

B Same for occasional sentences which fail to hold together
and for one or two casual remarks which require amplifying.
this is a very good paper

Plants and Animals

My Grandfather and his small home in Covington Ohio should rightfully occupy the first few pages of this autobiography of my plant and animal interests, for it was there that at an early age I became acquainted with living things. Moreover I'm sure it was from him that I inherited my curiosity and love for nature.

Every summer until my ninth birthday my family traveled to Lake Erie where the Wickendens had an annual reunion. However before we arrived there, we always spent several weeks in Covington. Similar to most houses in that Mid-Western town, Grand-dad's had a cobble stone alley running through the back yard, a chicken house with its wired-in chicken yard scattered with a few toothless corn cobs and melon rinds and shaded by an aged peach tree, and a smaller house which looked much like a children's play hut, but where the young chicks and their maternal hen were kept when not allowed to run on the lawn which stretched to the kitchen door. When

they were given this freedom, we had to be sure always to close tightly the wooden fence-gates on either side of the yard and to scrape our feet on the iron scraper before entering the house. Over to one side, a space the length of the yard was reserved for gardening. Several more peach trees propped with long poles and a cherry tree with a swing grew near by.

Every morning after I had listened in my grandparents' warm bed to familiar stories of coon hunting and fox chasing, I would follow Grand-dad down the concrete walk, often still wet with dew, and into the chicken-house.

Straw-filled boxes lined ^{with} two sides ^{away} in which I looked with anticipation for new-laid eggs. Often I was fooled by the smooth fake white ones which "Gramp" used to encourage laying. The floor was covered with feathers and under the racks, which ran half way up one side, lay the white drippings. Standing shyly in the doorway, I watched him take from in the corner the hoe and pail used specially for the job and scrape up the manure left from the night before. Then we went outside

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into the runway, Grand-dad holding the weighted door open and warning me to look to my feet. He scattered grain amid the anxious chickens and showed me how to force the dried corn off the cob with my thumbs. I could only shoot off two or three at a time, but it was fun to have races with each thumb. When the water troughs were filled, I wondered why the water stayed up in the bottles and why the chickens drank by throwing back their throats ~~heads~~ and vibrating their throats. After the grain had disappeared, they scratched the loose dirt and with cocked heads searched the soil for remaining bits or pecked at the melon rinds. Sometimes Grand-dad broke up pieces of china and crushed them on the walk with a round stone for the hens.

And thus ^{I repeat} it was all morning, ~~my~~ following him around and asking questions. Now and then he kept me from stopping a setting hen, whose spread out feathers covered all the straw, or disregarded my questions about the poor disturbed hens which were imprisoned in a very small enclosure. When I was

much older, I learned that these unfortunate creatures were hoody and wished to set while "Gramp" had other ideas.

When I wished to obtain some worms or hadn't much else to do, I went into the garden and watched him turn over the soil. Since he wasn't young, he didn't plant the entire garden, but always left a little to do each day. After I came, he'd pull up a turnip or radish and slice off pieces with his knife for me. I never helped him any, for I was too young then.

By the time I was six or seven, I thought I would like to have a garden of my own in New Jersey. Mother gave me a small patch in the backyard and a neighboring lady started me with several "Star of Bethlehem" plants. It was fortunate that they were so sturdy and unwilling to die, for I heavily covered their roots with our hard red clay and transplanted them many times. At one end of my plot, which was set off with a border of large clam shells I had brought home from the shore, I planted a pussy-willow branch. It had grown fine white roots while I had kept

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it in a jar of water after bringing it from church. The other end was lined with hedge hanches. Three lily plants, and several lilies of the Valley were all that filled the middle; nevertheless, I was proud of my work. It was really pretty when in the evenings a misty rainbow was added to the touch of white border, red earth, and green leaves, while I watered my first garden.

From this point forth I showed a real interest in farming. The most pleasant part of our two-and-a-half day trip to Ohio always came when we passed through Pennsylvania and looked for a tourist home. There was one place I shall never forget, for it was a real farm house with a large barn and cows. My sister and I had heard how much fun hay botts could be and eagerly climbed the wooden ladder into this one. However we soon felt differently about it, for we became choked with dust and covered with dirty cobwebs. Still the presence of the munching cows thrilled me. I climbed onto the springy seat of a cultivator and pulling the levers and shouting encouragement to my imaginary horses,

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I plowed the wide fields back and forth and decided to be a farmer when I grew up.

Not long after, a flower garden seemed to me rather girlish, so I tried vegetable raising. This gave me quite a great deal of trouble. Even though my Grand-dad had shown me how to break up the soil and plant seeds, I lacked the patience to wait a week or so for the young shoots to appear. I had dug more than half of my first radish plants up to see how they were coming before any had actually appeared. Moreover the neighboring dogs and my own were always breaking through my fence of four lath sticks and a thin white string and crushing whatever I had planted. After several unsuccessful attempts with seeds, I tried growing tomato plants. These always had a good bunch of leaves on before I planted them and therefore thrived much better. However we left for our summer home before the small green tomatoes had ripened. With these handicaps, I gave up farming altogether at twelve and started raising animals, for I could at least take them wherever I went. My first few could

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be classed merely as pets and were always a lot more trouble than anything else.

