



# My Friend John Burroughs<sup>1</sup>

By HAMLIN GARLAND



JOHN BURROUGHS came of a long line of farmer folk and woodsmen. His grandsire, in 1795, cut his way across the timbered divide into the valley of the Pepacton, and hewed a farm from the mountain-side nearly two thousand feet above tide-water.

It was on these rugged ancestral acres that Johnny Burroughs spent his childhood and youth, taking a hand in all the slow and backbreaking methods of husbandry that the time and the place made necessary. It is a stern land, rocky, timbered, and steep; a man's country and a man's climate. The summers are short, and the winters long and bitter.

The Burroughs homestead faced the east, and hence the most impressive objects in the boy's landscape were the high hills across the valley, peaks which must have seemed like a lofty mountain-chain to his childish eyes. Back of the house stood another, nearer height, dark and forbidding at nightfall, which was part of the farm, a source of fire-wood in winter and of maple-sugar in the spring.

John was one of a numerous family, "mostly boys and girls." It was necessary that all hands should be applied to the task of scraping a living off those stony slopes. Money was scarce, and clothing hard to get; hence it follows that schooling was as thin and scanty as the soil.

In all these limitations John's life

was typical. He drove oxen, carried buckets of sap, hoed potatoes, swung the scythe and the cradle and chopped wood, sharing in all ways the varied tasks of a farmer in the forties. Only for a few weeks in the winter was he allowed to go to school, at first in the little stone school to the north, later in the red school-house of the district to the south. Yet his boyish heart was filled with a growing desire to do something out in the great world, which he glimpsed as he rode to market with his father on a load of wheat, or sensed in some degree in the words of some book or newspaper.

He was a variant from the stock. How this difference between himself and his brothers arose we do not know; it sprang out of the fundamental mystery of personality. It was due to the driving power of what we call "genius," the inexplicable urge which at that same time was filling the heart of William Dean Howells, a barefooted printer's boy standing at his case in a small Ohio town. No matter what John Burroughs's brothers might say, he was as determined to get away from the farm and to do something in the world beside milk cows and pitch manure as he was to learn to spell.

This was due not to a hatred of work in itself, but to a desire for better things, or what the boy considered better things. He was a good worker. He shirked nothing on the farm, but

<sup>1</sup>For some of the dates in this article I am indebted to "John Burroughs Boy and Man," by Dr. Clara Barrus.

he was not content to think of being merely a farmer. He ached for larger action.

There were not many openings for an ambitious youth in the valley at that time. The only congenial employment open to John was that of teaching, and therefore at seventeen he left home to become the master of a school thirty or forty miles away from Roxbury. For nearly ten years he earned his living in this way, now here, now there, though a precarious living it was. The wolf was almost always near at hand, if not actually at the door, his voice heard in the dark of the mountain midnight.

John's real education began when, in his eighteenth year, he took his first ride on the "steam-cars" down to the almost mythical city of New York. In telling about this trip he always made a point of his firm belief that the train started very abruptly, and that it was necessary to safeguard one's hat. The coaches were rude, the seats hard, and the dust was annoying; but it was a noble ride, nevertheless, the first great event in his life.

It is highly significant to record that he spent almost his last dollar at a second-hand book-shop and that he carried that bundle of precious volumes on his back over the final twelve miles of his homeward journey, and did it on an empty stomach, every cent of his money having gone to pay his return fare. As I run over the list of the books he bore that day, I wonder that his back was not broken, for he carried among others, St. Pierre's "Studies of Nature," Locke's "Essay on the Human Understanding," the works of Dr. Johnson, Spurzheim's "Phrenology," and the works of Thomas Dick! Certainly it was a

most heroic load for a hungry youth on a mountain road.

## § 2

Like many another receptive mind at that time, John's first real inspiration came from a reading of Emerson, though, strange to say, the reading was done not in Kingston, but in Chicago and Buffalo Grove, a near-by Illinois town, whereto he had adventured during his nineteenth summer, a romantic excursion quite in keeping with the westward urge of the day.

