

Jesse Lowe Smith

Diary

1900 - 1905



Photo by Hecketsweiler

Transcribed by

*Julia A. Johnas
Highland Park Public Library*

Forward

The Author: Jesse Lowe Smith was born in Macon, Illinois, on 23 November 1869, to the Rev. Leonard Francis Smith (1838-1874) and Bridget Ann Lowe Smith (1842-1941). His father's diary for that date: "At 5:30 wife bore me another child, a boy weighing 10 lbs when dressed. Dr. Tobey was the physician..." Jesse's father, Leonard Francis Smith, son of Jesse Smith and his second wife, Sophia Lake Spencer, had married Bridget Ann Lowe, daughter of William Fletcher Lowe and Elsea Aquila, on 10 September 1863. They had six children, Elsie (1864), Kittie Grace (1865-1932), Clarence Bruner (1867-1943), Jesse Lowe, Edith (1873-195?), and Lennie Francis (1874-1976).

Jesse Lowe Smith attended grade school in Macon, Illinois. With a passion for books and nature study, Jesse saw his life as a teacher. He attended the Academy in Benton Harbor, Michigan from 1884-1887, living with his Great Aunt Margaret Crooks. In 1888 he returned to Macon where he taught for three years. Teaching and studying independently as he taught, Jesse, at age 21, qualified for entrance to de Pauw University in September 1891. After one year at de Pauw, he returned for one term at Macon, and then, with his mother and sisters, went to Lexington, Illinois where he taught for four years from 1893-1897, followed by five years in Park Ridge, Illinois. In May 1902, Jesse came to Highland Park as principal of the Elm Place School. He was Superintendent of Schools for District 107 at the time of his death on 21 April 1934.¹

His diaries reveal Jesse Lowe Smith as a man of many interests and great influence. He was widely known and respected throughout Illinois as an innovative educator and avid naturalist and in Highland Park as an educational, cultural and civic leader. He inspired the Elm Place School teachers to higher ideals of education and the students to a deeper understanding and appreciation for the world around them. He left a lasting impression on all who knew him in life and continues to inspire many who make his acquaintance through his diaries and his legacy in Highland Park.

Identifications: In his diaries, Jesse frequently refers to members of his family. During his years in Highland Park, Jesse provided a home from his mother and sister, Kittie. They are often referred to in the diaries as M. and K. His brother Clarence Bruner is referred to as Clarence or Clarence B., and Clarence's two sons, Leonard and Clarence, Jr. (Bruner or Junior) are also mentioned. Jesse's sister Edith married Clarence Danforth (Danforth or Clarence D. in the diaries). His sister Lennie married Arthur Enders, and their children, Robert and Ruth Anne, are mentioned in the diaries.

Transcriber's Notes: Every attempt has been made to provide an accurate transcription of the diary entries with respect to spelling, grammar, and punctuation; therefore incorrect or inconsistent (Mr. Smith spelled the same word in different ways at different times) usage is retained without the use of [sic]. When words were added above the line, they have been inserted into the text. When words were inadvertently repeated, the second occurrence of the

word has been dropped. Margin notes are indicated as such and are placed following the text that they appeared adjacent to in the diary. When words were illegible, brackets have been supplied enclosing a blank space []. Words that could not be deciphered with certainty have been placed in square brackets followed by a question mark [like this?]. Transcriber's notes are indicated by brackets [like this – ed.]. Clippings that were pasted into the diary are described in a transcriber's note, but are not always transcribed.

¹*Diaries 1859-1874 of The Reverend Leonard Smith, Circuit Rider* by Blanche Beal Lowe.

Jan. 12

Kipling as a poet of patriotism – see *Outlook* Vol 64, 1 – Jan 6, 1900

“Mr Kipling interprets through the imagination what may be called the executive side of the English spirit. He is pre-eminently a poet of the Englishman in action. That which touches his imagination the world over is the spectacle of men at work under all conditions; and wherever he finds courage, endurance, and capacity, he is moved by them, even when they are allied with a good deal of personal coarseness and vulgarity. It is because he loves life with such a passionate intensity that Mr Kipling has awakened so wide an interest in a generation which has listened mainly, for the last twenty years, to echoes in verse, and has rarely heard a human voice sounding a clear, original, and genuine note.” We ought not to “substitute the purely analytic spirit *** for that insight which is born of a conviction of the essential dignity of human nature and the essential worth of human effort.”

“Recessional”

July 17, 1897

God of our fathers, known of old –
 Lord of our far-flung battle-line –
Beneath Whose Awful Hand we hold
 Dominion over palm and pine –
Lord God of Hosts, be with us yet,
Lest we forget – lest we forget!

The tumult and the shouting dies –
 The captains and the kings depart –
Still stands Thine ancient Sacrifice,
 An humble and a contrite heart,
Lord God of Hosts, be with us yet,
Lest we forget – lest we forget!

Far-called our navies melt away –
 On dune and headland sinks the fire –
Lo, all our pomp of yesterday
 Is one with Nineveh and Tyre!

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Judge of the Nations, spare us yet,
Lest we forget – lest we forget!

If, drunk with sight of power, we loose
 Wild tongues that have not Thee in awe –
Such boasting as the Gentiles use
 Or lesser breeds without the Law –
Lord God of Hosts, be with us yet,
Lest we forget – lest we forget!

For heathen heart that puts her trust
 In reeking tube and iron shard –
All valiant dust that builds on dust,
 And guarding calls not Thee to guard –
For frantic boast and foolish word,
They Mercy on Thy People, Lord! Amen.

Jan 21.

The Foot-Path to Peace.
To be glad of life because it gives you the chance to love and to work and to play and to look up at the stars; to be satisfied with your possessions, but not contented with yourself until you have made the best of them; to despise nothing in the world except meanness and falsehood, and to fear nothing except cowardice; to be governed by your admirations rather than by your disgusts; to covet nothing that is your neighbor's except his kindness of heart and gentleness of manners; to think seldom of your enemies, often of your friends, and everyday of Christ; and to spend as much time as you can, with body and with spirit, in God's out-of-doors – these are little guide-posts on the foot-path to peace.

Outlook – Jun. 1900

Henry van Dyke

A tramp down the railroad track; then over a muddy road to the timber fringing the Des Plaines. Wordsworth in pocket and consulted for a time as I sat on a stray bit of side walk out among weeds and patches of stunted bushes. The muskrats played in open water. The sinking sun bathed the stubble in a yellowish light. On across the bridge; past the paper mill; two stretches of muddy road following the winding of the river; then another bridge. Here on the surface of a pool of open water hemmed in by ice was a beautiful picture. The violet purple tints gleamed faintly in the upper atmosphere but the mirror of water caught the softest tone and the shadows of trees reflected every detail of branches and twig and even the gray of the bark.

Been reading the Last Essays of Elia lately – for the most part on trains, instead of a newspaper.

Jan. 28.

“Our faculties and affections are graduated to objects greater, fairer, and more enduring than the order of nature gives us here. They demand a scale and depth

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of being which outwardly they do not meet, yet inwardly they are the organ for apprehending. Hence a certain glorious sorrow must ever mingle with our life; all our actual is transcended by our possible; our visionary faculty is an overmatch for our experience; like the caged bird, we break ourselves against the bars of the finite with a wing that quivers for the infinite. To stifle this struggle, to give up this higher aspiration, and be content with making our small lodgings snug, is to cut off the summit of our nature, and live upon the flat of a mutilated humanity.”

Martineau.

“Martineau did a great work for the universal church in behalf of the intuitive power of the soul, - ‘the surmises of the moral sense, the vaticinations of devoted love, the implicit faiths folded up in the interior reason, conscience and affection; - a self-luminous power of insight whereby things invisible and eternal and divine become our assured inheritance.”

J.B. Young.

Feb. 4.

Five inches of snow.

Friday evening had a tramp over the fields. Sun went down beautifully. In the stubble birds gave forth cheerful evening notes. Found my favorite vantage ground for a sunset – level stretch with solitary trees in foreground; in the back ground a fringe of timber etched darkly into the picture. Twin elms stood out clear yet soft in outline against a purple sky. The fore ground of a picture which shows a bird, a flower, and a tree is full enough. With faded sunset and the deepen’d gloom of the fringed western horizon at my back, I found the eastern sky a faded blue and the stars yellowish white aglow.

“The night is full of darkness and doubt,
The stars are dim and the Hunters out;
The waves begin to wrestle and moan;
The Lion stands by his shore alone
And sends, to the bounds of Earth and Sea,
First low notes of thunder to be.
Then East and West, through the vastness grim,
The whelps of the lion answer him.”

From *The Spectator* “printed about a year ago.”

Mar 1.

“I have been a steady student of the law of habit. I have seen it slowly, gently, imperceptibly, wrap men round and round and round in its close winding sheet, as if they were Egyptian mummies. So quietly was all this done that they never knew their bondage until the first faint movement toward the higher (a better) life, when, behold, their helplessness recalled the Indian-tortured hunter perpendicularly planted in the ground, with earth packed around him even to the lips.”

