

Tucholsky Wagner Zola Scott  
Turgenev Wallace Fonatne Sydon Freud Schlegel  
Twain Walther von der Vogelweide Fouqué Friedrich II. von Preußen  
Weber Freiligrath Frey  
Fechner Fichte Weiße Rose von Fallersleben Kant Ernst Richthofen Frommel  
Engels Fielding Hölderlin Eichendorff Tacitus Dumas  
Fehrs Faber Flaubert Eliasberg Eliot Zweig Ebner Eschenbach  
Feuerbach Maximilian I. von Habsburg Fock Ewald Vergil  
Goethe Elisabeth von Österreich London  
Mendelssohn Balzac Shakespeare Rathenau Dostojewski Ganghofer  
Trackl Stevenson Lichtenberg Doyle Gjellerup  
Mommsen Thoma Tolstoi Lenz Hambruch Droste-Hülshoff  
Dach Thoma von Arnim Hägele Hanrieder Hauptmann Humboldt  
Karrillon Reuter Verne Rousseau Hagen Hauff Baudelaire Gautier  
Garschin Defoe Hebbel Hegel Kussmaul Herder  
Damaschke Descartes Schopenhauer Bebel Proust  
Wolfram von Eschenbach Darwin Dickens Grimm Jerome Rilke George  
Bronner Campe Horváth Aristoteles Voltaire Federer Herodot  
Bismarck Vigny Gengenbach Barlach Heine Grillparzer Georgy  
Storm Casanova Lessing Langbein Gilm Gryphius  
Chamberlain Schiller Lafontaine Iffland Sokrates  
Brentano Strachwitz Claudius Schilling Kralik Katharina II. von Rußland Bellamy Gerstäcker Raabe Gibbon Tschechow  
Löns Hesse Hoffmann Gogol Wilde Gleim Vulpius  
Luther Heym Hofmannsthal Klee Hölty Morgenstern Goedicke  
Roth Heyse Klopstock Puschkin Homer Kleist Mörike Musil  
Luxemburg La Roche Horaz Kraus  
Machiavelli Kierkegaard Kraft Kraus  
Navarra Aurel Musset Lamprecht Kind Kirchhoff Hugo Moltke  
Nestroy Marie de France  
Nietzsche Nansen Laotse Ipsen Liebknecht Ringelnatz  
Marx Lassalle Gorki Klett Leibniz  
von Ossietzky May vom Stein Lawrence Irving  
Petalozzi Platon Pückler Michelangelo Knigge Kock Kafka  
Sachs Poe Liebermann Kock Korolenko  
de Sade Praetorius Mistral Zetkin



---

The publishing house **tredition** has created the series **TREDITION CLASSICS**. It contains classical literature works from over two thousand years. Most of these titles have been out of print and off the bookstore shelves for decades.

The book series is intended to preserve the cultural legacy and to promote the timeless works of classical literature. As a reader of a **TREDITION CLASSICS** book, the reader supports the mission to save many of the amazing works of world literature from oblivion.

The symbol of **TREDITION CLASSICS** is Johannes Gutenberg (1400 – 1468), the inventor of movable type printing.

With the series, **tredition** intends to make thousands of international literature classics available in printed format again – worldwide.

All books are available at book retailers worldwide in paperback and in hardcover. For more information please visit: [www.tredition.com](http://www.tredition.com)



**tredition** was established in 2006 by Sandra Latusseck and Soenke Schulz. Based in Hamburg, Germany, **tredition** offers publishing solutions to authors and publishing houses, combined with worldwide distribution of printed and digital book content. **tredition** is uniquely positioned to enable authors and publishing houses to create books on their own terms and without conventional manufacturing risks.

For more information please visit: [www.tredition.com](http://www.tredition.com)

**Letters of Robert Louis Stevenson  
–Volume 1**

Robert Louis Stevenson

# Imprint

This book is part of the TREDITION CLASSICS series.

Author: Robert Louis Stevenson

Cover design: toepferschumann, Berlin (Germany)

Publisher: tredition GmbH, Hamburg (Germany)

ISBN: 978-3-8491-5488-2

[www.tredition.com](http://www.tredition.com)

[www.tredition.de](http://www.tredition.de)

Copyright:

The content of this book is sourced from the public domain.

