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THIS, THAT AND TOTHER

A PAGE FROM THE DIARY OF A COUNTRY EDITOR

Awake betimes to a sound that falls like sweetest music on ears long unused to the roar of rain upon the roof, as sweet a sound, I think, as might greet mortal ears. Days in weary, sterile way to a dusty end. And a rain came. Never before has any man now living realized as keenly the pricelessness of the gift, water, unthinkingly ancient mother of life. Never, perhaps, has man been shown more clearly his impotence and that of his most brilliant fellows in the face of the same natural forces that sent fellows in the face of the same natural forces that sent his ancient fathers scurrying into caves, or fleeing southward before the coming of the North Wind. Instantly, after all, is the advance of man since he chipped a flint and lurked with the cunning of dawning thought at some water hole where a mastodon came to drink—infinitely little, with all of his boasted science and inventions, when the processes of Nature turn awry for a season. And yet, he has somewhat conquered mind, frantic fear with a faith and a philosophy of sorts.

So it is this morning that there comes a feeling of peace long unknown and contentment unused for a twelvemonth in the music of the rain. Soon I know the small streams that meander so beautifully through our meadows will chuckle to themselves softly, as they hurry down the branched bones of last summer's dusty death, over the bleached bones of last summer's dusty death, Gaunt, tortured animals, long thirst-ridden, will be at ease once more and to the midst of man will come again a content, a feeling of which he scarcely conscious when seasons are propitious—in the eternal rightness of the imponderable processes of that Mystery, Life, that has flesh, with veritable assurance and a naive trust, for his sole use and benefit. Heigho! What a piece of work is man!

Sweet the murmur of the rain upon the eaves, but it runs a sound which falls upon the early morning ear in accustomed seasons, rarely failing to greet the ebon or the coming of a shower. Where, I wonder, is that trim, boyish, boundless brown fellow, Carolina wren, whose ringing and clarion challenge to the day and cheer, though song is a veritable message of shame and defiance? But he winds be cold and fields blanketed with snow? Did he perish during those breathless, barren days of a summer when even the catbird languished in full song? I prefer to think that having quick-beating wings which might carry a cinnamon-brown body over many leagues by night he has escaped the rain in more favored fields and will return to us with the coming of the rain and another spring. Truly, the long silence of the trees has been more marked than I ever have noted. Only the doubtful little chickadee and his equally valiant winter companion, the down woodpecker, have come to my sust lump this winter. Even the cardinals and those robins that somewhere winter with us seem to have fled before the stress of something breath of the Great Drouth. What a tragedy if the sweet music of the fields, of tree and bush and hedgerow should not come again! But it will. And spring will burst near the glad shout of the flicker. The whistle again will hear the glad shout of the flicker. The whistle again will hear the glad shout of the flicker. The whistle again will hear the glad shout of the flicker. The whistle again will hear the glad shout of a cardinal, the merry bubbling of a wren, the plaintive chirp of a robin, the soft sweet note of a meadow lark—until spring and the far-flung carol of a meadow lark—until spring gives way to the fullness of June and the cat bird sings again and the rooster pours out his heart to the beauty of a summer's noon.

Hohum! 'is a relief to grow poetic in this workaday world now and then, though one stifle a cynical grin in the growing. For one becomes matter of fact enough. I find, as the years slip away, and cautious and a trifle timid, as the years drag on, and cautious and a trifle timid