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“A miracle of faith has rescued some of these; but a study of years compels the admission that not more than five in one hundred inebriates, gamblers, or libertines are ever permanently reformed. *** These are the piteous object lessons that have taught me the supreme power of habit over human destiny. But I saw that the tendency to repeat the same act, and the greater ease with which this was done the second time than the first, is the key to paradise as well as pandemonium. I saw the slow unerring plan of God by which our habits may become as step-ladder to saintship, etc.”

Frances E. Willard.

Mar 2 –

The snow lies deep in drifts but the sun shone long and strong today. There is something of cheer in the birds' chatter and the jay calls out with confidence.

“Shut out the whole world, and all the throng of sins: sit thou as it were a sparrow alone upon the house-top, and think over thy transgressions in the bitterness of thy soul.”

Mar. 3.

If we were only worthy of sunlight and sky, of the glittering snow crystals, of graceful trees towering serenely heavenward!

Mar 7.

Sleet and glittering snow fields.

Laetus sorte mea? [Goodwill be my lot? – ed.] Only in rare bursts of sanity.

Mar. 11.

Went to Ball's Park a few moments, dodging the deep drifts to see the birch trees. So handsome they look with their bark whiter than flour contrasting with black rings from which the bark is removed. They are tassel-hung for the great display soon to come.

“Nature is apt to mean nothing aesthetically if one can not make poem[s] about her and have them published, if one can not paint pictures of her and have them exhibited. There is a deeper purpose in the love of nature than that. Nature is for health, recreation, wondrously varied refreshment, indefinable stimulus, constant happiness rising occasionally into ineffable joy.”

Song of the Unsuccessful.

by Richard Burton

Outlook Mar. 3, 1900

We are the toilers from whom God barred
The gifts that are good to hold.

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We meant full well and we tried full hard,
And our failures were manifold.

And we are the clan of those whose kin
Were a millstone dragging them down.
Yea, we had to sweat for our brother's sin,
And lose the victor's crown.

The seeming-able, who all but scored,
From their teeming tribe we come;
What was there wrong with us, O Lord,
That our lives were dark and dumb?

The men ten-talented, who still
Strangely missed of the goal,
Of them we are: it seems Thy will
To harrow some in soul.

We are the sinners, too, whose lust
Conquered the higher claims;
We sat us prone in the common dust
And played at the devil's games.

We are the hard-luck folk, who strove
Zealously, but in vain:
We lost and lost, while our comrades throve,
And still we lost again.

We are the doubles of those whose way
Was festal with fruits and flowers;
Body and brain we were sound as they,
But the prizes were not ours.

A mighty army our full ranks make,
We shake the graves as we go;
The sudden stroke and the slow heartbreak,
They both have brought us low.

And while we are laying life's sword aside,
Spent and dishonored and sad.
Our epitaph this, when once we have died:
"The weak lie here, and the bad".

We wonder if this can be really the close,
Life's fever cooled by death's trance;
And weary, though it seem to our dearest of foes:
"God, give us another chance".

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Mar. 13.

The children report seeing the robin but I have only heard him. Streams are flowing, ice is melting, the breeze of March is blowing. March smiled rarely today. Hung out some suet by a wire today to try to entertain some of the transient ones.

Mar 14.

No smile of Nature but reposeful gloom with a short flurry of belated-seeming snow flakes.

Mar 15.

Cold! - - - The British flag waves over Bloemfontein. - - - Some of us quietly are pro-British in sympathies but we must reckon with the Ancient Order of Hibernians. - - The Platt-Deutsch of the village are to have a "Ball" next Sündabend. - - - No matter – the sky behind the clouds looks blue and warm and as one looks he listens for the lark's call from across the wind-swept ridges.

Mar. 16.

No glimpses of azure sky, today. Zero weather. - - - Raised my yawp to join the universal ditto, by writing Senator Cullom about the Porto Rican tariff - - - The drunkenness at Manila and the deluge of liquor fairly staggers one. (No pun).

Mar. 22.

One day of Spring by calendar and by grace of a modestly gentle mood of March. Robins have come into their own and devote much of the early hours of daylight to disputes with the jays. The blackbirds chant in companies.

Sunday afternoon I heard snatches of music from the stubble. Went to the Des Plaines and waded through ice and melting snow in the woods.

- March 25 -

The song sparrow carols now every morning in the trees of the neighborhood.

April 1.

A real April shower or two today! While drops were falling here and there at noon today the birds were jubilant. In the dry grass of the deserted lawn near by the blackbirds were stumping up and down hilariously while a solitary minstrel on a bare bough of an apple tree sang with dignity and delight. Near there a company of robins were rioting noisily.

The frogs sang their first chorus for me this evening from pools along the walk from here to Norwood. The bird choruses as night came on were very thrilling from stubble and meadow and tree top. The meadow lark and song sparrow exulted to lead the refrain.

Heard the pewee (chickadee) again today.

| | | |
|--------|-------|--------------|
| Robin. | Crow. | Song Sparrow |
| Jay | Owl. | Meadow Lark |

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Grackle. Eng Sparrow Blue bird
Orchard Oriole Pewee (Chickadee) Vesper Sparrow

Saw the sunset splash beautiful tints last evening down muddy streets in Chicago and glow on the surface of black puddles, while smoke masses and clouds of steam were tinged with splendor and floated against softened outlines of tall buildings and chimney stacks standing out against the western sky. All the splendor which I associate with the open country, meadow, grove, & river, is lavished upon the forlornest street of the city. The moon rises over the blackened tide of Chicago River and looms brightly through the smoky exhalations of a great city.

April 12.

Last Saturday afternoon was so warm that coats were oppressive. Spent two hours on the prairie, in the thin strip of woods south of here, & on the road. I met a large and jolly party of juncos. The meadow larks were conspicuous, seen as well as heard.

Yesterday over two inches of snow! My thriving crocuses & tulips I was perforce obliged to bury in their winter debris again.

I saw a dozen or so birds in a large elm today at noon; I believe they were orchard orioles, yet they seemed fully as large as robins. Perhaps my guess is wide of the mark.

April 22.

The landscape is adorned with that beautiful tint which grass in early spring gives it. The catkins are losing their woolly appearance; maple buds shower down on the walks; the elm buds are swelling. At all seasons of the year is the elm beautiful.

The tall arbor vitae hedges in my neighbor's yard and the elms, box-elders and maples there and in my own yard invite the minstrels who love town life. The robins' choruses at night fall are vociferous and inspiring. The meadow larks are abundant on the outskirts of our village and in the open country. This afternoon I listened to the music in a grassy lane amid fields, and passed on to the Des Plaines where I heard for the first time this season the "thrasher." He sang from a tree on the edge of the woods and I sat and listened at will. The sun became a red ball and sank in purple haze, but the river caught its somber red in blotches on its surface.

The year's at spring,
And day's at morn;
The morning's at seven.
The hill-side's dew pearled,
The lark's on the wing,
The snail's on the thorn,
God's in His heaven; -
All's well with the world.

April 23.

1900

Visited Forrestville school today.

Dr. W.T. Harris is great if for no more than that he reminds us occasionally what o'clock it is.

Malcolm. Let us seek out some desolate shade, and there weep our sad bosoms empty.

Macduff. Let us rather
Hold fast the mortal sword, and like good men
Bestride our down-fallen birthdom.

April 29.

Saw the first rose breasted grosbeak today.

The box-elders have a full display of silken threads carrying anthers and stigma. The long catkins of the birch adorn those trees. Thursday evening went down to Aurora. It was so delightful to see rolling country and to be really away from the city. The ride down was for that reason very charming. Farm houses, grassy roads, orchards, men in the fields, brooks flowing, -- I envied the rural inhabitant. How unconscious the city really is of the great things that are going on in the country. The new life of the meadows and the sprouting green of the oat-fields seemed to me of more moment than the confused preoccupation of the city.

Last Week's itinerary: Monday – Forrestville School; Tuesday – Lincoln School, South Evanston; Wednesday – South School, Oak Park; Thursday – Goethe School, & Chicago Kindergarten College. That evening in Aurora; the next day as well, & until noon Saturday.

May 14.

Yesterday afternoon in the woods and meadows on their fringes!

Saw and heard my first bobolink!! Heard him first – he was in a young tree bare as yet of leaves. He made the air vibrate for awhile as I lay on the grass and listened. Then he took a bath in the ditch close by while I stole up quite near for a close view. The bath over and his feathers dried in the tufts of grass, he flew up, wheeled around and fell to the grassy earth with a wild rich shower of notes! I heard other bobolinks here and there during my long ramble.

It is the most beautiful weather we ever see here. The orchards are masses of bloom; the grass in the meadows is velvety and rich. The trees are hanging out soft fresh masses of foliage. Wild flowers are profusely scattered in the woods. It was special display day for sweet-william. Geranium blooms here and there and will soon be profuse, while the white trillium still lingers to contrast with his plainer cousin of the read brown hue.

What shall be said of the songs of the day! Every thicket and meadow yesterday boasted its full corps of artists. Individual work was fine; the ensemble perfect; the result ravishing. The haw trees are beginning to bloom and the wild crab will soon burst its pink buds. Who dare ask more? Oh to lie in the grass sine cura!