The intention of the TREDITION CLASSICS series is to make world literature in the public domain available in printed format. Literary enthusiasts and organizations worldwide have scanned and digitally edited the original texts. tredition has subsequently formatted and redesigned the content into a modern reading layout. Therefore, we cannot guarantee the exact reproduction of the original format of a particular historic edition. Please also note that no modifications have been made to the spelling, therefore it may differ from the orthography used today.

# **The Letters of Robert Louis Stevenson**

## **Volume 1**



## CHAPTER I - STUDENT DAYS AT EDINBURGH, TRAVELS AND EXCURSIONS, 1868-1873

Letter: SPRING GROVE SCHOOL, 12TH NOVEMBER 1863.

MA CHERE MAMAN, - J'ai reçu votre lettre Aujourd'hui et comme le jour prochaine est mon jour de naissance je vous écrit ce lettre. Ma grande gatteaux est arrive il leve 12 livres et demi le prix etait 17 shillings. Sur la soiree de Monseigneur Faux il y etait quelques belles feux d'artifice. Mais les polissons entrent dans notre champ et nos feux d'artifice et handkerchiefs disappeared quickly, but we charged them out of the field. Je suis presque driven mad par une bruit terrible tous les garcons kik up comme grand un bruit qu'il est possible. I hope you will find your house at Mentone nice. I have been obliged to stop from writing by the want of a pen, but now I have one, so I will continue.

My dear papa, you told me to tell you whenever I was miserable. I do not feel well, and I wish to get home.

Do take me with you.

**R. STEVENSON.**

Letter: 2 SULARDE TERRACE, TORQUAY, THURSDAY  
(APRIL 1866).

RESPECTED PATERNAL RELATIVE, - I write to make a request of the most moderate nature. Every year I have cost you an enormous - nay, elephantine - sum of money for drugs and physician's fees, and the most expensive time of the twelve months was March.

But this year the biting Oriental blasts, the howling tempests, and the general ailments of the human race have been successfully braved by yours truly.

Does not this deserve remuneration?

I appeal to your charity, I appeal to your generosity, I appeal to your justice, I appeal to your accounts, I appeal, in fine, to your purse.

My sense of generosity forbids the receipt of more - my sense of justice forbids the receipt of less - than half-a-crown. - Greeting from, Sir, your most affectionate and needy son,

**R. STEVENSON.**

Letter: TO MRS. THOMAS STEVENSON

**WICK, FRIDAY, SEPTEMBER 11, 1868.**

MY DEAR MOTHER, - . . . Wick lies at the end or elbow of an open triangular bay, hemmed on either side by shores, either cliff or steep earth-bank, of no great height. The grey houses of Pulteney extend along the southerly shore almost to the cape; and it is about

half-way down this shore - no, six-sevenths way down - that the new breakwater extends athwart the bay.

Certainly Wick in itself possesses no beauty: bare, grey shores, grim grey houses, grim grey sea; not even the gleam of red tiles; not even the greenness of a tree. The southerly heights, when I came here, were black with people, fishers waiting on wind and night. Now all the S.Y.S. (Stornoway boats) have beaten out of the bay, and the Wick men stay indoors or wrangle on the quays with dissatisfied fish-curers, knee-high in brine, mud, and herring refuse. The day when the boats put out to go home to the Hebrides, the girl here told me there was 'a black wind'; and on going out, I found the epithet as justifiable as it was picturesque. A cold, BLACK southerly wind, with occasional rising showers of rain; it was a fine sight to see the boats beat out a-teeth of it.

In Wick I have never heard any one greet his neighbour with the usual 'Fine day' or 'Good morning.' Both come shaking their heads, and both say, 'Breezy, breezy!' And such is the atrocious quality of the climate, that the remark is almost invariably justified by the fact.

The streets are full of the Highland fishers, lubberly, stupid, inconceivably lazy and heavy to move. You bruise against them, tumble over them, elbow them against the wall - all to no purpose; they will not budge; and you are forced to leave the pavement every step.

