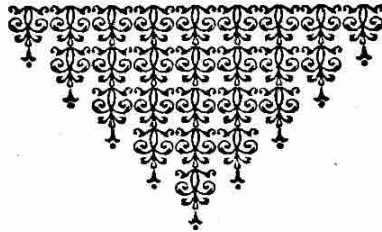


JOHN BURROUGHS AT TROUTBECK

BEING EXTRACTS FROM HIS WRITINGS
PUBLISHED AND UNPUBLISHED

With an Introduction by

VACHEL LINDSAY



*Troutbeck Leaflets
Number Ten*

TROUTBECK LEAFLETS

Troutbeck Leaflets, edited by J. E. Spingarn, and printed for private distribution by the Troutbeck Press, Amenia, New York, are devoted to a single spot of American earth and to those who have touched its life. All are OUT OF PRINT except Numbers 9 and 10.

- 1 *Poetry and Religion: Six Poems by J. E. Spingarn.*
- 2 *Criticism: An Unpublished Essay by Walt Whitman.*
- 3 *Aesthetics: A Dialogue, by Lewis Mumford.*
- 4 *The Younger Generation: A New Manifesto, by J. E. Spingarn.*
- 5 *Thoreau's Last Letter: With a Note on his Correspondent, Myron B. Benton, by Edwin Arlington Robinson.*
- 6 *Four Days on the Webutuck River, by Charles E. Benton. With an Introduction by Sinclair Lewis.*
- 7 *New Houses: Twelve Poems by Amy Spingarn.*
- 8 *The Amenia Conference: An Historic Negro Gathering, by W. E. Burghardt Du Bois.*
- 9 *A Troutbeck Letter-Book [1861-1867]: Being Unpublished Letters to Myron B. Benton from Emerson, Sophia Thoreau, Moncure Conway, and Others. With an Introduction by George Edward Woodberry.*
- 10 *John Burroughs at Troutbeck: Being Extracts from his Writings, Published and Unpublished. With an Introduction by Vachel Lindsay.*

June, 1926.

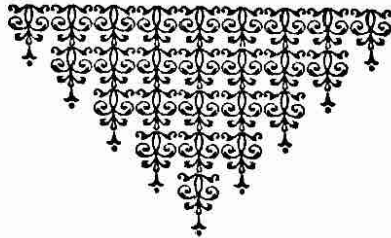
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Troutbeck Leaflets, Number Ten

AMENIA, NEW YORK

Privately Printed at the Troutbeck Press

M DCCCC XXVI

Of this tenth number of Troutbeck Leaflets (a series devoted to a single spot of American earth and to those who have touched its life) one hundred and fifty copies have been printed for the friends of J. E. and Amy E. Spingarn. John Burroughs' first visit to Troutbeck took place in 1862, his last in 1914; and these extracts from his writings, intended to commemorate his life-long contact with the place, are printed by permission of his biographer and literary executor, Dr. Clara Barrus.

INTRODUCTION

The Troutbeck Leaflets are "a series devoted to a single spot of American earth and to those who have touched its life." This is an introduction to the tenth leaflet, and no doubt will repeat what has been said by many others.

Of many men who have made their woods their castle instead of the house, John Burroughs and H. D. Thoreau have made themselves most felt in United States writing, and their names are often invoked by the Troutbeck Leaflets. Then there were John Muir and Enos Mills. I have often observed that John Burroughs' Whitman is a bigger man than Whitman himself, Emerson's Thoreau and Alcott seem bigger men than Thoreau and Alcott, just as the Napoleon of certain Frenchmen is a bigger man than Napoleon seems to be to us of this hour of realism.

This exalted way of seeing man and circumstance and mixing up the moon with it seems best to come to those who have allowed a "single spot of earth" to educate them, who have scrutinized it thoroughly. It is human, seasoned, commendable.

We are passing through a period of national retail-marketing and standard sizes to the smallest tack; and it is easier to sell a new soap to every grocery in the United States than to every grocery in one town. This has its effect on our most secret souls. So those who hold out for the "single spot of earth" are by way of being our noblest benefactors. There is something in it beyond mere human scrutiny.

Mohammed went away to Medina—but oh—he returned to Mecca, and on that furious loyalty turned the whole history of ages. At present the American "single spot of earth" is generally a city, and we have Santa Fe versus Denver, etc. But in the end the American is incurably a squire, of the style of Washington or Jefferson; and he builds his little Mount Vernon or Monticello and hopes he and his heirs may stay there forever, in spite of all motion and commotion.

