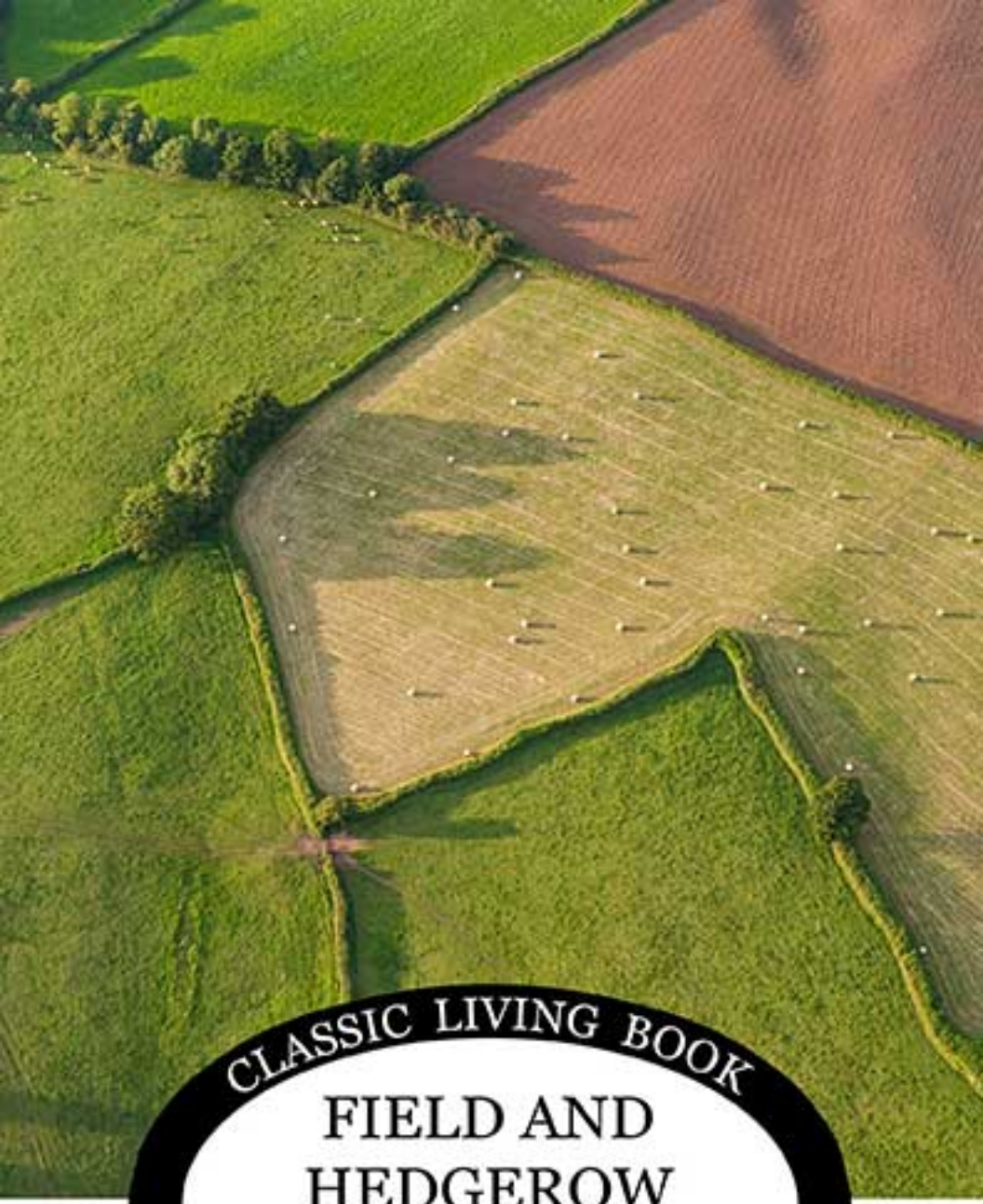

CLASSIC LIVING BOOK

FIELD AND HEDGEROW

Richard Jefferies

COMPLETE AND UNABRIDGED

Field and Hedgerow

BEING

THE LAST ESSAYS OF

Richard Jefferies

This edition published 2021
by Living Book Press

First published in 1900.

ISBN: 978-1-922619-77-8 (softcover)

A catalogue record for this
book is available from the
National Library of Australia

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HOURS OF SPRING.