To the south, however, is as fine a piece of coast scenery as I ever saw. Great black chasms, huge black cliffs, rugged and over-hung gullies, natural arches, and deep green pools below them, almost too deep to let you see the gleam of sand among the darker weed: there are deep caves too. In one of these lives a tribe of gypsies. The men are ALWAYS drunk, simply and truthfully always. From morning to evening the great villainous-looking fellows are either sleeping off the last debauch, or hulking about the cove 'in the horrors.' The cave is deep, high, and airy, and might be made comfortable enough. But they just live among heaped boulders, damp with continual droppings from above, with no more furniture than two or three tin pans, a truss of rotten straw, and a few ragged cloaks. In winter the surf bursts into the mouth and often forces them to abandon it.

An EMEUTE of disappointed fishers was feared, and two ships of war are in the bay to render assistance to the municipal authorities. This is the ides; and, to all intents and purposes, said ides are passed. Still there is a good deal of disturbance, many drunk men, and a double supply of police. I saw them sent for by some people and enter an inn, in a pretty good hurry: what it was for I do not know.

You would see by papa's letter about the carpenter who fell off the staging: I don't think I was ever so much excited in my life. The man was back at his work, and I asked him how he was; but he was a Highlander, and - need I add it? - dickens a word could I understand of his answer. What is still worse, I find the people here-about - that is to say, the Highlanders, not the northmen - don't understand ME.

I have lost a shilling's worth of postage stamps, which has damped my ardour for buying big lots of 'em: I'll buy them one at a time as I want 'em for the future.

The Free Church minister and I got quite thick. He left last night about two in the morning, when I went to turn in. He gave me the enclosed. - I remain your affectionate son,

**R. L. STEVENSON.**

Letter: TO MRS. THOMAS STEVENSON

WICK, September 5, 1868. MONDAY.

MY DEAR MAMMA, - This morning I got a delightful haul: your letter of the fourth (surely mis-dated); Papa's of same day; Virgil's BUCOLICS, very thankfully received; and Aikman's ANNALS, a precious and most acceptable donation, for which I tender my most

ebullient thanksgivings. I almost forgot to drink my tea and eat mine egg.

It contains more detailed accounts than anything I ever saw, except Wodrow, without being so portentously tiresome and so desperately overborne with footnotes, proclamations, acts of Parliament, and citations as that last history.

I have been reading a good deal of Herbert. He's a clever and a devout cove; but in places awfully twaddley (if I may use the word). Oughtn't this to rejoice Papa's heart -

'Carve or discourse; do not a famine fear.  
Who carves is kind to two, who talks to all.'

You understand? The 'fearing a famine' is applied to people gulping down solid viviers without a word, as if the ten lean kine began to-morrow.

Do you remember condemning something of mine for being too obtrusively didactic. Listen to Herbert -

'Is it not verse except enchanted groves  
And sudden arbours shadow coarse-spun lines?  
Must purling streams refresh a lover's loves?  
MUST ALL BE VEILED, WHILE HE THAT READS DIVINES  
CATCHING THE SENSE AT TWO REMOVES?'

You see, 'except' was used for 'unless' before 1630.

TUESDAY. - The riots were a hum. No more has been heard; and one of the war-steamers has deserted in disgust.

The MOONSTONE is frightfully interesting: isn't the detective prime? Don't say anything about the plot; for I have only read on to the end of Betteredge's narrative, so don't know anything about it yet.

I thought to have gone on to Thurso to-night, but the coach was full; so I go to-morrow instead.

To-day I had a grouse: great glorification.

There is a drunken brute in the house who disturbed my rest last night. He's a very respectable man in general, but when on the 'spree' a most consummate fool. When he came in he stood on the top of the stairs and preached in the dark with great solemnity and no audience from 12 P.M. to half-past one. At last I opened my door. 'Are we to have no sleep at all for that DRUNKEN BRUTE?' I said. As I hoped, it had the desired effect. 'Drunken brute!' he howled, in much indignation; then after a pause, in a voice of some contrition, 'Well, if I am a drunken brute, it's only once in the twelvemonth!' And that was the end of him; the insult rankled in his mind; and he retired to rest. He is a fish-curer, a man over fifty, and pretty rich too. He's as bad again to-day; but I'll be shot if he keeps me awake, I'll douse him with water if he makes a row. - Ever your affectionate son,

