

***HARRIET BEECHER
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ALCOTT, NORA
PERRY, ANDREW
LANG, GEORGE
ELIOT***



***THANKSGIVING
TALES***

**Harriet Beecher Stowe, Louisa May Alcott,
Nora Perry**

Thanksgiving Tales

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An Old-Fashioned Thanksgiving (Louisa May Alcott)

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CHAPTER I.

GENEALOGY AND PARENTAGE.

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TO LOUISA MAY ALCOTT.

BY HER FATHER.

When I remember with what buoyant
heart,
 Midst war's alarms and woes of civil
strife,
In youthful eagerness thou didst depart,
 At peril of thy safety, peace, and life,
To nurse the wounded soldier, swathe the
dead,-
 How piercèd soon by fever's poisoned
dart,
And brought unconscious home, with
wildered head,
 Thou ever since 'mid langour and dull
pain,
To conquer fortune, cherish kindred dear,
 Hast with grave studies vexed a
sprightly brain,
In myriad households kindled love and
cheer,
 Ne'er from thyself by Fame's loud trump
beguiled,
Sounding in this and the farther
hemisphere,-

I press thee to my heart as Duty's
faithful child.

LOUISA ALCOTT was the second child of Amos Bronson and Abba May Alcott. This name was spelled Alcocke in English history. About 1616 a coat-of-arms was granted to Thomas Alcocke of Silbertoft, in the county of Leicester. The device represents three cocks, emblematic of watchfulness; and the motto is *Semper Vigilans*.

The first of the name appearing in English history is John Alcocke of Beverley, Yorkshire, of whom Fuller gives an account in his *Worthies of England*.

Thomas and George Alcocke were the first of the name among the settlers in New England. The name is frequently found in the records of Dorchester and Roxbury, and has passed through successive changes to its present form.

The name of Bronson came from Mr. Alcott's maternal grandfather, the sturdy Capt. Amos Bronson of Plymouth, Conn. "His ancestors on both sides had been substantial people of respectable position in England, and were connected with the founders and governors of the chief New England colonies. At the time of Mr. Alcott's birth they had become simple farmers, reaping a scanty living from their small farms in Connecticut."

Amos Bronson Alcott, the father of Louisa, was born Nov. 29, 1799, at the foot of Spindle Hill, in the region called New Connecticut. He has himself given in simple verse the story of his quaint rustic life in his boyhood, and Louisa has reproduced it in her story of "Eli's Education" (in the *Spinning-Wheel Stories*), which gives a very true account of his youthful life and adventures. He derived his refined, gentle nature from his mother, who had faith in her son, and

who lived to see him the accomplished scholar he had vowed to become in his boyhood. Although brought up in these rustic surroundings, his manners were always those of a true gentleman. The name of the little mountain town afterward became Wolcott, and Louisa records in her journal a pilgrimage made thither in after years.

Louisa Alcott's mother was a daughter of Col. Joseph May of Boston. This family is so well known that it is hardly necessary to repeat its genealogy here. She was a sister of Samuel J. May, for many years pastor of the Unitarian church at Syracuse, who was so tenderly beloved by men of all religious persuasions in his home, and so widely known and respected for his courage and zeal in the Antislavery cause, as well as for his many philanthropic labors.

Mrs. Alcott's mother was Dorothy Sewall, a descendant of that family already distinguished in the annals of the Massachusetts colony, and which has lost nothing of its reputation for ability and virtue in its latest representatives.

Mrs. Alcott inherited in large measure the traits which distinguished her family. She was a woman of large stature, fine physique, and overflowing life. Her temper was as quick and warm as her affections, but she was full of broad unselfish generosity. Her untiring energies were constantly employed, not only for the benefit of her family, but for all around her. She had a fine mind, and if she did not have large opportunities for scholastic instruction, she always enjoyed the benefit of intellectual society and converse with noble minds. She loved expression in writing, and her letters are full of wit and humor, keen criticism, and noble moral sentiments. Marriage with an idealist, who had no means of support, brought her many trials and privations. She bore them heroically, never wavering in affection for her husband or in devotion to her children. If the quick, impatient temper

sometimes relieved itself in hasty speech, the action was always large and unselfish.