May 24.

1900

So much that is charming and lovely in Nature I have feasted on that writing seems stale. Saturday I went wheeling through Riverside and the woods beyond. I could hardly realize there is such beautiful scenery in this country. Sunday afternoon I had a long ramble along the Des Plaines. Such freshness and beauty and peace in the woods and open pastures! It seems a shame not to spend daily some hours in such charming surroundings.

The orchard oriole has added his ringing notes and vibrant trill to the daily chorus. The wood-thrush is persistent, insistent rather. I like him but methinks he protests too much.

Yesterday I saw lady's slipper for the first time! Some children brought in specimens gathered near the pond in Robb's Park. My horse-chestnut is one mighty bouquet, tastily arranged. The lilac season now drawing to an end has been one to be remembered.

I like the undiscovered part. It suits my fancy to leave it so. "Childe Harold to the dark tower came".

Oct. 7.

From Franklin's Autobiography.

"In reality, there is, perhaps, no one of our natural passions so hard to subdue as pride. Disguise it, struggle with it, beat it down, stifle it, mortify it as much as one pleases, it is still alive, and will every now and then peep out and show itself; you will see it, perhaps, often in this history; for, even if I could conceive that I had completely overcome it, I should probably be proud of my humility".

His prayer:

"O powerful Goodness! bountiful Father! merciful Guide! Increase in me that wisdom which discovers my truest interest. Strengthen my resolutions to perform what that wisdom dictates. Accept my kind offices to Thy other children as the only return in my power for thy continual favors to me".

From article in Oct. 1900 *Cosmopolitan* entitled "How Honor and Justice may be taught in the Schools."

"The forces of nature are not capricious and unjust. It is quickly seen that gravitation is not capricious, whatever it may be. The operation of this law is uniform, consistent, immediate, inexorable. Poetic justice is not accomplished, to be sure. The good man who falls over a cliff perishes precisely as does his erring brother. In time one comes to recognize a kind of justice in its dealings. It is so fair and equal. It has no favorites. Its requirements are not too difficult and one's relations with it are not so very hard to adjust. A kind of intelligible and intelligent order follows in its train. The planets move in obedience to this law, and the sun and stars. This law and others like it are our benefactors. The world as it is does not differ in this respect so widely from the world as it ought to be."

"It is noticeable that unless the foundations of truth-telling are laid in youth, the habit is seldom acquired in later years. In adult life, between a lie and its consequence too many circumstances intervene. So much occurs in the mean time that the logic of events is obscured."

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“While the forces of nature are invariable and immediate in their action, we have to go to theologians and to poets – to Moses and to Dante – to see that the logical consequences of moral and spiritual acts follow as strictly. The effects of such acts are invariable and inexorable on the actor’s interior nature.”

Oct. 14.

A ramble at sunset down between fields; the purple and browns of the fields; the flitting juncos with white tail-feathers; past dry ditches and ghosts of golden rod and asters; the musical reminiscences of a songster; the forest depths on the mirrored surface of the river; the approach of dark tints in the sky. The sun dipped his big round disk into purple vapors as he sank; a few streaks of clouds prolonged first the gold of sunset; then the rose and red. Purple shadows flecked the roseate glow and the display was over.

Oct 21.

It is golden pomp in leaf and purple dashes a field. The scarlet dyes are rare this year. The most beautiful blending of yellow leaf with green is displayed. The green grass contrasts charmingly with yellow foliage.

Yesterday. “In Memoriam.” Thomas Concert I

Today Gunsaulus.

He prayed that we might be in touch with the beauty of autumn; that we might consider the leaves of autumn and open our hearts to the great festival of nature.

“One star differeth from another star in glory”.

- Nov. 18 -

Gunsaulus. He quoted from Millet who is said to have wished for adequate power to paint the picture summed up in: “And there was famine in the land throughout the length and breadth thereof.” He suggested, as an equally profound subject, a sentence from the description of the journey of Elijah and Elisha to the Jordan, “And they two went on.” II Kings 2-6.

Elisha’s repeated refusal to tarry behind may illustrate the appropriate courage.

A fine though is the fatherhood of great minds – their ability to project their identity into variety. Shelley, the atheist, is the father of Browning, the Christian. Omar Khayyam has had not power of begetting sonship. Kant was the father of Hegel and Coleridge. Elisha, the prudent man, was fathered by the imprudent man, Elijah.

Dec. 9

Lucretius on Life and Death - - W. H. Mallock

(John Lane).

“Rubiayat” – Comparative Edition

(Little, Brown & Co.)

Fitzgerald

200

Whinfield

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Justin H. McCarthy.

Feb. 11. -- 1901!

| | |
|----------------|----------------|
| Tennyson | Arnold |
| Browning | Newman |
| Arnold. | Pater. |
| Clough. | (Henry James). |
| D.G. Rossetti. | |
| Morris. | |
| C. Rossetti & | |
| E.B. Browning. | |

That's partly way. Lassitude and chastened discouragement too. Have done much in revision of values & estimates of the party of the first part since a few months ago.

Heavy snow Feb 3; lighter one Feb. 9. The oldest inhabitant must admit that it does snow yet, once in a while.

Saturday night – Feb. 9 – Mansfield in Henry V.

Hon. I.N. Phillips address on John Marshall, Saturday, A.M.

“The power to do good is never wholly dissociated from the power to do evil.”

Easter! April 7. -- 1901.

Tulips and lilies and children at the little church and the wealth of meaning – subtle and tender – which children unconsciously infuse into their hymns of the risen Lord. He is risen indeed! Children are so rich in affection. Sometimes as I pause in my trips of inspection through rooms where children are at work, a little hand will steal into mine and hold it tight until I pass on.

Rich changes have been gradually spreading over the face of nature. Pools of water on low-lying lawns become purple patches set in such delicate and varying tints of green. The song sparrow bravely summons me at dawn; the robins hold late and somewhat noisy vespers in my maples and my neighbor's arbor vitae; and the maples are opening their swollen red-brown buds.

April 9.

Last evening I went down to my favorite brook in the timber to see for the first time for me – skunk-cabbage in bloom. The blooms produce such a delightfully odd effect with their streaked brown hoods sticking up out of the earth as if to allow the owner of the hood to take a preliminary survey of the state of the weather before hazarding his green leaves above ground. Two school boys were with me, and we dug up a few plants and wandered up & down the brook enjoying the comic appearance of the hooded brethren. I found great patches of one species of liverwort climbing down steep & shady nooks along the stream. Hepatica was holding up here and there above the dry leaves its bunches of fuzzy flower stems and displaying occasional pink blossoms of most delicate hue while

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the brave three lobed leaves straggled near by at the end of long rusty and weather beaten stems. I must not fail to chronicle the fine blue-bird that lighted at one time on a post near me and warbled so softly that we seemed to hear the faint sweet tones from a distance. The meadow larks fluted over our return across the meadows and the robins were at vespers as I passed the arbor vitae hedge to turn in home.

I am reading Thoreau's Walden these days. Sunday I began Newman's Apologia.

- April 10 -

In Adam Bede there is a very suggestive illustration of the contrast that may exist between external nature and sinful nature in man's breast. It is a picture of a rich country with woods rolling down gentle slopes to the green meadows where perhaps by the clustering apple blossoms, or in the broad sunshine by the corn fields, or at a turning by the wood where a clear brook gurgles below may be seen an image of a great agony – the agony of the Cross. The image might seem to a traveller to this world to be strangely out of place in the midst of this joyous nature.

April 18.

Sunday (14th) the Vedder pictures – especially The Threshold of Life, The Cumaean Sibyl, Lazarus

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Monday evening from the topmost seat in the Auditorium – Hiawatha's Wedding Feast and the Berlioz Te Deum.

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This morning a soft snow mantle surprised the sun and the rest of us. The early morning was one of rare contrasts; patches of virgin white snow flecking the green of the lawns, and overhead among the white tipped clouds and in infinite depths beyond them was the most delicate blue of the sky. Monday morning (Apr. 15) as early as 5 o'clock or perhaps earlier; I was aroused by the nervous quick iteration of a whippoorwill who was no doubt surprised to find himself in the trees back of my alley. I had not heard one here before. A few days ago an orchard oriole industriously turned over leaf patches in my garden, and the next morning I heard his whistle in my neighbor's yard down street. It was the first time I had heard his notes.

April 23

The spring delays a little. Cold winds have recalled March but they have been blowing a passage for the grass and flowers. The elm buds are swelling; it is impossible to eulogize rightly the beauty of the elm trees just now. A solitary dandelion blossomed in the shelter of the sunny side of our house today, but it looked half abashed, as it were, at its own boldness. It will not be so with its successors.