None of us are deceived by national advertising or standardizing campaigns. They are mere conveniences like Pullman cars, all necessarily alike, and transient. I will never be myself till the city where I was born, Springfield, Illinois, is rebuilt like the Golden Temple of Amritsar, till every field about is as heavy with rose-hedges as any

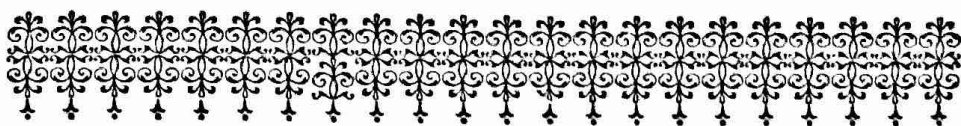
other place in America where I have been happy, till there are shining the greatest, most original, creative, art, music, scientific, dramatic schools the world has ever known, as Gothic as Abraham Lincoln himself, and every scrap of "Trust Company" classic architecture has been torn down.

I believe in the shrine and the citizen like Pericles, and the holy place of pilgrimage, and I believe in fighting and dying and living again for that "single spot of American earth" dearest to the individual American soul, to the personal pilgrim, and to the individual American memory.

I would like to make my own village of Springfield, Illinois, like a star on the plain.

VACHEL LINDSAY.

*Spokane, Washington,
May 19, 1926.*



THE FIRST VISIT TO TROUTBECK*

I FIRST saw Troutbeck in the early autumn of 1862. Myron Benton had written me apropos of some nature pieces of mine which he had seen in the New York "Leader," and thus a correspondence was begun which lasted as long as Myron lived. We first met by appointment in Poughkeepsie, and our first sit-down talk together took place on that round rocky point just south of the Highland ferry. It is nearly covered with buildings now, but at that time it was a naked rock. We sat there an hour or more and opened our minds to each other. Charles Benton, Myron's brother, had enlisted in the 150th Regiment, which was then in camp near Poughkeepsie. We saw him then—a fine farm boy, just out of his teens, and in the afternoon Myron drove me home with him to Leedsville, thirty miles away.

I liked Myron from the first sight of him. I was then twenty-five, and he was a few years older. He was a large man, nearly or quite six feet tall and of sturdy build. He had the flavor of the farm and of the country, as probably I myself had—a rural quality of mind and character that had been touched and mel-
lowed by the influence of the best literature, which I hope was also true in a degree of myself. Our tastes were much the same, and we discussed our favorite authors, among them Emerson and Thoreau, and probably Whitman, with great satisfaction,

*From the Introduction by John Burroughs to Charles E. Benton's "Troutbeck, a Dutchess County Homestead," 1916.

though Myron never got on very well with Whitman. Like many persons of poetic temperament he only found in him dainty morsels here and there, and I used to say to him that to look only for dainty poetic and literary morsels in Whitman is to miss the main matter. It is like going to the sea merely for the pretty shells upon the shore.

But we both loved nature and the nature literature with undivided love.

I had just begun to get hold of myself with my pen; I was like a young bird just out of the nest. My flights were short and rather awkward. I had contributed an Emersonian essay to the "Atlantic Monthly" two years before, and Myron had also appeared in print. On the whole there was enough literary atmosphere about us both to make our meeting interesting and profitable on other than the ordinary grounds, and our acquaintance and correspondence continued as between men of similar tastes and aspirations.

I remember Myron's father as a serious, silent man, and his mother as a woman of great breadth of mind. I probably met his cousin, Joel Benton, on the occasion of that first visit to Troutbeck, but of this am not sure.

The Benton farm came nearer being the ideal farm and country home than any farm I had ever seen, and after all these fifty years and more I have seen no country place that makes the same impression upon me in this respect that does the farm of my old friend. It is so near New England that it seems to have caught some of its atmosphere of ripeness and mellowness. It sits there in a series of easy fertile river and glacier benches and gently rolling pasture lands, with the placid and picturesque Webutuck winding leisurly through it, walled in on the west and the north by a high wooded ridge which gives one a comforting sense of protection and seclusion, running away to the east in a broad expanse of meadow land dotted with noble oaks and elms, suggesting a bounty of hay and grain on the easiest terms, lifted up in the southwest into low rounded hills and

wooded slopes, then opening its arms to the south in many acres of tillable land to all the genial influences that one so readily associates with such an exposure—fertility, picturesque, seclusion, and over all a look of repose and contentment that I believe would be hard to find in the same number of acres anywhere else in this state. The spirit of the place begat Myron Benton, and he left his stamp upon it in a way that will long endure.

