

Nov. 22, 1685. ''Hitherto was a very wet warm season.''

Dec. 29, 1686. ''Little appearance of any Winter as yet.''

Nov. 18, 1688. ''It was now very hard frost.''

Nov. 10, 1689. ''After a very wet season, the Winter came on severely.''

Nov. 16, 1690. ''Exceedingly great storms, yet a warm season.''

Nov. 8-30, 1691. ''An extraordinary dry and warm season, without frost, and like a new Spring; such as had not been known for many years.''

Nov. 12, 1693. ''The season continued very wet.''

Nov. 8, 1696. ''The first frost began fiercely, but lasted not long.''

Nov. 15-23, 1696. ''Very stormy weather, rain and inundations.''

Nov. 24, 1699. ''A gentle, calm, dry, temperate weather all this season of the year, but now comes sharp, hard frost, and mist, but calm.''

Nov. 21, 1703. ''The wet and uncomfortable weather stayed us from church,'' etc.

Nov. 26-27, 1703. ''The effects of the hurricane and tempest of wind, rain, and lightning through all the nation, especially London, were very dismal. Many houses demolished, and people killed. . . the damage to my own dwelling, farms and outhouses, is almost tragical, not to be paralleled with anything happening in our age. I am not able to describe it, but submit to the pleasure of Almighty God."

One finds so much generalized description, so much non-English element, and so little exact dating in Thomson's *Seasons*, that the *Autumn* cannot be compared fairly with our September, October, and November data. But the season as described by the Scotchman includes the familiar items of harvest, nut-gathering, hunting, meteoric showers, migrating birds, and fading woods

Of every hue from wan, declining green
To sooty dark.

It is also the season of ripened pears and apples, of cider-making, of

The breath of orchard, big with bending fruit.

Thomson's description of a snowstorm is reserved for *Winter*, and the chief weather phenomena allotted to *Autumn* are winds, heavy rains, and fogs.

For *The Cotter's Saturday Night*, Burns chooses a November evening, but makes no mention of snow.

November chill blaws loud wi' angry sough;
The short'ning winter-day is near a close;
The miry beasts retreating frae the pleugh;
The black'ning trains o' craws to their repose.

Fergusson's *Farmer's Ingle*, upon which Burns's famous poem is partly modeled, names no particular month, but the poet calls upon his muse to "chaunt in hamely strain,"

> What bangs fu' leal the e'enin's coming cauld,
> An' gars snaw-tappit Winter freeze in vain.

In *The Natural History of Selborne* the references to individual months are somewhat incidental. The snows recorded are all or nearly all in December or January. On November twenty-sixth, 1768, White mentions a martin seen by a neighbor busily "hawking for flies." Under date of April twelfth, 1772, he writes that the preceding November, the old Sussex tortoise was at work from the first to the thirteenth, "forming its hybernaculum," and as the weather was warm at the end of that period the work remained unfinished.[21] In 1773 he records that the tortoise "retired under ground about the twentieth of November, and came out again for one day on the thirtieth."[22] Once he writes of the house martins, "considerable flocks have discovered themselves again in the first week of November, and often on the fourth day of that month only for one day."[23]

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[21] Letter XIII.

[22] Letter XVII.

[23] Letter XXXVI.

*From a photograph by Cornelia Clarke*

SKUNK RIVER AT LYNNVILLE

*Iowa City*, November 28, 1900.

In the classrooms of the University here, one may learn, presumably, not only the history of Greece and Rome, the itinerary of Ulysses, the site of early London theatres with reference to the Thames, and the relations of Guelf and Ghibelline, but also much which lies closer to the student in time and place — the government and the ideals, the natural and the social history of Iowa. It is nearly twenty years since Professor Jesse Macy published his *Civil Government in Iowa*, recognized as a pioneer book in its field by a competent scholar. Local government, including careful consideration of the state constitution, was an important subject of study at the State Normal School a decade or more ago. Our geological, botanical, and zoölogical treasures of course received scientific attention even before statehood.

Yet some whose education in this state was not chiefly of scientific nature, whose life-work has not been concerned with local politics or history, must confess to ignorance of many Iowa matters they might be supposed to know. Here today, in the presence of the old capitol building, dignified, presenting a stately front to the street that seems made as an approach to it; in the town named for the state, beside the river named for the state; we may realize that while we have lived none too much in far countries and distant times, we have hardly begun to live, in a complete sense, in our own Iowa. What do we know of this very town, except that its domestic architecture seems to show strong early southern influence, that it was once the capital — and perhaps that it contains a considerable Bohemian element? Many of us are hazy as to the date when Des Moines was made the capital, and the date when the University was founded is less certain than that of Queen Anne's accession.

The woods environing the town, even in their present wintry state, we can admire; standing on the river bluffs certain straight stretches and certain curves of the stream are before our eyes, but what of the source, the upper course, and the further pathway to the Mississippi? By the chance of residence, one may be familiar with the stone quarries, the bayous haunted by migratory ducks in March or April, the wigwams and blanketed forms, in Tama County. Another has heard that the scenery along the river near Iowa Falls is of unusual beauty for our prairie state. But how many could draw a fairly correct line for the course of the Iowa from source to mouth; how many know that the steamer "Ripple" puffed up stream clear to this town, back somewhere in the forties? Some of those old maps of territorial days, from 1839 to 1845 — those of Colton, Plumbe, Jesse Williams, Newhall, Nicollet and

Barrows — might prove as interesting as maps of Elizabethan London or ancient Rome.

For the rivers of Iowa some fearless soul should make a poetic catalogue, for us the citizens of Iowa, as Spenser made one of British rivers for the British. He writes[24] of

The chaulky Kenet; and the Thetis gray;
  The morish Cole; and the soft-sliding Breane;
The wanton Lee, that oft doth loose his way;
  And the still Darent, in whose waters cleane
  Ten thousand fishes play and deck his pleasant stream.

And of the Severn, Tamar, Plim, Stoure, Wylibourne, and nearly forty more of the streams of England, Scotland, and Ireland.

Is there no poetry in the names, associations and individual character (or is it that we have not the "seeing eye," the venturous pride?) of the Yellow, Turkey, Maquoketa, Wapsipinicon, Cedar, Des Moines, Little Sioux, Rock, Fox, Chariton, Nodaway, Nishnabatona, Floyd, Willow, and Blue Earth? Even for the creeks might not there be some picturesque contrasts in a comparison of the Bear, Timber, Lime, Village, and Broken Kettle? Unhappy the prairie boy who does not know some stream to mingle in his earliest memories of birds, flowers, fields, and woods. For one, the experiences of the long hilly descent to the valley of

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[24] *Fairy Queen*, IV, 11.

Bear Creek, the crossing of the wooden bridge that seemed a thrilling adventure, dreaded for a mile or more of the approach, an occasional glimpse of sheep-shearing by the big pool, the swirl of muddy current after freshets; also the lazy summer days with the redwings and flopping fish and the small willows along Little Bear Creek — are these not treasures, not often mentioned, not often remembered, but altogether good to possess?

The tragic note is not missing in personal memories of the rivers of Iowa, though we have produced no Milton to sing famous monodies for those who pass in cruel waters. Today, one thinks of the two noble sisters, passionate lovers of nature, drawn down to sudden death by their beloved Cedar; of the two brothers drowned together in the Iowa near Marshalltown, and of a brother and sister who long ago sank to death near these very banks where we are musing.

*Grinnell*, November 30, 1901.

