

NATURE IN THE WORKS

OF

HAMLIN GARLAND

(With Special Reference to the Prairie Country)

by

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PREFACE

In making this study, its author read all of Garland's works listed in the bibliography except the Life of Grant and the following (which were not accessible): Jason Edwards, A Member of the Third House, Wayside Courtships, and Witch's Gold.

The writer desires to thank the Director of Libraries of the University of Kansas for special privileges granted him in the use of Garland's books. He wishes also to express his sincere gratitude to Professor Selden L. Whitcomb, of the University of Kansas, who has given him valuable assistance (some of it in vacation time), in the completion of this study.

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CONTENTS

	Page
Introduction	1
Chapter I - Flora	8
Chapter II - Domestic Animals	19
Chapter III - Wild Animals	41
Chapter IV - Atmospheric Phenomena	61
Part I - Clouds, Air, Sky, and Mist	61
Part II - Wind, Storm, and Mirage	76
Chapter V - The Seasons - Day and Night	92
Chapter VI - Landscape and Topography	108
Conclusion	125
Appendix A - A List of Plants mentioned by Garland	129
Appendix B - A List of Animals mentioned by Garland	132
Appendix C - Nature Diction in Garland	136
Bibliography	141
Index	144

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INTRODUCTION

Hamlin Garland was born in 1860 on a farm near the village of Onalaska, Wisconsin. Richard Garland, Hamlin's father, tiring of his hilly, rocky land in Green's Coulee, sold it and moved his family to a farm near Hesper, Minnesota. In the late summer of 1870, they moved to the Iowa prairie, where they remained for about ten years. A series of crop failures, brought on by the invasion of the chinch-bug in the late seventies and early eighties, discouraged the prairie farmers and Richard Garland, again moved by the spirit of the pioneer, "turned his face to the free lands of the farther west".¹ The Garlands left the fruitful prairies of Iowa and went to the semi-arid plains of Brown County, "South

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1 A Son of the Middle Border, p. 229

Dakota".² Hamlin, at this time twenty-one years old, did not accompany the family, but spent a year and a half roaming over the central West and the East. In the spring of his twenty-third year, he went to his parents in Dakota where he took a claim of a quarter section of land. He remained in Dakota some eighteen months, becoming thoroughly acquainted with the country. In the fall of 1884 he departed for Boston to begin fitting himself for a teacher. His residence in Boston marks the end of his close contact with the "middle border"; but it also was the beginning of a realization on his part of the literary possibilities of the West. As is true in the case of most farm bred people, Garland did not fully comprehend the beauty and charm of the environment of his youth until he was far away from it.

After attaining some measure of success as a teacher and as a lecturer on literary and sociological subjects in Boston, Garland turned to fiction. In A Son of the Middle Border,³ he informs us that much as he admired New England,

.....
 2. This is the term Garland uses. It was not until 1888 that Dakota was divided into the territories of North and South Dakota. Both became states in 1889.

3. Pp. 350-351.

he was not inspired to write of it. "I remained immutably of the middle border," he says, "and strange to say, my desire to celebrate the West was growing." He tells how the realization of the "poetic glamor" of the scenes of his youth came to him: "Each spring when the smell of fresh uncovered earth returned to fret my nostrils, I thought of the wide fields of Iowa, and of the level plains of Dakota. In the autumn when the wind swept through the bare branches of the elms, I thought of the lonely days of plowing on the prairie, and the poetry and significance of those wild gray days came over me with such power that I instinctively seized my pen to write of them."

4

In Crumbling Idols, a volume of his early essays, Garland sets forth his convictions regarding the duty of a young American author. He emphasizes truth in fiction; and urges the young author to write of the life he knows best, to turn to his native, intimate surroundings for his material. "Local color in a novel," he writes,⁵ "means that it has such quality of texture and

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4. P. 36

5. Ibid., p. 64

background that it could not have been written in any other place or by any one else than a native. It means a statement of life indigenous as the plant-growth. It means that ... every tree and bird and mountain shall be dear and companionable and necessary, ..."⁶ Garland stresses the fact in Crumbling Idols that he is a western man, that his hopes and ambitions for the West arise from extensive knowledge of its possibilities. "I want to see," he says, "its prairies, its river banks, and coules, its matchless skies, put upon canvas."

Garland held firmly to his doctrine of truth in the stories he wrote depicting the rural life of the middle west. He included in these stories "a proper proportion of the sweat, flies, heat, dirt, and drudgery"⁷ of the life he portrayed. These realistic pictures aroused persistent antagonism because they were thought untrue by a majority of readers. The publication of Rose of Dutcher's Coolly in 1895 brought forth renewed antagonism to his stories, and the author began to look toward a new field. He was at this time becoming intimately acquainted with and intensely interested in the country and human types of the

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6. Crumbling Idols, p. 36

7. A Son of the Middle Border, p. 416

far West and of the mountains. It was to that country he turned for new material. He says in A Daughter of the Middle Border that all his "emotional relationships with the 'High Country' were pleasant" and his sense of responsibility towards the types he knew there was less keen than that towards the prairie folk. Hence, the "notes of resentment, of opposition to unjust social conditions", which had made his prairie books an offense to their readers, were almost entirely absent in his studies of the western types of humanity. "My pity," he writes, "was less challenged in their case. Lonely as their lives were, it was not a sordid loneliness." Through numerous and prolonged studies of the mountain region and its people, Garland fitted himself well to picture that region; and he does so, truthfully and vividly in the dozen or so books whose scenes are laid in the "High Country".

Garland's boyhood and youth were spent on the farm in active participation in the multifarious tasks of the farm boy. His duties kept him out in the fields perhaps half of the time each day during six months of the year and more; and there

was scarcely a day passed even in mid-winter when he was not out of doors. In this formative period of his life, the beauty of the prairie world was deeply impressed upon his imaginative nature. The constant exposure to the elements stamped them upon his brain in an ineffaceable memory; the prairie sky, air, sun, wind, fields, animals, and plants were associated in his mind with healthy, joyous boyhood life. Garland shows in his books that there was much about the farm life which was extremely disagreeable - the heart-breaking toil, the mud, dust, and the faith of the barnyard. The farmers were seldom free from the "tyranny of the skies". However, he writes,⁹ "Nature was our compensation Even¹⁰ in our hours of toil, and through the sultry skies, the sacred light of beauty broke; worn and grimed as we were, we still could fall a-dream before the marvel of a golden earth beneath a crimson sky."

As the writer of this study was born and reared on the middle western farm, he has somewhat emphasized in these pages the relation of nature to the life of the farmer. He has tried to show

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9. See A Daughter of the Middle Border, p. 169

10. A Son of the Middle Border, p. 172

what he believes to be true; namely, that Garland's whole outlook on nature was profoundly affected by his farm experience. Garland's farm life schooled him in countless phases of the natural world. In that life, by force of conscious and unconscious observation, he learned to know intimately and to love deeply the outdoor world, in which he, of necessity, spent so much time. This love and this schooling remained with him through life, and they enabled him, whether in the mountains or on the plains, to appreciate nature as he perhaps could not have done except for his life on the farm.

CHAPTER I - FLORA

There were few trees on the Iowa prairie when the homesteaders began to settle upon it.¹
In Boy Life and A Son of the Middle Border,² Garland refers often to the "popple" tree, native to the prairie, and scattered over it in small groves "two or three hundred feet in diameter". The settlers called these groves "towheads". The "popple" is probably the white poplar, which is a round-headed tree, with dense foliage and short trunk. Other trees native to the prairie were the plum, crabapple, haw,³ and the willow. These grew near the streams. The oak's "brown branches"⁴ are mentioned in Boy Life as taking on delicate pinks and browns in the spring "as the tender buds

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1. P. 97
2. P. 134
3. A Son of the Middle Border, p. 134
4. P. 75

slowly unfolded"; and when the buds became as "large as a squirrel's ear", the farmer considered it time to plant his corn.

The settlers felt the need of trees for protection from the winter wind and summer sun, and Garland tells us in Boy Life⁵ that the thriftiest of the farmers set about planting trees at once. "Naturally," he writes, "they selected those which grew most rapidly, either willows, cottonwoods, soft maples, or Lombardy poplars, which were being introduced by nurseymen. All of these except the maples were planted by means of cuttings from the branches ..." The maple seeds were planted. He tells us that these trees "shot up like corn" and soon formed a considerable windbreak and shade.

In Rose of Dutcher's Coolly,⁶ the author refers to the "bitter-sweet, pungent smell of the Lombardy poplar-tree"; often he remarks upon the sabre-like form of these poplars.⁷

In Boy Life,⁸ there is a reference to boys' practice of chewing the inner bark of the elm:

.....
 5. P. 125
 6. P. 134
 7. A Son of the Middle Border, p. 239
 8. P. 50

"It had a sweet nut-like flavor and was considered most excellent forage". (This is, of course, the bark of the "slippery elm".) In The Trail of the Goldseekers,⁹ Garland writes that like the Ficarilla Apaches, the Chinook Indians had "discovered the virtues of the inner bark of the black pine. All along the trail," he says, "were trees from which wayfarers had lunched, leaving a great strip of the white inner wood exposed." The taste of the bark was "cool and sweet . . . , and on a hot day would undoubtedly quench thirst."

The "silken rustling" of the cottonwood tree is referred to in Victor Olnee's Discipline¹⁰ as resembling the "conferring voices of a distant multitude of infant seraphim". One of the characters in the story says that the murmur of the cottonwood always filled her with "mystical" delight. "I know they're a nuisance," she says, "with their fuzz, but I love their rustling."

The aspen, a near relative of the cottonwood, is a very common tree in the mountains, where they¹¹ may be seen standing in "rippling, shining groves". After frost they color the mountain slopes with

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9. P. 82

10. P. 137

11. Hesper, p. 124

with their "flaming gold",¹² as they stand
 "shivering in the wind, their sparse leaves dangling
 like coins of red-and-yellow gold,"¹³

The red cedar tree (the savin) is never very beautiful; and, when it grows on some windswept mountain side, may become positively ugly. Garland pictures vividly in The Forester's Daughter,¹⁴ a grove of weather-beaten savins of the Rocky Mountains. They were "old, gray, and drear", he writes, "as weirdly impressive as the cacti in a Mexican desert. Torn by winds, scarred by lightnings, deeply rooted, tenacious as tradition, unlovely as Egyptian mummies, fantastic, dwarfed and blackened, these unaccountable creatures clung to the ledges. The dead mingled horribly with the living, and when the wind arose - the wind that was so robustly cheerful on the high hills - these hags cried out with low moans of infinite despair. It was as if they pleaded for water or for deliverance from a life that was a kind of death."

It seems strange that there is no mention in all of Garland's books of the very common Osage-orange tree, which forms most of the hedges of

.....
 12. The Forester's Daughter, p. 87

13. Money Magic, p. 352

14. P. 13

the middle western farms.

Shrubs are given little notice by Garland.
 He mentions a number of different kinds ¹⁵ but says
 little or nothing about them. ¹⁶ The "hazel-bush"
 is most in evidence in his books of the prairie.
 The nuts of this shrub were gathered in large
 quantities every fall by the farm boys and girls.
 Its tough roots hindered the progress of the
 breaking plow; its brush furnished a shelter for
 the prairie wolf. Sumach was another common
 shrub on the wild meadows, and added a brilliant
 color note to them in autumn.

The common "small grain" plants, wheat and
 corn, are much in evidence in Garland's books
 dealing with the middle border.

"As I look back over my life on that Iowa
 farm," says Garland, "the song of the reaper fills
 a large place in my mind. We were all worshippers
 of wheat in those days. The men thought and
 talked of little else between seeding and harvest,
 and you will not wonder at this if you have known
 and bowed down before such abundance as we then
 enjoyed." ¹⁷ After reading his description of a

.....
 15. See Appendix A

16. See A Son of the Middle Border, p. 104

17. Ibid., p. 147

field of ripening wheat, one realizes as never before the beauty of that familiar sight. Its sounds, movement, and constantly changing color, the author expresses in poetic prose with rare skill in A Son of the Middle Border¹⁸ and in Boy Life.¹⁹ "Deep as the breast of a man," he writes, of the wheat field, "wide as the sea, heavy headed, supple stocked, many voiced, full of multitudinous, secret, whispered colloquies, - a meeting place of winds and of sunlight, - our fields ran to the world's end." He notes the noonday lilac colored shadows drifting over the wheat, when all was so still he "could hear the pulse of transforming sap as it crept from cool root to swaying plume". In the evening, when the setting sun flooded the wheat field with crimson, when its bearded heads "lazily swirled" in the wind, and the "mousing hawk dipped into its green deeps like the eagle into the sea", the "beauty and mystery" of it was deeply moving.

He writes that he loved (and what farm boy does not?) to go out into the "fairy forest" of the wheat and lie prone in its "swaying deeps" and

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18. P. 147

19. Pp. 243-245

listen to the music the wind played upon it. ²⁰

²¹
 In Boy Life, the author writes how the boy, lying
 in the wheat, watched the stalks as they turned
 yellow at the root and at the neck, while the
 middles remained green and the heads took on a
 blue-green sheen. He saw that the leaves, which
 had become useless, were beginning to wither and
 grow yellow at the base. He noted how the stalks
 were growing stiff under the daily increasing
 weight of the milky grains in the head.

²²
 In a poem, Color in the Wheat, Garland
 describes the fascinating movement and the ever
 changing color of a field of grain:

"Like liquid gold the wheat field lies,
 A marvel of yellow and green
 That ripples and runs, that floats and flies;

 A cloud flies there
 A ripple of amber - a flare
 Of light follows after. A swirl
 In the hollows like the twinkling feet
 Of a fairy waltzer; . . .

.....
 20. A Son of the Middle Border, p. 147-148
 21. P. 245
 22. Boy Life, p. 241

....moving in dazzling links and loops,
 A marvel of shadow and shine,
 A glory of olive and amber and wine,
 Runs the color in the wheat."

Garland's descriptions of the cornfields are no less vivid and delightful than those of the wheat. It is in July when the Iowa corn reaches its most beautiful stage. Its color is then dark green; it is "sweet-smelling" and "ripples like a sea with multitudinous stir and sheen and swirl",
²³
 he writes in Boy Life. "Waves of dusk and green and yellow circled across the level fields, while long leaves upthrust at intervals like spears or shock like guidons."

However, to the farm boy whose job it is to cultivate the tall corn in July, the cornfield, flooded with burning sunlight, is a very uncomfortable place. The soil is dry, hot and dusty, and the wind comes across the "lazily murmuring leaves laden with a warm, sickening smell drawn from the rapidly growing, broad-flung
²⁴
 banners of the corn".

²⁵
 We are told in Boy Life that each prairie

.....
 23. P. 105

24. Main-Travelled Roads, p. 146

25. P. 192

farmer had a field of corn varying in size from twenty-five to fifty acres. In that book ²⁶ also there is an account of the corn's ripening and of its gathering. In September the plant begins to change color. "Each day the mournful rustle of the leaves grew louder The leaves at last were as dry as vellum. The stalk still held its sap, but the drooping ears revealed the nearness of the end. At last the owner, shucking an ear, wrung it to listen to its voice; if it creaked, it was not yet fit for the barn." If it was "solid as oak", husking time was at hand. The corn husking usually began in October and lasted well into November. At first, Garland writes, the husking was not "devoid of charm", but as the days began to grow cold, the charm wore off. The huskers' hands became painfully chapped and sore from the coarse dry husks and rasp-like ears. At times the ears became heavily frosted and the frost irritated the cracked fingers and thumbs of the gatherers. "The leaves of the corn, ceaselessly whipped by the powerful wind, grew ragged and the stalks fell, increasing the number

of ears for which the husker was forced to stoop." The sere field became a dreary, inhospitable place. Before the corn husking was finished, the weather became very cold and the workers bitterly tired of their job.

The most common tame grasses of the prairie meadows were timothy and red clover. They made excellent hay. A field of timothy is described²⁷ by Garland as "moving like a lake of purple water". The meadows also contained much of the tall wild oats, "which tossed their gleaming bayonets in the wind".²⁸ In A Son of the Middle Border,²⁹ the author writes, "On the uplands a short, light-green, hair-like grass grew, intermixed with various resinous weeds, while in the lowland luxuriant patches of blue-joint, wild oats and other tall forage plants waved in the wind. Along the streams and in the 'sloes', cat-tails and tiger lilies nodded above thick mats of wide-bladed marsh grass." The blue-joint grass, he says, was the most beautiful and stately grass of the prairie soil.³⁰

There were, of course, numerous wild flowers

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27. Prairie Folks, p. 91

28. Boy Life, p. 1

29. Pp. 132-33

30. Boy Life, p. 97

in the meadows, and, although Garland mentions
³¹ many of these, he neither identifies nor describes
 them. As a boy, he gathered "bouquets of pinks,
 sweet-williams, tiger-lilies, and lady slippers",
³² he tells us in A Son of the Middle Border. He
 was conscious of the beauty of the native meadow
 flowers and the other plants; and, as he saw them
 destroyed by the breaking plow, he was able to
 understand the tragedy of their disappearance.