I jolted bicycle-wise to the river bridge this evening. Among the meadow larks I noted one with a peculiarly rich whistle; he trilled or triple-tongued it in the last bar. Five purple martins – two females – sat in a dejected looking row on

a wire fence by the clay pond. Swallows are graceful only in flight, like cowboys a-mount. Skunk cabbage peered out here and there on the sloping bank of the river and unfolded stout rolls of leaves. Little springs trickled out at frequent intervals and in their paths among the rich silt-washings the marsh marigolds were budding; some showed in full bloom. I plucked up two plants by the roots, a recognition and a well-meant compliment, and carried them to Mrs. C. as a reminder and advertisement of a spring opening. It is a hint to look and, if worthy of sight, therefore see. As Thoreau quotes: "The soul not being mistress of herself," says Thsengtsen, "one looks, and one does not see; one listens, and one does not hear; one eats, and one does not know the savor of food." [Drawing of a plant bud appears with this quotation. – ed.]

April 24.

Boys brought me for my first view today branchipus vernalis, specimens nearly an inch long swimming and darting as lively as minnows. They swim on their backs propelled mainly by the tail "fin," keeping all the while their rows of upright feathery gills in swift vibrations. Many bore sacks of eggs. My yellow-bells blossomed under the warm genial sun today.

- April 25 -

On a projecting shelf of the southern gable of our house a pair of robins has built a nest in which contributions from our rag-bag were thankfully received and conspicuously woven in. They have a snug dry nook but are compelled to do continual warfare for vantage ground against the sparrows. As if it were not enough honor to have one pair of birds select one's house for tenement purposes, a pair of turtle doves has cast in its domestic lot with the robins and us. We found the nest first today, but affairs had, unbeknown to us, reached the "interesting" stage, for the mother is setting. They chose the open eave-trough for a nest and the very corner where two of the tin gutters meet. The month has been rather dry, and we think this has dulled the birds' instinct; what a heavy rain will do is to be seen. The mother sits there in plain view from below peering at us with bright eye.

April 28.

Yesterday morning I heard pleasant music from a friendly bird smaller than a robin. It had black around its throat and head and a dark crest; the rest of its body dark save brownish read stripes on its wings and a grayish white breast.

Last evening I heard my first brown-thrasher who sang from the same tree where on April 22 a year ago I listened to the same kind of a vesper song. It was wonderful music with numerous and ravishing encores, caressing, entreating, commanding, warning, scherzo, capriccioso, andante con religioso. Song sparrows and humbler minstrels sang as feelingly even with less virtuosity, and the kingfishers chattered nervously from their perches jutting out over the water. The colored display in the sky was painted with feeling and rich sentiment upon the sensitive mirror surface of the river. As the shadows and approaching

1901

moonlight warned the evening singers to repose, the whip-poor-wills from the depths of the wood began their nightly choruses.

May 30.

“And men have died for its crimson bars
And its field of blue with the spangled stars.”

“A human life, I think, should be well-rooted in some spot of a native land, where it may get the love of tender kinship for the face of earth, for the labors men go forth to, for the sounds and accents that haunt it, for whatever will give that early home a familiar, unmistakable difference amidst the future widening of knowledge: a spot where the definiteness of early memories may be inwrought with affection and kindly acquaintance with all neighbors, even to the dogs and donkeys, may spread, not by sentimental effort and reflection, but as a sweet habit of the blood. At five years old, mortals are not prepared to be citizens of the world, to be stimulated by abstract nouns, to soar above preference into impartiality; and that prejudice in favor of milk with which we blindly begin, is a type of the way body and soul must get nourished, at least for a time. The best introduction to astronomy is to think of the nightly heavens as a little lot of stars belonging to one’s own homestead.”

“It is in such experiences of boyhood or girlhood, while elders are debating whether most education lies in science or literature, that the main lines of character are often laid down.”

Nessun maggior dolore
Che ricordarsi del tempo felice
Nella miseria.

Dante.

This is truth the poet sings,
That a sorrow’s crown of sorrow
Is remembering happier things.

See Daniel Deronda.

Oct. 22 – 1901.

The third day of Indian summer, warm, dray, friendly. The visionary tints are everywhere. The maples have flashed their brilliant signals and the deep harmonious colors of the oaks prevail now. Color always about one – greens and blues – purples and violets – deep browns and reds, and the flush of the sunset sky meets the answering flush from the woods. Visionary tints, indeed. And the moon shines bright at night while vapors mount from the meadows.

Nov. 24.

The Indian Summer referred to above was remarkable for its length and beauty. I spent many evenings afield. I should long remember the sunset skies and the reflections of painted trees in the still water of the river.

1901

Today I tramped across the fields during a drizzle and was cheered by the color in the stubble and meadows. The solitary cottonwoods stand out against the background of sky and gentle sweep of meadow and field with a grace I have never until late associated with them.

Every separate patch of dry waving grass seemed to have its own color. Here and there were gleaming masses of brown, the winter tint of some of our weeds, and belated stems of clover stood where the frost had checked their boldness and colored leaf and head of bloom a rusty brown.

Yesterday I was thirty two years old and I thought of it and was not altogether unhappy as I sat last night listening to the 8th Symphony and Brahms' Academic Festival. What if I should live thirty two years more, and what if I should not? Well – it matters how I live, not how long.

I went through the Polish and Bohemian cemeteries near Norwood Park this morning. Most of the tombstones are surmounted with the crucifix; the image of the suffering Lord is everywhere, oftenest of stone, very frequently of wood, and now and then of bronze on an iron cross. Over the door of the receiving vault is carved a large skull and crossbones! Such is death, -- to some. A tiny chapel stands back of the vault. The door was open and a solitary worshipper knelt for Divine consolation. Soon he arose, came out side, and closed the door. He coughed dreadfully.

One of the most inspiring things I see these days is the splendid skill and enterprise shown in the construction of the Marshall Field building. Some months back the work began and, I believe, has not ceased since. The men at work high up in the air look small, but they are at the right perspective. They are small in size but sovrein giants in mind.

A crane lets down its long fore finger, clutches the entire load of lumber from a heavily loaded wagon, lifts it to the ninth story and drops it in place. A workman aloft slips his foot into the grappling hook, grasps the cable, and is swung out over the street and lowered to the pavement below.

It is all poetry to contemplate, and the poem is enterprise and bravery and royal effort in terms of marble and structural steel. I like Thoreau's eulogy of commerce in Walden; and Whitman has gotten genuine inspiration from just such scenes as State Street give us every hour these days.

1902

Jan 12 – 1902.

The Verestchagin pictures yesterday! Some of the Napoleon pictures seemed to me very strong art. I felt like echoing the cry of the mangled soldier on the terrible retreat from Moscow – What a monster! Such an epithet it seems to me history should soberly employ in summing up the career of Napoleon.

The collection of subjects painted in the Phillipines appealed so strongly to my emotions that I had after a time to leave the gallery. The Russians has painted real American soldiers with all their characteristic spirit of daring, initiative, and humanity. The group beginning with one entitled, “You are hit, Sergeant?” “Yes Sir” is very touching. They make one involuntary pray that in his civic life he may be so devoted that the quiet but lasting heroism with which the American soldier has been discharging a sad but manifest duty in maintaining the national honor may not have been in vain. The Himalaya group and the views of Mt. Kazbeck and Mt. Elburz are grand representations of sublime scenery. Smaller paintings such as the views of the Monastery of St. George, of Cape Fiorent, and of The Kremlin are strong. I was much impressed with his pictures of Russian peasants. There is one in particular, the head of an old beggar woman 96 years old who has experienced 85 years of continued suffering!

March 1 – '02.

By calendar and weather, truly March first. Windy, sleety, snowy, cold, gloomy – there was no mistaking it. After March will come _____ I am glad March is unmistakably with us.

March 9 –

Weather mild for several days now, sometimes sunshiny, but mostly noncommittal. One of my boys insisted that he heard the song of the meadow lark Monday evening. I was out this evening, over the meadows and down to the river, but heard only the homely little bird that is with us all winter and that of late evenings in mid winter can be heard bravely calling to his mate in soft undertones.

The brown on the willows is deepening. Add to the browns and purples and dull grays and white grays, another tone – the gray green which occurs in patches on the meadows now.

“There is nothing in life for which to be more thankful or in which to be more diligent, than its intermissions.”

“I venture one of the penalties almost any woman may have to pay for bringing to the altar only the consent to be loved is to find herself, sometime, a Titania, a love’s fool.”

The Entomologist

Sunday, Mar. 16.

Since mid-morning a cold biting wind has been blowing. Up to this day the week had been mild with some beautiful, sunshiny days.

The birds seemed to arrive all of a sudden, - bluebirds, robins, meadow larks, purple grackles, red-wing blackbirds, and already there have been vespers

1902

in our and our neighbor's arbor-vitae. I heard a sweet little song-sparrow a-trilling Wednesday. To intensify the thrill of Spring the robins and bluebirds bring with them we have had pelting April like rains succeeded by a mild and sunny sky. The morning before the cold wind came down upon us the red-winged black birds had possession of the apple orchard in my neighbor's backyard. It was an enthusiastic gathering and every note of the blackbird gamut was employed apparently for purposes of pure rapture.

Sunday, Mar. 23.

It was graciously warm in the sun today and song sparrow and meadow lark called clear and loud. The trees were bare and the leaves rustled loud in the windrows as I tramped through the woods, but the sky and the sun and the bluebird told of spring. Hepatica was infusing a fresh green in her weather-beaten leaves. The brook ran so clear over the gravel and glided smoothly over its leaf drifts and brimmed its shallows and mirrored its world of tree trunks and flitting water insects.

