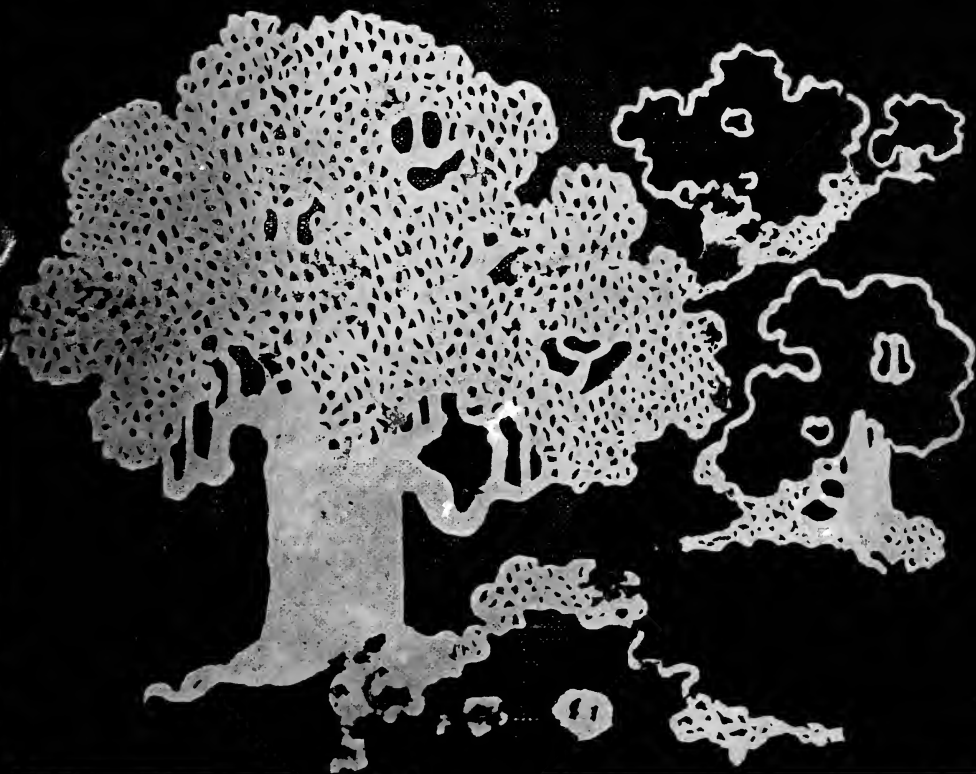

WALKS  IN
NEW ENGLAND



CHARLES GOODRICH WHITING

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Walks in New England

Give to me the gospel of the fields and woods,
The sermons written in the book of books ;
The sweet communion of the things of earth
Fresh with the warm baptism of the sun ;
Give me the offertory of bud and bloom,
The perfect caroling of happy birds ;
Give me the creed of one of God's fair days
Wrought in the beauty of its loveliness ;
And then the benediction of the stars,
His eloquent ministers of the night.

—*Ravenscroft.*



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Walks In New England

BY
Charles Goodrich Whiting
Author of
"The Saunterer"
With Illustrations from Photographs



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TO
SOLOMON STEBBINS
MY OLD COMRADE
AND
THE BEST MAN OF WOOD AND FIELD
I EVER KNEW

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THE ILLUSTRATIONS

The illustrations in this volume are reproductions from photographs taken on the walks which gave life to these notes on Nature. All but four were done by Joel H. Hendrick, who, with Chester T. Stockwell, has in these later years been a constant companion. The portrait facing the title was taken by E. J. Lazelle, in the course of a memorable climb over Mount Tom. Three other pictures, of farm life in the Berkshire Hills, were made by Albert Cargill and Edward Elwell Whiting.

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Walks in New England



WALKS IN

NEW ENGLAND

Come! Thou Song Sparrow

THE vernal equinox is past, and all the storms are here of snow and sleet and rain, and winter still wages his perpetual quarrel with spring. Late is the coming of spring, long is the winter's persistence; the birds on the wing from the south wait for the south wind's assistance; a few of the bluebirds have come, but where is the daring song-sparrow that sings over snowdrifts of home when the March wind is chilling the marrow? Dumb are the fence-rails he lights on, silent the bush and the brier. Oh! for the charm that delights one when the sun rises red as a fire, and the sparrow springs swift from the ground in bright unrestrainable joy, and in a sweet whirlwind of sound lets out the whole secret employ of the spell of the opening season,—then we know that the spring is at hand,—we know that in rhyme and in reason new life is at work in the land. Come,

then, O sparrow! and hymn to us,—talk of the new greening meadows; prophesy what is now dim to us, scatter the snowdrifts to shadows! What are the crows in the field, or crying their caws o'er the forest,—what does the chickadee yield but his courage when need is the sorest,—what do such robins as live in the hemlocks despite of wild weather,—what can all of these give to compare with the sparrow's specked feather? Even the bluebird's bright carol is not so inspiring a presage as when the song-sparrow will dare all the elements with his sweet message. Come then, O sparrow! and wing to the fence-post and joyously hymn to us,—quick will our spirits then spring to the answer that now is so grim to us.

Pardon a trifle of rhapsody, for notwithstanding the forbidding storms, we have felt the breath of spring, at odd times, on rare days, with discouragements and miseries between, but still there are the growing trees and shrubs which swell their buds of leaf and bloom, giving evidence that Nature's great processes are steadily advancing. This is after the vernal equinox, which sets a milestone against the boundary of a strenuous and sturdy winter of the most old-fashioned type. Not since the winter of 1842-3 has there been so long a season of snow. Very nearly all sorts

of weather have been furnished, and there is scarcely any stock left except the summer stock. Even our thaws have been very wintry, and the fogs we had in February are, so the farmers say, earnest of frosts in May, while the thunder showers mean mischief of cold in midsummer. Perhaps there is some sort of balance in the seasons' malaises, but when we are told that because the first snow-storm came on November 24, we must have 24 snow-storms, and we learn that the tale is not filled without three more,—we find it an overdraft on our credulity. Still, late as it is, by a little hurrying up, the three storms can get here before April. It is certainly rather unusual to look out upon a wild wintry world of white at so late a date. Why, the farmers on the hills are yet sledding over the shun-pikes instead of the turnpikes,—going out into the fields by paths well determined through many generations to avoid the drifts in the established roads. Such an experience is very rare. It is what they call a new thing,—though it is plain that there can be no new types of seasons,—vary as seasons will, they have every one their precedents. And old inhabitants relate how in 1843 the sleighing lasted in the valley until April 11.

In the course of this riotous winter, wonderful exhibitions of beauty have been made. We re-

call one tremendous day of northwest wind, in which an inch or two of light snow mounted to drifts here and there six or eight feet high. The wind was 50 miles an hour on the top of the Berkshire hills, but as one faced the sunset extraordinary effects of colour were produced. All the way up in the morning the snow wreaths wrought by the wind made marvelous pictures of magic as they swept up the hillsides, and Emerson's sea, "carving the coastwise mountain into caves," was fellowed with this riot of the drifting snow. And here and again in some curious hollow in the hills one beheld a miniature in delicate gray and white—not black and white, there is no black in Nature—of the light flames that hover over the crater of such a volcano as Kilauea. But now, suddenly, as the edge of a hill was turned, the rays of the descending sun swept over the crest of a pasture, and all the gray-white snow was turned to rose and glowed with the exquisite beauty of that pure colour, for some minutes, until, the sun declining, it was shot through by a golden glow that empurpled it,—all as if to contradict and destroy the power of the tempest. It was a transfiguration wrought by the elements in evidence of the potential glory of winter.

Later there was a lull in the storms, and the fogs came and crusted the trees and the shrubs

with delicate frost-work. This was charming and gracious, but there was finer beauty to come in the several ice-storms of the season. Never were there more glorious exhibitions of ice-draped and sun-lit forests than in the course of the winter that still lingers. Those who dwell in cities and see only the trees in the streets know little about the brilliant impression the forest makes in such a garb. Indeed, a vast deal of the glory of Nature is only to be realized in the winter, when the trees stand forth in their essential character of strength and vigour. The woodland was magnificent in the great ice-storm of midwinter, when the ice remained on the trees for some ten days, glittering and rustling in the wind and sun. But it was a ruinous glory to many a tree. The birches were bent in picturesque arches over mountain roads, and dipped their heads deep in the snow which followed and pinned them down. A remarkable effect was produced in the park of Holland mountain, so wonderfully planned by Nature, with its groups and vistas of red cedars. In all that beautiful hilltop there were few of these cedars which remained upright; and a great number of them were broken off at half or two-thirds their height. Then there have been many storms which left the trees covered with light, soft snow, creating a fairyland less

glowing with rainbow colours, but most delicately graceful.

The winter has been notable in these later weeks for the swelling of the flower and leaf buds on shrubs and trees, so manifest that everyone must have noted it. The elm buds, which are not the earliest, are distinctly ready to come forth, and as for the willow catkins, never was there a season in which they have been more ambitious or more undecided. They usually begin to show themselves at the very outset of winter, just enough to indicate their intentions; but this passing season the bushes at the edges of ponds, in the swamps or along the river banks, have thrust out their silky "pussies," and then drawn them in closer to their sheaths, even when the ice was close about their roots, or in the midst of snowdrifts. But the poet is right—"None is too late—none is too soon."

Now around the borders of the swamps, where the ghostly drooping panicles of the poison sumach are seen beneath the cedars and the hackmatacks, the flower buds of the cassandra are growing very definite and determined, and the more delicate pink andromeda follows its sturdier example. For colour, there is nothing to surpass in its way a swamp of the cassandra, whose leaves are now rich bronze, or fairly copper hue, while around

the shores the huckleberry bushes are reddening their new shoots, and the spice bushes and clethras add their note of coming leafage and flowering. Still linger also the varied leaves of last year on the oaks, and the pines rise with green distinction in the midst of the otherwise bare branches.

A striking picture, the other day, was that of a great balm-of-gilead poplar, its buds far advanced, and in its top a crow, whose prismatic black was relieved against the greenish yellow of the trunk and boughs. The crows have been very abundant, and hundreds have been seen before these last snows feeding on grubs in the pastures around the city. Now they have betaken themselves to the Long Island Sound shores, until the snow shall melt again. It is marvelous how these things recur, year after year, and our eyes are so blind and our hearts so dull to realize how infinite life throbs through the earth, and God is living in all that he has sent out, to tell us that we are not the sole recipients of his spirit.

We see through a glass darkly, and yet we may see face to face as truly now as we ever shall. No man hath seen God at any time, no man ever will see him except in the myriad manifestations of his life, around us at every step, and most wonderfully present, no doubt, to the generations that seek after a sign, in the opening of spring.

Let us open our eyes, our ears, our hearts, to the great current of his life, of which we are but a part,—how small a part or how great we cannot yet imagine. Unnumbered lives, infinite worlds, remain for us to learn, and we would do well to learn as much of this one as we can, and apprehend in some degree the marvel of the divine life.



THE MOUNTAIN'S PEAK



A Sabbath in the Open

IT was a good Sabbath that was kept in the fields and woods ; a good Sunday, too, full of spring hope and heart, and as one stood on the brow of a brown hill, and saw the oaks and apples and maples suddenly alive with bluebirds and robins, with now and then a sparrow, not to mention woodpeckers, coming in on the southwest wind, and heard the exquisite warble of the bluebird from every tree, there stirred in the heart that thrilling pleasure that is almost as poignant as pain, so keen and sudden and serious is its appeal to the hidden life, that reveals itself so reticently and with such hesitations and withdrawals throughout the long wintry season. Here then sounds the emphatic call of Nature : Mistake not ; the moment arrives, the harbingers are at hand ; my most unselfish child, spring, is busy with the marsh cabbage and busy with the hepatica buds ; out again creep the willow pussies that had retired while February froze the air ; again swell the poplar and the hazel and alder

aments,—this time they may come out and fear naught.

So irresistibly suggest the undertones of Nature, echoing the bluebird and the robin, and telling of the song-sparrow that begins to sing on the verge of the snowdrifts the song he will not cease to sing until November closes tight the sheaths of the buds that are to bloom another year. Of course, one finds the bluejays in fine fettle with their spring whistling to balance their shrill screams; of course the crows are plenty, for they are with us all through the winter. Perhaps the chickadee is never happier than now, as he begins slowly to try his vernal phœbe note, while he explores the trees and stumps for those insects which are his food,—a useful as well as a beautiful brave creature. He is life,—life sentient and conscious and at work in the realm for which it has been fitted,—life that goes on and can never cease. This lovely creature, so small, so modest, but so unafraid; with clear black poll above that bright and trusting eye; hopping almost at your very feet, is he not the frankest of the bird races? He scarcely suspects a man who behaves himself.

But the crow that drops inadvertently into the neighbourhood of one of us,—how furtively and silently he departs!—nor makes a note of criticism



until he gets well out of gunshot,—then he tells all the other fellows that in such and such a glen or wood their arch-enemy has a posted sentinel. We hear him, far overhead, screaming, “Don’t go there!” His first cousin, the dandy bluejay, has no such timidity: indeed it is scorn this gay, skyey-tinted predatory rascal expresses as he swings down close overhead of the intruding human being. All the birds have their opinion of men. There is the ruffed grouse, which we call the partridge,—hen and cock are so distrustful that they are up and away before we know where they be. All these one may espy in a March ramble, if circumstances favour, and might be wholly happy in espying them were it not for the knowledge that there are guns. Traces, too, of other birds may be detected, as when in a wood of yellow pines, the ground beneath is littered with the eviscerated shells of the cones, on whose seeds the Canadian crossbills have been feeding, and no doubt some bluejays also.

The tracks in the forest snows are eloquent of life, as silence is eloquent in this secret manner. When, traversing the snowy woods, one finds a convergence of fox and dog tracks to some cavernous ledge, which shows that there has been many a chase that ended at that refuge, he readily imagines the shrewd joy of Master Reynard in

leading his free-foot pursuers to the place where they must perforce lose him. There is nothing more interesting in its way than the insouciant fashion in which a fox will regard the dog that is chasing him. He will loiter, and turn, and sniff, and swing his broad brush, and then dart off, with a sure lead, and anon double and cross, and presently vanish. Then the free-foot dog will pause, and cry, and give it up after a while,—unless the man is along; and the man does not make it sure.

Curious things may be observed, as for instance when among a lot of mouse tracks one perceives a straight mark between one line of individual toes, and realizes that an unfortunate mouse has had his tail broken so that it trails behind him. Mice have ways of their own. They work along under the snow until they reach the edge of a drift beneath a ledge, or the stem of some tree or bush, with its melted passage to the ground, when they emerge,—thus covering their real home from discovery. The forest is full of tricks,—full of evidences of the wisdom of the furry or feathery tribes that inhabit it. And their wisdom and folly, whichever is shown, is marvelously akin to the human wisdom and folly.

Now surely the spells of the frost are loosened, and those skunk cabbages that choose, and that

have not hurried too much, will presently be humming all over their spadixes with pollen-scattering flowers,—for there is sound in this work of reproduction, though our ears be not finely enough attuned to distinguish it. Our yet imperfect senses miss a hundred shades and hues and tints of colour, which artists are ever striving to discover and fix on canvas; they cannot see light where multitudes of living things of so-called lower orders do see light and go about their businesses; they cannot catch the myriad overtones even of the musical instruments we make, no one of which, not even the subtle violin, ever registered the infinite delicacies and refinements of tone that vibrate to the spiritual sense; they cannot hear the corn grow, though they hear the waters trickle and the frosts whisper; and even the movements of the ants in the ground, the beetles in the bark, the larvæ in the wood, are only heard by a few whose trained ears have reached a neater touch of hearing.

We live in a world of sense and manifestation scarce apprehended, and for many of its phenomena we are less finely organized than the trivial creatures which we regard not. Man is the lord of creation, but while he assumes this rank with great conceit, he knows little of his lordship, and less of his subjects. The few that study life and

dwelt amid its myriad forms, and search in them for the great secrets, in great measure begin at the wrong end with an assumption of the material as the ultimate. But there is new light gleaming over the field of life,—a new study of the things we can physically touch and see as related to things beyond physics,—a growth of science toward spirit,—a conviction that life was before those manifestations which touch our imperfect physical sense; which was and is infinite and illimitable, and as it never began can never end. The universe, from least atom to greatest concourse of atoms, from the simplest sensitiveness to the furthest reach of man's soul, is all one living being, of which man no less surely and no more truly than the amœba is the expression.

THE LIFE OF EARTH

The Spring's life breathes in the air amid the snows ;
The Spring's pulse beats beneath the eager sun's ray ;
Pliant and yellow and mellow the willow bark grows ;
The beechen buds listen and glisten and think of May ;

Sweet at the forest's cool verge there steals a scent,
A scent that is tender and intimate, yet not bold
To quarrel and rival the pine, but still has lent
A freedom that whispers and smiles amid the cold.

The knolls are bare and the mosses are freshly green,
The wintergreen berries redden and spice the view,
Where the pulse of the young year's heart is sensibly seen
As arbutus blushes peep from their sleep anew.

This is the grace of the Spring New England knows,—
The arbutus rathe and blithe, that wins to its side
The earliest ardour the sun can give to the snows,
The perfume that promises all the dear spring-tide.

The Sugar Snow

THE snow was a surprise, certainly. Few years within the memory of this generation or the last can parallel the experience of finding this wintry substance covering the ground a foot deep on the morning of March 29. Let us try to hope that it was the last foot fall of winter. The birds have a right to complain of misplaced confidence, and so have we, since the blandness of spring, the day before, deluded us into regarding her intentions as honourable, and we welcomed her in expensive language, forgetting what an inveterate coquette she is. Where spring went, after flirting with us all so sweetly, Saturday, who can say?—but no doubt she was just as insinuating and cheating, wherever she was. The bluebirds woke up Sunday morning and took the snow as the joke of the season;—they warbled around genially and expressed a clear conviction that they could stand it longer than the snow could. The snow felt a good deal that way, too, before night. The

crows, naturally, observed that no such thing ever came without cause, and they gave a few for its speedy departure. The old farmer, starting for meetin' on runners, said this was as near goin' sleighin' on the Fourth as he ever wanted to. The boys said they were glad there was so much of it—for there would be some left for snowballs Monday. Moreover, it gave everybody something fresh to say about the weather. Something was heard about filling milk-pans with it, to pour the boiling syrup on and make that dainty, maple wax. It was surely a sugar snow, one of those swift night falls, on frozen ground, which send the sap stirring up the maples when the sun comes out. It was really very beautiful snow, and whether dissipating in the sunshine or shining in the moonlight, it was several degrees whiter than the average. Less meteoric dust in it. Spring snow always looks so very young, and it is a blessing to the new grass and young grain,—one of those blessings that brighten as they take their flight.

The Hyla's Voice is Heard in the Land

THE last Sunday in Lent was the first Sunday in Lent to assume in its exterior phases, as a day of the grace of God in Nature, that truly joyous aspect which belongs to a feast day, as all the Sundays in Lent are feast days by the church reckoning. So far as the common feeble mortal is concerned, he wants the sun to shine if his mood is to be festal. The morning indications were all for rain before the day should end, bright though it began; but the wind shifted to northwest, without much increase of cold, and the splendid sun ruled the day to a fine sunset. There will be many other perfect days, in the hastening advance of summer, and beyond; but Easter itself will be rare, indeed, if it equals the transcendent beauty of yesterday, when life informed the air, the earth, the birds, the marsh-king's courtiers—hyla and croaking frog; and breathed low beneath the ground the summons of bloom. Every character of

life was in the over breeze and the subterranean whispers.

There were bluebirds with the sky on their backs and the earth on their breasts, warbling with that tender and unobtrusive delicacy of which they have the sole secret. There were robins, cheery and bold; and there was the modest phœbe,—whose fellow the chickadee now is little in evidence, going northward. There is much talk of plagiarism in music, and it might be a question which of these birds is the plagiarist of the phœbe call, if it had not been for Paderewski's daring and truthful assertion that there is no proper theft in music, since no theme can be absolutely original, and the question depends on the use of the theme. This lets out both the phœbe and the chickadee, for each has an undeniable right to the notes he was born with. The song-sparrow, most celestially lovely of all the songsters of our clime, is now in his first rich delight in new light, new love, new home, new life. He is a wonderful fellow for continuous joy; for sweet as all the others are, he will sing for the beautiful love of song until November chills. Other sparrows there are now to keep him company, called by various names, but none of them has quite the inspiration of this nonpareil of the early fields and copses. There is pleasure now,

as always, in the hoarse and knowing caws of the crows and the lighter but still passionate tempers of the bluejay. But no longer the crow and his cousin jay, no longer the tones of winter strike the keynote—gentler, tenderer, more exquisite strains are filling the air.

One may hardly call the croak of the early bullfrog and the shrill piping of the hyla by such titles as these; but these queer creatures now make, wherever there are ponds or marshes, an important part of the spring symphony. What an elusive being is this little hyla, clinging to the stems of the cat-tail or sweet-flag or to the sedges and water grasses, indistinguishable from the stems he clings to—unless one with exhaustless patience sits beside some marsh until the tiny creature forgets that the alien is there, and again raises muzzle above the water. Even then what a long time will pass before the “curious impertinent” (to quote from the Cardenio story in “Don Quixote”) may detect the fifer. Shrill beyond the highest-keyed piccolo rises the hyla’s greeting to spring, and none may be sure that the winter barrier has been broken until it is heard. This year hyla is ahead of time, as indeed all the birds have been. One of our few close observers assures us that this is an extraordinary season for early migrations to our latitude. It is now three

weeks since the first flight of wild geese to the north; a great detachment swung over Mount Tom last Monday.

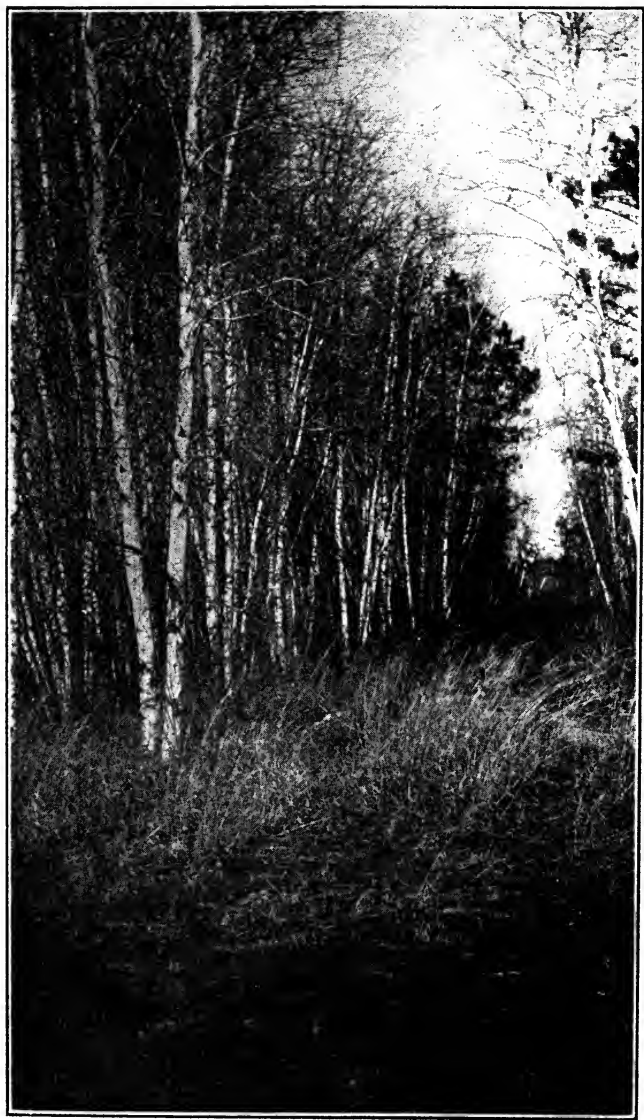
As for flowers, hepaticas have bloomed in the city limits, and two weeks ago dandelions were caught sight of. To be honest, there were adventitious circumstances that helped them; and so, nevertheless, the only reliable blossom of the season is that of the skunk cabbage,—one of the richest and most splendid of plants, notwithstanding its name, and for all that it is modest, and does not force itself upon the attention. It is one of those exceptional plants which spends all its substance of obvious beauty on the hood which hides the blossoms; the beauty of the flowers themselves is reserved for the microscope to discover. Let no one despise a type like this; there is a certain nobility in this effacement. There are human analogues, if we would care to follow out the resemblance.

And it must be said that the infinite charm of the day was that of perpetual promise. So goes on the life of earth, only interfered with by man, who does his worst to ruin and obliterate this constant impulse of life. He, the height of evolution, lingers yet in shallow sense of the place he holds, and of his duty as conservator of all that earth holds. In the scripture parable men are judged

by the use they have made of the talents intrusted to them. Here has a vast world of continually reproducing beauty and glory been committed to man's care, and he should be bound by the conditions of the gift to increase and glorify the work of Nature. But instead, the line of the poet is true: "Man marks the earth with ruin."

In this springtide, with every force of Nature,—that is, of God—bent on the greater beauty, how sluggish, how short-sighted, how injurious is our custody of the treasures of beauty! It is yet to be discovered by mankind that there is nothing in Nature which can be sacrificed without loss; that everything in Nature has value; that not the least, but the greatest value in the earth is its beauty. It belongs and appeals to the spiritual part of man, which will exist and find its fit place of evolution or of devolution after this day, and will be judged, saith the scripture, by the deeds done in the body.

Lo! Easter comes! and let us get quickly into sympathy with that symbolic and noble coming, in which God and Nature meet in one being, and man is a part and an heir of both,—that is to say, of the selfsame begotten kinship, along with the flower of the field, the bird of the air, the hyla of the marsh, and the finest intelligence that sings before the throne of God!



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IN THE SOUL'S NATIVE AIR

Dear is the breath of the April winds, in the pines on
the hillside,

Dear is the smile of the sun on the knolls where the
ground pines creep,

Dear are the showers that waken the flowers to bloom
by the rillside,

Dear are those blossoms that answer the sun and the
rain from their sleep.

Aye, when the torrents adown from the springs of the
mountain are dashing,

Gleams of celestial silver illuming the hemlock's deep
shade,

The spirit of God moves those waters, so vividly rushing
and flashing,

Even as on the great day when the firmament highly
was made.

Still we behold it anew, as if God were the first time cre-
ating,

Nature eternally showing the pulse of continuing life ;

Nature forever repeating, all of her forces relating,

Glory and beauty and honour born out of storm and of
strife.

Crumble the rocks into mould, and trees spring from out
of the ruin,

Climb to the sunlight and sway their breathing leaves
in the breeze ;

Sheltered beneath them spring the delicate flowers that
renew in
Loveliness ever unfailing worship that never shall
cease.

Over the pastures the grasses slowly grow sweet and pre-
pare them
Food of the servants of man, as erst of the rabbit and
deer ;
Green o'er the meadows the grasses, and swell the pink
buds that o'erfare them,
Promise of fruit for the feasting that comes of the fall
of the year.

Aye, and the birds that fly northward, pause here and so-
journ and sing to us,
Birds with the sky in their voices, the message of love
in their lays,
Birds that are free in the ether, and poise and waver, and
bring to us
Thoughts of the time when we too shall escape from
the tumult of days,—

Escape and flee and evanish, and soar to the home of the
spirit,
Soar there and sing, even we, the song that all life and
breath share,
Praising and loving and honouring Him in whose grace
we ensphere it,—
Once more in the bosom of God, restored to the soul's
native air.

Easter Hope

THE day of the rising of Jesus, the season of the rising of Nature, come into the closest connection this late Easter; and the hope of humanity, the promise of earth, are blent in one common springtide, as irresistible as the sunlight and the south winds, that waken the grass and swell the buds, cheer the birds, and invite the peaceful forces of the spirit of all life to renew the miracle of summer. How charming is youth! The very fact of youth is a prefigurement of immortality. Energies that find their way to the seed in the ground, to the germ in the egg; that fill the birds with joy and the air with their happy melody; that stir the pulses with vigour and make strife more expectant and ideals draw nearer,—these are the same that thrill the stars in their courses and bring the vital warmth of our sun to all its little worlds, and so with all the other suns and their attendant worlds.

It is still the word of Jesus that throbs with undiminished conviction this Easter: "Because

I live, ye shall live also." Not with Jesus was born the sense of the divine spirit of original, continuing and never ending life and advance. In the myriad ages of our race upon this planet there have been many prophets and priests of the living God who knew this truth and could not be put down by discouragements of transient and evil days. Not with Jesus did the line of these sons of God end, nor will it ever end. But it was he who first, so far as we have record, so knew the purpose of the Spirit and was so possessed by its unity, its sacred essence and its illimitable glory in ages beyond imagination to conceive, that his sense thereof was not hope, but knowledge, the certainty where is no room for doubt. He spake, because he knew at first hand. The voice of his Father was his own voice, for they were one.

"If a man die, shall he live again?" This is the form the question of questions has taken all down through the ages. It is the riddle of the eternal sphinx, of which all legendary sphinxes are but shadowy types; and notwithstanding Œdipus, it may be maintained that no sphinx ever was answered,—for his answer was an overwhelming catastrophe. Perhaps it is near the time when the riddle shall assume a new form, and we shall no longer ask a question that predicates

death as a condition ; when it shall be fully known that death is no more than an incident of life, like sleep its twin, and that life is the only fact of the universe of God.

This day is consecrated to the memory of the resurrection of Jesus, who is called the Christ, as narrated in the gospels of the faith called after his office of anointed Master of Life, who brought immortality to light, as it is written. And, indeed, though there are thousands of millions of human beings who have no heredity of faith in this extraordinary personage, and though among peoples called broadly after his name the confidence in this revealed evidence is growing dulled and lost, nevertheless, it must always be from him that the strongest of evidence proceeds,—because, a spiritual man, conscious of his divine sonship, he knew and from his knowledge declared that the spirit of man does not die at all. It is not necessary to hold the creed of any Christian church, so-called ; it is not necessary to think at all of the trinity or any other dogma or theologic conception. To give full force to what he has said, it needs only to recognize that element in him which has never been absent from the poet and the prophet,—the spirit's own witness to the spirit's undying continuance. "Because I live, ye shall live also," is enough. Viewed merely as the utter-

ance of a soul so infinitely one with the informing soul of the universe that no other word is possible to it, it thus puts on a universal authority, independent of Hebrew precedent or Pauline glosses, and all that theologians have since argued or invented.

It is one with the certainty of Socrates as he was about to drink the hemlock, and answered to his lamenting friends, who asked his preference as to his burial—"Bury me where you will,—if you can catch me!" It is one with Walter Raleigh's lines, "Yet stab at thee who will, No stab the soul can kill." It is one with every outburst of the Spirit itself, in Cicero and in Bernard, from the psalmists to Longfellow, in Emerson, Tennyson, Browning and Whitman. This is the essential and unchanging testimony of the inspiration of God, which has never failed the poets, who rebuke the sluggish faith of their fellows and give them an uplift in the on-going life.

And this is to be said, in this age of science, which has seemed to tend toward materialism of the most crushing character, even to the point where men actually say that there is no truth attainable save through the processes of the laboratory, and that nothing is proved until the retort has tried it and the figures have demonstrated it. What folly is this! The age of science, we have

termed it. But what is our science? Marvelous as have been the progresses of investigation in the century that has passed, who can say that anything ultimate has been reached? A hundred years ago science was as sure as it is now,—yet there is not a book in any branch of science that is authoritative if it is more than five years old. We consult the books of the beginnings if we go back to the epoch-making “Origin of Species.” Since then, while that book and its fellows are guides of vast value, and have even more weight than when they were new, nevertheless almost every day adds so many marvels of development that they are good for principles rather than for particulars. The steps grow larger and the interstices between them compass more.

Now we are learning from men of research in biology and physics that their studies are leading them to a point where they are catching glimpses and touches of a something mysterious, which, as one of them has substantially said, “we can call by no name more fitting than Love.” The point has been reached where physical standards no longer suffice; where in the unknown ether has been found a substance which is not susceptible of the laws and qualities of matter, and which may be the true expression of the endless creative energy.

Instead of a question of life, it comes to this, that there is nothing but life. The infinite Spirit fills all Nature, our souls no more truly, though so much more greatly, than the earth on which we live. That life is not potential, but actual, in every atom, and it never ceases, but still advances toward an unimaginable unity with the "master light, the secret truth of things, which is the body of the infinite God," as Arthur Hallam says. Science grows and discovers, and no man can say that it has a pause; but before sciences, before theologies, there was always the intuition of the spirit, and it is the one evidence which deserves credence, for it has never failed. Spontaneous it seems in its expression, but it is the indrawn breath of a diviner life than ours on earth that makes the poet so absolute. Emerson did not wait for Darwin and Wallace to read evolution in the record of earth. When he said:—

Ever fresh the broad creation,
A divine improvisation,
From the heart of God proceeds,
A single will, a million deeds.
Once slept the world an egg of stone,
And pulse and sound and light was none;
And God said "Throb!" and there was motion,
And the vast mass became vast ocean,—

—it was an additional revelation to that of the primeval poet of Genesis, because to him it was not a thing outside of God on which God acted, but a direct emanation of God. Life that never begins, life that never ceases, is Emerson's word. "The eternal Pan" is but another name of him who "layeth the world's incessant plan": —

Halteth never in one shape
But forever doth escape
Like wave or flame, into new forms
Of gem and air, of plants and worms.
This vault which glows immense with light
Is the inn where he lodges for a night.
What reck's such traveler if the bowers
Which bloom and fade like meadow flowers
A bunch of fragrant lilies be
Or the stars of eternity?
Alike to him the better, the worse
The glowing angel, the outcast corse;
Thou metest him by centuries,
And lo! he passes like the breeze;
Thou seek'st in globe and galaxy,
He hides in pure transparency.

And let us cite one more of this seer's commanding divinations which fills the Easter of the spirit: —

Saying : What is excellent
As God lives, is permanent.
Hearts are dust, hearts' loves remain,
Heart's love will meet thee again.

A Far Easter in the Future

“**N**OW late on the Sabbath day, as it began to dawn toward the first day of the week, came Mary Magdalene and the other Mary to the sepulchre. And behold, there was a great earthquake, for an angel of the Lord descended from heaven and came and rolled away the stone, and sate upon it. His appearance was as lightning and his raiment white as snow; and for fear of him the watchers did quake, and became as dead men. And the angel answered and said unto the women: ‘Fear not ye; for I know that ye seek Jesus, which hath been crucified. He is not here, for he is risen, even as he said.’”

