

BIRDS AND POETS

WITH OTHER PAPERS

BY

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OUR RURAL DIVINITY.

I WONDER that Wilson Flagg did not include the cow among his "Picturesque Animals," for that is where she belongs. She has not the classic beauty of the horse, but in picture-making qualities she is far ahead of him. Her shaggy, loose-jointed body, her irregular, sketchy outlines, like those of the landscape — the hollows and ridges, the slopes and prominences — her tossing horns, her bushy tail, her swinging gait, her tranquil, ruminating habits — all tend to make her an object upon which the artist eye loves to dwell. The artists are forever putting her into pictures too. In rural landscape scenes she is an important feature. Behold her grazing in the pastures and on the hill-sides, or along banks of streams, or ruminating under wide-spreading trees, or standing belly deep in the creek or pond, or lying upon the smooth places in the quiet summer afternoon, the day's grazing done, and waiting to be summoned home to be milked; and again in the twilight lying upon the level summit of the hill, or where the sward is thickest and softest; or in winter a herd of them filing along toward the spring to drink, or being "foddered" from the

stack in the field upon the new snow — surely the cow is a picturesque animal, and all her goings and comings are pleasant to behold.

I looked into Hamerton's clever book on the domestic animals, also expecting to find my divinity duly celebrated, but he passes her by and contemplates the bovine qualities only as they appear in the ox and the bull.

Neither have the poets made much of the cow, but have rather dwelt upon the steer, or the ox yoked to the plow. I recall this touch from Emerson : —

“ The heifer that lows in the upland farm,
Far heard, lows not thine ear to charm.”

But the ear is charmed, nevertheless, especially if it be not too near, and the air be still and dense, or hollow, as the farmer says. And again, if it be spring-time and she task that powerful bellows of hers to its utmost capacity, how round the sound is, and how far it goes over the hills.

The cow has at least four tones or lows. First, there is her alarmed or distressed low, when deprived of her calf, or separated from her mates — her low of affection. Then there is her call of hunger, a petition for food, sometimes full of impatience, or her answer to the farmer's call, full of eagerness. Then there is that peculiar frenzied bawl she utters on smelling blood, which causes every member of the herd to lift its head and hasten to the spot — the native cry of the clan. When she is gored or in great danger she bawls also, but that is different. And

lastly, there is the long, sonorous volley she lets off on the hills or in the yard, or along the highway, and which seems to be expressive of a kind of unrest and vague longing — the longing of the imprisoned Io for her lost identity. She sends her voice forth so that every god on Mount Olympus can hear her plaint. She makes this sound in the morning, especially in the spring, as she goes forth to graze.

One of our rural poets, Myron Benton, whose verse often has the flavor of sweet cream, has written some lines called "Rumination," in which the cow is the principal figure, and with which I am permitted to adorn my theme. The poet first gives his attention to a little brook that "breaks its shallow gossip" at his feet and "drowns the oriole's voice:"—

" But moveth not that wise and ancient cow,
Who chews her juicy cud so languid now
Beneath her favorite elm, whose drooping bough
Lulls all but inward vision, fast asleep:
But still, her tireless tail a pendulum sweep
Mysterious clock-work guides, and some hid pulley
Her drowsy cud, each moment, raises duly.

" Of this great, wondrous world she has seen more
Than you, my little brook, and cropped its store
Of succulent grass on many a mead and lawn;
And strayed to distant uplands in the dawn,
And she has had some dark experience
Of graceless man's ingratitude; and hence
Her ways have not been ways of pleasantness,
Nor all her paths of peace. But her distress
And grief she has lived past; your giddy round
Disturbs her not, for she is learned profound

In deep brahminical philosophy.
She chews the cud of sweetest reverie
Above your wordly prattle, brooklet merry,
Oblivious of all things sublunary."