There is a charming picture of the sunflowers
³³ given in Ol' Pap's Flaxen. On the Dakota plain
 in many places stood "splendid troops of gorgeous
 sunflowers, whose brown crowns, gold dusted,
 looked ever toward the sun - ."

.....
 31. See Appendix A

32. P. 133

33. The Century Magazine, vol. XXI, p. 913

CHAPTER II - DOMESTIC ANIMALS

The common domestic animals of the American farm are almost as much a part of it as the barn or the house. They are all but constantly in the farmer's presence; they demand his daily attention year in and year out; and he consciously or unconsciously learns to know them intimately.

Of all the farm animals, the horse is nearest the farmer's heart; he is the most useful of them all, and with him can be developed a close friendship; such as cannot be developed with the cow, or with the hen, or with any other domestic animal except the dog. The horse responds to sympathy and affection as well as food; the cow is indifferent to man's offers of friendship, and the hen downright suspicious of them.

On the farm, Garland learned to know horses and developed a deep affection for them. When he was very young, he acquired skill in handling them

in the numerous kinds of farm work in which they were used. He and his brother, in company with the neighbor boys, spent a great deal of time in the saddle, and, as he tells us in A Son of the Middle Border,¹ "we learned to ride like Comanches," and "we lived in the saddle, when freed from duty in the field".

In his works, references to the horse and short descriptive passages dealing with horses are very numerous. He describes in A Son of the Middle Border,² the change which came over the colts and young horses in the spring when they were turned out of their winter quarters to be herded on the common grazing lands. These lands were wide tracks of unbroken sod lying near their Iowa farm before the country was well settled. He writes: "The colts were a fuzzy, ungraceful lot at this season. Even the best of them had big bellies and carried dirty and tangled manes, but as the warmth and plenty of May filled their veins with new blood, they sloughed off their mangy coats and lifted their wide-blown nostrils to the western wind in exultant return to freedom."

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 1. P. 131. See also p. 135
 2. Pp. 130-131

The effect of this freedom on the young horses was to make many of them lose all traces of domesticity. "They were for the most part Morgan grades or 'Canuck'," says Garland, "with a strain of bronco to give them fire. It was curious, it was glorious to see how deeply-buried instincts broke out in these halterless herds. In a few days, after many trials of speed and power, the bands of all the region united into one drove, and a leader, the swiftest and most tireless of them all, appeared from the ranks and led them at will."

³
 In Boy Life, is mentioned that curious habit horses have of standing in pairs and "gnawing each other's withers in friendly civility".
⁴
 In the same book, is a vivid, delightful description of the action of unbroken horses running free on the prairie, and of a race between a herd of them and a boy on a swift mount. We are told that the boy (who might well have been Hamlin Garland) rode slowly up to the grazing herd, bent on having some fun. "The colts and young stallions, never handled by man, approached with insolent curiosity." The young rider "raised a

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 3. P. 273

4. Pp. 273-275

whoop" and "away they all went, with thunder of hoofs, and bugling from wide-blown nostrils. The clumsy colts were transformed into something swift and splendid. Their lifted heads and streaming manes dignified and gave majesty, as they moved off awkwardly but swiftly, looking back at their pursuers with peculiar, insulting, cunning waving of the head from side to side - the challenge of the horse - their tails flung out like banners." The boy and his mount soon outran all but a "savage little black mare", and the two horses ran abreast "as if in harness". The rider brought his whip down upon the black mare's back and yelled. At this, writes the author, "she seemed to flatten out like a wolf, as she let out the last link of her speed". The veins rose on her neck, we are told, and the muscles along her spine and over her hips heaved and swelled. The lad leaned forward and shouted into the ear of his own horse, "whose head, hitherto held high straightened and seemed to reach beyond the flying mare - she fell behind and wheeled - she was beaten!"

Fine descriptions of horses, pulling under the skillful direction of their masters, are given

5

in Boy Life. Garland is writing of a pulling match at a county fair in which several teams were entered. The object to be pulled was a "stone-boat". The actions of a fine team starting the heavy load are described thus: "Slowly, softly, the superbly intelligent creatures squared and squatted together, setting their feet fairly, flatly, and carefully on the sod". In another trial, "with the simultaneous action of shadows, the beautiful horses squatted and lifted, guided only by their master's words", and "for nearly half a minute they held to the work, their necks out-thrust, their feet clutching the earth, steady, loyal, bright-eyed, unwavering - - ."

6

In A Son of the Middle Border, the doctor's swift, wild span of broncos is depicted as "a team that scorned petting and pity, bony, sinewy, big-headed".

7

In many different passages, Garland sets forth vividly the actions of the bucking bronco. Some of these animals are buckers only because of fear or of a superabundance of energy; they are

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5. Pp. 304-307
 6. P. 143
 7. Cf. Eagle's Heart, pp. 300, 298, 266, and 159

subdued without much difficulty. Others of the "cow ponies" are innately vicious; even after they are tamed by the intrepid cowboys, they are never trustworthy. At every opportunity they try their best to destroy or at least to throw their rider. A realistic account of the bucking of a "wicked-eyed", unbroken, "natively vicious, powerful and cunning young horse" is given in The Eagle's Heart.⁸ The rider had just placed himself in the saddle and taken the blindfold from the horse's head, when, as Garland tells us, the horse "shot into the air with a tigerish bound and fell stiff legged. Again and again he flung his head down, humped his back, and sprang into the air grunting and squealing with rage and fear." Suddenly the horse threw himself and rolled, but the rider sprang to safety, and as the brute arose the rider was back into the saddle. After two or three great sidewise bounds, in which "the horse flung himself into the air like a high vaulting acrobat", the cowboy was unseated, and the "squealing bronco went down the track bucking and lashing out with undiminished vigor".

The cayuse, a small Indian pony familiar to

the far west, Garland pictures in one passage as
 "mangy, thin, hairy, and wild-eyed".⁹

In The Trail of the Goldseekers, that
 fascinating record of an overland trip to Alaska
 during the gold rush, the reader is kept almost
 constantly in the presence of the horse. One
 extremely interesting chapter in the book¹⁰ is
 devoted to the description of a singular kind of
 pony, which was purchased for a pack horse.
 Because of its color and small size, it was called
 the "Blue Rat". The effective manner in which
 this mild appearing little blue-gray horse
 repeatedly rid himself of his pack is very
 entertainingly set forth. The "Blue Rat",
 compared with the other horses in the outfit,
 Garland writes, "looked like a child's toy, but
 seemed sturdy and of good condition. His fore
 top was 'banged', and he had the air of a
 mischievous, resolute boy. His eyes were big and
 black, and he studied us with tranquil but inquiring
 gaze . . ." The little horse "dozed peacefully"
 while the pack was being fastened upon him. For
 a time after it was in place and lashed securely

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 9. The Trail of the Goldseekers, p. 14
 10. Chapter V.

the "blue pony stood resting one hind leg, his eyes dreaming". But soon, the author tells us, "I heard a bang, a clatter, a rattling of hoofs - and saw the blue pony performing some of the most finished, vigorous, and varied bucking it has been given me to witness. He all but threw somersaults. He stood on his upper lip. He humped up his back till he looked like a lean cat - . He stood on his toe calks and spun like a weather-vane on a livery stable, and when the pack exploded and the saddle slipped under his belly, he kicked it to pieces by using both hind hoofs as fealty as a man would stroke his beard." The pony repeated the performance of throwing his pack several successive times, and after each bucking fit he assumed his docile, innocent air as if nothing had happened. "He was a new type of mean pony", writes the author. "His eye did not roll nor his ears fall back. He seemed neither scared nor angry. He was alert, watchful, but not vicious."

Garland speaks of a team pulling a plow all day back and forth across a field "with that marvellous uncomplaining patience which marks the horse".¹¹ When weary horses are given a chance

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11. Main-Travelled Roads, p. 197

to rest, he notes that they stand sleeping with
 closed eyes and drooping lips;¹² and also that
 the tired horse stands with lowered head and
 "slanting, tired hips".¹³ When horses are
 unhitched at the end of a long hard day's work in
 the field, they walk "with laggard gait and weary
 down-falling heads to the barn".¹⁴ In The Trail
of the Goldseekers,¹⁵ Garland well shows his
 knowledge of equine nature. One of the pack
 horses had got into quicksand and the men were
 working hard to free him. The horse made no
 effort to help his masters. Upon this incident
 the author remarks: "A horse is a strange animal.
 He is counted intelligent, and so he is if he
 happens to be a bronco or a mule. But in
 proportion as he is a thoroughbred he seems to
 lose power to take care of himself ... having
 found himself helpless" the mired horse "instantly
 gave up heart and lay out with a piteous expression
 of resignation in his big brown eyes". The most
 heartrending passages in all of Garland's works are

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 12. Prairie Folks, p. 236

13. Her Mountain Lover, p. 326

14. Boy Life, p. 177

15. P. 75

16

those in The Trail of the Goldseekers and The
¹⁷
Long Trail, which gives us glimpses of worn out
 horses abandoned on the trail by selfish men, who
 were not humane enough to kill them mercifully,
 but left them to starve or to be tortured to death
 by flies and mosquitoes or to be eaten by wolves.
 One passage only will suffice to give an idea of
 this heartbreaking sight: "Another beast stood
 abandoned beside the trail, gazing at us
 reproachfully, infinite pathos in his eyes. He
 seemed not to have the energy to turn his head,
 but stood as if propped upon his legs, his ribs
 showing with horrible plainness, a tragic dejection
 in every muscle and limb."¹⁸ In The "Trail of the
¹⁹
Goldseekers there is a vivid picture of horses
 fighting the myriads of mosquitoes which breed in
 the swamps of northwestern Canada.

Garland's love for the horse is well typified
 in his attachment to "Ladron", a "spirited,
 dapple-gray gelding", purchased at the start of the
 journey to Alaska. His intelligence, loyalty,

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 16. P. 74

17. P. 68

18. The Trail of the Goldseekers, p. 74

19. P. 90

trustfulness, and other admirable traits, combined with his beauty and efficiency, immediately won Garland's heart. He refers to this horse always with loving admiration from beginning to end of the book, The Trail of the Goldseekers. At the conclusion of the overland trip, Ladrone was shipped to the author's home in Wisconsin, where he remained a delightful, faithful, and loving companion for Garland until a fatal sickness came upon the horse, and his master turned him over to a neighbor with the instructions to "put him away".

20

In A Daughter of the Middle Border, the author sadly pays tribute to his "lost Ladrone".

"Something grips me by the throat", he writes, "as I remember his eyes,

'Brown, clear and calm, with color down deep,
where his brave soul seemed to lie'."

He recalls the beautiful and the trying days they spent together, the affection and trustfulness of this animal, and adds: "A vast section of my life faded with the passing of that small gray horse".

The burro is mentioned several times in Garland's books of the west. The movement of that animal is well depicted in Her Mountain²¹ Lover as walking with low head and rhythmically flapping ears. Some of the persons in this story meet a packtrain of burros on a narrow mountain path; and the author writes that as "the little beasts caught sight of the women" of the party, "they began to weave about and point their ears with concern".²²

A comparison between horses and cattle is made in Boy Life.²³ We are told that while the horses galloped over the prairie simply from the joy of movement, the cattle did not move except for a reason. "They did not seem to take the same joy in exercise!"²⁴ In A Son of the Middle Border, it is mentioned that the boys on the free pasture herding the cattle found keen joy in watching them and studying their movements. "The foolish, inquisitive young heifers, the staid self-absorbed dowagers wearing their bells with dignity, the frisky two-year-olds, and the lithe bodied wide horned

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 21. P. 349
 22. P. 363
 23. P. 276
 24. P. 132

truculent three-year-olds all came in for interpretation." The warring instinct was frequently aroused in the bulls, and Garland describes the actions of the cattle herd when some of the old pugnacious males felt called upon to do battle with one another. A lone steer would come suddenly upon a trace of blood on the sod; he would pause, and with noisy breath, smell the earth, "Then with wide mouth and outthrust, curling tongue", would give voice to a blood-curdling bellow, "his warning roar", which ended in a "strange, upward explosive whine". At this sound every head among the cattle was lifted, "even the old cows heavy with milk stood as if suddenly renewing their youth, alert and watchful". This "prehistoric bawling cry" would be repeated again and again and the herd would start to run swiftly, and menacingly as "with awkward lope or jolting trot, snorting with fury, they hastened to the rescue, only to meet in blind, bewildered mass, swirling to and fro in search of an imaginary cause of some ancestral danger".

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In Boy Life, is a fine account of a

battle between two maddened bulls. The manner in which the fearsome creatures tear the sod with their horns and hoofs and roar in defiance of their antagonists, the way their tongues loll from their red mouths and the skin wrinkles on their powerful curved and swollen necks, and the way their eyes protrude and tails wave, as their skulls and horns clash, is all detailed in a vivid, dreadful picture.

A shockingly realistic description of cattle on a semi-arid western ranch, almost famished with thirst, is given in Hesper.²⁶ They are being driven over a long distance to water. They are gaunt and poor, and as they approach the watering place, they cry out "with voices hoarse and weak and high-keyed, As the big bony leaders neared the pool," the author says, "they plunged in, catching at the water as wolves snap at meat". They crowded wildly against each other, and those in the rear, unable to push through the mass, "swirled madly on the outer edge, moaning most piteously". They crowded into the water until it became "inky black with

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26. Pp. 89-90

churned slime, and yet they drank, gulping the liquid mud. The air was filled with the sound of their hoarse breathing, their whining and muttering."

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In A Son of the Middle Border, there is mentioned an interesting "phase of bovine psychology". In drinking or entering the stable the cows, according to the author, had a rule, they rigidly observed, regarding which one of them should be first. One "old dowager", he says, "took precedence, all the others gave way before her. Then came the second in rank, who feared the leader but insisted on ruling all the others, and so on down to the heifer". Even when the leader became old, she was still respected. This rule of precedence was conformed to by the females, but "the males were more unstable".

A good characterization of calves occurs in

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A Son of the Middle Border. Garland does not hold the belief of some that calves are "lovely, fawn-like creatures". As a boy, he had to feed milk out of a pail to the ones that were being weaned. Most farm boys will agree that this is

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 27. P. 117
 28. P. 120

not a pleasant job, because of the calves' utter stupidity in learning to drink and their unpleasant habits of butting the pail and "filling their nostrils with milk and blowing it all over their nurse". Garland calls them "greedy, noisy, ill-smelling and stupid".

Garland's works contain comparatively few pictures of the dog, but these are characteristic of all his animal descriptions; vivid and lifelike. In A Son of the Middle Border,²⁹ the author tells us that as a child he and his sister possessed a "dog named Rover, a meek little yellow, bow-legged cur of mongrel character, but with the frankest, gentlest and sweetest face, it seemed to us, in all the world". There is no living thing, perhaps, that can sympathize so thoroughly with a child in his joys and sorrows as just this type of dog.

After the Garlands had moved to the Iowa prairie, there seemed to be small place in their busy, frugal lives for the dog - he was apparently considered a luxury. In Boy Life,³⁰ Garland tells

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29. P. 40

30. Pp. 128-131

about a stray dog which came to the Stewart farm one summer and made his home there for a few months. He was a "woebegone" creature, "... a mixture of liver-and-white pointer and foxhound, with a tail like a broomstick, and ears that hung down like broken hinges. His big eyes were meek and sorrowful, almost to tears, his ribs stood out like hoops, and his neck was covered with minute brown specks like flecks of blood. ... his bay was like the mournful echoes of a battered bugle." Of course he was an enormous eater. His manner of gulping the food which the boys offered him is delightfully described by the boy, Owen, of the story, when he "ruefully" says, "He don't stop to taste it". Mainly because of the dog's great appetite, Mr. and Mrs. Stewart (who, in Boy Life, represent Garland's father and mother) were rather opposed to his presence; but he "was a wonderful creature to the boys", the author says, and we infer from that remark the boys were not accustomed to owning a dog.