**R. L. STEVENSON.**

Letter: TO MRS. THOMAS STEVENSON

**WICK, SEPTEMBER 1868. SATURDAY, 10 A.M.**

MY DEAR MOTHER, - The last two days have been dreadfully hard, and I was so tired in the evenings that I could not write. In fact, last night I went to sleep immediately after dinner, or very nearly so. My hours have been 10-2 and 3-7 out in the lighter or the small boat, in a long, heavy roll from the nor'-east. When the dog was taken out, he got awfully ill; one of the men, Geordie Grant by

name and surname, followed SHOOT with considerable ECLAT; but, wonderful to relate! I kept well. My hands are all skinned, blistered, discoloured, and engrained with tar, some of which latter has established itself under my nails in a position of such natural strength that it defies all my efforts to dislodge it. The worst work I had was when David (MacDonald's eldest) and I took the charge ourselves. He remained in the lighter to tighten or slacken the guys as we raised the pole towards the perpendicular, with two men. I was with four men in the boat. We dropped an anchor out a good bit, then tied a cord to the pole, took a turn round the sternmost thwart with it, and pulled on the anchor line. As the great, big, wet hawser came in it soaked you to the skin: I was the sternest (used, by way of variety, for sternmost) of the lot, and had to coil it - a work which involved, from ITS being so stiff and YOUR being busy pulling with all your might, no little trouble and an extra ducking. We got it up; and, just as we were going to sing 'Victory!' one of the guys slipped in, the pole tottered - went over on its side again like a shot, and behold the end of our labour.

You see, I have been roughing it; and though some parts of the letter may be neither very comprehensible nor very interesting to YOU, I think that perhaps it might amuse Willie Traquair, who delights in all such dirty jobs.

The first day, I forgot to mention, was like mid-winter for cold, and rained incessantly so hard that the livid white of our cold-pinched faces wore a sort of inflamed rash on the windward side.

I am not a bit the worse of it, except fore-mentioned state of hands, a slight crick in my neck from the rain running down, and general stiffness from pulling, hauling, and tugging for dear life.

We have got double weights at the guys, and hope to get it up like a shot.

What fun you three must be having! I hope the cold don't disagree with you. - I remain, my dear mother, your affectionate son,

R. L. STEVENSON.

Letter: TO MRS. THOMAS STEVENSON

**PULTENEY, WICK, SUNDAY, SEPTEMBER 1868.**

MY DEAR MOTHER, - Another storm: wind higher, rain thicker: the wind still rising as the night closes in and the sea slowly rising along with it; it looks like a three days' gale.

Last week has been a blank one: always too much sea.

I enjoyed myself very much last night at the R.'s. There was a little dancing, much singing and supper.

Are you not well that you do not write? I haven't heard from you for more than a fortnight.

The wind fell yesterday and rose again to-day; it is a dreadful evening; but the wind is keeping the sea down as yet. Of course, nothing more has been done to the poles; and I can't tell when I shall be able to leave, not for a fortnight yet, I fear, at the earliest, for the winds are persistent. Where's Murra? Is Cummie struck dumb about the boots? I wish you would get somebody to write an interesting letter and say how you are, for you're on the broad of your back I see. There hath arrived an inroad of farmers to-night; and I go to avoid them to M- if he's disengaged, to the R.'s if not.

SUNDAY (LATER). - Storm without: wind and rain: a confused mass of wind-driven rain-squalls, wind-ragged mist, foam, spray, and great, grey waves. Of this hereafter; in the meantime let us follow the due course of historic narrative.

Seven P.M. found me at Breadalbane Terrace, clad in spotless blacks, white tie, shirt, et caetera, and finished off below with a pair of navvies' boots. How true that the devil is betrayed by his feet! A message to Cummy at last. Why, O treacherous woman! were my dress boots withheld?