The cow figures in Grecian mythology, and in the Oriental literature is treated as a sacred animal. "The clouds are cows and the rain milk." I remember what Herodotus says of the Egyptians' worship of heifers and steers; and in the traditions of the Celtic nations the cow is regarded as a divinity. In Norse mythology the milk of the cow Andhumbla afforded nourishment to the Frost giants, and it was she that licked into being and into shape a god, the father of Odin. If anything could lick a god into shape, certainly the cow could do it. You may see her perform this office for young Taurus any spring. She licks him out of the fogs and bewilderments and uncertainties in which he finds himself on first landing upon these shores, and up on to his feet in an incredibly short time. Indeed, that potent tongue of hers can almost make the dead alive any day, and the creative lick of the old Scandinavian mother cow is only a large-lettered rendering of the commonest facts.

The horse belongs to the fiery god Mars. He favors war, and is one of its oldest, most available, and most formidable engines. The steed is clothed with thunder, and smells the battle from afar; but the cattle upon a thousand hills denote that peace and plenty bear sway in the land. The neighing of the horse

is a call to battle ; but the lowing of old Brockleface in the valley brings the golden age again. The savage tribes are never without the horse ; the Scythians are all mounted ; but the cow would tame and humanize them. When the Indians will cultivate the cow, I shall think their civilization fairly begun. Recently, when the horses were sick with the epizootic, and the oxen came to the city and helped to do their work, what an Arcadian air again filled the streets. But the dear old oxen—how awkward and distressed they looked ! Juno wept in the face of every one of them. The horse is a true citizen, and is entirely at home in the paved streets ; but the ox—what a complete embodiment of all rustic and rural things ! Slow, deliberate, thick-skinned, powerful, hulky, ruminating, fragrant-breathed, when he came to town the spirit and suggestion of all Georgics and Bucolics came with him. O citizen, was it only a plodding, unsightly brute that went by ? Was there no chord in your bosom, long silent, that sweetly vibrated at the sight of that patient, Herculean couple ? Did you smell no hay or cropped herbage, see no summer pastures with circles of cool shade, hear no voice of herds among the hills ? They were very likely the only horses your grandfather ever had. Not much trouble to harness and unharness them. Not much vanity on the road in those days. They did all the work on the early pioneer farm. They were the gods whose rude strength first broke the soil. They could live where the moose and the deer could. If there

was no clover or timothy to be had, then the twigs of the basswood and birch would do. Before there were yet fields given up to grass, they found ample pasturage in the woods. Their wide-spreading horns gleamed in the duskiess, and their paths and the paths of the cows became the future roads and highways, or even the streets of great cities.

All the descendants of Odin show a bovine trace, and cherish and cultivate the cow. In Norway she is a great feature. Prof. Boyesen describes what he calls the *Sæter*, the spring migration of the dairy and dairy maids, with all the appurtenances of butter and cheese-making, from the valleys to the distant plains upon the mountains, where the grass keeps fresh and tender till fall. It is the great event of the year in all the rural districts. Nearly the whole family go with the cattle and remain with them. At evening the cows are summoned home with a long horn, called the loor, in the hands of the milk-maid. The whole herd comes winding down the mountain side toward the *Sæter* in obedience to the mellow blast.

What were those old Vikings but thick-hided bulls that delighted in nothing so much as goring each other? And has not the charge of beefiness been brought much nearer home to us than that? But about all the northern races there is something that is kindred to cattle in the best sense — something in their art and literature that is essentially pastoral sweet-breathed, continent, dispassionate, ruminating, wide-eyed, soft-voiced — a charm of kine, the virtue of brutes.

The cow belongs more especially to the northern peoples, to the region of the good, green grass. She is the true *grazing* animal. That broad, smooth, always dewy nose of hers is just the suggestion of green sward. She caresses the grass; she sweeps off the ends of the leaves; she reaps it with the soft sickle of her tongue. She crops close, but she does not bruise or devour the turf like the horse. She is the sward's best friend, and will make it thick and smooth as a carpet.

“ The turfy mountains where live the nibbling sheep ”

are not for her. Her muzzle is too blunt; then she does not *bite* as do the sheep; she has not upper teeth; she *crops*. But on the lower slopes, and margins, and rich bottoms, she is at home. Where the daisy and the buttercup and clover bloom, and where corn will grow, is her proper domain. The agriculture of no country can long thrive without her. Not only a large part of the real, but much of the potential wealth of the land is wrapped up in her.