The boys, by pointing and saying, "Sic 'em" to this dog, tried to set him on one of the wolves which so often robbed the henyard even in broad daylight. But they soon discovered, we are told, that "he was a 'smeller' and not a 'looker'".

However, as soon as he scented the wolf, he dashed after it with a "bell-like outcry", lifted tail, and "decision in every movement; and won the boys' everlasting respect by the fearlessness and efficiency which he showed in battling the wily, keen fanged marauder.

Very interesting sketches of the actions of the setter and the pointer and a comparison between these two types of dogs are given in Boy Life.³¹ Garland thinks the pointer "much nobler in his action than the setter". The latter wriggles and worms "among the weeds and grasses with great pains and little dignity". The pointer presents a more splendid and dramatic picture to Garland as he stops, crouches, and rises in feeling his way to his quarry. The setter seems "less clearly specialized for the sport" in which he is used. The pointer is good for almost nothing else. He is "not a house dog"; he knows "nothing about retrieving"; he will not "chase a pig"; he eats "enormously", and has "dim eyes". When the pointer is out hunting with his master, he is a

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31. Pp. 322-324

"glorious piece of mechanism"; otherwise, he either is sleeping or pleading for food.

The Indian dogs of Northern Canada, which seem always to be nearly starved, are mentioned in The Trail of the Goldseekers: ³² "The dogs came about us occasionally; strange, solemn creatures that they are, they had the persistence of hunger and the silence of burglars".

A very familiar spring sound in the farmyard is the song of the hen, whose persistent, happy "caw-caw" Garland describes as "weird, faucous" ³³ and "monotonous". He speaks of the "hen's 'caw, cawing' in a mounting ecstasy of greeting to the spring," ³⁴ and of "the seed-time suggestion which vibrated in the 'caw-caw' of the hens as they burrowed in the dust of the chip yard ...". ³⁵

The roosters of the barnyard flock were "resplendent creatures, lofty of step, imperious of voice, with plumage of green, orange, and purple which shone in the sunlight like burnished metal". ³⁶ Garland tells in Boy Life ³⁷ how

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32. P. 111

33. Prairie Folks, p. 3

34. Boy Life, p. 56

35. A Son of the Middle Border, p. 125

36. Boy Life, p. 57

37. P. 57

strangely human and individualistic were the actions of the roosters. The boys learned to understand the meanings of their every crow and gesture. The author says that some were bullies, but cowards at heart. "Some seemed to have a distinct sense of humor, and would flap and crow exactly as one boy might taunt another. Still others were staid and dignified, speaking with quiet authority, crowing but seldom."

A remarkably realistic account of a rooster fight is given in Boy Life.³⁸ The details of the struggle are brought out so well, so vividly, and entertainingly that any reader who has ever witnessed a similiar barnyard cock fight is at once impressed by Garland's skill in describing it. The battle occurs between a strange rooster and a "home bird"; each is a personification of pride, confidence, and determination. We are shown how the two birds approach each other, slowly, warily, with sharp searching, cold glances, until their heads almost touch. Their neck feathers stand out nearly straight and form a grotesque ruff. For a time they stand thus facing one another

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38. Pp. 58-59

"with eyes seemingly bound together by an invisible thread, ... moving their heads up and down so silently that one" seems "to be nothing more than a shadow of the other". They rush furiously upon each other, striking with beaks and spurs. One rolls in the dust but is up instantly and hops clear over the head of his enemy, savagely thrusting his spurs at him. Their heads become bloody and their plumage disarrayed and dusty. They continue to charge, stopping now and then with heads close together, mocking each other's movements. Both become very weak with the strain, but they battle on with deadly persistency. Finally, one of them, after a particularly humiliating and jolting "knock down", turns tail and runs "dejectedly under the barn". "Thereupon", Garland writes, "the conqueror, in perfectly human exultation", struggles "feebly to the top-rail of the fence, and sends forth "a hoarse defiance to all his enemies".

"Guinea-hens, which clacked like clocks" are spoken of in Rose of Dutcher's Coolly.³⁹ The turkey, the sheep, and the swine are other domestic animals which Garland mentions, but he gives them

very slight attention.

CHAPTER III - WILD ANIMALS

As a boy on the prairie farm, out of doors a large part of nearly every day in the year, Garland had, of course, abundant opportunity to observe the bountiful wild life around him. But his was a busy existence, and there was little time for close study of wild animals and plants. His knowledge of them was the result of his being so much in their presence, not an outgrowth of detailed study.

He writes in Boy Life¹ that "the prairies were populous with a sort of wolf, half way between the coyote of the plains and the gray wolf of the timber land. They were called simply 'prairie wolves'". When the boys were herding cattle, they would often catch sight of the wolf's shadowy form, or startle him from his sleep in a hazel copse. He "slunk with backward glancing^c

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1. P. 127

eyes, from copse to copse, and many a mad race the boys had at the tail of this swift and tireless 'spectre of the plains'². The wolves were a considerable menace to some of the domestic animals and especially to the chickens.³

The character of the coyote is interestingly drawn by Jim Matteson, a western cowboy, in Her Mountain Lover.⁴ He explains that coyotes are "a kind of a half breed between a fox and a wolf. They're always hungry," he says, "and always thin as a match. But they are wonderful chaps; The Injuns all think the coyote is a sort of magician. ... They say 'coyote big medicine-man all same spirit', and he certainly is queer. ... He's always lookin' for something he's lost, and his voice at sunrise sometimes is like a woman cryin' over a dead child. He's a mysterious pup ...; he and the loon are a pair to draw to and beat the world."

The badger is often mentioned in Garland's prairie stories. He is called a squat, gray-bearded hermit, who makes his home in a deep den

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2. Boy Life, p. 97

3. Ibid., p. 128

4. Pp. 217-218

on the rocky unplowed ridges.⁵ In Boy Life⁶ an account is given of an effort to tame a captured badger. He did not respond to the kind treatment of the boys, and was given to "snarling and hissing". The boys stroked his "flat pointed head", but always at risk of having their fingers snapped off. He had a "bad smell", and, when he was set free, he "waddled away flat in the grass eagerly, swiftly". Very soon he hid himself by burrowing into a nearby ridge.

Skunks, we are told,⁷ were thick on the prairie. The boys considered them "pretty creatures", but because of their "terrible discharge", they were a great terror to the lads. "Nearly every dog in the neighborhood smelled of them, ..."⁸ In Boy Life, the "polecat", a deprecatory name for the skunk, is mentioned as having a "hopping, intermittent movement".

Very excellent and entertaining descriptions of the ground squirrel are given in Boy Life.⁹ The author tells of two kinds of ground squirrels which were numerous on the prairie: the "striped

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5. See A Son of the Middle Border, pp. 104 and 133; also Boy Life, p. 79
 6. Boy Life, p. 90
 7. Ibid., pp. 90-91
 8. P. 117
 9. Pp. 85-90

gopher", and the "gray gopher". The former resembled a large chipmunk, and the latter was apparently a "squirrel that had taken to the fields". Both of them had developed a very effective protective coloring, which fitted in so well with their background that they were able to escape, with comparative ease, the eye of the hawk.

"The little striped rogues absolutely swarmed in the wild sod immediately adjoining the new-broken fields, and were a great pest", Garland writes, "for they developed a most annoying cleverness in finding and digging up the newly planted corn. In some subtle way they had learned that wherever two deep paths crossed, with a little mound of dirt in the center, there sweet food was to be had, ..." The boys in the neighborhood waged a constant warfare upon them with gun and snare each day during the time the corn was in the ground. Garland tells us how the boys snared the little animals. A noose on one end of a long cord was placed in the gopher's burrow, and the boys would lie flat at the other end of the cord and watch for the striped head of the animal to appear. They were exceedingly

shrewd animals, extremely wary and hard to snare. They were "rare ventriloquists", Garland writes. "They had a low, sweet trill, like that of a sleepy bird", described as a "cheep-eeep", which was very hard to locate. It sounded back of the hunter at one moment and in front of him the next. In spite of the relentless war upon them, the gophers destroyed much corn and the farmers were forced to scatter poisoned grains of corn about the field.

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Garland has much to say about the rattlesnake. It was an ever present menace to human life in the wild meadows before the country was well settled. The prairie rattlesnakes, the massasaugas, were numerous in Garland's youth, and he writes in ¹¹ Boy Life that the boys "never came upon that cold gray coil and lifted, steady poised triangular head and blurring tail, without feeling that a deadly weapon was aimed remorselessly ready to take a life". The massasaugas, Garland says, were "smaller, more sluggish, and presumably less poisonous "than the big black and yellow banded"

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10. A Son of the Middle Border, pp. 32-33 and 105

Boy Life, pp. 81-83, 286-296

11. P. 83

timber rattler. Nevertheless, every herd of cattle on the prairie "had one or more invalids with jaw swollen to enormous size to testify to the terrible power of the virus" even of these prairie rattlers.

In Wisconsin, "In the spring, when the suns of early April began to warm the rocks on southward-sloping bluffs", he writes, the Crotalus borridus "came out to lie in the sun and breed before starting downward into the fields and meadows below. Nothing could be more sinister than knot of these terrible creatures, - a mass of twisting, shining bodies, from which the flat heads protrude like tassels, instinct with hatred and defiance, deadly as lightning and as swift. In autumn they returned to their dens in the seams of the cliffs."¹²

He writes of the blacksnake running through the hayfield with its head above the timothy.¹³
He tells in A Son of the Middle Border¹⁴ of one of the myths of boyhood, the "hoopsnake". Boys the country over believe, to a certain extent, that this snake exists and that it rolls with its tail in its mouth in the form of a hoop.

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12. Boy Life, pp. 81-82

13. Ibid., p. 107

14. P. 33

The song of the cricket was a very familiar sound on the prairie, and this insect had a noxious habit of eating almost anything. "Crickets during stacking time", Garland writes in A Son of the Middle Border ¹⁵ "were innumerable and voracious as rust or fire. They ate our coats or hats if we left them beside the stack. They gnawed the fork handles and devoured any straps that were left lying about, but their multitudinous song was a beautiful inwrought part of the symphony."

Other insects are much in evidence in Garland's works. On hot summer days the "grasshoppers rose, snapped, buzzed, and fell, and the locust uttered its heat-intensifying cry" ¹⁶. There is an excellent realistic description in Boy Life ¹⁷ dealing with insects in the wheat stubble. The farm boy, resting flat on his back in the shadow of wheat bundles in the harvest field, "could hear the 'cheep' of the crickets, the buzzing wings of flies and grasshoppers, and the faint, fairy-like tread of unseen insects just under his ear in the stubble. Strange green

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15. P. 209

16. Main-Travelled Roads, p. 158

17. P. 249

worms, and stinging flies, and shining beetles crept over him as he listened, in dreamful doze, to the far-off, approaching purr of the sickle."

A hemipterous insect of fetid odor, the chinch bug, entered the lives of the prairie farmers in the late seventies, and filled them with disgust and disappointment by blighting their wheat for several successive seasons. Garland writes in A Son of the Middle Border ¹⁸ that in 1879 and 1880 the chinch bug almost wholly destroyed the crops. In 1880 they "pestiferous mites" not only had devoured the grain, but "they had filled our stables, granaries, and even our kitchens with their ill-smelling crawling bodies", he says, "and now (1881) they were coming again in added billions. By the middle of June they swarmed at the roots of the wheat - innumerable as the sands of the sea. They sapped the growing stalks till the leaves turned yellow. It was as if the field had been scorched, even the edges of the corn showed signs of blight."

It is interesting to note that the chinch-bug was the cause of many of the farmers' selling their land and going west. As the

boll weevil in the South has recently forced the cotton growers to turn to diversified farming, so the chinch bug in the Middle West of the eighties caused the wheat-growers to learn the value of corn and stock raising.

While in Montana with his brother in the summer of 1897, Garland saw his first herd of buffalo. At that time in the Flat Head country of Montana, was a herd of about two thousand of the animals, "feeding and warring precisely as their ancestors had fed and warred for a million years". In A Daughter of the Middle Border, the author describes this group of bison. He and his brother rode horseback for many miles before catching sight of them. As they approached the herd, he writes, the "purple-black bodies" of the bison loomed through the "heated haze of the midday plain". When the animals caught sight of the men and their horses, the cows "began to shift and change", but the bulls fell to the rear of the group "and grimly halted" the advance of the two horsemen. One "colossal chieftain, glossy, black,

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19. A Daughter of the Middle Border, p. 49

20. Pp. 47-49

and weighing two thousand pounds", says Garland, moved about, "restless and combative, wrinkling his ridiculously small nose and uttering a deep, menacing, muttering roar". The author describes the sound the buffaloes made as growls coming from deep down in "their cavernous throats" as though made by "angry lions". Some of the animals, tortured by flies, were rolling on the ground or tearing the sod and raising great clouds of dust. "The rumps of some of the veterans" of the herd were entirely bare of hair, but, Garland tells us, "their enormous shoulders" were "bulked into deformity by reason of a dense mane. They moved like elephants - clumsy, enormous, distorted, yet with astonishing celerity." The author remarks that it was "worth a long journey to stand and watch that small band of bison, representative of a race whose myriads once covered the hills like a robe of brown ..."

Birds receive a comparatively large share of Garland's observation. He seems to be more interested in their song and flight than in anything else about them, because little is said in his writings regarding their plumage, and practically nothing about their nesting habits.

The larger birds are most in evidence in his stories of the prairie; although in the majority of his books there are many references to other birds.

The prairie chicken, of which so few now remain, scattered here and there over the central prairies of the United States, existed in Garland's youth in immense numbers. In many of his books of the prairie, he writes of the spring time "booming" of the prairie cock and the cries of the prairie hen and of the magic of these sounds. "There is no sweeter sound in the ears of a prairie born man", he says, "than the splendid chorus of these noble birds, for it is an infallible sign that winter is broken at last. The drum of the prairie cock carries with it a thousand associations of warm sun and springing grass, which thrill the heart with massive joy of living."²¹ Usually, on a warm day about the end of March, the prairie hen would first be heard; and day by day after the first mellow²² "boom" had sounded, we are told, "the call of this gay herald of spring was taken up by others

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21. Boy Life, pp. 45-56

22. A Son of the Middle Border, p. 99

until at last the whole horizon was ringing with a sunrise symphony of exultant song. 'Boom, boom, boom!' called the roosters; 'cutta, cutta, whe-whoop-squaw, squawk!' answered the hens as they fluttered and danced on the ridges ..." He writes in A Son of the Middle Border ²³ that when he was in the field driving a team hitched to the harrow, preparing the soil for spring seeding, he was enabled, because of the horses, which the birds did not fear, to get very close to the prairie chickens. They had regular "stamping grounds" on certain ridges, "where the soil was beaten smooth by the pressure of their restless feet. I often," he says, "passed within a few yards of them. I can see them now, the cocks leaping and strutting with trailing wings and down-thrust heads, displaying their bulbous orange colored neck ornaments, while the hens flutter and squawk in silly delight." The flight of the prairie chicken is compared to that of a bullet as she

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"Springs up in haste with swift wings' beat".

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 23. Pp. 99-100. See also Boy Life, pp. 47, 294
 24. Boy Life, p.35(poem).

Wild geese are referred to nearly as often as the prairie hen. Garland writes in A Son of
the Middle Border²⁵ that in the spring, following the ducks, came brant and geese "informal flocks, pushing their arrowy lines straight into the north". The brant is a member of the wild goose family, and his flight and voice are almost
 identical with those of the goose. In Boy Life,²⁶ Garland characterizes the wild goose as a wise and noble bird, skillful and circumspect, with a voice "capable of enormous signalling power and subtle alarm". He says that the flocks are well led and well governed. "They camp like redmen, with sentries posted, and no alien sound escapes their notice." He speaks of their sharp eyes as capable of detecting any sign of danger. On cold, blustery, fall days, the southbound wild geese, "honking wildly as they sprawled sidewise down the wind, seemed to be fleeing from an enemy behind, and with necks outthrust and wings extended,
 sailed down the wind ..."²⁷ Also, in late fall

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 25. P. 101

26. P. 325

27. Main-Travelled Roads, p. 197

the flocks of geese "swept by at a most furious speed, their voices sounding anxious, their talk hurried"²⁸.

Wild ducks were so very numerous in the middle border that at times the "sky seemed darkened with them, and when they alighted on the fields, they covered the ground like some strange down-dropping storm from the sky, and when alarmed, they rose with a sound like the rumbling of thunder"²⁹. They could be heard in the spring "gabbling in the pools",³⁰ or "quacking sociably"³¹ in neighboring lowlands.