Roxbury, October, 1916.

MYRON B. BENTON*

ONE of my oldest and best friends is Myron B. Benton, and it gives me much pleasure to write this sketch of his life. We became acquainted nearly thirty years ago. I had written some sketches of country scenes and experiences in a New York paper which fell under his eye, and this led to a correspondence and then to a meeting. We have been fast friends ever since. We have read the same books, we have shared the same enthusiasms; we are both countrymen to the marrow of our bones; we are both farmers, and the sons of farmers, who were also the sons of farmers; we have tramped and camped together, and together have essayed to take down other bars than those that confine the farmer's herds.

A cultivated American with a rural flavor and aroma is Myron Benton, such a man as is only the outcome of a family after it has dwelt long and lovingly in one spot, and its soil of life has become rich, as it were, in vegetable mold. He savors in his character and in his poetry of the placid Indian stream, a tributary to the Housatonic, upon the banks of which he was born, and of the rich, rolling alluvial meadows amid which he has passed his days.

*From the "Twentieth Century Review," May, 1890. Myron Benton died in 1902.

The locality here alluded to is in Amenia, Dutchess County, New York, and within sight of the Connecticut line. Here Mr. Benton was born in August, 1834, and here he still lives and tills the paternal acres. His grandfather came to the place from Connecticut in 1794. The family originally came from the vicinity of Guilford, Surrey, England, and was among the company of "planters" who settled in the "Colony of New Haven" in 1639. They filially brought their town name with them, and Guilford, Connecticut, which has just celebrated its 250th anniversary, in which Mr. Benton joined, has a mellowness and a charm of antique associations which few villages in this country possess. Mr. Benton's mother, a woman of rare breadth of mind and benignity of character, was a Reed, a descendant of John Reed, an officer who had achieved important services in Cromwell's army and who fled to this country in 1660, on the accession of Charles II., settling in Norwalk, Connecticut.

The family has not kept up the American reputation for roving. It has been a set-fast family all around. From Edward Benton to Myron, the coming to Amenia in 1794 has been the only flitting in two hundred and fifty years.

In answering some questions I put to him on the subject, Mr. Benton says: "We have hugged the soil close—an unbroken line of farmers; how far back in England green and old I do not know, but doubtless a long way. This bucolic association has permeated the very blood; I feel it in every heartbeat. My intense local attachment I doubt not has been fostered through many generations."

The events of Mr. Benton's life have not been such as go to make up a picturesque biography. He has not challenged or courted attention, but has seen his days and years go by there in his charming and secluded Webutuck valley with the calmness of a philosopher and the enjoyment of a poet. His lines have fallen in pleasant places, his paths have been beside still

waters, "Moab hath been at ease from his youth, and he hath settled on his lees and hath not been emptied from vessel to vessel," and his cup of life is clear and sweet accordingly.

In 1871 he married Miss Marianna Adams, of Poughkeepsie, a lady of Quaker ancestry and with tastes congenial to his own. Mr. Benton has contributed to various magazines and periodicals many poems, essays and sketches, but has never collected any of them into a book, as so many of us do, with less riches to draw from. Many of his poems have been put into various anthologies, but the volume his friends have a right to expect is not yet forthcoming. His poems are the work of a fine poetic spirit, a little secluded, a little withdrawn, and contemplating nature instead of man and his doings; but more genuine love of nature, closer and finer observation of her, and a more skillful touch in bringing out her charms, it would be hard to find in current poetry. My own favorites among his poems are "Embowered," "Haying," "The Whip-poor-Will's Shoe," "Pioneers," "Under the Linden," "The Mowers," and others of this stamp. They are very quiet and subdued in tone, but they are characteristic and breathe the air of the sweet, placid scenes among which they were written.

