

HAMLIN GARLAND'S 1887 TRAVEL NOTEBOOK: AN EDITION

Bridget Germana Wells

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Approved by

Advisory Committee

\_\_\_\_\_  
Diana Ashe

\_\_\_\_\_  
Nicholas Laudadio

\_\_\_\_\_  
Keith Newlin  
Chair

Accepted by

\_\_\_\_\_  
Dean, Graduate School

## TABLE OF CONTENTS

ABSTRACT .....	iii
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS .....	iv
DEDICATION .....	v
INTRODUCTION .....	1
The 1887 Notebook .....	3
Dialect .....	4
Character Sketches and Story Ideas.....	6
Local Color.....	10
Involvement in the Populist Movement .....	12
Impressionism.....	15
EDITORIAL PRACTICE .....	20
Principles of Emendation .....	21
Explanatory Notes .....	23
TEXT OF GARLAND'S 1887 TRAVEL NOTEBOOK .....	24
EXPLANATORY NOTES .....	48
RECORD OF EMENDATIONS .....	54
Textual Notes .....	56
WORKS CITED.....	58
Primary Works.....	58
Secondary Works.....	59
WORK CONSULTED.....	62
Works Pertaining to Scholarly Editing .....	62
Works Used to Determine Editorial Methods .....	62

## ABSTRACT

In the summer of 1887, Hamlin Garland took a trip from Boston to the Midwest, which he chronicled in a notebook. During his journey, he stopped in Chicago and met with author Joseph Kirkland, who urged the young Garland to write fiction and to practice his writing dialogue. Garland took Kirkland's advice and took copious notes throughout his trip. The resulting notebook is important because in it, Garland made his first attempt to write dialect, sketched characters and future story ideas, recorded his interest in the populist reform movement and local color, and became one of the first American authors to attempt literary impressionism . The notebook has been edited and is accompanied by an introduction and explanatory notes.

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## DEDICATION

I would like to dedicate this thesis to my husband, Christopher Wells, who was patient with me and listened to me, even though he had never heard of Hamlin Garland before I started this project.

## INTRODUCTION

Hamlin Garland was born on September 14, 1860, near West Salem, Wisconsin. His family moved several times during his childhood, with his father always in search of a better farm. When Hamlin was ten, the Garland family moved to Osage, Iowa. There Hamlin attended the Cedar Valley Seminary. Because he disliked farming and dreamed of moving away and teaching, when he graduated from the seminary in the fall of 1881, he supported himself with various jobs and taught school for a short time. After taking a trip East with his brother (a trek which included stops in Niagara Falls and Boston), Hamlin returned to the Dakota Territory, where his family had moved, and homesteaded in McPherson County.

By October of 1884, Garland had tired of the brutal life on the middle border and moved to Boston to study literature. There he spent most days in the library or reading in his room. The works of Charles Darwin, Herbert Spencer, and John Fiske inflamed his imagination. In 1885, Garland procured a teaching position in Moses True Brown's Boston School of Oratory. At that time, Garland also started speaking in front of small groups of people in various community members' houses on various subjects and authors. Before the summer of 1887, Garland had written essays and some autobiographical sketches, had published a few book reviews and poems, and had lectured, but he had not yet tried his hand at fiction.

In the summer of 1887, Garland took a trip west from Boston to visit his parents in what was then Dakota Territory, now South Dakota, with a stop in his old hometown of Osage, Iowa, to visit friends from his childhood. Garland referred to this area of the country as the middle border because it was the edge of the frontier of civilization. During this journey, Garland kept a notebook in which he recorded his observations with the aim of honing his fiction-writing skills and gaining material for later use. Garland made notes about the distinct regional dialects of

people on the middle border, sketched characters and future story ideas, recorded his interest in the populist reform movement and local color, and attempted literary impressionism.

Along his way, Garland met with Joseph Kirkland, whose novel, *Zury: The Meanest Man in Spring County*, Garland had reviewed for the *Boston Evening Transcript*. After the review, the two began corresponding and Kirkland invited Garland to stop in Chicago for a visit on his journey west. Kirkland was home alone, his family having gone away for the summer, and this enabled Garland and Kirkland to have some literary conversations during which Kirkland encouraged Garland to write fiction and hone his craft.

In *A Son of the Middle Border* (1917), Garland recounts a conversation in which Kirkland asks why Garland had not yet written fiction. Garland replies, “I can’t manage the dialogue,” and Kirkland accuses Garland of being “lazy,” and implores Garland to “buckle to it” and “sweat.” Garland admits that Kirkland is right, acknowledging the difficulty of “compos[ing] a page of conversation, wherein each actor uses his own accent and speaks from his own point of view” (354). Kirkland’s own proficiency in writing dialogue in the western idiom must have also prompted Garland to learn to write authentic dialogue. Kirkland’s *Zury* even includes a glossary of dialectical words “lest his readers find the prairie argot unintelligible” (Flanagan 283). Garland had kept notebooks his whole life, but Kirkland’s urging prompted Garland to reorient his note-taking to focus on the craft of fiction writing. Garland made a concerted effort to observe and record dialogue in his notebook, so that he might teach himself how to write fiction properly through practice. Donald Pizer affirms that “When Hamlin Garland returned to the middle border in early July, 1887, it was with the aim of gathering material for fictional use” (*Early Work* 31).

Garland later described the significance of this trip in *A Son of the Middle Border*:

This visit to the West seems important, for it was the beginning of my career as a fictionist. My talk with Kirkland and my perception of the sordid monotony of farm life had given me a new and very definite emotional relationship to my native state. I perceived now the tragic value of scenes which had hitherto appeared merely dull or petty. My eyes were opened to the enforced misery of the pioneer. As a reformer my blood was stirred to protest. As a writer I was beset with a desire to record in some form this newly-born conception of the border. (301)

While the trip was important to Garland, the more expansive notes in his journal, which appear greatly condensed in *Son*, are significant because they show Garland's development as a writer.

#### The 1887 Notebook

In his notebook Garland recorded impressions of the people and the scenery he encountered while on his trip, always keeping Kirkland's advice in mind. By chronicling his trip, Garland was able to sharpen his powers of observation. Garland's strength as a writer at that point in his career was in writing description and not in making up material, which had caused his aversion to fiction-writing. While he had written several book reviews, articles, and a few poems prior to the trip, only the last required the creation of new material and not simply the description of others' work. Recording his observations in his notebook provided Garland with later material for fiction, for he based his earliest characters on the people he observed in Osage. As Joseph B. McCullough points out, "While Hamlin Garland never achieved the greatness that he sought, he was a capable writer who was often able . . . to transform personal feelings, attitudes, and experiences into compelling themes for his fiction" (*Tales of the Middle Border* xxii).



Throughout the notebook, Garland's conscious decision to become a writer of fiction and his early development as a writer is evident. Garland was able to see his old home through a new lens. Recording his "newly-born conception of the border," he was able to write "the truth of the farmer's life, his condition seen from the angle of one familiar with it" (Pizer, *Early Work* 36). This new clarity aided the development of themes that became significant in his later work, such as the wretched living conditions for the farmers and women on the middle border; in addition, the notebook reveals his early attempt at impressionism and his interest in the Populist movement.

This notebook is also of interest and value because it shows how Garland learned to become a fiction writer under Kirkland's tutelage. Garland used his experiences in Osage to form many of the ideas he would later express in his fiction, and it is especially useful to observe him learning how to write dialogue. Moreover, the notebook illustrates Garland's resourcefulness in recycling material: some of the material in this notebook became the inspiration for much of his early work, including stories in the collections *Main-Travelled Roads* (1891) and *Prairie Folks* (1893), and also in his autobiography, *A Son of the Middle Border*.

## Dialect

While Garland later became famous for depicting midwestern dialect in his fiction, he did not always have an astute ear for dialogue, and writing it realistically was something he had to practice conscientiously to learn. Garland's skill in middle border dialect came from paying close attention and recording variations among dialects during his trip west in 1887.

Garland recorded his observations of the slang and expressions he heard, as well as the different pronunciations of words. For example, he noted the way a girl on the train used the

phrases, “by-gosh and don’t give a damn.” He credited the whole town with grammatical “blunders” like “I hadn’t nothing.” Garland explored patterns in regional dialects, noting, among other things, that “East born people . . . left off the *g* in going and running.” Garland described the New Jersey dialect of his neighbor, William Frazer, by using the examples *couw* and *nouw*. He also credits Frazer with “curious phrases” like *chingling*, as in “the buggy wheel went chingling along the road,” and “bug out his eyes.”

Garland recorded rules of elisions of certain letters in speech that “added to the swiftness and directness of speech,” and concluded that the “law of western dialect . . . was abbreviation. Everything is reduced to its lowest terms.” For example, he noted that in the western dialect, *h* is elided from “him,” and *g* is eliminated from the end of “ing.” Those speaking in a western dialect also tended to contract words, such as substituting “*cumere* for come here” and “*mays well*” for may as well.

Ironically, the notebook reveals that Garland’s later sympathetic understanding of the frontier farmer was not yet evident. Because living in Boston for three years had instilled a degree of arrogance and snobbery in Garland, at this time he believed that one’s manner of speaking, in part, demonstrated the level of one’s intelligence. He discriminated against those whose dialect suggested their lack of intelligence, for “In the speech of the intelligent there was hardly a single dialect trace, except that the *r* was sounded and made more strongly than in Boston.”

One needs to look no further than the second page of the first story of *Main-Travelled Roads* to see these dialect notes in practice. In “A Branch Road” Will Hannan asks Ed Kinney if he is going to help Dingman thrash his wheat, and when Will answers that he is, Ed replies, “So’m I. Who’s goin’ to do your thrashin—Dave McTurg?” (14). Later, when they discuss school, Ed says, “Le’s see: you graduate next year, don’t yeh?” Here, Ed Kinney contracts words by

eliminating letters from several words. Kinney uses a more “typical” midwestern dialect, but other characters in Garland’s stories speak in dialects that Garland observed during his visit. For example, in “The Creamery Man,” Nina speaks in a Dutch dialect, as in, “Vot vass Bill fightding apoudt?”(159), and she regularly leaves out the correct form of “to be,” as in, “How you like me today?” (162).

The dialect notes aided Garland’s fictional development considerably. Because he studied and applied his knowledge to write realistic dialogue, readers today can still admire and understand his middle border dialect.

#### Character Sketches and Story Ideas

The notebook is, in part, a collection of observations about the people Garland encountered during his trip, and many of his comments developed into character sketches, with brief plot ideas jotted down within the descriptions. Garland devoted many of the sketches to Milton Jennings, who would become a recurring character in Garland’s early fiction. He is mentioned in “A Branch Road” in *Main-Travelled Roads* as a “seminary chap” (16); he is also a character in several stories in *Prairie Folks*. Garland began a novel called *Milton Jennings* that he never finished but instead evolved into the novel *A Spoil of Office* (1892). Garland may have utilized this character so often because he based the character on himself, ascribing to Milton many of his own observations as recorded in the notebook.

Garland also mentions a character named Ilean Graham in conjunction with the Milton Jennings sketches. It is possible that Garland based this character on one “Mrs. C,” whom he also describes in the notebook. There is a character named Eileen Deering in *Prairie Folks*, and in “The Test of Elder Pill” and “Sim Burns Wife,” there is a character named Lily Graham.