The crane, Garland characterizes in Boy Life³² as the "most mysterious and splendid of all the birds of the plain", especially when their "shadowy, awkward forms" were "perched in a row beside some pool at dusk", or when they gave "their comical dances on a hillock in the morning."³³ The boys succeeded in taming a crane, which in captivity "stalked about, calmly inspecting all things with its round, expressionless eyes", and which "had a dangerous habit of pecking at shining

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28. Boy Life, p. 198
 29. Ibid., p. 55
 30. Ibid., p. 270
 31. Main-Travelled Roads, p. 136
 32. P. 328
 33. Boy Life, p. 328

things, - buttons, buckles, rings, and the baby's eyes. . .!" We are told in A Son of the Middle Border ³⁴ that the crane came last of all the wild fowls, "loitering north in lonely easeful flight". And on warm spring days his "sovereign cry" could be heard when he himself was flying so high that he could not be seen. "He came after the geese. He was the herald of summer. His brazen, reverberating call," says the author, "will forever remain associated in my mind with mellow pulsating earth . . . and cloudless glorious May-time skies."

35

In The Trail of the Goldseekers, a passing flock of cranes is described as a "royal, swift scythe reaping the clouds". In a poem called The Whooping Crane, ³⁶ there are these lines descriptive of the bugling challenge of this interesting bird:

"Come one, come all, come all, come all!"

.

echoing fearless, triumphant the cry".

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34. P. 101

35. P. 26

36. The Trail of the Goldseekers, p. 51

The loon is spoken of as laughing, and

"His harsh cries fret
 37
 The silence of the night".

The lark is mentioned a number of times by Garland, but he gives no indication of its species other than that of calling it the "prairie-lark" or the "meadow-lark". Often he refers to it simply as the "lark". It is probably the familiar yellow-breasted meadowlark.

He writes of the "slender wistful piping
 38
 of the prairie lark"; of "the meadowlark piping
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 from grassy bogs"; and of the "whistle of the
 40 41
 larks". In Boy Life, he includes a short
 verse entitled The Meadow Lark, which begins:

"A brave little bird that fears no God,
 A voice that breaks from the snow-wet clod
 with prophesy of sunny sod".

The robin's song is time after time referred to as a "chuckle" or a "laugh".

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 37. The Trail of the Goldseekers, p. 51

38. A Son of the Middle Border, p. 99

39. Ibid., p. 133

40. Ibid., p. 461

41. P. 92

The jay's insolent cry is mentioned in ⁴²
Monoyhagic and he calls "pertly, 'Shame, shame'". ⁴³

On a rainy day, when the other animals seem
 depressed, the "irrepressible blue jay" screams
 amid the rain with "insolent spirit, his plumage
 untarnished by the wet". ⁴⁴ In Boy Life, ⁴⁵

Garland has a poem on the Blue Jay in which the
 bird is well characterized:

"His eyes are bright as burnished steel,

His note a quick, defiant cry;

Harsh as a hinge his grating squeal

.....

Rains never dim his smooth blue coat,

The cold winds never trouble him

.....

his call at dawning is a shout,

His wing is subject to his heart;

Of fear he knows not - doubt

Did not draw his sailing-chart".

On the summer meadows of Iowa, the
 killdeer (called by Garland the "killdee"), a

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 42. P. 353

43. Main-Travelled Roads, p. 94

44. Ibid., p. 120

45. P. 354

subgenus of the plover family, and the snipe
 "shuttled to and fro in sounding flight"; and the
 "plover made the prairie sad with his wailing
 46
 call".

The song of the redwinged blackbird is
 47
 called a "liquid gurgle". The "shrill
 ki-ki-ki of the golden-winged woodpeckers" is
 48
 mentioned in A Daughter of the Middle Border,
 and the "sobbing cry of the mourning dove" in
 49
Prairie Folks. It cries, "'Ah, woe, woe is
 49
 me!'".

The bobolinks "sail and tinkle ..., now
 sinking, now rising, their exquisite notes filling
 50
 the air as with the sound of fairy bells".

51
 The crow utters a "prophetic, jubilant note;"
 52
 his song is a "ringing, rough cry".

53
 The statement, "Hawks sailed like kites ..",
 gives a perfect description of the flight of
 that bird. On a windy day on the prairie, the
 hawk, "tipping, wheeling, down shooting, up
 54
 darting" in flight, seems a toy of the wind.

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46. Boy Life, p. 106
 47. A Son of the Middle Border, p. 133
 48. P. 13. See also Main-Travelled Roads, p. 95
 49. P. 246
 50. A Son of the Middle Border, p. 138
 51. Other Main-Travelled Roads, p. 188
 52. Rose of Dutcher's Coolly, p. 325
 53. Eagle's Heart, p. 143
 54. Boy Life, p. 156

He speaks of the "grating shriek, or hollow boom"⁵⁵,
of the night-hawk, "suggestive and resounding".
The naked headed, dark colored, carrion-eating
turkey-buzzard or vulture is described in verse
56
in Boy Life.

"He wings a slow and watchful flight,
His neck is bare, his eyes are bright,
His plumage fits the starless night.
.
On rigid wing in royal ease
A soundless bark on viewless seas.
Piercing the purple storm-cloud - he makes
The sun his neighbor, and shakes
His wrinkled neck in mock dismay,
."

The gulls referred to in A Son of the Middle
57
Border as "apparently rolling along the sod",
in South Dakota, "gathering their morning meal of
frosted locusts", are perhaps the Franklin gulls,
which breed from Iowa north into Canada, and live
mainly on grasshoppers in the summer. In the

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55. Main-Travelled Roads, p. 76
56. P. 72
57. P. 246

west they may be seen in great numbers following closely upon the heels of the plowman, gathering insects turned up by his implement. They are wonderful fliers. Garland describes their flight in a strong wind in Ol' Pap's Flaxen:⁵⁸

"The glittering gulls were the only things" on the South Dakota prairie "that did not move listlessly They soared and swooped, exalting in the sounding wind; now throwing themselves upon it, like a swimmer, to dip again into the shining, hissing, tumultuous waves of the grass."

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58. The Century Magazine, vol. XXII, p. 41

CHAPTER IV - ATMOSPHERIC PHENOMENA

Part I: Clouds, Air, Sky, and Mist

Of the welfare of all classes of people, that of the farmer is most directly concerned with climate. Upon the average of the weather conditions through a period of years, depends his prosperity or adversity, his success or failure. It becomes a daily habit with him to study the clouds and wind, for it is combinations of these phenomena that bring the moisture for his crops. They may bring too much or too little. They may bring it at a time when it does more harm than good, and they may bring hail and set his year's work utterly at naught. The farmer has abundant opportunity to observe every kind of storm, and the effects of every change in cloud, sky, and wind. Indeed, opportunities are often forced upon him and he is compelled to observe, sometimes

with joy, sometimes with despair, but more often with resignation, the forces, working kindly with him, or acting so pitilessly against him.

Garland, in his childhood and youth, formed the habit of studying the sky and air as other farmboys do, and that the habit remained with him is shown in his writings by his numerous observations upon clouds, sky, wind, storm, and other aspects of the atmosphere. Naturally, one of Garland's temperament would thrill to the beauty and majesty of these phenomena in spite of the fact that they often seem cruel and pitiless.

The clouds possess an especial charm for Garland, and he presents many vivid pictures of them. He notes frequently the light, snowy clouds of fair spring and summer days, the towering cumulus clouds, which rise about the horizon on sultry summer afternoons, the ragged, swiftly hurrying stratus clouds of fall, and numerous other varieties.

The white, fluffy clouds, moving from west to east, trailing their shadows across the prairie, are a usual accompaniment of fair spring and summer weather. They are signs for the farmer

that the elements are to be kind for a few days:
 "The weather was perfect June. Fleecy clouds
 sailed like snowy galleons from west to east, . . ."¹
 Unless it is to continue fair, these clouds do not
 move east; they remain relatively motionless in
 the sky and become larger. The thunder heads,
 which furnish the most inspiring cloud scenery of
 the prairie summer sky, are described in a number
 of passages. In The Son of the Middle Border,²
 they are pictured as "vast purple-and-white clouds
 moving like stately ships before the breeze, dark
 with rain, which they drop momentarily in trailing
 garments upon the earth, . . ." In Rose of
Dutcher's Coolly,³ the author writes: "Great
 splendid clouds developed, marvellously like the
 clouds of June . . . They were white as wool, these
 mountainous masses, but bottomed in violet, . . .
 they sent down pink-purple, misty shadows, . . ."
 It is with these cumulus clouds that come the
 violent thunder storms, the hail, and the rain,
 and the destructive winds. In the haying season,
 the thunder heads are usually not a welcome sight

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 1. A Son of the Middle Border, p. 104

2. P. 138

3. P. 295

for the haymakers. Typical prairie "haying weather" with its afternoon appearance of cumulus clouds is described in Boy Life:⁴ "The sun rose in cloudless splendor each day, though during the middle hours vast domes of dazzling white clouds, half sunk in misty blue, appeared encircling the horizon. The farmers kept an anxious eye on these 'thunder-heads', regulating the amount of cutting by the signs of the sky. At times the thermometer rose to one hundred degrees in the shade, .." A day on which these conditions exist is usually called a "weather breeder". Often a section of the circle of cloud domes - most commonly a section in the west or north west - deepens in color and grows larger; the white becomes dark and begins to reach toward the sun and to blot it out.⁵ In Boy Life, Garland pictures these thunder heads after they have developed into an approaching storm as: "a vast dome of inky clouds, silent and portentous, .. filling the horizon, swelling like a great bubble, yet seeming to have the weight of a mountain range in its mass." Their approach is tremendously

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4. P. 111

5. Pp. 111-112

swift, and their passing works havoc in the hay field.

Too often these clouds promise moisture, which they do not bring. When the prairie farmer is hoping for rain to revive this withering crop, he anxiously watches these great clouds form above the horizon and carry out their magnificent "bluff". In The Moccasin Ranch,⁶ the setting of which is South Dakota, this is described: "Now the settlers began to long for rain. Day after day vast clouds rose above the horizon, swift and portentous, domed like aerial mountains, only to pass with a swoop like the flight of silent, great eagles, followed by a trailing garment of dust. Often they lifted in the west with fine promise, only to go muttering and bellowing by to the north or south, leaving the sky and plain as beautiful, as placid, and as dry as before."

The ragged clouds of raw spring and fall days are referred to often: "...the clouds seemed to leap across a sky torn and ragged, rolling and spreading as in summer tempests".⁷ And "There

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6. P. 49.

7. Boy Life, p. 195

were (fall) days when ragged gray masses of cloud swept down on the powerful northern wind, .."⁸

On cold, wet, March days, there are "the gagged gray clouds leaping the sullen hills like eagles, .."⁹

The heavy blizzard cloud rises suddenly in the northwest, and possesses little beauty when compared with the cumulus clouds of summer. It brings the sudden snowstorm and the rapid drop in temperature. It is described by Garland as ... "a vast, slaty-blue, seamless dome, silent, portentous, with edges of silvery frosty light".¹⁰ It spreads as rapidly as the thunder cloud, but it is longer in passing and the accompanying wind is more sustained.

Mountain clouds make a strong appeal to Garland and he gives almost every phase of mountain cloud scenery. They are made almost as much a part of the mountain landscape as the mountains themselves. The mountain clouds force themselves upon one's attention, owing to the fact that they seem out of place. Often they are on

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8. Boy Life, p. 195

9. Other Main-Travelled Roads, p. 203

10. Boy Life, p. 40

the same level with the traveler in the mountains, or they are beneath him. The combat of cloud and peak is ever an inspiring sight for Garland, and he never seems to tire of presenting the constantly changing cloud shapes and colors as they appear to the mountain dweller or traveler.

In Hesper¹¹ and elsewhere, we are constantly given glimpses of the inspiring drama of mountain clouds:

"...towards mid-day a single, shining, white-edged cloud appeared behind Mogalyon, clear-cut, radiant as a moon, and swiftly rose and silently shook out prodigious wings" until it covered the summit with a monstrous shadow. Others joined it, and "...they came, suddenly, like warriors from ambush, and, massing side by side, charged to and fro, hurtling over the desolate ridges in a frenzy of warfare, till their battle vapor hid the whole majestic wall." We are shown the great gray masses of low hanging clouds bumping against the crags; the single white cloud, "resting like a weary swan on the keen point"¹² of some peak, or folded around it like a vast turban, and we are given pictures of the high piled shining clouds propped

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11. P. 19

12. Tyranny of the Dark, p. 2

up by a mountain range, or of the clouds "rolling upward from the timbered slopes, unveiling crag after crag of purple-gray rock"¹³. The vantage point of some mountain height gives the observer a new perspective of cloud majesty and beauty.

In Her Mountain Lover,¹⁴ we are given a picture of a typical mountain summer cloud: "Occasionally a stately great cumulus cloud moved out over the valley like a ship, trailing a wine-purple shadow across the gold and green of the slopes, passing on to the west to catch and cling to some great crag and there dissolve in rain".

Perhaps the most striking of all the cloud spectacles are those furnished by the sight of their surface when the observer is above them. Garland describes a horse-back ride through the clouds. He was riding the trails around Cloud Peak in the Big Horn Mountains of Northern Wyoming in the summer of 1908. Of his experience, he

writes:¹⁵ "...while riding up the trail, I perceived above my head a far-stretching roof of seamless cloud. As I rose, coming closer and closer to it, it seemed a ceiling just above my^{reach, then my} ^

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13. Hesper, p. 369

14. P. 372

15. A Daughter of the Middle Border, p. 345

head merged in it. A kind of dry mist surrounded me - and for ten or fifteen minutes I mounted through this luminous, strangely shrouding, all pervasive, mountain cloud. ... soon we burst into the clear sunlight above. While still the mist curled about my horse's hoofs, I looked across a shoreless ocean with only Cloud Peak and its granite crags looming above its surface." Of the view from above the clouds, he writes: ¹⁶ "...prodigious rivers of cloud - white as wool and soundless as light - descended the canon on my right and spread above the foothills, forming a level sea out of which the high dark peaks rose like rocky islands. The high granite crags on the opposite side of the ravine took on shapes of ruined castles seated on sloping shores by foaming seas, their smooth lawns reaching to the foam.

"At one point, as I came out upon a ledge which overlooked the valley, I perceived my horse's shadow floating on the phantom ocean far below me, a dark equestrian statue encircled with a triple-ringed halo of fire."

He tells us that he was composing Cavanagh at this time. In that story, he represents the

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16. A Daughter of the Middle Border, p. 344-345

forest ranger as having two such experiences. They are described much more in detail, and with a much fuller use of color words. The ranger rides through the clouds on one occasion in the night, and comes out into the moonlight above them, witnessing one of the most marvelously beautiful and awe inspiring spectacles, perhaps, that nature has to offer mankind. ¹⁷ Garland writes:

"Overhead the sky was sparkling with innumerable stars, and the crescent moon was shining like burnished silver, while level with his breast rolled a limitless, silent, and mystical ocean of cloud, which broke against the dark peaks in soundless surf, and spread away to the east in ever widening shimmer.

"Slowly the mystic waters fell away, sinking with slightly rolling action into the valleys, - Towers took shape and islands upheaved, crowned with dark fortresses. To the west, a vast inky-black Gibraltar magically appeared." The ranger, we are told, stood for a long time "filling his soul with the beauty", and then, "with a shudder of awe", turned away and resumed his climb.

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17. Cavanagh, p. 176

In The Moccasin Ranch occurs this statement about the prairie dwellers' habit of studying the sky and air: "On the prairie, as on the sea, one studies little else".¹⁸ The physical atmosphere in Garland's books is very realistic. The prairie farmer, who spends so much of his time out of doors, develops, whether he realizes it or not, a fondness for the air with its constant subtle changes. His sense of appreciation of it and feeling for it is keenly developed. He becomes, so to speak, more or less of a connoisseur of out door air.