Dramatis personae: pere R., amusing, long-winded, in many points like papa; mere R., nice, delicate, likes hymns, knew Aunt Margaret ('t'ould man knew Uncle Alan); fille R., nommee Sara (no h), rather nice, lights up well, good voice, INTERESTED face; Miss L., nice also, washed out a little, and, I think, a trifle sentimental; fils R., in a Leith office, smart, full of happy epithet, amusing. They are very nice and very kind, asked me to come back - 'any night you feel dull; and any night doesn't mean no night: we'll be so glad to see you.' CEST LA MERE QUI PARLE.

I was back there again to-night. There was hymn-singing, and general religious controversy till eight, after which talk was secular. Mrs. S. was deeply distressed about the boot business. She consoled me by saying that many would be glad to have such feet whatever shoes they had on. Unfortunately, fishers and seafaring men are too facile to be compared with! This looks like enjoyment: better speck than Anster.

I have done with frivolity. This morning I was awakened by Mrs. S. at the door. 'There's a ship ashore at Shaltigoe!' As my senses slowly flooded, I heard the whistling and the roaring of wind, and the lashing of gust-blown and uncertain flaws of rain. I got up, dressed, and went out. The mizzled sky and rain blinded you.

CD + - - - - - - - - - | | + - - - - - - - - - \ A \ \ B \

CD is the new pier.

A the schooner ashore. B the salmon house.

She was a Norwegian: coming in she saw our first gauge-pole, standing at point E. Norse skipper thought it was a sunk smack, and dropped his anchor in full drift of sea: chain broke: schooner came ashore. Insured laden with wood: skipper owner of vessel and cargo bottom out.

I was in a great fright at first lest we should be liable; but it seems that's all right.

Some of the waves were twenty feet high. The spray rose eighty feet at the new pier. Some wood has come ashore, and the roadway seems carried away. There is something fishy at the far end where the cross wall is building; but till we are able to get along, all speculation is vain.

I am so sleepy I am writing nonsense.

I stood a long while on the cope watching the sea below me; I hear its dull, monotonous roar at this moment below the shrieking of the wind; and there came ever recurring to my mind the verse I am so fond of:-

'But yet the Lord that is on high  
Is more of might by far  
Than noise of many waters is  
Or great sea-billows are.'

The thunder at the wall when it first struck - the rush along ever growing higher - the great jet of snow-white spray some forty feet above you - and the 'noise of many waters,' the roar, the hiss, the 'shrieking' among the shingle as it fell head over heels at your feet. I watched if it threw the big stones at the wall; but it never moved them.

MONDAY. - The end of the work displays gaps, cairns of ten ton blocks, stones torn from their places and turned right round. The damage above water is comparatively little: what there may be below, ON NE SAIT PAS ENCORE. The roadway is torn away, cross heads, broken planks tossed here and there, planks gnawn and mumbled as if a starved bear had been trying to eat them, planks with spales lifted from them as if they had been dressed with a rugged plane, one pile swaying to and fro clear of the bottom, the rails in one place sunk a foot at least. This was not a great storm, the waves were light and short. Yet when we are standing at the office, I felt the ground beneath me QUAIL as a huge roller thundered on the work at the last year's cross wall.

How could NOSTER AMICUS Q. MAXIMUS appreciate a storm at Wick? It requires a little of the artistic temperament, of which Mr. T. S., C.E., possesses some, whatever he may say. I can't look at it practically however: that will come, I suppose, like grey hair or coffin nails.

Our pole is snapped: a fortnight's work and the loss of the Norse schooner all for nothing! - except experience and dirty clothes. - Your affectionate son,

**R. L. STEVENSON.**

Letter: TO MRS. CHURCHILL BABINGTON

**[SWANSTON COTTAGE, LOTHIANBURN, SUMMER  
1871.]**

MY DEAR MAUD, - If you have forgotten the hand-writing - as is like enough - you will find the name of a former correspondent (don't know how to spell that word) at the end. I have begun to write to you before now, but always stuck somehow, and left it to drown in a drawerful of like fiascos. This time I am determined to carry through, though I have nothing specially to say.

We look fairly like summer this morning; the trees are blackening out of their spring greens; the warmer suns have melted the hoarfrost of daisies of the paddock; and the blackbird, I fear, already beginning to 'stint his pipe of mellower days' - which is very apposite (I can't spell anything to-day - ONE p or TWO?) and pretty. All the same, we have been having shocking weather - cold winds and grey skies.