I found some of the mottled brethren of the hood – skunk cabbage – abloom.

March 24.

It should be recorded that the minstrels of the marsh have begun their long musical season. The nights are bright and clear, and the moon floats in a soft haze through the bare treetops. It is so light by night that the dogs have insomnia and bark at the moon.

Some notes made the last week of April, 1902, and copied March 1, 1903.

Ottawa – Friday Evening – Apr 25.

The view up and down the river from the viaduct; the river path, now at the foot of a bluff, now over a headland whose rounded buttresses of sandstone dipped down into the bed of the river. The muddy current; the swallows, wheeling, darting, skimming above it with a shrill chatter and outcry; the serene lyric of the song-sparrow from a tuft of willows on a small island out in the flood; the birds flitting about from bush to tree, and prying and searching among the leaves. We heard the ringing whistle of the cardinal bird, and soon found him and his mate busied in the thicket with occasional excursions aloft for an interval of musical outburst. "The Kentucky cardinal!" we cried with rapture. For many minutes we looked and listened. A flicker played buffoon and acrobat in a bald treetop. A tiny kinglet explored the shrubbery by us in a neighborly fashion. The most welcome odor of moist woods and opening leaf buds fed our grateful senses. The blood-root waved its handsome leaf-pattern, but the seed pod told of its passing hey day. Thus comes a note of regret into our impressions of spring.

Going over a headland we are of a sudden looking down into a tiny glen down which a brook comes leaping and foaming and battling with boulders that block its way. Halfway down the rocky side facing us stands a stout bush rooted

in a patch of soil, and it is having its day of cream-white bloom before its leaves are well-shown. We exact of it a bunch of blossom, and leave the brook to brawl its way into the river.

Utica – Saturday. Apr. 26, '02.

The Rock Island trains run close to the ancient sand-stone wall which was once the western embankment of the great river that poured gulf-ward. It is from forty to seventy feet higher than the road bed.

When I crossed the bridge over the Illinois River here today, a large flock of wild ducks was afloat on the river. A strong wind was blowing, and the ducks rode with their heads up stream and drifted with the current. I was quite near them on the bridge.

After crossing the bridge I followed the road along the river bottom. The high eastern bank of sandstone was there nearly a quarter of a mile from the edge of the river. The river itself wound along nearer and nearer the rock wall – until a mile away it washed against the broad high mass of the wall. There was “Starved Rock”.

It was a strange pleasure to try to imagine the French approaching this lofty headland, and dragging their canoes ashore to clamber to its top.

I first made my peace with the proprietor of the hotel, then I went to French Canyon.

Here and there along the way were slender, graceful trees – the shad bush – loaded with white blossom. I was not prepared for the pleasant surprises that came upon me one after another, in quick succession. I chattered aloud with pleasure until I entered the head of the canyon itself, when I was really awed by the effect. Into this spoon-shaped canyon, fifty feet in depth and less than that in width, a little brook spilled itself, splashing its way down the wall, past shelf after shelf, and then ran across the rocky floor on its way out of the canyon. Now it hurries around a sharp turn in the rock passage, and suddenly slips down a smooth steep channel in the rock to fill a foam-covered pool and pass on, turning and winding and singing with strange echoes accompanying until it flows past the east wall of Starved Rock into the river.

Brave pine trees, rooted high up in the walls of the canyon, lean over and nearly touch their tops across this beautiful chasm. Ferns hang down in solid masses, rooted in patches of soil on the shelving projections of the wall. Down below great masses of dicentra grow on the banks and lean over to meet the liverwort that climbs up the wet stone wall.

Out of the canon, climbing and winding up, I came at last to the top of Starved Rock. I got up the wooden platform and saw the famous view up and down the Illinois valley. It was a beautiful sight; will not soon forget it.

Across the river, in a tree top, that rare whistler – the cardinal bird – fluted me rich melody, while in the trees on the rock itself the chickadee sang its modest, cheery contralto. I did not want to hurry away, but I had to go back to Utica for the night. Yet an imperial sunset cheered my homeward way, and flooded the pastures and green hills with rich colors.

Horse-shoe Canyon, for instance.

1902

3:25 P.M. Sunday. Apr. 27.

At the head of the west branch.

A mighty buttress juts out to separate the head of the canyon into two deep embayments. Down into each from above, a depth of ninety feet, pours a stream of water to splash into a green pool at its foot. The water is broken at the moment of the plunge, and each silvery drop falls alone through the satiny spray. The one stream plunges over the wall between two pine trees which bend above it until their tops meet, and they can look down into the pool below. The stone wall back of each sheet of water is hollowed out deeply, and nothing but the grayest moss clings to it save now-and-then a long, thread-like vine that hangs down like a plumb line, but the buttress is beautifully dressed up and down its front with long fern fronds and hardy shrubbery. The leaves of autumn have lodged along its steep front, while through a rift beyond its projection tons of leaves have been poured down into the cavern. Tiny rills from the rocky basins unite and glide down between the walls of the canyon.

The spring flowers dwell here – dicentra, dog-tooth violet, bell-wort, budding blue-bells, trillium, rue-anemone, jack-in-the-pulpit, mandrake. Here we have the elder-bush; yonder the wild goose berry hangs down graceful branches from chance soil-gardens in the rocky walls. Shall we speak of the ferns that grow everywhere? Here is spring beauty and yonder marsh-marigold! The buttress is literally swathed in liverwort, clinging, branching – woven through and through with fine-leaved moss.

4:20 P.M.

At the head of the other branch. This seemed so open and hospitable for such a distance that I looked for a tame conclusion. But suddenly I come to a narrow bend, and wind around it to confront in the near distance a grand, stony terrace down which the water splashes. Half way up the walled end, a wide rift gives a glimpse back upon another landing. Through this rift, in a wide sheet, the water falls to sweep around over another wide terrace and run down to fill a rounding basin – then on down the canyon.

My notes do not tell of the long happy walk next day to Deer Park; of the brown thrasher's song by the way; of the splendid views of the Canyons at Deer Park; the explorations of the upper length of the canyon; lying flat on my back at noon in one sunny nook in a lonely part of the canyon and reflecting on the dinner table being four miles away; the great draughts of water I drank out of the swift stream; the climb out of the canyon, shelf over shelf, etc.

Mention might be made of the peaceful end of Sunday evening which I witnessed from the top of Starved Rock. The church bells in La Salle and Utica sounded so calmly soothing. The song sparrow and the cardinal bird and the grosbeak sang lyrics until dusk, when the whip-poor-will cried on into the night.

1903

March 1, 1903.

Highland Park.

The sun shone brightly into my windows this morning. The chatter of sparrows and the scream of the winter jay mingled with the whistling of a strong cool wind, which has given us a true early March day. One was happy, for it seemed truly March, and after March _____!

March 15, 1903.

Friday afternoon, Mar. 6, I heard the whistle (The dee-dee call of the chickadee) of the phoebe, and Saturday morning Mother heard it call repeatedly. There had been a very heavy rain with a thunder storm in the night.

Sunday afternoon, March 8, I had a long stroll down the Skokie valley. I met the first blue-birds of the season and kept them company for a while. I met my first robin, too. Him I took to be a winter resident for he was all alone. But the next day I heard the robins calling from my door.

It was splash and wade, with a beautiful sunset to flush and crimson the broad sheet of water. In the groves the chick-a-dee sang, and the tree sparrow flew about in the stubble.

The geese have been honking over; the robins and blue birds are unmistakably here. Tuesday morning, Mar. 10, a flock of black-birds clucked and chattered in the trees in a pasture not far from my house.

March 29.

March 17 and 18 were as warm March days as I remember.

On the evening of the 18th I saw and heard song sparrows and meadow larks. Another sparrow was abundant in the underbrush – I thought it the swamp sparrow. The 22nd I saw the white-breasted nut hatch, the brown creeper (I think), and the crested fly catcher – possibly only phoebe. Did not hear him sing.

April 1.

A warm shower this A.M. Beat up the ravine beyond the rifle range at Fort Sheridan this evening – without much result. Last evening I explored one of the patches of timbered growth in the Skokie beyond the Exmoor Club.

Sept. 6.

Golden rod and aster and thistle! And the katydids' duos at night to a steady background of humbly melodious chirp and buzz.

An old-fashioned funeral today. The bell-tolled and the mourners went about the street. First the grand children bearing wreaths and bunches of flowers; then six men bearing the casket; the mourners and friends. A bride of 50 years born 80 years ago was carried to the grave. [Philippina Kuist (nee Meyer), born Feb. 8, 1823, at Leopold's Haven, Baden, married to Andrew Kuist on May 12, 1853. – ed.]

Sept 7.

Too busy to accomplish much.

8

The first day of school!

Life is an arrow – therefore you must know
What mark to aim at, how to use the bow,
Then draw it to the head – and let it go.

9

Indian pipe – a study in black and white – is in bloom. The rain drips from the roof.

13

Through the wooded pasture and over the slope to the “wooded islands” in the Skokie – near the golf links. Asters everywhere, thistle blooms, chelonia, closed gentians and spiranthes – the last showing here and there in the meadow. The haw trees are aglow with ripe fruit.