It will be apparent from Louisa's life that she inherited the traits of both her parents, and that the uncommon powers of mind and heart that distinguished her were not accidental, but the accumulated result of the lives of generations of strong and noble men and women.

She was well born.

Mr. Alcott to Colonel May.

GERMANTOWN, Nov. 29,
1832.

DEAR SIR,-It is with great pleasure that I announce to you the *birth of a second daughter*. She was born at half-past 12 this morning, on my birthday (33), and is a very fine healthful child, much more so than Anna was at birth,-has a fine foundation for health and energy of character. Abba is very comfortable, and will soon be restored to the discharge of those domestic and maternal duties in which she takes so much delight, and in the performance of which she furnishes so excellent a model for imitation. Those only who have seen her in those relations, much as there is in her general character to admire and esteem, can form a true estimate of her personal worth and uncommon devotion of heart. She was formed for domestic sentiment rather than the gaze and heartlessness of what is falsely called "society." Abba inclines to call the babe *Louisa May*,-a name to her full of every association connected with amiable benevolence and exalted worth. I hope its *present possessor* may rise to

equal attainment, and deserve a place in the estimation of society.

With Abba's and Anna's and Louisa's regards, allow me to assure you of the sincerity with which I am

Yours,
A. BRONSON ALCOTT.

The children who lived to maturity were-

ANNA BRONSON ALCOTT,
LOUISA MAY ALCOTT,
ELIZABETH SEWALL ALCOTT,
ABBA MAY ALCOTT.

CHAPTER II.

CHILDHOOD.

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TO THE FIRST ROBIN.

Welcome, welcome, little stranger,
Fear no harm, and fear no danger;
We are glad to see you here,
For you sing "Sweet Spring is near."

Now the white snow melts away;
Now the flowers blossom gay:
Come dear bird and build your nest,
For we love our robin best.

LOUISA MAY ALCOTT.
CONCORD.

MR. ALCOTT had removed to Germantown, Penn, to take charge of a school, and here Louisa was born, Nov. 29, 1832. She was the second daughter, and was welcomed with the same pride and affection as her elder sister had been. We have this pleasant little glimpse of her when she was hardly a month old, from the pen of one of her mother's friends. Even at that extremely early age love saw the signs of more than usual intelligence, and friends as well as fond parents looked forward to a promising career.

Extract from a Letter by Miss Donaldson.

GERMANTOWN, PENN., Dec.
16, 1832.

I have a dear little pet in Mrs. Alcott's little Louisa. It is the prettiest, best little thing in the world. You will wonder to hear me call anything so young pretty, but it is really so in an uncommon degree; it has a fair complexion, dark bright eyes, long dark hair, a high forehead, and altogether a countenance of more than usual intelligence.

The mother is such a delightful woman that it is a cordial to my heart whenever I go to see her. I went in to see her for a few moments the evening we received your letter, and I think I never saw her in better spirits; and truly, if goodness and integrity can insure felicity, she deserves to be happy.

The earliest anecdote remembered of Louisa is this: When the family went from Philadelphia to Boston by steamer, the two little girls were nicely dressed in clean nankeen frocks for the voyage; but they had not been long on board before the lively Louisa was missing, and after a long search she was brought up from the engine-room, where her eager curiosity had carried her, and where she was having a beautiful time, with "plenty of dirt."

The family removed to Boston in 1834, and Mr. Alcott opened his famous school in Masonic Temple. Louisa was too young to attend the school except as an occasional visitor; but she found plenty of interest and amusement for herself in playing on the Common, making friends with every child she met, and on one occasion falling into the Frog Pond. She has given a very lively picture of this period of her life in "Poppy's Pranks," that vivacious young person being a picture of herself, not at all exaggerated.