On the third, two inches of snow lay on the ground. The eighth was "September-like, with many dandelions in bloom, and flies, spiders, grasshoppers and a small butterfly observed." It is curious to find Gray's *Manual* giving the period of dandelion bloom as only from April to September.[25] This plant, one is told, was carefully nurtured in the early days here, as a pleasant reminder of the old homes "back east" whence so many of the townsfolk came. The *Manual's* "pastures and fields everywhere" certainly gives it a wide habitat today; and locally it is considered a nuisance, many efforts being made to exterminate it. It was originally naturalized from Europe. In the course of its history it has had at least three specific names — the present colorless *officinale*, the *taraxacum* of Karsten, and the much more picturesque *dens-leonis* of Desfontaines. The botany also names a "false dandelion" and a "fall dandelion," each of a different genus from our plant; neither of them, apparently, being found in our state. The uses of the dandelion for "greens," wine, pastoral pipes, and curls, ought to give it some favor with us yet, one would think.

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[25] See Appendix, Note 20.

The insects noted on the eighth are not exceptional for the season, unless the butterfly is such. However many butterflies one may have chanced to see here in November, one hardly thinks of November as a butterfly month. The most common insects of late fall and winter in this locality, aside from grasshoppers and crickets (of frequent occurrence in November, but probably rare in December), are most likely the "common caterpillar" — the black-brownish banded one — and angleworms. The black ground beetles might come next in order. In central Kansas we noted one November fifteenth, ''many small insects are out,'' and on the corresponding date a few years later, at Redfield, South Dakota, ''ants and bugs are stirring.'' According to the files of a local newspaper, bugs, flies, and mosquitoes were much in evidence at Grinnell in the very mild December of 1877.

Yesterday and today have also been ''September-like.'' One often wonders whether the character of the season is changing, or memory playing us false when we recall the titanic snowdrifts of Thanksgiving time in auld lang syne. Did not Thanksgiving tradition, in families of Yankee origin, did not the cover of the *Youth's Companion*, lead one to expect cold weather, snowy roads, fur-wrapped human beings for the drive to Thanksgiving dinner at the old home, or at hospitable abodes of uncles, aunts, or cousins? We remember or seem to remember many a Thanksgiving day when the ride northward, six or seven or ten miles, to Uncle Tom's or Uncle Jack's or Uncle William's country home, was decidedly of wintry character — steaming, restive horses, sleigh equipped with heavy robes, hot bricks, and freestones, snowdrifts across the fences, and brief runs behind the sleigh ''to keep from freezing.'' Did the snow really fail with the years or did the boy merely grow up and imagination languish? There was certainly no very heavy snow on that Thanksgiving day when we walked across the open fields, six miles, to dinner at Aunt Eliza's, drove into town with the cousins and back again, and closed the day with a solitary walk homeward under clear moonlit skies, with the cottontails leaping beside the road and the farm dogs baying and barking loudly at the lone midnight traveler. A few years later, a drive across snowless Kansas prairies was a Thanksgiving treat; again a few years, a similar ride across the low hills of the Jim River Valley was enjoyed, with the fur of the jack-rabbit the only white against the brown landscape.

Two important items of Thanksgiving season, at least, we are sure are not dream-memories — apples and buffalo robes. One November day long ago, a Grinnell firm sold seventy-eight barrels of apples. At that time a popular program for humble households was a barrel or two of bellflowers for early consumption, greenings for solid midwinter comfort, and a barrel of russets to last as far into the spring as strong apple appetites would permit. The Christmas stocking usually contained a big bellflower or greening or both. What excursions, candle-lighted, into the cellar of a winter evening, for a plate of apples, to be pared, quartered or scraped; reinforced perhaps by a big bowl of crisp popcorn! What games with parings thrown over the shoulder, apples hung in the doorway for girlish teeth to claim! With changing conditions of horticulture and community life, came later dynasties of willow twigs, ben davises, winesaps, northern spies and roman stems. Discussion of the relative merits of favorite kinds of winter apples made one stock subject for fireside winter conversation.

In the late seventies and early eighties, buffalo robes were sold in Grinnell for from $5.00 to $15.00. It was a poor farmer who did not possess his buffalo robe and his buffalo coat, a poor "livery rig" sent out in cold weather without liberal supply of shaggy furs. No woven stuffs, no other furs can ever replace, for fancy, these old-time comforters. In those days the herds still lingered in the Missouri Valley, the widely scattered harvest of bones had not been gathered from the Dakota prairies, and schoolboys had not ceased to write essays on "The American Bison." Black Hawk tells us he wore the buffalo robe after the death of his children, but for us let it remain in memory, now that its material form has departed, a thing of joy forever.[26]

*Lawrence, Kansas,* November 30, 1907.

Today the campus pasturing closed, the cattle standing at the homeward bars in blissful ignorance of that fact. November is more distinctly and habitually an autumn month here than in central Iowa. The temperature usually goes to seventy degrees or higher during the month. Insect life is often flourishing — not only bugs, wasps, bees, spiders, crickets, gnats, grasshoppers, including the ''bird-grasshoppers,'' but also butterflies. On the thirteenth this year a fine grapta butterfly of an unidentified species was captured from a house wall and kept indoors several days, when it died, perhaps from lack of food. Probably a few dragon-flies might be seen some years. Autumn foliage lingers sometimes well into November, and bonfires this year have been burning throughout the month. Stevenson's little poem is applicable even to the Thanksgiving season here:

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[26] See Appendix, Note 21.

### AUTUMN FIRES

In the other gardens,
  And all up the vale,
From the autumn bonfires
  See the smoke trail!

Pleasant summer over
  And all the summer flowers,
The red fire blazes,
  The gray smoke towers.

Sing a song of seasons,
  Something bright in all!
Flowers in the summer,
  Fires in the fall!

Most flowers of real beauty pass with October, but quite a list of blossoms, if one includes humble "weeds," can be made for November. This year the following plants have been found in bloom sometime during the month:[27]

Aster, Dense-flowered. Aster multiflorus.
Catnip.
Clover, Red. Trifolium pratense.
Clover, White. T. repens. (?)
Dandelions.
Knotweed. Polygonum; species not determined.
Shepherd's Purse.
Soapwort. Saponaria officinalis.
Sow-thistle, Spiny. Sonchus asper.
Sweet Clover, White.
Wild Peppergrass. Lepidium virginicum.
Wood-sorrel, Yellow. Oxalis corniculata stricta. (?)

Proverbial weather lore says that if flowers bloom in November the winter will be severe. We do not believe that will hold true of this locality.

This is the season when local papers in many parts of the corn-belt relate the mighty deeds of the cornhuskers. In 1902, Iowa papers gave these records among others: Eighty-five bushels in nine and a half hours — by a woman; and, wonder of wonders, two hundred and ten bushels in ten hours, by a man who claimed the world championship. So far the records this year do not seem very unusual. From Oklahoma, one hundred and forty bushels in ten hours is reported; and one hundred and thirty bushels in the same time, as part of a total of twelve hundred bushels in ten days. Of the social aspects of cornhusking in the old days, including the furiously fast labors of rival teams, one finds a spirited account in the once famous *Circuit Rider*. But the corn is not all gathered in November, nor even in December. One may see the high-boarded wagons among the yellow stalks into January or later. The unreaped crop is not injured by frost or snow, but it has its enemies. ''Our Forefathers' Song'' which has been traced as far back as 1630, says of the maize:

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[27] See Appendix, Note 22.

> And when it is come to full corn in the ear,
> It is often destroyed by raccoon and by deer.