There is no mention of Ilean Graham in any of Garland's early stories, but some of her qualities can be found in other characters throughout Garland's early work. In "A Branch Road," for example, Agnes shares some of the same characteristics as Mrs. C. Just as marriage and childbearing prematurely age Mrs. C, so too does become a "dowdy little mother thick and slattern in dress," and childbearing has "taken away all her ambition."

Garland recorded his observations of several women, making sure to stress in the most sympathetic way how down-trodden and frail these toiling women were. His first impression of Mrs. William Frazer, is someone "as homely, as tried, and as long suffering as ever. She was so lame she could scarcely walk yet she was at work incessantly. From early dawn until late at night there was not a moment of rest for her." Mrs. Abigail Gammons, another neighbor who lived just down the road from the old Garland home, is much the same, a "poor, old, humble and weazen" woman, who "had known nothing but toil for half a century. Her aches and pains had been going on for so many years that [her husband] listened to them without a sign of interest. In reality she should not have been allowed to do a particle of work, as a matter of fact she did it all." Hopeless Mrs. B., the wife of Garland's old next-door neighbor Osmond Button, was a "poor thin wife emaciated almost to a skelton [sic] . . . living in the same low stuffy rooms without hope of a change."

There is no doubt that the woman Garland most sympathized with was his mother, although the description of the Dakota portion of Garland's trip is brief in the transcript. Throughout *A Son of the Middle Border* and even in the preface to *Main-Travelled Roads*, Garland despairs at the rough conditions his mother had to withstand, mentioning that she is "imprisoned in a small cabin . . . with no expectation of ever living anywhere else. Deserted . . . and in failing heath, she endured the discomforts of her life uncomplainingly" (ix-x). In this notebook, however, he just

mentions her “febleness” in passing, noting that “her voice had a tremulous weakness which [he] had never noticed before.” It is certain that Garland is referring to these battered women and his mother when he describes the weak female characters in his fiction. His three-year residence in Boston made Garland sensitive to the difficulty of life for women on the middle border. Garland also espoused the ideas of social progress in the writings of Herbert Spencer, who believed in social and political justice for women. Like Spencer, Garland believed that the subjugation of women was no longer appropriate due to the evolution of society. These sketches thus foreshadow his later involvement in the feminist movement.

With his newly-acquired Bostonian intellectual snobbery, Garland classified younger women as either educated or uneducated. Garland described women who appeared uneducated as “foolish” or “irresistible”—irresistible perhaps to other men for their naïveté. Educated women like E. K. and Mrs. C. were more desirable, with Garland even writing, “The C\_\_\_\_\_ were much more intelligent and wide awake than most of the young girls of the town. They were like lily buds forth from the muck.” He spent a long time describing these educated women, while only devoting a sentence or two to the undereducated.

A number of Garland’s stories describe other women oppressed by life on the middle border. Garland used his mother and other women he knew on the middle border as inspiration for these broken but still very strong and hardworking women in his stories. Several of his other stories, especially in *Main-Travelled Roads*, bear striking resemblance to Garland’s own experience, both in his childhood and in his 1887 visit. In “Up the Coulee,” Howard McLane, a successful young actor, returns home and, like Garland, encounters much disappointment and guilt, although unlike Garland, this young man has enough money to make a difference for his family. In “A Branch Road,” Will Hannan returns to find his childhood sweetheart in pitiful conditions,

married to a mean-spirited farmer, Ed Kinney. Her beauty is gone, but Will persuades the woman to leave with him. In some ways, this parallels Garland's sketch of Mrs. C. Garland writes "she seemed to fear her soul might be trampled upon by him, though she feared no physical harm. He appeared to be of dynamite liable at any moment to explode in cursing." Her husband "was ruined with drink or that he was a villian [sic] to be more feared than a highway man." Ed Kinney is not a drinker, but he does treat Agnes terribly, making her feel guilty and worthless.

Many scholars praise Garland's candor in describing the actual life of farmers, for he was one of the first authors to write truthfully about the harsh conditions of the farm, refusing to write more of the utopian farm stories that the American reading public had grown used to. As Pizer notes, "Garland was one of our first writers to depart from the conventional literary stereotype of the farmer as the "honest yeoman" and of the prairie West as "the Garden of the World" ("Rise of Boomtown" 345). While Henry Nash Smith argues that Garland's early stories about "the hardships of his people" on the middle border are "seriously deficient as art" because they are "in large part documentary, which is to say unliterary" (488), he does credit Garland with the ability to "express two things better than anyone else: the sense of outrage that underlay the Populist movement, and the literary evolution which had made it possible to deal with western farmers on their own terms, without reference to their supposedly inferior social status" (488). (Garland's sense of outrage that underlies the Populist movement is discussed below.)

In this notebook, Garland wrote very honestly about the men he met, like Uncle Billy Frazer and his neighbor John Gammons. Garland even quoted Mr. J as saying, "I am doing well enough now, but it is a dog's life. I am doing nothing but working like a nigger. We have no time to

read, and then we are just rushed with our cattle.” These harsh sentiments helped Garland to craft characters that broke those rosy stereotypes and make a new mark on American literature.

### Local Color

The notebook shows the beginning of Garland’s devotion to the local color movement, which he would later describe more fully in his literary manifesto, *Crumbling Idols* (1894). As an evolutionary critic, Garland praised the local color movement as a natural progression from Herbert Spencer’s idea that America was moving from “incoherent homogeneity to coherent heterogeneity,” or from simplicity to complexity and diversity. For Garland, local color was the way of the future, for it “pointed toward ever-increasing heterogeneity” (Pizer, “Genesis” 166). Additionally, local color supports Spencer’s idea that there are no absolutes, “only constantly increasing multiplicity and complexity in life and thought” (Pizer, “Genesis” 167).

Prior to his trip west, Garland had already subscribed to the belief that American authors should write about a culture and region that they are familiar with and have lived in; but his 1887 trip cemented this view, which he would later reflect in his fiction. Garland therefore drew upon the observations in his notebook in his writing to ensure that his work would be authentic and correctly portray the people and land of the middle border.

For Garland, local color “means that the writer spontaneously reflects the life which goes on around him. It is natural and unrestrained art” (*Crumbling Idols* 52). To write in the local color movement, an author must write about a place to which he is native, and which he understands and has studied. As Garland was about to embark on a career in fiction, it was fitting for him to reacquaint himself with the place about which he wanted to write, and it was natural for him to write about the middle border because it was his native land. He writes extensively about the

reasons for loving your native land in *Crumbling Idols*, declaring that, “Born into a web of circumstances, enmeshed in common life, the youthful artist begins to think. All the associations of that childhood and the love-life of youth combine to make that web of common affairs, threads of silver and beads of gold; the near-at-hand things are the dearest and sweetest after all” (53).

As mentioned above, Garland’s harsh depiction of the middle border was something new to literary America, but this unforgiving truthfulness in this notebook and his fiction is due to Garland’s devotion to local color. He was often honest to the point of pain, but he wrote purposefully. Pizer observes, “As he journeyed toward Dakota, Garland recorded his awareness of the hardship and drudgery of farm life, the narrowness and inadequacy of town life. . . The local colorist of the middle border . . . will not only describe the West truthfully, but in depicting that truth will voice the protest of an oppressed people” (*Early Work* 41).

Garland’s dedication to authenticity is evident in a section of the transcript in which he inscribes a checklist of things to do before leaving Osage:

Study the court rooms, and lawyers, especially C. P. Study the town as a whole.  
Get at the character of the people as compared with ten years ago. Look up pictures and ornaments. Study the library and see the books. Which are read and by whom. Look up the circulating library, meet as many of the citizens as possible, especially the young people. Study the Norwegians again, meet the editors.

Throughout the notebook, Garland fulfills many of these tasks. For example, Garland visits the town library and lists the authors that citizens of Osage read, among them William Dean Howells and James Fenimore Cooper.



Donald A. Dike asserts “Local color often takes the form of propaganda designed to call attention to the plight or special problem of people in local areas” (84). Garland had the task of enlightening readers about the cause he was supporting while simultaneously making his characters down-trodden enough to evoke sympathy, but not so pathetic as to warrant disbelief or apathy for a hopeless situation. If Garland could not make readers care about characters enough to want to save them, then they would not take up Garland’s cause.

Many of Garland’s early works contain some form of advocacy for one cause or another, and Dike’s assertion holds true for many of those works, and in the way Garland portrays his characters in this notebook. Local color also enables Garland to incorporate his social consciousness, truthfully portraying the middle border while motivating others towards reform.

Garland has been criticized for constructing loose plots, but Dike explains that “local color writing de-emphasizes plot, for the structure of the [local color] anecdote can scarcely be called plot, in favor of character and atmosphere” (86). However, this criticism is consistent with Garland’s aims in fiction-writing. His goal was to portray things accurately, with plot as a second consideration. In his notebook we can see Garland’s interest in description and experience but not in imagining or plotting.

#### Involvement in the Populist Movement

When he read Henry George’s *Progress and Poverty* (1879) in 1884, Garland was still in Dakota, but he immediately responded to George’s idea that those who control the land are given unequal advantage over those who do not, since inevitably the rising profits in land speculation is an unearned increment. George proposed a tax reform that would make it impossible to hold unused land in areas where land was in high demand. In this reform, a piece of land would be

taxed by the government based on the average value of the land surrounding it and not according to the improvements made on the land. Therefore, it would become unprofitable to hold land out of use and land speculation would ideally be eliminated. After his trip West, Garland became an active member of the Boston Anti-Poverty Society, which was an organization for Henry George's single-tax crusade.

We can see Garland's growing outrage about land speculation in this notebook, particularly in the beginning of the chapter he titles, "As I Went West From Charles City." He writes that every town is "cursed by speculators." His disgust at land speculators and admiration of reformers is clear in such comments as, "'Here is the most glaring example of the folly of the land system, which allows speculators to hold land out of use.' Nothing could be more tragic to me than this waste of human life and genius. 'The man who could change this . . . would be greater than Christ.'" However, Garland did not let the unfairness of land speculation sap his optimism. As Lewis Saum states, "[Garland] skirted hopelessness by accepting the central contention of the Henry George ethos—suffering came from faults in human laws and institutions, not from the dictates of nature nor the designs of God" ("Reform" 59). Accordingly, Garland believed that man could work for a better future by changing the laws and practices that caused the suffering. Garland continues to spout Henry George's ideas: "Every town was cursed by speculators. Just those lands which ought to be thickly settled close around town were lying waste."

In her article, "Points of Contact Between History and Literature in the Mississippi Valley," Dorothy Dondore writes that "literature is generally recognized as being more responsive to contemporary influences than other forms of activity and that the poet, dramatist, or story-teller is generally believed to be endowed with more sympathy and insight than the ordinary mortal"

(231). Garland thus sought to goad people into action through his fiction. Pizer correctly asserts that “today [Garland] is recognized as occupying an important place . . . in the literature of social protest (“Rise of Boomtown” 345). Garland’s early fiction dealing with the disparity of land speculation and his single tax ideals includes “Among the Corn-Rows,” “Under the Lion’s Paw,” and “Up the Coulee,” in *Main-Travelled Roads*; “Sim Burns’s Wife” in *Prairie Folks*; the play *Under the Wheel* (1890); and the novels *Jason Edwards* (1892), *A Little Norsk* (1892), and *The Land of the Straddle-Bug* (1894-95), as well as the manuscript “The Rise of Boomtown,” which Pizer published in 1956.