It is sweet on awaking in the early morn to listen to the small bird singing on the tree. No sound of voice or flute is like to the bird's song; there is something in it distinct and separate from all other notes. The throat of woman gives forth a more perfect music, and the organ is the glory of man's soul. The bird upon the tree utters the meaning of the wind—a voice of the grass and wild flower, words of the green leaf; they speak through that slender tone. Sweetness of dew and rifts of sunshine, the dark hawthorn touched with breadths of open bud, the odour of the air, the colour of the daffodil—all that is delicious and beloved of spring-time are expressed in his song. Genius is nature, and his lay, like the sap in the bough from which he sings, rises without thought. Nor is it necessary that it should be a song; a few short notes in the sharp spring morning are sufficient to stir the heart. But yesterday the least of them all came to a bough by my window, and in his call I heard the sweet-briar wind rushing over the young grass. Refulgent fall the golden rays of the sun; a minute only, the clouds cover him and the hedge is dark. The bloom of the gorse is shut like a book; but it is there—a few hours of warmth and the covers will fall open. The meadow is bare, but in a little while the heart-shaped celandine leaves will come in their accustomed place. On the pollard willows the long wands are yellow-ruddy in the passing gleam of sunshine, the first colour of spring appears in their bark. The delicious wind rushes among them and they bow and rise; it touches the top of the dark pine that looks in the sun the same now as in summer; it lifts and swings the arching trail of bramble; it dries and crumbles the earth in its fingers; the hedge-sparrow's feathers are fluttered as he sings on the bush.

I wonder to myself how they can all get on without me—how they manage, bird and flower, without me to keep the calendar for them. For I noted it so carefully and lovingly, day by day, the seed-leaves on the mounds in the sheltered places that come so early, the pushing up of the young grass, the succulent dandelion, the coltsfoot on the heavy, thick clods, the trodden chickweed despised at the foot of the gate-post, so common and small, and yet so dear to me. Every blade of grass was mine, as though I had planted it separately. They were all my pets, as the roses the lover of his garden tends so faithfully. All the grasses of the meadow were my pets, I loved them all; and perhaps that was why I never had a 'pet,' never cultivated a flower, never kept a caged bird, or any creature. Why keep pets when every wild free hawk that passed overhead in the air was mine? I joyed in his swift, careless flight, in the throw of his pinions, in his rush over the elms and miles of woodland; it was happiness to see his unchecked life. What more beautiful than the sweep and curve of his going through the azure sky? These were my pets, and all the grass. Under the wind it seemed to dry and become grey, and the starlings running to and fro on the surface that did not sink now stood high above it and were larger. The dust that drifted along blessed it and it grew. Day by day a change; always a note to make. The moss drying on the tree trunks, dog's-mercury stirring under the ash-poles, bird's-claw buds of beech lengthening; books upon books to be filled with these things. I cannot think how they manage without me.

To-day through the window-pane I see a lark high up against the grey cloud, and hear his song. I cannot walk about and arrange with the buds and gorse-bloom; how does he know it is the time for him to sing? Without my book and pencil and observing eye, how does he understand that the hour has come? To sing high in the air, to chase his mate over the low stone wall of the ploughed field, to battle with his high-crested rival, to balance himself on his trembling wings outspread a few yards above the earth, and utter that sweet little loving kiss, as it were, of song—oh, happy, happy days! So beautiful to watch as if he were my own, and I felt it all!

It is years since I went out amongst them in the old fields, and saw them in the green corn; they must be dead, dear little things, by now. Without me to tell him, how does this lark to-day that I hear through the window know it is his hour?

The green hawthorn buds prophesy on the hedge; the reed pushes up in the moist earth like a spear thrust through a shield; the eggs of the starling are laid in the knot-hole of the pollard elm—common eggs, but within each a speck that is not to be found in the cut diamond of two hundred carats—the dot of protoplasm, the atom of life. There was one row of pollards where they always began laying first. With a big stick in his beak the rook is blown aside like a loose feather in the wind; he knows his building-time from the fathers of his house—hereditary knowledge handed down in settled course: but the stray things of the hedge, how do they know? The great blackbird has planted his nest by the ash-stole, open to every one's view, without a bough to conceal it and not a leaf on the ash—nothing but the moss on the lower end of the branches. He does not seek cunningly for concealment. I think of the drift of time, and I see the apple bloom coming and the blue veronica in the grass. A thousand thousand buds and leaves and flowers and blades of grass, things to note day by day, increasing so rapidly that no pencil can put them down and no book hold them, not even to number them—and how to write the thoughts they give? All these without me—how can they manage without me?