Mr. Benton has been an omnivorous reader, finding by a sure instinct the best books. From his early years he has never lost his taste for Shakespeare and Milton. The coterie of great poets who ushered in our own century—Wordsworth, Shelley, Keats, Hood, Coleridge—have profoundly influenced him. For a few years he was greatly under the influence of Shelley, but later there was a reaction from certain of the less healthy and sane elements of his wonderful genius. He owes a large debt to Emerson and has been a loving reader of Thoreau. Mr. Benton is a poet who writes his poetry in the landscape as well as in books. He is a beautifier of the land. One such lover of nature in every neighborhood would soon change the aspect of the whole country. Planter of trees and vines, preserver of old picturesque cottages, lover of paths and streams, beautifier of

highways, friend of all wild and shy things, historian and por-
trayer of big trees, collector of local relics and seeker and culti-
vator of all that gives flavor and character to a place, Mr.
Benton is the practical poet of whom the country everywhere
needs many more.

THE SPRING AT TROUTBECK*

I KNOW a homestead, situated in one of the picturesque
branch valleys of the Housatonic, that has a spring flowing
by the foundation walls of the house, and not a little of the
strong overmastering local attachment that holds its owner
there is born of that, his native spring. He could not, if he
would, break from it. He says that when he looks down into
it he has a feeling that he is an amphibious animal that has
somehow got stranded.

A long, gentle flight of stone steps leads from the back porch
down to it under the branches of a lofty elm. It wells up
through the white sand and gravel as through a sieve, and fills
the broad space that has been arranged for it so gently and im-
perceptibly that one does not suspect its copiousness until he
has seen the overflow. It turns no wheel, yet it lends a pliant
hand to many of the affairs of that household. It is a refrigera-
tor in summer and a frost-proof envelope in winter, and a foun-
tain of delights the year round. Trout come up from the Webu-
tuck River and dwell there and become domesticated, and take
lumps of butter from your hand, or rake the ends of your fingers
if you tempt them.

It is a kind of sparkling and ever washed larder. Where are
the berries? Where is the butter, the milk, the steak, the melon?

*From "Pepacton," 1881. Burroughs wrote to J. E. Spingarn in 1910: "You
are correct in your inference—the spring referred to in my 'Pepacton' is the
spring which was then owned by my friend Myron Benton. I first made the
acquaintance of Troutbeck in 1862. It is the most beautiful farm I have ever
seen."

In the spring. It preserves, it ventilates, it cleanses. It is a board of health and a general purveyor. It is equally for use and for pleasure. Nothing degrades it, and nothing can enhance its beauty. It is a picture and a parable, and an instrument of music. It is servant and divinity in one.

The milk of forty cows is cooled in it, and never a drop gets into the cans, though they are plunged to the brim. It is as insensible to drought and rain as to heat and cold. It is planted upon the sand, yet it abideth like a house upon a rock.

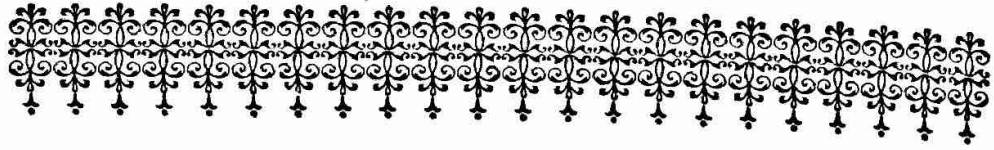
THE BURNING OF THE HOUSE*

I was really shocked to hear of the destruction of Troutbeck. It makes a wound in my very heart. I am wondering how it happened. Too bad, too bad!

I have not even got a photograph of it. I can imagine what a great blow it must have been to you and Major Spingarn. I will gladly re-write the letter which I sent you in 1910, but how small a part that one little letter is of all that you have lost!

I wish I had known you were in New York when Dr. Barrus and I were there last week; we would certainly have called on you. We had not heard of your loss until your letter came.

*From a letter to Mrs. J. E. Spingarn, December 25, 1917. The house to which Burroughs refers, and which Myron Benton occupied until his death in 1902, was originally built in 1765 by Captain William Young, and was purchased from Captain William Laselle, in December, 1793, by Myron Benton's grandfather, Caleb Benton; it was first occupied by its present owners in 1907, was destroyed by fire in December, 1917, and rebuilt in 1919-21. Burroughs saw this house for the last time in 1914; the visit is described in Charles E. Benton's "Troutbeck, A Dutchess County Homestead," 1916, page 24. Of the other houses at Troutbeck, the Delamater House, in which George Washington spent a night, was built by John Delamater in 1761; Century Lodge, the birthplace of the poet and essayist Joel Benton, was built in 1794 by his grandfather, Joel Benton, for four terms a member of the State Legislature; and The Maples, originally built as part of a woolen mill about 1809, was completely renovated by Myron Benton in 1887. While living in The Maples, Geroid Tanquary Robinson contributed to the "Freeman" of New York, beginning September 12, 1923, a series of articles entitled "An Up-State Anthology," all of them relating to the immediate neighborhood of Troutbeck.