It is well to recall on this Easter morning the simple narrative of the resurrection of Jesus who is called the Christ, told by the most gentle and humble of his immediate companions. Not one of his four biographers comes any nearer to an explanation of how that sealed tomb of Joseph of Arimathea was left by its temporary occupant. The Roman soldiers, overcome at their post in in-

explicable terror, excused themselves in what way they could, and the ruling Jews imposed secrecy upon them, and sealed it by a bribe, and taught them the tale that the disciples of the false prophet had stolen away his body, and this was the story current among the Jews.

The concern of the Christian church has been too much with the body, stolen away privily, and too little with the living Christ, the spirit, which was not and could not be so treated, since he was free, and privileged to take a body as he should please,—a body which might be present to his immediate followers, and be translated to spiritual essence on the hill of Ascension, and might at any time appear in vision before fine and simple souls to say to them, when faith should shrink, “I have ascended to my father and your father, to my God and your God.” It was not necessary longer to live the life of earth; had he done so, he would have been a noble force dissipated in unequal struggle with the conditions of alien men and low planes of life.

Instead of such a failure, he rose above earth and became a transcendent and glorified ideal; imagination wove around his risen form the transfigured splendours of the life he had lived among his fellows; and the man of the people, born in poverty, reared in labour, who rebuked the proud

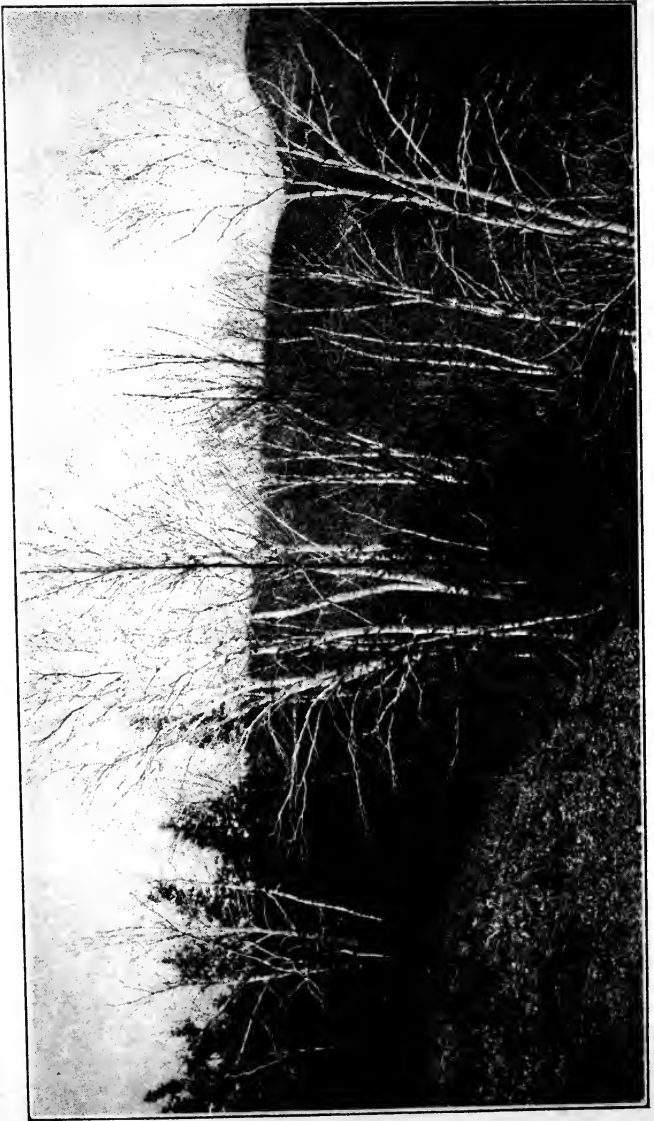
and exalted the humble, who arraigned the priests and their scheduled worship and asserted the perfect simplicity of approach to the divine Father,—he it was who gained and yet keeps the first place in the worship of the world. No prince like Sakya-Muni, no wild warrior-chief like Mohammed, no cold philosopher like Confucius,—not to be compared with any other saviour of the earth,—this Jesus reigns because he was a man and loved his kind,—loved them without consideration of place or privilege,—his sole scorn and reproach for arrogance, oppression and hypocrisy—those vile sins which Jesus never condoned.

The era of the people, of man in himself as the child of God, arose to light on that strange wild morning in Judea, when over the bare eastern hills rose the violet dawn, and the light thereof showed to the two Marys the angel in the sepulchre of Joseph. Was it for nothing in the future of the life of man on this earth that Jesus was of the common ranks of life, that his chosen friends were of those who laboured for daily bread, that the gentle Mary of Bethany and the ardent Mary of Magdala were the first to see and speak with him in his risen appearance? All these things were of infinite significance. From that day the people began to be the immediate and ultimate object of the world's progress; and de-

spite feudalism, despotism, priestcraft and plutocracy, it is the people who rose with Christ, and still are rising.

The time shall come when there will be no more despoilment of man by his brother man; when wealth as now conceived will have become a meaningless term; when all things shall be done for the good of all and nothing for the good of one,—be that one king, emperor, priest, president or great capitalist. The time shall come,—and then war will have become a hideous legend of the past, and no more shall men destroy the lives and hopes and happiness of other peoples for a little trivial aggrandizement and the interest of a few ignorant and pitiable men misled by false ideas. This is the Easter of the future. But because of the life of Jesus, we may be confident that it is to come. Even as he said: “Because I live, ye shall live also.”







WHITE BIRCHES ON EASTER MORN

"Where Nature Reigns"

EASTER was perfect. The sun was a true Easter sun, brilliant, yet softened in its heat by the light vapours which portended new storm; the deep blue sky, with its mare's-tail clouds, was worthy altogether of Hamlet's appreciation: "This most excellent canopy, the air, look you! this brave o'erhanging firmament, this majestical roof fretted with golden fire,"—for such was the show of Sunday. It could not be surpassed if one had the pick of the year. And the tender, wooing, winning movement of the light breeze coaxed out more than the blossoms, and these and the grasses and clovers, feeling the invitation of the gentle rain, sprang with instant response. What a day it was for the red maples and the elms—the scarce slippery elm was in flower in a miraculous moment,—a richer, larger, sweeter flower than that of the white elm. The poplar's tassels swung free and scattered pollen, and the willow pussies burst from kittenhood into full bloom, and the bees took their first full taste

of spring honey, their hum of wings heard a rod or two before one reached the bushes.

On the way to the mountain one saw an extraordinary apparition,—a little bevy of terns from the sea, dipping and swinging over the waters of the Connecticut. They are back to salt water before this, we hope, or some fool will be shooting them. Over the valley inside of Mount Tom, an eagle sailed, a noble wild creature, and with an air of majesty even beyond the osprey's, which is fine enough. Birds were on every hand; the song-sparrow, singing on the fences, and in the hedge-rows that Nature furnishes along even barbed-wire barriers, with that infinitely happy melody which he knows so well and varies so joyously; the robin, with his clear, bold notes; the bluebird, repeating his modest warble; the chewink, the dashing flicker, the chickadee and phœbe, the grackle, besides the jays and crows, who are old winter familiars. Truly a rich body of Easter music, all of them praising God as he inspires them. Lesser creatures, too; for not only the bees, but flies of unknown families, butterflies here and there making the scene more vivid with their wayward flights; spiders all over the leaves, and ants rustling beneath them; and the hylas in the pools fising and flageoleting because life is too good to be silent.



“Where Nature Reigns” 51

It is only the infinite that is silent, says a poet, it is the finite that must speak. But is not their speech that of the infinite, through its myriad tongues? How otherwise reach our own dull finite senses? Does it not teach us what has been so well said by William Mountford,—a religious soul that loved Nature and knew well her secrets:—

“Nature about us is a companionship, which our souls feel, and were meant to feel, for there is to be caught from it a tone so peculiar as to be intentional. Cheerful is what Nature would make us,—not merry, nor melancholy. Now it is in cheerfulness that our moral faculties are freest,—that we most readily trust, and are kind, and control ourselves. . . . And then, in itself, this earth is what we ought to die out of triumphantly. For in this world, has not God’s presence been what rightly makes us long for a manifestation of of it, higher and still plainer?”

The flowers of Easter were for the most part of the trees and the shrubs; yet there is an amazing forwardness in the saxifrages, whose little flower bunches so far swell out amid the pretty rosettes of foot leaves with their bronze and reddish hues, that another week will see them open. The arbutus is much slower to respond, and will wait awhile. But the wonderful discovery was of hun-

dreds of hepaticas in full beauty on a sunny hill-side, with their miraculous blue, lavender, pink and milk-white,—every one a marvel of variable colour, pulsing with the very heart of earth, and the aspirant essence of the spring. Hepaticas like this on the 30th of March,—who ever knew the like! It is as much as one expects to see a solitary hepatica in the first fortnight of April. But everything is hastening to light this spring,—the birds are antedating their arrivals. Perhaps they are too daring, but until the frost comes, let us forget that such a thing can be, and delight in the sunny flavours of the woodland, the gracious sweetness of the flowers, the music of the birds and the busy murmur of the bees; and as one drinks of the cold spring beneath the hemlocks, he partakes of the greatest blessing of Nature, the pure essence of her life, distilled through clouds and suns, and filtered through the channels of the holy earth, where as yet man has not arrived to delete and pollute with his many inventions.

All these wonderful things—the faint ruddy tinges of the red maples and the delicate yellow tints of the poplars on the great mountain side, beneath the many forest trees whose responses are yet invisible, the sweep of sunny atmosphere through the delectable valley, the delicious fra-

grances of the fallen leaves of last year warmed by the first spring fervours, the charm of bird song and butterfly wavering, the blossoms that are seeking the light from earth's warming bosom,—all these call us up higher. The birds will die, as human folk die; the flowers in their present beauty will vanish; but "what decays in flowers," says Mountford, "is not what you care for; the beauty in them that you love never perishes, and every year it is fresh to look at. Oh, flowers are words about a life more spiritual than is plainly to be signified in this earth by things springing out of it. Sometimes, in looking at a flower, my mind is drawn into a mood that is like a firm persuasion of immortality, it is so largely thoughtful and full of peace. Summer and winter, sunshine and darkness, rolling seas and high mountains,—there is that in me that is like them all. If only flowers, or only trees, or only some one class of objects in Nature were beautiful to us, then their perishing might infect us with mortal fears. But now all things are made beautiful to us in their time,—all things of God's making are. And the feeling of this is fellow feeling with God."

And in this mood of responsiveness to the divine life, expressing itself in these myriads of beautiful shapes and sounds and breaths, we know

that there is no death, but as Carl Spencer apostrophizes:—

Thou angel of the other change unknown,
With such vague terrors rife,
Speak to us in thine own familiar tone,
And we shall call thee Life.

“When death takes those we love, then we love death.” And it is for that reason we love it, or may love it,—that it is only change to new life. As Mountford writes: “The grace that rises from the earth in many a tree; the fascination that eddies and murmurs in flowing water, keeps the gazer standing by the riverside; the beauty that lives along the plain, and draws man’s outstretched hands toward itself, as in recognition; the loveliness that in a valley is around and over man, and embosomed in which he feels unearthly and sublimed; the dear and fearful beauty of the lightning; the wild grandeur of a September sunset;—what is in them we shall all feel again, and drink in everlastingly. And it will be a dearer delight than now; intenser and fuller. For then, O God! we shall be in thee and of thee, and thou wilt be to us like an ocean of delight, our little spirits being bathed in thine infinite spirit.”

The Culminating Easter

IT was a wise, and in no respect accidental adaptation, that took into the young Christianity the ancient Teutonic festival of Spring, and named from the imagined goddess thereof the time wherein the rising of the Saviour from the tomb took place. It is so much easier for the human consciousness to apprehend the immortal life in the presence of those lovely analogies which the new springing life of earth multiply before the eyes of dwellers in those northern climes where Eostre's rites were celebrated, as those of Rhea and Persephone were in the Nature-worship of the Greeks. Nothing is more natural than to believe in perpetual life for the soul that can perceive this wonderful resemblance to itself. It is so plain that the forms alone die, but the life, depending not upon forms, but on essential principles, cannot die. And even that imperfection which gives to many a seed no fertility, that misfortune which blasts the new buds in their

sheaths and brings what we call death to the tree and the shrub, indicates but a conversion of life force into new modes of manifestation. Life ends not, but forever begins. And as it has been, so it shall be.

The individual life, as it is a growth, may have its pause or its conclusion ; let the spirit see to it that, set free from whatever circumstances forbid or contract it, it shall have continuance in itself by virtue of that which in the sight of Jesus made man of a farther advance than the flowers of the field and the birds of the air, and yet of the same nature and under the same care. Not a sparrow falleth to the ground without your Father. It was not necessary to make a hypothetical emendation here ; this does not mean that God had a purpose in the sparrow's fall, or that he decreed it, but that he must perforce be present in all the incident and result of life,—the Father is not outside, but within the phenomena we see ; he is all and in all. Jesus was a pantheist, as all high poetic natures have been, for he knew no place where God was not. But this is hidden to some by ecclesiasticism, to some by dogma, and the most religious may be deficient in this spiritual sense. For as Cowley wrote :—

Only the spirit can the spirit own.

And to quote again from William Mountford :—

“ In God the fountains rise and the rivers run and the oceans ebb and flow ; and shall not my spirit continue to be a spirit in him ? But in death there is the loss of the body ; and in health, is there not a losing of the body and a regaining of other flesh every minute ? And then has a river the same water running in it any two hours together ? A fountain is a fountain, in God, for a hundred, a thousand, and many thousand years ; and I will not fear but my soul shall be a soul in him for ages of ages.”

In Mountford's beautiful book, which he called “ Euthanasy,” Aubin says :—

“ In the woods I seldom was long before I was possessed by a spirit, like what the Greeks imagined was Pan. A fearful pleasure ! At first it seemed as though the low wind whispered me ; and then, as though it waited about me and curled about my face. If a branch waved, it was toward me, and if a leaf fluttered, so did my heart. Then I would sit down and wonder in awe and joy and tears. And the awe in my spirit would deepen, and the joy, too, and my tears would fall faster, till I felt as the child Samuel may have done in the temple, while waiting for the Lord to speak. And there was speech from God to me at those

times ; because from my feelings then I am now sure, even to myself, of the blessedness which is to be felt with God by the pure in heart."

And this is no extravagance. Until the spiritual resurrection comes to business, politics and the great affairs of the world,—until the conviction of a spiritual life touches, informs and transforms everything which humanity has to accomplish, the divine purpose waits, and with infinite patience, for that culminating Easter morning when the life of God shall possess man as it possesses the new springing earth, and Jesus, the first fruit, shall welcome his brothers and sisters to the fullness of life.

April at Work

CONVERSATION on the weather is one of the universal and continuous indulgences of humanity. There is no speech nor language where this talk is not heard—unless in places like the city of Mexico or the desert of Sahara, where they have only one kind of weather. In this country nothing but politics and religion can rival the weather as a subject, and it is a curious fact that the basis of talk about the weather is not the familiarity which characterizes the treatment of politics, but rather a religious mystery. No sort of weather is accepted as natural, the very sort to be expected and just the thing that is wanted. It is always unusual, extraordinary, incomprehensible. Men “never saw such a steady pull of cold weather,” or “such a fearful hot spell,” or “such a dry time,” or “so long a siege of rain,”—and so on,—or “leastwise, not at this time of the year,” or “not for ten years,” or “not since the summer of 1811,” or “1837,” or some other remote date.

Yet the gospel of God in Nature is published abroad upon the mountain tops and down the valleys, so far as the sun has shone to unlock the voices of the waters and the birds, and to stir the pulses of growth in the earth. Many a long and dreary day of gray forbiddance we wait through, with rebellion and discouragement, while the rains prepare the ground and the north winds restrain the buds from premature ventures. This is the trial of our faith, which in the natural as the spiritual life worketh patience, that after these may come experience and hope. The sequence is always the same, the experience that came in past years has no sort of effect in working patience in the present. Indeed in all things is it not so? It is only by looking at the results of ages over the whole human race that we can discern strongly marked the value of experience: and that value, as Paul the tent-maker said, is to develop hope. Hope is the virtue and moral essence of spring-time, wherein nothing is as we would have it, and yet to the observant eye the promises abound of all the comforts and recompenses of summer.

For the hardier fern fronds begin to uncoil and the hepatica buds to prick through the mat of forest leaves; pussy-willow is tossing yellow pollen on the air; the pale yellow butterflies, hatched from last year's chrysalids, flit around these cat-

kins; the trailing arbutus is wooing all,—even those whom it would not wish to know; the robins sing at morning and evening around our homes, and the song-sparrow in the fields; all these and their like assuring us how

Once again the Heavenly Power
Makes all things new.

There is no need of haste; the season is before us, and all its appointed events have their proper and reasonable course; were sunshine continuous and winds from the south each day, were there not these gloomy skies and bitter winds to retard,—then everything would rush to manifest life at once, and the uses of discipline and the allurements of hope alike be lost to us. It is strange that we should complain of spring, seeing that incompleteness is so great an element in all that is pleasant in life, and pursuit the charm of all ambition and endeavour. Who would have all at once the blessings he desires? The zest of living would be lost if we had the purse of Fortunatus or the ring of Aladdin, and our only chance to recover it would be to lose the magic talisman. We might set forth at once on the quest for a new one; but that would lead to new adventures, new experiences, and give something again to live for. If by some such magic power we could environ

ourselves with perpetual summer, skies always sweet and bloom ever fair, fruit beside blossom and trees never bare, birds that do not depart, and all unchanging luxury and unresting perfection, would it not grow tedious? Could our New England virtues live where

Droops the heavy blossomed bower, hangs the heavy-fruited tree,
Summer isles of Eden lying in dark purple spheres of sea?

April is a charming creature at times, full of coy and pretty caprices, but one does not get very intimate with her, there is commonly a distant chilliness in her smiles, and it takes a brave wooer to fall heartily in love with her. Yet the earth is waking up leisurely, day by day, as she traverses the old paths. We see the grass springing green and hear the robins and the bluebirds; even a few fire-hang-birds are prospecting in couples; the wild geese fly high northward; the lilac bushes swell their leaf-buds, and alders and black birches are shaking pollen from their tassels. There is a treasure of charm in the sunny valleys that lie in the hearts of the hills, for although there is no richness of colour and scarcely a breath of fragrance in their spaces, there is an indefinable expectation in the air, and the eye, lacking the greater things

of interest, finds pleasure in the humble beginnings and hints, such as the incipient fronds of ferns in the clefts of the ledges, the herb-robert's delicate, reddish leaves, as beautiful as flowers, the first leaves of honest saxifrage or bold corydalis or gypsy columbine. Small things are as interesting as large ones, and mean as much in the everlasting mystery of creation and resurrection.

The waters now dash in splendid cataracts down many a precipice of basaltic trap that will be only dry rock a month hence; and one may lie on a sun-warmed rock, and watch the birds as they dart and drop and chatter, and call and fling out bursts of hopeful song, or see here and there tiny whirlwinds lift a spiral twist of brown leaves far above the trees they fell from in the fall, and enjoy other privileges that the forest foliage will presently restrict.

On the mountain's peak, one of these fresh spring mornings, the earth seems deliciously slumbrous, as if at the verge of awakening, but enjoying its morning naps,—turning itself therein, and saying like the sluggard in the Proverbs: "Yet a little sleep, a little slumber, a little folding of the hands to sleep." There lies to the southward a mist from the seething snows, clouding the horizon; and all around indeed this melting vapour rises; yet Greylock seems so near as if one might

put his hand on that white snow-cap ; Haystack looms blue further north, Monadnoc's grand dome shows its dark spruce belt, and gentle Wachusett rises blandly in the east. While one views the vast panorama of mountain and valley, the sense grows upon him of the perfect oneness of the whole scene, and of all scenes of Nature, as passing exhibitions of the constant life, which originates and informs them all. Here are we, midgits of a moment, which we call human life and mark out into hours and days and years, fretting over the vexing incidents of that moment. We are excited, eager, angry, emulating, envying, disappointed, despairing. And yet we know we shall presently be gone where all such emotions shall appear to us as the snow mists from the height ; and we shall wonder that we were moved by so slight considerations.

THE CHAIN

This is the chain that binds the world
In endless sequence, life in life ;
This coil, inextricably curled,
Draws soul and sense to ceaseless strife ;
These fatal links, untiring whirled,
Enclose a penance without strife ;
These golden gleaming bands unfurled
Display a growth with canker rife ;—
What is this chain, this coil, these bands,
And what the danger of their spell,
The evil of their mystic grasp ?
Let him then answer whose weak hands
Their power in vain essayed to quell,
In vain essayed to loose their clasp !

E

Opening April

FAIRLY launched in April, the most hopeful, most capricious, dearest of the spring months, we are quarreling with the chilly winds of north and west, and wishing for summer. 'Tis most unreasonable. Is there anything less satisfying than fulfilment,—anything more delicious than expectation? Luxury comes with summer, but this tardy, hesitating, lingering spring possesses the finer charm of reticent retreat and delicate enticement. A little advance of green grass in sunny spots beside the hedge of the roadsides; a little freshening of the willow bark and the soft maples; a brave and sudden disengagement of the buttonwood's brown shell of out-grown bark, revealing the clear, splendid gayety of its fresh garniture; a deepening of tone all along the woodland,—the young growth first flinging its modified reds against the gray of winter; a new tint swelling in the swamps, where the cassandra's young buds push out beneath the copper bronze of the winter-living leaves;—these

and many more signs are saying that all is as it should be,—that

“ God’s in his heaven,
All’s right with the world ! ”

But now we wait for April opening, such as its name invites. South winds must hurry to come, thrust back the western breezes and keep busy until they melt the snows of the mountains north and northwest ; for so long as those snows lie in the forest depths unyielding, so long the summer waits. Yet now the hepaticas are opening in the sunny dells of the woodland ; and now the birds are flying from southern climes and singing all about us. Hear the robins with their bold and heartsome warbles and calls ; hear the fleets of grackles, swinging through the groves and calling their all-hails to the new earth ; the song-sparrows and their congeners ; the meadow larks, and the brown thrasher, flinging forth his vernal hymn at a fence corner, in so off-hand a way that one feels as if winter had been a mere dream.

All the pulse of lasting life is in these beautiful rebirths, all the promise of immortality. Ay, truly, such manifestations are but the earnest of the vast splendours of realms and climes that lie beyond. Hear Vaughan’s teaching : —

“Hark! how the birds do sing
 And woods do ring!
 All creatures have their joy, and man hath his;
 Yet if we rightly measure
 Man’s joy and pleasure
 Rather hereafter than in present is.

“Not that he may not here
 Taste of the cheer;
 But as birds drink, and straight lift up their head,—
 So must he sip and think
 Of better drink
 He may attain to after he is dead.”

Dead? It is but a euphemism,—a mode of speech, a concession to faithless humanity. There is no analogue for this word in what we see of Nature’s processes, and less than none in what the soul is self-convicted of. Why not such a threnody as we may thus express?—

Man hath his travail here,
 And much that he must learn,
 But learning, lift his soul above his task;
 For here ’t is he shall earn
 Whatever from his Father he would ask
 For that continuing sphere.

Why, then, sing as the birds!
 Make so our transient nest,
 Rear broods and love them well,—then all resign;



WHERE BIRDS HAUNT THE SPRING





Above remains our rest,
Thereto we tend, and when we're there, we'll shine
Brighter than all our words.

Yet think, the while we sing,
To furnish holy food
For those we leave when we adventuring go;
As Jesus on the rood
Blest those who brought him there,—even so,
We'll love as we take wing.

Hepatica

THE watchword of the day is *Hepatica*! or it is *Arbutus*, or it is *Saxifrage*, or possibly in some camps of Nature it may be *Dirca*! Awhile ago it was *Pussy-Willow*; pretty soon it will be *Quaker Lady* or *Blue Violet*. These are peaceful tokens of speech, and even the cruel lovers of beauty have them at their tongues' end. In the sweet new winds of the west—they are rare, this spring, but we have felt them—one should have only gracious thoughts to match such words. But Nature bars none,—her gates are always open, and it rests with the one who enters to be worthy or unworthy of her intimacy. On the conscience and the heart of the visitor it depends whether blessing or barrenness comes.

One may rightly weigh for no little time the respective charms of the mayflower and the *hepatica*. What can be more delicious than the pink sweetness of the trailing *arbutus*,—that exquisite bloom of mossy wildwood knolls, nestled

beneath the shields of green leaves somewhat rusty from the winter weather, springing from furry stems that are so hardy in appearance, and so full of the character of the heath family to which this lovely flower belongs. This creeping vine may be aspiring to become a shrub, like its cousins, the white-belled cassandras and pink-belled andromedas of the swamps (which are even now vine-like), like the blueberries and the azaleas,—like the kalmias, those glorious bushes we call mountain laurel. All of these share the hardness and the delicacy in one of the arbutus, and the kindred is not difficult to discern. If the arbutus has this longing, then as its sensitive flowers aspire to a more perfect state,—for they are now changing, botanists tell us, from self-fertilizing to insect-fertilizing, as the way of evolution is,—and its stem would fain lift into the air, it must more readily yield, as it does, to the onslaughts of spoilers, and so give up the struggle with intrusion. The very neighbourhood of our coarse civilization affronts it, and even were it not torn asunder by robbers wherever it is found, it would retreat and resign its place as houses get near.

'T is the fragrance of the trailing arbutus which gives it precedence in the popular esteem; and added to that, it will kindly blossom after pluck-

ing, because of the sustaining force of its woody stem. But the hepatica scarcely survives the plucking; it wilts and dies as it departs from the earth. It is said that it has no fragrance, but this saying about flowers means only that our sense is not fine enough to apprehend the subtlety of their evanescent breath. Doubtless the hepatica has fragrance; doubtless the common blue violet, and the branching white violet, and surely the branching yellow violet, as well as the dainty marsh white violet, have their fragrances. Only the last mentioned, the tiny blanda, with its violet streaks in white, is credited with the faintest of perfume. But there are those who, long loving flowers, find in them the properties that others miss, and will not allow that the deficiency in such as these is more than relative.

Be that as it may, the hepatica needs no charms but those that are obvious to gain our love. And yet not all obvious. There is something more than meets the first glance in this modest, simple flower, espied in the midst of the dry brown leaves of the forest, where the fall ripening shook them from the boughs upon the warm slopes open to the south. Generally the old leaves of the year that went, encompass the crown of the new bloom, but sometimes the blossoms come in a pathetic loneliness. Always they wear the look of celes-

tial visitants, entering the new world of the spring with a certain surprise.

The hepatica is so beautiful that it transcends the sky and the earth, and brings heaven close. Look into the heart of the flower, and view its wondrous life; most of all, that pulsating colour which lifts and dilates, and drops and lessens, from blue of the sapphire to soft purple of the amethyst, as if the sky itself were living in this tiny blossom. And if the bloom be white, then note how at the foot of the petals a slight golden glow appears, as if the sun had given it a special ray: —

“ Oh, the earth’s unconscious bosom
Such rare colour never knew ! ”

but the heavens have known it, and here are their translated undulations of light, fascinating our eyes and hearts in the life of a little flower where in the spirit moves with the same infinite power that is exercised as easily in the movement of the universes. The scene of the advent of this delightful blossom is beautifully presented by Dora Read Goodale: —

“ All the woodlawn path is broken
By warm tints along the way ;
And the low and sunny slope
Is alive with sudden hope,

When there comes the silent token
Of an April day—
Blue hepatica !”

While thus the summer forerunners appear, proclaiming the message of blossom and growth in the still open woodland and on sunny knolls, see also the willows in flower, the catkins grown dusty with pollen,—see the poplars shaking their tassels, and the alders and birches and hazels. Now, too, the adder-tongue lily is showing its yellow bells at the edges of sunny woodland, and along the moist banks of meadows. The ferns are uncoiling their fronds, the crosiers of the bishop's fern are lifting in benediction over those that shall follow. The leatherwood's golden tassels are lighting the woods with their echoed sunshine, and the buds of the spice bush and hobble-bush are betraying their intentions. A hundred shrubs are swelling their leaf buds and flower buds, and all things are telling of life. All the while, over these growths, the birds are warbling, and scolding, and the sunshine and showers are making earth over. The sheaths of the elm buds are loosening and the elms grow gold-brown overhead; and what! can it be that the ruddy sweet florets of red maple are opening? Even so, and beneath at the wood's edge the bloodroot's white calyx spreads purely like a dream of virtue un-

flawed. All the sweet life of Nature is waking, and the promise of summer is here. Pray, we, that man may awake, too, and emulate such lives as these.

These Summer Visitations

SUMMER makes hasty brief calls on spring, and not many of them, either, this year. She hurries in at the edge of a northeaster, says howdy, and is gone before we fairly recognize her. But each time something happens to the face of Nature; a new lot of flowers take advantage of the sunshine and smile at her invitation; a new flight of birds suddenly arrives, and at the same time the beetles and the worms and the caterpillars, getting about their own business, provide food for the songsters, thus getting translated into a higher order of being, which they could reach in no other way so quickly. This is one of the seasons Hosea Biglow speaks of:—

“For half our May’s so awfully like Mayn’t
’Twould rile a Shaker, or an evrige saint.”

And yet who would have it otherwise, for the beauty of it?—the very delays enhance its loveliness. Things of desire attained are never so sweet in fulfilment; and May is the charmer because

she evades us, and leaves us while giving her promise. Were man to manage the progress, we well know how he would do it; everything all at once would be perfect, and run on time, like a railroad. So should we lose this enticing delay, and the grace of surprise would be wanting—that grace which, turning the coign of a ledge, reveals the gay columbine dancing in the light airs:—

“ With a gypsy beauty free and fine.”

For now the columbine is happy in the sunny woodland, and its slender roots in the mere dry clefts of the rocks sustain a burden of beauty so rich that one marvels to see such results from a footing that seems so precarious. Just a few root-threads in a rift barely enough to contain them, and here is this wonderful flower, nodding, yellow and red, on its slight, sturdy stem, with its beautiful sunlighted leaves, so perfectly wrought to sustain it. Also the anemones are out in their benign modesty, the rue and the wood anemones, and the pretty star flower their kin. The hepatica's season has passed,—it also was once called anemone, and indeed one easily recognizes its kindred in the singular changeable beauty of the rue anemone's satiny petals, besprinkled with silver, surrounding its yellow anthered stamens

around its five pistils with their starry stigmas. But while the hepatica has gone on to fruit, its twin on wings, the hepatica butterfly, its very counterfeit in blue and lavender colours, still flits through the woodland ways, and seems to be searching for the flower it fellows. This miraculous creature, the very psyche of the hepatica, still links May to April, and keeps alive the continuous sympathy of Nature.

Now is the infinite delicacy of the spring merging into summer, and something is lost, day by day, of the subtleties of colour, which yet are magical enough, as the gray birches, the tasseled poplars, the aspens, the pink or crimson oaks, the bronze tints of hickories and the pendulous sugar maple blooms emphasize the hillsides. Now, too, the sassafras is blossoming in pale old gold, on the hillsides, and there is in the swamps all the bloom of the dainty cassandra, drooping its heathery bells over the edge of the waters. To view any scene in Nature now is to feel the beauty of that slow advance by which in our clime one season melts into another, and hard and fast lines are avoided. There are no such lines in all Nature. The edges of a flower and of a mountain alike indicate something beyond ; the sharp outline is only true of man's structures, and of these, if they get age

enough, it ceases to be true. Time makes a castle or abbey in England a piece of the landscape; time more quickly adopts into its age the barns and houses of our countryside. All outlines close up and tone down and soften, till a stone wall or a rail fence becomes as much a part of the landscape as the original rocks or the trees from which the fence-rails were made. And the old houses,—when they were raised in the human pride of their possessors they were intrusive, no doubt; but now they take their place with dignity as children by adoption. In this there is an analogue of the whole course of Nature; and rightly, for all things are in the scope of the infinite life which pervades all that man is or does,—all that this earth or the universes are and do, which “fills and bounds, connects and equals all.”

MAY SONG

Within her springy copses hid
 Wakes slowly the dear life of earth,
Each blossom as it opes its lid
 Englories its enchanting birth,—
Sweet is the bud, and rich amid
 The springing green the blossom's worth.

The world smiles on the ardent day ;
 It is the open face of Spring,
The faithful tenderness of May,
 That coaxes all the birds to sing.
What gracious heart could fail to say
 Let all with earth's winged chorus sing !

The Marvelous Beauty of the Spring

THE singular character of the season has given to the landscape certain unwonted charms, which have been felt even by those unused to close observance of the ways of Nature. Everything has put on an original character, from the start out of winter until now that we are on the verge of summer, and yet we linger without remonstrance, for the earth is too beautiful to wish it otherwise. Flowers and leaves, grasses and sedges, the herbs, the shrubs, the vines, the trees,—and with them the birds and bees, butterflies and beetles,—all came swiftly in advance of their customary dates, and it seemed that the glory of the earth was about to rush in upon us like a flood. But then came the conservative delay. We had barely one or two summery days, just enough to give a fillip to the ambitions of the things that grow and bloom and fly and sing, and Nature has gone on in her gentle deliberation with merely warm days and constantly cool nights, and thus the exquisite delicacy of spring has been

prolonged, its ideal loveliness preserved, through weeks of unsurpassable beauty, as if to intensify all our love for the "soote season" that Surrey wrote of, and that is so often brief as "the posy of a ring."