Garland's references to the air are numerous. On fair winter days, he speaks of it as being crisp and clear; on cloudy winter days, the boy in the field feels the "constant keen nipping of the air".¹⁹ When he goes out to husk corn in the dawn of a late November day, the smoke of the newlybuilt fires "runs into the sky straight as a Lombardy poplar tree",²⁰ the air is so still. Garland frequently notes the poignant charm in the spring air. It is "like some all powerful

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18. P. 50

19. Boy Life, p. 12

20. Ibid., p. 194

intoxicant".²¹ The "soft wooing"²² of the March air brings with it a magic prophecy of new life; its sweetbreath holds associations of other springs; it bears the odor of awakening soil; and it carries the faint honks of north bound geese, caws of early crows, and a few timid croaks of young frogs. In one passage, Garland calls it a "raw" air. He writes: "There was a strange charm in the raw air, so laden with the fresh,²³ subtle, all pervasive scent of springtime earth".²⁴ The Dakota air of late spring is "mellow". On hot, sunshiny spring and summer days, owing to what are commonly called heat waves, there is a quivering movement about the air of the plains which destroys clear long distance vision. It is with this phenomenon in mind that Garland²⁵ writes in The Moccasin Ranch that the "plain was all a shimmer with pleasant heat", and that he speaks of the "shimmering air" in A Son of the Middle Border.²⁶ On pulseless days, when a thunder

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22. Prairie Folks, p. 3
23. Ol' Pap's Flaxen, Century Magazine, v. XXI, p. 922
24. Main-Travelled Roads, p. 136
25. P. 46
26. P. 138
21. Moccasin Ranch, p. 21

storm is brewing, he notes the "oppressive
²⁷density" of the air. When it is "full of
²⁸tempestuous threats, still and sultry", an
 afternoon of cultivating in a field of tall corn
 is for man and horse a severe trial. At those
 times the constant piercing sound made by the
 countless crickets and katydids seems almost a
 part of the air; it is "shaken by the most
²⁹extactic voices". Garland often mentions the
 fact that on still, fair summer and fall evenings
 the air moistens and grows cool, and becomes
 sonorous, resonant.

The mountain air is, of course, spoken of
 frequently in stories whose settings are in the
 mountains. At times it is keen, crisp,
 regenerative, and usually has an "exquisite
³⁰clarity" about it. At other times, it is
³¹"marvelously fresh and soft". The author
 notes its dryness, and in Hesper implies that it
 is charged with electricity when he says, in
 speaking of Ann Rupert, a character in the story:

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 27. Boy Life, p. 111
 28. Prairie Folks, p. 92
 29. Boy Life, p. 105
 30. Cavanagh, p. 267
 31. Her Mountain Lover, p. 332

"Her hair rose beneath her toilet-comb as if
³²
 fluffed by a crackling breeze".

Garland very often gives us glimpses of the sky. He loves it and shows that he has studied it. He describes the blueness of the early spring sky by the simile: "The cloudless sky was as blue
³³
 as a plowshare". Late in the spring, the blue becomes tender. The fair summer sky is genial, and on windy days, it is often "whitened by an
³⁴
 overspreading haze". In winter, it is
³⁵
 frequently "milky with flying frost", and the
³⁶
 sunset turns it a "cold yellow". He constantly marvels at the loftiness, wideness, bigness, gorgeousness of the prairie sky, with its far away horizon.

Garland refers several times to the morning
³⁷
 mist which shrouds the prairie. In Boy Life, he writes of one July dawn when "...all over the grass, heavy with dew, lay a wavering thin mist, which was like a visible silence". Again, in the
³⁸
 same book, he gives us an exquisite picture of

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 32. Hesper, p. 261

33. Boy Life, p. 52

34. A Son of the Middle Border, p. 208

35. Moccasin Ranch, p. 88

36. Ibid., p. 97

37. P. 136

38. Boy Life, p. 153

the morning mist: "...a mist that clothed the world like a garment, and clung to the jewelled grass like a bridal veil". The color of mist is often described as opalescent, and once as sapphire.

Garland gives an account of a peculiar mountain mist phenomenon in Hesper.³⁹ It is really a cloud that has descended upon the persons living high in the mountains; but to them, surrounded by it, it, of course, appears as a fog would to a person at a lower level. In describing it, Garland shows how well he is acquainted with this kind of occurrence and indicates his habit of close observation of atmospheric phenomena. Ann Rupert, the heroine of the novel, upon arising one morning, observes "a blue-gray mist", which "lay thick against her window pane. Raising the sash, she put her hand into it - it was like smoke, dry and cold!" Kelly, another character, says: "It is fairly drippin' with electricity. Did you feel it in your hair? The lads' (his sons) crackled like cats'." Ann remarks to him: "Isn't it gruesome?

This light is so strange.'"
 Garland goes on to say: "The cloud hung moveless for hours, impenetrable, yet resisting. A hush was in the air ... All that remained of the earth was a little strip of gravel beneath their feet."

Part II; Wind, Storm, and Mirage

Wind plays an important part in the lives of the prairie farmer. He experiences so much of it and in such great diversity of types that he cannot help observing and studying it. The wind turns his windmills, dries his mown hay, gives vigor to his growing ^ewhat, makes the heat of summer tolerable. On the other hand, it may work havoc by its violence, driving the rain and hail aslant to ruin his crops, intensifying the cold of winter, and sometimes blowing down his buildings. He learns to love it and to fear it.

The phenomena of wind, Garland sets forth in great variety. In winter, the "bitter wind, raw and gusty, swept out of the north-

40
 west". The winter wind is characterized in one
 fine passage in Boy Life⁴¹ as: "...that uneasy
 spirit of the sky, ... tireless, treacherous
 tracker of the plains, ..." The blizzard wind is
 described thus: "The rush of the wind grew each
 moment mightier. A multitudinous, soft rushing,
 whispering roar ..."⁴² On the snow covered
 prairie, when the wind shifts to the south, it
 is called by Garland "the north end of a south
 wind, the most intolerable and cutting of winds"⁴³.
 The north wind, which can be so bitter in winter,
 becomes very pleasant in spring and summer. A
 steady wind from the northwest accompanies fair
 skies and high barometric pressure. An
 interesting northwest wind phenomenon is the
 Chinook wind, occurring in parts of the northwestern
 United States and in the Canadian provinces east
 of the Rocky mountains. It is a dry wind, which
 has deposited its moisture in the mountains, and
 has been warmed in its descent of the eastern
 slope. In Switzerland, it is known as the
 "foehn" wind; in the United States and Canada as

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 40. A Son of the Middle Border, p. 89

41. P. 26

42. Mocassin Ranch, p. 99

43. Ol' Pap's Flaxen, Century Magazine, v. 21,
 p. 749

the "Chinook". Sometimes it is called by the inhabitants of the plains the "snow-eater" because of its ability to melt the snows quickly. The chinook may occur in South Dakota. In the story, Ol' Pap's Flaxen,⁴⁴ Garland describes it and shows its effect on the snow. In this work, the setting of which is South Dakota, is Garland's only mention of the Chinook; "Soft and sweet and sensuous it was, as the breeze sweeping some tropic bay filled with a thousand isles - a wind like a vast breath upon the land. Under its touch the snow did not melt; it vanished. It fled in a single day from the plain to the gullies. Another day and the gullies were rivers. It was the 'chinook' ...". Texts on physical geography speak of the chinook in summer as a wind which, owing to its dryness and heat, destroys vegetation. No doubt it is the summer chinook that Garland is describing when he writes in Ol' Pap's Flaxen⁴⁵ of "a day peculiar to the Dakota plain" on which "a frightfully hot, withering, and powerful wind was abroad; the

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 44. Century Magazine, v. 21, p. 750

45. Ibid., v. 22, p. 41

thermometer stood nearly a hundred in the shade
46

... " In A Daughter of the Middle Border,

reference is made to a simoon wind of Oklahoma.

It is a south wind, hot and dry; "... a hot, unending pitiless blast withering the grain and tearing the heart out of young gardens".

Chicago's "three winds" are described in
47
Main-Travelled Roads. One is the east wind coming off Lake Michigan; one is the north wind, which brings the suggestion of pine trees and maple covered ridges of the north; the third comes from the west or south and is "dry, magnetic, full of smells of growing grain in summer, or ripening corn and wheat in autumn". Of these three, the north wind and the "bitter-gray" east wind are "brothers". The east wind gives place, during the winter, only at times to the north wind, till in March the wind of the southwest begins to blow. "Then the eaves begin to drip."

Garland writes that one of the delightfully pleasant times of prairie life was the haying season, when over the meadows "moved the slow, soft west wind, laden with the breath of far off

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46. P. 250
47. P. 304

prairie lands ... soothing and hushing and filling
the world with a slumbrous haze".⁴⁸ On fair
summer days the wind is sometimes strong, but it
is kind, he tells us; and there is "the faint
melancholy sougning of the wind in the short
grass"⁴⁹ of the prairie. He speaks of "the cool
fragrant storm wind",⁵⁰ which smells of rain and
brings such sweet relief after a sultry day. On
rainy fall days the wind has a touch like that of
"wet palms".⁵¹ The wind ripples the corn, causing
"a multitudinous stir and sheen and swirl".⁵² It
sings a "whimpered mystic song"⁵³ over the head of
the farmer boy as he lies prone in the field of
wheat. There is a vivid description of the
strong south wind in Boy Life.⁵⁴ It would move
over the prairie in late summer, in "a blast that
swept the sear stubble like a scythe invisible,
but sounding with swiftness". At wheat stacking
time, it drove the loose wheat into the farmers'
faces like shot, and it "laughed and howled like

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48. Boy Life, p. 106
49. Main-Travelled Roads, p. 134
50. Prairie Folks, p. 94
51. Rose of Dutcher's Coolly, p. 75
52. Boy Life, p. 105
53. Ibid., p. 245
54. P. 155

an insane fury". On such days, the prairie folk feared greatly the breaking out of fires, because fire driven by this powerful wind could sweep a wide area.

55

In The Moccasin Ranch and A Daughter of the Middle Border,⁵⁶ Garland refers to the effect of the wind upon women who are forced by environment to listen to its almost constant sound. He writes of a visit to Hanover, Kansas, in the latter book, and says: "All day the wind blew, the persistent, mournful crying wind of the plain. The saddest, most appealing sound in my world. It came with a familiar soft rush, a crowding presence, uttering a sighing roar - a vague sound out of which voices of lonely children and forgotten women broke. To the solitary farmer's wife such a wind brings tears or madness. ... Think of living here with the litany of this wind forever in one's ears."

Only a small portion of Garland's references to the wind has here been indicated. He has more to say of it than of any of the other atmospheric phenomena.

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55. Pp. 70-71
56. P. 175

Garland's familiarity with different types of storms, and his ability to put their various manifestations into words make his numerous storm descriptions extremely interesting.

The dreariness of the steady, monotonous rain is well shown in Main-Travelled Roads.⁵⁷ He is writing of a rainy day on a Wisconsin farm - a farm which is furnishing only a bare living for its workworn, discouraged occupants. It was "not a shower, but a steady rain - an unusual thing in midsummer in the west", he tells us. "A cold dismal day in the fireless, colorless farmhouse ... The ceiling swarmed with flies which the cold rain had driven to seek the warmth of the kitchen." The rain swept down from "... the half-seen hills, wreathing the wooded peaks with a gray garment of mist, and filling the valley with a whitish cloud". The monotonous sounds of the falling water are well described: "It fell around the house drearily. It ran down into the tubs placed to catch it, dripped from the mossy pump, and drummed on the upturned milk-pails,

..." What a wretched, miry place the slow, long continued downpour makes of the farm yard! We are given a glimpse of it through the falling drops with "...the disconsolate hens standing under the wagons and sheds, a pig wallowing across its sty, and for atmosphere the desolate, falling rain".

The prairie farmer becomes intimately acquainted with that ostentatious atmospheric disturbance, the thunderstorm. There are no hills and few trees to shut off his view of it. When a sudden storm comes upon him at his work in the field, he usually seeks the shelter of his barn, because it is likely he has horses with him. From the harbor of the barn door, where his view of the storm is perhaps unobstructed, he, bathed in the cool, sweet breath of the storm, watches the awful display of teamwork on the part of cloud, wind, lightning, and rain.

58

In Boy Life, a typical daytime prairie thunderstorm, as the haymakers see it, is vividly brought before the reader in Garland's best style. He describes the conditions before the storm: the atmosphere is humid and hot; black clouds loom

high in the west, birds and insect voices become silent; "as if awed by the first deep mutter of the storm". As the cloud approaches, it begins to break. Garland writes: "Far away is heard a low, steady crescendo, grim roar; intermixed with crashing thunderbolts; the rain streams aslant, but there is not yet a breath of air from the west; the storm wind is still far away; .."

There is over the land ". . . an ominous gloom cast by the rolling clouds of the tempest. The black cloud melts to form the falling rain, which blots out the plain as it sweeps on." He follows the swift progress of the veil of rain ^{and} of the wind across the cornfield, the wind break, trees, and to the edge of the hayfield, the long grass of which "streams in the wind like a woman's hair". At last, the men in the field drop their work and run for shelter, and the "roaring tempest rides upon them like a regiment of demon cavalry, .. streams of fire go rushing across the sky like the branching of great red trees". The next moment the sheets of water blot out the landscape; the thunder crashes "sharp and splitting in the near distance, to go deepening and bellowing off down the illimitable spaces of the sky and plain,

enlarging as it goes like the rumor of war". As the storm passes on and blots out the "faint crescent of sunny sky", which still appears on the eastern horizon, "...a similar window, faint, watery, and gray, appears in the west as the clouds break away. It widens, grows yellow, and then red; and at last blazes out into an inexpressible glory of purple and crimson and gold." The sound of the thunder gradually dies away to the east; the cloud moves on; the sun appears and the storm is over, leaving in its wake a bright, beautiful, cool world, in which everything is "new-washed, clean of dust," and where a "faint, moist odor of green things is in the air".

The same type of storm is depicted in a bit of verse entitled Coming Rain on the Prairie.⁵⁹ It ends with a fine simile picturing cattle in the storm: "The cattle draw together on the plain

And drift like anchored boats upon
a wind-swept bay".

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In The Moccasin Ranch,⁶¹ Garland describes a storm which he calls a "tornado". However,

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59. Boy Life, p. 264

60. P. 54-55

61. P. 57

from his description, it appears to be only a very violent wind and rain storm, since little or no damage is done to houses.

In the mountains, Garland notes that the ordinary thunder shower is of very short duration. He says that the sunlight is suddenly blotted out; the sky becomes gray, and the path over which the traveler is passing and its surroundings become dark and chill. The storm seems very close to the observer. The passing of a mountain thunder storm, with its fitful, misty streams of rain, is noted in The Forester's Daughter.⁶² "The splitting crashes of thunder echoed from the high peaks like voices of siege guns, and the lightning stabbed here and there as though blindly seeking some hidden foe. Long veils of falling water twisted and trailed through the valleys with swishing roar." At another place in the same book,⁶³ there is an account of a noisy thunder storm, occurring at a high altitude in the mountains, when the rain changed to snow, which fell in "... great clinging, drowsy, soft, slow moving flakes, and with their coming the roar

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 62. P. 38
 63. Pp. 116-118

(of the thunder storm) died away and the forest became as silent as a grave of bronze. Nothing moved save the thick falling, feathery, frozen vapor ...” After a time the storm lightened and the snow changed back to rain; then to mist, and then ceased entirely.

64

The blizzard is described in Boy Life.

65

The Moccasin Ranch, and in A Son of the Middle

66

Border. In his graphic account of a blizzard in Boy Life, the author has in mind, no doubt, the storm which he speaks of in A Son of the Middle Border, as occurring the second winter the Garlands spent on the Iowa farm, which lasted two days and three nights.

Garland likens the prairie blizzard to a storm at sea in that it never affects the observer twice alike. He says that one storm may be sudden in its attack and last but a short time; one may be gradual in its approach but long and severe in duration; another may come without warning and rage furiously for days. It is the last type of blizzard that is presented in Boy Life.

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64. Pp. 39-45

65. Pp. 98-129

66. Pp. 310-312 and 110-111

He says that the day on which this storm began was warm and sunny, and the wind was in the south. The blizzard cloud appeared in the middle of the afternoon in the northwest, and soon covered the sun. "In fifteen minutes more the wind from the south ceased - there was a moment of breathless pause, and then, born on the wings of the north wind, the streaming clouds of soft, large flakes of snow drove in a level line over the heads of the homeward bound scholars, sticking to their clothing and faces and melting rapidly." (The boys of the story were on their way home from school.) By the time they reached home, "...the wind was a gale, the snow a vast blinding cloud, filling the air and hiding the road. Darkness came on instantly, ..."

When bedtime came that night, the storm was raging furiously, and the cold was so intense that in the house "water and food began to freeze within ten feet of the fire". The next morning the persons in the small farmhouse were becoming appalled by the "steady, solemn, implacable clamor of the storm. ...the house shook and snapped, the snow beat in muffled rhythmic pulsations against the walls, or swirled and lashed upon the roof, giving rise to strange,

multitudinous, anomalous sounds; now dim and far, now near and all-surrounding; producing an effect of mystery and infinite reach, as though the cabin were a helpless boat, tossing on an angry limitless sea." Outside "the air was impenetrably filled with fine, powdery snow ... It was impossible to see twenty feet." When one stepped out, his face was almost immediately covered with ice, and it was extremely difficult to breathe in the face of the wind.