This glimpse of the West was important in other ways. It gave young Burroughs a concept of the prairie, and enabled him to forecast in some degree the marvelous possibilities of the Mississippi Valley. Just how he was able to break away from Delaware County I cannot understand, for he once related to me the story of an uncle who kept his valise all packed under his bed for half a year, vowing every Saturday night that he would start west on Monday. The uncle never succeeded in leaving the valley, but Johnny Burroughs, a youngster and engaged to be married, moved by an impulse to explore new fields, managed somehow to migrate.

Even in John's case it was only an excursion, for notwithstanding his success as a teacher, and despite the library and his new-made friends in Buffalo Grove, something drew him back to his native valley to renew the struggle to make a living. Perhaps he was recalled by his love for Ursula North, though I like to imagine that he was drawn by something which no mere person, however attractive, could counteract or misdirect. Whatever the motive, whether homesickness or a promise to Ursula, this much is cer-

tain: he returned to Roxbury and remained on the old homestead till the day of his marriage, which occurred just before his twenty-first birthday.

Hardly more than a boy, with only his pay as a teacher or a farm laborer on which to maintain a household, his life problem was further complicated by his steadfast desire to write. In fact, he had already begun to compose essays, somewhat in the manner of Emerson, on "Expression," "Revolutions," "Progress," and other grandly abstract subjects, papers which had little value except as practice for his pen and consolation for his hours of loneliness.

The years lying between 1857 and 1863 were years of struggle, filled with poverty, doubt, and discouragement, almost with despair. At the urging of his ambitious young wife he tried to get into something more lucrative than teaching, but failed. He read medicine, and gave it up; he tried without success to write acceptable articles; and, worst of all, he ceased to make progress in any direction. "Seemingly all I could do, except till the earth, was to teach, and this inability to earn a respectable living disturbed my ambitious young wife, who resented the pity of her former classmates."

It was at this period of disheartenment that he wrote his noble poem "Waiting," which seems now to have been the expression of a subconscious conviction that somehow, sometime, his own would come to him. Yet the poem, when printed, had no perceptible effect on his fortunes. No one spoke of it; nothing came of it.

June, 1863, was another notable month in his calendar, for it was then that he met Emerson on the parade-ground at West Point, and also began

the reading of a series of books that changed his whole outlook on life, awakened in him a new and definite ambition, and filled him with glowing enthusiasm. Of these books he says, "I was teaching at the time in the little town of Highland Falls, a few miles below West Point, and it was in the library at the academy that I chanced upon Audubon's monumental volumes 'The Birds of America.'"

He had already reached James Russell Lowell and "The Atlantic Monthly" with an essay on "Expression," a piece of writing which seemed almost too good to be the work of a country school-teacher; nevertheless, it had been accepted and was about to be published. Burroughs himself, however, perceived its imitative quality. "It was to rid myself of the Emerson style," he said, "that I had turned my attention to back-country themes—themes which were native to me."

In the midst of this resolve to tramp the woods and fields, the contact of his mind with the work of Audubon was of enormous importance in his development. As he has himself declared in print: "It was like bringing fire to tow. I was ripe for adventure. I was in a good bird country. How eagerly and joyously I took up the study! It turned my enthusiasm into a new channel. It gave my walks a new delight. It made me look upon every grove and wood as a new storehouse of possible treasure."

To his love of back-country habits and customs and people he now added a keen desire to know the birds and to write of them. In this way the John Burroughs whom the world was to honor came into being. He had entered upon his distinctive field of literature, for even in this he was the

writer first; the naturalist was only secondary.

This was in the midst of the Civil War, however, and for a time he could make only desultory studies. Uneasy and distraught, he could write on no subject but the war. He had a guilty sense of shirking, and so to his friend Allen, just after the disastrous Battle of Chicamauga, he wrote:

"I am thinking of enlisting. I want to do something. I am not content to stay here and teach school or farm."

Allen in reply stated the other side of the case.