The family lived successively in Front Street, Cottage Place, and Beach Street during the six succeeding years in Boston. They occasionally passed some weeks at Scituate during the summer, which the children heartily enjoyed.

Mrs. Hawthorne gives a little anecdote which shows how the child's heart was blossoming in this family sunshine: "One morning in Front Street, at the breakfast table, Louisa suddenly broke silence, with a sunny smile saying, 'I love everybody in *dis* whole world.'"

Two children were born during this residence in Boston. Elizabeth was named for Mr. Alcott's assistant in his school, - Miss E. P. Peabody, since so widely known and beloved by all friends of education. A boy was born only to die. The little body was laid reverently away in the lot of Colonel May in the old burial-ground on the Common, and the children were taught to speak with tenderness of their "baby brother."

When Louisa was about seven years old she made a visit to friends in Providence. Miss C. writes of her: "She is a beautiful little girl to look upon, and I love her affectionate manners. I think she is more like her mother than either of the others." As is usually the case, Louisa's journal, which she began at this early age, speaks more fully of her struggles and difficulties than of the bright, sunny moods which made her attractive. A little letter carefully printed and sent home during this visit is preserved. In it she says she is not happy; and she did have one trying experience there, to which she refers in "My Boys." Seeing some poor children who she thought were hungry, she took food from the house without asking permission, and carried it to them, and was afterward very much astonished and grieved at being reprimanded instead of praised for the deed. Miss C. says: "She has had several spells of feeling sad; but a walk or a talk soon dispels all gloom. She was half moody when

she wrote her letter; but now she is gay as a lark. She loves to play out of doors, and sometimes she is not inclined to stay in when it is unpleasant." In her sketches of "My Boys" she describes two of her companions here, not forgetting the kindness of the one and the mischievousness of the other.

Although the family were quite comfortable during the time of Mr. Alcott's teaching in Boston, yet the children wearied of their extremely simple diet of plain boiled rice without sugar, and graham meal without butter or molasses. An old friend who could not eat the bountiful rations provided for her at the United States Hotel, used to save her piece of pie or cake for the Alcott children. Louisa often took it home to the others in a bandbox which she brought for the purpose.

This friend was absent in Europe many years, and returned to find the name of Louisa Alcott famous. When she met the authoress on the street she was eagerly greeted. "Why, I did not think you would remember me!" said the old lady. "Do you think I shall ever forget that bandbox?" was the instant reply.

In 1840, Mr. Alcott's school having proved unsuccessful, the family removed to Concord, Mass., and took a cottage which is described in "Little Women" as "Meg's first home," although Anna never lived there after her marriage. It was a pleasant house, with a garden full of trees, and best of all a large barn, in which the children could have free range and act out all the plays with which their little heads were teeming. Of course it was a delightful change from the city for the children, and here they passed two very happy years, for they were too young to understand the cares which pressed upon the hearts of their parents. Life was full of interest. One cold morning they found in the garden a

little half-starved bird; and having warmed and fed it, Louisa was inspired to write a pretty poem to "The Robin." The fond mother was so delighted that she said to her, "You will grow up a Shakspeare!" From the lessons of her father she had formed the habit of writing freely, but this is the first recorded instance of her attempting to express her feelings in verse.

From the influences of such parentage as I have described, the family life in which Louisa was brought up became wholly unique.

If the father had to give up his cherished projects of a school modelled after his ideas, he could at least conduct the education of his own children; and he did so with the most tender devotion. Even when they were infants he took a great deal of personal care of them, and loved to put the little ones to bed and use the "children's hour" to instil into their hearts lessons of love and wisdom. He was full of fun too, and would lie on the floor and frolic with them, making compasses of his long legs with which to draw letters and diagrams. No shade of fear mingled with the children's reverent recognition of his superior spiritual life. So their hearts lay open to him, and he was able to help them in their troubles.