We are given an idea of the feelings of those within the house during the three days of the blizzard. They talked very little; and felt that the storm was almost "too vast, too ungovernable, to ever again be spoken to a calm, even by God himself". The men's faces wore a "grim, set look, and the women sat with averted faces and downcast eyes full of unshed tears - "

On the last night of the storm, at about midnight, it was noticed that the "roar was no longer so steady, so relentless, and so high keyed as before. It began to lull at times, and though it came back to the attack with all its former ferocity, still there was a perceptible weakening. Its fury was becoming spasmodic."

The next morning the wind was still and the sun was shining in a blue sky.

The habit these severe storms have of suddenly materializing at about the time of the dismissal of schools caused many children to be caught between school and home, to become lost on the unfenced treeless prairie and frozen to death. Garland speaks of the suffering and the deaths which were the results of this storm.⁶⁷

The mirage, that peculiar atmospheric phenomenon common to the level treeless prairie and the desert, is mentioned several times in Garland's works. It is shown as occurring at sunrise in Boy Life,⁶⁸ The Moccasin Ranch,⁶⁹ and in Ol' Pap's Flaxen.⁷⁰ In The Eagle's Heart,⁷¹ it is presented as the traveler across the plains sees it at almost any time during sunshiny days: "...lakes of water sprang into view, filling a swale in the sod - mystic and beautiful, only to vanish like cloud shadows". This is Garland's

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67. Boy Life, p. 45 and A Son of the Middle Border, p. 111

68. P. 357

69. P. 314

70. The Century Magazine, vol. XXI, p. 918

71. P. 97

description of a South Dakota mirage as seen early on a cool, clear September morning by some of the characters in Ol' Pap's Flaxen: "In the south there was a vast phantom lake, with duplicate cities here and there along the winding shores, which stretched from east to west. The grain stacks stood around so thickly that they seemed like walls of a great low-built town, the mirage bringing into vision countless hundreds of them commonly below the horizon."

CHAPTER V - THE SEASONS - DAY AND NIGHT

The seasons of the year have more meaning to the farmer than to almost any other class of human beings. Each season brings to the farmer well defined duties, which he must perform on time if he is to succeed at his profession. The performance of these duties compels him to spend most of his time exposed to the manifold kinds of weather, which accompany the four periods of the year. Few know better than the man on the farm the welcome message of spring, the generosity - and the heat - of summer, the bounty of autumn, and the sternness of winter. The very word "season" refers to the tilling of the soil. It comes to us from the Latin satio, meaning "a sowing", through the French saison, "the sowing time".

Garland, as a young man on the farm, seeing at close range the continually recurring seasonal

changes and their effects upon the landscape and upon plants and animals, became learned in the significance of the seasons. Just as changes in the weather are given much attention in his works, so he devotes many passages in his books of the prairie to the changing seasons.

Spring in the temperate zone the world over is the most welcomed of the seasons, and on the farms it is received with joy, in spite of the fact that its coming means the beginning of long days of work in the fields. Garland has a bit of verse entitled Then It's Spring,¹ which is pleasantly descriptive of some of the most reliable signs of that season:

"When the hens begin a-squakin'
 An' a-rollin' in the dust;
 When the rooster takes to talkin',
 An' a-crowin' fit to bust;
 When the crows are cawin', flockin',
 An' the chickuns boom and sing,
 Then it's spring!

When the roads are jest one mud-hole
 And the worter tricklin' round

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 1. Prairie Folks, p. 2

Makes the barn-yard like a puddle,
 An' softens up the ground
 Till y'r ankle-deep in worter,
 Sayin' words y'r hadn't orter -
 When the jay-birds swear an' sing,
 Then it's spring!"

2

In A Son of the Middle Border, the author writes that the first winter the Garlands spent on the Iowa prairie was a long and depressing one; and when spring came to them with sudden beauty and sweet meaning, it seemed like "a sudden release from prison".

3

Garland writes that in the early spring, when the first warm winds of March began to blow, the snows melted and "lakes developed with magical swiftness in the fields" of the Iowa prairie, "and streams filled every swale, transforming the landscape into something unexpected and enchanting" In the night these waters froze. As the season advanced, the ice, "with prodigious booming and cracking fell away in the swales and broke through the icy drifts" which lay along the fences, "and

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 2. P. 99

3. A Son of the Middle Border, pp. 125-126

vanished ..." He tells us that the first dry ground to appear around the barnyard in the spring "in the almost universal slush and mud", was the slightly raised place where the wood-pile stood. Spring work began there, for the splitting of fire-wood was the "first spring task".

⁴
 In A Son of the Middle Border, the author tells how the season came to its maturity around him as he worked in the field. The most significant sound which ushered in the spring was the mellow drumming of the prairie cock. As soon as these birds appeared in large numbers on the meadows, it was time for field work to begin. Garland writes that the first field duty was that of harrowing. "I drove upon the field," he says, "which I had plowed the previous October, there to plod to and fro behind my drag, while ⁱⁿ the sky above my head and around me on the mellowing soil the life of the season thickened". Wild ducks, geese, and cranes flew high above him or alighted occasionally in the adjacent meadows. Fleecy clouds sailed by in a deep blue sky, and the scent ⁵ of warm soil was in the air. In Boy Life

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 4. Pp. 99-106

5. Pp. 65-69

Garland says that the spring mornings in the field were chilly, but in the afternoon, after a brief "nooning", the boy perceived a subtle change, a mellow charm; the ground was warmer, the sky more genial, and the wind more amiable, .." But as the sun sank, the wind became chill, and "The going of the sun seemed to put the springtime farther off". There were days, too, when "the blast was cold and swift and bleak", and sometimes flurries of snow came, "spiteful and stinging, and the soil grew wet and sticky again. But," the author says, "the clouds were fleeting; for the most part the sun shone, and the wind was soft and warm." He says that day by day the soil became mellower as "the prairie spring unrolled its beauties" about him while in the field. The last goose passed north, the green grass crept up the sunny slopes. Loitering cranes flew by and the "ground sparrow" built her "grassy nest". The prairie chickens secluded themselves in the swales, "and the pocket gopher, busily mining the sod, threw up his purple-brown mounds of cool, fresh earth. Larks, blue birds,

and king-birds followed the robins, and at last the full tide of May covered the world with luscious green".

Summer, in spite of the hard work accompanying it, was an enjoyable season on the Iowa farm. Summer at its height is vividly expressed by Garland in A Son of the Middle Border.⁷ He writes that even the toiling men, "dulled and deadened with neverending drudgery" were moved at this time by the "superabundant glow and throb of nature's life". The cornfields rippled in the wind, and "waves of dusk and green and gold" circled across the ripening barley. Trees were in heaviest leaf; insect life was "at its height"; the "shimmering air" was "filled with buzzing, dancing forms"; the clover was "gay with the sheen of innumerable gauzy wings"; and the wind was "laden with ecstatic voices" of many birds and insects. Grasshoppers moved "in clouds with snap and buzz ... and over all and laving all" moved "the slow west wind, heavy with the breath of far off blooms of other lands".

8

Garland speaks of the fact that in late summer there were times when beneath the radiant

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7. Pp. 137-138

8. A Son of the Middle Border, p. 208

sky "Nature seemed resting, opulent, self-satisfied, and honorable". He mentions the "still and pulseless days when slaty-blue clouds piled up in the west and came drifting eastward" to cool the prairie world with rain. There were misty windy days in late summer, he writes, "when the sounding southern breeze" came swiftly from the south and "whitened the sky with an overspreading haze".

Summer in Dakota, with its dryness, heat, and glaring sunlight, often seemed a mockery to the settlers. In Ol' Pap's Flaxen,⁹ one of the characters of the story in speaking of the South Dakota plain in summer remarks: "No trees; no flowers; jest a lot o' shanties full o' flies".

The advance of autumn upon the prairie is described in Boy Life.¹⁰ "Into beautiful gold and purple October," says the author, "great slashes of gray rain swept. There were days when the wind was northeast and the drizzle steady and pitiless". He writes that at these times, the meadows were gloomy and sombre. "With the ending of each fall rain, the weather was progressively colder; the sumach became crimson; the popple

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9. The Century Magazine, v. XXII, p. 41

10. Pp. 294-295

trees stood bare; and beneath the hazle bushes the ground became thickly strewn with nuts. "The barbs of the wild oats, twisted and harsh, fell to the earth, and the stalks of the crow's foot stood slenderly upholding a frayed sprangle of empty seed-cells." He speaks of the gophers storing nuts and seeds, and of the fat badgers that walked along the ridges on warm days, waiting for the winter. Grasshoppers and crickets were silent except during the warm hours of the day. "One by one", the author continues, "all the hardy autumn plants ripened or were cut down by frost until only stern grays and drabs and sombre yellows and browns remained upon the landscape".

11

In an account of the cornhusking in Boy Life, Garland presents realistically the merging of autumn into winter. He tells us that the husking began in October when the mornings were clear and frosty, and when the sun still shed a warm light. As the season advanced, the sun rose later each ^{day} and warmed the air more slowly; at times the frost remained upon the corn ears till nearly noon. "There were days" in the cornfield,

he writes, "when ragged gray masses of cloud swept down on the powerful northern wind, when there was a sorrowful, lonesome moan among the corn rows, when the cranes, no longer soaring at ease, drove straight into the south, sprawling low-hung in the blast, or lost to sight above the flying scud. ..." At last, when the husking was being finished, "the wind was roaring through the fields with ever increasing volume, carrying flurries of feathery snow and shreds of corn leaves," and "the field grew mysterious, vast, and inhospitable as the wind".

Winter on the Iowa prairie was, for the most part, a time of trial for the farmers. In A Son¹² of the Middle Border, Garland indicates that winter mornings were unpleasant times for him. He tells how hard it was to rise before dawn on winter mornings "in a chamber warmed only by the stovepipe" and "to draw on icy socks and frosty boots and go to the milking of cows and the currying of horses". Blizzards of varying severity frequently swept the prairie, and the

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12. Pp. 117-118

winter winds kept up an "almost incessant,
¹³
 mournful piping" in the chimneys of the farm
 houses. For the boys and girls, the monotony of
 the winter days was broken by school and by games
 in the snow. One of the irritating results of
 the exposure to the cold was chilblains, Garland
¹⁴
 says; and he speaks of the intense discomfort
 the school children suffered from the persistent
 itching and burning of their feet.

¹⁵
 In Boy Life, the author gives us a glimpse
 of the prairie after a blizzard. It was "ridged
 with vast drifts", he writes, and "To and fro,
 from north to south, and south to north, the dry
 snow sifted till it was like fine sand that
 rolled under the heel with a ringing sound on cold
 days". The prairie, which could be so pleasant
 in summer, was then a "pitiless and destructive"
 region.

The incredible severity of winter on the
 South Dakota plains is referred to especially in
¹⁶
A Son of the Middle Border and The Moccasin
¹⁷
Ranch. In the latter book, speaking of winter

.....
 13. A Son of the Middle Border, p. 119

14. Ibid., p. 111

15. Pp. 44-45

16. Pp. 309-312-

17. Pp. 88-89

on the Dakota plain, Garland writes: "Day after day the thermometer fell so far below zero that no living thing moved in the wide, white waste. The snows seemed never at rest. One storm followed another till the drifting icy sands were worn as fine as flour ... There were many days when the sun shone, but the snow slid across the plain with a menacing, hissing sound, and the sky was milky with flying frost ... The utter dryness of the flakes and the never resting progress of the winds kept the drifts shifting, shifting." The land became a "menacing desert, hard as iron, pitiless as ice".¹⁸ He says that in winter, "life in a cabin in this country had an isolation almost as terrible as that of a ship wedged amid the ice-floes of the polar regions".¹⁹

Few persons have better opportunity to observe sunrises and sunsets than the farmer, because his early rising permits him to see the sun appear, and his fields offer no obstruction to his view of the horizon. The beauty of the dawns and sunsets of the prairie world of Garland's

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18. Moccasin Ranch, p. 70

19. Ol' Pap's Flaxen, Century Magazine, v. XXI, p. 920

youth was deeply impressed upon him, and he places many vivid pictures of them in his books of the prairie, and in his stories of the farm.

In A Son of the Middle Border,²⁰ the dawn of a morning in late fall, as the thrashers see it, is described: "The frost lay white on every surface, the frozen ground rang like iron under the steel shod feet of the horses, and the breath of the men rose up in little puffs of steam Finally, ... the east began to bloom, and long streamers of red began to unroll along the vast gray dome of the sky ...". A windless September²¹ dawn is pictured in Main-Travelled Roads. The author says that "a vast dome of pale undazzling gold" rose silently and swiftly above the eastern horizon. The air was "indescribably pure, resonant, and stimulating"; the roosters were crowing far and near and the distant barking of dogs could be heard; and as "The dome of gold grew brighter, the faint clouds here and there flamed with a flush of red".

The winter dawns were, on clear mornings, no less beautiful than those of the other seasons.

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 20. P. 52
 21. Pp. 9-10

The Garlands arose at five o'clock on winter mornings, we are told, and by the time the chores were finished an hour later "...the eastern sky was gorgeous with light, and two misty 'sondogs' dimly loomed, watching at the gate of the new day".

Stacking time, which came in late summer, was usually an attractive period of the year. The early mornings of this season were especially charming, Garland writes. "Often by half-past six in the morning, the teams moved out into a field where the rising sun was flaming through a mist that clothed the world like a garment, and clung to the jeweled grass like a bridal veil. The prairie," he says, "at this time was quite silent. The young chickens had ceased to peep, the meadowlark was heard only infrequently - the cricket and the katydid possessed the land. The corn rustled luckily now and then, as if in intermittent, meditative speech, brooding upon the decay which was falling upon the world."

Sunsets are much in evidence in the works of

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 22. A Son of the Middle Border, p. 118

23. Boy Life, pp. 153-154

Garland. Here is a characteristic description of the phenomenon - the scene is Wisconsin and the passage is from Main-Travelled Roads: ²⁴ "... the falling sun streamed in broad banners across the valleys; ... the blue mist lay far down the Coolly over the river; the cattle called from the hills in the moistening, sonorous air ... The level, red light streamed through the trees" and "blazed along the grass ..."

Nightfall is realistically shown in A Son ²⁵ of the Middle Border as it occurred in threshing time. The author says that the afternoon sun "grew big and red, the night began to fall and the wind died out". Then, he presents vividly the weird hum of the separator, the picture of the men moving silently about in the dust and the flying wheat chaff. In the falling dusk, the scene becomes one of strange romance. Darkness comes and the work gradually ceases; the hum of the cylinder in the threshing machine dies and is silent. When the tired men and horses slowly leave the field, "The air is still and cool, and the sky a deep cloudless blue starred with faint fire."

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24. Pp. 102-103

25. Pp. 56-57

Sunrises and sunsets are often described by Garland in his stories of the west. The quoting of two passages which picture a mountain sunrise and a mountain sunset must suffice as typical examples of numerous descriptions of similar scenes in Garland's books. In The Forester's Daughter,²⁶ through the eyes of one of the characters, as he stands at the edge of a mountain lake, we see the "splendor" of the mountain dawn as it "smote him full in the eyes". The author says: "From the waveless surface of the water a spectral mist was rising, a light veil, through which the stupendous cliffs loomed three thousand feet in height, darkly shadowed, dim and far. The willows along the western marge burned as if dipped in liquid gold, and on the lofty crags the sun's coming created keen-edged shadows, violet as ink."²⁷ Also, in the same novel is given this description of a mountain sunset and nightfall: "Lightly the golden glory rose till only the highest peaks retained its flame; then it leapt to the clouds behind the peaks, and gorgeously lit their somber sulphurous masses.

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26. P. 112

27. P. 102

....The voice of the stream grew stern; and a cold wind began to fall from the heights, sliding like an invisible but palpable icy cataract."

Garland often mentions the fact that in the mountains the dawn seems to descend and the night to ascend.

29

In The Trail of the Goldseekers,²⁹ references are made to the long day and short night of the north. The author says that when they were in latitude fifty-four, "At 10:30 at night, it was still light enough to write. No sooner did it get dark on one side of the tent than it began to lighten on the other."