"God forbid that I should throw a straw in the way of patriotism now. Our country needs sacrifices, but I don't see that the demand is such that you need to enlist. . . . What you would sacrifice would be immense. I need not tell you that your after life will depend very much on the way in which the next three or four years are spent, toward your development."<sup>1</sup>

The sickness of his wife soon after this time brought upon Burroughs the threefold rôle of nurse, housekeeper, and teacher, and his plan for enlisting was, as he stated, "knocked in the head." He gave up for the summer all hope of going to war, and it was not till October that he found himself in Washington on his way to enlist.

Here again fate led him in the right direction, for it was not long before he came into comradeship with Walt Whitman, whose influence on him was immediate and fundamental. Furthermore, distance lent enchantment to his native landscape, permitted him to view it in perspective. He saw its hills and streams through a haze of homesickness, a longing which put an aureole around every hill and tree.

At a desk in the Treasury Department, in which he became a guard, he began to write. "While facing the blank side of a big iron door I wrote 'Wake Robin' and other of my sketches," he once said to me.

In the cramping space and half-light of that gloomy place in Washington he dreamed of the radiant valley of the Pepacton, and heard the foxes squall around the dark summit of Old Clump. In imagination he saw the flights of birds along the Delaware. In the silence of his granite corridor he kept the clock of the seasons. Slowly, tenderly, he began to write the pages which were in effect his longings for the open air and the sun. Even when he spoke of this to me long afterward his voice took on a tender droop.

"I seized every opportunity to get into the woods. Every holiday, every Sunday, found me wandering about the hills of Rock Creek. I was like a prisoner paroled for the day. That is how I came to miss hearing Lincoln on the occasion of his second inaugural. I wanted to make the most of my day off."

Despite this keen delight in nature, notwithstanding his daily writing about birds and flowers and streams, his first book was controversial and not at all a treatise on outdoors. It was a book on Whitman, "Poet and Person." That this writing took precedence of "Wake Robin" was due to his love of Walt and his desire to defend him from the storm of denunciation which had followed the republication of "Leaves of Grass." John was a loyal friend, and could not sit silent when his high priest of the open road was being maligned.

Emerson, Audubon, Whitman—

<sup>1</sup>From "John Burroughs Boy and Man," by Dr. Clara Barrus.

these were the great teachers who each in a special way profoundly instructed the farmer from the Catskills, and of the three it is hard to say which one most influenced him. He was thirty years old at this time, a stocky, bright-eyed, brown-bearded man of quiet manner and rustic speech.

For nearly ten years he made his home in Washington, breaking his exile, however, by frequent returns to his native hills in summer-time. In the course of his duties as treasury guard he went to England with a shipment of government bonds, a mission which enabled him to meet some English men of letters and to make some valuable observations on English country life and landscape, though all the while his love for his native hills was intensified. To his friend Benton he wrote: "I feel like a fowl with no gravel in its gizzard. I am hungry for the earth; I could eat it like a horse," expressions which only a farmer could use or fully understand. At last, in the spring of 1873, he resigned his job in Washington and returned to the Hudson River Valley.

In the effort to satisfy his craving for the soil he purchased nine acres of land on the west bank of the Hudson midway between Newburg and Kingston, and there in the autumn of the same year of leaving Washington he set about building his permanent home. Having been appointed federal bank examiner for the region roundabout, he was able for several years to combine his love of the soil and his planting with an official position which yielded him a living while his trees and vines were coming to fruitage.

His wanderings had ceased. He had found his home—a home which satis-

fied him. Within easy reach of the Roxbury homestead, in the midst of a wonderfully populous bird country, he began the work which was evidently adapted to his hand. Busy and contented, he developed his vineyard, and put forth book after book of intimate studies of flower, bird, and field. "Winter Sunshine," and "Pepacton" followed, and in magazines and newspapers his strong and characteristic name became increasingly familiar.

"My life was not dependent on the sale of my books," he explained. "I made my vineyard pay. In some years I raised as many as forty tons of grapes." He said this with pride and some humor, as if it took more skill to make the vineyard pay than it did to write his books.