This is also a season of extensive prairie fires. This year destructive fires were reported from Minnesota about the middle of this month. Last year, a fire raged in Indian Territory over an area three miles wide and twenty miles long, destroying hundreds of acres of standing corn.

In his *Autobiography*, Black Hawk thus speaks of the Sac rejoicing over the corn crop, though he does not specify any calendar period, and his account of the supernatural gift of the maize, and of the ''crane dance'' at the time of planting are considerably more extended: ''When our corn is getting ripe, our young people watch with anxiety for the signal to pull roasting ears, as none dare touch them until the proper time. When the corn is fit for use another great ceremony takes place, with feasting and returning thanks to the Great Spirit for giving us corn.'' One wonders if the Reservation Indians of today continue such a custom. A year ago, the *Grinnell Herald* reported some of the ''Tama Indians'' passing through town for the autumnal squirrel hunt — a bit wilder festivity than that described by the great chief, but perhaps less devout.

A Jasper County paper reported last year the shooting of a golden eagle, perched in a large cottonwood tree, the bird being about seven feet across the wings, and weighing eight pounds.[28] Not quite birds of prey, but no less interesting to some, are the red-breasted nuthatches appearing at Grinnell about the middle of this month.

This year also, the *Grinnell Herald* reports the capture of two opossums on a farm in a wooded region southwest of town. The 'possum is frequently mentioned by the old travelers in this prairie section. It remains with us, while the bear, panther, deer, elk, and buffalo, with which it was once associated, have left for regions less haunted by humanity. Judging from hearsay 'possum lore and experience are richer in Missouri than in Iowa. Many Iowa boys never saw this quadruped, unless in captivity, and their chief knowledge of it is gained from the proverbial expression "playing 'possum," and perhaps from the song:

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[28] See Appendix, Note 23.

> Possum meat am good to eat,
> Ca've him to de hea't.[29]

The poor little creature seems to have had its share of abuse for a long period. Julia E. Rogers gives the last chapter of her recent *Wild Animals Every Child should Know* to the opossum, and these are the last words of her account: " 'Playing 'possum' was a trick noticed by the colonists when they met the opossum for the first time. In the 'Perfect Description of Virginia,' published in 1649, occurs this paragraph:

" 'If a cat has nine lives, this creature surely has nineteen, for if you break every bone in their skin, and mash their skull, leaving them for dead, you may come an hour after and they will be gone quite away; perhaps you may meet them creeping off.' "

*Des Moines*, November 27, 1912.

Yesterday in Lawrence, we heard the faint flight notes of bluebirds, and saw two flying quite high across the street. This month has had its usual quota of devastating prairie fires, including one in southwestern Kansas, over nearly a township, another twenty miles long, and only two or three days ago others in Nebraska and South Dakota. Heavy snows are reported from northern Michigan, but according to newspaper correspondence violets were in bloom a few days ago near Cottonwood Falls, Kansas. During part of the month, pear trees in Lawrence have been in magnificent coppery or wine-red foliage, the flicker has shouted his piercing cries, and the red-bellied woodpecker has been busily gleaning from the boles or branches of the street maples.

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[29] See Appendix, Note 24.

It is somewhat colder here than two hundred miles south; but there are no signs of snow. The Des Moines River is mainly open, though some small flat disks of ice appear here and there. The river banks between the principal streets have been much improved during the past few years, answering, surely, the expressed or unexpressed hopes of many citizens all over Iowa. Stately public buildings now adorn both sides of the river, and spacious parkings have been laid out, which in time will become attractive, dignified grounds. In too many of our western towns the shores of a considerable stream are degraded by a formless mixture of railway tracks, mills, hovels, and refuse heaps.

The impressive Blashfield painting in the capitol is probably the most important mural decoration in this state. One could spend many hours in studying its details, and in forming abiding impressions of the spirit of the composition as a whole. It has been criticized by the public, perhaps unfairly, and defended by the artist, in respect to the manner of driving the ox team. One who has rambled over the prairie country may compare the prairie schooner with those still frequently seen, especially west of the Missouri; and attempt to relate the birds and flowers to those of reality. At first glance, the birds seem to be a kind of compromise between wild ducks and terns; and the brick-red flowers, with inflorescence like that of the pink family — what name shall we give them? The buffalo skull is bluish gray, with the horns darker, and the cornfields show stalks apparently too low for their texture, and in darker shades than seem natural. But the composition must be taken as an allegorical rather than a realistic picture, and it gives one a sense of the joy of pioneer adventure, a realization of our past history; recalls those moments of personal experience when the fertility and infinitude of the prairies haunted us like a spiritual presence.

A few bright dandelion blossoms greet one from the lawn of the noble Historical Building, though most of the heads are in gray-white plumage. Within the building are treasures of so wide a range, of such complex details, that a lifetime would scarcely permit of intimate acquaintance with all. The writer has been among the books and art collections of the British Museum, but dares to confess that he always enters this familiar home building with a feeling of reverence. Some years ago in the little building along the Lexington Road where so many interesting relics of Concord were gathered, the curator had placed here and there on the walls printed placards reading: "Voices of the Past that Whisper." Here also, amid the energetic activities of today and large-minded plans for the future, the same voices reach us.

Within a year or two a Harvard professor speaking at the University of California named Iowa as a state conspicuous for its lack of literary production. This seems to us one of those careless statements the westerner so often hears from the easterner; but be that as it may, we have at least not been entirely negligent in collecting or reading the books others have written. Stephen Tabor, an Iowa citizen who died in 1883, is said to have left a private library of six thousand volumes. According to Gue, "every book had been read before being placed upon the shelves." In 1848 the library of the state contained some sixteen hundred volumes, about one-third of them being law books. The state collections now contain some one hundred and forty thousand volumes. Within this building, also, are collections of books by Iowa authors indicating at least "Literary Beginnings

*From a photograph by Mary Chamberlain*

BLAIR HALL ON GRINNELL CAMPUS

in a Western State.'' Here are many volumes in which early travelers or residents record their impressions of the prairie country; early maps, in which up to about 1867 the location of Indian tribes is an important matter. Here is Tanner's *View of the Valley of the Mississippi*, published in 1832, in the introduction of which we read: ''And soon the American who has not made the tour of the Valley of the Mississippi will be considered a man who has seen but little of his own country.'' After eighty years, we may recommend this sentiment to some of our Yankee friends who consider Chicago as far west as one need go to see ''his own country,'' or whose ''tour'' of our Valley consists of a Pullman ride on a limited train from Chicago to Denver, Billings, or Moose Jaw. An original signature by ''Julien Dubuc,'' dating from 1806, recalls the large place the French people have had in this region; the portraits of Appanoose, Mahaska, Keokuk, Tamah, Wapello, and Black Hawk offer studies of intense interest and limitless suggestion. From what a different world come these rare or even unique manuscripts and portraits of the Rossettis, of Tennyson, the Lyttons, and a hundred other English celebrities!

In the various museums of the building are a thousand memorials of the natural and social history of the state — remains of mastodon and mammoth, human bones from the Boone mound, pearls from the River, copperheads and rattlesnakes, the nest and eggs of the yellow-headed blackbird, wonderful fossil collections; a real prairie schooner — the old "Canestoga wagon," with hind wheels five feet in diameter, and frame heavy in proportion — Filipino guns, a fence rail twelve feet long, the Amsterdam pulpit from which the good dominie Scholte inspired many a stalwart citizen to cross sea and land to Pella — whence later many a letter must have passed "aan de geloovigen in Nederland."