A LIFE-LONG CORRESPONDENCE*

(1862-1901)

OLIVE, N. Y., September 29, 1862.—Our correspondence is becoming brisk. I hope it will not meet with a sudden collapse. The interest we now take in each other may vanish after an interview. Nearness and contact, you know, are terrible. I am wonderfully stupid. That is my habitual mood. I occasionally have brighter spells, but seldom with strangers. If I should find that I have always known you, though I never happened to meet you before, why, we will get along first rate together.

Your "Vacation" poem in the "Leader" I read and re-read, and told my wife I had never seen a poem in the "Leader" so fresh and so intense with the spirit of Outdoors as that. I wondered who the author might be.

Thoreau's "Autumnal Tints" is a poem. What Argus-eyes that man had! What years of patient, loving study he must have given to nature! Thoreau was not a fine literary worker. His diamonds are so plenty that he minds little about polishing and shaping them. And yet, I would not have him otherwise, would you?

*Extracts from letters written by John Burroughs to Myron B. Benton at Troutbeck, for the most part unpublished. A great many other extracts will be found in Clara Barrus's "Life and Letters of John Burroughs," published in 1925. References to Benton also occur in many of Burroughs' essays. Their Adirondack trip is described in "Adirondac" (in "Wake Robin," 1871); their climb of Slide Mountain, in "The Heart of the Southern Catskills" (in "Riverby," 1894); a fishing trip, in "Speckled Trout" (in "Locusts and Wild Honey," 1879). Benton's poem, "Rumination," is quoted in "Our Rural Divinity" (in "Birds and Poets," 1877), and several of his poems are reprinted in Burroughs' anthology, "Songs of Nature." It is to Myron Benton and Troutbeck that Burroughs refers when he says (in "Notes on Walt Whitman as Poet and Person," 1867, page 10) that he first read "Leaves of Grass" when "visiting a friend in the eastern part of the State."

I propose to be in Poughkeepsie on Friday of this week, October 3rd. I hope to be there early in the afternoon. I will stop at the hotel in Main Street, a few steps from the Court House, the name of which I have forgotten. If you see walking along the street a middling short, thick fellow, with a mere shadow of side whiskers, dressed in a dark suit, with a light felt hat, and a newspaper clutched in his fist, there is a chance of its being "the Undersigned."

P. S. I am seldom detained or put out by the weather. If I am well, I shall not fail to be there.

Buttermilk Falls, N. Y., January 7, 1863.—Thank you for your promptness in writing. I value your letters much, and your friendship and good opinion much also. I do not see why you cannot come and see me. If a farmer is not at leisure in winter, when is he? Oh, these long nights in our quiet household, what a god-send your company would be! Mr. Frissell [formerly pastor of the Presbyterian Church at South Amenia] has called on us a couple of times. I like him very well. I gave him the "Commonwealth" and the "Leader" containing your contributions, which pleased him very much. "Myron," he said, "is a very superior young man." I hope he will take a hint from your poem the next time I hear him preach.

Same, May 3, 1863.—Household matters go along as usual, and you need not delay your long-talked-of visit further. Whenever you can leave, I should be rejoiced to see you. I should like Joel [Benton] to come, too. If you cannot leave your farm, send him. Tell him Mr. Frissell has a school ma'am that I think would make his heart beat a tattoo. I am on the point of falling in love with her myself.

I like the "Commonwealth" very much. In your poem on Emerson I find some lines of remarkable beauty and rhythm. Your last paper in the "Leader" I think the best of the "Notes."

Same, June 21, 1863.—Miss Smith is well and as beautiful as ever. She was in here a couple of hours the other evening. She talked the most and best I ever heard her. I gave her some account of you; she said she had no idea you were such a genius. I lent her the "Repository" and gave her some of your verses. Your "phiz" is capital; many thanks. I got Emerson's in New York; it is quite like him.