### § 3

Although I began to read Burroughs in the late seventies, I cannot be quite sure of our first meeting. I am inclined to think that it was in 1889.

It could not have been long after this that I met Burroughs at a New York club. He was a brown-bearded man just beginning to go gray, or so he seems to me as I strive to recall him. He seemed smaller than I and a little stooped, but he moved alertly, and spoke with quiet authority on many subjects. I liked him at once and I think that I, perhaps, interested him as an output of the prairie; anyhow, our correspondence continued. His letters were all in his own hand and usually in faded ink, as if he had let the bottle freeze, which, as I afterward came to know, was the fact.

For six years we met infrequently in New York City, never at "Riverby," as he called his place at West Park; but in 1895, when I was about to go



to West Point in pursuit of material for a life of Grant, I wrote him that I was coming, and he replied as follows:

West Park, Dec. 8, 1895.

Dear Garland: I am not tramping much now-a-days—I am building a retreat on some wild land I have purchased—a big stone chimney I am building with my own hands. It is great fun.

On the day after Christmas he wrote again:

I hope you can come this way, and spend at least a day with me. I cannot promise to keep you overnight, matters in the kitchen are so uncertain, but we can have a pleasant day together, and if things are at their worst, we can take our dinner over in Whitman Land. [By this he meant Slabsides.] I have taken my dinner there every day for a week—except Xmas—and have relished it immensely. The chimney of my hermitage is done, and we are putting on the slabs. Do come.

This letter is especially valuable, for it settles just when Slabsides was built, and it tells also something of the disturbing conditions at Riverby that made Slabsides a refuge.

It is no secret that in the judgment of his own family, as well as in that of his wife, writing was a foolish waste of time. His skill as a vineyardist had their unqualified respect, but to knock off tying up grapes in order to put down some observation concerning a bird or a chipmunk was ridiculous and productive of nothing but laughter on the part of the neighbors, one of whom is reported to have said, "Why all these people come around here to see old John Burroughs I can't see."

It was in self-defense against such folks that he built Slabsides in the thick forest one mile west of Riverby.

There he received Whitman, Muir, and many others of his nature-loving friends. He had few "society" contacts.

In externals he was very much the farmer; only when he put his pen to paper did he show his power and his precision as a writer. He was never witty and seldom humorous in conversation. His discourse was homely, mellow with rustic common sense, or penetrating with the wisdom of the natural philosopher who was also the man of wide and careful reading.

In speech he was almost the direct antithesis of Howells, for Howells spoke, as he wrote, with exquisite precision and with rare humor. They were good friends, but widely separated in their ways of life. Howells loved nature and birds not for their scientific interest, but for their human association, while Burroughs cared very little for fiction of any kind. Each meant a great deal to me during those years, and I was able to share in some degree the enthusiasms of the naturalist without losing my interest in the fictionist.

#### § 4

In 1900, when I first brought my wife to New York City, Burroughs was quick to call upon us, and as the years passed, my children came to the point of knowing "Oom John," whose long white hair and beard made him delightfully venerable to them, a kind of Santa Claus. He was not given to fondling children,—I am not sure that he ever took mine in his arms,—but there was something in his voice and eyes that won them. He never pressed his affection upon them even after they were old enough to know that he was a kind of household saint at our fireside.

Once on his way to California he brought Mrs. Burroughs to dinner at my Chicago house, a notable visit, for it presented them both in holiday mood. They made a charming old-fashioned couple, she in shining black silk, he in rough-and-ready homespun, his halo of hair and beard and his noble head reminding me of Whitman.

He talked of John Muir, whom he expected to see again in California, and told of Muir's visit to him at Slabsides. "He's a great man and a good man, and I like him," he explained, "but he is a wearisome man to have around. If you say 'two and two make four,' he is sure to retort: 'Aye, Johnny, but two and three make five. Now, how is that Johnny?' He always has something of his own to offer. He always holds the floor. He is interesting, but along about two in the morning he gets tiresome. He talks well, much better than he writes, but there is a limit to my powers of endurance. I am exhausted when he leaves me."