Then the cow has given us some good words and hints. How could we get along without the parable of the cow that gave a good pail of milk and then kicked it over. One could hardly keep house without it. Or the parable of the cream and the skimmed milk, or of the buttered bread? We know, too, through her aid, what the horns of the dilemma mean, and what comfort there is in the juicy cud of revery.

I have said the cow has not been of much service

to the poets, and yet I remember that Jean Ingelow could hardly have managed her "High Tide" without "Whitefoot" and "Lightfoot" and "Cusha! Cusha! Cusha' calling;" or Trowbridge his "Evening at the Farm," in which the real call of the American farm-boy, of "Co', boss! Co', boss! Co', Co'," makes a very musical refrain.

Tennyson's charming "Milking Song" is another flower of poesy that has sprang up in my divinity's footsteps.

What a variety of individualities a herd of cows presents when you have come to know them all, not only in form and color, but in manners and disposition. Some are timid and awkward, and the butt of the whole herd. Some remind you of deer. Some have an expression in the face like certain persons you have known. A petted and well-fed cow has a benevolent and gracious look; an ill-used and poorly-fed one a pitiful and forlorn look. Some cows have a masculine or ox expression; others are extremely feminine. The latter are the ones for milk. Some cows will kick like a horse; some jump fences like deer. Every herd has its ringleader, its unruly spirit — one that plans all the mischief and leads the rest through the fences into the grain or into the orchard. This one is usually quite different from the master spirit, the "boss of the yard." The latter is generally the most peaceful and law-abiding cow in the lot, and the least bullying and quarrelsome. But she is not to be trifled with; her will is law; the whole

herd give way before her, those that have crossed horns with her, and those that have not, but yielded their allegiance without crossing. I remember such a one among my father's milkers when I was a boy — a slender-horned, deep-shouldered, large-uddered dewlapped old cow that we always put first in the long stable so she could not have a cow on each side of her to forage upon; for the master is yielded to no less in the stanchions than in the yard. She always had the first place anywhere. She had her choice of standing room in the milking yard, and when she wanted to lie down there or in the fields the best and softest spot was hers. When the herd were foddered from the stack or barn, or fed with pumpkins in the fall, she was always first served. Her demeanor was quiet but impressive. She never bullied or gored her mates, but literally ruled them with the breath of her nostrils. If any new-comer or ambitious younger cow, however, chafed under her supremacy, she was ever ready to make good her claims. And with what spirit she would fight when openly challenged! She was a whirlwind of pluck and valor; and not after one defeat or two defeats would she yield the championship. The boss cow, when overcome, seems to brood over her disgrace, and day after day will meet her rival in fierce combat.

A friend of mine, a pastoral philosopher, whom I have consulted in regard to the master cow, thinks it is seldom the case that one rules all the herd, if it number many, but that there is often one that will rule

nearly all. "Curiously enough," he says, "a case like this will often occur: No. 1 will whip No. 2; No. 2 whips No. 3, and No. 3 whips No. 1; so around in a circle. This is not a mistake; it is often the case. I remember," he continued, "we once had feeding out of a large bin in the centre of the yard six oxen who mastered right through in succession from No. 1 to No. 6; *but No. 6 paid off the score by whipping No. 1.* I often watched them when they were all trying to feed out of the box, and of course trying, dog-in-the-manager fashion, each to prevent any other he could. They would often get in the order to do it very systematically, since they could keep rotating about the box till the chain happened to get broken somewhere, when there would be confusion. Their mastership, you know, like that between nations, is constantly changing. But there are always Napoleons who hold their own through many vicissitudes; but the ordinary cow is continually liable to lose her foothold. Some cow she has always despised, and has often sent tossing across the yard at her horns' ends, some pleasant morning will return the compliment and pay off old scores."

But my own observation has been that in herds in which there have been no important changes for several years, the question of might gets pretty well settled, and some one cow becomes the acknowledged ruler.