One of Garland’s most famous and most widely anthologized short stories, “Under the Lion’s Paw,” is a archetypal example of Garland’s use of the single-tax doctrine as the basis for a story, while not mentioning the single tax by name. The very premise of the story mirrors George’s ideas in *Progress and Poverty*. The Haskins family moves from Kansas to Iowa. They rent a farm from Jim Butler, a notorious land speculator. Haskins puts in an enormous amount of labor on the farm, and when he is ready to buy the farm after three years, Butler doubles the original price of the house because of the increased value due to Haskins’s improvements of it. Haskins is outraged, and says, “I’m kickin’ about payin’ you twice f’r my own things—my own fences, my own kitchen, my own garden,” to which Butler replies, “You’re too green t’ eat, young feller. *Your* improvements! The law will sing another tune” (emphasis in original). Later, Butler continues, “Why, man, don’t look at me like that. Don’t take me for a thief. It’s the law. The reg’lar thing. Everybody does it” (154). Garland’s contempt for land speculation and its supporters is clear throughout the story, but particularly in this exchange at the end of the story.

However, Garland eventually abandoned his single tax fiction, for many of the stories in which he mentioned the single tax by name were unsuccessful because readers do not want their fiction to preach to them. As Herbert Edwards writes, “[Garland was] ignoring the basic principle that the temple of arts may have an altar, but not a pulpit . . . conflicting claims of art and propaganda constituted an almost insuperable difficulty” (361). In any case, Garland’s reform spirit gave him familiar material to write about when he first started writing fiction.

### Impressionism

In addition to showing Garland’s developing local color style, the notebook shows his earliest efforts to write in the impressionist style. In July 1885, Garland met the impressionist landscape painter John J. Enneking, whose style of painting interested him. The two discussed their ideas about art, and Enneking “emphasized temperament and individuality in art” (Pizer, *Early Work* 134).

As a form of writing, impressionism involves the expression of the author’s subjective impression of a scene, as opposed to the objective recording of a scene. Literary impressionism often includes rough or vague descriptions and fragmentary sentences because, like the impressionist painters, the authors are attempting to convey the general atmosphere of the scene as they perceive it. Sentences tend to be heavily noun- and adjective-based. James Nagel writes that “Although all the senses may be involved, the dominant sensory images are visual and involve various modifications of sight: light, shadow, color, form, and depth” (29). Much of the description also revolves around the author’s impression of the mood and tone of the scene. As Maria E. Kronegger explains, “The impressionist writers share with recent investigators in phenomenology the conviction that we cannot know reality independently of consciousness, and

that we cannot know consciousness independently of reality” (14). An impressionist writer, therefore, admits that his or her experience affects his or her writing, while a realist tries to deny his or her personal influence.

Garland was drawn to impressionism because of its “supposed scientific accuracy and its aesthetic individualism” (Pizer, *Early Work* 135), which also fit with his local color ideas. In 1886, Garland read a defense of impressionism in Eugene Veron’s *Aesthetics* (1879), which touted science as its basis. Scientific knowledge had advanced in the fields of light and color techniques. This scientific approach attracted Garland, who in his personal copy of *Aesthetics* wrote, “This book influenced me more than any other work on art. It entered into all I thought and spoke and read for many years after it fell into my hands about 1886” (Pizer, *Early Work* 135)

Garland also admired impressionism’s stress on an “individual’s impression of a scene” (Pizer, *Early Work* 135), which allowed Garland to put his personal observations into his work. In impressionism, “there is always something in the sensation which is unconsciously an interior quality of the artists, and in this respect individuality or subjectivity is evidenced in impressionism” (Gibbs 176). This allows the author to present characters, scenes, or moods through his or her own temperament, rather than through an objective lens. Garland states this idea in his definition of a veritist as someone who “sees life in terms of what it might be, as well as in terms of what it is; but he writes of what is, and, at his best, suggests what is to be, by contrast. He aims to be perfectly truthful in his delineation of his relation to life, but there is a tone, a color, which comes unconsciously into his utterance” (*Crumbling Idols* 43).

In “A Realist Experiments with Impressionism: Hamlin Garland’s “Chicago Studies,” James B. Stronks suggests that in the 1890’s Garland wrote “Chicago Studies” with the aim to “enlarge

his repertory and to refine his technique” with impressionism. Although many scholars believe that Garland and Crane were mutually influenced by each other, Stronks believes that Garland had fallen under the influence of Stephen Crane’s impressionism (38) and that it is not possible that Garland could have influenced Crane’s impressionism (46). However, Stronks’s article only discusses Garland’s attempt at impressionism beginning in 1892, but Garland wrote in an impressionistic style in this notebook in 1887. Some of the notebook’s passages, are “descriptive sketches [that] obviously aspired to literary finesse” (Stronks 39), which anticipate the later sketches in “Chicago Studies.”

Conversely, Stanley Wertheim suggests in his article, “Crane and Garland: The Education of an Impressionist,” that Crane’s attendance at Garland’s lectures in 1891 at the Avon-by-the-Sea resort was the impetus for Crane’s impressionism. Wertheim also writes that Garland’s essay “The West in Literature” in the November, 1892 *Arena* marks the “starting point of literary impressionism.” In the article, according to Wertheim, Garland “stresses the replacing of theoretical knowledge with visual experience as the goal of realistic writing” (24).

Pizer asserts that Garland began employing impressionist techniques regularly by 1890; however Pizer also notes that Garland made several attempts at impressionism in a notebook from 1886, in which Garland described fall scenes, as well as in his 1887 notebook, both which contain material that he eventually incorporated into his middle-border stories and novels.

Throughout the notebook, Garland’s attempts at impressionism pay particular attention to color, texture, and light. Impressionism is especially prevalent in the descriptions of the land. In the notebook Garland describes a sunset:

Just at sunset the river became a glory, and the sun set in pale gold. . . . A blue hill lay in the foreground on each side, always the most velvety green, touched

on one side by the light of the sun. . . . In the mid-distance the river reflected dark, cold clouds. Cattle were on point beyond. A boat floated like the petals of a lily. The indescribable splendor of the land, the velvety green of the flats. Yet anything greener than the hills could not be imagined, fresh and velvety beyond expression. The sky blue at the bottom, slated blue and gray above.

A similar description of a sunset is found in “Up the Coulee”:

A few scattering clouds were drifting on the west wind, their shadows sliding down the green and purple slopes. The dazzling sunlight flamed along the luscious velvety grass, and shot amid the rounded, distant purple peaks, and streamed in bars of gold and crimson across the blue mist of the narrower upper coulee. (*Main-Travelled Roads* 58)

Both descriptions depict the clouds, the effect of sunlight falling upon the land, and the velvety color of grass. Garland wrote like Enneking and other impressionists painted their landscapes, focusing on the details of color and tone. At this early stage in Garland’s development as a fiction writer, he experimented with writing styles that had not yet become popular in American writing. Crane may have influenced Garland’s impressionism in “Chicago Studies,” but Garland practiced impressionism long before Crane made it popular.

While he was learning to write fiction in his notebook, Garland experimented with many different subjects and methods of writing. In “Romantic Individualism,” Pizer summarizes the connection between Garland’s interest in impressionism, local color, and his evolutionary ideas, which ultimately led to his involvement in reform movements: “the impressionist or veritist reflecting the life around him cannot help being a local colorist, since by his reference to nature he must needs represent the uniqueness of his particular area.” Pizer continues to say that in

*Crumbling Idols*, “Garland stated an aesthetic system in which evolutionary ideas served as the intellectual foundation, impressionism as the artistic method advocated and local color as the end product in the various arts” (467). Thus Garland’s 1887 notebook is pivotal in the development of his choice of subjects and techniques in his early fiction.



## EDITORIAL PRACTICE

Garland recorded notations about his 1887 visit to Osage in a notebook, item 18 in the Hamlin Garland Papers held at the University of Southern California Doheny Library. The notebook is comprised of two brown tablets 21 by 13 centimeters in size. He later made a typed transcript of the notebook, item 19, which contains 24 leaves. This edition is based on photocopies of both texts.

Garland may have made the transcription in preparation for chapter eighteen of *A Son of the Middle Border*, "A Visit West," but it is more likely that he made the transcription soon after his visit because the names that appear in the transcript match the names in his notebook, with few exceptions, while the names differ from those appearing in *Son*. Moreover, since many of the characters that appear in sketches in the notebook also appear in Garland's earliest fiction, it is probable that Garland made the transcript prior to writing these works. It would not have behooved Garland to transcribe the character sketches if he had prepared this transcript long after writing these stories, and he probably would have excluded them from the transcript. Furthermore, the transcript contains content different from the chapter in *Son*, including many details he chose to exclude from *Son*.

Comparison of the notebook and the transcript reveals that Garland omitted little material of interest from the notebook when he typed the transcript. The notebook consists of short notes in a bulleted form, but in the transcript, Garland expanded the notes into paragraphs. Garland also added to his recollections throughout the transcript, such as with the introductory description of the Morrisons, with whom he once boarded. The paragraph on Lawyer Rice is another example of Garland's embellishment in the transcript. In the notebook, the full section about Lawyer Rice consists of only, "Rice went by with his usual stately step, much shattered they tell me,"

while in transcript, the description is much more complete and more closely matches the resulting description in *A Son of the Middle Border*. Garland also added paragraphs of reflections about the meaning of his trip to the transcript, such as the following passage in which he reveals his ambition:

It would be a great thing to interpret the thoughts of these young girls to get at what they actually knew of the world and the color with which thought imparts to it. If I could do this I could write one of the greatest books. For such a book would be typical of the movements of a number of people.

Other sections of the transcript have no corresponding section in notebook. The first four pages and the end of transcript, starting with the chapter “As I Went West From Charles City,” have no counterparts in the notebook. This last section is of considerable interest because it shows Garland’s developing interest in the Populist land movement, along with a description of his trip to Ordway.

Because Garland’s thoughts are more complete and more clearly expressed in the transcript, while still reflecting his initial impressions of his trip, the transcript serves as this edition’s copy text.

### Principles of Emendation

Garland inscribed some minor holograph revisions on the transcript, but because these revisions are largely stylistic in nature, they are not included. Garland also revised some of his initial impressions to soften their impact so that he might not seem rude or brash. Also, these stylistic revisions, while relatively abundant in the first half of the notebook, are missing from the second half, with the exception of a few corrections of spelling and typographical errors. It is

unclear when Garland made these revisions, but it is possible that he made them long after making the transcript. Because Garland's unrevised, initial impressions of his visit are important, this edition reproduces the unrevised transcript with the few exceptions noted below.