He taught them much by writing; and we have many specimens of their lists of words to be spelled, written, and understood. The lessons at Scituate were often in the garden, and their father always drew their attention to Nature and her beautiful forms and meanings. Little symbolical pictures helped to illustrate his lessons, and he sometimes made drawings himself. Here is an example of lessons. A quaint little picture represents one child playing on a harp, another drawing an arrow. It is inscribed-

FOR LOUISA.
1840.

Two passions strong divide our life,-
Meek, gentle love, or boisterous strife.

Below the child playing the harp is-

Love, Music,
Concord.

Below the shooter is-

Anger, Arrow,
Discord.

Another leaflet is-

FOR LOUISA
1840.

Louisa loves-
What?

(Softly.)

Fun.

Have some then,
Father

says.

Christmas Eve, December, 1840.
Concordia.

FOR ANNA.
1840.

Beauty or Duty,-
which
loves Anna best?

A
Question
from her
Father.
Christmas Eve,
December, 1840.
Concordia.

A letter beautifully printed by her father for Louisa (1839) speaks to her of conscience, and she adds to it this note: "L. began early, it seems, to wrestle with her conscience." The children were always required to keep their journals regularly, and although these were open to the inspection of father and mother, they were very frank, and really recorded their struggles and desires. The mother had the habit of writing little notes to the children when she wished to call their attention to any fault or peculiarity. Louisa preserved many of them, headed,-

[*Extracts* from letters from Mother, received during these early years. I preserve them to show the ever tender, watchful help she gave to the child who caused her the most anxiety, yet seemed to be the nearest to her heart till the end.-L. M. A.]

No. 1.-MY DEAR LITTLE GIRL,-Will you accept this doll from me on your seventh birthday? She will be a quiet playmate for my active Louisa for seven years more. Be a kind mamma, and love her for my sake.

YOUR
MOTHER.
BEACH STREET, BOSTON, 1839.

From her Mother.

COTTAGE IN CONCORD.

DEAR DAUGHTER,-Your tenth birthday has arrived. May it be a happy one, and on each returning birthday may you feel new strength and resolution to be gentle with sisters, obedient to parents, loving to every one, and happy in yourself.

I give you the pencil-case I promised, for I have observed that you are fond of writing, and wish to encourage the habit.

Go on trying, dear, and each day it will be easier to be and do good. You must help yourself, for the cause of your little troubles is in yourself; and patience and courage only will make you what mother prays to see you,-her good and happy girl.

CONCORD, 1843.

DEAR LOUY,-I enclose a picture for you which I always liked very much, for I imagined that you might be just such an industrious daughter and I such a feeble but loving mother, looking to your labor for my daily bread.

Keep it for my sake and your own, for you and I always liked to be grouped together.

MOTHER.

The lines I wrote under the picture in my journal:-

TO MOTHER.

I hope that soon, dear mother,
You and I may be
In the quiet room my fancy
Has so often made for thee,-

The pleasant, sunny chamber,
The cushioned easy-chair,

The book laid for your reading,
The vase of flowers fair;

The desk beside the window
Where the sun shines warm and bright:
And there in ease and quiet
The promised book you write;

While I sit close beside you,
Content at last to see
That you can rest, dear mother,
And I can cherish thee.

[The dream came true, and for the last ten years of her life Marmee sat in peace, with every wish granted, even to the "grouping together;" for she died in my arms.-L. M. A.]

A passage in Louisa's story of "Little Men" (p. 268) describes one of their childish plays. They "made believe" their minds were little round rooms in which the soul lived, and in which good or bad things were preserved. This play was never forgotten in after life, and the girls often looked into their little rooms for comfort or guidance in trial or temptation.