Roosevelt was another bond of sympathy between Burroughs and me, and always when we met we discussed him. "Roosevelt knows what he is talking about when he touches on birds and animals," Burroughs often said, and he was especially emphatic about this after one of their excursions into Virginia. "He taught me two new birds, while I taught him only one," he explained gleefully.

The President treated him with a mingled love and admiration, which was highly pleasing. "I felt like a personage with Roosevelt," he confessed, with an expression of humorous self-analysis in his voice. "It was like living near the center of some kind of national disturbance; and yet Roose-

velt was never hurried or worried himself. He had an immense capacity for thinking in the midst of a crowd."

Once when some one was urging him to write his life, Burroughs said, "My life is not worth writing about; nothing ever happened to me." In a certain sense this was true, for his adventures were mostly internal; but he made things happen to several other people in 1903, when he wrote his celebrated article in opposition to romantic natural history—an article which brought Roosevelt to his aid with his caustic phrase "Nature-faking." Between them they made stormy weather for all careless or designedly "popular" animal historians. Nature-fakers soon took their rightful places in the minds of readers. To John Burroughs this was an event.

In this I had a part. Although in no sense a naturalist, I had grown up in the woods of Wisconsin and on the prairies of Iowa, and I had trailed in the Rocky Mountains enough to know something of its animal life; hence I was interested, and when my friends Ernest Thompson-Seton and Charles G. D. Roberts were involved, I was moved to take a hand. I had followed Seton's career from the beginning and I had read Roberts's stories with admiration. I knew Seton's careful methods of work, I had seen his notebooks, and I could testify that his tales were based upon accurate notes and drawings in the field.

For these reasons I wrote to Burroughs in defense of Seton, and when I met him I went into detail on the subject.

"Seton is a story-teller, I admit, but his stories are based on careful observation," I stated in conclusion.

Burroughs was reasonable.

"I like Seton and I like his stories, but I do not like them when issued as natural history," he replied. "The two forms of writing should be carefully separated. I did n't mean to include him or Roberts in my diatribe. They are both good men of the woods."

This gave me a friendly report to carry to Seton, and it happened that I was present when Burroughs made personal amends. It was at a dinner at Andrew Carnegie's house. Seton and I entered the reception-room together. Almost the first man we saw was Burroughs, who was in conversation with Hamilton Wright Mabie. I confess to being a bit apprehensive, for the fight on nature-faking was at its hottest, and all the papers were taking a somewhat malicious delight in repeating that Burroughs had "flayed" Seton.

Seton did the manly thing. Walking straight up to Uncle John, he offered his hand as if nothing had happened to mar their friendship, and Burroughs grasped it in the spirit in which it was offered, saying: "I did n't intend to bring you into my indictment, Seton. I was so mad at the fakers that my bile slopped over on some of my friends."

While this explanation was going on, others of the men in the room were smilingly regarding it in the light of a reconciliation, and so indeed it was. For the rest of the evening we three kept in close association. If I am not mistaken, Seton asked to be seated beside Burroughs at the table.

To my way of thinking there remained a fundamental difference between Burroughs and the younger men of that day. He refused to admit, and later in his published conclusions

in "Ways of Nature" continued to minimize, the wide differences which arise between individual members of the same species, whereas Roberts and Seton and other observers made much of such "animal heroes."

On this question Burroughs sometimes found Roosevelt inclined to side with the story-tellers, and in my own discussions with him I called to his mind the amazing individuality in a litter of pigs, for example.

"There is always a bully who cuffs the others, a clown who 'cuts up,' and a meek little tit-man who whines of being cheated," I said. "As children we always recognized these differences and gave them names accordingly. Puppies and kittens vary in the same amusing way; so do ground-squirrels. Now, Seton and Roberts fix their eyes on the doings of these differing or exceptional creatures, while you are inclined to ignore the individual in the light of the general characteristics of a species. Furthermore, your use of 'instinct' is pretty inclusive."

"Perhaps I *do* work instinct pretty hard," he replied thoughtfully.