The bully of the yard is never the master, but usually a second or third rate pusher that never loses

an opportunity to hook those beneath her, or to 'gore the masters if she can get them in a tight place. If such a one can get loose in the stable, she is quite certain to do mischief. She delights to pause in the open bars and turn and keep those at bay behind her till she sees a pair of threatening horns pressing towards her, when she quickly passes on. As one cow masters all, so there is one cow that is mastered by all. These are the two extremes of the herd, the head and the tail. Between them are all grades of authority, with none so poor but hath some poorer to do her reverence.

The cow has evidently come down to us from a wild or semi-wild state; perhaps is a descendant of those wild, shaggy cattle of which a small band is still preserved in some nobleman's park in Scotland. Cuvier seems to have been of this opinion. One of the ways in which her wild instincts still crop out is the disposition she shows in spring to hide her calf—a common practice among the wild herds. Her wild nature would be likely to come to the surface at this crisis if ever; and I have known cows that practiced great secrecy in dropping their calves. As their time approached they grew restless, a wild and excited look was upon them, and if left free, they generally set out for the woods or for some other secluded spot. After the calf is several hours old, and has got upon its feet and had its first meal, the dam by some sign commands it to lie down and remain quiet while she goes forth to feed. If the calf is approached at such

time it plays "possum," assumes to be dead or asleep, till on finding this ruse does not succeed, it mounts to its feet, bleats loudly and fiercely, and charges desperately upon the intruder. But it recovers from this wild scare in a little while, and never shows signs of it again.

The habit of the cow, also, in eating the placenta, looks to me like a vestige of her former wild instincts — the instinct to remove everything that would give the wild beasts a clew or a scent, and so attract them to her helpless young.

How wise and sagacious the cows become that run upon the street, or pick their living along the highway. The mystery of gates and bars is at last solved to them. They ponder over them by night, they lurk about them by day, till they acquire a new sense — till they become *en rapport* with them and know when they are open and unguarded. The garden gate, if it open into the highway at any point, is never out of the mind of these roadsters, or out of their calculations. They calculate upon the chances of its being left open a certain number of times in the season; and if it be but once and only for five minutes, your cabbage and sweet corn suffer. What villager, or countryman either, has not been awakened at night by the squeaking and crunching of those piratical jaws under the window or in the direction of the vegetable patch? I have had the cows, after they had eaten up my garden, break into the stable where my own milcher was tied, and gore her

and devour her meal. Yes, life presents but one absorbing problem to the street cow, and that is how to get into your garden. She catches glimpses of it over the fence or through the pickets, and her imagination or epigastrium is inflamed. When the spot is surrounded by a high board fence, I think I have seen her peeping at the cabbages through a knot-hole. At last she learns to open the gate. It is a great triumph of bovine wit. She does it with her horn or her nose, or may be with her ever ready tongue. I doubt if she has ever yet penetrated the mystery of the newer patent fastenings; but the old-fashioned thumb-latch she can see through, give her time enough.

A large, lank, muley or polled cow used to annoy me in this way when I was a dweller in a certain pastoral city. I more than half suspected she was turned in by some one; so one day I watched. Presently I heard the gate-latch rattle; the gate swung open, and in walked the old buffalo. On seeing me she turned and ran like a horse. I then fastened the gate on the inside and watched again. After long waiting the old cow came quickly round the corner and approached the gate. She lifted the latch with her nose. Then as the gate did not move, she lifted it again and again. Then she gently nudged it. Then, the obtuse gate not taking the hint, she butted it gently, then harder and still harder, till it rattled again. At this juncture I emerged from my hiding place, when the old villain scampered off with great precipitation.

She knew she was trespassing, and she had learned that there were usually some swift penalties attached to this pastime.