The transcript contains several misspelled words throughout the transcript, most of which are dropped letters due to Garland's substandard typing skills, but Garland corrected most of these in his later holographic revisions. These corrections have been silently included. Misspellings that Garland did not correct with a holograph revision have been retained, unless Garland spelled the word correctly elsewhere in the transcript or notebook. In those cases where the word was spelled correctly elsewhere, the spelling has been silently emended. Obvious orthographical errors, such as "impluse" for "impulse" have been silently corrected. Garland occasionally typed off the edge of the page, resulting in missing letters at the end of lines. These letters have been silently supplied.

When Garland left a blank space, either as a reminder to return later to supply correct or missing information or to retain anonymity, as in a person's name, a space has been underscored to mark his blank. On several occasions, Garland neglected to put a space between words. These slips have been silently emended, for Garland caught most of these errors in his holograph revisions.

Garland's sporadic punctuation sometimes inhibits sentence comprehension. When necessary for clarity, punctuation has been emended and a note recorded in the table of emendations, with the following exceptions: commas have silently been placed inside of quotation marks and missing terminal quotation marks have silently been supplied. The placement of commas within quotations marks is merely a stylistic convention, and in most places, the incorrect comma placement was a typographical error.

In other manuscripts Garland routinely wrote contractions without an apostrophe, but placed the apostrophe correctly in possessives. However, contrary to his regular practice, Garland misplaced or forgot the apostrophes in possessives several times in this transcript. The use of apostrophes in this edition reflects Garland's practice and is not emended.

In sections that include notes on dialect, Garland often uses phonetic spelling to show the pronunciation. However, in some sections, such as his notes on the Scotch dialect, the abundance of these dialect examples can get confusing. Therefore, when Garland calls attention to a word as a word, these words and letters have been italicized to indicate that they are dialect examples.

#### Explanatory Notes

Where known, annotations identify the people, places, and characters or works that Garland saw or wrote about in this notebook. Garland included almost everything from the notebook in his transcription, with few exceptions. If Garland omitted from the transcript something substantive from the notebook, it appears in an annotation. Other annotations record variations among the notebook, the transcript, and *Son*.

## TEXT OF GARLAND'S 1887 TRAVEL NOTEBOOK

### Chapter 1.

#### LEAVING BOSTON, 1887.

I left Boston in the late June on the Hoosac tunnel line.<sup>1</sup> I had been away from the west for four years, and had lived continually in the city of Boston or suburb.

The first distinct feeling of pleasure which I had on the ride was the sight of the deep shadowy forest with great trees, with under-growth of brakes, deep green and fresh. It brought up for me experiences of childhood. Also I noticed with delight the leaves on the pond burnished as living gold. They illustrated for me the words of Shelley's "Starry River Buds."<sup>2</sup>

The Berkshire hills interested me. The meadows starred with white, red and yellow. The horizon a vast amphitheater of blue walls broken with wavy lines like vast parapets. Thought of Hawthorn writing among these picturesque valleys.<sup>3</sup>

Saw a man on a rye field with his rake and reaper. A man binding. They wore straw hats with handkerchiefs hung down behind to keep the sun off the neck. One man shook his finger at us jovially.

The river is to the landscape like a fine mirror in a parlor.

Burning prairie grass effect upon my brain, calling up succession of ideas and memories of old times. Sense of smell one of strong relationship.

Cliffs along the Mohawk valley brought up ledges of lime stone on the old Cedar River.

Slept that night in my seat. Could not afford a sleeper. Did not take any notes. No fun, too sleepy, too uncomfortable. Lights in cars too dim. Noticed particularly a young girl traveling alone. A very interesting study. Big honest, innocent eyes, self-reliant face, like some of my old

schoolmates, and made the best of every discomfort. Her face never showed irritation. Country along the lake shore I found very attractive, level and rich in verdure.

I was stiff and sore with the cramped position in which I had been dozing, but had begun to pluck up a little courage. One gets out side of the comforts of travel, so far as ordinary cars are concerned, after leaving Albany.

As we got to Oberlin the rye and winter wheat began to show up, while shocks stood thickly over the field. All was thrift and plenty, apparently.

I was delighted to observe more chin whiskers among the men and more weight as we neared the west. More color in the cheeks, more variety as to dress. Coats did not fit so well on the whole, but there was a certain strength and heartiness which compensated.

A little comedy. A man who took a girl's seat while she was getting a drink of water. She would not sit down beside him. Her face a study of timidity, and chagrin. Fellow got red in the ears, but he held the fort, and the girl was forced to give in and sit down as far away as possible.

How forlorn the laborers looked to me in the fields under the hot sun, looking forward to the 4th of July, a thing to cheer them on to plod for other days under the burning sun. What a life, what a tragedy. It is that men are condemned to such toil with no better hope than to go to a celebration of the glorious 4th. From my standpoint at present it is all unprofitable.

I began to hear Scandinavian words and talk at Toledo and westward. Idlers sitting beside the track under the trees with their shoes off enjoying the breeze. They had nothing to do.

The girls began to look different. Had a different walk, less graceful. Shoes apparently troubled them. Faces were fresher more childish.

A man got on with a whiskey bottle in his coat pocket. His immense enjoyment of it. Very comic. He hung to it like a dog to a root. The effect gave him leer of the \_\_\_\_\_. Ultimately he became an offense.

## Chapter 2.

I had a delightful visit with Joseph Kirkland,<sup>4</sup> who I found to be a small, alert, sensitive man with precise speech and liberal ideas. He gave me a great deal excellent talk concerning art of fiction and advised me to write. I found him living in what was to me a most imposing house on Rush street. His people seemed to regard me as something that had blown in from outside.

I pulled out the next day for the west. It was a beautiful day and the 3rd day of July. Corn fields, apple orchards, and sheaves of waving blades of wheat, rank and red, appealed to me with great power. The variety of the shades of green as the wind turned the leaves upward and depressed them struck me with new beauty. Each field had its special tones and movements of oats, barley, and wheat. I was so profoundly impressed with this journey, that I wrote a poem called, "Into the West," the first draft of which was as follows:<sup>5</sup>

I laugh as I ride  
On my green prairies wide,  
I exalt and am glad  
In the might of the steam.

Like an eagle on wing  
I swoop and swing.  
I shout and am mad  
With a wild sweet pain

To meet the plain.

I could not but observe the lack of the esthetic of all the homes of the western farmers. Not a suggestion that there is something higher than mere utility. The house a bare box like, with hardly a curved line.<sup>6</sup> A miserable square structure of the conventional carpenter's type. It was not a question of expense. The same money put into the right form of dwelling, would furnish the same room and might be beautiful. The trouble is they are not educated in these things, and their surroundings are made prosaic. I was struck as never before by the boundless wealth of natural benefits. Rich and fertile plains that seem inexhaustible and not half tilled.

Our train was a Sunday train, and after dinner whenever we came to a village platform a crowd of people in their best dresses gathered to catch a glimpse of the train, and to be seen by us. They seemed to desire to feel the gaze of the world upon them. The girls were out in their best ribbons. Many of them pretty and graceful. The boys were often stupid or abnormally loud voiced and rude of joke.

These people show the need of diversion in this dreary town. Amid such monotonous surroundings the train comes like a messenger from the great unknown world far beyond the horizon. In the coming of the engine and its gorgeous cars seems to help them forget the pettishness of their own lives. And fills them with ambition to live something better.

The men wore broader hats, the women lacked the then current bustles.

A man came into the train. He seemed to me to be a type, a bold man with a beard like a Russian. An aggressive face, and naturally without the slightest delicacy. He would chew gum over the shoulder of the angel Gabriel without a blush.

A young couple got on the train. He was a country dandy. Wore a high hat, faultless coat, daintily twisted moustache. She was young, good and true. A peculiar complexion which might



be called a masked pink. Pearly teeth and a tender and trusting smile. He might have been a village drug clerk.

An irresistible girl who said, by-gosh and don't give a damn. Talked loudly with widely opened and vigorously handled lips.

I began to see that I had read in the minds of these people too much that was sensible. They knew nothing and cared little for the things I valued so highly.

Art was an unknown term to them, and literature they had not explored. They were like their surroundings. As I looked at the couple before me, I was again reminded that the courtship of most young people is not a matter of refinement. It was made up of tapping, putting the arm around the girl's shoulder and pinching the cheek. It brought to my mind similar courtships I had witnessed on the farm and in the little village in which I went to school.<sup>7</sup> To impute to these people a thought, a connected conversation would be nonsense. They could not imagine anything of the sort.

The river towns along the Mississippi are of quite a different nature to the prairie towns. They have a number of brick and stone cottages set in the side hill. Bellevue for example.<sup>8</sup> They have a little old look and their characters are out of date. They are not modern, but small towns almost unconnected by railroads. They straggle away from the river in queer old works, long and low, their sides to the streets. Painted in unharmonizing brown and white and brick. Some of them plastered high on the outside, the whole effect quite striking. They were built by the Canadian French trappers and boatmen in old days.

The river scenery was exceedingly fine, rich full of variety, fresh and green. Just at sunset the river became a glory, and the sun set in pale gold. The river was perfectly still reflecting like

burnished mirror the lighted glory of the sky. A blue hill lay in the foreground on each side, always the most velvety green, touched on one side by the light of the sun, and the whole river looked like a roadway into Paradise. Silent and alone in the mid-distance blazed with reflected glory like an immeasurable gem. A long sand beach interchanged with brown and gold, while a gray mist wreathed in the distant portals of the royal river. It was all ineffably splendid and every change brought about by the movement of the train gave a new and still more beautiful vista. Brought in more color and changed it.<sup>9</sup>

In the mid-distance the river reflected dark, cold clouds. Cattle were on a point beyond. A boat floated like the petals of a lily. The indescribable splendor of the land, the velvety green of the flats. Yet anything greener than the hills could not be imagined, fresh and velvety beyond expression. The sky blue at the bottom, slated blue and gray above.

Frogs were croaking like Spanish castanets, calling from out the darkness as we flashed by.

I went to sleep in my seat again, awakened occasionally by the screaming of the boys around a 4th of July bon-fire, whose light flamed in at the windows for a moment as if with triumphant outcry. It was irresistible young America already celebrating old America independence.

A beautiful night full of the deepest and most impressive peace. Men's voices rung out in the air. Frogs called loudly, and with a gloomy and leisurely tone answering each other. The effect as of snoring.

### Chapter 3.

Charles City. Arriving here this morning, it was necessary for me to wait until 3.30 for the first train North to take me to my old home at Osage. Thus the day opened and a wet, dull, gray dawn appeared over the world. Notwithstanding the air was chilly and a gray mist of clouds

swept along. In the village anvils were being exploded, and the fire-crackers rattled. Bells rung furiously at intervals. Around me in the prairie grass, larks were singing and roosters could be heard in all parts of the village, crowing with all shades of different voices and meaning. I met here an old friend, former County Superintendent of Schools, Mr. Rhan, and we fell into a talk concerning old friends and neighbors.<sup>10</sup>

A cold rain set in proving a damper on the celebration. The splendid air of the previous day was gone. The sky looked like the sky of autumn, gray, sullen, discouraged. Around were many anxious hearts that day, and thousands of boys asked of their fathers as I once did, "Do you think it will rain all day?" I observed a groupe of poor little bare legged boys in front of a cottage firing cartridges, with that keen enjoyment that comes to those who have few enjoyments and little excitement. Poor little devils from my standpoint, but happy little animals probably from a true standpoint.