Louisa was very fond of animals, as is abundantly shown in her stories. She never had the happiness of owning many pets, except cats, and these were the delight of the household. The children played all manner of plays with them, tended them in sickness, buried them with funeral honors, and Louisa has embalmed their memory in the story of "The Seven Black Cats" in "Aunt Jo's Scrap-Bag."

Dolls were an equal source of pleasure. The imaginative children hardly recognized them as manufactured articles, but endowed them with life and feeling. Louisa put her dolls through every experience of life; they were fed, educated, punished, rewarded, nursed, and even hung and buried, and

then resurrected in her stories. The account of the "Sacrifice of the Dolls" to the exacting Kitty Mouse in "Little Men" delights all children by its mixture of pathetic earnestness and playfulness. It is taken from the experience of another family of children.

Miss Alcott twice says that she never went to any school but her father's; but there were some slight exceptions to this rule. She went a few months to a little district school in Still River Village. This was a genuine old-fashioned school, from which she took the hint of the frolics in "Under the Lilacs." Miss Ford also kept a little school in Mr. Emerson's barn, to which the children went; and Mary Russell had a school, which Louisa attended when eight or nine years old. These circumstances, however, had small influence in her education.

During this period of life in Concord, which was so happy to the children, the mother's heart was full of anxious care. She however entered into all their childish pleasures, and her watchful care over their moral growth is shown by her letters and by Louisa's journals.

The youngest child, Abba May, who was born in the cottage, became the pet of the family and the special care of the oldest sister, Anna.

Louisa's childish journal gives us many hints of this happy life. She revised these journals in later years, adding significant comments which are full of interest. She designed them to have place in her autobiography, which she hoped to write.

From three different sources—her journals, an article written for publication, and a manuscript prepared for a friend,—we give her own account of these childish years. She has not followed the order of events strictly, and it has not been possible, therefore, to avoid all repetition; but they

give the spirit of her early life, and clearly show the kind of education she received from her father and from the circumstances around her.

Sketch of Childhood, by herself.

One of my earliest recollections is of playing with books in my father's study,—building houses and bridges of the big dictionaries and diaries, looking at pictures, pretending to read, and scribbling on blank pages whenever pen or pencil could be found. Many of these first attempts at authorship still remain in Bacon's Essays, Plutarch's Lives, and other works of a serious nature, my infant taste being for solid literature, apparently.

On one occasion we built a high tower round baby Lizzie as she sat playing with her toys on the floor, and being attracted by something out-of-doors, forgot our little prisoner. A search was made, and patient baby at last discovered curled up and fast asleep in her dungeon cell, out of which she emerged so rosy and smiling after her nap that we were forgiven for our carelessness.

Another memory is of my fourth birthday, which was celebrated at my father's school-room in Masonic Temple. All the children were there. I wore a crown of flowers, and stood upon a table to dispense cakes to each child as the procession marched past. By some oversight the cakes fell short, and I saw that if I gave away the last one I should have none. As I was queen of the revel, I felt that I ought to have it, and held on to it tightly till my mother said,—

"It is always better to give away than to keep the nice things; so I know my Louy will not let the little

friend go without."

The little friend received the dear plummy cake, and I a kiss and my first lesson in the sweetness of self-denial,-a lesson which my dear mother beautifully illustrated all her long and noble life.

Running away was one of the delights of my early days; and I still enjoy sudden flights out of the nest to look about this very interesting world, and then go back to report.

On one of these occasions I passed a varied day with some Irish children, who hospitably shared their cold potatoes, salt-fish, and crusts with me as we revelled in the ash-heaps which then adorned the waste lands where the Albany Depot now stands. A trip to the Common cheered the afternoon, but as dusk set in and my friends deserted me, I felt that home was a nice place after all, and tried to find it. I dimly remember watching a lamp-lighter as I sat to rest on some doorsteps in Bedford Street, where a big dog welcomed me so kindly that I fell asleep with my head pillowed on his curly back, and was found there by the town-crier, whom my distracted parents had sent in search of me. His bell and proclamation of the loss of "a little girl, six years old, in a pink frock, white hat, and new green shoes," woke me up, and a small voice answered out of the darkness,-

"Why, dat's me!"