He was not a mystic. He had small regard for the vague or sentimental or speculative in philosophy. Neither was he prosaic. On the contrary, there is a lasting charm in his books, though they are never rhapsodic. He keeps his feet on the ground. "There is little of the moralist or preacher in me, but a good deal of the philosopher, the investigator," he says in one of his books.

As he grew in years he drew to himself a very large audience of young students who were able to follow him, repeat his discoveries, and verify his deductions for themselves. Burroughs's material was near at hand,



homely, and accessible, and his expression clear and definite; hence his ever-widening audience of school-children and amateur naturalists. Inevitably, his books became texts for review in classes, and as a result he became the most venerated figure in our present-day group of writers, a veneration toward which Roosevelt undoubtedly contributed by means of his outspoken words of praise and his warm personal friendship. Slabsides and the Bark Study became shrines for an increasing number of pilgrims.

In 1909 John added a third and still more appealing workshop to his list. In a letter to me, written about 1910, he says:

I am back on the old farm at Roxbury, swinging a scythe over the very ground I helped to mow when a boy sixty years ago. I am in an old house on the farm my father owned, but it is not the home in which I was born. I call the cottage Woodchuck Lodge. Come and see me when you can.

This I promised to do, but it was not till 1917, after I had become a resident of the Catskills myself, that I was able to follow his trail and find his den.

One day in my camp in Onteora, in response to a timid rap, I opened my door to find a fair-haired young fellow, a stranger to me, standing on my threshold.

"John Burroughs is out here," he announced. "He has come to visit you."

Glancing toward the roadway, I saw "Oom John" engaged in manœvering a snorting, sputtering, protesting "flivver" into a position of repose on the steep slope of my front yard. He looked like an up-to-date Santa Claus as with a smile of pride he shut off his engine.

## § 5

This was the beginning of many neighborly interchanges, for Roxbury was only two hours' ride down the Schoharie valley, and a lovely ride we found it to be when we returned John's call a few weeks later. "Keep down the valley to Grand Gorge," he wrote, "then turn to the left for several miles. Just before you come into Roxbury cross the railway-track to the west, and climb the hill till you come to a small stone cottage. Leave this on your right hand and keep on angling up the slope till you come to a small farm-house with a front porch littered with books and woodchuck skins. That will be Woodchuck Lodge."

With this luminous description we could not go wrong. We made all the turns, angled the hill, and came at last to the cottage with the porch and the litter of books and woodchuck skins, and in the midst of it sat the white-haired old philosopher in a brown sweater, a rough shirt, and gray trousers.

It was a very humble cottage, without a particle of charm except in its view, which afforded a noble sweep of the valley far below and the high range of hills on the eastern horizon.

"That is the valley of the Delaware," John explained. "Pepacton is its Indian name—a name which I revived, though it is really the east fork of the Delaware. I 've come back to the scenes of my boyhood."

He spoke of the lack of beauty or picturesque quality in the place.

"It is just a poor little farm-house," he admitted. "I 've done nothing to it but add the porch."

It was in truth an ugly place. Its furniture and its wall-paper, its wood-

work and its doors, were all indicative of the poverty of the man who had built it, but it expressed John's indifference to esthetic considerations. He liked to be comfortable, but had so little care about being "artistic" that he made no change in the decoration of the rooms. Aside from his books and his collection of wasp-nests, curious rocks, and roots, the rooms offered no special appeal.

Aside from his noble head and his white cloud of hair John was himself as plain as the house. His baggy trousers, his moosehide shoes, his faded sweater, and his rustic speech fitted in with the bare walls and stark simplicity of his home. It was difficult to relate him to the beauty and dignity of his books.

To many people he was a naturalist, a writer upon birds. To me he was above all else an essayist, a stylist of singular clarity and precision and beauty. The porch was a library as well as study. Here as elsewhere he was surrounded by books, and his files were filled with letters from poets and philosophers. It was his habit to read as it was his habit to observe.