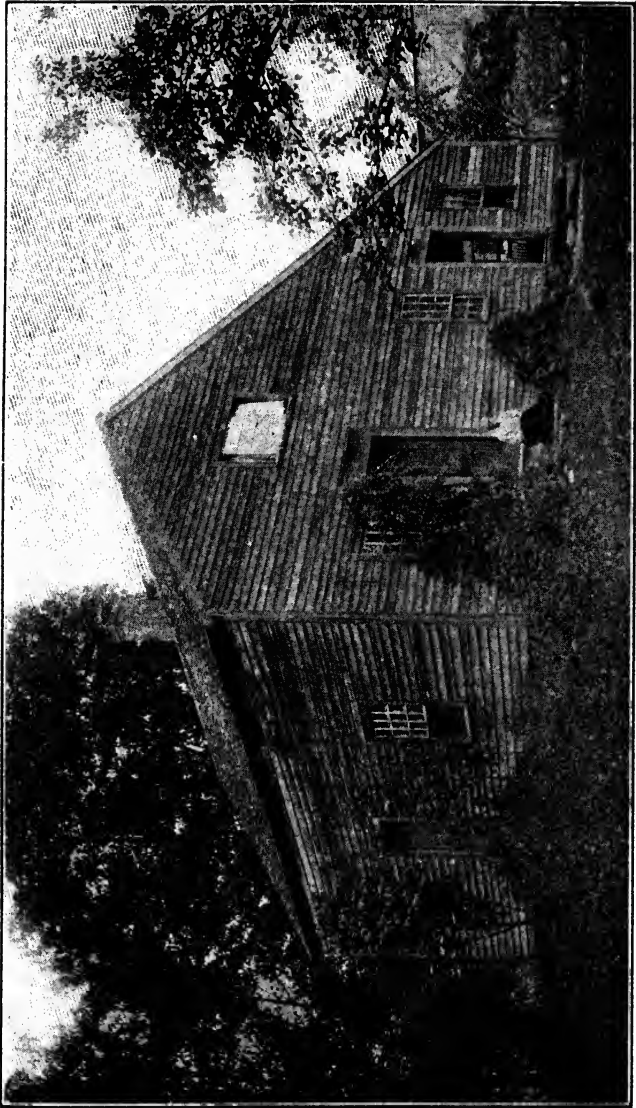
What these weeks of pause produce we may see now all around us in the woods and fields; while yet on the higher hills summer is much farther off, and bloom and leafage not yet in large evidence. It is owing largely to the maples that the colours of the spring remain so charmingly fine. Without the maples our woodland and our meadows and pastures, not to speak of our roadsides, would lose much in both spring and fall. The maple is claimed by the Canadas, but New England surely shares their claim of this tree's noble and continuous beauty. Matthew Arnold, when he visited this country, was more impressed with the great sugar maples before old places in the Berkshire towns than with the elms which are so commonly regarded as special New England glories. To his eye, the English elm was not the inferior of our white elm, but the English maple, he allowed, bore no comparison with these superb trees. He unfortunately never traveled among our hills with that freedom which alone can show truly the characteristics of country, or he would have found the red and white maples also important and ex-

ceeding. We must realize the exceptional beauty of this fine family, and there is no time better than now, when the early leafage is beginning to swell from its buds in very various tints of red, and the brilliant yellow or crimson keys are still, thanks to the delays of the chill winds, augmenting their splendour.

The show of Nature in the woodland stretches around our outlying farm lands is one of extraordinary beauty. Pause at the gray rail fence, and across a little tract of bushy marsh view the woods encompassing the prospect and hiding the horizon, lifting into the sky their myriad boughs and slender twigs, clad in the sweet grace of the young leaves, a miraculous symphony of colour, in tones refined to the ideal of harmonious relation. In their midst the light wind weaves its caresses, and they sway and swerve, not in disturbance, but in response. The sun, partly veiled by the rising vapours of earth, fills all these moving tree-tops with a tender golden radiance, and when it touches a pine's dark masses among the maples and birches and poplars, it lights it suddenly with sparkling silver brilliance. It is the magic of infinite life that fills, that surcharges, the scene; and Nature to our common eyes transfigures the woodland and the near swamp, and the lifting pasture-sidehill until they take on

a character not so much of earth and time as of God and eternity. This is but for a moment in the endless ages, it is a transient glimpse of the unbeginning and unending Spirit, which lives thus and moves thus, and so influences our souls, that are parts of his soul, that we feel our derivation and know our destiny. Such as we may see betokens and assures what we are and shall be.

The foreground of such a view is always as wonderful in beauty, though less impressive, lacking that transfiguration which the zephyrs, the sunlight and the splendid cloud-traversed blue sky lend to the larger and higher view. This foreground may be of a little marsh in which gray birches, poplars, a spruce or two, may add a touch of variety, but in which also the cinnamon ferns are swiftly unrolling their "fiddle-heads," the skunk cabbage displays its tropical luxuriance of rich green leaves and the rhodora blooms in royal purple modesty among the tufts of strong marsh grasses. Then what should be said about the darlings of the spring, the bluets, the Quaker ladies, which now make edges of pastures, and often whole sidehills, milk-white with their infantile prettiness? These little blossoms are individually charming, but they are only emphatic in communities, and they never





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lack of adding an element of cheer to the season. Another foreground might be a pasture crowded with the "painted cup," or "Indian paint brush," which now abounds in grounds a little moist,—as red as a cardinal's robe, but not at all a "cup," while very much recalling the look of a brush dipped into red paint, such as the Indians who once dwelt here were wont to use in adorning their countenances. It is an interesting reminiscence in history,—that old Yankee name. In the marshes, too, is now blooming the yellow lady's slipper, and the crimson moccasin flower in somewhat dryer grounds. Ferns of many species are now rolling out of their curls, which begin beneath the ground. In fine, there is an exhaustless variety of beauty in the woods and fields.

Nor shall we wander over the realms of untrammelled and unneighbourd Nature without the inspiration and delight of the birds, most absolute of the gifts of heaven, who live in the air and on the earth alike, and in exuberance of love are now filling all the fields and roadsides with their song. One may see almost all the birds that come here to stay, and not a few of these who will shortly go northward. Orioles, both Baltimore and orchard; so many sparrows and warblers and flycatchers; the kingbird and the chimney swift, the

barn swallow and the meadow lark ; and not to mention our familiars, the robin, the bluebird and the rest, here is the brown thrasher, whom Yankee farmers have dubbed "the planting-bird," since he arrives at planting time and from the tops of tall trees directs the farmer how to do his work, with volubility and an extraordinary variety of songs, as many as the catbird has, or the mockingbird himself. "List the brown thrasher's vernal hymn"—one cannot do otherwise if he be within hearing distance. What endless delight in life,—what joy is life !

However much one may complain of lesser matters, the breath of flying winds on the rocks is enough to make one forget all else. There all the earth seems a mere accident, and one breathes the universal communion. Things as they are in the valleys, where men mould and mismanage them, are forgotten, and for the moment one feels the divine wholeness, the inspiration of God which makes existence bearable, in hope, almost in view, of the infinite liberation.

Then one feels that while there are constant and inexorable duties in the vale, and reason enough to fulfil those duties and against escaping from them,—yet there is a refuge which is sure to come,—a freedom which is instinct and chartered in the soul, which may be earned by that





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lower discipline, and can only be forfeited by rebellion against it. This is the lesson of the robins, the grackles and the orioles. Why should we not all learn it?

In Mid-May

THE swift advances of the summer are depriving us of the tender, delicate, gracious qualities of the spring. Too suddenly, if not too soon, the full greens of the summer are beginning to shade our streets, and those tentative tints of the trees are overtaken and overborne by the full chlorophyll rushing from the earth and drinking in the vapours of the sky. Earth is in haste to be ready for June. The apple trees are blossoming,—it is the apple year; the pears are coming out, the cherries of cultivation are going by, but the wild cherries are all in great beauty; the shadblow has shed its light-some petals, and now the lilacs are full of fragrance and charm. And a little way out of the city, where the forest remnants exist, where the snow lingered longer and the frosts were slower in loosing hold, the red and sugar maples are now in beautiful bloom, the poplars in their several fellowships are harmonizing the woodland, and the great family of the oaks are adding richer

colours of exceeding tenderness. The oaks, with their long patience and prospect, are in no hurry about leafing, as the shorter-lived deciduans are. The scrub oak is now one of the most attractive ornaments of the plain lands, and one resents the name, for while the husbandman may find this oak a scrub, it should be called rather the shrub, or the bush oak, for such is its manner of growth. It is delightful to find a member of the majestic family of the oaks condescending to lesser stature and common fellowship with the wayside willows, the hazels, the alders and the sumachs. In truth, it is only our false notions of importance which make such distinctions; in Nature all are of equal character and rank.

The season of appearance which we call spring has been so cautious, considerate and dilatory that still there lingers on shaded slopes beneath the pines the arbutus; still the hepatica—flower of April—is in bloom in the woodland; and the skunk cabbage, though now swelling those great green leaves which give it its proper name, has not yet done with the hooded blossoms of the earliest spring. Now are the anemones in bloom, and the first of our lilies, the adder-tongue, is making splendid many a knoll in pasture and meadow. This is one of the flowers that gets civilized out of our parks, as the skunk cabbage

does, and as the arbutus does, and indeed almost every wild flower, by the constant meddling of the park improvers. There is no flower more lovely and more delightful than the erythronium—this adder-tongue lily—but it must be let alone. Now the cassandra and the andromeda are blooming in the swamps, and all around their borders the magical rosy purple rhodora is aflame, and in the edges of damp woods the gold-thread sends up from its beautiful green vine that runs underground its bright starry blossoms. The wake-robin and the painted trillium, its fellow, are now opening in the woods ;—the lovely corydalis is in bloom on the mountain, its favourite home the seams in the venerable ledges where the ages have lodged bits of soil ; there is budding the strange and forbidding flowerage of the poison ivy ; and the bright yellow rocket and pretty zizia, the earliest of the parsleys, are in that stage. Note, too, the strong growth of the plants that are to bear those sturdy democracies, the asters and golden-rods, every apparent flower really a community of equals, and many hundreds of such communities gregarious in the fields and by the roadsides, making confederacies of beauty in their later days, when all the delicate graces which live so briefly now are without evidence, and hundreds of others, the riper riches of the summer, have bloomed

and are gone. Then comes the season of these honest, social families.

The loveliness of spring is that which most surely appeals to all. It is release from captivity, it is rising from death, it is promise and expectancy, it is hope, immortally beautiful and precious, the star of the future dawn gleaming against the blackness of the cloudy past. So for ages since man first rhymed the poets have declared, saying for the rest of us what we cannot so well say for ourselves. But there is also something pathetic and even melancholy in spring, since after all, these charming and cheering tokens are of the moment, and the season's secret burden is evanescence.

“ Sweet day, so cool, so calm, so bright,
 Bridal of earth and sky,
The dews shall weep thy fall to-night,
 For thou must die.”

“ Like to the grass that's newly sprung,
Or like a tale that's new begun,
Or like the bird that's here to-day,
Or like the pearled dew of May.
Or like an hour, or like a span,
Or like the singing of a swan,—
E'en such is man, who lives by breath,
Is here, now there, in life and death,—
The grass it withers, the tale is ended,
The bird is flown, the dew's ascended,

The hour is short, the span is long,
The swan's near death—Man's life is done."

More native to spring are these broodings on the brevity of earth than even to autumn, if one considers closely. For much of this sweet promise can have no fulfilment; whereas as the fall draws on apace, and the harvests are made, the fruits brought in, we witness the accomplished results of the energy of Nature and the labour of man; it is achieved, the year's growth and service, and the sustenance of all things and creatures from least to highest won once more from the earth.

It is one mood of man to doubt most when most is promised, to question most when most is asserted, to apprehend storm when skies are fairest, and ruin when omens favour. 'Tis this mood, as often as the mood of defeat and discouragement, which rebukes the aspiring spirit and reduces it to the weary level of the common ground. So in times when out of the winter little by little the sun lifts over the line, and the drifts that cover the highways,—and send travelers out into the fields over rocks and stumps and fences in order to get along at all,—begin to shrink and lay bare the true roads and expose the nature of the make-shifts,—then the worry and work are the hardest, and the change is the slowest to come. Yet it always comes.

“Ah Still Delay! Thou Art So Fair!”

THERE is an especial interest in the tardiness of summer, when Nature seems so reluctant to change, so fondly lingering in the pleasant purlieus of spring. It is as if Nature were feeling that final mood of Faust, when he should say to the passing moment, “Ah still delay! thou art so fair!” Often in our clime that mood possesses Nature in the days of ripening forests, when the achievement has declared itself, when fervour and passion are over, and the reward of repose is sweet. But the delays of spring are apt to be sour, savage and menacing,—not as now, cool but cheerful and even brilliant, with the beauty of the earth unfolding steadily, tenderly, with infinite delight,—the very temperance of luxury.

Who has looked upon the wonderful variance, harmonies, gradations of the foliage over streets and roads and mountains, in valleys and beside rivers,—the magic of the increasing and deepening shadows of the trees,—the outspringing of

the hidden flowers from forest leaves, on pasture hillsides, in green meadows, in dipping swales, in tangled swamps,—who has watched the birds come, creating and enticing beauty as they bring their warbles and songs to join earth and sky in equal praise,—who has noted each new butterfly, and the coming of the dragon flies from the pools, and the burly welcome of the bumble-bee, the piping of the hyla and the chirp of frogs,—who, in fine, has followed the cautious steps of summer in the escort of spring, without repeating, over and over, day and day, “Ah still delay! thou art so fair!”

And yet—what such a one suffers in the ravage of the axe in the forest!—never more rude and savage than now. The destruction wrought by man is melancholy in a degree to the lover of Nature, even where there is use to follow, but how much more when the mere wantonness of ignorance sweeps away beauty and glory, and there is nothing to make amends. We have in mind a glen on the south side of a mountain. A year ago it was a scene of fairy witchery; the brook flowing through a bit of rich alluvium, besprent with adder-tongue lily, trillium, hepatica, anemone, the little early buttercup, and the lovely spot begirt all around with the spice-bush, then in full sweet yellow bloom. It was a place of in-



IN THE MIDST OF THE WOODS

describable beauty; which robbed the owner of nothing, and gave the visitor who had eyes to see and a soul to enjoy immeasurable pleasure. Why, when the unworthy owner wished to cut the timber and cord wood from around this glen, should he not have left the spice-bushes? They were worth nothing to him; but a few ignorant choppers—no more ignorant than he—leveled them, and the lover of beauty cursed him and pitied him at once. It is man, in his partial development, his half-civilization, that knows not how to enjoy his earth, and so destroys it.

The Nature-school of the age that began with Wordsworth and continued through Bryant and Thoreau and is so well known in Burroughs and many another—"all can raise the flower now, for all have got the seed,"—that it is which has opened the wonder of the manifestation of life in tree and flower and the glory of the scenic beauty of earth to all, without giving them the radical secret of respect.

There is no time of the year more marvelous than this border region of the seasons. It cannot but awaken a fresh sense of the miraculous life of earth, even though it be very imperfectly apprehended. When Wordsworth wrote his well-known lines in "Peter Bell":—

“ A primrose by a river’s brim
A yellow primrose was to him,
And it was nothing more,— ”

and further,—

“ The soft blue sky did never melt
Into his heart ; he never felt
The witchery of the soft blue sky,— ”

he appealed to so few that these and like lines were among those which received the most contemptuous mockery of the wits and scholars of the time. They could not possibly understand what the man was driving at. But now there are very few who fail to see what Wordsworth meant, for the spiritual conception of the universe has stolen into the sense of all thinkers or been thrust there by the very remarkable advances of science. That way all the researches of physics and biology tend, and so at last the Wordsworth idea has become a part of thought, and the love of Nature as the very life of the divine spirit is no longer a matter for mockery. Whether in the flower of the field or the star in the sky, God dwells ; and no life can be dis severed from that all-pervading and all-encompassing spirit.

Fragrance and Melody

EARTH is never more beautiful than when hasty summer riotously rushes upon us, and all the fields and woods are captivated by that only too generous largess of the sun—the air, the bloom, the fragrance, the wings, the songs, the greening and growth,—the ineffable hurry of life that cannot wait, but in ardent desire races through hope and promise and pledge in all its myriad forms to the fruit and fulfilment, the crown and achievement, of the swift season between winter and spring. “Do the duty nearest thee” is a watchword of creation, no more for man alone than for all that we call animal or vegetable or mineral. It is to mistake gravely to assume that humanity alone fails to observe this law because of misleading and perversion. For every blossom or bird there are a multitude that lapse and fail. Life abounds, but lives are lost, in every grade of Nature’s work. Unceasing is the infinite Spirit, renewing, developing, ending but to begin again, and in the midst of this swift and

shining season the thrill of that endless vitality stirs the most sluggish pulse.

The air is full summer, and the sweet oppression of the breeze, shot through by the rising sun, opens the day with myriad perfumes. There is not a flower or fern or unfolding leaf of the woods that does not contribute to the fragrance of the hour. The sweet briar wafts its wild tenderness over the multitude of lesser scents, and a spicy odour from the tasseling black birch follows swift behind. Another touch, and the sweet fern's pervasive scent steals to the nostrils. A little tang of bitterness swings in from the poplar and the tonic willow, and more spice from the sassafras. But while one detects such individual fragrances, be sure that something in the air is due to blossoming hickory and elm and red maple, and the oaks, too, just opening, have their honey, which wild bees love, and many another insect.

Then deeper, stronger, more constant than all, wherever they grow, the pines and hemlocks, the cedars and firs and spruces, swell the rich gift of the breeze. And their balsam heightens as the fervour of the day draws on, and the magnetic sun pierces their tossing depths, and the conifers yield of their secret, treasured essences, and thrill the sense beyond all that the rest can do. The flowers that spring and bloom and fade so quickly,



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the trees that greet the new season with leafage and grow into hospitable shade,—these are transitory, but the pines and hemlocks endure and bear from year to year, in all seasons, the promise of eternity. They are commercially nothing but cord wood, or a little timber, but to the lover of Nature they embody the will of everlasting life.

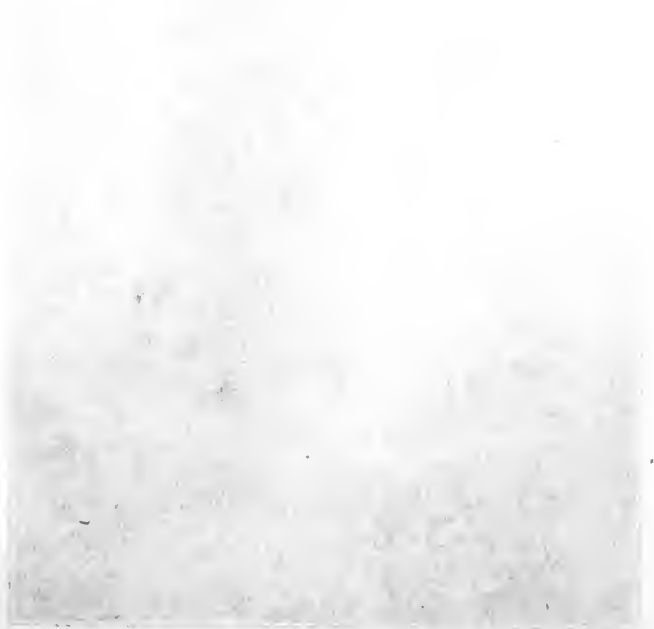
To lie upon the side of a wooded ravine, at the edge of the forest, and behold the great trees swaying and tossing in the warm breeze, bending far east and revolting far west, as each passing gust passes by; to breathe these odours, and to mark the sunshine swell down the long aisles of the woods or repose in the opening of the field; to follow the hawk's sailing flight above all the woods and despite the wind; to watch the labouring crows and hear their social and sagacious conversation; to hear the curious cry of the scarlet tanager, or the slight, solemn warble of the wood thrush, or the rich and insistent note of the Baltimore oriole,—so noble a note, with its melancholy tone;—to do this, is to raise the question whether any heaven that can be imagined could be more beautiful than earth. But in truth, the answer is ready enough. In the life beyond, as in this, the soul will seek and find its own. If there are not the particular beauties and charms and associations which have made this life precious and desirable,

there will be such others as will meet the demand of each soul in its earthly tabernacle. As our senses delight in these fragrances and songs, and in the wonderful skies, the flowing rivers, the sweet springs and the great oceans that we know, so something that corresponds to all these will greet our greater life. With this also comes the assurance that our human loves, our intimate attachments, will live,—for all souls seek their ordained fellowships, and souls are not, like trees and flowers, bounded by the limits of those things which are but shows and types, and not immortal in essence, as themselves.

Now every day hastens some new beauty and grace into light and air. How rapidly they follow,—there was first the rare yellow violet of the cold brookside, then the common blue violet,—no lovelier flower grows,—and now the yellow wood violet, the lavish white branching violet of the deep woods, the tender sky-blue violet of the forest borders, are out, and the larkspur-leaved violet, with its intense blue, is almost ready to appear. The lovely dicentra now peeps from amid its exquisitely cut leaves, the first corydalis blooms on the mountain rocks, the mitre-wort and its cousin Nancy-over-the-ground are in evidence, and the early meadow rue is lifting its misty head. Buttercups and daisy fleabanes are rushing into

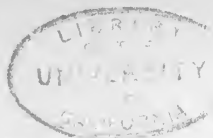


AT THE ALTAR OF THE HEMLOCK









view, in the company of the grass flowers to which they are entitled. Every day some new fern uncurls, and this delightful woodland race, with its many families, makes the forests a constant surprise. Some on the sternest heights, where water is scarce, exploit their graceful beauty, as if, said Thoreau, Nature designed in them to show how wonderful a mere leaf might be; some in the darkest marshes, some on the sunny hills,—everywhere lavish in varied grace and elegance, the finest bred of all vegetable races.

Such are the gifts of Nature in this wondrous season. Who does not receive and love them is the poorer for his failure. They are an inestimable part of the training of the soul,—the essential, the only, purpose and meaning of the life of earth.

An Over-Ardent June

ON this occasion, much as June is loved, there is a general feeling that she came in with too much of a bounce. What we have largely loved in June has been the shy, sweet, elusive way with which she slips in, so that she usually has been around, coaxing the roses gently, and suggesting buds to the red clover, and so on, until the conviction of her presence steals upon our senses with subtle sweetness as the perfume of the syringas, the wild cherries and the grapes follow on the vanishing lilacs and the azaleas. But she arrived in a hustling fashion, this year, taking hold as if she were emulous of July, infuriating the thermometer, and making us want to take off our flesh and sit in our bones, as Sydney Smith said. For the first time in a generation, we desired a little more coolness in June's advances. She was too forward, too forcible. Her Amazonian caresses took our breath away,—who wants to make love in such a fever and fret? In fact, if June would give us the cold

shoulder for a bit, we said, we should be relieved. And straightway she gave us just that.

Still, let us reflect, when the heated term assaults us, that some odd hundreds of thousands of years ago, where we now broil, the ice-cap rested a mile deep over Massachusetts—which had not yet been thought of and did not know it. It was even deeper than it is now over Greenland. That was a climate to talk of in these days. How comfortable it must have been!—about 250 degrees or less cooler than Sunday's sunshine and 200 degrees cooler than its shade. It is still cool near the Arctic circle. And the Antarctic continent is an even grander refrigerator. Butter would never melt there, nor meats spoil; and there could be no call for ice-cream, soda water or palm-leaf fans. The interesting narrative of Arthur Gordon Pym, as reported by Mr. Poe, is good reading for such a term as the recent. So is Dr. Kane's romantic chronicle of his explorations, and the history of the *Jeannette*, not to mention the tales of the various searches for Sir John Franklin's party and the Peary relief expeditions. It is cool, too, on Kunchin-Jinga, on Popocatepetl and on Cotopaxi. But the snow is not clean on Cotopaxi,—the volcanic dust is too abundant. It is also cold on the moon, but there is no atmosphere at all there, it is said, and even

a little hot June atmosphere is better than none at all, that is, better for a race used to breathing through lungs.

Then we might read Kipling, and thank heaven we are not in India. When one fancies himself in that printing office where Kipling met the Man who would be King, or sits with him and the Soldiers Three while Mulvaney, hero that he is, tells tales all night long to keep his comrade from sheer insanity, one feels that there are worse places than New England in a hot June. Or if one likes a change, let him march awhile in the African forest with Stanley, and presently fancy himself going mad as Barttelot did. Or the Death Valley of Arizona is worth contemplating, or Fort Yuma—on leaving which for the infernal regions they say one wants to carry a double outfit of winter clothing. It is all a matter of comparison. When one gets used to it, a temperature in the hundreds is not bad—not positively bad, though it may be superlatively so.

On the whole, it has been very pleasant weather. Things grow, though thoughts dwindle, in the presence of heat. It has been delightful to watch the leaves swelling and the full garniture of the trees developing in the sumptuous warmth. The woods are rich in colour and fragrance. Sit for a moment on a broad ledge and gaze down the



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THE VIEW THROUGH THE GORGE



valleys into the shimmering heat, and the scent of a late azalea draws you to a thicket where it modestly blossoms, caring not that it is unseen ; or the merest waft of fragrance, like the exhaling spirit of bloom, tells you that there are moccasin-flowers somewhere hidden in the hollow. Then, too, on those ledges, in the fullest glare of the fierce sunlight, nods and trembles the graceful corydalis, and the brave mountain fern, the woodsia, springs in cheerful tufts in crevices of the rock, green enough now, but in later summer as dry as the rock itself.

Over and over the white clouds float, and from peak to peak and tree to tree in the forest the birds fly,—catbirds and thrushes and finches, now and then a tanager, and many warblers,—and the whole natural earth breathes a symphony of content. Not yet the springs have dried from the mountain tops, and one who knows their ways can drop half a hundred feet, or may be a full hundred, to a pool of refreshing water, or to where a rivulet issues beneath the broken rocks, still feeding the mountain growths. The squirrels are full of life, and when one misses their calls and their sharp casual chatter, he can always hear the evidences of humble life in the beetles and ants that roam beneath the leaves and rustle them to dispel the absolute solitude. These do not mind the heat, and

always through the forest roads and openings the breeze strays, cooling itself from the outside heat in the healthful quiet of their depths. If man wearies of the conditions he makes, let him spend an hour or so where Nature continually works to repair his ravages, and harmonize his emotions with the constant charm of her unspoiled beauty.

It is not so much as a day's work

Birds, Insects, Man and Woman

THE blossoms and leaves of summer are rapidly filling the air with perfume and the day with shade. Over our New England hills and valleys, by the farm-houses and in the villages, the lilacs have crowded close after the cherries, peaches and pears; they have had their day of bloom and are setting their fruit. The apples also are gone by, after welcoming the orioles and the robins; the orioles no more dash sportively amid the orchard masses of blossom, but are already constructing their nests on the pendent boughs of the elms. It is a day of birds, the song sparrows by the roadside and the vesper sparrows by the brooksides, the red-wings in the marshy sedges, the bobolinks in the meadows, and over all the crows, with their wise commentary on our inferior and wicked contrivances which they behold in the fields, ready against the coming of the corn. The night-jar swings over our streets and over farmers' fields with equal vigilance, screaming as it flies, after moths and chafers—for

the chafers are now heard buzzing amid the bushes and banging against the panes,—June-bugs, or May-bees—as we call them when they come ahead of time. The gardener unearths every day these curious blundering beetles, whose grubs he will be killing later. The insect hordes are early to arrive and late to depart,—in fact, they are always with us, and it is amazing what a number of them live on the herbage and the sylvan foliage.

In the state of Nature all these inchoate races of minor life are kept in subjection by the birds, but since of late years the birds have been slaughtered by wholesale to make women's hats hideous, the balance is lost, and hence we have plagues of elm beetles, cottony louses, and gypsy and brown-tailed moths. Thousands of varieties of insects have found their proper food on trees from time immemorial, and might continue to do so without reminding us of the plagues of Egypt, were it not for the women who want birds and feathers of birds on their hats. If the wearers of these slaughtered creatures of God, more beautiful and more useful than themselves, could only see how they look to a lover of Nature, or a mere enlightened farmer and fruit raiser, they would surely discard their egrets, their bird-of-Paradise plumes, their wings, and the whole birds so hideously adorn-

ing their comely heads, and never wear another. Why do they proclaim themselves murderers?

As we listen to the delicious glee of the bobolink over the meadows, to the swift, bright cry of the meadow lark, or the tender sibilation of the red-winged blackbird in the swales, it seems impossible that human beings can possibly think of killing these lovely creatures, or of being accomplices after the fact in their slaughter. The other day, the sun shining ardently over the fields and forests, and drawing delicate veils of moisture from the brooks and swamps, one listening to these wild and gracious utterances of the sole and infinite Spirit could only conceive of the world of Nature as one of harmony. The several grades of life are interdependent and the less developed nurture the higher perpetually.

As for man, only he introduces a breach in the order of being, and destroys tree and flower and bird without respect to their offices, despoiling himself the worst of all. And when he is told this and it is proved to him, the moment's greed makes him shut his mind and dismiss consideration of the subject. Still his ignorant woodchoppers fell the forest, "clearing" the land, destroying the saplings as remorselessly as they cut the trees of timber or of cord wood, and ravaging the whole forest by fire. Still his railroads rush

through the land, sending out their sparks to set fires that burn over in an hour 25 or 30 acres of young forest and rob him of all their promise. What has man been given reason for? Apparently to make a dollar to-day, forgetting that generations are to come after him to whom his dollar will be valueless because long since expended, and whom his destruction of the very sources of life has left poor indeed. No, man does not use his reason, with even his self-interest, except for the bare moment. Obloquy has settled over more than one generation in the history of man for the cause which was expressed in the phrase of the Bourbon society of France before its great Revolution—"After us, the deluge." There is too much of this in even our civilization, though the motto is not avowed. What the earth is to render, what society is to become, when we are gone,—these things are not sufficiently regarded by the present generation.

Let us try to escape from these difficult and dispiriting thoughts. Let us leave the city, in these opening days of summer, forget its paved streets and its clouds of black smoke clogging the free air of God, and visit those precincts where yet Nature reigns. It is long ere we reach those unpolluted places. But once among the undisputed tracts, where streets are not yet laid out,

there is revival of native and intimate sympathies. The great oaks, so noble a feature of our surrounding country, are past their period of blossoming, and no longer delight earth with those exquisite variations of colour in the young foliage of these monarchs of the forest, so great a matter of wonder, showing us how consistent is strength with beauty. 'Tis no slight matter that a rugged, robust oak should blossom in graceful tasseling and leaf in exceeding delicacy of pink and buff and cream tints, making the woodland a parterre of rare and fine harmonies, with the maples behind in their clear, translucent greens, and the somber pines, just lightened by the new bright growth, like thrusts of kindling sunshine. Now beneath these shades the solemn quietude of an infinite, primitive, remote age is gathering,—an age when man was not, and when forests rose in majesty and lived their long lives, and the aged fell and their physical decay nourished their successors. That far gone time renews itself to one who enters these sacred precincts in sympathy with Nature. Here yet the sense of essential life resides, and temporary and conditional living recedes. The spirit of the universe does not desert the forest shades. The ceaseless hurry of our semi-civilization is left behind, and the healthful recovery of repose succeeds.

If that repose may end in what is called death, who quarrels with that in the forest? It is as fruitful and more peaceful than what is called life. After this life has been lived, and we have done what it was allotted us to do, the dismissal is even joyous. In the midst of the odorous cedars and hackmatacks, with many a blossoming shrub around, and the red sweet waters noiselessly moving into and from the deep, dark pond,—as the sun sinks behind the forest, and its depths grow dusky, and warm fragrances steal from the flowers whose faces hold the vanishing light though all the bushes are vague,—as the wild, strange waves of delicate colour rise in the sky above the departing sun, and the thrush, deep in the wood, sends forth its sweet and thrilling vesper, like the notes of a group of rich organ-pipes springing forth out of the harmonious chords of the great instrument of Nature in its noble *largo appassionato*,—at such an hour the thought which Whitman has so nobly expressed in President Lincoln's burial hymn may well come to mind.

Whitman was no shy recluse of Nature, no wanderer of woods and fields—he was a vivid, robust, hearty adorer of human life in every shape,—there was no limit to his sympathy and fellowship in all that men do. But it was reserved for such a man as this to express more poignantly

than any man besides the profound and serious sweetness of the teachings of such an hour and scene—embodying all the infinite lesson of our departure : —

“ Now, while I sat in the day and looked forth,
In the close of the day with its light and the fields of
 spring, and the farmers preparing their crops,
In the large unconscious scenery of my land, with its
 lakes and forests,
In the heavenly aerial beauty, after the perturbed winds
 and storms,
Under the arching heavens of the afternoon swift pass-
 ing, and the voices of children and women,
The many moving sea-tides, and I saw the ships how
 they sailed,
And the summer approaching with richness, and the
 fields all busy with labour,
And the infinite separate houses, how they all went on,
 each with its meals and minutia of daily usages,
And the streets, how their throbbings throbbed, and the
 cities pent,—lo, then and there,
Falling upon them all and among them all, enveloping
 me with the rest,
Appeared the cloud, appeared the long, black trail,
And I knew death, its thought, and the sacred knowledge
 of death.

Then with the knowledge of death as walking one side
 of me,

And the thought of death close-walking the other side
of me,
And I in the middle as with companions, and as holding
the hands of companions,
I fled forth to the hiding receiving night that talks not,
Down to the shores of the water, the path by the swamp
in the dimness,
To the solemn shadowy cedars and ghostly pines so still.
And the singer so shy to the rest received me
The gray-brown bird I know received us comrades
three,
And he sang the carol of death, and a verse for him I
love.

From deep secluded recesses,
From the fragrant cedars and the ghostly pines so still,
Came the carol of the bird :

Come, lovely and soothing death,
Undulate round the world, serenely arriving,
In the day, in the night, to all, to each,
Sooner or later, delicate death.

Praised be the fathomless universe
For life and joy and for objects and knowledge curious,
And for love, sweet love,—but praise! praise! praise!
For the sure-enwinding of cool-enfolding death.

Dark mother always gliding near with soft feet,
Have none chanted for thee a chant of fullest welcome?
Then I chant it for thee, I glorify thee above all,
I bring thee a song that when thou must indeed come,
come unflinchingly.

Approach, strong deliveress,
When it is so, when thou hast taken them, I joyously
 sing the dead,
Lost in the loving floating ocean of thee,
Laved in the flood of thy bliss, O death.

From me to thee glad serenades,
Dances for thee I propose, saluting thee, adornments and
 feastings for thee,
And the sights of the open landscape and the high-spread
 sky are fitting,
And life and the fields, and the huge and thoughtful
 night.

The night in silence under many a star,
The ocean shore and the husky whispering wave whose
 voice I know,
And the soul turning to thee, O vast and well-veiled
 death,
And the body gratefully nestling close to thee.

Over the tree-tops I float thee a song,
Over the rising and sinking waves, over the myriad
 fields and the prairies wide,
Over the dense-packed cities and all the teeming wharves
 and ways,
I float this carol with joy, with joy to thee, O death."

It is not sacrilege to take these wonderful native rhythms from their setting, for whether a great or a lesser one depart, the office of separa-

tion is the same. It liberates while it terminates for every child of earth, and one who has not felt this encompassment in the midst of the glorious charm of Nature has not sounded the depths of his spiritual possession.