I was particularly interested in a young preacher who walked as though the fate of thousands had been upon his shoulders. His personal pride was exceedingly interesting to me for it gave him a fine poise of the body. He was handsome fellow, and was aware of it.

A great man among a large body of Americans is a minister. The age of superstition still exists. The medicine man who is supposed to stand nearest the elbow of God has dominion wider than the radicals some times think.

A crowd of young people got on at \_\_\_\_\_ bound for Osage.<sup>11</sup> Among them an attractive girl, quite pretty, and Oh, what pride in her white dress and poor little ornaments. She had a shawl but did not wear it over her shoulders, because it would hide her ribbons. She warbled with an air of satisfaction. Looking at her rather stupid beau with tender and bewitching gestures.

A rude fellow made a marked bow to her, and it was very beautiful to see the swift recoil of her whole body and the fall of her eyelids, followed by a look of deepest indignation. This depressed her for a little while, but she soon over come it and began trilling again out of overflowing joy.

It was good to see how gentle she was. She might be foolish and vain, but she was not wanton, that was certain. The rude fellow was dashed. He was a man of middle age, bald headed, bold eyed with a villainous moustache, but he could not face the injured innocence of that girl. Her lover grinned with a very stupid distoration of the lips; he was so much less a man than she a woman.

At last I came within sight of the little town in which I had lived so many years. I began to observe familiar houses after crossing the bridge, over Lena River, and soon we drew up to a little dingy station from which I had started out into the world some six years before.<sup>12</sup> The town seemed smaller, lonelier and more squalid. Leaving the train I slung my valise over my shoulder and walked up the street. There were crowds of people, coming and going on the side-walk, and for an hour or two I did nothing but walk about studying these people whom I had known for so many years. No one recognized me for I had grown a full beard since leaving.

The faces struck me as being cross almost brutish in many cases. Still there were many good faces. One thing most noticeable was this, in the West the brutish people look worse than usual because they are badly dressed, while in city the faces called bad belonging to the young rowdy or the servant girl is accompanied by the dress of a lady or gentleman. Thus in a measure the disagreeable outlines of their faces and figures are disguised.

I discovered the boys and their girls driving about in the good old way in expensive carriages, and treating ice-cream and pea-nuts.

The farmers had grown old and more grizzled, other wise they looked the same. I knew them instantly. They were afflicted with the same old trouble. Chinch bugs were in the wheat, and they put a damper upon their feelings. I went to the best hotel in town for my breakfast.<sup>13</sup> It was a terrible breakfast. I took my seat by an open window which looked out down the street and while being served by a slap-dash girl in a jersey waist, I looked out down the street seeing constantly familiar faces passing by.

Among the rest, Lawyer Rice went by with his usual stately step,<sup>14</sup> looking much shattered it seemed to me. There were a thousand memories of this remarkable man in my mind. I remembered his long speeches, his occasional drunkenness, his great dignity, his love of poetry, his florid and long winded orations on literary topics. And many other peculiarities which were always connected by the people of the town, because they were a part of his personality. He always wore his coat, a well fitting Prince Albert frock, unbuttoned, and his vest always unbuttoned to the last two buttons thus exposing his spotless white shirt in something of the fashion, and revival of the old time ruffled shift front. He chewed tobacco frightfully, and drank at times with such vivacity that it seemed as though he would drink himself to death.

I saw two or three young girls go by who had been my classmates,<sup>15</sup> and at last I made myself known to one or two of them and we took seats in a open window of a law office, to see the street parade go by.

I looked upon the scene with such alien eyes that it was all disgusting and pitiful. It was pitiful to see those people crowd to watch a miserable farce like this street parade. It was a revelation of the frightful monotony of the every day lives like those of Anna and Eva Kelly or Matilda Tower and Mrs. Cofin waiting for that vulgar fantastic procession to pass by. It was to me a sad thing.<sup>16</sup>

The crowd was comfortably dressed, but with no regard to style. The men wore, at least many of them, poor straw hats, the women, specially the girls, wore white gowns. The absence of the bustle and corset was noticeable. They had in many cases a fine free walk, some, however, swung along lithe, strong, and erect.

I sat in the law office of Mr. F. F. Cofin, in company with his wife, who had been one of my early teachers and friends, a fine strong, intelligent woman.<sup>17</sup> She, among all the women I had met, had kept pace with me intellectually. I felt in speaking to her as though I were talking to one of my friends in Boston or Chicago.

I recognized nearly every face of the old men and women, but the young people had grown entirely out of my memory. Sometimes, however, I was able to recognize them. Queer little squirts of boys have developed into tall young fellows with all the airs that boys of my generation used to assume.

In talking with the old settlers I noticed many mistakes of grammar, but comparatively little dialect, properly speaking. They said, "I hadn't nothing," and other such blunders. The East born people, I found left off the *g* in going and running. I was keenly alive for the first time to their peculiarities. Uncle Billy Frazer,<sup>18</sup> for example used the New Jersey dialect, *couw* and *nouw*, etc. He seemed to me alert, good looking and powerful. He was getting irritable and old. He was full of the old kinds of curious phrases like, *chingling*. He said, "The buggy wheel went *chingling* along the road." Used the expression "Bug out his eyes." He spoke of prying deep into things. Was undergoing a vast and deeply laid transformation. His hair was whitening.

Old conceptions no longer suited him. He had freed himself almost entirely from religious creeds. He had a mighty reverence for Ingersoll whom he called Ingelson.<sup>19</sup> He was deeply

interested in every remark I made which seemed to confirm him in his freedom of thought. I went home with him a few days later and made a still more careful study of him.

Other peculiarities which I noticed for the first time, were these. Letters were eliminated where they interrupted the flow of words, as for example, he put *im*— *h* left out. But he did not flinch from *his* duty. The eliminations added to the swiftness and directness of the speech. Some of the people said, *goen* for going. *Cumere* for come here. You *mays well* give it up. In many cases the sound of *a* was flat. In the speech of the more intelligent there was hardly a single dialect trace, except that the *r* was sounded and made more strongly than in Boston. I spent a day making observations of this kind and meeting old friends and neighbors. Several of my class-mates were still living in the village and one or two of them seemed to me to be as I once thought them, others seemed to have remained behind without much development.

I took lodgings with my old friends the Morrises,<sup>20</sup> and made a careful study of their Scotch dialect modified as it is by a life in the West. They were living in precisely the same way as when I last saw them. Living most frugally on bread and milk which they ate at a little table in the kitchen. Mrs. Morrison, a strongly individualized Scotch with tremendous head of red gold hair, appealed to me with even greater power than ever before. She was a great reader of all the old books and poets and was something of a poet herself. She seemed to enjoy talking with me although she by no means considered me in the light of a superior intellect.

Notes on the Scotch dialect by Morrison.

I observed the following rules. *i* became a short *e* as *kelt* instead of kilt.

*Rep* in place of rip.

But was *boot*. *o* equaled *u*. In our become *oor*. As for example, well *ai kenna say anything aboot thot*.

A equals *a* in father, *thot*.

Bill they call *bell*.

*About* the *hoose*, they said.

Was *heel makin* five *doll- ars*. *O* is shortened where it should be long and lengthened where it should be short. Ropped became *wrut*.<sup>21</sup> Not became *note*.

*Werne* there. All combinations of *ere* had the sound of *ware*. *Parfectly*. *Wather*. *ing* was always sounded.

Commonly *thahn* were known *about*.

*Ye* was sure, instead of you.

*Louvesboot attendair* floor and what ease she knew. *Nough* but a pock horse. *forehair* beg *mon*. Hair lives *rueened* new. Shes lost *hair girrl* head and got *neithing* in *plass*.<sup>22</sup>

#### Chapter 4.

The next day I went out to visit an old neighbor near the old farm. I rode out with Uncle Billy Frazer, and stayed over night with him. I found Mrs. Frazer, to be as homely, as tried, and as long suffering as ever. She was so lame she could scarcely walk yet she was at work incessantly. From early dawn until late at night there was not a moment of rest for her.<sup>23</sup> She put me into her little spare room in which was a cheap chamber set of ash. It was a plain room and she took great pride in it with its' lace curtains and its' new wash bowl and pitcher.<sup>24</sup>

The supper table was covered with an oil cloth with pitchers of milk, pickles, bread, melted butter, salt pork, and all the old familiar and disagreeable odors and tastes of a farm table.<sup>25</sup> The boys smelled of the stable, and the whole scene was depressing and irritating. The mother



scolded her boys; harsh and petulant Frazer shouted at the quarreling children with sudden rage. Manners were exceedingly rude and primitive.

As I saw these boys bending over their bread and milk, eating with their knives, I was again in the old days. Farmers have more to irritate them than any other men on the earth: pigs, cows, and horses are preserved as no earthly thing can be. I could see these worriments and irritations all about me on the large farm. The men all wore dirty and greasy clothing. Went to work in the morning without bathing. They were parched by the wind and burned by the sun. I found that an increase of stock had added to the burdens of the farmer, had made him a pack horse, kept him at home all the time with little or no opportunity for amusement.

None of the beauty of music came into his life. He lived for himself, away from his fellows, and all the little courtesies and delicacies of life were unknown to him. His crops were uncertain by reason of the chinch bugs, draught, or frost which always lie in wait for him. His cows had to be milked, his horses fed, twice a day, and after the work was done he could not change his filthy clothing but must wear his sweaty and ill-smelling shirt from one weeks' end to the other. At least that is what he does. If he gets on clean clothing on Sunday it is only for a few hours. The bondage seemed to me to be as vital as the clasp of death.

I heard a night hawk screaming as he swiftly fell, and evening came over the plain, starry and beautiful. The next day I went over and visited neighbor G.<sup>26</sup> He had become lean and brown, even to his teeth, which were tobacco stained. Decay had set in upon him and would soon cover him. The home had a look of comfort; rag carpets on the floor,<sup>27</sup> a careless profusion of one or two pictures was hung close to the ceiling, in fact all of the pictures were hung absurdly close to the ceiling. One or two little old frames contained faded and undistinguishable shadows of men

and women each leaning wearily upon a mantle piece and gazing stonily into space. An organ and a small book case made up the furniture of the sitting room.

These ghastly chromoes are everywhere, at neighbor Frazer's as well as at the Morrisons.

The barn was old and worn and badly eaten up by the horses, thick with filth and exposed to the North winds. All that pertained to the barn was unlovely, but before it was a beautiful landscape, beautiful creek flowing slowly down the meadow. Around black birds piped and whistled and black birds near by returned the sounds. It was all so deeply and touchingly familiar to me. In that little pond I had gone swimming with Burton years before.<sup>28</sup>

The sound was a delight, but the green of the great meadows was specially delightful to the eye. The green fields were dappled with golden green.

The furnishings of the home seemed to me to be pitiful. It was curious to see Mr. G. absolutely indifferent to his wife's sufferings. She was poor, old, humble and weazen, and had known nothing but toil for half a century. Her aches and pains had been going on for so many years that he listened to them without a sign of interest. In reality she should not have been allowed to do a particle of work, as a matter of fact she did it all.