For they were so much to me, I had come to feel that I was as much in return to them. The old, old error: I love the earth, therefore the earth loves me—I am her child—I am Man, the favoured of all creatures. I am the centre, and all for me was made.

In time past, strong of foot, I walked gaily up the noble hill that leads to Beachy Head from Eastbourne, joying greatly in the sun and the wind. Every step crumbled up numbers of minute grey shells, empty and dry, that crunched under foot like hoar-frost or fragile beads. They were very pretty; it was a shame to crush them—such vases as no king's pottery could make. They lay by millions in the depths of the sward, and I thought as I broke them unwillingly that

each of these had once been a house of life. A living creature dwelt in each and felt the joy of existence, and was to itself all in all—as if the great sun over the hill shone for it, and the width of the earth under was for it, and the grass and plants put on purpose for it. They were dead, the whole race of them, and these their skeletons were as dust under my feet. Nature sets no value upon life neither of minute hill-snail nor of human being.

I thought myself so much to the earliest leaf and the first meadow orchis—so important that I should note the first zee-zee of the titlark—that I should pronounce it summer, because now the oaks were green; I must not miss a day nor an hour in the fields lest something should escape me. How beautiful the droop of the great brome-grass by the wood! But to-day I have to listen to the lark's song—not out of doors with him, but through the window-pane, and the bullfinch carries the rootlet fibre to his nest without me. They manage without me very well; they know their times and seasons—not only the civilised rooks, with their libraries of knowledge in their old nests of reference, but the stray things of the hedge and the chiffchaff from over sea in the ash wood. They go on without me. Orchis flower and cowslip—I cannot number them all—I hear, as it were, the patter of their feet—flower and bud and the beautiful clouds that go over, with the sweet rush of rain and burst of sun glory among the leafy trees. They go on, and I am no more than the least of the empty shells that strewed the sward of the hill. Nature sets no value upon life, neither of mine nor of the larks that sang years ago. The earth is all in all to me, but I am nothing to the earth: it is bitter to know this before you are dead. These delicious violets are sweet for themselves; they were not shaped and coloured and gifted with that exquisite proportion and adjustment of odour and hue for me. High up against the grey cloud I hear the lark through the window singing, and each note falls into my heart like a knife.

Now this to me speaks as the roll of thunder that cannot be denied—you must hear it; and how can you shut your ears to what this lark sings, this violet tells, this little grey shell writes in the

curl of its spire? The bitter truth that human life is no more to the universe than that of the unnoticed hill-snail in the grass should make us think more and more highly of ourselves as human—as men—living things that think. We must look to ourselves to help ourselves. We must think ourselves into an earthly immortality. By day and by night, by years and by centuries, still striving, studying, searching to find that which shall enable us to live a fuller life upon the earth—to have a wider grasp upon its violets and loveliness, a deeper draught of the sweet-briar wind. Because my heart beats feebly to-day, my trickling pulse scarcely notating the passing of the time, so much the more do I hope that those to come in future years may see wider and enjoy fuller than I have done; and so much the more gladly would I do all that I could to enlarge the life that shall be then. There is no hope on the old lines—they are dead, like the empty shells; from the sweet delicious violets think out fresh petals of thought and colours, as it were, of soul.

Never was such a worshipper of earth. The commonest pebble, dusty and marked with the stain of the ground, seems to me so wonderful; my mind works round it till it becomes the sun and centre of a system of thought and feeling. Sometimes moving aside the tufts of grass with careless fingers while resting on the sward, I found these little pebble-stones loose in the crumbly earth among the rootlets. Then, brought out from the shadow, the sunlight shone and glistened on the particles of sand that adhered to it. Particles adhered to my skin—thousands of years between finger and thumb, these atoms of quartz, and sunlight shining all that time, and flowers blooming and life glowing in all, myriads of living things, from the cold still limpet on the rock to the burning, throbbing heart of man. Sometimes I found them among the sand of the heath, the sea of golden brown surging up yellow billows six feet high about me, where the dry lizard hid, or basked, of kin, too, to old time. Or the rush of the sea wave brought them to me, wet and gleaming, up from the depths of what unknown Past? where they nestled in the root crevices of trees forgotten before Egypt. The living mind opposite the dead pebble—did you ever consider the strange and

wonderful problem there? Only the thickness of the skin of the hand between them. The chief use of matter is to demonstrate to us the existence of the soul. The pebble-stone tells me I am a soul because I am not that that touches the nerves of my hand. We are distinctly two, utterly separate, and shall never come together. The little pebble and the great sun overhead—millions of miles away: yet is the great sun no more distinct and apart than this which I can touch. Dull-surfaced matter, like a polished mirror, reflects back thought to thought's self within.