14

Everything adrip – mosquito holiday.

18

Fringed gentians! A little warbler fluttered into the school room today – too weak to do much. Yet as it sunned itself in a window it feasted upon unwary flies. Later on it ate two from my fingers.

20

A flock of cedar wax-wings on the pastured margin of a grove along the Skokie.

21

Fine warm Sept. weather. Mosquito superlative. The oaks are in full green, the sumachs and wood bine turning, and now and then a rare maple a scarlet harbinger of the gorgeous pageantry yet to come.

It seems hard to conceive of the mental destitution which prompts the printing of poetry such as Cra[m?] occasionally publishes.

26

The common white oak and the variety with more deeply divided lobes – the bur oak with its leaf deeply divided as to its upper portion and with is broadly expanded lower half. -- We shall have more complete esthetic appreciation of the oaks when we can readily distinguish the kinds, and can thus not only see the differences in broad masses of foliages but can readily interpret the varying effects due to different texture of foliage mass.

29

1903

Out in the oak thicket at seven in the wet grass. The misty tenderness of an opening Indian summer day – the joyous flights of birds; the colors on oak, and sumach, ash, and maple. A flock of towhees made the patches of bushes interesting. One could not listen much for bird calls because he wanted to whistle himself. (Chopin's little nocturne which the choir used last Sunday – with appropriate words.)

“Always there is a black spot in our sunshine; it is the shadow of ourselves” -
Carlyle.

30

The ash whose russet purple foliage fairly shimmers; the gray sky that broods over the reddening wood; the buzz and chirp and subdued drone of insects; the straggling blooms of the witch-hazel;

October

4.

Down the Skokie valley to the county line this morning. Very beautiful vistas there were over green stretches – ashes, yellow and purple; oaks growing scarlet; hazel and dog wood bushes brown and red; sumachs scarlet; everywhere obscurer tones of green and gray, red and brown, and the peace of Indian summer over all. Already many of the shag bark hickories have stripped off their leaves; a few of the ashes have done the same. The white oaks show patches of red through out their foliage masses which soon turn to brown; the red oaks turn brown at once; the swamp white oaks turn to yellow – first around the leaf leaving the glossy green center showing, then this, too, turns to yellow and the leaf falls; the scarlet oaks are turning. The hazel-nut bush shows much exquisite shading from green and brown to red.

The elms drape their towering stems with leaves and let fall swinging festoons from the graceful arches above.

This afternoon I spent an hour in Libertyville. Mention should be made of the rushy lake flushed with tints from a cloudy sunset-rifted sky; of the thousand or more ducks afloat in the liquid glow; the bittersweet and barberry; the purple red crabapples.

Oct. 23.

The yellow masses in the ravines; the brown-yellow of the beeches at the bend of the ravine; the white oaks of dull red and purple red tones; the red oaks of a russet brown with rare streaks of yellow along the veins; the scarlet oaks; the perfect day followed by the perfect night.

The Mettle of the Pasture. Unevenness in style and technique; descriptions tawdry at times; figures inapt; plot poorly constructed;

Nov. 8.

1903

The flight of the fallen leaves appeals to my imagination. Watch them scamper around a corner and tangle themselves in the grass on the lawn. Here they pause, blade up as sails of a ship to catch the next gust of wind, alert, expectant, in well-ordered circular groups and companies. They are noisy in their own way, -- airy travelers by happy chance.

Dec. 6

Out on a bird trip this afternoon with Mrs Moseley. In the woods east of the club house we found a small flock of pine grosbeaks, one of them being an old male, evidently, as his breast and head showed beautifully rose-colored. We found several groups of these birds in the course of our ramble – usually feeding on the seeds of the ash. There was but one bird strongly marked with rose red, though we found two or three with red on the rump feathers. Most of the birds had brownish yellow heads, necks, & rumps with grayish breasts, though now and then one had a gray breast faintly suffused with pink.

Almost a perfect, wintry afternoon, the wind being mild. The snow lay only in unexposed places. The chickadees were numerous and diverting. The flush of sunset and the golden afterglow enveloped the woods with a wondrous beauty.

1904

Feb. 28, '04.

The pine grosbeak was seen during January by Mrs Moseley, and probably by others who reported to that effect. Feb. 7 – one cold afternoon, while on a walk I heard a melodious call and looked up only in time to see a flock of birds taking flight from the tops of some trees over the way. They were silhouetted against the bright light of a western sky, and I could only see their forms, but I believe they were grosbeaks.

Today and the latter part of yesterday a mild thaw. Since about Dec. 12 we have had almost uninterrupted winter with continuous sleighing. There was but one day of “January thaw” and this was immediately followed by a heavy fall of snow and biting cold. The lake has all but frozen completely over. Steamers have been imprisoned in the ice – one spent three days off Highland Park.

Tramped down the “ravine drive” yesterday and out along lake front a little ways below McGregor Adams’ place to visit a clump of alders. It is easy to detect a colony of beach trees in a forest of other trees in mid-winter even if one is too far away to see their trunks. A sort of blur of fine lines across the distant tree masses tells of the presence of beeches. Their lower limbs are nearly horizontal, those above reaching out more and more obliquely, and it is these oblique lines traced over their back grounds that betray the presence of beeches.

The chickadees were in good spirits as were a pair of white-breasted nuthatches.

Later in the day. – Feb. 28.

I found a flock of a dozen or more pine grosbeaks in among the cedar and pine trees in the ravine near the Gad’s Hill camping grounds. It was not easy to get near them because of the crunching noise my walking in the deep snow made.

March 8.

Weather has gradually moderated since March 1. Sunday, March 6, was rainy in the afternoon. Robins seem to have arrived that day. Yesterday I thought I heard the blue bird’s note. Today I heard several, and saw three or four.

April 5, 1904.

On March 9 a child brought in a dead meadow lark with its handsome yellow breast and markings of black. The bird had probably died from exhaustion. On Friday evening, March 11, I went down to the Skokie and saw my first blackbirds. It was cold and gray and the pools were ice-fringed.

Sunday afternoon, March 12, I spent at Berwyn. That evening a heavy snow storm set in which lasted about sixteen hours. The ground was bare of snow to begin with, and the fall was about the heaviest of the season. Before there had been much thawing, another heavy snowfall occurred, March 15-16.

March 23 I saw my first chewinks and fox sparrows, although they had been here some days.

March 27 I saw a magnificent shrike and a flock of cedar wax-wings. The afternoon before I saw a phoebe in the ravine near Gad’s Hill Point.

During the heavy snow fall of March 16 the song sparrows sang cheerfully. I saw my first kinglets – golden-crowned – April 3, Sunday. April 1, Milton T.

1904

brought in a fine great blue heron which had been shot a few days before in the Skokie near the Tillman farm.

The alder on Mr Leigh's lawn is in full tassel, the catkins are long and limp and wavy, and tiny red pistillate cones are in sight.

~ May 1, 1904. ~

April 13 I saw my first brown thrasher and the myrtle warbler. About Apr. 12 the oven birds became conspicuous, and Apr. 18 the hermit thrushes. On the latter date I saw my first ruby crowned kinglet.

The month of April was most unusually cold. High winds were frequent and not until the 27th did a period of really mild weather set in.

Sunday morning, April 24, I spent an hour in Hamilton's woods where the aspens were overhung with rain-bedraggled waving tassels. Kinglets of both kinds were numerous as were the myrtle warblers, and I noted also the palm warbler, the black-and-white warbler, the blue-gray gnat-catcher, and the American goldfinch.

That afternoon, in company with Mrs M. we found the white-throated sparrow. We probably saw a little green heron on a high branch of an elm. Hermit thrushes were much in evidence.

Wednesday, April 27, I saw at Lexington the indigo bunting, scarlet tanager, prairie horned-lark and probably the Lapland longspur.

From the train, Apr. 26, the opening catkins of the cottonwoods showed as fine masses of color, and the elm buds sometimes glowed with a reddish tinge. No fruit trees were yet in bloom.

The yellow-bellied sapsucker has been very numerous here this Spring, and the maples and aspens drip from his attacks.

Today, May 1, I found two large flocks of cedar waxwings in Hamilton's woods. They seemed quite fearless, but they apparently enjoyed flying into small trees whose branches are yet thick-set with dead leaves. I heard the first song of the brown thrasher.

May 8, '04.

Yesterday I explored the north branch of the 6th ravine beyond the rifle range. Thrushes were numerous, probably the olive backed thrush. Skunk cabbage was unfolding its thick roll of leaves; only here and there were the blossoms still fresh. Trillium grandiflorum was beginning to bloom; bloodroot was mostly through blossoming; hepaticas still dotted the slopes of the ravine; blue violets were beginning to appear. Shepherdia canadensis was in full bloom.

I saw the ovenbird, redstart, black-throated blue warbler, and magnolia warbler, and heard the call of the great crested flycatcher. I followed up and watched for some time the little green heron. This bird presents a ludicrous appearance in flight with its neck stretched out and legs hanging down, and the feathers of head and neck rumped on end. If disturbed when perching it stretches up its long neck and flirts its tail.