The home seemed to me intolerably barren, no books, no newspapers, and yet Mr. G. was one of the most intelligent men in the country. Ghastly old chromoes on the wall framed in walnut hung tight against the ceiling and a worn rag carpet, battered organ, flies buzzing about, the sound of the wind outside in the trees; these things are associated in my mind. There was no beauty in the homestead, but it was a beauty imparted to it by the trees, winds and grasses. Nature adorns the humblest home. Going to meeting was one of the principal amusements of these people and this interest keeps the church going.

My old friend John I found had become a Methodist preacher and his parishioners were convinced that he was a great man.<sup>29</sup> They were very amusing to me. John had married a daughter of a well to do man of a small town and was said to be very successful and very fortunate. He was getting very fat.

A beautiful July evening. Every day it had threatened rain, but it had blown by from time to time but there was scarcely a breath of air blowing. I sat out in the pasture listening to the sounds around me. Flies hummed all round, and the notes of a hummingbird far away; a robin chirped, and king birds and sparrows in the wind-brake kept up a cheerful chatter. A black bird broke forth at times into that unctuous “wurree.” The sounds from the farm yard completed the symphony. For a moment it made me forget the barrenness and monotony of this life. “How sweet it is to live in such peace,” I said. Being filled with the delight in nature, I allied myself to the black-bird and felt something of the same joy in nature. Fields, birds, and blossoms laden with bees, the sounding thrush, the falling disc of the sun fill me with a joy of living which was almost delirium.<sup>30</sup>

In that moment I become the boy of the past, and for a moment all that I was or had attained in the East was forgotten. I had the impulse to let all things else go by. “Here is all that is best and most lasting in life,” I said.

And yet I deceived myself. The next morning a thousand things claimed my thoughts. I ate my plain fare with corresponding jest, circumstances had changed. There are times when to live is great joy, at other times beefstake and coffee are worth more.

Neighbor B. I visited next.<sup>31</sup> He seemed not to have changed much. He talked in a fairly deep voice, using remarkably good language. His adjectives were discriminating. The old stone

house in which he lived, however, seemed less cheerful than ever. The windows were merely loop-holes.

In the old days, many years ago, he had built this with the intention of sometime making it a granary and moving into a fine new house.<sup>32</sup> The new house had never been built and his poor thin wife emaciated almost to a skeleton was living in the same low stuffy rooms without hope of a change.<sup>33</sup>

The oaken door, rude and rough as a pioneer's cabin, the faded color of Mrs. B.'s calico gown, caused by being washed innumerable number of times, the barren walls, the old, cheap and rickety furniture effected me most unpleasantly. The daughter had developed from an exceedingly plain girl to a still plainer spinster. They were washing and tried to excuse themselves, "It was wash day," etc. They were, however, not much concerned about me, as I was an old visitor and neighbor.

B. himself, wore a shirt, a pair of trousers, a pair of boots, and a hat, no more, no less. Regulation uniform of the farm. Ammonia was in the smell of his clothing. I get it every where among these stock farms. There is no escape from it. At the table one must eat with the smell of the barn-yard in his nostrils.<sup>34</sup>

Mrs. B. moved about in ghastly, ghostly silence. She took practically little interest in me. Sat with a face like an Indian. The girl was fat, slatternly, and sloppy. She wore a mustache on her lip.<sup>35</sup>

B. himself, was handsome, kind, and with a twinkling eye.

We ate dinner in the little kitchen, hot as hell's front entry stone.<sup>36</sup> In one corner a wash tub, in another a huge pitcher of milk, no napkins, no ceremony. They talked much on the prices of butter in Boston. The youngest girl put on a clean dress, in token of a certain maidenly pride. I

did all I could to put them at ease by saying, “Oh, do not put on any frills for me, I know what wash day means.”

The house appeared to me as graceless as a stone jug. Think of them living in that jail all these years. The old lady was nearing death’s door. Her life, of what use? Another coral insect after a day of incessant toil, trying to add its little grain to the ledge.

It seemed to me if they realized their condition they would all die, they could not live.

In talking with Mr. J., the next door neighbor, I learned his feelings of the hopelessness of this life. He had deep eyes, a slow, full voice, and very attractive. “I am doing well enough now, but it is a dog’s life. I am doing nothing but working like a nigger. We have no time to read, and then we are just rushed with our cattle.”<sup>37</sup>

Nothing can be more tragic than a soul awakening to its situation like this.

## Chapter 5.

Back in town again, I saw a great deal of E. C.<sup>38</sup> The more I saw of her the more interested I became. She was always the same, yet never the same. There was something indescribable, something theatrical about her, as though she were acting a part with an air of alarm, not of personal violence but of disparagement from her husband which seemed to me he was not worth.

She seemed to fear her soul might be trampled upon by him, though she feared no physical harm. He appeared to me to be of dynamite liable at any moment to explode in cursing. Her graces were distinctive in a measure and anything given to alarm her added to her visage. The grace of the womanly poise of her head, the movement of her body, were graceful and charming. Every woman of the town seemed cold and dull beside her. All except one. Miss. K. made her appear unwholesome, tropical and sultry.<sup>39</sup>

She made me think of a woman who has given herself to a man without duty, security and who fears the consequences of his rage.<sup>40</sup> This fearing the uncertainties as regards her fate is the powerful element of the fascination in her. I felt admiration for her daring and courage.

On one day as she called to her pet dove and it flew toward her and alighted on her head. She made a wonderful picture as charming as anything that could be imagined of any country or state.

Her peculiarity of color was this, she did not blush but her color was ever present coming and going: now deepening at the temples now on the cheeks. Her color was always present, warm and radiant. She would be called a real blond.

Miss. K. on the contrary is tall stately and divine. She almost seemed cold and with thought pure as snow with no suggestion of passion. She has no color, no artificial graces or wiles of any sort. Her stately walk, her colorless face, her great gray eyes all denoted contentedness and free from impulse. She had grown to maturity since I knew her. She was a beautiful child and she had grown to be a beautiful woman. She dressed simply without any of the modish appliances of dress. Her gowns were usually plain white or wine color. She listened as I talked with closest attention, her arms folded, her face calm and colorless, a faint smile touching her mouth. She was not a conversationalist but meditative in repose. She was not, however, gloomy, but reticent. She formed in her natural graces, and her pure beauty a perfect contrast to Mrs. C. whose splendid form and ripe though delicate color denoted a mature woman full of acquired graces.<sup>41</sup>

It was strange then to see the dissimulation particularly of Mrs. C. It would appear that her husband was ruined with drink or that he was a villain to be more feared than a highway man.

The home was really fine so far as it went. Small but comfortable. Everything seemed to be happily arranged, but beyond the atmosphere was to me sultry and life a strain. There was a tension about all she said or did which was like the drawing of a bow string. As I sat once in the parlor I heard her trying with musical voice cajoling him into good nature in the chamber above. He raved like a bear with a sore head, and although he had known me for many years and my position was already a better one than his he took little pains to make things agreeable. I felt in talking with M. as well as with E. K. that it would be a great thing to interpret the thoughts of these young girls to get at what they actually knew of the world and the color which thought imparts to it.<sup>42</sup> If I could do this I could write one of the greatest books. For such a book would be typical of the movements of a number of the people.

#### Note.

Milton Jennings.<sup>43</sup> It might be that Milton coming in contact with a brilliant and powerful woman might lose his interest with Ilean,<sup>44</sup> who meanwhile was becoming a dowdy little mother thick and slattern in dress. Ilean had never been a reader and her married life had taken away all her ambition.

#### Library notes.

I was interested to see what was being read in town. I found that Mr. Howells was read by a few of the most intelligent people and that they believed in him thoroughly. Eggleston was read some, Miss. Murphy a little. Cooper was immensely popular but E. P. Rowe stood first. Pansy books next, Scott and Collins trailing behind.<sup>45</sup> Literary intelligence therefore seemed to me to

be at a low ebb. Only a few read the best books. It was incredible to me how little they really knew what was going on in the world.

The C\_\_\_\_ were much more intelligent and wide awake than most of the young girls of the town.<sup>46</sup> They were like lily buds forth from the muck. To think they must grow old and withered that their beauty must go with the perfume of flowers and the petals of a rose. I saw it must be. Life is no stopping place for such as these, none what ever, none for any of us. Mrs. H. was sorrowful and with sad voice told her history.<sup>47</sup> Her beautiful sad eyes, beautiful and full of thought. Her fair head and general matronly form. A charming figure worthy of careful study. Her position precarious. Teacher of art, a wife without a husband and without a child. Her life wrecked by one unworthy of her. The scene might be located in a studio. Cares coming and going. The contrast between their life and that of the young people of the town. Their fragile forms and lack of exercise.

Mrs. C. Again. Her life peculiarly cold. Great profound gray eyes. Charming features, attractive mouth and lips, beautiful face. Stately though not tall figure. Graceful, original, and remarkable conversationalist. Well read, up to date. Knows just how to pose, is graceful in all her movements with a grace that is a bit theatrical and charming.<sup>48</sup>

Talked with T, in which she spoke gloomily of her future. Like most women did not look to marriage for relief from their thoughts. Noted her lonely life upon the plain making her thoughtful and womanly. She was merely a child when I went away but is now a sombre young woman. Noted the devotion of her life to her people. Noted the old man and lady both weak and failing. Speak of them as last seen and as they now are. The old man was a mere wreck going rapidly into the grave. For what use? T. faithful to them and remained with them.



Milton had now completed the mid-summer term. He comes back to the farm helps hay and harvest. Write up the Fourth of July into Miltons' life of that summer. Make use of \_\_\_\_\_ in that connection.<sup>49</sup> He makes a devil of a splurge with a top buggy etc. Write up Mr. B. as Ilean's father,<sup>50</sup> his aversions, his fine voice, his handsome head, his smiles, nervous shaking of the head, his hat worn gracefully. Write in Uncle G. as a father and his life. The tobacco he had eaten for forty years. He looked as though he had been covered with the nicotine of his pipe.

Milton goes to town each Sunday to see Ilean. Draw a picture of him driving home in an autumn evening. Wild thoughts struggled in his mind between the actual Ilean and the impossible and passionately desired Lily.<sup>51</sup> He wished to find a real, and lovely girl, with emotions and aspirations for a high minded and beautiful woman. He did not like to let his high ideals go.

The love of love might be as enthralling as the love of a woman herself.

Work in how the farm life was sweetened by these weekly visits to Ilean, and that he really loved Ilean.

Courthouse, brick building, and hot as it could be. A wide hall ran through it with an uneven floor. Offices on each side of the hall. Milton sat in an office, as I walked in. A half dozen chairs invited me to take a seat back of the hall way. The trees outside moved gently, throwing down dapples of shade. An occasional call breaks the silence of the office. Crickets drop in the grass, and Milton, flung himself in a chair in the cold draught of the hall. He was most thoroughly at home there.

Note that the poem beginning, "A dream, I lie beneath the sky,"<sup>52</sup> was written at farmer G's. A beautiful evening. Notes of study. Study the court rooms, and lawyers, especially C. P. Study the town as a whole. Get at the character of the people as compared with ten years ago.