Being with difficulty torn from my four-footed friend, I was carried to the crier's house, and there feasted sumptuously on bread-and-molasses in a tin plate with the alphabet round it. But my fun ended next day when I was tied to the arm of the sofa to repent at leisure.

I became an Abolitionist at a very early age, but have never been able to decide whether I was made so by seeing the portrait of George Thompson hidden

under a bed in our house during the Garrison riot, and going to comfort "the poor man who had been good to the slaves," or because I was saved from drowning in the Frog Pond some years later by a colored boy. However that may be, the conversion was genuine; and my greatest pride is in the fact that I lived to know the brave men and women who did so much for the cause, and that I had a very small share in the war which put an end to a great wrong.

Another recollection of her childhood was of a "contraband" hidden in the oven, which must have made her sense of the horrors of slavery very keen.

I never went to school except to my father or such governesses as from time to time came into the family. Schools then were not what they are now; so we had lessons each morning in the study. And very happy hours they were to us, for my father taught in the wise way which unfolds what lies in the child's nature, as a flower blooms, rather than crammed it, like a Strasburg goose, with more than it could digest. I never liked arithmetic nor grammar, and dodged those branches on all occasions; but reading, writing, composition, history, and geography I enjoyed, as well as the stories read to us with a skill peculiarly his own.

"Pilgrim's Progress," Krummacher's "Parables," Miss Edgeworth, and the best of the dear old fairy tales made the reading hour the pleasantest of our day. On Sundays we had a simple service of Bible stories, hymns, and conversation about the state of our little consciences and the conduct of our childish lives which never will be forgotten.

Walks each morning round the Common while in the city, and long tramps over hill and dale when our

home was in the country, were a part of our education, as well as every sort of housework,-for which I have always been very grateful, since such knowledge makes one independent in these days of domestic tribulation with the "help" who are too often only hindrances.

Needle-work began early, and at ten my skilful sister made a linen shirt beautifully; while at twelve I set up as a doll's dressmaker, with my sign out and wonderful models in my window. All the children employed me, and my turbans were the rage at one time, to the great dismay of the neighbors' hens, who were hotly hunted down, that I might tweak out their downiest feathers to adorn the dolls' headgear.

Active exercise was my delight, from the time when a child of six I drove my hoop round the Common without stopping, to the days when I did my twenty miles in five hours and went to a party in the evening.

I always thought I must have been a deer or a horse in some former state, because it was such a joy to run. No boy could be my friend till I had beaten him in a race, and no girl if she refused to climb trees, leap fences, and be a tomboy.

My wise mother, anxious to give me a strong body to support a lively brain, turned me loose in the country and let me run wild, learning of Nature what no books can teach, and being led,-as those who truly love her seldom fail to be,-

"Through Nature up to Nature's God."

I remember running over the hills just at dawn one summer morning, and pausing to rest in the silent woods, saw, through an arch of trees, the sun rise over

river, hill, and wide green meadows as I never saw it before.

Something born of the lovely hour, a happy mood, and the unfolding aspirations of a child's soul seemed to bring me very near to God; and in the hush of that morning hour I always felt that I "got religion," as the phrase goes. A new and vital sense of His presence, tender and sustaining as a father's arms, came to me then, never to change through forty years of life's vicissitudes, but to grow stronger for the sharp discipline of poverty and pain, sorrow and success.

Those Concord days were the happiest of my life, for we had charming playmates in the little Emersons, Channings, Hawthornes, and Goodwins, with the illustrious parents and their friends to enjoy our pranks and share our excursions.

Plays in the barn were a favorite amusement, and we dramatized the fairy tales in great style. Our giant came tumbling off a loft when Jack cut down the squash-vine running up a ladder to represent the immortal bean. Cinderella rolled away in a vast pumpkin, and a long black pudding was lowered by invisible hands to fasten itself on the nose of the woman who wasted her three wishes.