He was not a linguist, as Howells was, for he knew no language except English, but he read widely in translations, especially in books on natural phenomena. His interest in contemporary events remained keen, a fact made evident to me by the presence on this hillside of the New York papers. He cared very little about painting or music or the stage, but his interest in philosophy, poetry, science, and descriptive prose was insatiate. Even here, on his porch, were some of the most recent philosophical books.

Near by stood the old barn from whose doorway he had made the

studies for several of his later books, and in the driveway was a rude table, made of several boards nailed to the top of a dry-goods box, on which he had done the actual writing of many chapters. Sitting at this table, with a pen in his hand and a pair of field-glasses within reach, he was accustomed to observe and write for long hours. On this box he had written some of his most penetrating studies of the psychology of birds and small animals. It remains to say that he did not tell me of this; he was much more interested in showing me a hidden bird's nest or in calling to my attention the delicately etched form of a fern which he had discovered in the heart of a rock "millions of years old." There was very little of literary pretension in Burroughs.

## § 6

The lodge is high above Roxbury, and Roxbury itself is off the direct line of travel; and yet all day long at frequent intervals motor-cars climbed the hill in order that their passengers might catch a fleeting glimpse of the farmer-poet. He was not permitted to be lonely, and for the most part he was glad of this homage, at least when it appeared to be genuine.

"On Sundays visitors come in processions," he explained, "people of the Western States going East, and people from New England going West. Most of them tell me that they learned to read my books in the schools."

There were usually children in these motoring parties, especially those which came from near-by points. To see him moving about the yard or in the midst of the meadow with a group of youngsters following him, looking up at him, and listening while he

talked of a bee, which he picked from a flower as if it were a berry, or of a little lizard, which he held in his hollowed palm, was to enjoy a charming picture of age and innocence.

Although a man of solitary habit of thought, he was notably gregarious. He loved his kind, especially in his later years, and was catholic in his loves—almost too much so for some of us who had not his capacity for shutting up and going off into Brahmanic meditation in the presence of bores. The throngs around him exhibited an extraordinary mixture: Vassar students, amiable frumps, aspiring young naturalists, poets, men of letters, Whitmanites, mystics, all kinds and conditions of men and women except those who are more interested in saying a smart thing than a true thing. He had no patience with such folk. In truth the highly sophisticated man or woman found nothing worth while in Burroughs. He was neither witty nor comic nor suggestive in his talk. He knew little and cared nothing for the activities of either the smart intellectual set or the smart social set.

While he was not a man of much humor, he could tell things which reflected on his own conceit with comic effect. His account of his experiences while learning to run his motor-car were amusing, and so were his confessions of social blundering; but for the most part he was a serious and rather taciturn companion.

In order to make my reader feel the kind of man he was, I must repeat myself. The gulf between the philosopher with his pen in his hand and the plain, homely old farmer who met you and talked with you in the road or on the porch was enormous. John Burroughs the man of letters was master,

not merely of his subject, but of the English language; Uncle John, as he sat by my fire, was kindly, serious, rather negative, often a little remote; a countryman, interested in birds, the weather, the neighbors. It was hard for me, long as I had known him, to realize the immense range of his reading and the ground he had covered in his writing. It is only now, as I am rereading his books in their proper order, that I begin to estimate in something like just degree, the depth, and patience of his marvelous intellectual discipline.

The clarity, the quiet authority of his statements on geology and chemistry, as well as his judgments on poetry, displayed the mind of a man who dwelt in seclusion, with power to meditate and to put into beautiful and precise phrase the results of his meditation. He was in this journalistic age of ours, but not of it. With his pen in hand he had an amazing power of vivid description. Many of his pages are as perfect in their form as poems; some of them *are* poems.

In his later years he loved company. To have people attentive to him was a joy; and yet at times admirers became a burden. One Sunday afternoon when I knocked at the door, it was opened by Dr. Clara Barrus, who first exclaimed a greeting, then called to Burroughs in the back room.

"It 's some one you know, Uncle John. It 's Hamlin Garland." Going into the kitchen, I found Uncle John in hiding, "worn out with people," as he confessed.