Nature's Independence Day

THE day was as it should be—intense. Patriotic ardour had an unequal match with the solar, and the spots on the horoscope of the country were less conspicuous than those on the face of the sun. Why should we be asked to worry over petty villainies and wrongs, within so small and transitory a sphere of days, when a storm 50,000 miles across,—larger than two earths stretched out flat the longest way round,—is careering over the vast orb that makes our life and our country's possible? We are but a speck upon a little ball, in one of the least among myriads of universes,—and why fret on a day that in itself forbids such a temper, and would have us indolent and content? As the Swan of Usk wrote to his friend:—

“ Why should we
Vex at the land's ridiculous miserie ? ”

Let us go rest and breathe slow, and dream,
where trees bend over shady waters that cool the

hot winds. For indeed in this very stress and splendour of summer even the light zephyrs are distempered, their wings as it were shriveled, and their lips fevered as they kiss our brows. Only where water is do they revive their sweetness and comfort, and in the deep hearts of pines and hemlocks, where they roam like bees in clover, these hot hours, stirring the balsamic odours which the sun coaxes forth, and bestowing them on weary men and women.

The holiday is one of Nature's own adoption; therefore let us withdraw into her generous society, and be at ease. The country is to be served any day and all days, and for the sanity that brings her good service there is no food better than the forest shades afford. Seen from the coverts the very fervours of the sun bestow their aid. Look out upon the fields that faint in the keen rays, and over the meadows of drooping clover, to where—

“Far in the fierce sunshine tower the hills.”

Then the wind comes, tossing the trees, bending the grasses, and the clouds swiftly sweep up the sky, dark and threatening. Suddenly an ominous silence falls,—the rush of winds upgathered breaks forth upon the heat and scatters all the warm fragrance of the day; man and all creatures haste to shelter; the birds with quick

FERNS AND SARSAPARILLAS

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FERN AND SARAPAHIA

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cries fly to inner haunts they wot of; the trees writhe; the mighty beast rolls from the thunder cloud that blackens and blots out the sultry sky, and with its swift and yearning rains makes the cool odours of the refreshed earth "forth from far recesses fern scents rush." And with such gracious legacies departs the heated day in the imposing grandeur of the storm.

Looking Unto the Hills

THE earth in our latitude is now at the height of vigorous life. Now is all growth thrifty and spirited; in the hot days which wilt down poor humanity the great forest trees luxuriate, and show such shining glory of foliage as brings close to the lover of Nature the delight of all this proud vegetation,—the joy of the maples, the elms, the oaks, the beeches, the birches,—the sempiternal pines and hemlocks in the July sun. What luxury is expressed in the imperial chestnut, blossoming on all the hills and asserting its lordship over thousands of acres of woodland! In the city there are also the European lindens in honeyed bloom, and the catalpas, kœlreuterias, and honeysuckles.

It is a season emphatic in its wealth of life. The flowering of the fields and the thickets is less in number and variety than in the spring, but it is gorgeous in colour. The predominance of yellow has begun, and the black-eyed Susans produce concrete sunshine over meadows and pastures.

The ox-eye daisies company these closely ; amid the tall grasses bloom the gay nodding lilies of orange, and the upright red lilies at the edge of the copse fill the eye with noble flame. The first goldenrods are out, and all the loosestrife family, even to the steironema ; the Canada thistle, as sweet and pretty as if every farmer did not detest it,—the pretty but even more greedy shrubby cinquefoil, and the mulleins are in evidence. But not the yellows alone,—that other hue of the later days is beginning to show itself,—the purple scale of colour, descending from the linaria to the lobelia, in advance of the thistles and vervains, and with the asters and ironweed in prospect ; while yet the daintiest of all the compositæ, the daisy fleabanes, are profuse in bloom. Everywhere in forest shades and pasture hillsides, the multitudinous ferns are fruiting in their lavish frondage. All trees and shrubs, in this early summer climax, fill the prospect with a sense of high rejoicing in vital warmth and stored moisture.

This pervasive and potent sense of life in all the earth takes possession of the senses as one wanders through the wildwood pleasaunces, or reclines upon the breezy mountain-top, content to rest in the embracement of the divine Spirit that utters by its lightest breath all these wondrous and lovely phenomena. Only to look upon the

tossing woods in a summer breeze, only to feel the life of the air as it passes, is to be filled with a sacred possession of endless power and grace. So moved the Spirit upon the face of the waters when the firmament was formed above the fogs of the inchoate earth; so moved that Spirit when the angel was set at the gates of Paradise to forbid forever the access of the sons of Adam. But now we do not care for any Paradise where life was not conditioned by work,—we have a higher world, in which work is the requisite of rest and reward. Let us be thankful that this is so, and that never more may sluggards claim what they have not rightly earned.

For what can all the glory of the earth mean to those who have done nothing to justify even their existence among sentient living things? Nothing is more true than the dictum of the old Scripture: "He that will not work, neither shall he eat." And this is not meant for physical food alone; but as well for spiritual food, which cannot be gained by spiritual indolence, that waits to be fed. Those who desert duty and court pleasure forfeit all that pertains to the soul, for that requires vast nourishment, which must come from the roots of practical human life, through which the spirit's atmosphere is generated. And it is in the free realm of air, in the wide fields, on the bare

rocks that top the hills, beneath the shades of the forest, that these truths are strongly felt. Wherefore, as the fervent waves of July beat upon the tired nerves, let us remember the cry of the Hebrew poet: "I will look unto the hills, whence cometh my help."

THE BIRDS IN THE THICKETS

What voices are these in the thickets ?

Why, unless my old eyes are garblers,—
Come here, my boy, and look quick!—it's

Touch and go with the warblers,—
There—there—there! on a score or so of the boughlets,
Flitting while you are looking, see their sides of red
chestnut

Gleam for a moment, and now they are still as the
owlets

Up in the hollowed maple—Speak now? well, I guess
not!

They know their time to talk, and it's not while we're
near them,—

Unless we grow still and fine, and grow part of their
quiet.

Well have they reason to hush and hide, and to fear
men,

Well have they cause every one of our race to shy at,—
We that slay their bright kindred to adorn the bonnets
of woman,—

We that kill them to eat, as does the childish Italian,—
How should the dear birds know that any one that is
human

Differs at all from the tramp or the tatterdemalion?
Clad are they all much alike, methinks, to the bird's eye;
Judged by the bird's keen optics and keener acoustics
Enemies must we appear, nor caught is the heard sigh,

For that is conveyed away by the devil-on-two-sticks,—
He who can show us all up,—the spirit Asmodeus,—
He of all others the coldest, unkindest diviner,—
Making oneself to oneself at every turn most odious,
And without modulation transposing our confident major
to minor.

Ah yes! ye birds that flit in the shadowy hemlocks,
Ye mountain sparrows, ye chickadees, buntings and jun-
cos,

Trust us not. Time was that the gemboks,
Unsuspecting their imminent need was to shun foes,
Came to the call of the hunter, rested their chins on his
shoulder,

Followed him close as o'er the South African wilds he
wandered,

Trusted him, till at last, grown meaner, not bolder,
The man turned and slew the poor fools,—basely
squandered

Their fond, silly faith, and their innocent friendship.
Trust us not,—why trust me? Hast not seen such an-
other

Steal carefully on, and rest,—so! Let the end skip,—
I might be that man,—I am that man's brother.

Ay, dear little birds in the fir trees,
Be shy of me too, though I love ye;
Prudently, cautiously skirt these
Thickets that border in birches
The forests in summer that grove ye;
Come not too nigh, lest a savage
Spring from my silent devotion,

And, like my kind, I make ravage
Of what I love best. That's our notion :
If we love, we destroy ; 'tis the record of history.
Destroy and despoil and lay desolate,
Thus hath man done. O dread Mystery !
Thou whose intent we all guess so late,
Thou whose gray hell we all tessellate
With the blessings we would give, but cannot,
Art thou coldly the high heavens mounting ?
Is't even, who ran and who ran not ?
Has not character, too, an accounting ?
The Spirit speaks—the God's astir,—
The speech is brief and strong :
“ Leave to the lower gods that were
Their rustic crowd so long.
Leave to old Pan his worshiper
Who knows not of thy wrong ;
Leave to the maple and the fir
The rapture of their song.
I breathe through their delicious throats
The sacred joy of life ;
'Tis I that utter in their notes
That melody arife
With beauty of the seven spheres
That reach to Paradise,—
That melody which he who hears
Joins to the singing skies ;
And he on very wings of birds
In transport of the soul
May rise to me, and, lacking words,
Know he hath said the whole ! ”

July Days

NATURE holds her most royal state in this month of glowing heat. We yield too thoughtlessly to the fine tyranny of Lowell's muse, glorifying June with so intimate eulogy as the absolute "high tide of the year." June is indeed beautiful, sweet and gracious, and none denies her charm, or disputes that

Then, if ever, come perfect days ;
Then heaven tries the earth if it be in tune
And over it softly her warm ear lays.
Whether we look, or whether we listen,
We hear life murmur and see it glisten.

But now there is no need to try if earth be in tune, for her stately rhythm is perfected, its harmonies written in, and the great symphony fills every sense with the rich burden of its adagio. The height and rest of summer are not found in the day of cherry and horse-chestnut blossoms ; it is in July, when the sun is fervid and strong and the winds both cordial and vigorous, that Nature re-

poses in her splendid wealth. There is now a complete sense of comfort and joy in power, and nourishment of beauty, and liberal welcome, such as no other season equals. The meadows or the hills whose daisied grasses or tall grains roll their waves of light and shade before the hurrying winds; the deep, cool shaded woods where the ferns spread their profuse fronds; the prodigal roses and the linden-bloom loved of bees, even the mere city's shaded streets and shaven lawns, utter the same thought of endless resource and liberal bestowal.

The advance of a perfect July day is like nothing else so nearly as a musical work by a fine artist,—a Mendelssohn concerto, or a Mozart sonata, for instance. There begins to steal upon the lesser stars a dimness, yet it is still the starry night that fills the vault immense; then a pearly gray grows at the edge of the east, and the robins, earliest of birds, begin to call in sharp, quick notes; the gray grows whiter, and delicate sea-shell tints in imperceptible gradations rise in the sky; a faint streak of cloud absorbs them, and then suddenly lights into flame; the birds are all awake now, and full of twittering talk, with little music in the trees, though the wood-birds have yet their songs to sing; the sun is near; his ruddy disk cuts the bright horizon line, and in an instant springs ra-

diantly forth, "rejoicing as a strong man to run a race;" dawn is lost in day.

For hours yet there are dewy grasses to sparkle with hues of the rainbow; the maples keep the sweet morning breeze in their leafy harbours; the hearts of the roses are cool, and the bees are in the poppies and petunias, and busy at the clover, before the fervours of the noon have come, and the earth is lapt in light. Then a myriad insects are leaping and darting, humming and shrilling their strident happiness; the click-clack of the mower and the tedder sounds over the fields, and the new-mown hay crowds the air with warm high fragrance; the earth is the captive of the sun, and David's words are in our ears, when he says: "His going forth is from the end of the heaven and his circuit unto the end of it; and there is nothing hid from the heat thereof." Yet there is health in the heat; the air is clear and sweet and full of life, and when the evening returns with dewy coolness, the lone evening star is revealed golden and tender above the vanished sun; the afterglow mounts high in its white, celestial benediction, and as all trace of day departs, "stars arise, and the night is holy."

The Electric Storm

YET upon the hush of the elements breaks in the electric storm. There are more terrible manifestations of the elemental forces, as when a tornado sweeps across the land, or a tidal wave engulfs a city, or an earthquake or volcanic eruption destroys the habitations of men and the supposed stability of mountains, or a typhoon sweeps across the ocean and tosses a great ship with its human freight as a bubble. These are more terrible, because so escapeless. But the emotion of awe is swallowed up in terror, and with it, if any other feeling arise, it is that of revolt and anger, that man should so be taken advantage of, helpless and resourceless as he must be in the concourse and conspiracy of elements. To awaken in its sublime reach the grand spiritual feeling truly known as awe, that small impulse of pygmy resentment must be stilled, must be absent,—nothing must remain except what the prophet felt when on the mount before the Lord he heard and beheld him pass by,—“ a still, small

voice," after the mountains had been rent and the rocks broken in pieces, and the pause had come. There was the moment of awe, when all the weight of the world fell on the prophet's shoulders, and the God spake to him, in the unearthly silence that ensued.

Nothing else that we experience in the yearly course is so wonderful and inexplicable as the thunderstorm,—as it is still called, by metonymy, placing the effect for the cause. The splendour of such a storm from the coign of a commanding hill, looking over miles of mountains and valleys, is something inexpressible in language. To view it aright, and know its magnificence, one must see it through, from its long upgathering over roods and square miles of territory, with its brooding echoes of thunder from flashes that are mere streaks of gentle light; to the moment when the fringes of the shower descend and the flashes grow brighter, and the response is swifter; to the crucial, living instant when crashes all the air, and every hill echoes back, so soon after the flash that no common watch can register the elapsing fragment of a second. Here, when heaven and earth seem to clash in one tremendous utterance of unity, is the splendid thrill of the electric storm.

Attuned to this infinitely glorious music, what,

for the moment, seem all the inventions of men? But this is not a permanent thought—in another moment the great separation is plain, and there is not a true comparison between man and the immenser elements. To say this is not to say anything of the exceeding brilliant beauty of the electric discharges as they chart themselves on the clouds in their immediate descent or ascent or interchange,—so incessant, sometimes, that all the heavens seem ablaze with wandering currents, making crosses and curves and circles, and mighty zigzags, with colours of violet and red, gold and fire yellow, and multitudinous other tints, or hues, across and within the deep-bosomed blue-gray clouds. It is in vain to picture the scene. Few ever remain out of cover beneath the skies to witness it. These storms are the crowning glories of July,—the visible and audible presence of God as he walks in his garden of the universe.

A Seasonable Divagation

IN the bright blazing heat of July, this penultimate year of the century, it is more than ever an escape that one makes when he leaves the city for mountain, lake or seashore. There is more to escape from than for a whole generation past. Thrust aside the city, forget the telegraph and the newspaper; under God's free sky, breathing vital air, in touch with the wholesome earth, come into community with the original state of man, amid the healing elements that have not heard of war or known of greed.

Be there balsam or brine in the air that we seek, it refreshes the jaded nerves of the denizen of cities, worn upon by contact with his kind until life itself is ajar with noise and noisomeness, and has become indeed like "a tale told by an idiot, full of sound and fury, signifying nothing." The old earth receives her children with the same uncaring aspect; emotionless it accepts our love; without passion it responds to our fever; we

grow calm and sane. Over all this wide "gannet's bath" ply the winds of the east, as before man set foot on the wild shores of America; over the great sweeping hills rush the western winds with the tang of the north filling them now and again, as when no man had sought a northwest passage for commerce or thought to discover the north pole. These at least are yet untouched by the transient race of man.

And what wonderful gifts are these the winds bring over the salt foam and the great wildernesses,—gifts of new living force and fresh delight, which sooth our frayed and fretted sensations, and bring to us healing and heartsome purpose. They are indeed no less than the voice of God walking in the garden in the cool of the day. 'Tis all the cool of the day for the spirit that formed this scene of earth, and is not bound by our petty limitations. We measure everything by our own small yardstick—we time what is done by our 70-year clocks, and remember not what Jesus said to us all, as he looked forth over the hills of Judea, and noted the lilies and the birds, and rebukingly said: "Shall he not much more clothe you, O ye of little faith?" And we know that we shall yet be clothed upon in the home that is to come in beauty equal to that of the earth which is our present habitation.

The summer splendour and enchantment is at its fill of perfection. The hayfield fragrance is subtly interwoven with the currents of air, and the sun draws forth as well the balsamic odours of the pines and hemlocks and spruces. He who dwells in a mountain region where such trees grow is more richly furnished with the breath of health than any other. The yellow pines that abound on the plain are a great constituent of our health, and so fast as they are destroyed by the invasion of the houses, the atmosphere deteriorates. They cannot combat the soft coal smoke which hangs over all the valley. But this is the way of the world; the opportunity of money-getting fouls all the air of the valleys, and to the hills or the shore one must fly to escape this pollution. Faugh! Let us get out of it for a moment and make for the mountains—"whence cometh my help," said David the psalmist.

There is nothing more wonderful for us than the hill country westward, where as yet only farmers live and where still a few villages with their home industries exist, if they do not flourish. If things were healthy, these industries should be prosperous, and the whole country round about would be happier,—as it was a generation ago. It was a most attractive sight, one of the little old-time villages, set in a valley still high in the

hills, where a shop, making churns, or drums, or tool-handles, or cheese-boxes, or axes, or cloth, or yarn, centered the activities of a community to which the surrounding farmers contributed their custom and whence they shipped their produce. Those which still exist are not what they were, yet they still add to the pleasure of a country life. The mail comes in twice a day in the summer, once a day in the winter; there is enough to draw thither the farmers to swap stories at the village store; and such a village is one of the centers of the world. For the newspaper comes there, and all of the people get the news, although not all of them buy the newspapers.

But why do we linger in the world in this way? It is now as it was when Wordsworth wrote:—

“ The world is too much with us: late and soon,
Getting and spending, we lay waste our powers;
Little we see in Nature that is ours;
We have given our hearts away, a sordid boon!
The sea that bares her bosom to the moon,
The winds that will be howling at all hours,
And are up-gathered now, like sleeping flowers,
For this, for everything, we are out of tune;
It moves us not. Great God! I'd rather be
A pagan, suckled in a creed outworn,
So might I, standing on this pleasant lea,

Have glimpses that would make me less forlorn ;
Have sight of Proteus rising from the sea,
Or hear old Triton blow his wreathed horn."

The world is too much with us— yea, indeed.

Oh, to meet face to face with Freedom on the heights, where she dwells, free-eyed, full-bosomed, forthright and faithful ! What is all the mischief of men when one stands on a mountain summit, and surveys vast billows of hills swelling around him, north, south, east and west ; and descries the Catskills and Greylock, Haystack, Monadnoc, and even little Mount Tom, through the defile of the Westfield river, and the Dome of the Taconics, with multitudes of hills unnamed and unknown, but forest-clad and glorious in green, with chestnuts blossoming, oaks glistening, birches shining, hemlocks, pines, spruces and balsams darkling, and hackmatacks gayly dancing ! Here in truth one feels free of human ills, for here is that immitigable spirit, the freedom of God's life, filling all the air.

There is then, we find, something stronger, more masterly, more beautiful, more encompassing, more enduring, more holy and purifying, than all that we children of Adam have done. It was done before one of our race had been born out of the slow evolved forms of life, before right and wrong had become differentiated with the

growth of conscience in the latest of evolutions. God here reigns in an earlier expression, and teaches his latest born children that they have multitudinous steps yet to take to reach his reign of calm and power, in which he reposes, and gives us so the opportunity to repose in faith and hope.

The Height of Summer

NOW summer is at her midmost fervour and splendour. For a moment she pauses in the glory of full foliage, the ripening of grasses and grains, the drifting fragrances of first harvests and the firs whose resinous sap is drained by the ardent sun and richly distilled within the air,—she pauses and contemplates what she has done. Over the hills sweep her wild western breezes and the forests murmur gratefully; in the valley brood her heats, and her dews rise and the thrushes sing and there is peace; on the plains the rye nods and the corn-blades wave and the cattle lie beneath the trees at the pasture edge in the noontide, and are content. All the earth has changed since summer came. No faint scents of tiny violets or brave arbutus are hers; after the lilacs and the syringas followed the roses, and all the air was full of their sumptuous fragrance; then the grapes joined their wine. All the sweetness of the azalea and the clethra is forgotten now, and even the roses are a memory, save where in the secluded

swamps Rosa Carolina brightens the whole circuit of the cedars and hackmatacks. The fragrances of the hills and vales are those of the elderblow and the honeysuckles. Clovers are no longer sending their honeyed perfume over many an acre; their time is past, and the mowings only offer the nostrils the pleasant wholesome scent of hay, with now and then a delicious intensity where the sweet grass has been cut with the rest. Haying is the business of the farmer, and the weather has been kind to him. It is true that the great New England crop brings lower prices than might be wished, but if its exchange value is less, its use value is as great as ever,—it will raise the farmer's beef, it will give the farmer's milk, and butter and cheese will be produced as richly as if the crop as it's mowed were worth \$20 a ton. And to us who look at the earth as a place of beauty this is merely a side issue.

There is a rich profusion of wayside bloom now, and it is noteworthy that on every hand the tone that marks the turn of the year toward the fall is prevalent in field lilies and rudbeckia, and the first golden-rod of July is beginning to prophecy that combination of the golden-rods and asters which are in fact the flowers of fall. Meantime there are scores of lesser flowers that lighten the wayside. The cleavers are sending up their clamber-

BLACKBERRYING

swampy fields... lights as the whole circuit
 of the woods... The fragrances
 of those of the elderblow
 flowers are no longer
 uniformly an acre,
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ing stems, that clutch by the fine little spines under their leaves and pointing down along their stems, and so climb up in the midst of other plants, and fairly "cleave" their way to sunlight. Some of these cleavers are lovely in their delicate pale flowering, as well as attractive in the starry arrangement of their leaves. The rich crimson flowers of the thimble-berry or Scotch-cap abound in the mountain thickets. The bittersweet is in blossom, and in the woods the two twin flowers, *Linnaea* and *Mitchella*, and the creeping snow-berry in dark recesses. Also many an orchid is out, and Venus's looking-glass is seen,—so extravagantly misnamed. Of course the hearty yarrow is busy on the roadsides and in the yards, and the ground-nut's pink blossoms are swinging from the shrubs they climb over. The Indian-pipe is lifting its curious flower, a piece of sculpture that perishes, but as well worth the artist's use as the acanthus. Thus Nature is full of joy in these days of heat—good days, wherein life is embodied and pursued with constant energy.

Now when summer reigns so royally, the mountains and the seaside are rivals in their attractions. The winds that sweep the mountain tops are not like those that come up from the sea, bringing the strengthening breath of the brine, the breath that has blown over the waves of the

globe, and has in it Cathay and Ceylon and Araby the Blest and so many other realms of tradition and poesy. For though we know all the regions of the earth and their peoples, and there are no secrets hidden from us of a sophisticated generation, to whom all things have become common, yet there lingers in the salt air a fascination that knowledge and reason does not destroy, and that adds to its physical impact an element that belongs to past romance.

Past in certain phases, but living in other lines ; for the ocean is always the home of infinite power ; swept over though it is by thousands of the petty craft of men, it is still untamed and strange, and its tragedies are numerous enough and better known than they were of old. On some cliff above the broad Atlantic, with nothing between one and the shores of Spain, there still comes to the ear the mystic song of the sailor that Count Arnaldos heard, and asked in vain to be taught : —

“ In each sail that skims the horizon,
In each landward blowing breeze,
I behold the stately galley,
Hear those mournful melodies,
Till my soul is full of longing
For the secret of the sea.”

Yet Thoreau thought the secret of the sea was better caught on land : —

“The middle sea contains no crimson dulse,
Its deeper waves cast up no pearls to view,
But on the shore my hand is on its pulse,
And I converse with many a shipwrecked crew.”

In these days, when everybody makes the ocean voyage, the truth ought to be known. The Spanish ballad says that the sailor answered to Count Arnaldos : —

“Only those who brave its dangers
Comprehend its mystery.”

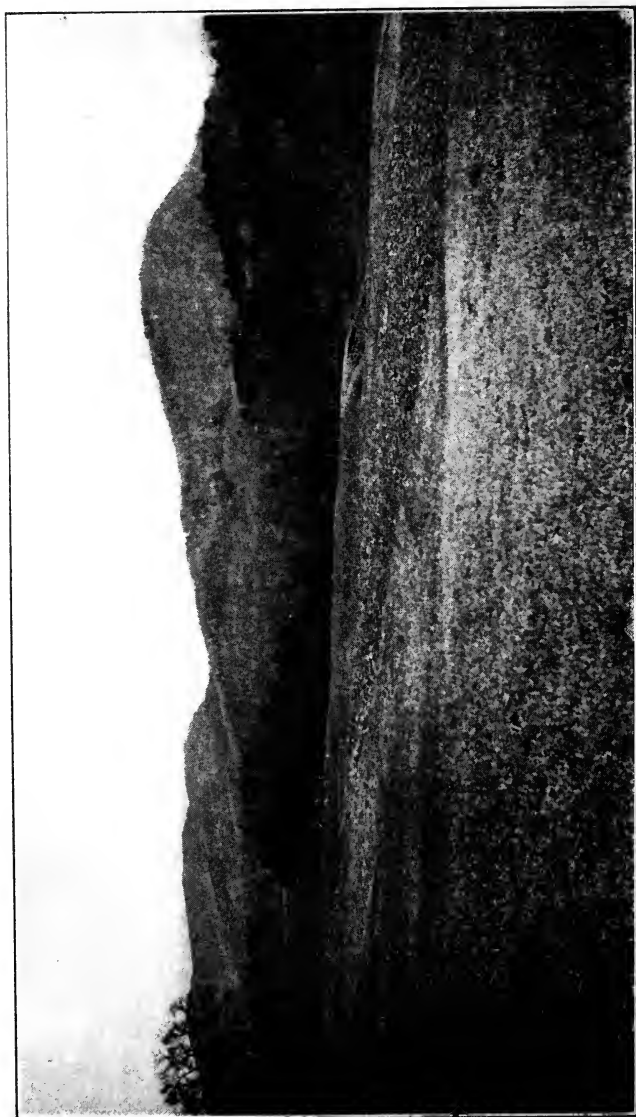
And perhaps the reason why the hills are more dear to so many who love Nature is that their mystery, as profound as that of the sea, is more near and more free of apprehension. Not that Nature is ever truly in sympathy with man's moods, but that we are in her very bosom, sensibly nurtured by her abundant life and intimate with her very heart-beats. She is not sympathetic with man, but man may glide into her great flood and current of divine power, and feel himself borne on in endless vigour to a broader and most wondrous order of development, where all that is beautiful here will have a transcendent renewal and spiritual exaltation.

In the Dog-Days : 1898

THE dog-days have been so long with us, —beginning at a most unconscionably early date, before Sirius was in the ascendant—that recognition of their presence seems belated. It would seem that in sympathy with our soldiers in the tropics, we had taken on some of the aspects of the rainy season of those latitudes, and were enabled thereby to share, even if in a very small degree, the discomforts and discouragements of their climatic differences. But as soon as we speak the words, the foolish notion vanishes, the slender resemblance disappears. It is a wetter season than usual ; we have malarial fever, the humidity clogs our veins and our digestions, but we are not having our physical vitality lowered to the point where collapse follows and the rest of life threatens to be a struggle with a broken constitution. That is the prospect before our soldiers, and the thought of it makes us feel as if mere enjoyment of active labour here were something of an affront to the men whose




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plane of life is burdened by these dangers. Indeed the war clouds even the beauty of the earth, and it is hard to escape for a moment the terrible burden.

Yet there still rise the great undisturbed hills above still with the majestic solemn ocean; the peaks of the west except the mountain peaks; the mountains of our New England are as peaceful, quiet, free and unobtrusive of human life to their visitors as ever they were; the promontories and stretched sands of our coasts are still of refreshing spice and salt in their air, and as incarnations of all human feelings. If, indeed, Nature sympathize, as sentimental poets have said in the past, with human feelings, how intolerable this earth would become! It is because Nature is remote, vast, venerable, incommensurable, because she was before man was, and will be after he has disappeared,—transient passenger for a few thousand ages to unconceived destinies—That Nature affords us comfort. In these phenomena which are so familiar to us we learn as we view them in their apparent dimensions the slow patience and constant persistence of that inner purpose of all that is,—the constancy of development of the highest from the lowest, the never ceasing progress of knowing and doing and being, the infinite daily conceived in our ideals.



THE MOUNT TOM RANGE

prime of life is burdened by these dangers. Indeed, the war clouds even the beauty of the earth, and it is hard to escape for a moment its terrific burden.

Yet there still rise the great undisturbed hills, there still rolls the majestic solemn ocean; breezes of the west sweep the mountain peaks; the plateaus of our New England are as peaceful, sunny, free and unsuggestive of human ill to their visitors as ever they were; the promontories and stretched sands of our coasts are as full of refreshing spice and salt in their airs, and as inconsiderate of all human feelings. If, indeed, Nature did sympathize, as sentimental poets have said in the past, with human feelings, how intolerable this earth would become! It is because Nature is remote, vast, venerable, incommensurate, because she was before man was, and will be after man has disappeared,—transient passenger over unknown ages to unconceived destinies—that Nature affords us comfort. In these phenomena which are so familiar to us we learn as we view them in their apparent dimensions the slow patience and constant persistence of that inner purpose of all that is,—the constancy of development of the highest from the lowest, the never ceasing progress of knowing and doing and being, the infinite dimly conceived in our ideals.

The earth is now as rich as in June in wonder and power in our woods and fields. Much of the charm has departed,—for no doubt the stages of the spring catch us more graciously and hold us more tenderly than any others, and the sumptuous vitality of early summer is profoundly captivating, with its apple blooms and its roses, and every fern growing into perfection, and all the trees rich with verdant glory, and the birds uttering their varied melodies. But midsummer has its own charms, not altogether without music either, for the song-sparrow never ceases to sing, and the wood thrush is now at his height of song, while the hermit thrush in the depths of the forest is sure to send forth his evening hymn. But besides these, how many delicious bits of song are heard, by those who wander in unfrequented thickets, from lesser members of the singing craft. Yes, the time of courtship is past, but it is a libel on many of the tribes of birds to say that they only sing in that period; some of them sing always, and wherever they are. There are odds in birds as in men. Certainly one who in deep winter woods has heard the chickadees and the mountain sparrows sibilating back and forth in the frosty air knows that the note of tenderness lasts in beauty, though it changes its insistence and its accent. So long as these little creatures chirp and

whisper in the spruces and the hemlocks, "the poetry of earth is never dead."

But woods and fields are feeling the warnings of fall. How the golden-rods colour the pastures and the roadsides, some five or six varieties being in full bloom now; while the cone flowers yet linger, and will for a long time; and the superb butterfly-weed is yet crowded with its clouds of cinnamon-coloured butterflies, and the joe-pye lifts its wealthy pinkish-purple corymbs high over the moist brooksides where it loves to dwell. The cardinal flower now bends its stately panicles over the very edges of the mountain streams, and splendid in colour as it is, it bears the modest air of retirement. Now also the lobelias are plenty in various habitudes, and the parsley tribe riots in meadows and roadsides and marshy tracts, from Queen Anne's Lace to water hemlock and the heracleums and the archangelicas,—though the former of those giant parsleys is past its blooming and in fruit, like the poison carrot. In the open and sunny marshes now the arrowhead is in its finest condition, and few years see such great blossoms of *sagittaria* as this year discloses. This is emphatically the season of the mints, and bee-balm in the gardens, and occasionally in stray nooks where once there have been gardens, calls to the lilac, bergamot, the paler, tall pennyroyal

or mountain mint, and many more whose spicy fragrance fills the air and attracts the bees.

These are of the fields, of the unshaded places, but there are also the offsprings of the wood mold which charm, or which interest because of their peculiarities, if they do not charm. Such are the parasites of the tree roots and the dwellers upon decaying wood. Now may be seen in full character that amazing plant which the Indians are said to have named "ghost flower," which the Puritans first called "corpse plant," and which later New Englanders named "Indian pipe"—the *monotropa uniflora* of the botanists. The danger of judging by appearances is well illustrated by this truly ghostlike flower, for it is closely allied to the trailing arbutus, the kalmias, the huckleberries and the deerberry and a score more of plants so unlike that their actual fellowship seems a fiction. This is analogous to human nature, for we are all of one blood, and the Caucasian philosopher and scientist is as like the Andaman islander as the arbutus is like the Indian pipe, or the mountain laurel like the false beech-drops,—which also are now in bloom. Strangely, too, one of the loveliest groups of flowers of this season bears the same stigma of filched growth, the gerardias, whose most showy species, the yellow and the oak-leaved, are now in full bloom, and the grace-

ful purple wayside species soon will be. Now, also, the most splendidly coloured funguses are in evidence, those great crimson boletuses in the woodland, and the deep orange mushrooms. It is thus the choice season for parasites, and among them also is to be found the corallorhiza, or coral root, to which little beauty belongs, but only a certain element of marvel, as it springs from the damp mold of the deep woods, brown of stalk and with dead brown or yellowish bracts in place of leaves, with rather pretty, waxen flowers, devoid of light in their dull tones. There is also the true beech-drops, as unearthly or too earthly as the others.

The swamps are now reservoirs of unliberated heat, where the atmosphere steams visibly in the sunshine and the poison sumach is filling its forbidding panicles of berries, as the poison ivy is doing in like manner around the fences and on the trees in the open lands. But the swamp rose still blooms in these deep cedar-fringed and hackmatack-bordered recesses and the sphagnum is riotous in its growth. The hackmatacks, our native larches, are yellowing already, and the water-maples are sending forth their brilliant red signals of the coming fall. The end is foreknown in the swamps first of all; before even a bough changes on the maples of the upland or the first leaf crim-

sons on the woodbine, their relations in the swamps are saying that the parting of the ways has come. Here we realize first how the inexorable process of Nature moves on, and all the glory of the earth is rushing as swift as sap can move and fruit can mature to the season's turn, when in quick following come all the splendid colours of that bloom which marks the end.

But it is not given to the race of man to end in splendour as age draws on. That is the boon of the transient show, the partial bestowal of the great spirit which informs all. Man's period is not for yearly change, fall and renewal, but for a momentous pause precluding and signifying a period of new conditions. The trees and the flowers and the grasses obey their genius of existence, and go with triumph and with peace into their wintry rest. But we of higher sensitiveness and closer neighbourhood to the great spirit of all have lost that confident commitment of fortune, and worry over what is to happen and what we are to be. There is no need of this anxiousness. "Are ye not of much more value than they?"

“*The Fountain Light of All Our Day*”

YESTERDAY was a day of foreboding fate. As one in the fields has heard from the distant town one slow and solemn toll, and then an echoing silence long succeeding before the bell begins its solemn record of the dead,—so was it in that short morning hour when upon the intolerable blazing sunshine fell a sudden cloud, and a slight chill wind breathed upon earth, and the sky grew overcast; in that moment sounded the warning stroke of the year’s decline. The prophetic pause is sooner or later, one year and another, but it always comes, and it remains in memory, like as the lingering echo from the village belfry, until the note is struck again, and the summer is indeed gone.