But today perhaps nothing impressed us more than these words in a manuscript from "Octave Thanet" to Mr. Aldrich: "You are fond of Iowa. So am I. I have promised to write a book of stories (true stories) similar to the one by Stockton for New Jersey and Joel Chandler Harris for Georgia. Can you put me on the track of some good material?" It is twenty years since the writer first met Charles Aldrich — moving nervously about in his restricted quarters in the old library rooms at the capitol. Bringing him the enthusiastic inquiries of a young man concerning Alexander Wilson, what courtesy and animation of response one found, what wide information, what zest for service! On many a day in the years that followed we have seen his small, stooping form, gray head, keen, sensitive face by the office desk in the northwest room of this building; or in moments of fatigue, in the last brave year, resting on his couch almost among the stacks. Of him and of the faithful woman helper in his last labors here, no living sign today.

> "The form remains, the function never dies."

*Grinnell*, November 28, 1912.

Along the streets the chickadees are calling from maples and elms, and the nuthatch is working steadily, with frequent grunts of self-approval. Around the borders of the park shepherd's purse is in bloom. Dandelion blossoms are fairly bright on the lawn in front of Blair Hall, and the pigeons coo comfortably about the cornices of that abode of science.

The stimulating air this afternoon invited one to ramble into the country. In the old Reservoir, the ice is firm enough to hold a man for a yard or so from the shore, and at Arbor Lake a boy is sprawling about on the ice, heedless of the loud calls from an anxious mother on the slope above. At the south end of the Lake a clump of small willows makes an almost brilliant yellowish patch against the general grayish-brown of the landscape. The Lake is a recent triumph of landscape gardening, but the little stream flowing from it, wherein ice and water now mingle, is the same we followed many years ago. The contour of the hills, the clustered trees, the osage hedges are mainly as of old. Down the little valley the wind is fairly strong, stirring the broken, trampled cornstalks and leaves to sharp, insistent, rustling sounds. On the eastward slope, a half mile away, a sportsman with gun and dog stalks rapidly by the feeding horses and cattle — a silent figure, looming and picturesque. A small bird suddenly rises from the ground with a tenuous alarm note and wings skyward. Perhaps it is a horned lark. From the bed of the stream a lone wader springs up as if reluctant to be disturbed in its wintry solitude, and flies rapidly down stream, with a sharp clattering cry — to rise again for longer flight when again the intruder approaches.

On the hill farm which was our goal the housewife was in the yard, apologetic for her dress. She had been picking corn this Thanksgiving day, and her husband was found storing a wagonload, fresh from the field, in the old-fashioned board-latticed crib. (At least one high school principal, home for the holiday, is out on the fraternal farm, helping with the husking.) All about the red cylinders of the silos, conspicuous through the bare trees and hedges, are new monuments of the enduring rule of the King. Passing into the cornfields, after greeting the farmer, one sees an ear dropped from the wagon, shining like gold. Under the standing corn, the dry, brown, matted masses of silk are spread along the earth.

How thin seem the old woodlands westward, compared with their dark, almost impenetrable masses in boyish days! My farmer host said he had recently cut down the old cottonwood in which the tree sparrow lingered that November afternoon so long ago. *Trees of My Boyhood!* The willow where the bees buzzed about fragrant catkins in early May, where the swing hung, where the flag floated; the choke-cherry, whose red-black fruit was gladly abandoned to the eager robins — the "bird-tree"; the hard maple in the corner of the yard, firm, compact, clear in outline, noble in autumnal coloring; the two great cottonwoods, falling when they fell, with angry crash nearly across the broadest street in town! Trees, also, of more adventurous if not more romantic days of other youths in other regions! This cottonwood, for happy example, of Parkman's camp along Laramie Creek: "Our daily routine soon became as regular as that of a well-ordered household. The weather-beaten old tree was in the centre; our rifles generally rested against its vast trunk, and our saddles were flung on the ground around it; its distorted roots were so twisted as to form one or two convenient arm-chairs where we could sit in the shade and read or smoke; but meal-times became, on the whole, the most interesting hours of the day, and a bountiful provision was made for them. An antelope or a deer usually swung from a bough, and haunches were suspended against the trunk. That camp is daguerreotyped on my memory: the old tree, the white tent, with Shaw sleeping in the shadow of it, and Reynall's miserable lodge close by the bank of the stream.''[30]

The ''Big Rock,'' too, remembered by a thousand travelers on foot, or in wagon or carriage, as they came down the long hill, turned south and ''struck the road'' between the counties, is said to be blasted and removed. We will loaf no more on its granite surface, in June sunshine, comrades of mine. No more will we brush the snow from the gray-white-black mosaic and stamp our chilly feet till they are warm for the homeward stretch. But the oranges are still lying caught in the thorny branches of the osage; the tree sparrows still render tinkling music from the brush-heap in the farmyard; the black furrows of newly ploughed fields are again waiting for the snows of December and the seed of a late March day.

*Lawrence, Kansas*, November 30, 1913.

We have had chiefly warm weather throughout the month, with the temperature passing seventy degrees a number of days, and on Thanksgiving and since, cloudiness, rain, mist, or fog. Within the last ten days or so, many insects have been active — the bird-grasshopper in strong flight, crickets singing in the grass, "their cheerful summer cry," as White of Selborne calls it; a swarm of mosquitoes, and a small orange butterfly on a golden dandelion blossom. Nearly every day for a week the cardinal has sung, often in strains almost as free and varied as in spring. A Carolina wren, a really trim, dainty bird, was feeding on the trunk of a small tree, not four yards from the club-house window, Thanksgiving afternoon, and we heard wild geese passing over soon after our Thanksgiving dinner.

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[30] *Oregon Trail,* Chapter X.

A correspondent at Grinnell writes that "our neighborhood has been enlivened since the day before Thanksgiving by the presence of a pair of long-eared owls, roosting usually in the big, crooked box-elder west of Mr. Erskine's house. Are they rare here?" Whether rare or not for others, for you and me such little novelties of observation cheer the passing days, and enrich the memory for years to come. How applicable to the whole field of nature for many of us, is the spirit of White's sincere, simple statement: "It is now more than forty years that I have paid some attention to the ornithology of this district, without being able to exhaust the subject: new occurrences still arise as long as any inquiries are kept alive."[31]

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[31] *Natural History of Selborne,* Letter XLIX.

Many of us will die without having seen the wonders of nature in foreign lands, but —

The cardinal sings in this cherry tree,
The barred wren feeds on the bole,
Though a thousand birds unknown to me
Are busy 'twixt pole and pole.

Year after year your eyes have sought
The creatures of wood and sward,
But the strange, weird owls today has brought
To roost in the neighbor's yard.

Whether we wander far afield,
Or wait by our place of birth,
We are gleaners aye from the bounteous yield
Of the wonders of our earth.

# APPENDIX

# APPENDIX

## *I. NOTES FOR SEPTEMBER*

**1.** An October record for robin song is given in the text, but the writer has not known the robin as a fluent songster in September. Slight but real songs were heard at Lawrence, Kansas, on October 2, 5, and 6, 1914.

**2.** Greene gives both the papaw and persimmon as "not common." Gray's *Manual* locates the papaw in northeastern Iowa, and the persimmon in southeastern Iowa. In Lawrence, Kansas, the negro boys are sometimes throwing sticks and stones to bring down persimmons from the park trees as early as the twentieth of September, though often the fruit is not at its best till much later. As is well known, its sweetness waits for a sharp frost. The persimmon trees are among the first to show a tinge of autumnal yellow — sometimes before the end of September. This note appeared in a Memphis paper in the fall of 1913: "There is no such thing as persimmon wine. Once there was persimmon beer. It is about as palatable as rainwater flavored with dried apples."