I have owned but three cows and loved but one. That was the first one, Chloe, a bright-red, curly-pated, golden-skinned Devonshire cow, that an ocean steamer landed for me upon the banks of the Potomac one bright May Day many clover summers ago. She came from the north, from the pastoral regions of the Catskills, to graze upon the broad commons of the national capital. I was then the fortunate and happy lessee of an old place with an acre of ground attached, almost within the shadow of the dome of the capitol. Behind a high but aged and decrepit board fence I indulged my rural and unclerical tastes. I could look up from my homely tasks and cast a potato almost in the midst of that cataract of marble steps that flows out of the north wing of the patriotic pile. Ah, when that creaking and sagging back gate closed behind me in the evening, I was happy; and when it opened for my egress thence in the morning, I was not happy. Inside that gate was a miniature farm redolent of homely, primitive life, a tumble-down house and stables and implements of agriculture and horticulture, broods of chickens, and growing pumpkins, and a thousand antidotes to the weariness of an artificial life. Outside of it were the marble and iron palaces, the paved and blistering streets, and the high, vacant mahogany desk of a government clerk. In that ancient inclosure I took an earth bath twice a day. I

planted myself as deep in the soil as I could to restore the normal tone and freshness of my system, impaired by the above mentioned government mahogany. I have found there is nothing like the earth to draw the various social distempers out of one. The blue devils take flight at once if they see you mean to bury them and make compost of them. Emerson intimates that the scholar had better not try to have two gardens ; but I could never spend an hour hoeing up dock and red-root and twitch grass without in some way getting rid of many weeds and fungus, unwholesome growths that a petty, in-doors life was forever fostering in my own moral and intellectual nature.

But the finishing touch was not given till Chloe came. She was the jewel for which this homely setting waited. My agriculture had some object then. The old gate never opened with such alacrity as when she paused before it. How we waited for her coming! Should I send Drewer, the colored patriarch, for her? No ; the master of the house himself should receive Juno at the capital.

“One cask for you,” said the clerk, referring to the steamer bill of lading.

“Then I hope it’s a cask of milk,” I said. “I expected a cow.”

“One cask it says here.”

“Well, let’s see it ; I’ll warrant it has horns and is tied by a rope ;” which proved to be the case, for there stood the only object that bore my name, chewing its cud, on the forward deck. How she liked the

voyage I could not find out ; but she seemed to relish so much the feeling of solid ground beneath her feet once more that she led me a lively step all the way home. She cut capers in front of the White House, and tried twice to wind me up in the rope as we passed the Treasury. She kicked up her heels on the broad avenue and became very coltish as she came under the walls of the Capitol. But that night the long-vacant stall in the old stable was filled, and the next morning the coffee had met with a change of heart. I had to go out twice with the lantern and survey my treasure before I went to bed. Did she not come from the delectable mountains, and did I not have a sort of filial regard for her as toward my foster mother ?

This was during the Arcadian age at the capital, before the easy-going southern ways had gone out and the prim new northern ways had come in, and when the domestic animals were treated with distinguished consideration and granted the freedom of the city. There was a charm of cattle in the streets and upon the commons : goats cropped your rose-bushes through the pickets, and nooned upon your front porch, and pigs dreamed Arcadian dreams under your garden fence or languidly frescoed it with pigments from the nearest pool. It was a time of peace ; it was the poor man's golden age. Your cow, or your goat, or your pig led a vagrant, wandering life, and picked up a subsistence wherever they could, like the bees, which was almost everywhere. Your cow went forth

in the morning and came home fraught with milk at night, and you never troubled yourself where she went or how far she roamed.

Chloe took very naturally to this kind of life. At first I had to go with her a few times and pilot her to the nearest commons, and then left her to her own wit, which never failed her. What adventures she had, what acquaintances she made, how far she wandered, I never knew. I never came across her in my walks or rambles. Indeed, on several occasions I thought I would look her up and see her feeding in national pastures, but I never could find her. There were plenty of cows, but they were all strangers. But punctually, between four and five o'clock in the afternoon, her white horns would be seen tossing above the gate and her impatient low be heard. Sometimes, when I turned her forth in the morning, she would pause and apparently consider which way she would go. Should she go toward Kendall Green to-day, or follow the Tiber, or over by the Big Spring, or out around Lincoln Hospital? She seldom reached a conclusion till she had stretched forth her neck and blown a blast on her trumpet that awoke the echoes in the very lantern on the dome of the Capitol. Then, after one or two licks, she would disappear around the corner. Later in the season, when the grass was parched or poor on the commons, and the corn and cabbage tempting in the garden, Chloe was loath to depart in the morning, and her deliberations were longer than ever, and very often I had to aid her in coming to a decision.