This is the most interesting ravine we have, and the shore for a half mile or so north and a fourth of a mile south of its mouth is also very interesting. North of the mouth birch trees are numerous on the slope with cedar, arbor vitae, &

juniper lower down. Various shrubs are intermingled, and the osier dogwood grows down on the beach level.

Today I saw and heard the yellow warbler. The bobolink, too, I saw, although I heard him a few days ago. White throated sparrows were still abundant.

The fox sparrows have been gone ever since about April 20. The kinglets have been gone probably since May 1.

I heard rare music in a bush dotted meadow this morning; bobolink, brown thrasher, song sparrow, yellow warbler, goldfinch, robin, etc.

This afternoon I identified the lark sparrow and listened to his song. He would leave his mate among the clods and mount in the top of a small tree near by. His song was very sweet.

I found the copses west of the Exmoor grounds haunted with warblers – magnolia, black and white, yellow, redstart, chestnut sided, and three I could not identify. I found a number of kingbirds in a ploughed field.

The past week has been very beautiful for scarlet catkins on the cottonwood, red and pink maple blooms, brownish green elm and box elder blossoms, yellow catkins and fairy yellow-green filmy leaf-buds on the willow, green fields, variously tinted stretches of ploughed ground; etc.

June 5, '04.

Explored the north fork of the Sixth Ravine (Fort Sheridan) this afternoon. I found a dozen or more yellow lady's slipper, and what I believe to be the shoots and leafy stems of the pink lady's slipper – yet to bloom.

Cornus alternifolia was just beginning to bloom. Cranesbill still showed its graceful blossoms as did belated trilliums, and wild phlox. The indigo bunting and Grinnell's water thrush, the redstart also, were seen. I heard the veery, I think, but could not get him to show himself. I saw him in song in a willow clump in a gravel pit near Geneva, Ill., and the song I heard today was the same.

Sept. 5, 04.

Yesterday afternoon the redstarts were everywhere in the woods. The chickadees sang and several kinds of warblers flitted about. I recognized the black-and-white warbler, and, I thought, the magnolia, but at least three others eluded me. One of the thrushes – not the wood-thrush – was startled here and there. I saw the white-breasted nuthatch, too; a water-wag-tail, a whip-poor-will, a chewink, great flock of boisterous crows, - golden-rod and asters, blue lobelia, New Jersey tea, black-eyed Susans, gerardia, brunella, etc.

Nov. 6, 1904.

Through Hamilton's woods – the stiff, thick-set leaves on stump sprouts – the Birch wooded-pasture – the elm with brown gold foliage, its fellows all stripped and silhouetted against the sky – the pussy willows still green – the small cottonwoods with scattered patches of yellow leaves still clinging to their tops – the dry basins thickly lined with deep-brown-red dock – the brown-purple, yellow tinted meadows – the brown-gray marsh – the island patches of plumed wild-rice – the loose tasselled sedge – the thick brown grasses – the sentinel

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groves and copses – the painted depths, -- the sinking sun – the plashy curving lagoon deep-set among sedges and coarse grass – the robins and blackbirds on bare branches of a clump of willows – the dead bittern in the grass – the muskrats' carelessly built domes along the morass – the frost-bitten lily pads – the tell-tale streaks on the stagnant stream – the wooden bridge lifting the roadway across the stream – the valley view of meadow and marsh, of slope and tangled wood – the road-side clump of hawthorne festooned with flaming bitter-sweet – the deep flush in the western sky and the gathering gloom –

They flash upon the inward eye, which is the bliss of solitude.

Nov. 9.

A pelting rainstorm came up this evening with fitful strong puffs of wind for prelude. The swamp white oak up street stands heavily clad in all its summer leaves turned brown and stiff, and as the winds mouthed the leaves and the rain drops splashed down through them, they rustled and hissed and crackled noisily.

1905

January 2, 1905.

The emphasis of newness. Yet every day is new, each minute also. There are so many splendid things to do. We could be always busy with them – if we could. Perhaps, also, if we would.

January 3.

Saturday last when coming up to Chicago on the Alton limited I noticed a low sand ridge in the northern limits of Braceville. For a few miles beyond there was no sand exposure but there were gentle ridges capped with a second growth scarlet oak. Near Braidwood, however, there were sweeping ridges of sand and again beyond Braidwood these ridges were not noticeable but the fields were conspicuously dotted with boulders. Then appeared strong morainic ridges as we crossed the Kankakee at Wilmington. Near Elwood appeared minor ridges soon passing into stronger ones which in turn died away into an undulating plain. Again came strong heaving ridges and we ran into the Des Plaines valley at Joliet.

The haunt of the showy orchis under the heavy beeches shade; the mystic notes of the hidden musician; the drip, the faint odors, the leafy coolness.

January 4.

It is cold; then the bitterness grows less. It snows some and the wind blows the snow about.

The great Maestro is dead today! His new Temple of Music has known his presence but a scant three weeks. [Theodore Thomas established the Chicago Symphony Orchestra in 1891 and served as its musical director until his death. Orchestra Hall was dedicated three weeks before his death. – ed.] At the motion of his baton thoughts too lofty for voice or pen – the sublime creations of master intellects – were embodied forth for him who had ears to hear and soul consciousness to be awakened to full activity. There is less of Beethoven, of Hayden, Handel, Mozart, Wagner, Tschai today than there was before the Maestro died.

January 5.

Being a good listener has its drawbacks. The talker gets from practice fluency of expression, and he improves his thoughts by turning them over. What one does not say does not promote eloquence.

If the word coward meant as much in the marketplace as it does on the battlefield, we would have a fine body of citizenship.

January 6.

An interesting question – to trace the extent to which the growth of stability in a nation is due to ideals of the marketplace as compared with that arising from ideals of the spirit.

January 7.

Only the great can afford to be unassuming. Others will be lost who preserve that attitude. The vigorous man wins with coarse calibred weapons. It is worth while to lose.

January 8.

“The truth is that readin’ is th’ nex’ thing this side iv of goin’ to bed f’r restin’ th’ mind. With mos’ people it takes the place iv wurruk. A man doesn’t think whin he’s readin’, or if he has to, th’ book is no fun.”

Martin Dooley

January 9.

The wind blows cold – the skater seeks shelter.

We have a new Governor today. [Charles Samuel Deneen – ed.]

January 10.

Probably 8° to 10° below zero this A.M.

Professor Triggs’ address at Springfield the other day was inspiring – what he said and what he is because of what he says. He believes in the “inclusive man” and is one, and he maintains generous ideals of a democracy to be which make him troublesome to smug dwellers in the present.

January 11.

Rereading Martin Chuzzlewit. It is so easy for an author to make his bad characters “real”, but it is difficult to keep the good ones from vanishing out of their gilt frames. There are Sairey Gamp and Tom Pinch!

January 12.

A chat with an old settler who told how his parents were a whole winter saving up two dollars and a half to meet their subscription to a “public” school to which they were sending three children.

January 13.

The splendid but unconscious faith of children is sufficient to remove mountains. It is often touching to hear children recite passages freighted with the sad serenity or the anxious doubting and inquiry of the adult mind, and all with a simple directness which notes no portent in the lines.

“Serene I fold my hands
and wait.”

January 15.

At the Art Institute this afternoon to see the loan portrait exhibit. Lehnbach, Chase, Zorn and Sargent represented the world of today, and Lely, Lawrence, Reynolds, and Romney and Stuart that of yesterdays ago.

- Jan. 16 -

“And so from hour to hour” –

We devote our time stolidly to the smaller things, and, to keep sweet, we let ourselves think no further. We would not chafe – it is bad on the temper. We defer doing greater things until later – which is always true to its name. Acute

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compunction affects us with momentary anguish, but soon we remember to forget.

January 18.

What value shall be set upon the fugitive contributions of the man who is sleepy? Why will they not let him sleep? How a little weariness blurs the spiritual outlook!

Jan. 19.

Richard Mansfield in the Merchant of Venice!

Jan 21.

Last night, Leon Marx and Mrs. Minnie Fish Griffin in the Club House. Tonight, the orchestra in Orchestra Hall – Tramonti and Miss Foster, soloists. A beautiful concert and a sad one; the dignified Master is yet in our minds.

Jan 22.

A trip to the groups of cedars in Gad's Hill Ravine to look for pine grosbeak. I did not see any birds whatever, whether the noise I made crashing through the snow crust frightened everything away long in advance or not. But – oh the splendor of the lake under the reflected rays of sunset! Off on the horizon were rose purple clouds. The snow on shore and the marginal ice masses were of the softest pink tone, while the undulating water in the foreground was a gold green with iridescent patches.

The winter weeds and grasses stood out above the snow – b[run?]ella, asters, goldenrod. The burs hitched bravely on one's garments. The thin snow patches above the yielding crust told the story of small wood and field folk reconnoitering for food. [This sentence is followed by drawings of animal tracks. – ed.]

Tonight the solemn full moon came up above the horizon cloud mass and spilled a broad wake of light across the lake.

January 23.