**3.** One year the sumac began to color on the University campus at Lawrence by the twenty-third of September. One year on September fourteenth scarlet maple branches, with tall cattails, served as dining-room decorations in a Hood River hotel. Two days later, from our Pullman window we saw lines of bright colored shrubbery running up the ravines in the bleak hills of southern Idaho, and the next day looked out upon snow-covered hills in southern Wyoming.

**4.** Anderson says the western meadowlark never sings in Iowa after the first of September, and that the eastern remains into November — some occasionally throughout the winter. There is poetic propriety in the fact that the autumnal song, that of the "melancholy days," is the thin-voiced, pathetic melody of the eastern variety.

**5.** A note for the campus at Lawrence records goldenrod bloom on November seventeenth, in 1910. The following Thanksgiving Day, the writer picked a bouquet of bright, fresh, violet-tinted asters at Excelsior Springs, Missouri.

**6.** Toward the end of September, 1910, a friend reported seeing the monarch host at Lawrence, Kansas, and about the same time the *Kansas City Star* contained an article on the migration.

**7.** The cicadas can be heard at Lawrence, some years, well into October, and occasionally into November.

**8.** I have found Grindelia in bloom at Leavenworth in mid-September, at Topeka, on the Washburn College campus, October fifth, and at Manhattan on October twentieth. Miss Cooper's *Rural Hours* contains an interesting passage of some half dozen pages on the Latin and English names of our American flowers. She writes partly in indignation at the absurdity and ugliness of much of the nomenclature.

**9.** With very few exceptions, the trees mentioned by Bradford, Brackenridge, Darby, Mrs. Ellett, James, Pike, and Woods, as belonging to Iowa or its neighborhood, are given in Greene's *Plants of Iowa.* The following is a partial list of species found both in these early writers and in Greene. (The index to English names in Greene is far from satisfactory.)

Ash (species?)
Ash, Prickly
Asp (Aspen; species?)
Birch (species?)
Box Elder
Butternut
Cedar, Red
Cherry, Wild
Cottonwood
Crab Apple
Dogwood
Elm, American (White Elm)
Elm, Mucilaginous (Slippery Elm)
Hackberry
Hickory, Common (species?)
Hickory, Shellbark
Hornbeam
Ironwood
Linden
Locust (Black Locust?)
Locust, Honey
Mulberry
Papaw
Pecan
Persimmon
Maple, Red
Oak, Black (Yellow Oak)
  ‘‘ Black Jack
  ‘‘ Bur
  ‘‘ Laurel (Shingle Oak)
  ‘‘ Pin
  ‘‘ Post
  ‘‘ Swamp
  ‘‘ White
Pine (species?)
Poplar
Plum, Wild
Redbud
Sassafras
Walnut, Black

**10.** A few September flowers found in central and eastern Iowa, 1906-1909. (In popular names this list follows Greene; in scientific names, Gray's *Manual*, ed. of 1908. While the writer has analyzed all specimens and taken care with classification, it cannot be guaranteed that all the species are correctly given. Many specimens were first determined from the sixth ed. of Gray's *Manual*. Comparison of this edition, that of 1908, and Greene reveals the usual lack of fixity in both popular and scientific names which vexes the amateur botanist, year after year, from Atlantic to Pacific.)

Arrowhead. Sagittaria.
Aster, New England. Aster novae-angliae. Charles City and eastward; south of Waterloo; Grinnell.
Aster, Panicled. A. paniculatus. Charles City; Clear Lake.
Bellflower, Tall. Campanula americana. McGregor.
Bergamot, Wild. Monarda fistulosa.
Black-eyed Susan. Rudbeckia hirta.
Bindweed, Hedge. Convolvulus sepium.
Blazing Star, Large. Liatris scariosa.
Boneset. Eupatorium perfoliatum.
Boneset, False. Kuhnia eupatorioides. Charles City.
Boneset, Tall. Eupatorium altissimum. McGregor.
Bugle-weed, Purple. Lycopus virginicus. Charles City.
Bur-marigold, Nodding. Bidens cernua. Charles City.
Butter-and-Eggs. Linaria vulgaris.
Cardinal-flower. Lobelia cardinalis. Along upper Wapsipinicon.
Catnip. Nepeta cataria.
Chickweed, Common. Stellaria media.

Chickweed, Large Mouse-ear. Cerastium vulgatum.

Cinquefoil, Rough. Potentilla monspeliensis. Ionia; Charles City.

Clammy Weed. Polanisia graveolens. Clear Lake.

Coneflower, Gray-headed. Lepachys pinnata. Mason City.

Coneflower, Sweet. Rudbeckia subtomentosa. Charles City; Grinnell.

Coneflower, Tall. Rudbeckia laciniata. Mason City; Charles City.

Coneflower, Thin-leaved. Rudbeckia triloba. Charles City; near Des Moines.

Cucumber, One-seeded Bur. Sicyos angulatus. Dubuque.

Cudweed, Lobed. Artemesia ludoviciana.

Culver's Root. Veronica virginica. McGregor.

Cup-plant. Silphium perfoliatum.

Evening Primrose, Common. Oenothera biennis.

False Dragonhead. Physostegia virginiana. Mason City; Charles City; Waterloo.

Flat Top. Vernonia noveboracensis. Grinnell.

Four-o'clock, Wild. Oxybaphus. Clear Lake.

Galinsoga. Galinsoga parviflora. Dubuque.

Gentian, Prairie. Gentiana puberula. Mason City.

Gentian, Yellowish. G. flavida. Charles City.

I have found G. crinita and G. affinis early in September in Minnesota. A friend has sent G. procera from southern Wisconsin late in September.

Gerardia, Slender. Gerardia tenuifolia. Charles City; Grinnell.

I have found G. grandiflora in splendid bloom at

Devil's Lake, Wisconsin, on the first day of September.

Goldenrod, Bushy. Solidago graminifolia. Charles City.

Goldenrod, Elm-leaved. S. ulmifolia. Charles City.

Goldenrod, Field. S. nemoralis.

Goldenrod, Missouri. S. missouriensis. Charles City.

Goldenrod, Showy. S. speciosa. McGregor.

Goldenrod, Stiff. S. rigida. East of Charles City; Mason City.

Goldenrod, Zigzag. S. latifolia. Charles City.

Goldenrods. Greene gives twenty numbers. The field and Riddell's seem among the more common species. Among the more abundant on the campus at Lawrence, apparently, are the stiff, Canada, Riddell's and S. petiolaris. One analysis pointed to S. tenuifolia, for a somewhat strange-looking species, but Gray's *Manual* does not carry this species so far west.

Ground-cherry, Low Hairy. Physalis pubescens.

Ground-cherry, Virginia. P. virginiana. Waterloo.

Gum-plant, Broad-leaved. Grindelia squarrosa. Prairie du Chien.

Harebell. Campanula rotundifolia. McGregor.

Hawkweed, Canada. Hieracium canadense. Charles City.

Heal-all. Prunella vulgaris.

Hedge Nettle, Rough. Stachys tenuifolia. Charles City.

Indian Tobacco. Lobelia inflata. McGregor.

Ironweed, Western. Vernonia fasciculata.

Joe-pye Weed. Eupatorium purpureum.