Same, September 27, 1863.—Our campaign in the Adirondacks seems almost like a dream to me; it has idealized itself already and my life will always be the richer and sweeter for it. How it enhances the value of living (does it not?) to have something sweet to remember! I liked your article on the Bishop in the "Leader." In some parts of it you did yourself justice. I wish you would always sink your bucket down thus. When you come out, which I shall expect soon, please bring Thoreau's three volumes, will you?

Washington, D. C., January 9, 1864.—When I called on Walt Whitman this morning I found him en dishabille reading "Walden." The more I see of Walt, the more I like him. I cannot characterize him better than by saying he is far the wisest man I have ever met. There is nothing more to be said after he gives his views; it is as if Nature herself had spoken. And so kind, sympathetic, charitable, humane, tolerant a man I did not suppose was possible. He loves everything and everybody. I saw a soldier the other day stop on the street and kiss him. He kisses me as if I was a girl. He appreciates everybody and no soul will get fuller justice in the next world than it gets at his hands here. I related to him our Adirondack trip, the deer shooting, etc., which so pleased him that he said seriously he should make a "leaf of grass" about it. I related him other country experiences with you, which he relished hugely. I have often told him of you, but without exciting any remark from him, till the other day, without any provocation, he commenced to ask me about you; wanted to hear all about you, how you lived and if you were a "good fellow" (the highest praise he ever bestows upon a man). I told him what you had written, and he said he had not meant to hear about your poetry, but about you, what your type and temper and gait was, etc., etc. So I fell to portraying you—a pleasant task—and Walt was much interested, and for all I know may immortalize you in a "leaf of grass." I wish you would make up your mind to come down awhile here this winter. Try hard.

Same, February 27, 1865.—It has just occurred to me that perhaps I might persuade you to come to Washington to see Abe and me inaugurated! We are keeping house, have a "spare bed," and would be delighted to have you come. Walt is here. Spring is here, the Bluebird and Robin are here. The Spirit says Come, the flesh says Come, wife says Come, Abe says Come, so

Come! I have written so little to you since I saw you, that I am spoiling for a talk. Persuade your brother, the "Scientist," [Orville] to come along.

Same, April 28, 1865.—I hope you are doing something with your pen. I read with mingled feelings of surprise and delight your long story in the "Leader." I did not think that kind of thing was in you. It suggested Hawthorne, but was vastly better than his earlier productions, and parts of it equal to any of his later. It deserved a better fate than the columns of the "Leader."

Same, June 10, 1865.—I saw your second self the other day—your brother Charles. I took him home with me and kept him all night. How much he resembles you in look and manner. He is a noble fellow and I hope to see him again before he goes home. I liked very much that poem of yours in the "Commonwealth"; there was a tone or an atmosphere about it very rare and subtle. Allen found fault with the rhymes—said it was faulty, etc.—but I am getting to have a sort of horror for those mathematically correct verses that suit him.

Same, January 17, 1866.—I send thoughts and good wishes to you often, but I suppose they do not reach you, as I project them into the air and trust to the winds. I think you had better pick yourself up and come down and see us. Why not? We are housekeeping, and it need not cost you a cent while here. Write me by the next mail that you are on the road. I cannot imagine what you are doing so long. I think you need poking up with a long pole. Have you not yet absorbed all the nutriment of those quiet landscapes? After all, it is a cheap trick to write, and I guess you have learned a higher lesson—namely, to *live*.

Same, May 6, 1868.—Thanks for the magazine that came yesterday. I had seen your "Red Knight" at the news-stalls, but had not read it. It is a success. I was much amused. It shows good manipulation, and is worthy of Hawthorne, whose touch it certainly recalls. The "Putnam" article I read and enjoyed. I thought it very characteristic. There is a suggestion running through it quite new and valuable. I only wish you had made it stick out more. I hope you will do lots of such things. I was glad to see Joel and Charles [Benton], and had a good time with them. Hated to see them go so soon. Charles quite won my heart, no doubt because he so much resembles his brother.

Same, September 9, 1868.—Be assured I wanted to see you and should have enjoyed a visit to your house very much. But think of the heat! The "Adirondac" piece I shall add to materially. I have six pieces now which I think will do to make a book of. They are mainly about the birds. I thought of adding one or two more, but I believe there is enough now to worry the reader. They will make a book about as large as Thoreau's Letters. They are to me what the poet's work is to him, and I do not wish [to be] too prolific. Now what shall the book be called? My kingdom for a name. I can hit on nothing. Help me.