I listened to the sweet-briar wind this morning; but for weeks and weeks the stark black oaks stood straight out of the snow as masts of ships with furled sails frozen and ice-bound in the haven of the deep valley. Each was visible to the foot, set in the white slope, made individual in the wood by the brilliance of the background. Never was such a long winter. For fully two months they stood in the snow in black armour of iron bark unshaken, the front rank of the forest army that would not yield to the northern invader. Snow in broad flakes, snow in semi-flakes, snow raining down in frozen specks, whirling and twisting in fury, ice raining in small shot of frost, howling, sleeting, groaning; the ground like iron, the sky black and faintly yellow—brutal colours of despotism—heaven striking with clenched fist. When at last the general surface cleared, still there remained the trenches and traverses of the enemy, his ramparts drifted high, and his roads marked with snow. The black firs on the ridge stood out against the frozen clouds, still and hard; the slopes of leafless larches seemed withered and brown; the distant plain far down gloomy with the same dull yellowish blackness. At a height of seven hundred feet the air was sharp as a scythe—a rude barbarian giant wind knocking at the walls of the house with a vast club, so that we crept sideways even to the windows to look out upon the world. There was everything to repel—the cold, the frost, the hardness, the snow, dark sky and ground, leaflessness; the very furze chilled and all benumbed. Yet the forest was still beautiful. There was no day that we did not, all of us, glance out at it and admire it, and say something about it. Harder and harder grew the

frost, yet still the forest-clad hills possessed a something that drew the mind open to their largeness and grandeur. Earth is always beautiful—always. Without colour, or leaf, or sunshine, or song of bird and flutter of butterfly's wing; without anything sensuous, without advantage or gilding of summer—the power is ever there. Or shall we not say that the desire of the mind is ever there, and *will* satisfy itself, in a measure at least, even with the barren wild? The heart from the moment of its first beat instinctively longs for the beautiful; the means we possess to gratify it are limited—we are always trying to find the statue in the rude block. Out of the vast block of the earth the mind endeavours to carve itself loveliness, nobility, and grandeur. We strive for the right and the true: it is circumstance that thrusts wrong upon us.

One morning a labouring man came to the door with a spade, and asked if he could dig the garden, or try to, at the risk of breaking the tool in the ground. He was starving; he had had no work for two months; it was just six months, he said, since the first frost started the winter. Nature and the earth and the gods did not trouble about *him*, you see; he might grub the rock-frost ground with his hands if he chose—the yellowish black sky did not care. Nothing for man! The only good he found was in his fellow-men; they fed him after a fashion—still they fed him. There was no good in anything else. Another aged man came once a week regularly; white as the snow through which he walked. In summer he worked; since the winter began he had had no employment, but supported himself by going round to the farms in rotation. They all gave him a trifle—bread and cheese, a penny, a slice of meat—something; and so he lived, and slept the whole of that time in outhouses wherever he could. He had no home of any kind. Why did he not go into the workhouse? 'I be afeared if I goes in there they'll put me with the rough uns, and very likely I should get some of my clothes stole.' Rather than go into the workhouse he would totter round in the face of the blasts that might cover his weak old limbs with drift. There was a sense of dignity and manhood left still; his clothes were worn, but clean and decent; he was no companion of rogues; the snow

and frost, the straw of the outhouses, was better than that. He was struggling against age, against nature, against circumstance; the entire weight of society, law, and order pressed upon him to force him to lose his self-respect and liberty. He would rather risk his life in the snowdrift. Nature, earth, and the gods did not help him; sun and stars, where were they? He knocked at the doors of the farms and found good in man only—not in Law or Order, but in individual man alone.