Leafcup, Small-flowered. Polymnia canadensis. McGregor.

Lobelia, Great. Lobelia siphilitica. McGregor; Grinnell.

Lobelia, Pale Spiked. L. spicata. Observed in Minnesota.

Loosestrife, Fringed. Steironema ciliatum. Charles City.

Loosestrife, Wing-angled. Lythrum alatum. Grinnell.

Lousewort, Swamp. Pedicularis lanceolata. Charles City; Grinnell.

Mallow, Round-leaved. Malva rotundifolia.

Marigold, Fetid. Dyssodia papposa. Across River from Muscatine.

Mayweed. Anthemis cotula.

Monkey-flower. Mimulus ringens. Charles City.

Morning-glory, Ivy-leaved. Ipomoea hederacea. Waterloo.

Morning-glory, Purple. I. purpurea.

Motherwort. Leonurus cardiaca.

Mullein, Great. Verbascum thapsus.

Nightshade, Black. Solanum nigrum.

Nightshade, Smaller Enchanter's. Circaea alpina. McGregor.

Partridge Pea. Cassia chamaecrista.

Pennyroyal, American. Hedeoma pulegioides.

Persicaria, Pale. Polygonum lapathifolium. Clear Lake.

Persicaria, Swamp. P. muhlenbergii. Clear Lake.

Rattlesnake-root. Prenanthes alba. Charles City; McGregor.

Skullcap, Mad-dog. Scutellaria lateriflora. Charles City.

Sanicle, White. Eupatorium urticaefolium. Charles City; Dubuque; Des Moines. Also at Fort Snelling, and Devil's Lake. One of the most conspicuous campus flowers at Lawrence throughout October.

Sneezeweed. Helenium autumnale.

Soapwort. Saponaria officinalis.

Spanish Needles. Bidens frondosa.

Speedwell. Veronica.

Spurge, Flowering. Euphorbia corollata. Charles City.

Spurge, Upright. E. preslii.

Stonecrop, Ditch. Penthorum sedoides. Clear Lake.

Sunflower, Pale-leaved Wood. Helianthus strumosus.

Sunflower, Saw-tooth. H. grosseserratus.

Sunflower, Stiff. H. scaberrimus. Mason City.

Sunflower, Stiff-haired. H. hirsutus.

Sunflower, Showy. H. laetiflorus.

Sunflowers. For the state, Greene gives 18 numbers.

Sweet-clover, White. Melilotus alba.

Tickseed-Sunflower, Long-bracted. Bidens involucrata. Fort Des Moines.

Touch-me-not, Pale. Impatiens pallida. Clear Lake.

Touch-me-not, Spotted. I. biflora. Charles City.

Velvet Leaf. Abutilon theophrasti.

The writer prefers the old name, "Indian Mallow."

Vervain, Blue. Verbena hastata.

Vervain, White. V. urticaefolia.

Wild Balsam Apple. Echinocystis lobata.

Willowherd, Northern. Epilobium adenocaulon. Dubuque; Des Moines.

Wood-sorrel, Upright Yellow. Oxalis stricta.

Woundwort. Stachys palustris. Waterloo.

Yarrow, Common. Achillea millefolium.

**11.** Selections from the Diaries of William Savage for September.

1856. 18. Killed a Turkey, took it to Salem and sold it for 30 cents.

1858. 17. Kill first Turkey of this season.

1859. 18. Painted bird D. B. shot, resembling a moorhen, its name unknown.

1859. 19. Picked elderberries.

1860. 6. Very hot.

1862. 6. Dug in an Indian grave, found nothing but bones. Shot 1 Turkey and 1 fox squirrel.

1862. 28. Kill 1 f. squir. 2 greys, 1 hawk, 1 Turkey.

1863. 11. Commenced CUTTING CORN.

1863. 18. Sandhill cranes and wild geese fly over.

1863. 20. Picked a basket of grapes by creek.

1864. 19. First FROST.

1864. 20. Finish my corn, set 10 shocks, 94 in all, mostly round ones with 3 forks in them for braces; then cut my buckwheat and set it up; to creek and carry water, strip some cane and dug some sweet potatoes.

1864. 21. Shot 1 g. hog; caught skunk in trap in field.

1887. 30. Shot 1 rab. and Rover caught 1; then I went to C. Bottom to find some hops; got a few. Shot 2 f. s. and 2 g. s. and smoke 1 rab. and trap 4 chewinks.

1907. 6. Paint some on Northern Butcherbird.

## *II. NOTES FOR OCTOBER*

**12.** There is a note on the "field-crickets" in Letter XLVI of the *Natural History of Selborne.* White speaks of "their cheerful summer cry," but adds: "They are so shy and cautious that it is no easy matter to get a sight of them; for, feeling a person's footsteps as he advances, they stop short in the midst of their song, and retire backward nimbly into their burrows, where they lurk till all suspicion of danger is over.''

**13.** The ''wood violet'' of popular language was perhaps Viola papilionacea (?); the ''bird's-foot'' very probably Viola pedatifida, or less likely Viola pedata (?). But ''by any other name,'' etc.

**14.** Gray's *Manual*, edition of 1908, gives six species of the Staff Tree family, and the habitat of ''waxwork'' as from Maine to Manitoba and southward. The same work enumerates 65 species of thorn, most of them easterly ones, and many of very restricted habitat. It is interesting to note that they fruit generally in October, though some are recorded as fruiting in August or September, and a few in November. Greene gives eight species for Iowa. (Genus *Crataegus.*)

**15.** A synoptical arrangement of Miss Cooper's notes in *Rural Hours*, for October coloring of trees. (See pp. 170-171.)

Without clear dates, Miss Cooper also gives these items of coloration: Locusts, seldom more than a tolerable yellow; pears, pale yellow or russet, sometimes just touched with red or purple; sycamores, same note as for locusts; weeping willows, only pale yellow.

**16.** At the time of its appearance this article caused considerable discussion. Below is a list of the chief animals mentioned, with Professor Osborn's statement, in brief, as to the probable time of their extinction in the state, or their present status therein. The present writer has added a few data in parenthesis.

Badger. ''Few if any left.'' Reported from the central parts of Iowa in the early eighties.

Beaver. Linn County and Tama County records of 1890, and seen near Missouri Valley in 1891 (?).

(Beaver slides and men trapping beaver were seen along the Solomon River in west-central Kansas in 1887.)

Buffalo. Disappeared between 1850 and 1870.

(In 1883 or 1884 two or three buffaloes were reported seen in Faulk County, [South] Dakota.)

Deer, Virginia. ''As early as the middle sixties it was practically unknown in the central and eastern part of the State, at least in those portions which were sought for settlement. The species probably lingered some time longer through the central and western portion, but records of the occurrence are too scanty and indefinite for us to name any date for its final extinction.'', etc.

(The writer dimly remembers hearing in boyhood that the Iowa deer lingered last in the northeast section of the state.)

Elk. No dates given.

Lynx. ''The species, if present in any locality, must be practically extinct throughout the state.''

Mink. ''May survive in specially favored localities, but for the state at large it must be counted as practically gone.''