For two summers she was a well-spring of pleasure and profit in my farm of one acre, when in an evil moment I resolved to part with her and try another. In an evil moment I say, for from that time my luck in cattle left me. The goddess never forgave me the execution of that rash and cruel resolve.

The day is indelibly stamped on my memory when I exposed my Chloe for sale in the public market-place. It was in November, a bright, dreamy, Indian summer day. A sadness oppressed me, not unmixed with guilt and remorse. An old Irish woman came to the market also with her pets to sell, a sow and five pigs, and took up a position next me. We consoled with each other; we bewailed the fate of our darlings together; we berated in chorus the white-aproned but blood-stained fraternity who prowled about us. When she went away for a moment I minded the pigs, and when I strolled about she minded my cow. How shy the innocent beast was of those carnal market-men. How she would shrink away from them. When they put out a hand to feel her condition she would "scrooch" down her back, or bend this way or that, as if the hand were a branding iron. So long as I stood by her head she felt safe — deluded creature — and chewed the cud of sweet content; but the moment I left her side she seemed filled with apprehension, and followed me with her eyes, lowing softly and entreatingly till I returned.

At last the money was counted out for her, and her

rope surrendered to the hand of another. How that last look of alarm and incredulity, which I caught as I turned for a parting glance, went to my heart!

Her stall was soon filled, or partly filled, and this time with a native—a specimen of what may be called the cornstalk breed of Virginia: a slender, furtive, long-gear'd heifer just verging on cowhood, that in spite of my best efforts would wear a pinched and hungry look. She evidently inherited a humped back. It was a family trait, and evidence of the purity of her blood. For the native blooded cow of Virginia, from shivering over half rations of corn stalks, in the open air, during those bleak and windy winters, and roaming over those parched fields in summer, has come to have some marked features. For one thing, her pedal extremities seemed lengthened; for another, her udder does not impede her traveling; for a third, her backbone inclines strongly to the curve; then, she despiseth hay. This last is a sure test. Offer a thorough-bred Virginia cow hay, and she will laugh in your face; but rattle the husks or shucks, and she knows you to be her friend.

The new comer even declined corn meal at first. She eyed it furtively, then sniffed it suspiciously, but finally discovered that it bore some relation to her native "shucks," when she fell to eagerly.

I cherish the memory of this cow, however, as the most affectionate brute I ever knew. Being deprived of her calf, she transferred her affections to her master, and would fain have made a calf of him, lowing

in the most piteous and inconsolable manner when he was out of her sight, hardly forgetting her grief long enough to eat her meal, and entirely neglecting her beloved husks. Often in the middle of the night she would set up that sonorous lamentation and continue it till sleep was chased from every eye in the household. This generally had the effect of bringing the object of her affection before her, but in a mood anything but filial or comforting. Still, at such times a kick seemed a comfort to her, and she would gladly have kissed the rod that was the instrument of my midnight wrath.

But her tender star was destined soon to a fatal eclipse. Being tied with too long a rope on one occasion during my temporary absence, she got her head into the meal-barrel, and stopped not till she had devoured nearly half a bushel of dry meal. The singularly placid and benevolent look that beamed from the meal-besmeared face when I discovered her was something to be remembered. For the first time also her spinal column came near assuming a horizontal line.

But the grist proved too much for her frail mill, and her demise took place on the third day, not of course without some attempt to relieve her on my part. I gave her, as is usual in such emergencies, everything I "could think of," and everything my neighbors could think of, besides some fearful prescriptions which I obtained from a German veterinary surgeon, but to no purpose. I imagined her poor

maw distended and inflamed with the baking sodden mass which no physic could penetrate or enliven.