Yesterday was the massacre in St. Petersburg. "Greater love hath no man that this –" may be said of the peasants, working men, and students who were so pitilessly shot down. Theirs is the serene dignity of a martyr's death.

One could hardly talk of it today; it is so pitiful.

January 24.

Without are fierce blasts and shifting snow drifts, and the thermometer dipping farther and farther below the zero mark.

January 27.

Reading about Ruskin. The novice rushes in where the wary critic fears to tread.

Feb. 5.

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The coldest so far was the night of Feb. 1 – thermometers registered all the way from 16 to 20 degrees below zero.

A tramp in a snow storm with the road now piled deep with snow and now wind-swept. The brave road-side flowers of winter – asters, yellow daisies, burdock, jewel weed, rag weed, cockle burs – were beautifully powdered and wreathed in snow.

I went to see some neglected and starving horses that had been reported. Out in a close cropped meadow far away from shelter were four forlorn horses pawing away the snow where thinner places occurred and gnawing snow-choked mouthfuls of scanty grass and weeds. I left them there in the dusk unmindful of the pelting storm and of the cold – still biting eagerly at the frozen stubble.

Feb. 12, '05.

Cold, with occasional snow squalls. Heavy snow masses cover the ground. (Over to Berwyn, this P.M.)

“The majority of men will always require humane letters; and so much the more, as they have the more and the greater results of science to relate to the need in man for conduct and to the need in him for beauty.” Matthew Arnold.

Atlantic – Feb. '05.

“It makes little difference whether a man speeds in his new automobile over the new macadam to his new country house, -- man and machine and road and house exactly like the advertisements! – or climbs wearily up to the hall-bedroom again at the end of a day’s work, to console himself with a pipe and a book. Each man must sit down at last with his old self; with the old hopes, sorrows, dreams; with the old will to ‘win out’ somehow; with the inner world, in short, which Literature interprets, and no hint of which appears in the advertising pages”

Bliss Perry – *Atlantic* – Jan. '05

Feb. 26, '05.

Many days of intense cold this month, but mild and balmy the last few days. Sunny part of today – a gray evening – blue-gray cloud masses over all the sky. Most of the snow is gone; sleighing is “thin”; the heavy snow drifts melt from time to time.

A trip down the county-line road. Noted particularly the contrast between the details of branches and twigs in hard maples and ashes. In the latter the blunt thick twigs curve upward at branch ends. In the former the twigs are more slender and numerous, but there is usually the same recurving of branches. The maple densely interweaves its allotted space with branches and twigs.

The weed tops and sedges, the wild-rice stripped of most of its streamers, the waving grasses, and the brown masses of swamp grass stood out well from a back ground of snow. The tree sparrow called from stubble; a large heron-like bird rose up from the high grass and winged its way along the frozen windings of the Skokie. It may have been a gull.

Pussy willows were peeping a little.

March 5 – 1905.

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Friday afternoon (March 3) went out over the melting snowy fields to the Skokie islands beyond the golf links. Four school boys “mit.”

Gulls were winging their way over; crows were heard and seen; and we flushed a lone robin – a winter visitant, I supposed. The tree sparrows retreated before us as we climbed the slope homeward – quite invisible, they were, but sweetly and elusively musical.

Today – the long tramp to the county line bridge. The snow still lay in drifts in the woods – the pastures were dotted with it here and there – steel gray pools of water everywhere mirrored the gray of the sky. I tramped around the margins of several of the wooded islands, admiring especially the purple-red-dish glow of the osier dogwoods. The twigs of this dogwood fork and fork again in a noticeable manner, and each is tipped with pointed leaf buds. Clumps of viburnum lentago showed their somewhat flattened buds folded between long bud scales which tapered up prominently above the bud.

Flocks of tree sparrows flew up out of the high grass, sported awhile in the trees and then flew down into the meadow.

At the county line I went towards a patch of haw trees over which bittersweet vines ran riot, and there I found a solitary shrike on the very top of a tree. He gave me one good look only then flew away out over the Skokie – leaving a watery way too deep for travel between us. I would have expected to see a northern shrike, but the black line or band connecting the lores was so prominent that I fain must call him a loggerhead shrike.

A few minutes later I found a pair of robins in a tree, and the male scolded sharply at the intrusion.

It was a gray March afternoon with a cool north wind stirring.

Mention may be made of the hay stacks with their refreshing smell.

Tuesday afternoon – Feb. 28 – I saw a red-headed woodpecker in a tree at Lake Forest as I went through on the trolley.

[Pasted onto this page of the diary is a newspaper clipping without citation regarding the causes of poverty in Chicago. – ed.]

March 8.

From 4:30 to 6:30 P.M. I tramped around near the bridge at the County Line. A hawk in a distant elm gave me a long and fruitless chase. No robins were in sight – blue-birds give no sign. A fine clear sunset flushed the pools and flowing water courses of the Skokie. This I viewed from the top of a stack of marsh hay.

March 12 – Sunday.

From the school room windows we saw, as we thought, a flock of five robins on Tuesday, March 7. On Thursday evening we followed a robin up for a while. Yesterday morning was bright and sunny, and at 12 o'clock a blue bird flew into an ash tree in front of me – I was coming back from the school house. Children had reported blue birds earlier in the week – one accurate boy observer is sure he saw some the 8th. The week has been rather gray on the whole, although sunny bursts have been very genial – a cool week, sometimes cold. A

1905

somewhat cold wind from the north has been blowing all day. Frozen ice patches still linger in shady places.

I tramped over the Birch hill into the Skokie with Mr. S. We flushed a small hawk, a pair of blue birds, and a prairie horned-lark.

March 26.

A warm day for March with a strong wind blowing over the fields. Overcoats were a burden; the tranquil close of day was mild enough for well-established spring weather.

Two trips today: one to vicinity of Exmoor in the morning. Flocks of goldfinches, some fox sparrows, a few song-sparrows, a fine shrike, a phoebe, -- there were my catch. The shrike made a beautiful picture on a spray of pussy willow with gray-white bursting buds swarming about him.

This P.M. – via County Line, Ravinia, the lake shore, and Ravine Drive. I found flocks of flitting, trilling juncoes; the sparrow with the plaintive falling notes; another shrike; downy woodpeckers; brown creepers; a mourning cloak butterfly; a sparrow hawk; flocks of golden-crowned kinglets; some more Phoebes; and a pair of chewinks, a solitary goose – Canada goose up on beach that took flight promptly.

The alders at the foot of McGregor Adams' bluff are in full red-brown-golden tassels.

Wild fowl sweep across the sky. Sheets of water dot the Skokie valley. Blue and purple and brown yellow patches – that is the Skokie. An azure lake splashed its waves on the sands this evening.

Bluebirds and robins – the home-worship carol of the robins this evening – from the quiet depths of the ravine. Saw black birds – Mar. 22. Frogs choruses I heard first – Mar. 24, but they had been singing a few days.

April 2.

The last ten days of March were gentle – only now and then a cool blast – not cold. Warm yesterday – cooler today. – Skunk cabbage abloom in the Sixth Ravine!

April 6.

Snow flurries yesterday between bright bursts of sunshine, and this afternoon a fall of snow which persists still (10:30 P.M.) – but the roof drips and the grass will look greener tomorrow morning.

April 9.

Today was the overcoat a burden! Aspen and balm-of-gilead and cotton wood are hastening out their catkins. The larch hangs out rose-purple spheres. The scarlet maples have patches of vivid red along their bare fronts. Symphonies in gold brown are the waving elm tops. The thorn shows swelling leaf buds; -- soon the golden willows will cast a shadow!

The season burdens one's yearning spirit. This season's harmony blends overtones of the past. We are pensive as the buds burst.

1905

Hermit thrushes – perhaps other species – are here; have been here probably a week or ten days. A water-wag tail paused in our school ravine a few minutes – Apr. 4, A.M.

“Until he can manage to communicate himself to others in his full stature and proportion as a wise and good man, he does not yet find his vocation. He must find in that an outlet for his character, so that he may justify himself to their eyes for doing what he does. If the labor is trivial, let him by his thinking and character make it liberal. Whatever he knows and thinks, whatever in his apprehension is worth doing, that let him communicate, or men will never know or honor him aright. Foolish, whenever you take the meanness and formality of that thing you do, instead of converting it into the obedient spiracle of your character and aims.”

[Several clippings without citation are pasted in the final pages of the diary. The first appears to be from a magazine and is an excerpt of an address by Ex-President Harrison at the opening of the Missionary Conference in New York on the topic of universal brotherhood. The second is an address by William M. Salter of the Society for Ethical Culture. The third is a lengthy article dated March 25, 1900 and is headed ‘Dr. Hill’s sermon follows:’ – ed.]

[On the inside back cover of this diary, Mr. Smith recorded the following quotation. – ed.]

“Had better never have been written.”

Matthew Arnold – E. in C. First Series. p. 3.

[Diaries for the remainder of 1905 through 1910, if they exist, are not owned by the Library. Previous to 1911, diary entries were recorded onto blank pages of writing journals. Beginning in 1911, Mr. Smith recorded entries in diaries that provided a page for each day with the date pre-printed at the top of each page. – ed]