(So-called ''minks'' were often denounced as enemies of the chicken-yard in the writer's boyhood. Once

|  | *October* |  |  |
|---|---|---|---|
|  | 1-10 | 11-20 | 21-31 |
| Alders |  | Green |  |
| Apple trees |  | Green |  |
| Ashes | Dark purple | Yellow, shaded with purple; gold |  |
| Aspens | Green; pink; yellow | Green | Light yellow |
| Basswood | Deep orange | Orange |  |
| Beeches | Brownish yellow |  |  |
| Birches | Yellow; golden |  | Orange; yellow |
| Black Walnuts | Nearly bare |  |  |
| Cherry, Wild |  | Reddish |  |
| Chestnuts | Green; yellow; bright gold |  |  |
| Dogwoods |  | Deep lake |  |
| Elms | Yellow |  |  |
| Hickories | Yellow |  |  |
| Maples, Hard |  | Gold; crimson; vermilion; green; red |  |

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| Maples, Mountain | | Pinkish red | |
| Maples, Soft | | Gold; crimson; pink; yellow; green; red; scarlet | |
| “Maples” | Yellow; pink; scarlet | | Many bare |
| Moosewood | | Yellow | |
| Oaks | Deep red; scarlet | | |
| Pepperidges | | Almost purple | |
| Plum, Wild | | Reddish | |
| Poplars, Lombardy. | Green | | |
| Poplars, Native | | | Green |
| “Poplars” | | Tops clear green; yellowish on lower branches | |
| Sweet-gums | | | Green |
| Thorn-tree | | Vivid red | |
| Willows | | Green | |
| Witch-hazels | | Bare | |

the report came that a neighbor's wife had almost stepped on a mink prowling about her back porch. Possibly these ''minks'' were really creatures of another species.)

Otter. Found in Linn County during the seventies.

Panther. ''Probably some time between the early settlements and 1860 must have seen the departure of these animals.''

Turkey, Wild. Professor Osborn speaks of this species as extinct in the state, but Mr. Aldrich adds a note stating that a fine specimen was shot in Monroe County in 1904.

Wild Cat. ''May be found at rare intervals.''

Wolf, Prairie. ''They doubtless occur still in the roughest sections.''

(This seems a very mild statement. One often hears that they are holding their own or even on the increase in some regions. The local papers every spring report many bounties paid in some counties. While picnicking along Rock Creek in Jasper County, about 1903, we heard the howling of a coyote, and were told it was frequently heard in that vicinity.)

Wolf, Timber. ''Yet to be found in small numbers in specially favored places.''

(Local papers report timber wolves seen or shot from time to time, but always mention such occasions as rare ones.)

**17.** Thirty Iowa herbs found blooming in October in northeastern Kansas: mainly at Lawrence, Topeka, or Manhattan. The figures indicate the last day of the month bloom has been noted. Compare also the November list, pages 140 and 177.

1. Aster, Sky-blue. Aster azureus. 4.
2. Aster, Aromatic. A. oblongifolius. 4.
3. Black-eyed Susans. Rudbeckia hirta.
4. Boneset, Tall. Eupatorium altissimum. 9.
5. Coneflower, Thin-leaved. Rudbeckia triloba.
6. Cress, Spreading Yellow. Radicula sinuata. 20.
7. Culver's Root. Veronica virginica. 4.
8. Eclipta. Eclipta alba. 12.
9. Evening Primrose, Common. Oenothera biennis. Bloom and buds. 12.
10. Figwort. Scrophularia. When analyzed only one species given in Gray.
11. Fleabane, Daisy. Erigeron ramosus. 4.
12. Fleabane, Larger Daisy. E. annuus. 5. One fleabane not analyzed, but likely one of these two species, found in bloom October 22. May probably be found in November.
13. Gaura, Small-flowered. Gaura parviflora. 18. Its near relative, Stenosiphon linifolius, a very attractive late autumn prairie flower, found in bloom on the 20th.
14. Gentian, Blue. Gentiana puberula, probably. Reported at their prime on the 12th one year at Lawrence.
15. Gum-plant, Broad-leaved. Grindelia squarrosa. 20.
16. Ironweed. Vernonia.
17. Heal-all. Prunella vulgaris.
18. Jimson-weed. Datura stramonium. 12.
19. Mayweed. Anthemis cotula. 31.

20. Nightshade, Black. Solanum nigrum. 13.

21. Poppy Mallow, Purple. Callirhoë involucrata. 20.

22. Ruellia, Hairy. Ruellia ciliosa. 6.

23. Sage, Lance-leaved. Salvia lanceolata. 18.

24. Sage, Pitcher's. Salvia azurea. 17.

25. Sandbur. Solanum rostratum. 24.

26. Spurge, White-margined. Euphorbia marginata. 20.

27. Sunflower, Stiff-haired. Helianthus hirsutus.

28. Tickseed, Tall. Coreopsis tripteris. 22.

29. Trailing Wild Rose. Strophostyles helvola. 4.

30. Umbrella-wort, Hairy (?). Oxybaphus hirsutus (?), possibly albidus. 11.

**18.** Notes from William Savage's Diaries for October.

1855. (William Savage arrived in Iowa, reaching Salem by stage from Burlington. His Iowa journals begin this same month.)

1857. 9. Days very warm and nights very cool.

1857. 18. Caught a coon in steel trap in my cornfield.

1857. 24. Went to see the shooting match.

1857. 26. Went to mill.

1857. 29. House raising at neighbor's.

1859. 17. Mowed fence corners; then came first snow-squall.

1859. 28. Got white oak bark for John.

1860. 9. Watch treed a skunk up a jack oak by house; got up and struck a light, but could not see what it was.

1860. 12. Kill 2 rabbits and 1 Possom that Watch treed. Shot 1 P chick on corn shock, the first this fall.

1861. 9. Finished stripping cane, and top'd some.

1861. 27. Gathered a good mess of hickory nuts.

1861. 29. Shot a mink near the cut off.

1862. 13. Went to C. Bottom and got a *great heap* of Butternuts.

1863. 13. Walter and I gathered a sack of black walnuts and piled up some butternuts.

1887. 1. Fished some above the Gill Riffle. I caught 2 three pound catfish and some small ones.

1887. 4. Split some poles and paint some on sugar haw branch under blue grosbeak and Prothonotary warbler.

1887. 16. Portray a kildeer plover that Foster H. shot and brought down for me.

1907. Pick up a basketful of black walnuts by my branch.

**19.** From Caroline A. Soule's novel, *The Pet of the Settlement.*

"The prairies were brilliant with the nodding crowns and the golden rod and the waving spires of the wild sun-flower; the low thickets that hedge them were royal with glossy-leaved hazle bushes and crimson-plumed sumachs — masses of purple asters clustering lovingly about their roots; the forests were gorgeous with scarlet maples, yellow hickories, dark green oaks and silvery-leaved cottonwoods, while down on the river-bottoms and all along the banks of the little creeks, the brown vines of the wild grape were drooping heavily with their thousand clusters of dead-ripe fruit . . . long ere they were looking for it, a crisping frost had tinted the long grass of the prairies with a sunlike hue, and crowned as with rubies the old maple that shadowed their cabin.

''But so glorious was that autumn, that none of them mourned for the lost summer. Like a dream of beauty it lay on their hearts; day after day of the calmest, loveliest weather coming to delight them. The golden air was fragrant with balmy winds; the sky was splendid, a thousand flitting tints of blue and amber chasing over its zenith, while pale, purplish mists hung about its horizon; the woodland grew each day more gorgeous in its coloring; the river sang more softly, while the prairies were more magnificent than ever, their long grass rolling and swelling like the waves of an ocean, while the flowers that lingered were kingly in their hues, giving here a rich amethystine glory to the landscape, and there clothing it with a star-like radiance.''

(The text states that the events connected with the scenes described above occurred fifteen years before the novel was published, which was in 1860.)