Thus ended my second venture in live stock. My third, which followed sharp upon the heels of this disaster, was scarcely more of a success. This time I led to the altar a buffalo cow, as they call the "muley" down South — a large, spotted, creamy-skinned cow, with a fine udder, that I persuaded a Jew drover to part with for ninety dollars. "Pag like a dish rack (rag)," said he, pointing to her udder after she had been milked. "You vill come pack and gif me the udder ten tollar" (for he had demanded an even hundred), he continued, "after you have had her a gouple of days." True, I felt like returning to him after a "gouple of days," but not to pay the other ten dollars. The cow proved to be as blind as a bat, though capable of counterfeiting the act of seeing to perfection. For did she not lift up her head and follow with her eyes a dog that scaled the fence and ran through the other end of the lot, and the next moment dash my hopes thus raised by trying to walk over a locust tree thirty feet high? And when I set the bucket before her containing her first mess of meal, she missed it by several inches, and her nose brought up against the ground. Was it a kind of far-sightedness and near blindness? That was it, I think; she had genius, but not talent; she could see the man in the moon, but was quite oblivious to the man immediately in her front. Her eyes were telescopic and required a long range.

As long as I kept her in the stall, or confined to the inclosure, this strange eclipse of her sight was of little consequence. But when spring came, and it was time for her to go forth and seek her livelihood in the city's waste places, I was embarrassed. Into what remote corners or into what *terra incognita* might she not wander! There was little doubt but she would drift around home in the course of the summer, or perhaps as often as every week or two; but could she be trusted to find her way back every night? Perhaps she could be taught. Perhaps her other senses were acute enough to in a measure compensate her for her defective vision. So I gave her lessons in the topography of the country. I led her forth to graze for a few hours each day and led her home again. Then I left her to come home alone, which feat she accomplished very encouragingly. She came feeling her way along, stepping very high, but apparently a most diligent and interested sight-seer. But she was not sure of the right house when she got to it, though she stared at it very hard.

Again I turned her forth, and again she came back, her telescopic eyes apparently of some service to her. On the third day there was a fierce thunder-storm late in the afternoon, and old buffalo did not come home. It had evidently scattered and bewildered what little wit she had. Being barely able to navigate those streets on a calm day, what could she be expected to do in a tempest?

After the storm had passed, and near sundown, I set

out in quest of her, but could get no clew. I heard that two cows had been struck by lightning about a mile out on the commons. My conscience instantly told me that one of them was mine. It would be a fit closing of the third act of this pastoral drama. Thitherward I bent my steps, and there upon the smooth plain I beheld the scorched and swollen forms of two cows slain by thunderbolts, but neither of them had ever been mine.

The next day I continued the search, and the next, and the next. Finally I hoisted an umbrella over my head, for the weather had become hot, and set out deliberately and systematically to explore every foot of open common on Capitol hill. I tramped many miles, and found every man's cow but my own — some twelve or fifteen hundred, I should think. I saw many vagrant boys and Irish and colored women, nearly all of whom had seen a buffalo cow that very day that answered exactly to my description, but in such diverse and widely separate places that I knew it was no cow of mine. And it was astonishing how many times I was myself deceived; how many rumps or heads, or line backs or white flanks I saw peeping over knolls or from behind fences or other objects that could belong to no cow but mine!

Finally I gave up the search, concluded the cow had been stolen, and advertised her, offering a reward. But days passed, and no tidings were obtained. Hope began to burn pretty low — was indeed on the

point of going out altogether, when one afternoon, as I was strolling over the commons (for in my walks I still hovered about the scenes of my lost milcher), I saw the rump of a cow, over a grassy knoll, that looked familiar. Coming nearer, the beast lifted up her head; and, behold! it was she! only a few squares from home, where doubtless she had been most of the time. I had overshot the mark in my search. I had ransacked the far-off, and had neglected the near-at-hand, as we are so apt to do. But she was ruined as a milcher, and her history thenceforward was brief and touching!