Same, January 30, 1869.—The blue birds are here. I hear their soft notes as they fly over. I am glad you have undertaken a story. I really think you can do something big in this direction, if you only throw yourself into it. Your touch certainly recalls Hawthorne's, but you have not Hawthorne's industry or his ready command of all his resources. You need to work like Jehu and to let yourself out. The great trouble with men of your temperament, and of my temperament, is that we are too reserved, too cautious. We do not get up heat and motion enough. Such men as O'Connor or Victor Hugo err in the other direction. They beat the air wildly. Their writing is a conflagration. I constantly feel that I need more swing. We want nothing sensational, but a work cannot be too striking and deep cut. I think you will not fail for want of dramatic talent. You need to look to the *features* of your work—to give it point and variety. I shall charge you nothing for this advice or opinion. If your article on "A Boy Who Never Heard Baby-talk" is as good and humorous as the title, it will be a success. The idea is very novel. Why not come down and help me inaugurate Grant? We will have a jolly time.

Same, August 25, 1869.—We had a glorious time in the woods and lots of trout. I expect to immortalize it in an article called "Speckled Trout." Orville [Benton] was a good trout eater from the start, and he soon got to be quite a trout catcher. Johns is well and hearty, and thinks Speckled Trout a great institution, and wants to repeat the trip next summer. We both think of our visit to your place as a real idyl.

Same, January 26, 1870.—I was very lonesome after you went away and have hardly got over it yet. I have written a little, read a little, and longed a good deal. I sent you a sweet little

song of Miss Snead's. Do send me some poem of yours for her. I gave your message to Walt [Whitman]; he says he should like to come.

Same, September 6, 1871.—If you feel like writing anything about my little book I am sure I shall appreciate the favor. Either the "Radical" or the "Commonwealth" would be a good place to send it. I am thinking of going into the trout business in this city. I find a spring here outside of the city limits that quite astonishes me. It is larger than your spring, and I think nearly as cold and quite as clear.

Same, November 18, 1872.—I should have taken a run over to see you if I had had the time. I have been on the point of writing you several times, but having no news of importance, forebore. I suspect what was the matter, and that you had the building fever very bad. I love to be absorbed in that way, or in any way; I think one is never so happy as when chuck full of some pursuit or occupation, and as for building, I would like to build a house every year. No doubt you have done well, and I shall be glad to see and pronounce judgment on the house. I have finished my paper on "Birds of the Poets," and shall send it off soon. But if you have anything, send it to me. Did you not write a poem on the Humming Bird?

Middletown, N. Y., January 19, 1873.—Since you last heard from me, I have become almost your neighbor, up here in Orange County. It seems as if I could reach across and shake hands with you. Before you know it I shall drop in for a little chat. I did not use either of the poems you sent me in "Birds of the Poets." They were not quite specific enough. In a piece on the Bluebird, which "Scribner" has accepted, I use your name and a line from one of your poems, but I shall not gratify your curiosity by telling you which or what the line is.

Same, June 5, 1877.—I received your letter to-night and was greatly tickled at your hearty commendation of my essays. I sip your words slowly like some rare and costly wine that I would not miss any flavor of. Your praise is not cheap and does a fellow good when it does come. You say a most superb thing about Walt Whitman—better than I have said—and I much regret that I did not have it to put in the piece. I refer to the statue and statuette comparison. I shall revolve that under my tongue

as a sweet morsel. I have just had a three days visit from a young Englishman from Cambridge [Edward Carpenter], who came to this country to see Whitman. I liked him much—a modest sensible man, and a great admirer of W. W.

Same, August 21, 1877.—We propose coming over to your place as soon as wife is well enough, probably in a couple of weeks or sooner. What are your plans in the meantime? We can time our visit to suit your convenience.

Same, January 28, 1878.—Your letter followed me to Washington, whither I journeyed two weeks ago, and from whence I returned on Saturday. I paused in New York and saw Joel [Benton] and went about with him some—to see Stedman among others. We found the poet brilliant and complimentary. I liked him much, and his wife more. I talked with "Scribners" folks about your article. Of course they would not commit themselves—they have six farm articles spoken for, but said they could keep your article over to another year if it suited them, or if it was unique in itself, as I assured them it would be, could use it sometime. So fall to and write it—turn a double swath through the whole length of that big meadow. I have no doubt they will take it.