## *III. NOTES FOR NOVEMBER*

**20.** In the edition of 1908 this extension is made: ''and rarely throughout autumn and winter.'' Rich, abundant blossoms are sometimes seen at Lawrence in December and even in January. Dandelions were reported in bloom in Grinnell at the end of November, 1907.

**21.** It was probably in the early eighties that a one-wagon menagerie of Nebraska wild animals was drawn into Grinnell by a team of buffaloes. In September, 1906, the writer picked up a fairly well preserved buffalo skull on the prairie near Swift Current, Saskatchewan. In February, 1907, a Kansas City paper reported local sales of some half dozen buffalo robes, at a price of about $500.00 each.

**22.** In later years the following additions have been made to the list:

Aster. Another unidentified species.
Burdock.
Beggar-ticks, Swamp. Bidens connata.
Bidens aristosa.
Bur-marigold, Nodding. Bidens cernua.
Chickweed. Stellaria media (?).
Goldenrod. Unrecorded species.
Mallow, Common. Malva rotundifolia.
Sanicle, White. Eupatorium urticaefolium.
Violets. Not observed but doubtless in bloom. Reported from Cottonwood Falls, one year.

**23.** This is a proper seasonal item. Anderson says the species does not breed in Iowa, that it is a rather rare but fairly regular visitant, and while sometimes seen in winter is most commonly observed in March, April, and October. One often sees newspaper reports of eagles taken in November, in this region. At the very end of October, 1908, a young golden eagle was reported captured at Clay Center, Kansas, which was sent as a present to President Taft. The earliest individual eagle known to some prairie boys was probably ''Old Abe,'' the famous mascot of a Wisconsin regiment in the Civil War. In November, 1913, a newspaper item refers to a ‘‘huge gray eagle’’ shot near Warrensburg, Missouri; another item to a ‘‘large American eagle, measuring 17 feet from tip to tip,’’ killed near Fairbury, Nebraska. ‘‘It carried a large pig in its talons,’’ adds the report. This last paper should employ an ornithologist, or at least a competent proofreader.

**24.** In Missouri, verily, ’possum hunts and ’possum suppers are still a matter of annual enthusiasm. On November 12, 1913, an all-night hunt took place not very far from Kansas City. At Excelsior Springs, on Thanksgiving Day, 1910, one of the attendants at the sulpho-saline pavilions was heard to remark: ‘‘I am going home with the Doctor for a ’possum supper.’’ A Lawrence paper a year or so ago quoted a negro as saying ’possums were specially good, and also reported that some one took eight ’possums on one hunt. A discussion in the correspondence column of the *Kansas City Star* in November, 1913, included an elaborate account of ‘‘how they cooked the ‘’possum’ in Virginia.’’ An issue of the *Memphis Commercial Appeal*, the same year, published this somewhat iconoclastic version of ‘‘’possum meat:’’ ‘‘The South has long been cursed with stories of things said to exist here or to be peculiarly Southern that are the mere fictions of the exuberant imaginations of professional Southerners south of the line and professional Southerners who have never been farther south than Washington. Nobody now eats possum, and nobody now eats possum and sweet potatoes. Once the negroes ate possum once in their lives, but no negro ever made a second assault on a dish of possum. A man who could enjoy possum should have a copper-riveted stomach, and a taste for pure fat with a strong odor."

**25.** Notes from William Savage's Diaries for November.

1857. 23. I watched Well's cornfield and shot a Spike Buck, wounding him in the ham. He went into Cap's field and lay all night. Next morning I tracked him up and found him just north of Cap's house. He then jumped up and I shot him again as he rolled over the fence. He ran a piece and lay down, got up again, and ran to the creek and crossed it at the island. I then found him on the other side, shot him again, and then Watch caught him, we killed him and dragged him home.

1860. 9. Trapped 7 quails and shot 1 Turkey Watch treed.

1861. 3. Went butternutting.

1861. 17. First snow.

1861. 19. Thunder and rain; sowed timothy seed.

1862. 2. First snow.

1862. 15. Dr. killed 5 ducks and 2 quails; I shot 4 ducks.

1863. 4. Weave some (weaving don't go right some way.)

1863. 18. Shot 1 f. squir. and 3 ducks; then grub.

1863. 19. Grub; (raining).

1863. 20. Grub.

1863. 21. A. m., grub; p. m., hunt; shot 1 f. squir.

1863. 22. Hunt for sign; made 5 pens for mink traps; shot 1 g. s.

1875. 10. Hunt in morn. and kill 1 gob. Turkey 17 pounds.

1875. 16. Snow. I killed a turkey and he got away from me on Summer Creek; and shot 4 q. and 1 dove.

1878. 27. Hunt some in C. Bottom; shot at and wounded a turkey, it flew over the creek at Clay Bluff I too tired to follow it.

1887. 16. Chop and split up a cherry tree west of little meadow (it being a sprout from a tree I chopped down when I lived in the old house. Made 14 rails out of said tree.) Chop some stakes and stake some fence.

1887. 19. Wind blowing very hard, has blown our cornshocks down, about 80 of them scattered all over field. I look around field, found some rails blown off fence. I cut 2 linn trees down by road fence, then John and I tried to haul the scattered fodder; hauled 1 load, the wind blew so hard we quit.

1906. 20. To traps and brought all 7 traps in. SNOW ½ in. deep, the first; it fell yesterday eve.

## *IV. HISTORICAL DATA*

1804. Floyd's *Journal* written.

1805. Pike's Expedition up the Mississippi.

1834. Black Hawk's *Autobiography.* L . . .'s *Journal of Marches of Dragoons* (written.)

1836. Edwin James came to Iowa. Lea's *Notes on Wisconsin Territory.*

1839. Kneeland's *Letters from Salubria.*

1841. Newhall's *Sketches of Iowa.*

1843. Audubon in Iowa.

1848. Parry's *Systematic Catalogue of Plants of Wisconsin and Minnesota.*

1852. Owen's *Geology of Iowa.*

1853. Shea's *Discovery and Exploration of the Mississippi Valley.* The *Iowa Farmer and Horticulturist.*

1855. William Savage arrived in Iowa. His journals began, running to 1908.

1867. Davenport Academy of Science founded.

1873. Parry's *Early Exploration and Settlement of the Mississippi Valley.* White's *Physical Geography of Iowa.* Agassiz visited Iowa. (This visit resulted in the removal of Wachsmuth and his crinoid collections to Massachusetts.)

1876. Bessey's *Geography of Iowa.* J. C. Arthur's *Contributions to the Flora of Iowa.*

1885. Abbie Gardner Sharp's *History of the Spirit Lake Massacre.*

1886. Allie B. Busby's *Among the Musquakies.*

1887. Starr's *Bibliography of Iowa Antiquities.* Williams and Keyes' *Check-list of Iowa Birds.*

1891. Calvin's *Prehistoric Iowa.*

1899. Barr's *Monograph on the Mississippi River.* Garland's *Boy Life on the Prairie.*

1904. Hornaday's *American Natural History.* Margaret C. Walker's *Our Birds and their Nestlings.*

1906. Lazell's *Some Autumn Days in Iowa.*

1907. Anderson's *Birds of Iowa.* Greene's *Plants of Iowa.*

1908. Bender's *Geography of Iowa.*

1911. Miner's *The Iowa Indians.* Wallace's *Education of the Iowa Farm Boy.*

1913. Seerley's *The Country School.*

## *V. CHIEF ARTICLES AND BOOKS TO WHICH REFERENCE IS MADE*

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