

Oberlin, Dec 21, 1880

The day is dead, night, starless, calm, black, cloudy, still, oppressive, creeping <sup>up</sup> from the Atlantic and ~~is~~ noiselessly travelling over the N. A. Continent, has gone already some three hours westward of us, — of me. She is just beginning to touch the Pacific shores.

The weather has driled out a few inches of snow again, about two. It was a light, white, dry kind that looks like sugar, the houses are frosted, like cakes, it sticks to steeples, and towers, and columns and cornices and friezes — (It has columns and whose friezes turn the wheel the wheel and the wind) — making them look very beautiful.

Spires and roofs and trees all of whose twigs are doubled and brought out by snow, when thus arrayed look very striking against a dark lowering sky.

The usual order of light is reversed. Commonly the sky is the bright part of things, but in this case the ground and the things thereof are the brighter.

Commonly the sky is the more noticeable. In this case, the snow and objects attract the attention more.

Permit me to express, Wilhelm, my high regard for your letter, in which you strike like a blacksmith on a red hot piece of iron, making the sparks fly. The red-hot iron is your thought — heated in the furnace of your mind — and your pen the horn of fire. You will not, of course, let your literary culture

peter out up at White Salmon. You have yet a mission to fulfil as a writer. Oregon, with her blood of various kinds, may go off in a delirium of fever some time, as Cal. has, unless some potent restorer be given.

Every man who has truth in him, who has lived some and knows what life is like, and who has the measure of love unfeigned in him, is needed to purify the blood of the country. With what time you can get — and you can pick up a few hours every day, sometimes more — you can get down some of the saving thoughts — the kind that raise you from error or unworthy aims — and that soak into you from the outer world, or that bubble up in the inner, and put them in permanent form, and

give them to the country.

I would be an unsympathetic and dull brother if I had not perceived that your youthful ambition to shake the world with your pen, has been more or less barged up - a source of grief to you at Times, from which your remarks to the effect that your efforts had been spit upon may be traced (You have not forgotten).

I would be still more imperisious if I did not see that the bumps your ambition has got had ~~not~~ compacted and brought your literary ability to an edge. Some of your former hopes were idle and inflated, impracticable. You had not learned the force of inventions in the bulks of the world, etc. etc. etc. But now with better appreciation of what

you are about, without vanity, and  
with dignified purpose, your  
real ability, backed by real ex-  
perience, may effect something  
that the country would not  
wish to do without. You  
have some times cursed the  
tough times you have seen,  
but I think that you can  
see they were merely grinding  
away the somewhat empty  
ambitions that you had to  
start with — some things that  
are good to get rid of. I  
know that I can see that  
you ~~are~~ are ten times the  
man you were five years ago.  
With money enough to qualify  
your former plan, I incline  
to think you would not  
have turned out well. Ease  
and freedom would develop the  
emptiness, ambitious side of you,  
and though you would always

be a man of Taste and refinement, you might not be a man of firm, fibrous, moral character, faithful of yourself.

You see the nonsense of your some time remark that the moral element had been left out in your make up. That is just the element in you that circumstances for the past five years have been developing above all others. Like the scholar who is behind in some study, that the teacher keeps back in his other studies until he gets up on that one, God has been putting you back in art, in literature, in making yourself mortal — for I believe that you have not yet reached your maximum in any of these things — until you make up on the moral side. Being cramped for money

having a number of relations on your hands, being unwell, (ha!) <sup>there</sup> have kept your mind hard and square on the central questions of your "moral element." I would not have had you miss that training for all that my hand is worth. If you go ahead now you will go ahead right, and get some where. Others were you might have gone ahead wrong, and come out at the little end of the horn.

Ah my boy!! Mother's love and interest in me is more and more a force in my life. The unpleasant, the disappointing scenes, of her sickness have faded out of my mind. We ought to be something just for her sake.

It is vacation now. I suppose that you will boat

at me, but I have made up  
my mind not to go to Ballo-  
magoo. It would be quite an  
expense, and if Mary should  
come next year, I, as well  
as you, must save the guilders.

Perhaps you thought I was  
rather analysing your case  
W. in the above. It is an  
interesting case. Thank the  
dear Lord it is an interesting  
case!

So now how I can't get over  
the thought of you Mary.

My chin whiskers are growing  
quite long. They are stubby  
and straight, and comparatively  
thick, like Mr Manning's.

Like a spear of grass underneath a dead leaf  
in mildew and darkness, I pine.  
Until in its pity for such lonely grief  
there came to my help a soft western wind  
It blew in my hair, it blew in my eyes,  
it blew all my sadness away

Gone like the leaf are my woes and my <sup>sighs,</sup>  
And I'm growing all green in the light  
of the day!

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Life is a cloud whose contents 'tis spending  
Sun or hail or sleet or rain,  
Thus lack and love; thus joy and pain,  
With gloss and sadness forever blending

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He slipped upon the steps of stone  
And had he smote the frozen ground,  
He winked his eyes; suppressed a groan,  
Then slowly rose and looked around.

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"O woe it be fully

My dear, dear friend

When we came to the holly

At the <sup>journeys</sup> ~~vicar~~ far end!

But when we had come to the <sup>the journey</sup> end of

And plucked in the twilight (the dew-laden <sup>spring</sup> twig

- in the hollow, <sup>so</sup> leafy and shady and ferny -

We found in our hands (the cyprus's dark twig  
(end of 2<sup>nd</sup> line) <sup>with dew</sup> spring laden

(... 4<sup>th</sup>...) the twigs of the year

It is after nine and bed time.  
I am by the window. I have  
made an admirable shelf by  
the window close by the stone.  
I made a hole in a pane of glass  
about the size of my fist - ac-  
ciden Buller's, but it furnishes  
just enough air for comfortable  
ventilation. With my feet  
on the stone, my back to the  
window and the <sup>sober</sup> ~~sober~~ light  
filtered through the clouds com-  
ing over my shoulder; on the  
yellow lamp light, as now; and  
with a pen or a book, I am  
very comfortable.

In all my elastic veins  
God up with my blood duty flow  
The gladness still for aye remains  
Ere should the blood faint to go.  
There is an apparent contradiction  
in the above.

But now that I have got down

to the rhyming structure of my  
mind, I had better stop: for  
a while at least.

It is next day noon. Still  
the gray clouds overhang the  
sky. The ther. stands motion-  
less at  $27^{\circ}$ .

It will be day after tomorrow  
that I shall get your letter.

It is now drawing near  
dinner time, and if you  
will excuse what you seldom  
have to excuse - a vacant  
page - I will stop.

I wake up at 4:36 this morn-  
ing; wakes until 5:17 and  
slept until 6:52, with great  
pleasure.

Three months, or  $\frac{1}{8}$  of my  
exile have crumbled off.

Good Bye  
H. S. Lyman



Sarah  
My love to you

Saxony-eyd metem