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 28. Cf. Cavanagh, p. 99; Forester's Daughter, p. 94; They of the High Trails, p. 188
 29. P. 83

CHAPTER VI - LANDSCAPE AND TOPOGRAPHY

To the Garlands, coming from a home shut in by the wooded hills of Wisconsin, the wide expanse of open Iowa prairie, to which they moved in 1870, offered a striking contrast to the narrow coulee they were leaving. As they rode west into the middle border in their wagons, there were times when on the broad extent of the plain not a sign of man's habitation could be seen except the road they were following. "The majesty of the primeval world exalted me," Garland writes in A Son of the Middle Border.¹ "I felt for the first time the poetry of the unplowed spaces." He succeeds well in placing much of this majesty and poetry of the prairie landscape into his books.

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P. P. 82

To the south of the Iowa farm on which the Garlands settled in 1870 lay the town of Osage, and we are told that the sections in that direction were then nearly all settled. However, to the north and on into Minnesota, there was virtually nothing but virgin prairie, which "billowed like a russet ocean, with scarcely a roof to fleck its lonely spread".² There was an unforgettable fascination about this "wide, sunny, windy country," with its big sky and low, far away horizon, he³ writes.

In A Son of the Middle Border,⁴ the beauty and charm of the natural meadows are well set forth. The author says that the uplands were covered with short, light-green, hair-like grass and with resinous weeds; the lowlands supported luxuriant, tall, graceful grasses. Dotting the meadows were many wild flowers. On the slopes of the upland ridges "huge antlers" lay "bleached and bare in countless numbers", telling of the "herds of elk and bison that had once fed in these splendid savannahs". In the spring the prairie

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2. A Son of the Middle Border, p. 83

3. Ibid., p. 85

4. Pp. 132-138

air carried the enchanting drum of the prairie cock, the suggestive honk of the wild goose, and the resounding challenge of the crane. In summer the myriad voices of smaller prairie birds mingled with the shrill cry of the katydid and the chirp of the cricket; and "The sun flamed across the splendid serial waves of the grasses and the perfumes of a hundred spicy plants rose in the shimmering mid-day air". The presence of the badger, the fox, the shadowy coyote, and of other four-footed animals, was an added allurement of these wild meadows. "All the charm and mystery of that prairie world comes back to me", writes Garland in A Son of the Middle Border,⁵ "and I ache with an illogical desire to recover it and hold it and preserve it in some form for my children." We fervently echo his wish, with the feeling, however, that he has done much to preserve it for his readers.

The South Dakota landscape of the eighties is pictured by Garland in a number of passages. In A Son of the Middle Border,⁶ he says that

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5. P. 100

6. P. 246

while walking from Aberdeen to his father's claim, twelve miles from that town, he for the first time "set foot upon a landscape without a tree to break its sere expanse". This plain was much flatter than the prairie of Iowa, but there was a delicate beauty and weird charm about it. In spring it took on "exquisite shades of pink and purple" which were mingled with "radiant yellow-green". The flaming sunlight fell upon it, and the air was filled with an "opalescent mist".

The phenomenon of the mirage lent mystery to this landscape. In The Moccasin Ranch,⁷ the author describes the progress across the Dakota plain at sunrise of several wagon loads of homesteaders. He writes that as the sun rose a kind of transformation scene took place in the landscape. "The whole level land lifted at the horizon till the teams seemed crawling forever at the bottom of an enormous bowl. Mystical forms came into view - grotesquely elongated, unrecognizable. Hills twenty, thirty miles away rose like apparitions, astonishingly magnified. Willows became elms, a settler's shanty rose like a shot-tower - towns hitherto unseen swarm and

palpitated in the yellow flood of light like shaken banners low hung on unseen flagstaffs."

On these plains, as on the Iowa prairie, were scattered the bones of the vanished buffalo and deer; numerous quadrupeds were there; and in the spring the "prairie piped and twittered and clacked and chuckled" with the sounds of birds.

In July and August the Dakota plain could become an inhospitable place of hot, withering winds and of monotonously bright sunlight.

Garland writes that an ominous change came over this land in summer, and that the grasses withered and became as inflammable as hay, and the birds were silent. "The sky", he says, "absolutely cloudless began to scare us with its light. The sun rose through the dusty air, sinister with flare of horizontal heat." In winter, this wide landscape became an empty, white waste of remorseless winds and iron earth "over which the snows swept as if across an icy polar sea".

The landscape of the Montana plains is pictured in The Captain of the Gray Horse Troop.

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8. The Moccasin Ranch, p. 25
 9. A Son of the Middle Border, p. 308
 10. Ibid., p. 315
 11. P. 16-18

It is a silent, lonely, and sinister country, but contains wonderful charm. "The solitary buttes," writes the author, "smooth of slope and grotesque of line; the splendid, grassy hollows ...; the burned-up mesas, where nothing lived but the horned toad; alkaline flats, leprous and ashen; the occasional green line of cottonwood-trees, deep sunk in a dry water course + all these were typical of the whole vast eastern water-shed of the continental divide" The author says that the air was dry and that the alkali dust so easily stirred, parched the skin and pinched the lips of the traveler.

The color of these far western plains is described in one passage as "dust-brown and sage-green".¹² They are "flooded with vehement, devouring light".¹³ The sugar-loaf mesa, which is present in many localities of these plains, is mentioned in The Eagle's Heart;¹⁴ and in Money Magic¹⁵ the level top of one of these mesas is pictured as "Cutting the sun in half".¹³ In The Eagle's Heart, reference is made

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12. Forester's Daughter, p. 1

13. The Eagle's Heart, p. 100

14. P. 97

15. P. 28

to the "domed and pyramidal and hawkheaded buttes" of the Rocky Mountain foot-hill region.

Garland gives his readers some charming pictures of Southern Wisconsin landscape. Through his eyes we see the richly wooded hills with "gently sloping green sides, rising to massive square or rounded tops with dim vistas, ... gracious, lofty in their greeting" to the traveler,¹⁶ "immortal in their vivid and delicate beauty";¹⁷ in Other Main-Travelled Roads a fictitious Wisconsin town is described as lying in a valley surrounded by hills whose square tops were on a common level, "showing," the author says, "that they were not the result of an upheaval, but were the remains of the original stratification formations left standing after the scooping action of the post-glacial floods had ceased". Oaks and cedars covered their tops, and in summer graceful vines clambered over their rough sides, and underbrush softened their broken contours. In Prairie Folks,¹⁸ Wisconsin spring landscape is depicted. The slopes of the hills, Garland says, were like "carefully tended lawns, without stumps

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16. Main-Travelled Roads, p. 71

17. P. 163

18. P. 243

or stones"; their summits were topped by cliffs of lichen-spotted stone; and the slopes leading up to the cliffs contained groves of trees which were colored "pink and gray and green in softly rounded billows of cherry blooms and tender oak and elm foliage".

Garland refers to rivers a great number of times, and he mentions the names of a large number of North American rivers, but he gives few interesting descriptions of them. On their way to Iowa the Garlands crossed the Mississippi River in early spring. In A Son of the Middle
19
Border is given the description of that crossing. The river was "a wide expanse of snow covered ice", he writes, "in the midst of which a dark, swift threatening current of open water ran". The family crossed on a flexible narrow bridge which carried them uncertainly over the terrifying "boiling heave of that black flood". The "sheen" of the "oily red current" of the "Huddy Missouri" River is referred to in A
20
Daughter of the Middle Border. In The Trail of the Goldseekers, the author writes that rivers proved

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19. Pp. 71-72
20. P. 189

serious barriers to the Alaska-bound trailer and his pack train; and there were many of them to be crossed. Garland writes in that book ²¹ that "Sullen streams lay athwart the road" of the man on the trail "like dragons". The Bulkley River of Northwestern Canada is spoken of as one of the most savage streams Garland and his companion had to cross. Its "Every drop of water was in motion. It had no eddies, no slack water. Its momentum was terrific". ²² The Bulkley was typical of many of the streams along the goldseeker's trail.

The Little Cedar River, which ran near the ²³ Garland's farm in Iowa, is called in Boy Life the "Maple River". It was a wonderful stream to the prairie boys, especially on hot days when they were free to swim and fish in it. Garland has ²⁴ an interesting poem on this stream; which

"In murmur of dream and of sleep,
 ... drowsily eddied and swirled
 And softly crept and curled
 Round the out-thrust knees
 Of the basswood trees

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 21. P. 68

22. The Trail of the Goldseekers, p. 99

23. P. 122

24. Boy Life, pp. 120-121

And lifted the rustling, dripping sedge
 In rhythmic sweep at the outer edge."

Water snakes glided across the river's surface,
 he writes, and the kingfisher and jay cried and
 darted across it from tree to tree. The last
 stanza of the poem begins:

"And I, a bare-legged boy again,
 Can hear the low, sweet laugh of the river -
 See on the water the dapples aquiver,
"

We are given vivid glimpses of Lake Michigan
 in Rose of Dutcher's Coolly.²⁵ In that novel, the
 author speaks of the majesty of the "immense
 shoreless spread" of the lake and its "smooth
 expanse of glittering green and blue water", over
 which floated great clouds trailing huge shadows
 "like robes of state".²⁶ Rose of the story saw
 the lake in March when a "great mass of churned
 and heaving ice and snow lay like a robe of
 shaggy fur" near the shore. At that time the
 deep water farther out was "a vivid pea-green
 broken by wide, irregular strips of dark purple".

.....
 25. P. 169
 26. Rose of Dutcher's Coolly, p. 294

Garland describes the moods of "this mighty spread
of water" in Rose of Dutcher's Coolly,²⁷ and in that
novel²⁸ there is a marvelous description of the
lake "in its frenzy".

In the early spring on the prairie farm, as
the water from the melting snow moved slowly down
the hollows and ravines, it was often stopped at
the fences, we are told in Boy Life²⁹ by banks of
slush and ice. It also formed ponds on the wide,
flat fields. These ponds, when frozen, were
excellent skating places for the boys and girls of
the neighborhood. There is a delightful bit of
detailed description in Boy Life³⁰ of the melting
ice in the fields and hollows. Garland writes
that as the sun's rays grew warmer, the water began
to flow from beneath the ice. Between the ice
and the ground were left crystal arches and
labyrinths of shining pillars through which the
water "gurgled and tinkled with most entrancing
music". The boys, pressing their ears to the
ice, could hear the faint, fairy-like melodies,
played as if upon "tiny bells far down, mingled

.....
27. P. 295

28. Cf. pp. 296 and 304

29. P. 52

30. P. 54

with splashing of infinitesimal waterfalls, and of rhythmical, far away lapping of tiny wavelets". The author speaks of the iridescent bubbles, which lay under the surface of the melting ice "like pellucid palettes". As the ice weathered a "whole fairy world of architecture" was exposed. The sun lighted its arches, pillars, and colonnades till the boys' hearts "ached with the beauty of it".

31

Garland writes that there was a fine charm about the stubble fields in late summer. The fields of wheat had given place to wide reaches of cleanly shaven stubble, "beautifully mottled in green and purple by smart-weeds and mats of morning-glory vines wherein the shocks, weather-beaten as granite, sat in sagging rows awaiting the stacker ..."

32

In A Daughter of the Middle Border, after explaining why he turned from writing tales of the prairie to writing western stories, the author says: "... the unplowed valleys, the waterless foot-hills and high peaks inspired me, filled me with desire to embody them in some form of prose .."

.....
 31. Boy Life, p. 154
 32. P. 32

Garland's visits to the Rocky Mountains were frequent and usually of long duration. His familiarity with them is well shown in his very numerous word pictures of their landscape.

The rugged majesty of the Rockies is brought out in the following passage from The Tyranny of

³³
the Dark. "Six-thousand feet above the valley

floor green and orange slopes run to the edges of perennial-ice fields, while above these almost inaccessible defences, like tents of besieging Titans, rise three great mountains, gleaming with snow and thunderous with storms." The

magnificent sweep of the mountain ranges is shown

³⁴
in The Forester's Daughter: "They had now reached

a point twelve thousand feet above the sea, and range beyond range, to the west and south, rose into sight like stupendous waves of a purple green

sea." ³⁵ Again in Her Mountain Lover, we are shown the ranges from a high point in the mountains:

"...range after range of peaks, each more than fourteen thousand feet above the sea, billowed away, gleaming with green and gold and garnet,

.....
33. P. 1
34. P. 188
35. P. 366

mingled with snow, over which the clouds dropped purple shadows." A passage in A Daughter of the Middle Border³⁶ shows the Rocky Mountains "Snow covered, flaming like burnished marble, ... with high summits sharply set against the cloudless sky, upreared in austere majesty, each bleak crag gilded with the first rays of the morning sun. Above the warm, brown plain, the giants towered remotely alien, like ancient kings on purple thrones, ..."

A bit of detail of mountain landscape and atmosphere is given in The Forester's Daughter.³⁷ Garland is telling of a trip through the mountains of three of the characters in the story: "At last they reached the ragged edge of timber line", he writes, "and there rolling away under the mist, lay the bare, grassy, upward-blimbing, naked neck of the great peak. The wind had grown keener moment by moment, and when they left the storm-twisted pines below, its breath had a wintry nip. The rain had ceased to fall, but the clouds still hung densely to the loftiest summits. It was a sinister yet beautiful world - a world as silent

.....
36. P. 140

37. Pp. 94-95

as a dream, and through the short, thick grass, the slender trail ran like a timid serpent. The hour seemed to have neither daytime, nor season. All was obscure, mysterious, engulfing, and hostile."

In The Eagle's Heart,³⁸ the author describes the impression the view of the distant mountains make upon one who sees them for the first time. The traveler at first is usually deceived into thinking the far-away mountain range a heavy cloud bank. He may travel for hours towards the mountains, wondering at the immobility and constant outline of the "cloud"; when it will flash upon him that he is beholding the mountains.

An inspiring view of the plain from a mountain height is presented in A Daughter of the Middle Border.³⁹ The author is giving an account of a trip over "the short-line railway" to Cripple Creek, Colorado. As the train, in which he and his friends were riding, crept "across the mountain's shoulder", he says, "we were able to look back and down and far out upon the plain which was a shoreless sea of liquid opal. At ten thousand feet, the foot hills (flat as a rug)

.....
38. Pp. 145-146

39. Pp. 230-231

were so rich in color, so alluring in their spread that we could scarcely believe them to be composed of rocks and earth."

Mountain forests are referred to often in Garland's works, but usually in a general way only. He speaks of the golden forests of aspens of the lower mountain altitudes, flaming against the dark green of the higher pine forests.⁴⁰ He writes of the "unbroken cloak of firs whose dark and silent deeps" have a "stern beauty".⁴¹ As the traveler descends through timber line, he passes first, Garland tells us, the "wind-twisted, storm-bleached dwarf pines". The firs come next; then the "blue green spruces, and then the sheltering deeps of the under-spoiled forest".⁴² He mentions lark's spur and painter's brush as dotting the mountain meadows.⁴³

Mountain landscape, the author writes in Hesper⁴⁴ is "vigorous, clear-cut, masculine landscape, inhospitable to women". In the same book,⁴⁵ he writes that living on a mountain-top "is like being diurnally in the proscenium-box of a

.....
 40. The Forester's Daughter, p. 87
 41. Ibid., p. 89
 42. Pp. 95
 43. A Daughter of the Middle Border, p. 20
 44. P. 177
 45. P. 261

theatre horizon wide, in which clouds are the actors, electricity the illuminator, and thunder the trumpeter. It broadens a man's heart and expands his mental horizon."

Garland's descriptions of mountain landscape impress the reader with the majesty and grandeur of the mountains. The word pictures cause the reader to comprehend to a large extent their mighty height, the vast sweep of their ranges, and their marvelous colors.

The Canadian Rockies are very often spoken of and vividly described in The Trail of the Goldseekers. In that book also references are made to the Coast range of Alaska and Canada. The Grand Canon of the Colorado, with its "miles and miles of purple pagodas, violet towers and golden peaks" is mentioned in A Daughter of the Middle Border.

46

CONCLUSION

Garland is primarily interested in character portrayal; but he uses nature description to set off his characters by contrast, or, in the case of his western stories, to furnish splendid backgrounds for his heroic human types - the forest ranger,¹ the cowboy,² the miner,³ and others. His mountain backgrounds, however, are realistic. He makes the reader sensible of the mighty spaciousness and immeasurable grandeur of the mountain West. The ranges, he tells us in the Foreword to They of the High Trails, "are not the painted back drops of melodrama, gloomy, fuliginous, hell-litter. On the contrary, they are very real, very sunlit, and habitable;" and so they seem in his descriptions. Contrast between beauty of nature and the sordid lives of the poverty stricken farmers is often

-
1. Cavanagh, pp. 175-176 and 188-190; also Forester's Daughter, pp. 87-97
 2. Eagle's Heart, pp. 145-148 and 250
 3. Hesper, p. 135

used effectively in his books of the prairie. In his prairie stories, Garland also makes his nature descriptions serve to accentuate the distress, bitterness, hopelessness in the lives of the rural people by showing them working in their fields exposed to the blazing sun, to cold rain, to snow, and to bitter winds. He frequently emphasizes the fact that their welfare depends upon the whims of the elements.