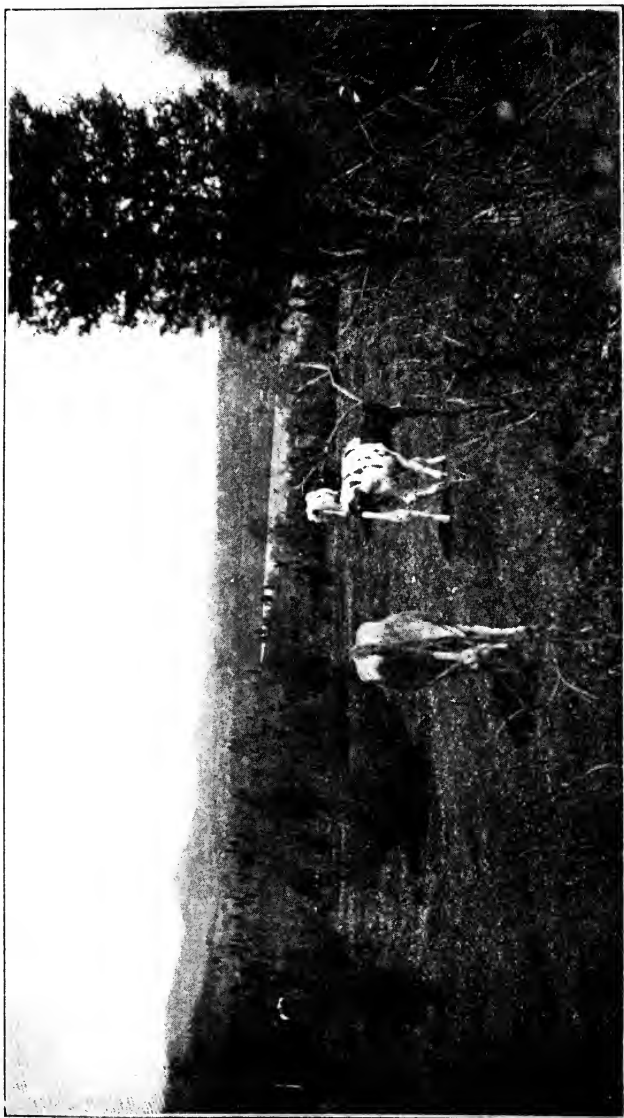
There is a poem that by some strange hap strayed into the hymn-books which has these musical lines, as we remember them :—

“ Sweet Sabbath of the year,
While earthly lights decay,
Thy parting steps methinks I hear
Pass from the world away.”

The pensive cadence of these simple words falls with a delicate perfectness of sympathy into the anticipating thought of autumn ; for whether because of old religious associations, or because the Sabbath idea is rest, nothing could better express the especial charm of the season. And though long weeks of heat are to come, rounding out the fruit of the orchards and the nuts of the forests, filling the maize ears in the rustling fields and swelling the pumpkins beneath them, yet the Sabbath sense has come into our lives, and the hour of eve has filled us with a curious calm, in which the strange and cruel human world is for a little time alien and absent.

Resting in such a solemn sweet day upon the shaded ledges of the mountain side, beholding the wonderful great earth stretching away in billowy hills, the peace of God fills the soul. Lapped in the ample bosom of mighty Nature, into every sense steals the deep and still conviction of the Spirit that began not nor ceases,—so strong, so sure, so patient, so constant, so harmonious, in its dateless and enduring ages working out its tremendous and holy purposes. What are we, to fret and labour and curse, and confound our mortal weakness, with the face of God continually before us, and his life throbbing in our veins, and in the birds and the squirrels, the trees and the shrubs,

THE HILLSIDE PASTURE





the myriad grasses and ferns and flowers,—aye, in streams of the spring and in the very rocks themselves, which are called insensate—as if anywhere in a living universe there could be a thing insensate! We are not merely in God's hands,—we are partakers of his being, and without us, surely, there were no God.

Why should we limit our vision and shut our ears in the presence and witness of the greater harmonies, the everlasting truths? Labour in our accustomed ways we must; the transient busy world of men has work for us all to do, and none may shirk or deny it. But there remaineth a rest to the people of God,—and it is open to all to partake of it,—not in some imagined heaven without duties and responsibilities, some abode of sublimated selfishness, but here and now, while we have our work, and are doing it. To it we return, as by instinctive movement of that spark of the divine, that true self, the soul we got from the Over-soul, in which abide, though smothered under passing circumstance and burden, yet now and again thrilling us with deathless fire, the feelings which, "be they what they may," —

"Are yet the fountain light of all our day,—
Are yet a master light of all our seeing,
Uphold us, cherish, and have power to make
Our noisy years seem moments in the being

Of the eternal Silence : truths that wake
 To perish never ;
While neither listlessness, nor mad endeavour,
 Nor man nor boy,
Nor all that is at enmity with joy
Can utterly abolish or destroy !
 Hence in a season of calm weather,
 Though inland far we be,
Our souls have sight of that immortal sea
 Which brought us hither,
 Can in a moment travel thither,
And see the Children sporting on the shore,
And hear the mighty waters rolling evermore !”

THE SYMPHONY OF THE STORM

The storm-ship dips its swift rudder
Deep into cloud waves that shudder
 And shake into showers o'er the land,
 Descending, possessing the land.
The hills in its mist-wake are hidden,
The woods with its wild winds are ridden,
 They tremble and toss,
 As seaweeds are tossed on the strand ;
 They moan o'er the loss
 Of the leaves that they loose on demand
Of the guides of the ship, the storm-spirits,
 Now in power for the hour
 While deep-bosomed clouds lower ;

Now in power and in duty
To fret and to harry the earth,—
To rouse and enhearten the earth.
For the storm-ship never will veer its
Course from the orders it got
Till all is fulfilled of its lot,
And it stops in the harbour with booty
Reft from the earth and its dwellers.
What should the spirits that guide
Care for the ruin that wide
Follows their track,—the pride-quellers!
Down go the great works man has builded,—
Crushed are his ships and their piers ;
Swept into rude heaps are his gilded
Palaces, the glory of years ;
His warehouses of merchandise nought ;
In his homes desolation is wrought ;
Man, woman and child
In the wreck overpiled—
Most endangered where safety they sought,—
Done to death by the rioting rage
Of the war that the elements wage.

“ Oh praise the Lord of Heaven ! praise him in the height !
Praise him, all ye angels of his ! praise him all his hosts !
Praise him, sun and moon ! praise him all ye stars and
light !
Praise him all ye seas ! praise him all ye coasts !
Fire and hail, snow and vapour, stormy wind fulfilling
his word !

Let them praise the name of the Lord !

Let everything that hath breath praise the Lord ! ”

Yea, for all they are doing his will,—

All the life of God, going on, all that is and shall be to
fill ; —

And we know not why or how, but surely it is,—

Death in a moment of storm, death in the quiet of home,

Death in the horror of murder, death at the height of
bliss,—

What matters how we depart ? Even in ocean’s foam

God is : and not wave and not wind,

Nor other messengers of his mind,

Can harm the soul that knows him,—

Since each of them but shows him

Intent upon the mighty work of Time,

Which is Eternity : for what we call

Time’s but the entrance hall,—

Nay, ’tis a corridor

Whence opens many a door

On passages which lead us to the prime

And present habitation of our God,

The spiritual place where feet ne’er trod,—

Unlimned, illimitable light,—the abode of God.

“ The Lord descended from above

And bowed the heavens high,

And underneath his feet he cast

The darkness of the sky ;

On cherub and on seraphim

Full royally he rode,
And on the wings of mighty winds
Came flying all abroad!"

So shall the storm-ship scud ;
So shall it harry the earth and the sea ;
Secure that His life will waken and bud,
Secure that the flower and the fruit will be.
The bud that blasts, the flower that may wither,
The fruit that decays, we scarce may see ;
They are but efforts stopped erewhither,—
They are but motes in Eternity.

" O all ye works of the Lord, bless ye the Lord !
Praise him, and magnify him forever !
O let the earth bless the Lord !
Yea, let it praise him, and magnify him forever !
O all ye fowls of the air, O all ye beasts and cattle,
bless ye the Lord !
Praise him and magnify him forever !
O ye children of men, bless ye the Lord !
Praise him and magnify him forever !
O ye holy and humble men of heart, bless ye the Lord !
Praise him and magnify him forever !
O ye spirits and souls of the righteous," ye spirits of all
the offspring of God, " bless ye the Lord !
Praise him and magnify him forever !"
Amen !

After the Summer

THE leaves that redden on the soft maples, that grow ruby on the woodbine, that gold on the birches, that yellow on the aspens,—the ferns that blanch in the wood, the tiarella leaves that turn bronze and purple as the vine grows old ; the bittersweet berries that swell and begin to split their buff wrappings and show how red they are ; the fox-grapes that are turning reddish, a grape or two at a time in the cluster ; the few prophesying gentians in the marshes, the cardinal flower, which shares its colour with no other of our region, the ladies-tresses in the damp meadows, the ternate botrychiums in the pastures ; the entrance of the later fragrant golden-rod upon the scene where several of its congeners have disported themselves for the past month ; the passing in splendour of the eupatoriums—the joe-pye, the thoroughwort and now the snowy ageratoides ; the blooming of the first wood aster ; the swelling of the wild rose hips and the thorn-tree's haws ; the scent of the flowers of the

mints in all the air,—these, and so many other signs indicate the entrance of autumn. The rich charm of ripening possesses the earth.

Now the field flowers have their innings, and are doing their work bravely, the autumn colours of purple and gold flaunting along the roadsides, although the purples and blues of the asters have scarcely yet begun to show,—the first lone purple aster that has dared to blossom is of no longer date than this week. The lespedeza has furnished most of that class of colour, and is going by, but the heroic purple of the ironweed and the royal of the vervain abounds, where they choose to grow.

Moreover, this is the season when the rhexia, one of the most beautiful harmonies of the year, with its rose-pink petals and golden stamens, and red buds, is to be found. 'Tis a somewhat rare plant, but where it does occur, in moist pastures or mowings, it is abundant and profuse, and gives the spot a refined gayety that draws all eyes. In certain haunts it is as distinctive as the fringed gentian, and like that, bears a certain elegance and delicacy which seem to mark it as one of the aristocracy of flowers; it is, however, less sensitive and less capricious. The gentian has now begun to blossom. The clematis, the traveler's joy, makes bowers of the hedge rows and poetry

of the fences,—even the barbed-wire atrocities of our civilization are made use of by this happy wanderer.

Myriad sounds of insects make what the poets have called the dirge of the departing year. And indeed although the grasshoppers have long been very numerous, and the cicadas have crushed the air with their strident cacophony, and the crickets have added their solemn minor to these curious instrumental performances, it is not until the katydid starts his extraordinary utterance that one really feels that fall is at hand. Autumn is a quiet and gentle summation of the period of growth, and it is yet long to last, for the rowen will ripen in the meadows, and the nuts grow brown and drop before the real fall shall come. Here, however, the katydid vaticinates, and says to us: Nevertheless, the end is nigh.

Thus are the warnings of Nature continually given; we do not need to wait for the ripening of the apples to learn that they must ripen; we do not need to see for the first time in the falling of the rose petals the doom of the rose,—the fate is instinct in the bud, the blossom foretells the fruit; the dropping fruit too soon asserts the farewell of its spring. The birds add their forecast as they teach their brood to fly, and thenceforth know no more their offspring. The squirrels that frisk

about the forest or the lawn grow bolder as their young have learned their lesson of self support. These creatures irresponsibly live and die, and each generation makes its own career.

Thus we are not as the flowers of the field or the birds of the air or the denizens of the trees and the burrows,—for some new element has entered into us as we have evolved our nature and our destiny. Not one spring, not one summer, not one fall—nay, not one winter, is our own. And man has not only his labour and pains, for himself and his successors, but he must bear the care of the humbler creatures to whom he should be the thought and the providence that preserves, since in his growth he has been taught that no man liveth or dieth unto himself. The responsibility is limitless :—

“ For so the whole round earth is every way
Bound by gold chains about the feet of God.”

The phenomena of ongoing life are endlessly marvelous, and what man faints under, Nature sustains with glorious triumph. Were these wonders all made just for man's mere sustenance of a physical life conditioned on this earth, how wasted were these generous beauties ! But man has other qualities that touch spheres beyond the one he thinks he knows, and which yet he cannot

know. A word from a lofty thinker may give us pause. Sir Thomas Browne wrote, long ago, such meditations as these :—

“ That we are the breath and similitude of God, it is indisputable, and upon record of holy scripture ; but to call ourselves a microcosm, or little world, I thought it only a pleasant trope of rhetoric, till my near judgment and second thought told me there was a real truth therein. For first we are a rude mass, and in the rank of creatures which only are, and have a dull kind of being, not yet privileged with life, or preferred to sense or reason ; next we live the life of plants, the life of animals, the life of men, and at last the life of spirits ; running on, in one mysterious nature, those five kinds of existences, which comprehend the creatures not only of the world, but of the universe. Thus is man that great and true amphibium, whose nature is disposed to live not only like other creatures in divers elements, but in divided and distinguished worlds ; for though there be but one to sense, there are two to reason, the one visible, the other invisible.”

The Fall Begins

THE first fall day has come. Premonitions of the change of the year, the ripening of fruitage, the pause of growth, the hastening of colour here and there,—such signs have been noted. But with the cool northwest wind of yesterday one felt that the fall was with us, and that sweet, subtle, wild fragrance of the woods breathed out on the wanderers in forest and field, making a new atmosphere of fulfilment. There is an ichor in the autumn air which renews human life and gives it fresh zest ; over the hills, over the rowen clover, over the pastures of golden-rod and aster, over the ponds with their lilies, over the swales with their flags and grasses and sedges, through the forests with their early fall of prematurely ripening leaves and their nutty fragrances, over and among the copses of glowing sumach pompons and joe-pyes, thoroughwort and sunflowers, salicin-breathing willow and delicious hearty sweet fern,—comes the inspiring essence of life that is accomplishing its purpose. It fills

our nostrils and expands our lungs with vital force,—force unexpended, and going on to other years, and in our veins no less than in the growths of the earth which to-day are and to-morrow shall receive their boon of rest.

Rest is what this hurrying day does not allow; and those who most long for it in sympathy with free Nature know well they cannot have it save for moments, such as Byron describes when he says:—

“ There is a pleasure in the pathless woods,
There is a rapture on the lonely shore,
There is society, where none intrudes,
By the deep sea,—and music in its roar.
I love not man the less, but Nature more
From these our interviews, in which I steal
From all I may be, or have been before,
To mingle with the universe, and feel
What I can ne'er express, yet cannot all conceal.”

Thus it is that we touch Nature, in brief interviews,—a moment, an hour, half a day,—and then back again to the task which is ours. The rest, the rapture, the sense of partaking of the very soul of the universe,—the sense, that is, of communion with the Spirit of earth and sea and all things else,—this is what our fall brings to us; and while the earth about us is lovely and full of

grace, the poet was right in his love of the ocean. Not for every day is the great sea movement, to one who is in unity with grand uplift of the mountains and gentle caresses of the moors and glens. But there comes a moment when all things else seem dull and lifeless compared with the impact of the mighty, far-running ocean waves rushing upon the beach, or dashing against the cliff. Oh to feel the salt breath of thousands of miles of water breaking at our feet, on the shore, or splashing spray upon us as we sit upon the coast cliffs! Oh to dream of all that has been in man's curious and contradictory history, resting for a little space upon a rock, and watching the waves, and beholding the gulls and kittiwakes in their fine, free sailing and dipping. A gull?—nay, rather—

“A spirit on Eternity's wide sea,
Calling : Come thou where all we glad souls be !”

Yet when we behold a flight of cranes from some sequestered pond, or crows, black against the keen blue sky, cawing as they go in their emphatic language, or a pair of bluejays in their brilliant garb, or when we startle a wren from the hedgerow or a sparrow from the ground,—there is something of significance, though no way so suggestive as the birds of the waves, of that illimitation of freedom that we know shall be ours

when we depart from this habitude, and enter into that infinite realm where all the glad souls be.

Now the nuts are ripening in their wraps,—the hazels by the roadside and in field, the chestnuts in their burrs, the butternuts in their Nessus garments and the walnuts in their mathematical boxes. It is the charted time of all the asters; every aster has a name, thanks to the botanists, but let us know them simply as asters, a simple, earnest kindly class of folk, who do their best to make life happy,—for themselves, of course, but as it happens, for men and women and children, just as the golden-rods do.

The sunflowers are busy, and the burr-marigolds; and the various lettuces, especially those of the prenanthes group, are making their bits of the world beautiful. Now the fringed gentian is to be found, and as well that recluse, the brilliantly blue closed gentian, and the snake-head or turtle-head is abundant beside water courses. The great tribe of polygonaceae are riotous over all manner of places, and prettiest of all is the dainty pink-white polygonella on dry fields. In the purples of the fall, besides the few lespedezas, the desmodiums, the wildbeans and the ground nuts, there are the stern darkness of the vernonia and the bright splendour of the liatris to keep up the

tone. The gerardias are mainly gone, but the pretty purple species yet is to be seen on the roadsides.

What is all this display on Nature's part but expression of the inexhaustible life which informs the earth,—that earth which with all the other parts of the universal frame gives all its wealth to us, as constituting in its place "the body of the infinite God?"

These September Days

“ Oh tenderly the haughty day
Fills his blue urn with fire.”

EMERSON'S daring and splendid trope fits these fine September days with so exquisite an expression that it is almost sacrilege to give it a lesser voice. But even as the crickets and grasshoppers play their light instruments in the autumn orchestra, and the cicada scrapes his harsh strings, and the katydid carries on his inconclusive accusations in the elms at evening, and these make a rich undertone of harmony which with all its sharp accents suits well with the sweeter messages of the breezes, the farewell notes of the birds and the subtle throbbing diapason of Nature in these parting days—so the fragmentary thought and perception of the beauty of earth and its exhaustless meanings contribute somewhat in the same way to the comprehensive image of the seer.

What phase of Nature is more wonderful and

mastering than the spell of these days of lingering farewell? Long since, in the later July, the foretelling came, one knew not how, in a day when the air breathed some quality that was not of summer. Then weeks followed without another hint of the impending change, when suddenly it came again, and the maples near to die began to redden and the ferns to blanch in the woods, and the key of fall was subtly sounded, not to be lost again except in northwest winds and snows. The Indian pipe and the beech-drops from the forest mold took the place of the pyrola and the pipsissewa, and the orchis family had the coral-root for representative instead of the habenarias, and the myriad funguses arose to add rich hues to the neutral ground of the fallen leaves of former years, and along the roadsides the asters and golden-rods began to multiply in variety. Now they are all here, the copious glories of our fall, with their adagios of purple and lavender and white, their allegros of bright yellows and oranges, their generous modulations of tone,—a simultaneous symphony, let us say, in which all the movements are performed at once, and yet all accord. Nature is not really like an orchestra, in sound or in its parallel of colour, but as all beauty is correlated and congruous, her utterance is colour and tone and feeling and thought all in one and all at once,—

the discords lost in the greater spirit which informs the wondrous whole.

The sunlight in these long afternoons reaches into farther depths of the woods than it did in summer months ; and in shadowy twilights where the ferns have scarce seen a ray sift through the lofty tops, they are now touched with long afternoon beams that linger and light them with gold, and their green grows tenderer of hue. The leaves of the trees are plainly growing thinner in texture, and they droop from their stems a little, and so the meshes of that wonderful screen are wider and the rays are not all caught, but steal through to the waiting heart of the earth, which has not been warmed since the full delicious April sun awakened the hepaticas and arbutus. Now begin the fragrances of the forest herbs departing life, rising like sacred incense in a solemn temple ; while the cheerful scents of the waysides and pastures without are as vivacious as the swift and busy existence of mankind itself,—both phases of the same indwelling worship, shown in work and sport and meditation with an equal difference. All moods are satisfied in September days, wherein the pulse of harvest is so keen, and the fields are being cleared of their crops, and the fall plowing is being done for the next year's expectations, and the sweet rowen is mowed which the milch

cows love for dessert and the young stock delight in when the winter comes.

The vapours of this fading vegetation lie close to the earth in the night hours, and are seen beneath the moon from the hilltops lying or lifting or wavering over the meadows as the mists of the streams mingle with them. The variance of the atmospheric effects from those of the summer are subtle, and yet few eyes do not detect, though they cannot define, the change that really has passed upon the face of the earth, making more veil-like the blue tones of the mountains in the distance. The colour now grows day by day in the woodlands. Maples always lead the glory with their red and golden boughs from the midst of green foliage; but rapidly follow the ash trees, with their olives, bronzes and purples; and a white or gray birch turns yellow early here and there. The butternuts are leafless,—'tis one of the trees which does not adorn the fall, but simply drops its withered brown leaves day by day till all be gone. One of the richest effects is made by the great dog-wood, whose broad cordate leaves so blend sanguine hues with olive greens, as to produce a superb harmony, which crowned by its corymbs of bright red berries lights the under side of the woods. There are many lesser trees and shrubs which give to the wayside a wealth of

colour unnoted in the general effect. But the glories of autumn are yet beginning, and still the general aspect of the forests is verdant.

Not so the fields. These are never so varied as now, where the tilth is upturned brown over many an acre, and the meadows are green with second growth or third, and the roadsides are so full of bloom; the buckwheat fields, reaped or unreaped, enrich the slopes with wine-brown stretches, and the dead bents of the June grass make the pastures all a dusky white, except where the cinnamon fern is leather-brown or the dicksonia's gold-green masses command the steep sidehill. The earth is green, is the common notion; but when one looks upon the earth in early autumn he sees it is many other colours besides, even before the forests have fairly begun to blossom. The infinite variety of notes in the colour scheme of earth requires a lifetime to learn, and the special vocabulary of the artist to nominate.

The lesser flowers of the region which we dwell in are changing with the days. The orchis family is now known by scarcely any other members than those of the spiranthes class, which spring up along the roadsides and in the meadows where there is moisture enough,—the ladies' tresses, they are called, not very happily. The cardinal flower is now almost at the end of its brilliant life, where







THE LONE PINE AT SUNSET

beside the brooks and in the marshes it flames forth, a splendid beacon of the wayfarer's quest. The snake-head yet blooms in the marsh, and there the fringed gentian should be frequent. The late botrychiums are now in trim among the ferns,—things lightly passed over, often never seen, but adding a little beauty of frond to the many beauties of earth, in the midst of the grasses and lingering second growth clovers in the moist meadow.

We hear the autumn bemoaned as a season of death, and indeed superficially it is such a season. But how superficially! For the truth is to any one who observes Nature and sees things sanely, the autumn is the season of promise. What hath been shall be, and the flowers that fade, the leaves that fall, are but forms of life that have fulfilled their functions, and pass life on to another year. So is it with our own human tenure. Its purpose is filled and its end has come. What, then, is this death that men fear, and which seems to our poor race the end of all? It is but the period put to the transient show, the pause in the eternal progress. What is not essential is stripped off, and that which remains is the core and inner truth of life. That goes on endlessly; and human souls that have breathed the breath of that inner life go on as endlessly. No one else has so

superbly expressed the true office of death as Sir Walter Raleigh: "O eloquent, just and mighty Death! whom none could advise, thou hast persuaded; what none hath dared, thou hast done; and whom all the world hath flattered, thou only hast cast out of the world and despised; thou hast drawn together all the far-stretched greatness, all the pride, cruelty and ambition of man, and covered it all over with these two narrow words—*Hic Jacet!*"

After a Dry Summer

THERE are heats stored up in the dying moon of September, but there is that in the breeze which is the sole property of our fall,—a frank acceptance of the doom of flowers and fruit and herb and tree, a wild free feeling of joyous farewell. The line storm has broken the long drouth, and at least the surface of earth has been rejoiced, refreshed and restored to its old values in some measure. The surface only as yet, for the springs are scarcely reached, and the big trout brooks of the mountains do not fill with their accustomed currents. It must have been a tragic season for the finny population of the brooks, and trout will be scarce next year in many a familiar current from the mountain springs.

We are now able to discern the terrible effect of the dry summer, for when the forests should be showing glorious colour they are brown and sere. It is common speech that the hues of autumn are dying splendours, but in truth they

are ripenings; like the flowers of the gardens and the roadsides, the trees too bloom in one triumphant burst of noble colour, to delight the earth and the children of earth. This fall is seen veritable death in the decay,—the leaves, abandoning life when they should be emphasizing it in gold and red and crimson, hang on the trees without a tinge of pride or sentiment,—barren and desert of life.

WIND OF THE EAST

Trouble the trees,
 Wind of the East !
Stir up the seas,—
 Churn them to yeast,—
Wind that blows over the brine !
Strong is thy voice,
 Rough is thy breath,
Ships are thy toys,—
 Thou bearest death—
Thou bearest life like wine !

Haste with thy train
 Of tumultuous cloud ;
Haste with the rain
 From the skies overbowed,
Lowering and longing to pour
 For the forest athirst

All their heart out at once
In a generous burst,—
But too late for the nonce,
Does the burden of storm hurry o'er.

For the forest is parched,—
The scorch of the sun,
The heat as they marched
Of the winds that o'errun
Have dried out the roots of the trees,
And they stand and appeal
For the help of the rain;
Leaves fall and fates seal,—
Yet they pray once again
For the visit renewed of the breeze,—

The return of the storm,
The assail of the gale,
Full clouds that reform,
That descend and envail
All the land with their burden of mist;
For thus the earth waits
For the tempest and stress,
When the rain opes the gates,
And released from duress
Sinks deep in the earth it has kissed.

So trouble the trees,
Wind of the East!
Mind not the seas,
Or greatest or least,—

Careering o'er the broad brine,
Lift thy wild voice,
Fore-cry the rain,
Clamour,—rejoice !
As comes thy refrain
To the blessing so dear, so divine !

Nature smiles on with her wonderful, imperturbable, inscrutable sweetness. All is right with her. What is it to her in the vast process of the ages of earth, that there should be a season which discomfits the weakness of man? She is beyond human needs ; she has no touch of human frailty or worry or reproach. How often during the trying summer have we witnessed this serene content of Nature ! A shower of an hour,—a day of brisk north wind dissipating the oppressive smoke clouds,—and lo ! the everlasting Mother, crowned and sceptered and secure of homage, looked upon the earth and declared that it was good. The mere creatures of a day out of her millions of days may repine and rebel, but what do they know of her everlasting plans ? “ For my thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are my ways your ways, saith the Lord. For as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are my ways higher than your ways, and my thoughts than your thoughts. For as the rain cometh down and the snow from heaven, and returneth not

thither, but watereth the earth, and maketh it bring forth and bud, and giveth seed to the sower and bread to the eater,—so shall my word be that goeth out of my mouth ; it shall not return unto me void, but it shall accomplish that which I please, and it shall prosper in the things whereto I send it.”

It is still a question whether the voice of the people is the voice of God,—though we believe that true—but that Nature is the action of God is sure. We may fret and complain and worry over what the sun and the rains do or fail to do, but in the domain of law that began before the world was on planets yet unknown in other universes of which we have not an inkling, these same causes have been operating forever, and will forever so operate in myriads of worlds to come. Out of all that exists, or seems to exist, there is nothing that shall last save the soul ; and the small conditions of earth, in Nature as well as in moral and social, national and globe-wide relations, are but experiences and disciplines for the soul. If the glory of summer is rich and satisfying, or if it be cruel and withering,—if autumn be crowned and glorified with colour or dun and discouraging under drouth, it is all one in the essential matter. We reckon in years and days,—God and Nature have no dates.

A Fall Day of Mists

A DAY like yesterday was not a day to bring out the colour. But it was one of the most wonderful of days for beauty, if one only lifted himself high enough. Dull and depressing, fairly of the dog-day type, in the valleys,—on the hills it was marked by vigorous life, in the infinite swift movement of the low cloud masses over the great expanse of country. Even from the cliffs of Mount Tom—so down-reaching and valley-pervading were the clouds,—one had delight in being above the storm,—if storm the rapid slight mists could be termed, which swinging in and rolling over and over and whirling around from the east, swept over the valleys and broke upon the western hills. There the mist clouds encompassed the mountain for a few minutes, and suddenly a break showed sunlight on the fields below, and in a moment more a great white mass rushing northward, hit by the full force of the sun, fairly blazed upon the eye, while the moving tumult under the shadow of the pursuing

clouds seemed densely dark. The gleams of flickering sunlight, skimming the valleys, were exquisite in effect; and far eastward, on the long range of hills from the Holyoke ridges, that all the time hung mysteriously blue,—right from the sky there gleamed the echo of the same sunlight, but of other beams, like messengers from the hypethral beauty. It was not a day for glowing colour, it is true, but was one of infinitely subtle atmospheric effects.

The lesser and more intimate face of earth is still a manifest of the divine beauty in flower and fruit, for now the berries add much to these charms, and the later golden-rods,—the wreath, the speciosa, and some others,—accompany the asters in their abundance. The gentians are in full excellence; and, though yet in great rarity, the magical scent of the witch hazel steals upon the nostrils in the edges of the forest. Nor have all the birds left us. Many of the migrants who have nested to the northward are pausing here in their flight to winter quarters, and having little harmless orgies of their own over the seeds of such plants as they have known and approved for generations beyond number. In fine, it is a choice autumn which opens before us. It is characteristic, as every season has been this first year of the new century. A sturdy winter; a

lingering, delaying, provoking, delighting spring ; a fervent summer ; dog days up to the most afflictive standard,—and now the seductive cordiality of fall, which would break to us with the finest kindness the warning that winter is in prospect.

The Glories of October

BEFORE the frosts have curled the clover, while yet the asters by the brook invite the bee to honey that is a trifle bitter, while yet the katydid is heard, and the catbirds mew and the red-winged blackbirds creak,—no longer uttering their soft, sighing notes of content ; while Nature is at her best and bravest and sweetest, let us do honour to the most beautiful of Octobers, in a region where October, if no other month, is sure to be beautiful. The fall, like the summer, has indeed been throughout a pattern of seasons so far as airs of delicious temperance and invigoration could make it so. We have lacked the latter rains in their customary abundance, and the equinoctial storm dear to tradition made but a feeble showing of purpose, and passed us by for the coasts and the northern hills. But day after day the clouds have swept over the intense blue in splendid snowy masses, or thin vapours have melted in just so much haziness as to

soften the rays of the southing sun, and it has been ungrateful to complain.

The week that now closes has been of the richest colour and light. Never, perhaps, have the New England hills been more splendidly adorned than during this time, and though after the dashing rains and windy tempests of the last day thereof there can be little left of the gorgeous show, it will remain in memory as unsurpassed for harmonious pride of bloom. Generous indeed is Nature in what is wrongfully called our bleak New England clime. Nowhere in the world can this parting glory of the green year, rising into superb blossoming of ripened life, be excelled, as it is seen each fall from the Canadas down to the Carolinas, on the eastward slopes of the grand Appalachian ranges. No time else better presents Nature in her kindest character.

It is the season of cheer and promise. Spring has more aggravations and discouragements; for she gives one day to take back the next, and wintry storms recall the snows to the hills and fasten the streams in fetters they had been freed from by the climbing sun. The weariness of hope deferred vexes us, and the season is long and labouring, with all its charms,—which, lovely as they are, one humanly forgets in their frequent oblivion. But the attractions of autumn are loth

to leave us, and linger with delight, while each week prolongs a pleasure in what we know we soon must lose. One watches October's beauty with a love that is child of longing and parent of loss. As the Sky Farm poet sang, years ago,— beholding her where—

“ In queenly state she rules her forest lands
Where maples light with flame the frosty air,—”

so we feel moved to appeal to the forerunning messengers of winter : —

“ Blow softly, wind ! one rude or reckless breath
Might take from out her hair its silken flow,
One dash of rain might drown those brave blue eyes
And drain from cheeks and lips their living glow.”

Now even yet, although her cheeks are paler and her glories shred, there is beauty in the royal figure, and her presence on the hills has not lost its grace and dignity. It fills the brooding mists of night, and the morning, that drifts those mists away in light and wavering vapours up the mountain side, reveals her still in state. The wilding fragrances of the late flowers, the withering ferns and the fallen leaves are incense before her throne, and among them all steals, mysteriously subtle and enchanting, the unkinde magic of the witch hazel, whose yellow wraiths of bloom spray on the bare twigs, encircling the fruit of last year's

bloom. The booming flight of the grouse breaks on the ear like the very tone of the forests, and squirrels, gray, red and striped, each in his individual way, whistles warning, as the alien foot of man intrudes upon the solitudes.

The earth is full of abounding life, life which sleeps for a season, but doubts not for a moment that it resumes and goes on, and is always to resume and go on. And so let us, the higher children of Nature, who have in sophisticated ways lost our true birthright of her unity, think of ourselves,—we, too, shall sleep, and awake, and resume, and go on, according to the divine spirit within us, and within all.

Paradise was Never Lost

THE hills are now at their height of glory, and in the broad valleys the watercourses are marked by the richest reds and yellows, maroons and olives, russet brown, orange and buff, and all that superb gamut of the spectrum which sings to the eye as birds sing to the ear in summer when the woods and fields are full of chants and warbles and living joyance. No frost has marred the splendid changes of the trees, and in this region the autumn flowers are to be found in bloom over many a meadow, pasture and forest opening, whence they have commonly disappeared at this time. The sheltered nooks are not alone in sportive new blooms of aster and golden-rod, daisy and clover, wild flax and caraway, bouncing bets and immortelles, while the herb robert's delicate pink flower nestles in its exquisitely wrought leaves, among whose green are changing colours as rich as on the maples themselves. The leaves have fallen from the grape vines, and the rare abundance of the clusters adorn the wayside

thickets, now and then giving the charm of their fruitage to some forest tree which they have caught upon and climbed, and compensate for their too close embrace by that unwonted beauty.

Now, as the hues deepen on the mountains and in the valleys, the concentrated warmth and sweetness that sunshine and rain have stored in the leaves of the trees and the fronds of the ferns, the grapes, the nuts and the autumn flowers, crowds the air with delicious scents, and adds to the autumn the grace of evanescent perfume which befits the closing hours of the pageant of Nature. It is so wholly different in character and effect from the seasons of multitudinous bloom, when the fragrance of honeyed flowers intoxicates the most luxurious of the senses.

In the autumn forest aisles or among its lanes and generous fields, there is a sober tenderness of feeling which largely proceeds from these subtle dying odours of the leaves which have fulfilled their office and now are sinking to earth to rebegin their service of use and beauty through transformation. Not dead do the leaves of the trees and shrubs fall to earth, but alive. Gather the red and yellow, the olive and gold, the bronze and buff, the salmon and gamboge of the trees from the ground where they have fallen; compare them with the rich green leaf that remains upon the tree, and





THE WHITE OAK AT THE MOUNTAIN PORTAL



their texture will be found as firm. It is the buds of the leaves of next year that push beneath them and gently thrust them from their summer thrones, in their bright blossoming.