The bitter north wind drives even the wild fieldfare to the berries in the garden hedge; so it drives stray human creatures to the door. A third came—an old gipsy woman—still stout and hearty, with green fresh brooms to sell. We bought some brooms—one of them was left on the kitchen floor, and the tame rabbit nibbled it; it proved to be heather. The true broom is as green and succulent in appearance in January as June. She would see the 'missis.' 'Bless you, my good lady, it be weather, bean't it? I hopes you'll never know what it be to want, my good lady. Ah, well, you looks good-tempered if you don't want to buy nothing. Do you see if you can't find me an old body, now, for my girl—now do'ee try; she's confined in a tent on the common—nothing but one of our tents, my good lady—that's true—and she's doing jest about well' (with briskness and an air of triumph), 'that she is! She's got twins, you see, my lady, but she's all right, and as well as can be. She wants to get up; and she says to me, "Mother, do'ee try and get me a body; 'tis hard to lie here abed and be well enough to get up, and be obliged to stay here because I've got nothing but a bedgown." For you see, my good lady, we managed pretty well with the first baby; but the second bothered us, and we cut up all the bits of things we could find, and there she ain't got nothing to put on. Do'ee see if 'ee can't find her an old body.' The common is an open piece of furze and heath at the verge of the forest; and here, in a tent just large enough to creep in, the gipsy woman had borne twins in the midst of the snow and frost. They could not make a fire of the heath and gorse even if they cut it, the snow and whirling winds would not permit. The old gipsy said if they had little food they could not do without fire, and they

were compelled to get coke and coal somehow—apologising for such a luxury. There was no whining—not a bit of it; they were evidently quite contented and happy, and the old woman proud of her daughter's hardihood. By-and-by the husband came round with straw beehives to sell, and cane to mend chairs—a strong, respectable-looking man. Of all the north wind drove to the door, the outcasts were the best off—much better off than the cottager who was willing to break his spade to earn a shilling; much better off than the white-haired labourer, whose strength was spent, and who had not even a friend to watch with him in the dark hours of the winter evening—not even a fire to rest by. The gipsy nearest to the earth was the best off in every way; yet not even for primitive man and woman did the winds cease. Broad flakes of snow drifted up against the low tent, beneath which the babes were nestling to the breast. Not even for the babes did the snow cease or the keen wind rest; the very fire could scarcely struggle against it. Snow-rain and ice-rain; frost-formed snow-granules, driven along like shot, stinging and rattling against the tent-cloth, hissing in the fire; roar and groan of the great wind among the oaks of the forest. No kindness to man, from birth-hour to ending; neither earth, sky, nor gods care for him, innocent at the mother's breast. Nothing good to man but man. Let man, then, leave his gods and lift up his ideal beyond them.

Something grey and spotted and puffy, not unlike a toad, moved about under the gorse of the garden hedge one morning, half hidden by the stalks of old grasses. By-and-by it hopped out—the last thrush, so distended with puffed feathers against the frost as to be almost shapeless. He searched about hopelessly round the stones and in the nooks, all hard and frostbound; there was the shell of a snail, dry and whitened and empty, as was apparent enough even at a distance. His keen eye must have told him that it was empty; yet such was his hunger and despair that he took it and dashed it to pieces against a stone. Like a human being, his imagination was stronger than his experience; he tried to persuade himself that there might be something there; hoping against hope. Mind, you see,

working in the bird's brain, and overlooking facts. A mere mechanism would have left the empty and useless shell untouched—would have accepted facts at once, however bitter, just as the balance on the heaviest side declines immediately, obeying the fact of an extra grain of weight. The bird's brain was not mechanical, and therefore he was not wholly mastered by experience. It was a purely human action—just what we do ourselves. Next he came across to the door to see if a stray berry still remained on a creeper. He saw me at the window, and he came to the window—right to it—and stopped and looked full at me some minutes, within touch almost, saying as plainly as could be said, 'I am starving—help me.' I never before knew a thrush make so unmistakable an appeal for assistance, or deliberately approach so near (unless previously encouraged). We tried to feed him, but we fear little of the food reached him. The wonder of the incident was that a thrush should still be left—there had not been one in the garden for two months. Berries all gone, ground hard and foodless, streams frozen, snow lying for weeks, frost stealing away the vital heat—ingenuity could not devise a more terrible scene of torture to the birds. Neither for the thrushes nor for the new-born infants in the tent did the onslaught of the winter slacken. No pity in earth or heaven. This one thrush did, indeed, by some exceptional fortune, survive; but where were the family of thrushes that had sung so sweetly in the rainy autumn? Where were the blackbirds?