Look up pictures and ornaments. Study the library and see the books. Which are read and by whom. Look up the circulating library, meet as many of the citizens as possible, especially the young people. Study the Norwegians again, meet the editors.

## Chapter.

### As I Went West From Charles City.

As one goes West from Charles City the country changes to a fresh green. Large ponds, land rich, cool grasses; a prairie for stock, yet few make use of it. Town squalid, little clusters of battlemented buildings. The whole town looked blighted by some cruel spectre. The country though splendidly fertile was thinly settled. The settlers buy their lots after getting out free last year. That part of it which was farmed was but scratched over. Settlers had a rough look. Thin, small, and dressed badly. Their solitary life showed itself in their looks and actions. As I looked upon these wretched farmers, ghastly towns, and the splendid soil of the country lying waste I exclaimed, "Here is the most glaring example of the folly of the land system, which allows speculators to hold land out of use."<sup>53</sup> Nothing could be more tragic to me than this waste of human life and genius. "The man who could change this," I cried, "would be greater than Christ."

Every town was cursed by speculators. Just those lands which ought to be thickly settled close around town were lying waste.

A mirage appeared for the first time soon after we left Marion Junction. Each hour carried me now further into the great Dakota plains. At sun set that night I felt myself once more in the actual West. Dakota sun-sets always impressed me with their beauty, and this night especially. The sky was full of the most delightful pink, and gold, a low tone prevailing most of violet and

purple. There was much of that peculiar tint which we call dove color. The harmony of pinks was like exquisite music, while lines broken into waves gave line and form to the whole scene.

Note. When people get old they want to sleep. They begin to vegetate. They are content to let the mind sleep, to let the mind rest. It is a plea beyond every view of ambition. It is a dictate of the human soul. When it is not we feel sure that the soul is not dictating itself. Ordway, probably about July 16th.

One does not know what power for adaptation he possesses until he tries. A week ago I was enjoying the society of half dozen charming, young women who made the days pass very pleasantly. This week I have been almost entirely in solitude. In a few weeks more I shall be back into Chicago and Boston and at work again and among my literary friends. I can not say I am home sick, yet I am likely to be restless soon, and undoubtedly shall be glad to get back to Boston once more. It is evident that content is a condition of the mind, yet it depends in a large measure upon the condition of the body.

I found my father and mother living in a small frame house, two miles from the little village of Ordway, in a house which I had helped to build six years before. I was startled by the increase of white in my fathers hair, and by the growing feebleness of my mother. Her voice had a tremulous weakness which I had never noticed before.<sup>54</sup> I was struck by the constant familiarity of their tone and gestures. A curious little noise which my mother made, my father's way of snorting into his handkerchief. The very way in which they took their seats in the rocking chairs or at the table. Naturally all these minute things came back to me, and in an hour or two had absolutely destroyed all the years which lay between this visit and my last visit to them four years before. I noticed again the western dialect as expressed by my father and his men. I

noticed a number of mistakes in pronunciation. My father knew the exact meaning of a word he was using, but he did not always get the pronunciation.

The law of western dialect, I noticed was abbreviation. Everything is reduced to its lowest terms. Speech swift, and abrupt.

I went immediately into the harvest field, there to study the men, and to be boss of the stacking, precisely as in years gone by.

One of the men, George \_\_\_\_\_ was cruel, too fresh, loud mouthed, empty headed. Exulting in his physical strength. One or two words of praise on his physical powers set him going like a mill wheel. I held him down by courtesy in my intercourse with him. He never returned a cross word for a civil one.

Hatch, loud voiced, hardy, a sailor, never tired, live enormously upon wild pretenses. Brown as leather, sturdy, tough as cow's hide, and very few ideas. Had gathered a great deal from the change in going west. Home in Cortland.

James Smith. Big good natured soul, witty, compelled to work for the love of his child, talked with a thick tongue, doubtless a sort of dialect. Said hey, after making a statement. Giant strength in his sinews. A little touch of the dreamer in him. Sat astride of the chair while talking with me.

At the end of three days my hands felt like canvass hams, face was brown, my skin felt stiff as though the wind had dried it. My brain sluggish almost unactive, my appetite wolfish. Each night I came home wet with sweat, tired, and dirty all over. The dirt was clean, however, Dakota soil.

## EXPLANATORY NOTES

- <sup>1</sup> *Hoosac Tunnel*: A 4.75 mile long railroad tunnel through the Hoosac Range, an extension of Vermont's Green Mountains. The tunnel was completed in 1875.
- <sup>2</sup> *Shelley's "Starry River Buds"*: The poem Garland is alluding to here is really Percy Bysshe Shelley's "The Question." The fourth stanza reads:  
And nearer to the river's trembling edge  
There grew broad flag-flowers, purple prank'd with white  
And starry river-buds among the sedge,  
And floating water-lilies, broad and bright,  
Which lit the oak that overhung the hedge  
With moonlight beams of their own watery light;  
And bulrushes, and reeds of such deep green  
As soothed the dazzled eye with sober sheen.
- <sup>3</sup> *Hawthorn*: Nathaniel Hawthorne (1804-1864). Author of *Mosses from an Old Manse*, a book which greatly affected Garland. After reading the book, Garland read more of Hawthorne's works and used them as a "literary touchstone with which [he] tested the quality of other books and other minds" (*Son* 177).
- <sup>4</sup> *Joseph Kirkland*: (1830-1894). Author of *Zury: The Meanest Man in Spring County*, and other novels. Garland corresponded with Kirkland before and after this visit, helping Kirkland by critiquing his stories, and accepting criticism from Kirkland on some of his own works. Kirkland wrote to Garland in May and June of 1887 urging him to come visit.
- <sup>5</sup> *"Into the West"*: It is unclear whether this poem was ever published, or if this is just a rough draft.
- <sup>6</sup> *The house a bare box like. . .*: In *A Son of the Middle Border*, Garland describes houses in this same way: "The lonely box-like farm-houses on the ridges suddenly appeared to me like the dens of wild animals" (286).
- <sup>7</sup> *the little village in which I went to school*: This probably refers to the village in which Garland grew up, West Salem, Wisconsin.
- <sup>8</sup> *Bellevue*: Spelled Belleview in notebook. Garland refers to Bellvue, Iowa.
- <sup>9</sup> *The river towns along the Mississippi. . . Brought in more color and changed it*. These two paragraphs are paraphrased and rewritten on page 286 of *A Son of the Middle Border*.
- <sup>10</sup> *County Superintendent of School, Mr. Rhan*: Garland did not mention this meeting in *A Son of the Middle Border*. However, this probably is a reference to Ed. M. Rands, the superintendent of Mitchell County Public Schools.

- <sup>11</sup> *A crowd of young people got on at \_\_\_\_\_* : In the notebook, Garland writes of “the young girl and her fellow from Floyd.”
- <sup>12</sup> *I began to observe familiar houses after crossing the bridge. . . soon we drew up to a little dingy station from which I had started out into the world some six years before*: In *A Son of the Middle Border*, Garland writes, “the farm-houses with their weedy lawns, all seemed not only familiar but friendly, and when at last I reached the station (the same grimy little den from which I had started forth six years before)” (288).
- <sup>13</sup> *Best hotel*: In *A Son of the Middle Border*, Garland names the Merchant’s Hotel as the place he stopped (289).
- <sup>14</sup> *Lawyer Rice*: Lawyer \_\_\_\_\_ Rice, whom Garland refers to as Lawyer Ricker in *Son* (289-90). Garland writes, “Among the first to pace slowly by was Lawyer Ricker, stately, solemn, and bibulous as ever” (289).
- <sup>15</sup> *I saw two or three young girls go by who had been my classmates*: In *A Son of the Middle Border*, Garland identifies these girls as Ella McKee and her younger sister. He is probably referring to Eva Kelly (see note 16).
- <sup>16</sup> *Anna and Eva Kelly or Matilda Tower*: Anna J. Kelly was a graduate of Cedar Valley Seminary with Garland in 1881. Eva and Anna Kelly were the daughters of Henry and Celestia Kelly. There is also a record of a William J. Tower in the Mitchell County, Iowa, probate records (“*Cedar Valley Seminary*”).
- <sup>17</sup> *Mr. F. F. Coffin*: Frederick F. Coffin was a prominent attorney. His wife was Miss Emma Lower, later Mrs. Emma Lower Franham, after the death of Mr. Coffin. She was a teacher in the Osage public schools (“*Cedar Valley Seminary*”).
- <sup>18</sup> *Uncle Billy Frazer*: In The notebook, Garland just refers to a visit to Uncle Billy’s. There is no mention of this visit in *A Son of the Middle Border*. Garland probably refers to William. G. Frazer (1826-1902). He was married to Hellen Frazer (“*Cedar Valley Seminary*”).
- <sup>19</sup> *Ingersoll whom he called Ingelson*: Robert Ingersoll (1833-1899), was a famous American lawyer and orator. He defended agnosticism and expressed radical views on religion, slavery, and women’s suffrage. In *Son*, Garland writes that Ingersoll’s “The Mistakes of Moses,” “profoundly influenced” both his father and him (155).
- <sup>20</sup> *The Morrisons*: In the Mitchell County, Iowa, Probate index, there is a record for Catherine, Duncan, and Mitchell Morrison. This is the family that Garland boarded with when he attended Cedar Valley Seminary (“*Cedar Valley Seminary*”).
- <sup>21</sup> *Ropped became wrut*: In the notebook, Garland wrote “wrote = wrut.”

- <sup>22</sup> *Shes lost hair girrl head and got neithing in plass:* In the notebook, Garland takes notes on Scotch dialect. This sentence is distinctly different in the notebook. It reads “She’s lost hirh virginity an gut noething int’s plass.”
- <sup>23</sup> *I found Mrs. Frazer, to be as homely, as tried, and as long suffering as ever. She was so lame she could scarcely walk yet she was at work incessantly. From early dawn until late at night there was not a moment of rest for her:* In *A Son of the Middle Border*, Garland writes, “At neighbor Gardner’s house, I watched his bent complaining old wife housekeeping from dawn to dark, literally dying on her feet” (292).
- <sup>24</sup> *It was a plain room and she took great pride in it with its’ lace curtains and its’ new wash bowl and pitcher:* In *A Son of the Middle Border*, Garland describes a visit to William Knapp’s house in which Mrs. Knapp offers Garland her “best room” (292), which seems to correspond to this description. It seems that Garland either separated the descriptions in *A Son of the Middle Border* for Mrs. Gardner and Mrs. Knapp, or just combined them in the notebook.
- <sup>25</sup> *The supper table was covered with an oil cloth with pitchers of milk, pickles, bread, melted butter, salt pork, and all the old familiar and disagreeable odors and tastes of a farm table:* This description also mirrors the description of *A Son of the Middle Border* of Andrew Ainsley’s house. “Notwithstanding his town-visitor and the fact that it was Sunday, he came to dinner in a dirty, sweaty, collarless shirt, and I, sitting at his oilcloth covered table . . . while the smell of the horse and cow mingled with the savor of the soup. There is no escape even on a modern ‘model farm’ from the odor of the barn” (293).
- <sup>26</sup> *neighbor G:* John (?-?) and Abigail (1821-1891) Gammons lived just down the road from the Garland home in Burr Oak township (“Mitchell County Iowa”).
- <sup>27</sup> *The home had a look of comfort; rag carpets on the floor:* When describing the house of “Bess” in *A Son of the Middle Border*, Garland writes, “As I looked around upon her worn chairs, faded rag carpets, and sagging sofas,--the bare walls of her pitiful little house seemed like a prison” (293). There seems to be a disconnect between Garland’s notebook and *A Son of the Middle Border* in both names and his feelings about the houses; however, he does describe Neighbor G’s house this way in the notebook.
- <sup>28</sup> *Burton:* Burton Babcock was Hamlin Garland’s best friend in Osage.
- <sup>29</sup> *My old friend John I found had become a Methodist preacher:* This probably refers to John Gammons. When Burton visited Garland in Boston, he informed Garland that “John Gammons had entered the Methodist ministry and was stationed in Decorah” (*A Son of the Middle Border* 278).
- <sup>30</sup> *A beautiful July evening. . . which was almost delirium:* This paragraph is closely paraphrased from a sketch Garland did of Milton Jennings in the notebook. Garland attributes this

thought to himself here, suggesting that Garland used himself as a model for Milton Jennings, or felt that Jennings and he were interchangeable.