On Sunday the earth was so rich in its transcendent beauty that it made the heart to ache with joy but to look upon it, but to breath the delicious fragrance of the forest, and those wild, mysterious scents that are borne from the ferns; besides the lingering wealth of the odora golden-rod, the life-everlasting, the traveler's-joy; and the bouquet of wild grapes in the wayside thickets, while ever and anon one suspires deeply to take in the magic of witch hazel. At every turn of the road there is a new wonder. Now one pauses at a large outlook over the low hills to consume in a glance the gorgeous harmony of every forest hue spread over miles of spectacle, as if all the earth were crying in this visible utterance: "Glory to God in the Highest! on earth peace, good-will to men!"

All now is solemn and restful in the woods and fields; work is over, repose has come; and yet in this there is nothing that depresses, nothing that bears the emphasis of gloom or melancholy. It is what should be, and so we recognize it, and find in these days of glowing colour and pervading fragrance great store of comfort and consola-

tion. The farewell that is breathed by these ferny scents and last lingering leafage,—the shy and mysterious essence of the witch hazel penetrating through it all with a charm that cannot be defined, but is like a spiritual greeting—this is most sane and ennobling, and leaves the lover of Nature a blessing for the imprisoning period of the snows.

In the seasonable pause before the storm, though the mists drift over the glens and the sunshine but fitfully gleams on the hills and lights for a moment a forest, all is as the lover of Nature would have it. Was it said that Paradise was lost? But is it not Paradise?—this valley in which, among the bright flames of maples and the ruddy back-log glow of oaks, and in the viburnum thickets with their purple-grays and the spice-bushes with their garnered sunlight,—amid these and so much more, the birds of June are flocking,—bluebirds and robins, flickers and jays, juncos, chickadees and phœbes, mountain sparrows and now and then a chippie,—are flocking and sometimes warbling. Surely this is a valley of Paradise, where none has yet entered to molest or make afraid. Into the valley flows a flood of heaven, out of it flows the streams of healing for the discomforts of civilization. Nay, why are not the four rivers that watered Eden here? or streams

as good,—since from such a spot must diverge influences that keep earth alive.

There is a singular companionship or parallelism between June and October, in seasons when mild weather sustains the slender manifest lives of plants. It is in such a year that apples and cherries, raspberries, and other fruits blossom again; and so one need not be surprised at a pasture sunny with hundreds of dandelions; and the mulleins and evening primroses send out new blossom stems from the very end of the already dry and seeded pods of the summer bloom. Many things of June and July are now vigorously blossoming,—the ox-eye daisy, the tall daisy fleabane, mayweed; then there is the queer white green-ribbed Grass of Parnassus, and many violets appear. These with the most beautiful of the asters, and the wreath golden-rod, the black-eyed Susans, the tansy and the Queen Anne's lace, make fine bouquets. Besides, one finds the fringed gentians and the closed gentians, equally attractive, though so apart. "There are diversities of gifts, but the same Spirit."

Nature has her conditions, to which we must conform, for if man be lord of creation, as the old way of thinking and writing has it, he is a lord with lords over him,—lords many and gods many, and all these are but Nature, the embodiment of

the divine spirit,—weaving at “the roaring loom of time,” instantly and forever, “the garment thou seest Him by.” It is none other than God, that “warms in the sun, refreshes in the breeze,” that “lives through all time, extends through all extent, spreads undivided, operates unspent.” All that we see and breathe and love and are is not only His, but Him, and there is no other. The message of the autumn is thus the same that the Hebrews from time immemorial chant in their service, in music that is thought to have come down from the very day of Moses:—

“The Lord bless thee and keep thee.

The Lord make his face to shine upon thee and be gracious unto thee.

The Lord lift up his countenance upon thee, and give thee peace.”

Of His Good Pleasure

THE splendour of the hills and plains is wonderful; the trees which a week ago were as green as in June have felt the reinforcement of the rains, which have put into solution the salts of the earth that give to our forests the marvelous hues of the season. Here once more is the magic of transformation,—here once more the unceasing expression of the life which wreaks that lovely magic. Man has in himself incorporate a personality which leaves him at his end a problem and an uncertainty to himself; but if he could meet his seasons as the roses and grasses and trees do, would he not desire and would he not receive such vicissitudes between spring and spring, through summer and fall and winter, with joy and triumph? Not thus is it with man,—that restless spark of the divine within him can have no pauses for recovery and renewal; on it must go, and its best chance for developing advance is by Goethe's motto, "Without haste, without rest." And this other: "For

it is God which worketh in you both to will and to do of his good pleasure.”

Traversing the ways of field and woodland this troubled and worried spirit of man finds now as fine a repose and as keen a delight as it can reach to and sustain. For the wonderful days which have passed over us and which have not yet ended, the common spectacle of ripening earth has filled us with a luxurious comfort that never satiates. The atmosphere of the days of the fall of the leaf and the farewell of the flowers is in itself a delicious gift of heaven,—for heaven is about us not only in our infancy, as Wordsworth wrote, but always, if we resign ourselves to the infant’s heart that lives beneath the experiences of the world. Indeed, it is not until we slip into the further side of our human term, until we pass “life’s height of water-shedding,” that we get the whole value of the heaven which God has given to the soul through which he expresses himself, as through the myriad forms of life besides.

The region manifests the extraordinary vitality of Nature when the frosts hold off. There has been but one frost that even touched the trees, and then only in limited areas where moisture advances the assault of lowering temperature. The ferns seldom survive as in this fall, where even the sensitive fern (*onoclea sensibilis*) may yet oc-

asionally be found, and the eagle fern,—“hoss brake,” the Yankee name is,—is quite frequently green and stout. The cinnamon and the clayton ferns are gone by, and so too the ostrich fern, and many another. But now is the bravery shown of the marginal, the spinulose, the Christmas and the crested ferns,—the fine sisterhood of the aspidiums, which love to dwell together, knowing their kindred. Now all the lesser shrubs, the viburnums, the cornels, the blueberry family, are thronging the wood paths with exquisite variations of colour,—scarlet, crimson, mulberry and tints that have no colour names; while beneath them blanching ferns, and lilac cohosh, and purplish cranesbill, over the fallen leaves, adorn the groundwork of the great scheme.

Out in the open fields, by the roadsides and over the highways the maples have filled the common earth with cloth of gold,—a more truly precious gold than that of the commercial medium over which nations fight and men surrender their immortal lives. What words can express the glory of looking up into the royal branches of a sugar maple, catching its golden glow in the reflected light of the leaves which have ripened and fallen! Indeed, what are words to interpret such magnificence of growth and such splendour of bloom? We can but be quiet, and admire and worship.

The persistence and readiness of life is seen in a thousand ways, as we note the way that the small herbs are forming their foot leaves in rich rosetts on the ground ; the five-finger, the evening primrose, the robin's plantain, the saxifrage, the various asters, the mullein. One never mentions the grasses and the rushes, the flags and the sedges, which are expected and sure,—yet are these not the perennial evidences of continuing impulse and vigour? Note, too, how the plants flower anew under the encouragement of the rains and warm suns,—how the bygone asters and golden-rods and mayweeds start forth with new flowers and even groups of flowers. One may find now pretty nooks in the pastures where there are many dandelions in bloom—dandelions which arise from the seed plants of the spring. The branching yellow violet and the branching white are now occasionally found, and the common blue hooded violet of the meadows. Black-eyed Susan and ox-eye daisy start forth frankly upon the autumn air, sure that they are wanted. The wreath golden-rod is quite a common adornment of the forest paths. Rarely there is a fringed gentian,—very rarely.

And the fragrances of the forest,—that general woodsy scent which fills all their aisles, the rich bouquet of the fox grapes, the peculiar evanes-

cence of the witch hazel, the balsamic odours of pine and hemlock—these add so much to the charm of the earth, far from the purlieus of men. With these belong the slight, subdued, musical whispers of the mountain sparrow; some stray warblers not yet able to fling themselves away from the charm of our woods; the juncos and the cheery chickadees; and over the wide landscape the crow's sagacious observations.

Then the great views of the circuit of the hills, the reflections in the rivers and the ponds, the graciousness of the atmosphere that wraps us round, the glory of God in his creation, the manifestation of the Spirit,—'tis a whole whose purport can never be conveyed in words, but it enters our soul as a part of itself, a breath of the ineffable but familiar presence, the Oversoul and the inner soul of man as of earth and of the universes, and we can only say with Emerson, in "Each and All:"—

As I spoke, beneath my feet
The ground pine curled its pretty wreath,
Running over the club-moss burrs;
I inhaled the violet's breath;
Around me stood the oaks and firs;
Pine cones and acorns lay on the ground;
Over me soared the eternal sky
Full of light and of deity;

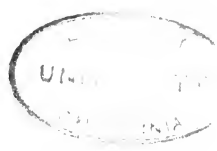
Again I saw, again I heard,
The rolling river, the morning bird,—
Beauty throughout my senses stole ;
I yielded myself to the perfect whole.

WILDWATER IN A WIND OF FALL

Again — — — — —
 The — — — — —
 — — — — —
 — — — — —

WINDWATER IN A WIND OF FALL





Let Us Say, "He is Beautiful"

LET us call it the line storm. It is true that the autumnal equinox was three weeks past when it began, but why should we closely hug the letter when by freeing the spirit we can count three weeks as nothing in comparison with that attractive tradition? It surely seems reasonable that the sun, when it goes wintering down South, should have more distinction than the English gentry who go to the Riviera or the happy American who changes to Florida or Bermuda,—his stay being longer and his importance greater. So while a paragraph in the gossip column will do for the one, a good, steady, old-fashioned coast storm is much more appropriate at the southing of the sun. The old rule was always elastic,—the 22d, "there or thereabouts,"—and three weeks later is thereabouts. We have a scriptural warrant for the early and "the latter rains."

The line storm was of rare beauty and considerateness. It was one of those slow, deliberate

gatherings of cloud and fog and mist,—fog sweeping in along the coast and hiding the sea from the shore, mists rising from the streams and the marshes, dry as they seemed, farther inland ; a day of lowering clouds, low descending on the hillsides, veiling the view of the earth from the mountains, full of gray clinging vapours and dripping trees and a mysterious consciousness of change ; then a day of showers and of sunlight breaking through the clouds now and again, settling into quiet rains, with an occasional burst of a cloud in swift descent all at once, which filled a night and a day and a night again ; then in the “wee sma’ hours ‘ayont the twal’ ” the morning star hanging as a sign in the thinning clouds, which letting fall their gentle burthen melted away and dispersed, until the auroral glory began, and the sun shone on a renewed earth, and the west wind arose with the sun and tossed the patient and refreshed trees, strewing with leaves the woodland and the city streets,—and the line storm was over. It is one of the most admirable events of New England meteorology,—and old folks say that this used to be a regular thing until the weather bureau was constituted to cold-shoulder dear tradition, and relegate the equinoctial to the realm of fable. No such thing ! Is there anything fabulous about the four-days’ storm that began on Sunday ? We trow

not. It fulfilled all the conditions. Let it be accepted at its full value.

With or without the richer and broader glories, the season holds a multitudinous magic for the lover of Nature in her infinitely varied manifests. It is in such a season that one realizes most completely the ceaseless movement of conscious life, expressing itself in myriad forms. While the birds are fewer, and now the lesser creatures of the forest, the snakes and salamanders, and the crickets and grasshoppers and locusts in the fields, are almost all retired, the life that speaks in plants is as busy as ever.

On a barren hillside, as almost anybody would call it, there is room for inexhaustible study and admiration,—yes, and adoration,—for where is God to be worshiped, where is his essence to be known, where is the unbeginning and unending life to be discerned, more than in these bright and happy spontaneities of scores of humble plants, over which hundreds may walk oblivious of their presence? In a few hours' ramble on such barren hillsides, among the grasses,—every one of the many species and varieties a marvel in itself,—one finds the pretty Deptford pink, a charming little relation to the carnations which man has developed, but quite unacquainted with them. It is so modest that one is amazed to see

how its clear pink lightens up and cheers the spot where it blooms. Then one finds a buttercup, or a tender little "Quaker Lady," or if no flower appears, then note how robin's plantain or saxifrage or St. John's wort is spreading its roset for next year's growth; or how the sumptuous silver-dewed velvet aquamarina of the heart of the mullein makes a spot of infinite wealth at the edge of the ledge, or how the young plants of the columbine, which will have bloom next May, are turning into charm with lilac and purple colours, as well as with their most graceful and delicate leaves, so finely wrought in sinuated arcs of beauty.

Now and again one comes on a group, a community rather, of the wild rose, and with blossoms here and there as lovely as those of June. In another community we shall see the little royal purple laurel, the sheep laurel, blooming as if its time were not four months past. These are of course "sports,"—accidents of the rare autumnal heats; and there is yet one more notable, the pillared mullein amid its brown seed-vessels strikes out a new sweet yellow flower for the bees to seek, and at its top sends forth a new essay at greater height in a sprout as fresh and green and full of bloom as it were just beginning its destiny of fruit. Furthermore, one finds the

great plant of the Indian poke with its ruddy stalks and great green leaves whose borders are growing red, and its berries in panicles of most royally dark crimson, while still the pink-white blossoms persist in coming out at the ends of the stems.

Of course the juniper and the cedar are blue with their masked cones, and the silvery lights amid their greens add an elusive grace to the charm, while over the fences and up the cedars climbs the bittersweet, with its pendants of orange berries, whose yellow envelopes have fallen back to display them. The poison sumach is now most splendid, and its drooping stems of whitish berries add to its effect. Now and then, too, one may hap to see by a rill side the unrivaled cardinal flower, and a colony of fringed gentians, the most exquisite of fall flowers, and the most capricious. Then, most characteristic of all of the season, there steals upon the nostrils the wild magic of the witch hazel's fragrance, so slight, so subtle, so penetrating, so spiritual, that nothing else in the odours of field and forest can be compared with it.

What are all these, and the grasses, the mosses, the lycopodiums, the lichens, the very moulds on the rocks, but the expression in infinite variousness of the one constant Spirit that pauses not

nor completes, but with every moment lives? — though we call one season life and another season death, that Spirit goes on, infinitely urging, endlessly encouraging, in the least as in the greatest, and producing all we see or know or are, as the life of his life, the breath of his breath, the body of his all compassing soul. Let us say, “Not It is beautiful, but He is beautiful.”

Ready for Winter

THE glory of the fall is gone, though its beauty lingers yet in green meadows and the brooding haze that softens the mountain outlines on sunny afternoons. The delay of the black frosts preserves this brightness of the verdure that contrasts so well with the wintry grayness of the discrowned forest. The farmers on the hills have forecast moderate weather to the very verge of winter, and thus far the season confirms them, and withal the long latter rains have come and filled the springs, though not to their over-brimming autumn standard. The brooks are alive again in the glens and ravines, and the rivers rush and shout down their rapids as if all the spirits of the waters had returned and were telling of their travels in aerial voyages to other lands. There is as much charm in a country walk as at any season ; though it be not the same charm, what matters that ? since life without variety is tasteless, and the life of Nature no less than that of man.

We have a better part of Nature than they who dwell under the tropics and know no repose in the things that grow and glorify earth, and see no wondrous arising from death to life as we when the bluebird drops out of the March sky upon our roadside weeds, and finds its food in their seeds, and the trillium glows over the beach leaves on the southern slope, and finally lilac time comes again, and apple-blossoms, and the fire-hang-bird flashing among their sweet delights. In those climes where Nature works incessantly, man declines and dwarfs; here, where she rests and renews, man has the energies that make the world advance. And so there is a deep pleasure in the farewell we pay each year to the splendid bloom of the forests and the warm and palpitating skies of summer.

The fall has not been so rich in colour as other falls, because the long dry time, with its soft airs, enervated the trees; as roses in June when there is not rain enough have but half their beauty and scatter their petals like poppies, so the leaves in a dry autumn are less glorious in hue, and less tenacious of their slender hold, and sooner than their wont yield to the light October winds,—

“ And fall like flakes of light,
To the ground.”

Yet there were never more brilliant sidehills

of young growth, where birch, maple and poplar saplings felt the first breath of fall, and glowed in brilliant beauty. And later the oaks, last and strongest in their robust dyes, were all the more magnificent for the lack of rivalry, or were richly set off by the generous golden chestnuts. The chestnuts gave no fallacious promises in their tossing summer plumes ; for there surely was never a more satisfying season for chestnuting parties. The glossy, full and healthy nuts are so abundant that the squirrels will have great store this fall, after all the children and many of the grown folks have helped themselves. The rustling covering of the earth is brown with them still in unfrequented woodlands, and the squirrels scamper on every hand at a stranger's step, and seek the trees and watch him as he pokes the leaves over and opens the rare reluctant burrs. If in such search you come upon one of Bunny's cunningly hidden caches, let us hope you have the conscience to let it alone, for there are rights of property that are not expressed in human title deeds.

It is a curious matter, by the way, that nobody ever thinks of the owner of the land whereon nut trees grow as having any property in their fruit. He cuts down the trees without anybody's question, but if he tries to reserve the fruits thereof to his use and behoof, there is an instinctive re-

bellion of the public, from the small boy up to the predatory stroller or Sunday sportsman. Nuts at least are *feræ naturæ*, even if apples and fish must be protected. This feeling is not so well known in other countries, and perhaps in this we New Englanders are the true heirs of our forefathers, who in all the deeds they received from the Indians of their pleasant lands, conserved to the red men the privileges of gathering nuts and taking fish. It is very interesting to read those deeds of two and a half centuries ago, with this invariable proviso. The chestnut was important to the Indian, so important to him that the region of Mettawampe and Pocomtuck was known and described in the deeds the Dedham pioneers took as "the Chestnut country." But the privileges of nutting and fishing do not seem very large when one reads the petty barter of strings of wampum and other small goods that went with those privileges to make an even trade for the fair Connecticut valley and its noble forests and meadows.

Besides the nuts and the squirrels, there are quantities of deerberries and berries of the woodbine, and skurrying grouse; the crows caw as wisely as ever, getting ready to depart, and there are still in sheltered glades small asters flourishing with great bravery, and even a very occasional golden-rod. The ferns are not all withered, but

POET AND MYSTIC AT OAK KNOLL





those that blanch early to foretell winter are long since gone, and little besides the polypody, the Christmas fern and its special kindred of the aspidium name, look healthily satisfied with the northwest winds. All things indeed are closing up for rest, and presently the earth will be ready for the winter to forbid and fetter its life, content to sleep its time. Then, when the frost has quite completed its ruthless work, and the snow has covered the ruins of the verdurous year; when the landscape is brought into sober tints and the sharp contrasts of white and black are brought into harmony by the Master-artist; then the glory of the sky succeeds to the charm of earth.

For while the earth is beautiful, inviting, familiar and infinitely various, there is little notion of regarding the skies except as pendants and adornments to this pleasant globe of ours. It is when the obvious monotony of winter becomes oppressive that skylscapes take the lead of landscapes, and our thoughts rise toward the unimaginable reach of the starry vault, with its eternal distance and extension. It is in such gazing that we feel how insignificant is our physical being, and how petty our mortal environment,—how mighty our spiritual reach, how tremendous our possible destiny!

In such a mood wrote Whitman:—

O Thou Transcendent !

Nameless, the fiber and the breath,
Light of the light, shedding forth universes, thou center
of them,

Thou pulse, thou motive of the stars, suns, systems,
That circling move in order, safe, harmonious,
Athwart the shapeless vastnesses of space,—

How should I think, how breathe a single breath, how
speak, if out of myself

I could not launch to those superior universes ?

Swiftly I shrivel at the thought of God,
At Nature and its wonders, Time and Space and Death,
But that I turning call to thee, O soul,
And lo, thou gently masterest the orbs,
Thou matest Time, smilest content at Death,
And fillest, swellest full the vastness of Space !

Witch Hazel Bloom

THE rich, ripe beauty of the mature year now delights all who in our clime and latitude walk forth to view the great colour harmonies of the forests, the completed repose of the harvested fields, and breathe the vital elixir of the border air, blending summer sweetness with winter strength. If the pearl of the year be June, with its glorious sensuous loveliness, then October is the ruby, deeply founded, superbly toned,—a crystallization, not an accretion, and royal even in the rough. For there is no year in which October is not glorious, though its degrees of hospitality are by no means uniform. Stern storms and frosts may forbid its minor graces of tenderness,—its veiling hazes, its wooing zephyrs, its blossoming of clover, its warm hillsides beneath the curtained sun, its clear north winds that sweep the heavens clear, and provoke the mountains into joy. But never can storms or frosts utterly abolish the transfiguring colour of the ripening trees, which under skies of cloud as

beneath the sun display the grand artistry of Nature ; nor can these change the magic of the leafy woodland paths, which one treads as if in another world from that of business, books, newspapers and politics, which compel his attention where he and his fellow-mortals confront their artificial existence.

The forest bloom has departed, the birds have flown, the squirrels and the boys are a-nutting ; on the roadsides few flowers besides the asters linger and the long sprays of the wreath golden-rod, the humbler members of the sunflower kindred and the late gentians ; in the fields appear those second blossoms that spring from the mowed down golden-rods, ox-eye daisies and black-eyed Susans. Down the forest aisles streams the unique magnetic fragrance of the witch hazel, which only of all fragrances could harmonize with the sacred sweetness of the autumn woodland. A familiar of the flowers knows that a month hence he shall find these and a score of flowers besides, in places that he wots of, but to the general eye the gay children of Nature have departed, and winter seems waiting around the corner to close the door.

Still the charm of the fall air softens the omens of departure. The wild fragrance of the fallen foliage rises like an oblation to the generous gen-

ius of Nature, and thrills the sense with kinship of all that lives which now and again fills the heart of Nature's lover, as he reclines on the bare rocks of the mountain peak, and beholds the varied earth,—the wild wood, the clearing, the reaped grain-field, the meadow with its sweet rowen, the bare brown earth reft of its roots or tubers, the corn-stooks like to tented camps and the piles of sunny pumpkins among them ; the abandoned summer pastures, the cattle feeding in the mowings ; the orchards with their heaps of green, ruddy or yellow apples—some for the market, some for the home, much for the cider mill ; the tobacco fields with their scattered little sprouts since the harvest ; the onion fields with their rows of bulbs pulled and deployed along the lines of their original ranks,—and whatsoever other truck of the husbandman is visible in the fertile valley beneath his eyes.

Far off on his horizons rise in blue remoteness the heights of greater hills, and as he calls their names he seems to share their prospects also,—so that from Tom or Holyoke he looks not only on the winding Connecticut, but as well on the twin lakes of Salisbury or across the wide valley of the Hudson to the Catskills, as if he were on the wild, treeless top of Taconic Dome ; or perchance across to peaceful Sugar river, as if he were on

Ascutney ; or over multitudinous hills to the Adirondacks, as if it were Greylock he stood on. All the mountain world is his in a new sense ; it almost seems as if it were but to will, and be transported to Greylock, to Mettawampe, or to Mettawee, as the oriental heroes journey. But no magic carpet has ever been owned in New England, except the one Madame Blavatsky had at Spirit Vale, and that she took with her.

This fall there is no swift and sweeping change of colour in the hills, but as a whole the great effect is delayed and prolonged ; the work began later than usual, and individual trees have suddenly reddened or bloomed in golden luxuriance, and sooner than their wont have shed their leaves and stand bare amid their yet verdant fellows. But we cannot clearly know in our valley when in the northern or western hills, lifted from a thousand to three thousand feet higher, this magical painting of the autumn began. A month ago there was a marshy pasture on the side of Mettawampe as brilliant in its glow of ruddy maples as any place hereabout is now, and in the noble sugar orchards of that region there were glorious old maples, with their feet in the springy mountain side, as richly robed as such monarchs ought to be, before whose presence one remembered the boast of King Adrastus in Talfourd's " Ion :—"

“Thus shall the royalty of Argos pass
In festal blaze to darkness.”

Through all this pomp of regal bloom insinuates and permeates and controls the mysterious beauty and enchantment of Nature's slumber charm, whose very essence is the attractive, elusive, withdrawing, sacred scent of the witch hazel. This strange bush, that flowers in the fall and fruits in the spring, is as individual in its flower as in its habit, and both so strange. Now the pale gold fringes release themselves slowly from the close fitting wraps that summer has wrought around the buds,—buds that afford no hint of the weird wraiths of bloom they hold. Before yet their delicate petals disentangle themselves, they bestow their mystic fragrance on the forest depths. It is like a loving benediction of God to the wanderer of the woods,—a tender farewell from the secret soul of Nature.

Gliding Into Indian Summer

THIS glorious first autumn of the twentieth century advances with almost unexampled beauty, and we now see and feel the extraordinary charm of a brilliant October gliding imperceptibly into the gracious loveliness of the Indian summer,—the summer of All Saints, whose festival is this day. Such days as the last Sunday and yesterday are typical of Indian summer, with its singular atmospheric conditions in full character,—the far-echoing transmission of remote sounds, the brooding peace and the vapoury distances in which clouds and hills melt together, and through the vistas of the woodland gleam like spiritual transfigurations the yellow young maples and the translucent red cornels, making a fairy realm of inexpressible beauty, at once bright and soft,—the magical tenderness of a divine expression of harmony. Not every year do we behold this infinite concinnity; it would be the less thought of, the less esteemed, were it not so rare. Nature is never lacking in dear and intimate phases





THE PINE'S GRAND COLUMN

oak is that enduring symbol of aged force, which contains the earnest of eternity. And when that, too, passes, there remain the hemlocks, pines and spruces, and the vital cedars, that can subsist for centuries on the mere trickle of rains on the cleft rocks,—these in the bare forests will still uplift their vivid or their solemn greens, and the wind that plays within their boughs as upon giant harps brings forth the superb rhythms of continuous praise.

How full are the fields and forests of this hold on life! Not for the moment is anything in Nature born. It is true that life never ceases. All these living things which have made the beauty of the earth do not supinely rest in winter. Note how the buds swell on the birches; how the arbutus buds are all ready for spring even now; how the azalea and the laurel give the same tokens. Note how the foot leaves of a thousand humble plants spread themselves on the kindly ground, and keep life for the flower stalks of the spring or summer. And in such a fall as this, note how the young seedlings of the year hurry into bloom, to greet the wooing gentleness of the southern zephyrs. On a recent walk over mountain and valley a company of lovers of Nature made note of 56 species of wild flowers in full bloom; among them the wild strawberry, the

deerberry—most beautiful of all its family, whose name recalls the days when deer were as familiar in the forest as gray squirrels are in Springfield—the herb robert, the evening primrose, the canina violet, the Deptford pink, seven or eight species of aster, four or five of golden-rod, the Queen Anne's lace to represent the parsleys, and others that may await naming.

The charm of Indian summer, which has so overtaken and conquered us all, may not last long; but while it lasts it is incomparable in these miraculous suggestions of the underlying vitality and ongoing force of the Spirit which has made all this earth and through it expresses himself. If God did not constantly evolve life out of life, he would not live. It is God who speaks in the unending glory of the seasons. All the poets know it, and have known it, for they are informed of him. The seasons are the type of God, where-with he prints before his dullard children on his "three mighty leaves, earth, ocean, sky," the rune of "might, justice, love." And the greatest of these is love.

Flowers in November Bloom

THE fifty-six flower species found in bloom in the walk noted above deserve to be specified, as showing the extraordinary grace of this lingering warmth of autumn. The walk was from the south peak of Mount Tom for some miles northward along the ridge, then still northward down the mountain and through the valley between it and Little Tom, and so across to Smith's Ferry,—thus compassing a considerable variety of conditions. The flowers found were as follows,—according to Gray, but not the latest edition of that standard botany, which is not at hand, so that some variations will be noted:—

Sinapis arvensis (charlock, wild mustard); *arabis lyrata* (low rock cress); *lepidium virginicum* (peppergrass—properly pepper-cress); *cerastium viscosum* (mouse-ear chickweed); *polygala sanguinea* (milkwort); *desmodium canadense* (tick trefoil); *geum album* (white wood tick); *hamamelis virginica* (witch hazel); *oenothera biennis* (evening primrose); *viola canina* (the light blue

dog violet); dianthus armeria (Deptford pink); anychia dichotoma (chickweed); malva rotundifolia (mallow); geranium robertianum (herb robert); trifolium agrarium, arvense, pratense and repens (yellow, rabbit-foot, red and white clovers); fragaria virginiana (strawberry); diervilla trifida (bush honeysuckle); daucus carota (Queen Anne's lace); galium asprellum (cleavers); ambrosia artemisiaefolia (roman wormwood); gnaphalium polycephalum (common everlasting); gnaphalium uliginosum (cudweed); anaphalis margaritacea (pearly everlasting); antennaria plantaginifolia (the spring species); eupatorium ageratoides (white snake root); eupatorium perfoliatum (thoroughwort or boneset); solidago bicolor (silver rod), latifolia (broad-leaved * golden-rod), nemoralis (small spike), caesia (wreath); aster corymbosus and macrophyllus (both woodland species), cordifolius (heart-leaved), Novae-Angliae (New England), patens (red-stemmed), ericoides (heath-like, with white involucre), multiflorus (bushy and abundant-flowering); erigeron annuum (larger daisy fleabane); achillea millefolium (yarrow); anthemis cotula (mayweed); chrysanthemum leucanthemum (ox-eye daisy); potentilla arguta (tall cinquefoil); rudbeckia hirta (Black-eyed Susan, cone-flower); hieracium paniculatum (wood hawk-weed); prenanthes alba (white lettuce);

lobelia inflata (Indian tobacco); vaccinium stamineum (deerberry); chelone glabra (snake-head); pycnanthemum lanceolatum (mountain mint); nepeta cataria (catnip); polygonum sagittatum (tear-thumb); brunella vulgaris (self-heal).

This is undoubtedly an uncommon record, for very rarely does the black frost hold off as it is doing this fall in this region. Nevertheless, it by no means represents the flowers that were to be found in blossom that day, or may be found so now,—for no severe frost has occurred since,—the brilliant hoar frost at the beginning of last week being quite harmless even to delicate forest growths. On that walk there was no endeavour made to search for plants in blossom. The observers had been over neighbouring ground only a week before, and knew that with a little divagation they might have seen dandelions, butter-and-eggs, mulleins, ladies' tresses, and possibly fringed gentian, the purple gerardias, arrowheads at the edge of a marsh, and bluets—the pretty houstonia. Some of these have been found since by a member of the party. As to the rare mildness of the season there are other facts that bear interesting witness. The sweet fern is untouched by frost all around this region. Not only the Christmas, the marginal and the spinulose ferns are now green and lusty, but are seen now and again a commun-

ity of sensitive ferns yet unwilted, and the bracken (*pteris aquilina*) here and there quite green. Even the maiden-hair fern may still be found green in sheltered spots. Many of the blossomings noted are new efforts of life on the already fruited stalks; many are of young plants of this year that have decided to come out before winter instead of after. The arbutus sometimes does this, but these special observers did not find any buds so enterprising. The really extraordinary performance was that of a deerberry bush on one of the sternest cliffs of the mountain; it was crowded with bloom, and a beautiful sight. The bluets, or "Quaker ladies" (to use the pretty Pennsylvania name), are now not infrequently to be met with in their favorite places.

One Indian Summer Day

THE true and only Indian Summer has visited our clime this year; not with generous expenditure of balm and beauty, as sometimes happens, but none the less truly because its perfect loveliness was expended on one day. Very rarely have we a season of marvelous days such as Longfellow describes in "Evangeline,"—

"That beautiful season
Called by the pious Acadian peasants the summer of All
Saints.
Filled was the air with a dreamy and magical light, and
the landscape
Lay as if new created in all the freshness of childhood.
Peace seemed to reign upon Earth, and the restless heart
of the ocean
Was for a moment consoled. All sounds were in har-
mony blended :
Voices of children at play, the crowing of cocks in the
farmyards,
Whir of wings in the drowsy air, and the cooing of pi-
geons,

All were subdued and low as the murmurs of love, and
the great sun
Looked with the eye of love through the golden vapours
around him.

If we have a single day that answers this description, we have Indian Summer, and any one who noted the beauty of Thursday knew such a day. The lovely rarity had not come unheralded, for had not the western wind of the day before blown somewhat too briskly and too keenly, that also would have answered the requirements. It is a pity that the Century dictionary concedes the application of the term to any sort of mild weather between September and December. This, to the most of those who consult a dictionary, supposing it to be a final authority and not a simple register of usage, seems a sanction of the vulgar error against which observers of Nature have been protesting for many years. We always have mild weather in October, with blue haze on the hills and quiet in the air. But the true Indian Summer which Longfellow so well pictures comes at the time of the feast of All Saints, November 1, a day or two before, a day or two after, and sometimes lasts for a week or two or even more. The leaves of the forest have fallen, save for the lingering winterers of the oaks and beeches; the frosts have blackened the clover and wilted the wild

flowers, before earth is ripe for this miraculous charm.

That one wonderful day revealed the ideal type of the exceptional season. Seldom in a lifetime may one hope to see and to feel that wondrous dream of air and light and exquisite illusion. To one who viewed the earth from a mountain peak, all fields and forests, streams and ponds, blended in phantasmagoria. There may be azure hazes veiling and masking the landscape at many seasons : in early April when the snows are melting ; in June when summer grows sensuous ; in August when the heat settles, gray and intimate, on the bosom of earth, and all the garniture of Nature is suffused with fervent sunlight ; in September when the leaves put on colour and the winds are whist ; in October when all the woods are glorious and the delicate blue tinge sets off the glowing tones of trees and shrubs and dying ferns. But such a transforming skyey hue as charges the Indian Summer landscape is so different from all other azures of the advancing year that no one who has viewed the scene under such a light can be misled.

On that rarest of days the earth lay in peace and transcendent slumber. The light western breeze scarcely stirred the pine leaves high up in the ether. The hemlocks were whispering softly

as the sough of the zephyr disturbed them, and out from the witch hazel covert the grouse now and then dashed whirring. Over the broad farms lightly there brooded the sense of contentment, and the forests sighed gently as through them the breezes caressingly wandered. All the broad earth seemed transmuted to a region of dreaming enchantment,—as if at a breath it might vanish, as if all that was seen was but Maya; the sun in its shining subdued, the vault of the high skyey spaces, no less than the sinuous river that gleamed white far into the cloud-bank of vapours that clung close to earth and shut in the common horizon, or the hills that were lost as they rose in the veil of the magical distance.