Looking down from the stilts of seven hundred feet into the deep coombe of black oaks standing in the white snow, day by day, built round about with the rugged mound of the hills, doubly locked with the key of frost—it seemed to me to take on itself the actuality of the ancient faith of the Magi. How the seeds of all living things—the germs—of bird and animal, man and insect, tree and herb, of the whole earth—were gathered together into a four-square rampart, and there laid to sleep in safety, shielded by a spell-bound fortification against the coming flood, not of water, but of frost and snow! With snow and frost and winter the earth was overcome, and the world perished, stricken dumb and dead,

swept clean and utterly destroyed—a winter of the gods, the silence of snow and universal death. All that had been passed away, and the earth was depopulated. Death triumphed. But under the snow, behind the charmed rampart, slept the living germs. Down in the deep coombe, where the dark oaks stood out individually in the whiteness of the snow, fortified round about with immovable hills, there was the actual presentment of Zoroaster's sacred story. Locked in sleep lay bud and germ—the butterflies of next summer were there somewhere, under the snow. The earth was swept of its inhabitants, but the seeds of life were not dead. Near by were the tents of the gipsies—an Eastern race, whose forefathers perhaps had seen that very Magian worship of the Light; and in those tents birth had already taken place. Under the Night of winter—under the power of dark Ahriman, the evil spirit of Destruction—lay bud and germ in bondage, waiting for the coming of Ormuzd, the Sun of Light and Summer. Beneath the snow, and in the frozen crevices of the trees, in the chinks of the earth, sealed up by the signet of frost, were the seeds of the life that would replenish the air in time to come. The buzzing crowds of summer were still under the snow.

This forest land is marked by the myriads of insects that roam about it in the days of sunshine. Of all the million million heath-bells—multiply them again by a million million more—that purple the acres of rolling hills, mile upon mile, there is not one that is not daily visited by these flying creatures. Countless and incalculable hosts of the yellow-barred hover-flies come to them; the heath and common, the moor and forest, the hedgerow and copse, are full of insects. They rise under foot, they rise from the spray brushed by your arm as you pass, they settle down in front of you—a rain of insects, a coloured shower. Legion is a little word for the butterflies; the dry pastures among the woods are brown with meadow-brown; blues and coppers float in endless succession; all the nations of Xerxes' army were but a handful to these. In their millions they have perished; but somewhere, coiled up, as it were, and sealed under the snow, there must have been the mothers and germs of the equally vast crowds that will fill the atmosphere this year. The

great bumble-bee that shall be mother of hundreds, the yellow wasp that shall be mother of thousands, were hidden there somewhere. The food of the migrant birds that are coming from over sea was there dormant under the snow. Many nations have a tradition of a former world destroyed by a deluge of water, from the East to the West, from Greece to Mexico, where the tail of a comet was said to have caused the flood; but in the strange characters of the Zend is the legend of an ark (as it were) prepared against the snow. It may be that it is the dim memory of a glacial epoch. In this deep coombe, amid the dark oaks and snow, was the fable of Zoroaster. For the coming of Ormuzd, the Light and Life Bringer, the leaf slept folded, the butterfly was hidden, the germ concealed, while the sun swept upwards towards Aries.

There is nothing so wearying as a long frost—the endless monotony, which makes one think that the very fault we usually find with our climate—its changeableness—is in reality its best quality. Rain, mist, gales—anything; give us anything but weary, weary frost. But having once fixed its mind, the weather will not listen to the usual signs of alteration.

The larks sang at last high up against the grey cloud over the frost-bound earth. They could not wait longer; love was strong in their little hearts—stronger than the winter. After a while the hedge-sparrows, too, began to sing on the top of the gorse-hedge about the garden. By-and-by a chaffinch boldly raised his voice, ending with the old story, 'Sweet, will you, will you kiss—me—dear?' Then there came a hoar-frost, and the earth, which had been black, became white, as its evaporated vapours began to gather and drops of rain to fall. Even then the obstinate weather refused to quite yield, wrapping its cloak, as it were, around it in bitter enmity. But in a day or two white clouds lit up with sunshine appeared drifting over from the southward, and that was the end. The old pensioner came to the door for his bread and cheese: 'The wind's in the south' he said, 'and I hopes she'll stay there' Five dull yellow spots on the hedge—gorse bloom—that had remained unchanged for so many weeks, took a fresh colour and became golden. By the constant

passing of the waggons and carts along the road that had been so silent it was evident that the busy time of spring was here. There would be rough weather, doubtless, now and again, but it would not again be winter.