It ended in my inviting him over to my home in Onteora.

"You shall have a rest," I assured him. "We will have no one in. You shall see no one but my own family."

This promise we kept. Only one or two of our most intimate friends knew of his coming, but at the end of the second day he said with a hesitating note in his voice:

"Are n't you going to have anybody call? I'd like to see White and Mrs. Black and young Brown."

We understood. He wanted to be quiet, but not *too* quiet. That night we had a "party," and Uncle John was happy.

He was not a "joiner." He belonged to no clubs or societies except in an honorary capacity. He was of no value in organization. His tendency was to flock alone. He attended few dinners and never acquired the lecture habit. In the later years of his life, however, he learned to make speeches.

"And I did it pretty well," he remarked to me, with a laugh in his voice. "I did n't know I could stand up and talk to a thousand people, but I did. I got so I enjoyed it."

Last summer his friend Frank Seaman of Yama Farms, in consideration, as he supposed, for Burroughs's comfort, arranged to have him housed at a lovely cottage on a lake six or eight miles above the inn.

"Nobody will disturb you up there," Seaman said. "You can hunt birds or write without distraction or interruption."

Burroughs was curiously unresponsive to this arrangement, and went in a mood which was not at all enthusiastic. He stayed one day or possibly two. "I want to go back to the inn," he announced. "I don't like it up here; it's too lonesome."

This was amusing to some of his friends, but to me it had its sober side. It was as if the old man realized that

he was about to enter that solitary cell for which there is no key, and the thought of the dark silence made him avid for human companionship.

He could philosophize on death,—he often did so with me,—but I could see that he was loath to leave the sunshine and the trees and the purple hills of the good earth he knew so well.

"I should like to live three years more. I want to finish the books I have in hand. I know I ought not to expect that much, but I am hoping to see them all in final shape."

## § 7

The last night he spent at my fire-side was especially beautiful. With only the flaming logs for light we sat about the hearth and sang old songs, and then a young girl, one of my daughter's friends, played the violin from a dusky corner of the room, while Uncle John, a majestic figure, sat like some old saint, the radiance of the chimney creating about his head a nimbus of gold-colored light. That he was deeply affected was evident to us, although he said little, and when he went away next day, I had no expectancy of ever having him the center of our circle again.

Like most old people, he dreaded each returning winter, and to escape the imprisonment of it he had made it a point to go to Florida or Bermuda or California for at least three months, and it was on his return journey in March of this year that he suddenly fell into his long sleep on the train.

He had planned to celebrate with friends his approaching birthday, but it was otherwise ordered. The eighty-fourth anniversary of his coming into this life marked his reëntrance into the soil from which he sprang.



## This Little Pig Went to Market

By SYDNEY GREENBIE

Drawings by JOHN R. NEILL



THE basket was growing heavier and heavier, and his stomach weaker and weaker. How to convert his burden into a meal was a problem, written as large upon his face as the delight in the bargains he was making shone in the face of the marketeer beside him. He was a young chap just emerging from boyhood. He had been employed by this restaurant-keeper because he said he needed a meal. It was not to be a real job. He was to get his meal all right, but not till he earned it by going with the boss to market and carrying his basket for him.

The basket was soon full to overflowing, and the young man bearing it was nigh exhaustion. They were now going home. At the corner of the open square that Brussels had assigned to its garden-truck venders the old man stopped to buy a rose. He disputed

the price with the flower-girl, obtained a reduction, and went on. "I always bring my wife a rose from market," he remarked in semi-soliloquy, and they disappeared, the young fellow with his burden, the old man with his rose.

Thus does the European little pig go to market, and he 's the most civilized little pig in the world. He has been learning to market for hundreds of years, and that most essential of social functions is the progenitor of communal life. The way in which it is performed is a test of the civilization of a people.

The first democrats and artists of Europe, the Greeks, knew this, and made the agora a market-place, a focus of public art, and the scene of their political gatherings. Wretched, indeed, was the little pig that stayed home when the agora was convoked, for he it was whom the Greeks had