On Easter morning when I was very young my sister and I had an exciting egg hunt. ~~Early~~ Early we had run downstairs and tearing from one room to the next, we looked behind curtains, on window ledges, in drawers, on the mantle, and even under the sofa cushions. Afterwards as we sat on the floor counting our many-colored treasures, a continuous ^{orua} chirping attracted our attentions. When we investigated, we found behind the couch a box partly filled with paper grass with two fuzzy golden chicks. Mine was named "Wings" after a demented funny-paper hero and lived to be a large intelligent hen with full greyish-white feathers. Most of the time "Wings" ran free and would pick out grass even from our hair. However when summer came, she was eaten by a neighbor to whom we had entrusted it.

Several years later, I built a long white box with a sloping roof and wire front for two rabbits my parents had promised me. It had a separate compartment, which they later

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graved away, for them to sleep in and a neat brass lock to keep them safe. This box was nailed to the back porch and although it caused Mother much concern, it remained there for a year till finally they died of an unnatural cause.

Until my fourteenth birthday these animals never interested me in any biological sense, but that year, I wanted to raise rabbits in a serious way.

With a small runway and neat sleeping box it seemed to me only a matter of a month or so before my two new rabbits would produce some offspring. After several months of waiting in vain, a friend, who was a more mature breeder, claimed my rabbits were both males. As secretly as possible, lest my foolish mistake be laughed at, I exchanged one for a female and started over. In three weeks time, I was sure of success. The expectant mother carried all the loose straw she could find into the sleeping box and forced it with her chin into a soft circular nest. On the last day, she pulled fur loose from her neck and chest till the nest was so completely covered that I could not see

into it through the fluffiness. The next morning when I peered in, I shouted for joy, yet my stomach dropped for new-born rabbits are very ugly. Eleven of them crawled and wiggled about like fat worms. Their shape was embryonic with legs and eyes still enclosed in skin.

Each day as they grew, only three or four appeared well-fed; the rest took turns at being just skin and bones, for a mother rabbit can feed only six or seven at the most and mine had five too many. Two always had huge stomachs that hung around them like meal sacks.

In a month all eleven had grown into fuzzy white balls that sometimes pised up their parents and nudged beneath their father, who always looked completely bewildered when this happened. Nearby lived a large well-named dog called "Wolf," who terrorized the neighborhood. He was said to have been half wolf and trained by the police for a special bodyguard. Despite his reputation, he adored my bunnies. For hours he would sit outside their wire cage, following them back and forth while saliva dripped from his jaws.

To prove he had no evil thoughts, I would place a couple between his large front legs and let them eat before his soft black eyes.

When I was sixteen, I attempted to raise the more sensitive Rex Chinchilla rabbits. Each day one of my first litter died until I had left three out of seven and these never thrived. After this failure, I gave up all animal-raising ideas.

With high-school occupying most of my time, my naturalistic interests lay dormant except during the summer. Then I spent much time netting turtles with a friend up an old creek in a swamp. Back in the Pamapoos a small lake overflows into this swamp of about two square miles area which focuses into a partly stagnant stream and empties into Greenwood Lake. After canoeing two miles up this creek, we could believe perfectly well that we were in the Tropics, for not a single tall tree could be seen, only a thick underbush on all sides and groping weeds. The bottom was soft and clung to our paddle tips as we shoved along through the

mass of weeds. When we first found this ^{were} strange country, every log and projecting stone had several orange-spotted "Soldier" turtles covering it, which "plopped" off into the water as we approached. Through the weeds slimy-backed "Stink" turtles slid along. With such an abundance on hand, we only netted the small baby ones. Once we found a black turtle spotted with yellow and on a grey clay bank a nest of baby catfish, which looked like a solid black mass until we came closer and saw the fish a half-inch long with barely noticeable spikes and tails. We occasionally caught sight of fish hawks, long legged herons, and the almost extinct white egret standing out clearly from the black swamp brush.

About this time my youthful hope of becoming a farmer was finally replaced by a desire to be a doctor. Along with a Biology course in Pingry and the reading of several popular books by doctors, I visited my uncle Dr. Winans in Kentucky, who offered me much advice and let me accompany him through his hospital. The operations I saw

there were all very minor, but interested me a great deal. Later I was permitted to visit Dr. Ciel's clinic in Cleveland, where I saw a collection of realistic models of disease-infected parts of the human body, especially of the arms and legs; also real human embryos in stages of several weeks from one day to nine months.

With this small knowledge of what a medical career really is and a feeling that I'd much rather help people and learn how we function than ~~to~~ be a chemical engineer like my father, I entered Amherst at seventeen with eight years of training before me.

However I haven't forgotten my earlier gardens and animals and if medicine becomes too laborious a career, I should like to study scientific breeding and agricultural diseases. At present I have seeds of starchy and sweet, purple and white corn which I hope to cross this summer. Besides, I'm going to make a collection of water crustaceans and, some-time in the future, try to win a scholarship to Woods Hole to continue further this study.