Dark patches of cloud—spots of ink on the sky, the 'messengers'—go drifting by; and after them will follow the water-carriers, harnessed to the south and west winds, drilling the long rows of rain like seed into the earth. After a time there will be a rainbow. Through the bars of my prison I can see the catkins thick and sallow-grey on the willows across the field, visible even at that distance; so great the change in a few days, the hand of spring grows firm and takes a strong grasp of the hedges. My prison bars are but a sixteenth of an inch thick; I could snap them with a fillip—only the window-pane, to me as impenetrable as the twenty-foot wall of the Tower of London. A cart has just gone past bearing a strange load among the carts of spring; they are talking of poling the hops. In it there sat an old man, with the fixed stare, the animal-like eye, of extreme age; he is over ninety. About him there were some few chairs and articles of furniture, and he was propped against a bed. He was being moved—literally carted—to another house, not home, and he said he could not go without his bed; he had slept on it for seventy-three years. Last Sunday his son—himself old—was carted to the churchyard, as is the country custom, in an open van; to-day the father, still living, goes to what will be to him a strange land. His home is broken up—he will potter no more with maize for the chicken; the gorse hedges will become solid walls of golden bloom, but there will never again be a spring for him. It is very hard, is it not, at ninety? It is not the tyranny of any one that has done it; it is the tyranny of circumstance, the lot of man. The song of the Greeks is full of sorrow; man was to them the creature of grief, yet theirs was the land of violets and pellucid air. This has been a land of frost and snow, and here too, it is the same. A stranger, I see, is already digging the old man's garden.

How happy the trees must be to hear the song of birds again in their branches! After the silence and the leaflessness, to have the

birds back once more and to feel them busy at the nest-building; how glad to give them the moss and fibres and the crutch of the boughs to build in! Pleasant it is now to watch the sunlit clouds sailing onwards; it is like sitting by the sea. There is voyaging to and fro of birds; the strong wood-pigeon goes over—a long course in the air, from hill to distant copse; a blackbird starts from an ash, and, now inclining this way and now that, traverses the meadows to the thick corner hedge; finches go by, and the air is full of larks that sing without ceasing. The touch of the wind, the moisture of the dew, the sun-stained raindrop, have in them the magic force of life—a marvellous something that was not there before. Under it the narrow blade of grass comes up freshly green between the old white fibres the rook pulled; the sycamore bud swells and opens, and takes the eye instantly in the still dark wood; the starlings go to the hollow pollards; the lambs leap in the mead. You never know what a day may bring forth—what new thing will come next. Yesterday I saw the ploughman and his team, and the earth gleam smoothed behind the share; to-day a butterfly has gone past; the farm-folk are bringing home the fagots from the hedgerows; to-morrow there will be a merry, merry note in the ash copse, the chiffchaffs' ringing call to arms, to arms, ye leaves! By-and-by a bennet, a bloom of the grass; in time to come the furrow, as it were, shall open, and the great buttercup of the waters will show a broad palm of gold. You never know what will come to the net of the eye next—a bud, a flower, a nest, a curled fern, or whether it will be in the woodland or by the meadow path, at the water's side or on the dead dry heap of fagots. There is no settled succession, no fixed and formal order—always the unexpected; and you cannot say, 'I will go and find this or that.' The sowing of life in the spring time is not in the set straight line of the drill, nor shall you find wild flowers by a foot measure. There are great woods without a lily of the valley; the nightingale does not sing everywhere. Nature has no arrangement, no plan, nothing judicious even; the walnut trees bring forth their tender buds, and the frost burns them—they have no mosaic of time to fit in, like a Roman tesselated pavement; nature is like a child, who will sing and

shout though you may be never so deeply pondering in the study, and does not wait for the hour that suits your mind. You do not know what you may find each day; perhaps you may only pick up a fallen feather, but it is beautiful, every filament. Always beautiful! everything beautiful! And are these things new—the ploughman and his team, the lark's song the green leaf? Can they be new? Surely they have been of old time! They are, indeed, new—the only things that are so; the rest is old and grey, and a weariness.