For this day indeed all the autumn had ingeniously been preparing, with frosts in this latitude delayed so that every tree in the forest has had its full opportunity to blossom at its best, and so splendid masses of orange and gold and pale lemon in the sugar orchards, of brightest red in soft maples,—so rich ranges of brown in elms, beeches and chestnuts, the hickories' gamboge yellow, the sumachs' scarlets and crimsons, the glowing viburnums and cornels, mingled and qualified by the heart-reds and maroons of oaks along the mountain sides, have seldom been surpassed. Even the apple trees, whose foliage usu-

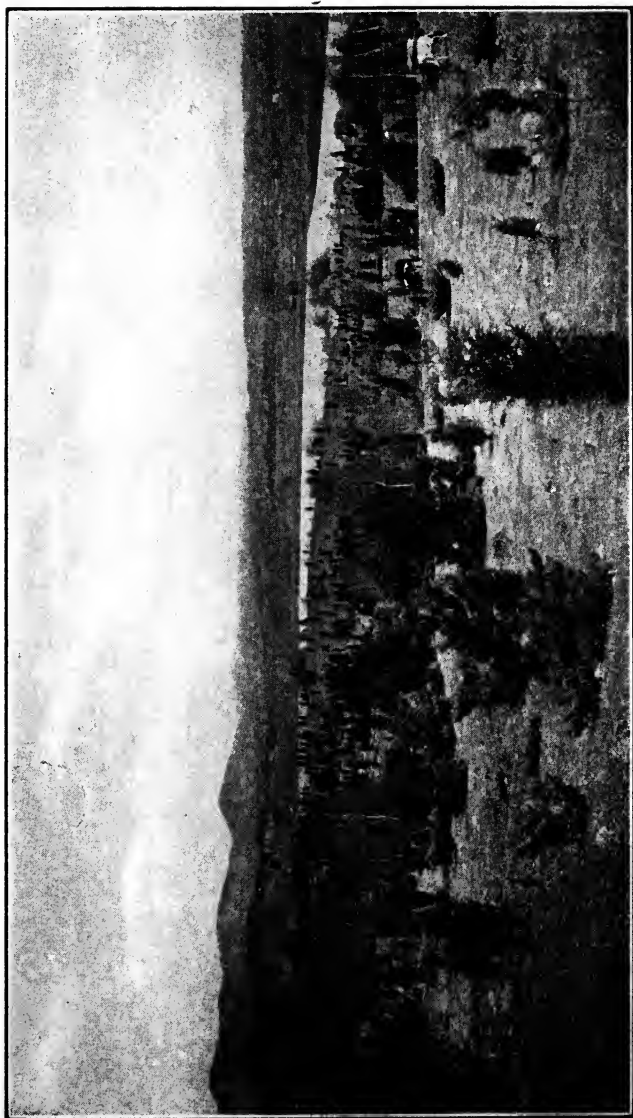
ally withers to dull brown in early frosts, have had time enough to grow interesting in shining mottled hues of bronze, and the Japanese ampelopsis that in the city adorns so many churches and houses has shown all its striking variegations of colour, which are more like those of the poison ivy than the simple pure colours of the woodbine, our native ampelopsis, whose season is so much briefer, though not less conspicuous. The eye has been nobly feasted by the procession of Nature's glory over hills and meadows and pastures and along country roads. There is yet the harmony, the poetry of earth, which Keats said is never dead; the insect musicians are not silenced utterly, as usually the killing touch of frost has silenced them ere this; still on sunny mid-days the cricket's chirp and the grasshopper's dry fiddling may be heard; and wasps, hornets and bumblebees dash about in counterfeit of summer. The hawks sail and scream over the hills; the crows caw lustily,—as they will do in their customary visits all winter long; even yet there are a few jolly song sparrows singing for pure love of it. Gentians yet “look through their fringes to the sky;” nor yet has every aster or golden-rod extinguished its cheerful rays. The pulse of the life of God beats warmly in these latter days, as in the days of beginning. It may indeed be felt that in one Indian Sum-

mer day, we have had an earnest of the truth that in the transient show of earth lives the constant substance of the divine spirit, in which death that seems is but a phase of life that is.

Indian Summer Reverie

THE rare season of the year is passing away. Gathering clouds forebode the end of these Indian summer days, so perfect in tranquil peace, the pause of Nature ere the finishing frosts. The peculiar charm of earth at this moment is a profound and serious sweetness. Repose broods over the valleys and veils the forests; the hills melt into the melting sky; high the vapours of the fallen foliage mount in the atmosphere; sounds echo far yet soft across the land; the very caw of the crow loses its harsh emphasis, and the bluejay's screams are in minor keys. Now the chickadee's calls and the slight whispers of the mountain sparrows are the chief voices of the woodland and the copse; the visiting snow-buntings lift their gleams of white as they fly from bush to bush; and over the marshes, what is that swift vision of broad blue wings but the blue heron, pausing in the journey of the year? The red squirrels chatter and scold, the chipmunks skurry through the rustling leaves, and the grouse





...and down to hide the golden, which ...
...the happy life moves, ...
...of waiting ...
...the alien sharpness ...
...would be no loss ...
...the ...

The ... of rain has filled ...
...the ...
...OVER GEORGES AND JIMMERS ...
...the ...
...is something of ...
...show ...
...the falling leaves ...
...the temperate ...
...to install; the gray ...
...with picturesque ...
...mists, and strange ...
...wide meadows and ...
...were ...
...the winds and ...
...he ripened leaf ...
...fences and ...
...of the golden ...
...the olive ...
...of the ...
...The yellow ...
...the ...
...the ...
...each backgrounds ...

SEEN OVER CEDARS AND JUNIPERS

cluck and hasten to hide themselves, with booming flight. Whatever life moves, whatever beauty shows, is in the tone of waiting and content. Were it not for the alien sharpness of the sportsman's gun, there would be no break in the magic of the Indian summer.

The long moon of rain has filled the springs, lowered by three successive years of drouth. Those lowery days were not without their pleasurable aspect, for in this region Nature can never be beautiful. There was something of keen delight in the days of eastern winds that tossed the trees and thrashed the falling leaves across the fields; there was comfort in the temperate rains, that had their mission to fulfill; the gray days were full of kind promise, with picturesque effects of fog, and diffusing mists, and strange lights and shades over the wide meadows and on the somber hills. There were snatches of splendour in the forests; then came the winds and swept the roadways and heaped the ripened leafage in winrows and around the fences and wayside bushes, and there was no more of the golden magnificence of the maples, the olive purples of the ashes, the buff vestures of the beeches, and the chestnuts. The yellow bronzes of the hickories yet remained and the light trembling poplars and the pale birches lingered. Against such backgrounds still an occa-

sional swamp maple would show like a fine altar flame of worship.

Now there is only the great family of oaks that gives colour to the landscape, but these are more generous and glorious than ever. Seldom does Indian summer come to such a wealth of fascination. The wide fields are rich in ground colours of superb browns, maroons, grays, yellows, with now and then some acres of new rye or lush meadow emphasizing all with broad spaces of fresh green. In this display of the fields note what is accomplished by humble plants which the farmer calls weeds—and justly calls them so, from his practical point of view. What makes the seal-brown hue on yon hillside? The innumerable plants of the lesser St. John's wort. What gives the ruddy tinge to this sweep of plain? The little running blackberry, or dewberry. The golden-rods, the blazing-stars, in their seed estate, fill the long outlook with a harmonious ashy tone, picked out with brown points of accent. The high, feathery-seeded grasses of the sandy soils swing and shake in the light breezes, and now and then one discerns an aster or a golden-rod that is belated, yet will blossom despite of the date on the calendar.

Over all this rich foreground the eye wanders to rest against the fringing forests, with the grand

and sturdy oaks, some deep blood-red, but mainly russet and lighter browns. Among these the white pine lifts its aristocratic head, full of grace and elegance ; and the sturdy yellow pine, one of our most characteristic trees, whose keen and forceful clusters of stout needles are companioned by such multitudes of cones, each with its scores of seeds to keep the forest living. The oaks and the pines, the chestnuts and the hickories, disdain destruction. Here also are the noble hemlocks, which join grace and dignity in a harmony all their own, and in the deep marshes rise the hackmatacks, in their eccentric grace, with their light yellow plummy branches defined against the bare boughs of the deciduous trees and the darkness of the evergreens.

But what shall tell the wealth of the marshes in these closing days of the living year? To penetrate their deep recesses is to enter fairy-land. Here yet the swamp maples bear a few bright leaves, and the water oaks are richly red. Over the trunks of the maples and cedars, the spruces and pines, the lichens are fresh and soft in their delicate greens, and the fine, tangled green mosses hang from the boughs in long streamers. Beneath is a wondrous fabric of sphagnum, deep-rooted water cryptogams, now blushing with their autumn colours, besprent with starry crowns, trav-

ersed by the pretty cranberry, ruddy fruited, and the creeping snowberry, bordered in the drier parts of the marsh by goldthread and partridge-berry with its sanguine fruit, and overrun by the beautiful cassandra and andromeda. Here in their season are to be seen lovely pink orchids, and all around bloom the white clethra and the crimson laurel called lambkill. The poison sumach abounds, too, with its pale and forbidding berries. Then we reach an outlook on a wide stretch of swamp where the cat-tails grow, and at the edges the sweet-flag; while beneath our feet the pitcher-plant riots in profusion.

What is the impression of these marshes, so luxuriant in life, so defiant or ignorant of man? It is the great secret of Nature, its infinite and versatile mystery. Mystery is the great voice of earth, always heard by the attentive ear; it is the great aspect of earth, always seen by the enchanted eye. This mystery is none other than the all-pervading life of God. Leaving the ways of men and plunging into the unspoiled wilderness, such thoughts come as the current labour of daily life finds no room for. All life is one; we are one with tree and shrub and flower, one with squirrel and bird, one even with the sinuous serpent. The sympathy of life draws to these lesser things than ourselves a close attention, for they are near us

and yet far ; they also as we are emanations of the spirit of endless life, concerning which we know nothing and can know nothing except that we belong to its continuous surge and ebb, move with its purpose and retreat with its achievement, and over and over again serve the everlasting power.

Thus we look upon the great panorama of the earth as a symbol and exemplifying of a force which moves us and all to greater issues than our limited intelligence can compass in our present state. But the evidences and tokens of a vast encompassing love fill our hearts as that panorama passes before us, carrying us with it in ceaseless change and unchanging perpetuity. We are a constituent element in the life of God, and of all his creatures. What we are, we may feel sure to be forever, giving our energy, our virtue, our life, our love, to the immense energy, virtue, life and love on whose bosom we rest, embarked on sure waters for nobler lands of labour which we shall attain as we are worthy.

The Second Day of December

LET it be remembered that the second day of December, in this last year of the nineteenth century, was one of the most exquisite examples of Indian summer weather known in this latitude. We are unusually blest, for snows of several storms lie northwest and north and northeast of us, and all along the hills of Western Massachusetts our rains have been ice-storms. Hereabouts, as in a magically guarded, charm-encircled region, no frost has yet come to blacken the clover in the fields and wilt the petunia in the gardens. There have been many warm and sweet early days of December, and even late days, but the oldest inhabitant fails to remember a year when without a killing frost summer has graduated through autumn to the calendar verge of winter, as in this year of grace. With the light haze and mists of the morning, the earth assumed that mystic grace which we associate with Indian summer—now so long past its reasonable season.

A touch of mirage was in the landscape, as for-

The Second Day of December 237

ests were seen in the veiling blue, lifting their very ground into view miles away, and the reflections of all upon its banks made the river deeper and wider to the eye. The trees whose images were reflected in the slumbrous water seemed scarcely more real than those images; and far away the mountains rose against the faintly outlined orange tone on the horizon. All this lovely smoky tint as the day wore on grew to light lavender and lilac, and the sweet cerulean skies began to be flecked and then filled with soft white clouds rolling in beautiful tenuous masses above the earth.

The sounds of the earth were fewer than on a busier day, but they came with that far and mysterious resonance which belongs to this peculiar atmospheric condition. The bluejays and the crows were lively with their wild and companionable calls, which echoed so that whether before or behind was now and again questioned. Magic and mystery were the keynotes of the first half of the day; and as the clouds gathered and the sun but rarely cast gleams through the yet thin barrier, and "drew water," as the rustic phrase is, the spell was not broken. Under the pines and oaks the fitful sunlight stole, and illumined the woodland with a refinement of infinitely gracious charm. It was not wonderful among wonders to witness on a warm hillside at the edge of the for-

est the playful flight of pretty earth flies, and the blazonry of the rainbow on the bodies and wings of other flies. One felt sorry for the grasshoppers that came out, and were not quite happy, though they leaped with considered vigour,—and for the light white butterfly that made mistaking flights over the yet fresh herbage of the departing year. Some flowers there were, of golden-rod in the field, of tansy by the roadside, even a little white violet.

The unceasing life was present, and all these manifestations told us that a pause was not an end, a sleep not an extinction. At the moment's suggestion, life springs forth and greets us as cordially as though there were no winter snows. The great oaks that rise so strong and forceful, the pines that are so cheery in the winter woods,—nay, the bearberry vine and the ground pine that capture large tracts of woodland with their spreading communities, and the mosses and ferns, the pretty selaginella among the violets of the brookside, all speak the same language. The fragrance of the woods was that of October, that worshipful sweetness which speaks of content and grace. A memorable day, this Sunday, when all things seemed to chant with delight, "The Lord is in his holy temple; let all the earth keep silence before him!"

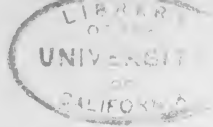
The Day of the Child

THIS day the churches called Christian commemorate the mystery of Incarnation, wherein God came down to dwell with man, being born in the babe of Mary as all souls are born into bodies, and not otherwise, no matter what faith be held as to the mystery. Since and before, God has always been coming in the form of a babe to regenerate the earth, even as Jesus, when he was grown to be a prophet among his people, testified, when he said that their angels do always behold the face of the Father in heaven, and that he who should not receive the kingdom of heaven as a little child, he might in nowise enter therein. Words not for the moment, but for all times, before and since and forever.

The naive, confiding, open and frank attitude of the little child is not often kept, seldom enough regained; yet often as one grows old, he discerns how little by little he has been reassuming the child's thought of many things, how sophistications and subtleties, mockeries and antagonisms,

are losing their influence, and simplicity of feeling, as well in outlook as in memory, is replacing many old anxieties. Duties grow more obvious, responsibilities more limited; the day's good and ill become more plainly sufficient for it; and if one should go suddenly out of life to another, he would go more nearly as a little child, trusting just because he does not know, than in many a hard-working and worrying year. To many such a one Thackeray's beautiful last sentence is a fit expression: "And his heart throbbed with an exquisite pleasure."

The heart of a child! And to those who remember what childhood was, it is seen to be the very fitting test for the future, and as well for the feast of this holy day, when childhood was so glorified. It is still the children that make the Christmas. Beautiful are the legends of the child Jesus, even in the gospels of the Infancy; these are the earliest fairy tales of Christianity, preceding Santa Claus and Kriss Kringle, and Christkinden and bambino stories. If one desires a warrant for the imagery and fancy of the children's saint and the visits of "the good little Jesus," it may be found in those strange pretty anecdotes, as that wherein Jesus and other children played in the clay banks, and made birds out of the clay, but Jesus, when he had wrought his birds, clapped



his hands, and lo! they took flight and soared away,—the heaven-child had sent the birds to his home, where birds ever sing and the flowers of Galilee and Judea ever bloom. He never forgot the birds or the flowers, or the children. “Let the children come to me,” he said, “don’t hinder them. Your only opportunity of the kingdom of love is the child’s heart.” In such manner of language he taught, and not as the scribes, for you will not find that in Moses’s law.

Do not be afraid of the children’s fictions or of fictions for the children. Trust them, they will not fail to discover the difference between dreams, which they know so well, and wilful deceptions, which they should never know. It is not Santa Claus legends that hurt the tender soul of the child, it is the hard worldliness of lying excuses, false reasons for forbidding things, the inner hideousness of the cheat. Poetry is healthy; ’tis dishonesty that wounds.

The children’s day! Let us love childhood and foster the heart of the child in boy and girl, and most of all in ourselves.

Winter Takes Possession

WINTER, with unusual attention to the conventionalities of the calendar, has taken possession of the land. The mercury that had been so bravely maintaining a mild fall, took a wild fall itself, down below zero, and all the muddy country roads froze rougher than corduroy, and men and oxen walked abroad with cloudy breath and icicle-hung whiskers. All night the frost tightened ; in the forbidding moonlight the earth looked weird and desolate ; the woods echoed with curious snapping sounds, may be from cracks in the freezing ground, or may be 'twas the sap in deluded saplings that had misunderstood the blandness of November.

The early morning revealed the pastures glittering with crystal and the willows and alders along the watercourses sparkled in the frosty day. The partridges that started suddenly, surprised from frugal breakfasts by the roadside, and whirred with booming pinions to the woods, assured the traveler that links with the abounding forest life







ICICLES OVER WILDWATER

of summer yet remained unbroken, although the crows were no longer to be heard and even the chickadees were on that morning silent.

There is a kindly delay in the gradual departure of the more engaging charms of Mother Earth. As in the whimsical Good Night symphony of Papa Haydn, where one after another of the players rises, puts out his candle, takes up his instrument and bows himself out,—so the flowers and the birds leave us; the symphony goes on while they fly south, tribe by tribe, while they fade and wither, family after family; and we enjoy the strains as much when the performers are fewer as when the orchestra was complete. But the symphony of Nature never really ceases; even in the dead stress of winter there are players in the woods, piping their own particular parts,—small parts, no doubt, and not especially admired when the whole conservatory is in force, but now quite delightful.

The winter that has thus with rude and angry hand given the blow of grace, as the French phrase is, to lingering autumn, will be severe, if the old country signs hold good. The snow-storm that comes will not lead so tremendous a procession of snows as this region often sees, because after so great a snow-fall last season, and so frequent and heavy rains throughout the summer, a dry winter is more likely. But a very cold dry winter

is looked for; the woodchuck dug his burrow early and deep and retired, the wild geese migrated a fortnight sooner than usual, the robins and crows likewise, and not so many of these two species staid behind as are wont to stay when the season is to be open.

It is often assumed that the robins who do not follow the crowd to southern latitudes are the young and foolish, truants, as it were, or prodigal sons who stay instead of run away, but get reduced to great straits just the same. But familiar observation of these exceptional individuals, in their door-yard calls, leads to the conclusion that they are really the geniuses of their kind, experienced fellows, that have found good winter homes in the evergreens, and studied the lay of the land, the resources of the woods in the way of deerberries and fox-grapes, and of their human neighbours in the specialty of crumbs at the farmers' back doors and in the hen-yards. We have, indeed, gathered as much as this from the conversation of one of them, met by the side of a Berkshire country road in a sunny October day in a remarkably communicative mood. "Walk along! walk along!" he cried out cheerily; "I'm going your way." We cannot translate all his remarks into cold-blooded English, but in the course of the talk he intimated that as to going down south for his

health, like the rest of them, he knew a trick worth two of that; he didn't want to tell exactly what his plans were, but he should have a good time, plenty of company, and his health would not suffer—not so much as to lose him a pennyweight of flesh. Let us hope, at least, that he knew what he was talking of. So far as food goes, the gray woodpecker, who may now be heard tapping the hemlocks and beeches, or the gnarled old apple trees in the orchards, is well provided. His busy beak now echoes the woodman's axe in the woods, and that is busy enough, with no judgment for the future, and not too much for the present.

But as we were saying, the winter signs are ominous of a snug and tight and continuous freeze. Now and then a sage, with a solemn headshake, goes so far as to say that if 'tain't the stiffest winter that folks remember hereabouts, *he* loses *his* guess. And if there ain't no snow, as it's likely there won't be, the brooks'll freeze down to their beds, and the grass-roots won't be none the better for't. In this state of things those who like to taste their misery beforehand may luxuriate. In the meantime, let us wait for the next run of prophecies, some day when the sun gets up with cheerful resolution in his halo, and proceeds to toll the mercury up in the forties. Then we shall hear, it is probable, of other signs that were not

taken into account before, and that indicate on the whole a tolerable average of weather.

There will be cold weather enough, trust the genius of old New England for that. The winter thermal lines run from the Taconic hills high into Maine forests, and any of us who agree with the robins that leave instead of the brave minority that stay and "tucker it out," will hardly be shaken in preference by the season that's with us. After all, it only lasts two or three, or possibly four months. Then comes spring again, and our October robin will make ready to greet the fellows from South America with tall stories of the rich picking he has had in the old home.

The Splendour of the New Jerusalem

OUR Sunday was a pearl of winter days in itself—in its exquisite sweet freshness of the new snow, so welcome after weeks of germ-laden dust of the streets—freshening the air, thrilling it with ozone, with the cleansing amoniac brought from the upper air, and enabling clear and pure breathing, deep and grateful. “The glorious sun uprist” over an earth of splendour and in a sky of the most lovely blue, with lightly, swiftly floating white clouds; and as the day began, so it continued and tenderly closed. It was a day when in the woods and fields mere physical life was a delight.

The ice-storm whose magnificence the sun and sky of the perfect day enhanced and displayed to every advantage was of peculiar nature. The noises of the night were strange indeed. An uneasy waving of branches, a crackling and rustling, as if prisoners were stirring in fetters, varied by a low, dull moaning now and then as a gust came hastily from the northeast, shook each tree a little

more rudely and careered onward. There seemed a mysterious intelligence and expectancy about the earth, as though it had a sense of the spectacle that was being prepared and artistically finished.

The rain came slowly and gently, and great accretions of ice grew on the trees and the shrubs; the light snow with which the storm ended was blown away by the capricious breezes of the night; and the temperature of the day being just below the freezing point, the ice remained throughout the day, except in warm southern exposures. The pines and the spruces, which often are clad in tranquil, gracious whiteness by the snow-fall, now had their long branches stretched earthward, their dark verdure offset by the diamond splendour of the ice, and long icicles depending from every stem and bough. The oak leaves clinging to the center of their homes shone through the crystal coating like moss shut in the agate. The slender gray birches bowed till their tips touched the ground, and a group of these graceful trees, each member curved to an opposite point, made elfin bowers that might well delight "the little people of the snow," of whom Bryant wrote with so delicate a fancy. Every such bower and every black-berry bush by the roadside or rose bush in the garden, shone with all the prismatic colours.

In the morning, when the sun's rays struck

most vertically, the view of the forest against the sun was ineffably beautiful. Those were true jewels that hung on every grass blade and every twig, and that sparkled from the boughs. The dew-drop and the soap-bubble get their iridescence by the same process, and the same law that makes the diamond produces the ice-prism—crystallization is identical in both. The one, we say, is transient, the beauty of a moment; the other, we say, is permanent, enduring for ages. But what are ages more than moments in the order of the universe?

Yesterday any one might have the wealth of the world for the seeing. Such flashing, flaming trees!—flaming in the very guise of gems,—here a ruddy jasper, there a delicate aquamarina; a turquoise here, and here a beryl; topazes yellow and orange, and fire opals that made the eye ache to behold them; rubies, too, and bright chrysolites, amethysts and jacinths; the infinite faceted diamonds and the deep skyey lapis-lazuli. The very names of precious stones are poetic in their music, and all of them were seen on the great trees, shining from their outmost boughs against the wonderful skies like glories of the New Jerusalem as the Revelator saw it coming down from heaven to earth. And if one looked toward the sun—lo! as it were transparent glass the whole

woods gleamed. This was revelation, this the apocalyptic picture,—God's glory breathing from the earth and captured by the air in its wondrous energies.

And one noteworthy matter was that so light a snowfall was over the ground that the most delicate of tiny seed-stalks of the flowers, the lowly herbs and the little shrubs which are usually, when such storms occur, buried deep in snow banks, were now each bearing their burden of ice crystals, and flashing from a million points their "intolerable magnificence." One saw jewels like stars in magnitude, so rare that perforce one must find them, to discover that not one great central ice knot sent forth those stellar rays, but a favourable crossing of several blades of grass or twigs of sweet fern. Endless are the combinations of Nature to produce a desired effect,—nay, an inevitable effect, for the crystal is as inevitable as the motions of the stars in their courses. Remember that wise saying: "A fixed star is as much within the bounds of Nature as a flower of the field, though less obvious, and of far greater dignity."

Of all this magnificence naught will long remain, but so it is with the precious stones which men amass and fight over. When all is done, what remains for the man who has got these rievings of

the earth? Nothing for him; all is no more than the ice masquerade of the hemlocks and the pines, the chestnuts and the oaks, in that new order of life into which he has entered. God's blessings are those that lift the human life and fill the on-going soul. The very footprints on the snow of mice and rabbits, partridges and foxes, tell of lives that are as important in their order as our own. They do not see these fiery, lucid glories, but they have their own place. Truly, "there is one glory of the sun, and another glory of the moon, and one star differeth from another in glory." So is it not only with humanity that rises from the death, but as well for every form into which the breath of God has been poured from that exhaustless fountain of his being, the true elixir of life.

Skating and Sliding Down Hill

WHEN the country is yet almost snowless, although the winter has long since set in, it is perhaps an undue aggravation to talk of sleds and sliding,—time-honoured and child-delighting sport of New England, far older and more important than skating, although that is exceedingly pleasurable, and more abounds in picturesque features and displays of athletic skill. Who can forget the master-skater of his village, he who would dash away ten miles an hour upon mountain stream and back, and coming home at rushing speed, make the high leap of ten feet? But the high leap, and all the leaf-cutting and figures-of-eight of the experts, can be done within the limits of the city. These are spectacular, and please the crowd.

There are far finer charms for the country boys, who start up the winding river and skate to the next town. In such a venture the lads soon separate. It is not a track that is laid out before them, it is the icy edges of a mountain stream





which invite their enterprise, and each one develops according to his genius. The solitary and adventurous skater has almost as good an opportunity for romancing as the fisher who loses the biggest fish and brings home the littlest,—just to show that he must have told the truth, since if the big fellow had not got away, would he not have brought that instead?

Skating stories are of many sorts; an imaginative lad can have many odd experiences in a ten-mile expedition, what with thin ice and air holes. For example, we recall the chap who dropped into an air hole, floated down the river for half a mile, now and then bumping his head against the ice, until he reached another air hole and came up all right. He certainly got wet, and he could show the air holes, and would, to any one who wanted to go over the course with him. Let not that powerful skater be forgotten who came to the verge of the mill-dam sooner than he had expected, when he was going about as fast as an express train,—he actually had raced half a mile on the river with the iron horse on the rails,—and as he could not check his speed, he rose to the occasion in one mighty leap, landed like a bird ten rods below the dam, and so easy that he never felt the jar,—and then just skimmed on as before, for no little thing like that could faze him. No

one saw this except as he heard the story,—but then he saw it as plain as day ; there was the dam, and the skater must have traveled in the air nigh ten rods if he wanted to strike good ice. What more would you have ?

For those of other predilections there are rare charms in a solitary night exploration on skates of a mountain stream. The glorious brilliance of the moonlight reflected in the crystal ice ; the glittering restlessness of the far stars in the steely sky ; the west wind that cuts across the tingling cheek as a bend is turned,—the wind that whispers and murmurs in the cloudy pines ; the shadows of the hills, dark and vague, but at the edges of the sky sharply defined ; the quiet pools of clear ice, transparent in daylight as plate glass, but now like black marble ; the waters where some descent is made, gurgling beneath the skim of crystal, and sending in advance great bubbles that claw their way like living creatures ; then the steeper rapids bursting quite free of trammels for a space, around which the skater carefully trims his way, over the shallow edge of brittle ice ; the surprise of warm air currents now and again ; the never-freezing spring beneath the roots of the old hemlock, whose waters make an open hemicycle where they enter the river ;—all these, and a certain wild transfiguration of the earth and sky—a

lonely and mysterious influence which possesses the skater, as if he and all else were in some vision of enchantment,—such as these are the charms of a solitary moonlight pursuit of a mountain river, up stream and down stream, and as God wills.

Of the social side of skating there is nothing to say that may not be familiar to the denizens of any considerable city. They can get that. But the social side of sliding, without which there would be very little of it done, can't really be had in the city, even by the children. The few streets they are allowed to make dangerous are quite too social; they are crowded and noisy and full of foul language and the hoodlums that use it. Postponing the question of the civilization of the hoodlums, which is a pressing duty, it may be observed that the children of other sorts ought to be brought up to walk a few miles, to outlying hills at no great remove. The country boys and girls don't mind a long walk for good sliding. One of the best slides that memory recalls could be made three miles long, if the highway were in good condition; and while few would walk those three miles up hill, and those few chiefly to say they had done it, yet the lower section of that slide, say from half to three-quarters of a mile long, was popular, and even populous, on bright nights. A superb slide

it was; and get a party of ten lads and lasses on a big double-ripper, with a stout and steady steersman, sweeping down the steep pitches, flying into the air at every thank-ye-ma'am,—and the landing from the flight tries the steersman's nerve and muscle,—finally, shooting across the village square, up the rise and half way over the bridge that crosses the north-west branch,—that was something to remember. Sometimes there were disasters, it is true, for if the steersman did lose his nerve, it meant scratched faces at the least, and a sprain or so, or even a broken arm might result. But the risk was part of the fun, just as in Alp-climbing or Arctic exploration, while the results were perhaps as truly compensatory.

Sliding on “the crust” is another good thing of winter in the country. Let there be a mixed storm of light snow and warm rain, and a brisk freeze to finish off, leaving all the hills gleaming in the sunshine with a stiff covering of concreted pellets,—what fun is at hand for all the sleds! Then no one course is open, but anybody's choice of courses over the hilly pastures. Take down the bars and leave the bar-way open; down with a bit of Virginia worm-fence between two fields, or opening into the traveled road; and then from the hill-top aim for that ten or twelve-foot opening from any point that strikes the fancy. It

needs a sure eye, a steady foot behind and a sturdy girl in front,—one who won't squirm or scream more than enough to keep up the excitement,—to be sure of that particular break in the fence line.

Another way to improve the crust in old days was to cross leather straps over barrel staves, on the concave side, a little forward of the middle, and then, thrusting the feet into these stirrups, ride the stave-horses down the uncertain sidehill. What a way the staves had of spreading out! until down the rider sat, and slid perforce on his beam-ends as far as gravitation and impetus would carry him. This is not yet obsolete, although it belongs to days far antecedent of Boyesen's tales which brought to knowledge the Norwegian ski, before known only to readers of Fouque. Few, if any, Yankees have ever mastered the ski, any more than they have the Indian's snowshoes. Read "Adirondack" Murray's brilliant wilderness stories,—they contain the most marvelous pictures of winter in the woods,—and of other seasons as well.

Another phase of country children's winter pleasures is afforded by the hollows in the pastures where rains make temporary ponds, and the water, sinking into the earth, lets the ice down to the bottom of these pockets, and there are thrilling opportunities of venture on sleds or skates. To

get a good start, dash down one side of such a bowl with all the vim possible, and essay to reach the other rim by sheer momentum,—this is truly heroic. Caught in the bowl, hurled back from the very verge of achievement, to climb its crevasses and escape its immurement is a problem indeed. In the most desperate cases the boy digs out by cutting steps with a jack-knife—just as the custom is of those fleeing from wolves in stories that used to affright the child as he read them in the school Readers—and imagination did not fail to supply the wolves.

Yes, there are good things for the children and their elders in the wild country winter. If Nature ever gives reward, it is in the clear, cold, bright, still winter day. There is no phase of her eternal loveliness more absolute. Let us not grumble over a brief interlude of rude wind and flying snow. Such visitations make for our best good, in stirring our languid pulses, and enforcing that natural vigour which it is easy to lose in soft and wooing seasons of untimely warmth. This is all as it should be, and as the Lord looked upon the earth after each day of creation and saw that it was good, so should we regard the rigours of that clime which largely made the old New England force, and still nurtures the best part of our character.

Across Lots is Best

THERE are two ways of going from one place to another,—sometimes more, but always two; you may either take the highroad or go across lots. By the highroad one gets there quicker, as a rule, for several reasons, as because it actually is a road, with the impediments to travel removed, the streams bridged, the way marked out so that the wayfaring man, though a fool, need not err therein. Also one finds less that distracts the attention; his task is laid out before him by the surveyors and the civil engineers, or at least by the selectmen, assessors and overseers of the poor—for in truth some roads do not appear to have had any surveying or engineering, but to have been made the way the little girl's mother cut her waists—"by presume." It is true that out in the country, there are many of these highways which are really most attractive and tempting to divagation, being so winding, wilful and hid away that they seem only temporarily diverted from the original cowpath or wood-road.

Yet at the best a road is a road, and the instinct of conformity is such in us that once started on it, we follow it faithfully. Wagon tracks or sleigh tracks, 'tis much the same. It gets monotonous, but one has the ever precious sense that one is going to a definite goal. We take a prospect or two by the way, but after all, there is a certain impression of business about a highway.

And so if one is not bound on any business, on a brisk but cheery winter morning, even though he may mean to climb a mountain before the day is done, there are odds in favour of the 'cross-lots plan. It is not so easy for the muscles, but it is more interesting for the nerves. There is a certain triumph in trampling on difficulties,—such as the drifts on a rocky hillside and the over-ankle snow in the woods. It is a jolly thing to leap from tussock to tussock in the warm-watered marsh, or even to hang on to an old-fashioned rail fence while one treads tentatively on what may be solid ground and may be a deceptive coating over ice as thin as isinglass. There is excitement in plunging through a thicket of birches and alders and osiers, plentifully accompanied with black-berry brier and complicated by bittersweet vines and wild grapes. How stupid is a bridge, when you come to a brook and look for the likeliest spot for a leap!—a leap is freedom, while a bridge

OVER NEWLY CLEARED LAND





is convention. Thank heaven, and thank earth, that when one goes across lots there is a parting with conventions.

This used to be uniformly the case, in the old days, for a rail fence is nothing but a piece of Nature; but nowadays the hateful barbed-wire fence does introduce convention. The wanderer of the woods and fields detests these wicked intrusions, and he delights to see how soon the wretched contrivance loses hold of its hooks and gets crushed down by the operations of Nature. Some of the masters of woodcraft have been heard to observe that barbed-wire fence, particularly in the winter, is apt to sag and droop, and get tangled and torn off, whole lengths of it,—of course they don't know how it happens. The fact is, the best sort of fence for the 'cross-lots man is the old-fashioned one. That fence he crosses with honour and respect, and if a rail be displaced, he stops to replace and even strengthen its hold.