Garland rarely places nature description into the mouths of his characters. His passages, descriptive of nature, are never more than two pages long; and they would, perhaps, average about one hundred and fifty words.

As has been stated elsewhere in this paper, Garland's interest in nature developed during his life on the farm; his knowledge of nature and his love for it were the results of daily contact with the natural phenomena of the outdoor world. The healthful, vigorous outdoor life of the farm promoted in him a wholesome though ^{un}scientific attitude towards nature. Now and then, however, he implies hostility towards it. The Dakota

.....
 4. Main-Travelled Roads, pp. 69-129; also Prairie
 Folks, pp. 83-117

plain, he says, seemed to him for the most part
 "an empty, desolate, mocking world".⁵ We infer
 from a passage in A Daughter of the Middle Border,⁶
 that Garland shares with many other persons the
 dislike, which sometimes amounts to hatred, of the
 "persistent mournful crying wind of the plain".
 In A Son of the Middle Border,⁷ the author writes
 that the destruction by the chinch bug of the
 Iowa farmers' crops in the early eighties was "a
 tragic, abominable injustice". This hostility is
 only momentary, however. For the most part,
 Garland has nothing but admiration and love for
 nature; he regards it usually as being kind and
 generous. His resentment is directed not against
 nature, but against the "land system", as the main
 cause of the farmers' unremitting toil and poverty.

Garland differs from the American nature
 essayists, Thoreau, Muir, Burroughs, and others,
 in his lack of scientific interest in nature.

There are probably other midwestern novelists of
 the present time, who compare favorably with
 Garland in their presentation of nature; e.g.,
 Miss Margaret Lynn for Kansas, Miss Willa Cather

.....
 5. A Son of the Middle Border, p. 315

6. P. 175

7. P. 243

for Nebraska, and Mr. William MacLeod Raine for the far west and the mountains. However, so far as the present writer knows, Hamlin Garland is the only author who has treated adequately the nature of both the prairie and the "Mountain West".

APPENDIX A

A List of the Plants Mentioned By Garland

(Note: The plant names are here given as Garland uses them.)

Trees

Alder	Larch, European
Apple	Locust
Aspin	
	Maple
Balsam	" , silver-leaf
Balsam fir	
Basswood	Oak
Birch	" , bur
Black haw	" , jack
	" , red
Cottonwood	" , white
Cedar	
Cherry	Pine
" , red	" , white
" , wild	" , black
Choke cherry	Pinon
Crabapple	Plum
	" , wild
Elm	Poplar
	"Popple"
Fir	
	Spruce
Hickory	Sycamore
Juniper	Tamarack

Walnut
 Willow
 " , "cutleaf"

Shrubs

Blackberry	Sage
Currant	Snowball
Grape	Sumach
Greasewood	Syringa
Hazel	Witch-hazel
Huckleberry	
Lilac	
Poison ivy	
Raspberry	
Rose	
" , cinnamon	
" , wild	

Herbs

Alfalfa	Cactus
Asparagus	Cattail
Aster, wild	Chicory
Bachelor-button	Clover
Barley	Corn
Beet	Columbine
Blue-joint	Crocus
Buckwheat, wild	Crow's foot
Buttercup	

Dandelion	Thistle
Devil's-club	Tiger-lily
Dewberry	Timothy
Fire-weed	Tumble weed
Gentian	Violet
Goldenrod	Watermelon
Hollyhock	Wheat
Hydrangea	
Indian paint-brush	
Indian tobacco	
Jonquils	
Lady-slipper	
Larkspur	
Maiden-hair fern	
Mandrake	
May apple	
Mayflower	
Meadow phlox	
Morning glory	
Oats, wild	
" , tame	
Orchid	
Painter's brush	
Pea-vine	
Pieplant	
Pigweed	
Pink	
Primrose	
Pumpkin	
Purslane	
Rattlesnake-weed	
Sandburr	
Sedge	
Sheep sorrel	
Smartweed	
Strawberry, wild	
Sunflower	
Sweet-william	

APPENDIX B

A List of Animals Mentioned by Garland

(Note: The Names are those used by Garland.)

Mammals

Antelope	Klk
Badger	Fox
Bat	
Bear	Goat
" , grizzly	Gopher
Beaver	" , pocket
Buffalo	
Burro	Hog
	Horse
Caribou	" , Arabian
Cat	" , broncho
Cattle	" , buckskin
" , Herford	" , cayuse
" , Holstein	" , Morgan
" , "Longhorn"	" , Norman
Chipmunk	" , wild
"Cony"	
Cougar	Jack rabbit
Coyote	
	marmot
Deer	Mole
DOG	MOOSE
" , po inter	mountain-lion
" , setter	Mouse
	mule
	Muskrat

Panther	Weasel
Polecat	Whale
Porcupine	Wildcat
Prairie-dog	Wolf, gray
	" , prairie
Rabbit	
Raccoon	
Ram, wild	
Rat	
Seal	
Sheep	
Skunk	
Squirrel,	
" , grey	
" , ground ("gopher")	
" , red	

Birds

Bittern	Guinea-hen
Blackbird	Gull
" , redwinged	
Bluebird	Hawk
Bobolink	Hen
Brant	Heron
Buffalo-bird	Humming-bird
"Camp-bird"	Jay
Catbird	" , blue
Chickadee	
Crane	Killdee
" , sandhill	Kingbird
Crow	Kingfisher
Dove, mourning	Lark
" , ring	" , meadow
	" , prairie
Eagle	Loon
Goose	Magpie
Grouse	Mockingbird

Night-hawk	Snipe
Oriole	Snowbird
Owl	Sparrow
" , white	" , "ground"
	Swallow
Partridge	Thrush
Peacock	Turkey
Pigeon	" - buzzard
Plover	
Prairie chicken	Vulture
"Prairie pigeon"	"Water robin"
Ptarmigan	Whippoorwill
Quail	Woodpecker
Raven	
Robin	

Miscellaneous Animals

Bass	Red-horse
Catfish	Salmon
Chub	Shark
Crawfish	Sucker
	Sunfish
Mud-cat	
Muskelunge	Trout
Perch	
Pickereel	
Black snake	Frog
Blue racer	
Garter snake	Tadpole
Rattlesnake	Toad
	" , horned
	" , tree
	Turtle

Bee
Beetle
Butterfly

Chinch bug

Firefly
Fly

Gnat
Grasshopper

Katydid

Locust

Mosquito

APPENDIX C

Nature Diction

(Note: The following list is composed of words in Garland descriptive of sense impressions from the world of Nature. No attempt is made at completeness.)

Visual Terms

Amber	dusk
Amethyst	Dust-brown
Ashy	
	Emerald
Bay	Ermine
Blazing	
Blood-red	Fawn
Blue	Fire
Blue-black	Flame
Brass	Flaming
Brilliant	Fretted gold
Brown	Frosty
Burnished blue	
" gold	Garnet
" silver	Gleaming
	Gold
Coral	Golden-green
Crimson	Gray
	" -green
Dappled	" -white
" gray	Green
Dazzling	
Drab	Inky
Dull-blue	Iridescent
Dun	

Lavender	Sapphire
Lilac	Sere
Liquid gold	Sheen
	Shine
Marble	Shimmering
Milky	Silver
Misty blue	Somber
	Sorrel
Olive	Steel-blue
Opal	
Opalescent	Tawny
Opaline	Topaz
Orange	Turquoise
Pale-blue	Violet
Pallor	Vivid
Pea-green	
Pink	white
Pink-purple	Wine
Purple	wool-white
" -gray	
	Yellow
Radiant	Yellow-green
Red	
Royal Purple	
Ruby	
Russet	
Rusty-red	
Saffron	
Sage-green	

Auditory Terms

Appealing	"Cheep"
	Chime
Bark	Chirp
Bellow	Chuckle
Boom	"Clack"
Bugling challenge	Clapping
Buzz	Crack

Crashing	Sad
Crow	"Shame"
"Cutta"	Shout
	shriek
Drip	shrill
Drum	sighing
	slap
Echo	Snarl
	Snort
"Gra-onk"	Snuffling
Grating	Sob
growl	Soft
	Song
Marsh	Splitting
High-keyed	Squawk
Hissing	Squeak
Monk	Squeal
Howl	
Hum	"Te-chee"
	Tinkle
Jangle	Trill
	Twitter
Laugh	
	Ventriloquistic
Mellow boom	
Moan	Wail
Monotonous	Weird
Mournful	Whinny
Muffled	"Whirr-rr"
Murmur	Whisper
Mutter	whistle
	Whiz
Peal	Whooping
"Pee-ee-oo-on"	Wistful
Piping	
Plash	
Quack	
Rattling	
Raucous	
Reverberating	
Rhythmical	
Ringing	
Roar	
Rushing	
Hustle	

Terms of the Sense of Smell

Aromatic	Fragrant
Acrid	
Bitter-sweet	Raw
	Reeking
Earthy	Sickening
	Sulphurous
Fresh	Sweet
Moist	
Musty	
mist-like	

Topographical Terms used by Garland

Arroya	Hill
	Hollow
Bayou	
Bluff	Island
Bog	
Brook	Knoll
Butte	
	Lagoon
Canon	Lake
Cliff	Ledge
"Coolly"	
<u>Coulee</u>	Marsh
Crag	Mesa
Creek	Moraine
	Mountain
Divide	" range
Flat	Peak
Foot-hill	Plain
	Plateau
Glacier	Pond
Gorge	
Gulch	Ravine
Gulf	Ridge
Gully	River
	"Run"

Sand dune
Savannah
Shore
"Sloo"
Slough
Swale
Swell

Valley

Water-fall
Water-shed .

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INDEX

- Aberdeen, South Dakota, 111
Air, 71-74
" , mountain, 73-74
Alaska, 28, 116
Animals, domestic, 19-39
" , wild, 41-60
Aspen, The, 10-11
Autumn, 98-100
- Badger, 42-43
Birds, 50-60
Blackbird, The, 58
Blacksnake, The, 46
Blizzard, 87-90
Blue Jay, The (verse), 57
Bluejoint, 17
Bobolink, The, 58
Boston, 2
Boy Life on the Prairie, 8, 9, 13, 14, 15, 21,
23, 30, 31, 34, 35, 36, 37, 38, 41, 43, 45,
46, 47, 53, 54, 56, 59, 64, 74, 77, 83, 87,
90, 95, 98, 99, 101, 116, 118
- Broncho, The, 23
Brown County, South Dakota, 2 (footnote)
Buffalo, The, 49-50
Buckley River, The, 116
Burro, The, 30
Burroughs, John, 127
Buttes, 114
- Calves, 33-34
Canada, 28, 37, 59
Canadian Rockies, 124
Captain of the Gray-Horse Troop, The, 112
Cather, Miss Willa, 127

- Cattle, 30-34
 Cayuse, The, 24-25
 Chicago, The four winds of, 79
 Chinch bug, The, 48-49
 Clouds, 62-70
 Clover, 17
Color in the Wheat (verse), 14
Coming Rain on the Prairie (verse), 85
 Corn, 15
 ", husking, 16-17, 99-100
 Cottonwood, The, 10
 Coyote, The, 42
 Crane, The, 54, 55
 Cricket, The, 47
 Cripple Creek, Colorado, 122
 Crow, The, 58
Crumbling Idols, 3, 4
- Dakota, 2, 98, 112, 126
 Dakota, South, 65, 78, 91, 101, 110
Daughter of the Middle Border, A, 5, 29, 49, 58,
 79, 81, 115, 119, 121, 122, 124, 127
 Dawn, The, 103-104
 Dog, The, 34-37
 Dove, Mourning, 58
 Ducks, wild, 54
- Eagle's Heart, The, 24, 90, 113, 122
 Elm, The, 9-10
- Farm Life, Influence on Garland's nature
 attitude, 5-6, 126
Forester's Daughter, The, 11, 66, 106, 120, 121
- Garland, Richard, 1
 Geese, wild, 53
 "Gopher", gray, 43-44
 ", striped, 43-44, 45
 Grand Canon of the Colorado, The, 124
 Grasshoppers, 47
 Guinea-hen, The, 39
 Gulls, 59
- Hanover, Kansas, 81
 Hawk, The, 58
 Hazel shrub, The, 12
 Hen, The, 37
Her Mountain Lover, 30, 42, 68, 120
 Hesper, Minnesota, 1

- Hesper, 32, 67, 73, 75, 123
 Horse, The, 19-30
- Insects, 47-49
 Iowa, 59, 87, 94, 100, 108
- Jay, The, 57
- Kansas, 127
 Killdeer, The, 57
- "Ladrone", 28-29
 Lake Michigan, 79, 117-118
 Lark, The meadow, 56
 " , The prairie, 56
 Little Cedar River, The, 116
 Local color, 3
Long Trail, The, 28
 Lynn, Miss Margaret, 127
- Main-Travelled Roads, 79, 82, 103, 105
 Maple Tree, The, 9
 Meadows, 109-110
Meadow Lark, The, (verse), 56
 Mesas, 113
 "Middle Border", The, 2
 Minnesota, 109
 Mirage, The, 90-91, 111-112
 Mississippi River, The, 115
 Missouri River, The, 115
 Mist, 74-75
Moccasin Ranch, The, 65, 71, 72, 81, 85, 87, 90,
 101, 111
Money Magic, 67, 113
 Montana, 49, 112-113
 Mountain clouds, 66-70
 " dawn, 106
 " forest, 123
 " landscape, 120-124
 " mist, 75-76
 " night-fall, 106-107
 " sunset, 106-107
 " thunder storm, 86
 Mountains, The Big Horn, 68
 " , The Coast Range, 124
 " , The Rocky, 120-124
 Muir, John, 127

- Nature description, Garland's use of, 125-126
 Nebraska, 128
 New England, 2
 Night-fall, 105
 Night-hawk, The, 59

 Oak, The, 6-9
 Oats, wild, 17, 99
 Oklahoma, 79
Ol Pap's Flaxen, 18, 60, 78, 90, 91, 98
 Onalaska, Wisconsin, 1
 Osage, Iowa, 109
 Osage orange, The, 11
Other Main-Travelled Roads, 114

 Plover, The, 58
 Poplar tree, The, 8, 9
 "Popple" tree, The, 8
 Prairie, The, 108-109
 Prairie chickens, 51-52
Prairie Folks, 58, 114

 Rain, 82-83
 Raine, Mr. William MacLeod, 128
 Rattlesnake, The, 45-46
 Red Cedar, The, 11
River, The (verse), 116-117
 Rivers, 115
 Robin, The, 56
 Rooster, The, 37-39
Rose of Dutcher's Coolly, 4, 9, 63, 39, 117, 118

 Seasons, The, 92
 Shrubs, 12
 Skunk, 43
 Sky, The, 74
 "Slippery Elm", The, 10
 "Small grains", The, 12
Son of the Middle Border, A, 2, 8, 13, 17, 18, 20,
 23, 30, 33, 34, 47, 48, 52, 53, 55, 59, 63,
 72, 87, 94, 95, 97, 100, 101, 103, 105, 108,
 109, 110, 115, 127
 Spring, 93-97
 Storm, 82-90
 Stubble field, The, 119
 Sumach, The, 12
 Summer, 97-98
 Sunflower, The, 18

Sunrises, 102-104

Sunsets, 104-106

Then it's Spring (verse), 93

They of the High Trails, 125

Thoreau, 127

Thunder storm, The, 83-87

Timothy, 17

Tornado, The, 85

Trail of the Goldseekers, The, 10, 25, 27, 28,
29, 37, 55, 107, 115, 124

Tree planting, 9

Trees, 8-11

Truth, Garland's doctrine of, 4

Tyranny of the Dark, The, 120

Victor Olnee's Discipline, 10

Vulture, The (verse), 59

Wheat, 12-15

Whooping Crane (verse), 55.

Wild flowers, 17-18

Wind, 76-81

" , Chinook, 77-78

" , foehn, 77

" , simoon, 79

Winter, 100-102

Wisconsin, 46, 82, 108, 114

Wolf, 41-42

Woodpecker, The golden winged, 58

Wyoming, 68