Pilgrims journeyed over the hill with scrip and staff and cockle-shells in their hats; fairies held their pretty revels among the whispering birches, and strawberry parties in the rustic arbor were honored by poets and philosophers, who fed us on their wit and wisdom while the little maids served more mortal food.

CHAPTER III.

FRUITLANDS.

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MY KINGDOM.

A little kingdom I possess,
Where thoughts and feelings dwell,
And very hard I find the task
Of governing it well;
For passion tempts and troubles me,
A wayward will misleads,
And selfishness its shadow casts
On all my words and deeds.

How can I learn to rule myself,
To be the child I should,
Honest and brave, nor ever tire
Of trying to be good?
How can I keep a sunny soul
To shine along life's way?
How can I tune my little heart
To sweetly sing all day?

Dear Father, help me with the love
That casteth out my fear,
Teach me to lean on thee, and feel
That thou art very near,
That no temptation is unseen,
No childish grief too small,
Since thou, with patience infinite,
Doth soothe and comfort all.

I do not ask for any crown
But that which all may win,
Nor seek to conquer any world
Except the one within.
Be thou my guide until I find,
Led by a tender hand,

Thy happy kingdom in *myself*,
And dare to take command.

IN 1842 Mr. Alcott went to England. His mind was very much exercised at this time with plans for organized social life on a higher plane, and he found like-minded friends in England who gave him sympathy and encouragement. He had for some years advocated a strictly vegetarian diet, to which his family consented from deference to him; consequently the children never tasted meat till they came to maturity. On his return from England he was accompanied by friends who were ready to unite with him in the practical realization of their social theories. Mr. Lane resided for some months in the Alcott family at Concord, and gave instruction to the children. Although he does not appear to have won their hearts, they yet reaped much intellectual advantage from his lessons, as he was an accomplished scholar.

In 1843 this company of enthusiasts secured a farm in the town of Harvard, near Concord, which with trusting hope they named Fruitlands. Mrs. Alcott did not share in all the peculiar ideas of her husband and his friends, but she was so utterly devoted to him that she was ready to help him in carrying out his plans, however little they commended themselves to her better judgment.

She alludes very briefly to the experiment in her diary, for the experience was too bitter to dwell upon. She could not relieve her feelings by bringing out the comic side, as her daughter did. Louisa's account of this colony, as given in her story called "Transcendental Wild Oats," is very close to the facts; and the mingling of pathos and humor, the reverence and ridicule with which she alternately treats the personages and the notions of those engaged in the scheme, make a rich and delightful tale. It was written many

years later, and gives the picture as she looked back upon it, the absurdities coming out in strong relief, while she sees also the grand, misty outlines of the high thoughts so poorly realized. This story was published in the "Independent," Dec. 8, 1873, and may now be found in her collected works ("Silver Pitchers," p. 79).

Fortunately we have also her journal written at the time, which shows what education the experience of this strange life brought to the child of ten or eleven years old.

The following extract from Mr. Emerson proves that this plan of life looked fair and pleasing to his eye, although he was never tempted to join in it. He was evidently not unconscious of the inadequacy of the means adopted to the end proposed, but he rejoiced in any endeavor after high ideal life.

JULY, 8, 1843.

Journal.—The sun and the evening sky do not look calmer than Alcott and his family at Fruitlands. They seemed to have arrived at the fact,—to have got rid of the show, and so to be serene. Their manners and behavior in the house and in the field were those of superior men,—of men at rest. What had they to conceal? What had they to exhibit? And it seemed so high an attainment that I thought—as often before, so now more, because they had a fit home, or the picture was fitly framed—that these men ought to be maintained in their place by the country for its culture.