All along the way one finds the evidences of the native uses, and that there is a considerable population in the woods and fields. Tracks of foxes and rabbits, of gray and red squirrels, mark the snow, each in the peculiar fashion of the creature. If one is quiet enough for a while, one may see these furry denizens of all out-doors, but he cannot be sure of it. The wild creatures do

not care to show themselves to men, knowing how mischievous and murderous they are. Even the wanderer most innocent of their blood is no better off than the hunter,—not so well off, because the hunter has his eye out for killing and there is no instinct so strong as the killing instinct in the half-civilized. He who has learned, or who did not need to learn

“ Never to blend our pleasure or our pride
With sorrow of the meanest thing that feels,—”

sees the squirrel and hears his chatter, or beholds the grouse break out of covert and rush forth in booming flight,—sees in these beautiful creatures of free Nature other manifestations of the divine and inspiring life, and would almost as soon think of killing a man as them. And for that matter,—but we will go no further. While one notes such marks of the house-keeping life that goes on so steadily (were it not for man), the crows are crying overhead, and beat through the air, sweeping in salient and re-entrant curves, until they melt into the distance and are gone. In thickets, if one pauses long enough, he will hear the whispering of the few lesser birds that stop here through the winter or pause a while on their way elsewhere. These small birds,—the chickadee, a sparrow or two,—do not sing, but they whisper

to each other,—and now and again we hear the tap of a gray woodpecker on a tree where there are grubs. All the winter, if the sportsmen would let them alone, these little winged blessings are keeping down the insect pests. We should have no fears for our elms or maples if the birds were given a fair chance.

Other things come to one's knowledge ; among the rest that even the green life of summer is not altogether obliterated in the season of frost and snow. Here is a marsh where the water is unfettered and the grass is of as rich a green as the finest city lawn wears in June ; where white and red clover are in leaf untouched by frost, and the marsh marigold and buttercup leaves are as fresh as the grass, and one almost expects to see a blossom of something or other,—but of course that is too much even to fancy. In such a marsh one may take out a bit of turf or a plant or two with his fingers, and feel no colder than in summer. Of course dozens of plants maintain their foot-leaves throughout the winter, such as the St. John's wort, the evening primrose, the wild strawberry and some of the asters and golden-rods. But the warm spring makes a counterfeit of summer in its little sphere, telling us that life is what persists and death is but a semblance.

It is strange enough to find some of the deli-

catest ferns, like the asplenium trichomanes, looking brisk in their slight hold on the rocks between the snows ;—the Christmas fern all know keeps green through the winter, and the rich marginal fern also. The greatest surprise is that of the wild geranium, the herb robert, an exquisitely slight plant, in leaf and flower, which blossoms in winter if the least encouragement is given it by the sun and wind. Not all these things will be seen in one walk, even across lots. But the bittersweet berries, hanging over the bushes which the vine twines around and chokes with its selfish affection—quite a human trait—these are sure to be seen, and at the border of some pool the splendid bright berries of the black alder, our native holly, will catch the eye.

Arrived at the mountain top, through whatever hardships of pilgrimage, thus richly repaid, is there not recompense enough for vastly more trouble? The wide country is spread before us, as interesting as in summer. Almost at the top of the mountain one pauses to drink at the wayside spring,—over which, beneath their shelter of rocks, nod and waver bright green ferns, as if it were not winter at all. The draught we quaff is an elixir of life, and becomes a part of the great glory of the earth. Standing on the grand escarpment of rock on the verge of the cliffs that lift themselves into

air far over the broken rock that they have been letting go for ages, one views the kingdoms of the world and the glory of them. It is all the same in the long run, whether one looks upon the vast realms of political importance or only on the farmsteads and forests of rural New England. It is the soul that beholds and not the show that is beheld which counts. Here we may resist temptations and rise superior to them. The eye that sweeps the horizon and views Greylock, and Monadnock and Wachusett, and all those billowy hills between, needs no offer of great prizes. It has already the one great prize, if it can understand it. That ineffable, incomprehensible, intolerable, eternal Divinity is here, taking the little human soul into its own vast being, and making it one with him. On a mountain top dwells the vast Oversoul, and man accepts his place, and is silent.

Things One Sees in Winter

NOW that the January thaw is here, and the frosts are getting out of the earth as in March, and the leaves in the forest steam with the odours of last fall, and many a bud is coaxed into dangerous forth-putting,—it may seem a bit out of order to speak of the characteristic pleasures of cross-country walks in the winter snows. But the recess of winter just in this region will be over soon enough ; all bitter February, with its traditional three cold days, is before us ; and the snows will be furnished in due time. These snows are the only drawback to the pleasure of winter walking. It requires twice or thrice the nerve and muscle force used in other seasons to traverse a mountain pass in the uncertain footing of the snow ; the necessity of lifting the feet six inches or a foot at every step is exhausting, and then the ice that underlies the snow at unexpected places betrays the too confident foot. It is rather odd that the snowshoe is not used hereabouts, for it would be of great value in

traversing defined paths and roads, although in the brush it would be hindrance rather than help.

The fields and roads are as full of interest in winter as in the seasons of growth, flower and fruit; and there is a peculiar invigoration in the cold, clear purity of the air; so that facing a north-wester in the open country or on the hills is welcome and comfortable, and the stirring of the pulse and stiffening of the muscle as one beats against the blast is a keen assertion of life that renews youth. It is wholesome, joyous, triumphant. One becomes a part of the elements, thrilled with their splendid spirit and force.

The study of the trees and shrubs dons a new phase and importance. It is true that one does not know these if he does not recognize them by bark and habit, by root and bud. It is a rare woodlander who can surely tell whether an oak in the forest is white, post, red, yellow, scarlet, black, pin, swamp white or chestnut oak. Even in leaf the oaks are difficult, especially in youth, when the extremely variable leaves have not settled in their typical form. In the winter the trunk is the chief object of notice; when a tree bears its last year's leaves there is some help, but that is not so sure except to the most careful of students. So among the maples there is some difficulty in youth; in old age there are few trees that do not

manifest themselves with small excuse for error, but in our woods none is in full development,—the primeval forest is gone, and a tree that is more than 30 years old is rare. So it comes to pass that an old wood-ranger may pronounce a flowering dogwood a sassafras, and utter other such humiliating dicta. How many can tell a blueberry from a viburnum? How many can declare at the edge of the swamp that the little laurel is there instead of the cassandra? The heaths are very closely related and resemblant, and 'tis no wonder, so superficial is our observation.

It is interesting also to study the seed stalks as they lift over the snow on the fields and in the wooded paths. The golden-rods are easiest recognized, but sometimes they get mixed with the asters. These profusely seeded "weeds" of the compositæ are of great interest, because they furnish a great part of the food of the birds that frequent the winter fields and thickets. It would be a very mistaken project to exterminate the golden-rods and asters, the mulleins and thistles; for the birds are worth more to the farmer and the earth than all the roods of cleared land on which not a weed should be seen. The American holly, commonly called the black alder, is not only one of the most beautiful of our native shrubs, but its brilliant red berries feed the juncos and the chicka-

dees and mountain sparrows. All the viburnums and vacciniums give the birds food. So does the Indian poke,—a plant so superb in its free growth and royal crimson colouring that it ought to be a favourite in gardens, where it will make itself at home as easily as the sumachs will. The sumachs are also great bird stores, and when the birds were in the habit of coming back from the South in great flocks, the sumach thickets gave their earliest plunder. In the winter hills a natural plantation of sumachs, whether of the staghorn, the glabra or the little copallina species, fill the landscape with vivid fire, lighting up all the region round about. There is nothing else that produces so fine an effect of warm colour except the bittersweet, when with its yellow-wrapped orange berries it takes a thicket for its own. There is much warmth, too, in the lingering leaves of the young oaks, and especially, in this vicinity, the abundant thatch, which brings a touch of summer to the coldest day.

In the woods there are all the mosses and lichens of the rocks and stumps to interest one, and in these there is an endless pleasure, as one sees how life is ever active, asserting the universal presence of God. It is in beholding such little things that the lover of Nature most surely feels the truth that Walt Whitman expressed: "And a kelson

of creation is Love." To observe the tracks of the wild creatures in the woods is another joy of the winter walk. Now all the forest regions would be full of squirrels, rabbits, foxes and others of their kin,—of grouse and woodcock, too,—were it not for the hunters, who almost outnumber the game. The woodland on our western hills abounded in these charming creatures, 40 years ago, but now there are probably more gray squirrels in Springfield streets than there are on Mount Tom or Mount Holyoke. It is probable that city protection may yet be the only means to preserve them. Old men, who used to see gray and red and striped squirrels by scores and hundreds in the course of a year, now tell us that they scarcely see one gray squirrel in a summer, a few more red squirrels, and quite a number of chipmunks. It seems a pity. But yet their footprints are to be discerned in the less hunted woods, and it is a delight to come upon a great fallen tree where these rodents have eaten their feast of nuts, and to discover in the snow the little excavations where they have dug to recover the hickory nuts they had buried in the fall.

Of other delights of the winter walk,—of the frozen ponds, of the cliffs over which trickling rills have festooned grand icicles, a rod long, or have poured in great floods and remain frozen,

with the water gurgling and glowing beneath,—of the miniature cyclones of snow-wreaths, that swing into the air on a sudden and go skurrying down the sidehills and over the plains,—of these and many more phenomena of the country in winter, there is not time to say. But there is no more charming and recompensing season than this for acquaintance with the glory and grace of Nature.

A Prophesying Day

THese bright March days at the end of January rather worry the progress of the seasons, and when one sees the aments of the alders crimsoning, and plucks the pussy willows, and actually discovers the skunk cabbage thrusting its close-wrapt hood two inches above the moist and warmth of the swale, he feels much as if he had encountered a boy with a straw hat. It is a surprising winter. Notwithstanding our occasional spells of zero weather, or near it, southern exposures in this region where one cannot thrust a walking stick deep into the roadside bank must be few. There is little frost in the ground, and there is the peculiar spring feeling in the atmosphere—a reviving, aspirant impulse, which makes one for the time forget. But, after all, what if the temperature lowers and the northwesterners roar? Has not the promise been given and felt, and the prayer of gratitude been uttered?

The moving of the sleepless, pauseless spirit of

life,—that does not wait for months and days, but manifests where and when it will, rebuking our shallow and tenuous faith with witnesses to its gentle energies,—that it is which lifts above the frosts, the snow, the ice, the hardened earth-surface of winter, the assurance of summer. It is truly summer that is our keynote of the year, and not winter. There are indeed few days of the cold season's calendar when we cannot hear that note in the pines and spruces and hemlocks, but chiefly in the white pines ; when we cannot listen to its echo in the prattle of the brook. While in our ardent summer there are few days in many years that bring the memory of frost to our consciousness, there are many days in winter which open all the year to our entry. When we wander in the fields and see the brooklime fresh and green, and ready for the spring ; when on a forest bank we note the arbutus buds prepared for the first opportunity of spring bloom ; when we note the preparation of the alder, the sweet fern, the blueberry, the azalea, the mountain laurel and so many other shrubs ; when we observe the sand violet's foot leaves and the most beautiful St. John's wort, the evening primrose, the robin's plantain, the saxifrage, the golden-rods, we can but feel that the perpetual truth is summer, just as the perpetual truth is life.

The year is full of summer. Beneath a great hemlock whose myriad branches and boughs sway in the west winds, what is more sure than the real new year—no calendar convention, but the time when the forces of growth are at once let loose, and the voice of the Lord is heard among the trees of the garden! That voice is never silent, though it be a still, small voice, and only the prophets of the Lord may hear it. Among these prophets are the mosses and lichens, which take occasion for their renewing life in the wintry landscape. For now it is that delicately bright red dots and delicately green cups appear upon the stumps of felled trees, and the green mosses at the roots of trees begin to deepen their hues and start in their lowest roots the slender stems that shall bear their hidden fruits. Never does Nature rest; and though the skunk cabbage may not yet unfold its tight wrappings and project its full crimson-streaked hood and open the starry blossoms of its inner club,—here is the marvelous prophesy of spring in what it has already done.

As the summer heats furnish their days of prediction of fall and the suspense of the glorious manifests of the forests and the fields, so that in a July day one may sense in the air the coming of October,—so in January we catch the whole character of March, the month of hope. By such

means the seasons are joined and unified, and such a day was yesterday, with its westerly winds, so little of snow and ice, and so little of forbidding chill ; so much of cordial sunshine and so generous response in the life of earth. The crows with their hearty and wise utterances, the whispering chickadees in the pines,—these had their confirmation to give. Crowded and engrossed and saturated with the living spirit are these days. Sweet is their air, lovely the colours of wood and field, wonderful the modulations of blues and greens in the sky. One lives indeed in their wide and hospitable beauty.

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Winter Morn and Moon

THE winter's own personal charms are of no meager or indifferent sort. Even the keen morning,—when the squeak of the slow wood-sled runners on the snow is heard half a mile up the hill, and the oxen, as they yaw heavily from side to side, holding back the load, breathe out clouds of gray steam,—when the axe of the woodman is echoed far across the valley, and the frost crystals are an inch thick on the butt of the felled pine,—when after the night's ice is cut from the barnyard trough the water skims over again before the impatient heifer has had time to quench her thirst,—when the farmer's hens cuddle miserably against the southern wall and cackle plaintively against the coldness of their corner of the barn,—when the brook is so tightly shut that its murmurs can only be heard by laying one's ear close in the dell at the roots of the hemlock,—even such a morning is full of extraordinary beauties, which do not pale by commonness like the charms of summer. How sharp and fine the outlines of

the forest are against the sky, and how strongly the gray rocks, with their garb of lichens and polypody ferns, accentuate themselves in the midst of the aggressive snow! How sturdy the savin with its creeping boughs, and how the fall memories shiver in the blanched leaves of the beech! How, projected upon this steel-gray sky, the ancient oak extends its gnarled arms,

“Spiry and stern, inveterately old.”

Then comes the day of heavy skies, when the storm is gathering; the sun is gone, the wind moans, and there is a suppressed weariness of waiting in the very aspect of the earth. The clouds thicken and crowd downward, and all the horizon at sunset is bordered with a dull, oppressive, darkening mass that crushes the day from the earth and forbids the morrow. This in its way is a most magical and attractive phase of winter nature, though devoid of beauty and sweetness. But those mild and gracious qualities are not lacking. Passing the beauty of a bright and genial winter day,—which everyone acknowledges, from the school-boy to the most serious of silken dowagers or stock speculators—so irresistible is our winter at its best,—contemplate the wonderful loveliness of such nights as the moon now in our sky bestows upon us.

Nothing in Nature for perfectness of peace compares with the winter landscape beneath the moon. This moon, just completing its second quarter, rarely so luminous in this phase, bestows its beams on the snowy expanse with a soft and tender grace that makes the whole earth half ethereal, and the tree-tops that define themselves upon the steely sky are sublimed by their far, mysterious background. The moon lies like a boat in the mystic sea, and far beyond it in infinite darkening depths the incredible myriads of stars are dimly visible. Light clouds sweep low behind the trees and disappear. Rarely a mass of snowy fleece sails upward, gleams a tinge of amber from the moon-beams, dissolves and vanishes. Then up the vault drives swiftly a hurrying veil of mists, that pass, like lace-work endlessly purveyed, over the face of Phœbe, reflecting her glance in amber and amethyst tints,—and they, too, disappear into the distant heavens. Then, southward, drops with strange deliberation a brilliant meteor, glowing with heat and splendid in colour, that seems to fall in the next field,—but there are few really to see a meteor fall to earth.

Such are the charms of a winter night, while beneath all the business and pleasure and passion and sleep of the actual human world go on; the

boys and girls are sliding down hill, in the city streets and in the country fields,—where over long reaches of the shining crust the home-made sleds dash as merrily as any city rippers,—and on the ponds the skaters fly to their iron music,—joy to which the pent-up artificial pleasures of the rolling-rink are tame and stupid indeed. The beauty of the winter is not known in the city, any more than the beauty of the summer; it is not the city that holds the key of “the mystic gates of past and future,” which “not for common fates wide open fling;” it is beyond the mad city, amid the woods and fields, that the spiritual essence of Nature is offered to the lips of her lovers, whether the earth be royal green or penitential white.

Spring Days in Winter

IT has pleased the lovers of the New England year to observe that its spirit and standard of living are warm and ample, instead of frigid and restricted ; that it is not disproportioned with six months of winter, three months of summer and three other months of betweenities, as the slander goes ; but that in point of fact, it is summer that rules. Summer is positive ; winter is negative ; in the vexing rapidity of change from one temperature to another we recognize the aggression of that royal life which will not consent to be pent under snow and ice, but must break forth and assert itself. Thus it is that after a few iron-bound days, the sky grows blue and the clouds delicately thin, and every storm that is prepared has a preface of bright or veiled sweetness of air and earth in generous and tender harmony. Such preliminary days have in them the essential feeling of a life ready to start anew in all the charms of earth ; and the suggestion of spring thus irresistibly projects itself in such a day when

an exquisite grace possesses the earth ; the atmosphere pulsates with warmth ; there arise light veiling vapours about the woodland ; distances grow into mysteries ; and horizons lift into the heavens. Such a day was not to be obliterated by the stern and savage onslaught of the north-west wind, that crushed the mercury to zero weather with such sudden force. The word had gone forth that the earth was alive, and, charged too much in the cold trip that followed, one felt the rebate coming, as it did yesterday.

It was certainly a noble day,—storm-gathering, it is true, but in itself wonderfully fine and affectionate. To the wanderer over fields and through forests, worshiping God in his holy temple, where all the earth kept silence before him, it was a chrysolite of days. In the eastern sky first came the reflex of the clouded sun,—the delicate greens and blues that melt in each other, amid clouds of lavender and ashes of roses ; and then the sun came out of hiding for a few minutes, gracing and sweetening the forest depths, now open to his regal entrance ; lighting the fields with their colouristic harmonies of buff and salmon thatch, the blacks and grays and umbers of sweet fern, golden-rod and melilot,—with the low oaks, now brown, now yellow green, now fairly red,—and touching the pines and hemlocks, filled them with

light greens to complement their deep shadows, and make the scene one of the richest repose.

In the midst of all the voices of the living choir of ministrants were heard; if from no other throats, at least from those of the cheery chickadees, those lovely and fearless little birds that when the snow comes dip into it with joy and then rise to the tree tops and utter their simple and honest warble of praise to what has made the earth so good. Seeds to eat, by the millions—and what more is to be wanted? And when one hears the crow sound his knowing comment on the way things are going, it is borne in upon the wanderer that this is all right, and the good time is coming. So when one sees the hawk swinging and sailing aloft, he must feel the mighty unity of all the glorious earth, which has so much room for all life. To this also contribute the footprints of field mice and squirrels, of juncos and grouse—the grouse are scarce hereabouts, but they are not quite exterminated by the gunners. Yet it is true that in the woods where the partridge berries most abound the ungathered fruit shows that these most attractive of game birds have been sadly reduced in numbers.

In such days as these, which prefigure the spring, there is a wonderful sense of cordial welcome in the phenomena of Nature. There is an

embracement of love in the air. It is so rich, so clearly sweet, so invigorating, so lifting, so aspiring, that profound thoughts fill the soul of the wanderer,—thoughts of what must lie beyond this dust. Is all this infinitude of charm and sense of life that begins not, nor ends, to be expended solely on the transitory race of men? It has a greater, a wider, a more enduring purpose, and that purpose can be nothing less than the on-going development of the life of the soul. Do we feel in the air nothing but the slight impact of a wooing movement on our faces,—nothing but the fierce attack of a storm-dispersing blast,—nothing but a physical mechanism—strange to us in its origins, but nevertheless merely functional in the growth and ruin of this globe of ours? Not so. It is the essential and divine life of all that is, soul and body, origin and environment, source and end, that thrills, conflicts or soothes in these elemental manifestations. In truth, he who knows not that God is, and (as the scripture says) is a rewarder of those who seek Him, has yet much to learn before he can hope to go, free of soul and brave of heart, into the inheritance which God hath prepared for them that love Him.

The Great March Blizzard of 1888

THE storm now upon us, which in its course up the Atlantic coast reached this region late Sunday evening, and has brought pretty nearly all the concerns of men to a stand-still,—will be remembered in history as the greatest of a generation. No middle-aged man can recall its parallel. It began with a light snow, falling with a deceitful gentleness, and people said it would probably turn to rain as soon as the sun rose. The wind was northeast, and chilly, but not very cold. As the night grew toward morning the wind increased in strength and velocity, the snow came faster, and the drifts begun to pile. It was already so much of a storm as 9 o'clock approached that mothers felt apprehensive as their children started for school. By this time too the railroad trains were giving up the contest. And so it went on; the wind becoming a gale from the north, the snow continuing to fall, the drifts to grow, all paths to close up; all means of locomotion were withdrawn from the

streets; there were no trains run, and consequently no mails received or dispatched; there was no business done in shops or stores, for few ventured abroad, and they only persons who had work to do.

Those who had come to their daily tasks in the morning could not get home at night, and the hotels were crowded with men and women whose employers had to house them there; while business men who could not join their families were added to the homeless throngs. There were many rumours of missing children who had not reported since their schools were let out, even into the evening. There was much reason to fear that some of the rumours might be true in a tempest so fierce and unceasing, where beside the fine, light snow that the wind bore in its fury, a keen sleet that cut the face was driven sharply; the eyes filled with it, and when one turned to catch breath, every other minute, he wiped the icicles from his eye-lashes. The wind was of such fury that every breath seemed to tear the lungs, and this trebled the labour of the walker, contending against snow mid-thigh or waist deep, so that an ordinary three-minute walk in a side-street would consume a quarter of an hour. This was in the middle of the afternoon; by night the side-streets were given up as impassable by any one, the

sidewalk drifts covering the fences from sight except for an occasional gulch scooped by the antic winds.

There was no such thing as getting a view of the storm during the day ; the vision could reach but a few rods, the clouds could not be seen, all the air was a mad whirl of flakes, and to look up Main street was to see an ominous moving wall, frayed and tossed at the edges, of a sort of dull brown colour in the height of day, deepening as the unseen sun dropped below the blocks.

It was a wicked day among the elements, one of those days that impress on the mind the fact that there is no sort of sympathy for man in that mystery called Nature, and that beside her power man's wonderful ingenious triumphs are mere toys. What were his boasts, the locomotive engine and the telegraph, yesterday, when the north wind and the snow came down upon earth and raged over it? It was like the caprice of some gigantic spirit, sending his servants not to destroy, but to obstruct and vex. "See!" thus they cried,—“It is well for you to stay where you are to-day ; you, clerk at your desk,—you, sales-woman at your counter—you, merchant, and your children will not see each other to-night,—sleep where you can, all of you,—this is my pleasure. Let the world go on as it will, you people will be none the worse

off if you do not see a newspaper, or get a letter, or send a dispatch. And I will leave you some work to do or have done in the morning. Prisoners are always digging out of prisons—you may dig out. Fun for all of you—great fun!”

How far the storm reaches no one knows at this writing. It took from between 9 o'clock and 10 Sunday night until 8 o'clock yesterday morning for it to reach Lowell, which is not very rapid traveling for such a coast gale as this. In the evening, about 24 hours after it began, the snow had apparently almost ceased falling here, and the temperature was less exasperating, though the winds still blew swiftly, heaping up the snow, whistling and wailing around the eaves and down the chimneys, and making life out of doors about as undesirable as it ever is. On the hills this must be a tremendous storm, like those the elders tell of 50 and 60 years ago; highways and byways alike will be obliterated, and the cattle in some barns have to go without fodder; late in March though it is, there will be neighbourhood breakings-outs. Any one starting on a walk in a sparsely settled mountain district yesterday would have stood a right smart chance of never getting there—wherever he wanted to get.

There were a good many March meetings to be held yesterday, but the corners and borders of

the towns were scarcely likely to turn out in great numbers, even if there were important legislation to accomplish, and matters were doubtless hurried by those who did come. A Yankee will brave as much as any man for business, but going out yesterday on the hills was little short of foolishness. We suppose this storm was as good a specimen of the blizzard as the East needs to see; men who had wintered in Dakota said yesterday that except for the intense cold of the real Dakota article, we had the same thing,—every other feature of the storm was perfectly reproduced.

The Picture After the Storm

THE great storm had not discharged its burden and taken wings and fled away yesterday morning, nor did the clouds disperse in the course of the day, but overhung gloomily, as if they were waiting to produce some new mischief. Occasionally a flurry of snow filled the air, and the wind, still in the north-east, was rough and raw. The indecision of the weather was the opportunity of the citizen, but he was sluggish about improving it, and the magnitude of the job frightened him, and neither the city nor the street railroad company displayed that energy which would have encouraged private enterprise. In fact, slow though they were, the citizens came off at the end of daylight ahead of the municipality and the tenants of the highway.

The appearance of the city was unprecedented. In the unbroken quiet of the morning hours it lay, except for Main street, as trackless as the forest. Like the forest, there was the exception of its lesser animal life, for as the rabbits and

foxes mark the woodland with paths, so had the cats and dogs streaked the wilderness of the streets and gardens with their signs pedal. Gradually as the day grew toward noon the streets became curiously diversified with trails, those who had to pass through taking the middle of the road so far as might be, but describing long curves or sharp diagonals, to take advantage of the lowest grades; and sometimes, confronted by an absolutely forbidding drift across the whole highway, the trails led directly over miniature Alps and White Mountains. Fences were largely not matters of faith, but of pure supposition, and great drifts rose even to second-story windows, covered hen-houses in sepulchral mounds, or combed up like ocean waves 12 or 15 feet high,—poising there as if a moment more might dash them to break in foam against the assailed houses.

Main street was a marvelous sight in the morning, nor less so when the clearing of the sidewalks had heaped the sides of the streets as they were never heaped before. Up Harrison avenue a long notched ridge, a veritable Sierra Nevada, reared its imposing bulk; Market street up to noon was a wild stretch of mountain and valley. The Hill showed the freakish mischief of the gale that swept out gullies and cañons where no one wanted to go, to pile full the

household pathways and the public walks. There more than on the lower levels might be seen what Emerson has pictured so finely in a poem which so fits this wonderful display that it may well be quoted here entire : —

THE SNOW-STORM

Announced by all the trumpets of the sky
Arrives the snow, and driving o'er the fields,
Seems nowhere to alight ; the whited air
Hides hills and woods, the river and the heaven,
And veils the farm-house at the garden's end.
The sled and traveler stopped, the courier's feet
Delayed, all friends shut out, the housemates sit
Around the radiant fire-place, inclosed
In a tumultuous privacy of storm.
Come see the north wind's masonry.
Out of an unseen quarry evermore
Furnished with tile, the fierce artificer
Curves his white bastions with projected roof
Round every windward stake or tree or door.
Speeding, the myriad-handed, his wild work,
So fanciful, so savage, naught cares he
For number or proportion. Mockingly
On coop or kennel he hangs Parian wreaths
A swan-like form invests the hidden thorn ;
Fills up the farmer's lane from wall to wall,
Maugre the farmer's sighs ; and at the gate
A tapering turret overtops the work.

And when his hours are numbered, and the world
Is all his own, retiring, as he were not,
Leaves when the sun appears astonished Art
To mimic in slow structures,—stone by stone,
Built in an age—the mad wind's night-work,
The frolic architecture of the snow.

Never before within the memory of the oldest inhabitant has the "fierce artificer" drawn so liberally from the crystal stone of his "unseen quarry" in this region. Not 30 or 40 years, but 60 or 70 years knows not the parallel of this storm. On the hills, one or two thousand feet above us, such storms are more frequent, while here we have nothing like so tremendous a visitation. The fall was three feet on a level, and the nearest approach to that in the armory records is the 22 inches that fell in the storm of January 31, 1882. William Smith of Pine Street remembers a snow fall of four feet in the last part of March, when he was a boy in Dalton, almost 80 years ago, but then it did not blow. A lesser fall with such a wind produces on the hills as great drifts as we have now in the city, and moreover pounds and presses the snow so close that oxen draw sleds over the drifts. Here the drifts were nowhere solid enough to bear even boys upon their surface, and on snowshoes alone could one traverse the wild scenery with freedom. If we are to have

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old-fashioned winters as a regular thing we shall have to practice the aboriginal craft of snowshoe locomotion. Such winters will be very unpopular, however, and every one will be content to look back upon this March storm as unrivaled, unapproachable, unique and ideal.

In City and Country

THE impressive character of this March storm, when one reflects upon it, is seen to lie not in the physical facts belonging to itself, such as its depth of snow and fierceness and swiftness of wind, but almost wholly to the theater of its action. It is not the first tremendous snow-storm that has fallen in this country, but it is the first that has included in its sweep the mighty metropolis of the country and the railroads and telegraph lines of all the eastern sea-board, bringing affairs throughout so wide a region to a pause of indefinite length, isolating large communities, and rendering visible in a moment the infantile degree of man's mastery of Nature. Here has Nature but to blow and snow a few hours, and the important concerns of men are halted; do their best they cannot carry them on; and when the mysterious hand of Nature is withdrawn, men must labour for days before they get free of the simple walls with which it has engirt them, and can go their own ways, and start again

their interrupted business. These circumstances are what make the storm so extraordinary.

Storms far more severe, attended by an intense cold which we have not suffered, and continuing longer their fury, are familiar in our far West, and we have been well acquainted with the news of the destruction of cattle and sheep and the loss of human life in these blizzards. Three feet on a level, with a driving wind, is not so nearly unprecedented on the Berkshire, Hampshire and Vermont hills, or in mountainous New Hampshire, or the Maine woods. The great storm of 1717 covered very much the same regions that the present one has, but there was then not much more to interfere with in all its extent than there is now in the rural territories just mentioned. The ancient storm in question is thus spoken of in Noah Webster's "Elements of Useful Knowledge," published in 1806:—

"In February, 1717, fell the greatest snow ever known in this, or perhaps any country. It covered the lower doors of houses so that some people were obliged to step out of their chamber windows on snowshoes. There was also a terrible tempest. Eleven hundred sheep belonging to one man perished. One flock was dug out of a snow-drift on Fisher's Island, where they had been buried to the depth of 15 feet. This was 28 days

after the storm, when two of them were found alive, having subsisted on the wool of the others, and they sustained no injury."

Probably this was not the "greatest snow ever known," for that which is so powerfully pictured in the wonderful romance of "Lorna Doone,"—a romance which is simple history so far as the snow and all the characteristics of that strange English winter were concerned,—must have been more notable.

The advantages of the country over the city are considerable under such a visitation. The farmers and dwellers in the hill-top villages are used to it; they have their food in the house; they have their beef and pork barrels, their butter and milk and eggs, and they have no great anxiety about the non-arrival of mails, or the absence of news from the stock markets. Such things they can wait for in perfect patience. Snow is therefore not such an enemy as it is in the city, where all the domestic affairs go wrong without the daily visits of the butcher, the baker, the milkman, the postman and the messenger boy. In the country, too, one does not care much whether the trains are on time or not,—any day within a week or two will do. Nobody is worried because street cars are not running. Especially no one is afraid of fire,—that dreadful element of anxiety in the city. The fire

department of Savoy or Otis would be as efficient as ever in such a case,—in fact, the snow might be a great help, as supplying the lack of water. Thus there could not be felt on the hills the sense of oppressiveness, the unnatural burden, which has weighed upon the citizens of places where men have crowded their industries and dwellings together. The paralysis of our civilization to so extraordinary an extent is appalling to us. We do not live in spiritual essentials, which are the same now as ever, but in practical circumstances, and these being changed, it seems as if the world were awry.

The country has the advantage of the city, too, in the after part of the storm, the clearing up of obstacles and renewal of communications. The winter is always in considerable measure a period of seclusion and waiting for release, and the closer imprisonment of a big March storm is not so much to the farmers. In the city, where life in winter is the briskest, to be reduced to mere housing is unendurable. And when the storm is over, it is a desperate job to break out again even for merely interior uses. The sidewalks have to be painfully shoveled out into the streets, making them worse than in the first place, and then the superfluous snow must be sledded off, and a day's hard work only clears a few rods. But the farmer

cuts out a narrow path to the road, and other narrow paths to the barn, the wood-house and the tool-shop, and for the rest the snow's unbroken beauty lies until the sun disposes of it. When the chores are done and breakfast eaten, he yokes his cattle, hitches the tongue of his wood-sled to the yoke-ring, and starts with the boys to break out. His neighbors do the same thing, and where the road needs a heroic effort, the chains are hooked on and two or three yoke attached in line, and on they flounder till the road is made. Here they dig through a short drift; there they cut around a big one, going through a pasture or meadow,—sometimes through an open bar-way, sometimes over the fence, after a rail or two is taken out. But the road is made somehow,—not such a road as you could speed a horse on, but a road that will serve their turn. And it is a very much more interesting spectacle to an eye that appreciates the fact, than the city methods present.

Lives have been lost in this visitation, and this remarkable quatrain is written by Mason Arnold Green in view of that:—

“ Make me a bed,” the Storm King said,

“ Hard as fate and yet lighter than feather.”

A bed of snow the blizzards blow :

And the Storm King and Death sleep together.

THE UNBEGINNING LOVE

I

Now fades the full-orbed moon below the hill,
Cold, sacred and serene, as if a soul
Unstirred by passion, undisturbed and whole,
Yielded its life unto the eternal will,
Having of earth's vain transiency its fill,
With all its ardours in the sweet control
Of guides that guard it to the perfect goal,
Content and calm, with all its pulses still.

But far across the heavens melts the glow
Of rising Venus, golden rich and warm
With fervent flame of inextinguished love ;
Deep, strong, enduring, from her bosom flow
The heavenly glammers of all human charm
That draws to the eternal charm above.

II

And are Dian and Venus still opposed ?

Endymion shrouded in the Latmian mist,

By Dian's lips with chilling fervour kissed,

Therewith his virgin life too early closed ;

Adonis in the spring of life deposed

With o'erwarm kisses to his death dismissed,

The goddess losing in the loving list,

And he unknowing what stern fate had glozed.

Yet both are one : Chaste Dian, Venus dear,

Are sisters of the self-same endless love

Which all that's lovely laps within its breast :

This may be calm and that may hot appear,

Yet vary as they will, each shall approve

The magic philter of celestial rest.

III

For love is larger born and freer bred
And more divine than Venus or Dian,
Far elder than those beauteous thoughts of man,
Far wiser than the daughter of Jove's head.
Love was before the worlds in whirls were led,
And on their spheral race in music ran ;
The infinite life its course in love began,
And without love that life itself were dead.

O all ye endless sparkling lights of heaven !
Not even when ye vanish as a scroll
Thrice heated in the elemental flame
Of that last day when life from death is riven,—
Not then shall Love desert the sacred soul,
That springs to God's own bosom in Love's name !



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