Esopus, N. Y., January 5, 1879.—I have just finished a boat for a trip down the Delaware, and I want you to come and go with me. I suppose the absurdity of the proposition fairly takes your breath away, but I mean it. My farm is not my master yet, and I hope you dare to snub yours. It will take us through a wild, picturesque country, and we will just live on Locusts and Wild Honey. Write me by return mail and say when you will go.

Same, October 10, 1880.—I don't know why I should have delayed so long to write and thank you for your splendid article in the "Literary World." It was much more and better than I expected or deserved. I saw a little extract from it in the N. Y. "Herald." Be assured I appreciate it, and feel under many obligations to you. Your poem in the "Commonwealth" took my eye, and the flavor of it lingered long upon my palate. Your poems all have as distinct a character and quality of their own as have Emerson's or Whitman's. They bear your image and not another's. You should do more of them and give your best strength and days to them, instead of the odds and ends of your time as now. It is a pity you have not my leisure, without my laziness; you would be heard from well up on Parnassus.

West Park, N. Y., March 3, 1882.—I have been pretty busy since you left. Your visit put about two inches of fat on my ribs and I have been working it off. I needed a pause, a breathing spell, and to have my thoughts crossed with some vigorous species. One must have pollen from other minds if he would keep up a race of vigorous seedlings of his own. The next two weeks after you were here I wrote quite a long article, and one of my best, I think, on Observation of Nature—nothing that we discussed, yet I doubt if it would have been written if you had not come. I liked your poem of the "Mowers" much. It is one of your best and is no doubt destined to a permanent place amid our rural poetry. If you dug into your mind as persistently as I do into mine, you might write many such, and many prose sketches of permanent value. The muse is not going to seize one's hand and make him write; he has got to wait upon her and court her very assiduously. I bore her unmercifully sometimes. Julian often speaks of you, as do we all. Your visit was one of the brightest spots in our winter.

Same, July 20, 1884.—I am tardy in dropping you the promised line, the line which etiquette demands of the returned visitor; but etiquette always did fare poorly at my hands. Mrs. B. has not been well, but Julian and I have felt our oats—the holiday oats we partook of in your happy valley and beneath your hospitable roof. It all seems like a dream now. Julian sighs daily for that spring, as I do. There are other things we covet there, but we are more noisy about the spring. Our stay was protracted, but I am sure we did not wear out our welcome, as we certainly did not wear out our own enjoyment of your beautiful home and valley of forgetfulness.

Esopus, N. Y., January 20, 1884.—I went to New York and heard Matthew Arnold on Emerson. Curtis introduced him in a "neat little speech"—George William, the effusive. After the lecture I saw him introduce Joel [Benton] to Arnold also. Joel, I could see, took him by the ear with much spirit and kept his hold for some minutes. I have read Joel's articles in the "Graphic" and in the "Telegram"—I liked the latter best.

West Park, N. Y., October 20, 1884.—I was grieved to know that another grave has opened in your pathway, and this time the grave of a brother! Alas, I, too, have lost in Orville a valued friend. I try to recall my last word with him, my last

glimpse of him at your house last July. I saw Joel is Poughkeepsie the other day and he told me all that is known of Orville's death.

Same, April 9, 1886.—I trust this lovely day finds you out in the open air. How charming and altogether satisfying such a day is in your vale of Festiniog, I well know. A few such days as this and your air tubes will be all right. Beware how you take much doctor-stuff. Rather change your diet, and get a new impetus that way.

Roxbury, N. Y., April 14, 1892.—I liked your O'Connor letter very much, and meant to have written you before, thanking you for it. It was the only adequate word that has yet been spoken on that eloquent and chivalrous soul. I heard it highly spoken of in Camden and in New York. The critics seem to pass by O'Connor on the other side, as if they were still afraid of him.

West Park, N. Y., April 3, 1901.—I have been compiling during the past winter a Nature Anthology ["Songs of Nature"] for McClure, Phillips and Co. It has occurred to me that among your many poems there must be at least one that I ought to have for this collection, but I don't know where to look for it. Can you direct me? and what one would you suggest? I hope you keep well and that I shall see you again before another season passes. I can give you good bed and board at Slabsides whenever you will give me a chance.