Young men and young maidens, old men and women, should visit them and be inspired. I think there is as much merit in beautiful manners as in hard work. I will not prejudge them successful. They look well in July; we will see them in December. I know they are better for themselves than as partners. One can

easily see that they have yet to settle several things. Their saying that things are clear, and they sane, does not make them so. If they will in very deed be lovers, and not selfish; if they will serve the town of Harvard, and make their neighbors feel them as benefactors wherever they touch them,-they are as safe as the sun.

Early Diary kept at Fruitlands, 1843.

Ten Years Old.

September 1st.-I rose at five and had my bath. I love cold water! Then we had our singing-lesson with Mr. Lane. After breakfast I washed dishes, and ran on the hill till nine, and had some thoughts,-it was so beautiful up there. Did my lessons,-wrote and spelt and did sums; and Mr. Lane read a story, "The Judicious Father": How a rich girl told a poor girl not to look over the fence at the flowers, and was cross to her because she was unhappy. The father heard her do it, and made the girls change clothes. The poor one was glad to do it, and he told her to keep them. But the rich one was very sad; for she had to wear the old ones a week, and after that she was good to shabby girls. I liked it very much, and I shall be kind to poor people.

Father asked us what was God's noblest work. Anna said *men*, but I said *babies*. Men are often bad; babies never are. We had a long talk, and I felt better after it, and *cleared up*.

We had bread and fruit for dinner. I read and walked and played till supper-time. We sung in the evening. As I went to bed the moon came up very

brightly and looked at me. I felt sad because I have been cross to-day, and did not mind Mother. I cried, and then I felt better, and said that piece from Mrs. Sigourney, "I must not tease my mother." I get to sleep saying poetry,-I know a great deal.

Thursday, 14th.-Mr. Parker Pillsbury came, and we talked about the poor slaves. I had a music lesson with Miss F. I hate her, she is so fussy. I ran in the wind and played be a horse, and had a lovely time in the woods with Anna and Lizzie. We were fairies, and made gowns and paper wings. I "fied" the highest of all. In the evening they talked about travelling. I thought about Father going to England, and said this piece of poetry I found in Byron's poems:-

"When I left thy shores, O Naxos,
Not a tear in sorrow fell;
Not a sigh or faltered accent
Told my bosom's struggling swell."

It rained when I went to bed, and made a pretty noise on the roof.

Sunday, 24th.-Father and Mr. Lane have gone to N. H. to preach. It was very lovely... Anna and I got supper. In the eve I read "Vicar of Wakefield." I was cross to-day, and I cried when I went to bed. I made good resolutions, and felt better in my heart. If I only *kept* all I make, I should be the best girl in the world. But I don't, and so am very bad.

[Poor little sinner! *She says the same at fifty.*-L. M. A.]

October 8th.—When I woke up, the first thought I got was, "It's Mother's birthday: I must be very good." I ran and wished her a happy birthday, and gave her my kiss. After breakfast we gave her our presents. I had a moss cross and a piece of poetry for her.

We did not have any school, and played in the woods and got red leaves. In the evening we danced and sung, and I read a story about "Contentment." I wish I was rich, I was good, and we were all a happy family this day.

Thursday, 12th.—After lessons I ironed. We all went to the barn and husked corn. It was good fun. We worked till eight o'clock and had lamps. Mr. Russell came. Mother and Lizzie are going to Boston. I shall be very lonely without dear little Betty, and no one will be as good to me as mother. I read in Plutarch. I made a verse about sunset:—

Softly doth the sun descend
To his couch behind the hill,
Then, oh, then, I love to sit
On mossy banks beside the rill.

Anna thought it was very fine; but I didn't like it very well.

Friday, Nov. 2nd.—Anna and I did the work. In the evening Mr. Lane asked us, "What is man?" These were our answers: A human being; an animal with a mind; a creature; a body; a soul and a mind. After a long talk we went to bed very tired.

[No wonder, after doing the work and worrying their little wits with such lessons.—L. M. A.]