- <sup>31</sup> *Neighbor B.*: Osmond and Eveline Button, along with their daughter, Eva, lived next-door to the old Garland home in Burr Oak township.
- <sup>32</sup> *In the old days, many years ago, he had built this with the intention of sometime making it a granary and moving into a fine new house*: In *A Son of the Middle Border*, Garland notes, “I entered the low stone cabin wherein Neighbor Button had lived for twenty years (always intending sometime to build a house and make a granary of this)” (292).
- <sup>33</sup> *his poor thin wife emaciated almost to skelton was living in the same low stuffy rooms without hope of a change*: In *A Son of the Middle Border*, Garland writes, “Arvilla his wife was ill and aging, still living in pioneer discomfort toiling like a slave” (292).
- <sup>34</sup> *Ammonia was in the smell of his clothing. I get it every where among these stock farms. There is no escape from it. At the table one must eat with the smell of the barn-yard in his nostrils*: See note 25 above. It seems that Garland used the description in his notebook several times for different people. In the notebook, however, Garland writes these words for dinner at Neighbor Buttons’s home.
- <sup>35</sup> *The girl was fat, slatternly, and sloppy. She wore a mustache on her lip*: In the notebook, Garland describes the eldest girls as “fat slatternly—her breasts hanging down, a mustache on her lip.”
- <sup>36</sup> *little kitchen, hot as hell’s front entry stone*: In *A Son of the Middle Border* Garland describes the kitchen of Andrew Ainsley as “red-hot” (293). In the notebook, when describing his visit to Neighbor Button’s, he writes, “Down in the little kitchen, hot as hell!
- <sup>37</sup> *Mr. J.*: In the notebook, Garland writes that the man’s name is Jacobs.
- <sup>38</sup> *E. C.*: In the notebook, this part about E. C. begins under a heading called “Character Sketches.” Garland probably refers to Emma Coffin (see note 17).
- <sup>39</sup> *Miss. K.*: This probably refers to Eva Kelly from note 16.
- <sup>40</sup> *given herself to a man without duty, security*: In the notebook, Garland writes, “without the tie of marriage” in place of “without duty, security.” Perhaps Garland thought the idea of sex outside of marriage was too scandalous to include in the transcript.
- <sup>41</sup> *Mrs. C.*: Garland refers to Emma Coffin. (see notes 17 and 38).
- <sup>42</sup> *M.*: This may refer to Matilda Leete, whom Garland mentions in *Son*. Garland also refers to a Matilda Tower earlier in the transcript (see note 16).



<sup>43</sup> *Milton Jennings*: Garland is starting a character sketch in this note. Garland has an incomplete novel entitled *Milton Jennings* which he later incorporated into *A Spoil of Office*. A character named Milton Jennings can also be found in several stories in *Prairie Folks*, and Milton Jennings is mentioned in *Main-Travelled Roads*.

<sup>44</sup> *Ilean*: In *Prairie Folks*, there is a character named Eileen Deering that Milton Jennings seems to be in love with, but the relationship is never the focus of a story and is only mentioned very briefly. In the notebook, Garland writes of Eileen, whereas “Ilean” occurs in this transcription. He chose to spell the name phonetically for this transcription. There is also a character named “Lily Graham” in *Prairie Folks*.

<sup>45</sup> *Mr. Howells*: William Dean Howells (1837-1920). An American realist and literary critic, who became Garland’s close friend.

*Eggleston*: Edward Eggleston (1837-1902). An American historian and novelist, famed for *The Hoosier Schoolmaster* (1883).

*Miss Murphy*: Mary Noailles Murfree (1850-1922). American fiction writer and local colorist who wrote under penname “Charles Egbert Craddock.”

*Cooper*: James Fenimore Cooper (1789-1851). American author of the Leatherstocking Tales series which includes *The Last of the Mohicans* (1826).

*E. P. Rowe*: Edward Payson Roe (1838-1888). American novelist and author of *Barriers Burned Away* (1872) and *An Original Belle* (1885), which Christine Pawley notes was “perhaps the Sage Library’s most popular novel” (102).

*Pansy books*: Written by American author Isabella Macdonald Alden (1841-1930), who wrote under the pseudonym “Pansy.”

*Scott*: Walter Scott (1771-1832). Scottish historical novelist and poet and author of *Ivanhoe* (1819), *Rob Roy* (1818), and others.

*Collins*: William Wilkie Collins (1824-1889). An English playwright and novelist; author of *The Woman in White* and *The Moonstone*.

<sup>46</sup> *The C\_\_\_\_\_*: In the notebook, Garland has crossed out the name here so that it is illegible. The sentence starts, “The misses [illeg] like lilies...” It is possible that Garland is referring to the Kelly sisters.

<sup>47</sup> *Mrs. H.*: Garland writes a character sketch of a Mrs. H in the notebook. The description is almost word for word, but Garland has added some words in this transcription and left out the “reddish brown” color of her eyes. He says her position is “anomalous, almost precarious.” There was a teacher named Miss Howard who taught music (“Cedar Valley Seminary”).

- <sup>48</sup> *Knows just how to pose, is graceful in all her movements with a grace that is a bit theatrical and charming*: In the notebook, the description is much the same. Garland adds “She is graceful in all her movements, with a grace cat-like, by which is not meant that it was not perfectly charming. For it was.”
- <sup>49</sup> *Make use of \_\_\_\_\_ in that connection*: In the notebook, Garland refers to someone here but it is not clear who, for the writing is illegible.
- <sup>50</sup> *Mr. B. as Ilean's father*: Garland could be referring to Mr. Babcock, or Mr. Buttons in this reference.
- <sup>51</sup> *the impossible and passionately desired Lily*: Lily Graham is another character in “The Test of Elder Pill” and “Sim Burns Wife” of *Prairie Folks*. It is also possible that Lily is a nickname for Ilean (see note 44 above).
- <sup>52</sup> “*A dream, I lie beneath the sky*”: A poem Garland drafted at farmer G’s. There is no record of a published poem by Garland beginning this way. The poem appears in the notebook but is mostly illegible, so it has not been transcribed here.
- <sup>53</sup> “*Here is the most glaring example of the folly of the land system, which allows speculators to hold land out of use.*”: Garland writes more extensively on land speculation and “Government Land” in *A Son of the Middle Border* (295).
- <sup>54</sup> *Her voice had a tremulous weakness which I had never noticed before*: In *A Son of the Middle Border*, Garland writes of his mother’s voice: “once so glowing and jocund, was tremulous” (297).

## RECORD OF EMENDATIONS

Each emendation is keyed to page and line number. The final emendation that appears in the text is found to the left of the bracket, while the original appears to the right of the bracket. The source of the emendation is identified in the parentheses. “(HG)” indicates that Garland made the revision, while “(ed)” indicates that the editor made the emendation. “(nb)” indicates that the emendation was made based on the notebook. Asterisks indicate that there is a corresponding textual note in cases where further clarification is needed.

- 24.08        pond] pawn (HG)
- 24.21        sleepy, too] sleepy, to (ed)
- 26.02\*       leer] liar (ed)
- 26.05\*       Kirkland] Crukland (HG)
- 26.12        movements of] movements (ed)
- 27.10        dresses] dresser (ed)
- 27.19        be a] be (ed)
- 29.04        A long] Along (ed)
- 30.04        Schools] School (ed)
- 30.22        satisfaction. Looking] satisfaction; Looking (ed)
- 32.09        drunkenness, his] drunkenness, is (HG)
- 32.12        always wore his] always his (HG)
- 32.12        Prince Albert frock,] Prince Albert, frock, (ed)
- 32.21\*        revelation] revolution (HG)
- 33.01        comfortably dressed] comfortably dress (ed)

33.17 irritable and] irritable an (ed)  
33.21 Old conceptions] ¶ Old conceptions (ed)  
34.16 hair, appealed] hair appealed (ed)  
35.08 thahn] thathn (nb)  
35.15\* homely, as tried,] homely as tried (ed)  
35.18 into her] into he (HG)  
35.22 stable, and] stable and (ed)  
36.01\* boys; harsh] boys harsh (ed)  
36.03 knives, I] knives I (ed)  
36.14 ill-smelling] ill smelling (nb)  
36.22 undistinguishable] undecernable (nb)  
37.16\* books, no] books no (ed)  
38.09 “wurree.”] wurree. (nb)  
40.10 cattle.”] cattle. (ed)  
40.18 fear her] fear he (HG)  
40.21 body,] body (ed)  
41.04 to her] to he (HG)  
41.04 head. She] head she (ed)  
41.08 present, warm] present warm (ed)  
41.16 colorless,] colorless (ed)  
45.09\* spectre] sceptre (ed)  
45.15\* speculators] spectators (ed)  
45.18 speculators] spectators (ed)

## Textual notes

leer] lier

Garland writes “lier,” but it is unclear whether he meant “leer.”

Kirkland] Crukland

Garland corrected the misspelling in his holograph revision, but it is recorded here because of its implication. Garland had been corresponding by letter with Kirkland, so one assumes that Garland knew how to spell Kirkland’s name. It is curious that Garland misspelled it here.

revelation] revolution

Garland made a holograph revision of revolution to revelation, which seems to make more sense, and so his revision has been used here to clarify meaning.

homely, as tried,] homely as tried

Perhaps Garland meant tired instead of tried, but his intention is unclear so the original spelling has been retained. Commas have been added to make this a series for clarification.

boys; harsh] boys

This sentence presented a difficult issue. It is unclear whether the mother’s scolding was harsh and Frazer

was petulant, or whether Frazer was harsh and petulant.  
I have chosen the former because of word order.

books, no] books no

“books” appears at the end of the page, and it is unclear whether the comma has been cut off on the copy or Garland forgot to type it, but it has been supplied for clarity.

spectre] sceptre

Garland’s word choice here is unclear. In the transcript, Garland wrote “sceptre.” Both wordings make sense, but “spectre” seems to make more sense.

Speculators] spectators

It is obvious that Garland is talking about land speculators, but he may have been confused about the term “speculators” since he twice uses “spectators” improperly.

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