I have been reading heaps of nice books; but I can't go back so far. I am reading Clarendon's HIST. REBELL. at present, with which I am more pleased than I expected, which is saying a good deal. It is a pet idea of mine that one gets more real truth out of one avowed partisan than out of a dozen of your sham impartialists - wolves in

sheep's clothing - simpering honesty as they suppress documents. After all, what one wants to know is not what people did, but why they did it - or rather, why they THOUGHT they did it; and to learn that, you should go to the men themselves. Their very falsehood is often more than another man's truth.

I have possessed myself of Mrs. Hutchinson, which, of course, I admire, etc. But is there not an irritating deliberation and correctness about her and everybody connected with her? If she would only write bad grammar, or forget to finish a sentence, or do something or other that looks fallible, it would be a relief. I sometimes wish the old Colonel had got drunk and beaten her, in the bitterness of my spirit. I know I felt a weight taken off my heart when I heard he was extravagant. It is quite possible to be too good for this evil world; and unquestionably, Mrs. Hutchinson was. The way in which she talks of herself makes one's blood run cold. There - I am glad to have got that out - but don't say it to anybody - seal of secrecy.

Please tell Mr. Babington that I have never forgotten one of his drawings - a Rubens, I think - a woman holding up a model ship. That woman had more life in her than ninety per cent. of the lame humans that you see crippling about this earth.

By the way, that is a feature in art which seems to have come in with the Italians. Your old Greek statues have scarce enough vitality in them to keep their monstrous bodies fresh withal. A shrewd country attorney, in a turned white neckcloth and rusty blacks, would just take one of these Agamemnons and Ajaxes quietly by his beautiful, strong arm, trot the unresisting statue down a little gallery of legal shams, and turn the poor fellow out at the other end, 'naked, as from the earth he came.' There is more latent life, more of the coiled spring in the sleeping dog, about a recumbent figure of Michael Angelo's than about the most excited of Greek statues. The very marble seems to wrinkle with a wild energy that we never feel except in dreams.

I think this letter has turned into a sermon, but I had nothing interesting to talk about.

I do wish you and Mr. Babington would think better of it and come north this summer. We should be so glad to see you both. DO

reconsider it. - Believe me, my dear Maud, ever your most affectionate cousin,

**LOUIS STEVENSON.**

Letter: TO ALISON CUNNINGHAM

1871?

MY DEAR CUMMY, - I was greatly pleased by your letter in many ways. Of course, I was glad to hear from you; you know, you and I have so many old stories between us, that even if there was nothing else, even if there was not a very sincere respect and affection, we should always be glad to pass a nod. I say 'even if there was not.' But you know right well there is. Do not suppose that I shall ever forget those long, bitter nights, when I coughed and coughed and was so unhappy, and you were so patient and loving with a poor, sick child. Indeed, Cummy, I wish I might become a man worth talking of, if it were only that you should not have thrown away your pains.

Happily, it is not the result of our acts that makes them brave and noble, but the acts themselves and the unselfish love that moved us to do them. 'Inasmuch as you have done it unto one of the least of these.' My dear old nurse, and you know there is nothing a man can say nearer his heart except his mother or his wife - my dear old nurse, God will make good to you all the good that you have done, and mercifully forgive you all the evil. And next time when the spring comes round, and everything is beginning once again, if you should happen to think that you might have had a child of your own, and that it was hard you should have spent so many years taking care of some one else's prodigal, just you think this - you have been for a great deal in my life; you have made much that there is in me, just as surely as if you had conceived me; and there are sons who are more ungrateful to their own mothers than I am to

you. For I am not ungrateful, my dear Cummy, and it is with a very sincere emotion that I write myself your little boy,

Louis.

Letter: TO CHARLES BAXTER

### **DUNBLANE, FRIDAY, 5TH MARCH 1872.**

MY DEAR BAXTER, - By the date you may perhaps understand the purport of my letter without any words wasted about the matter. I cannot walk with you to-morrow, and you must not expect me. I came yesterday afternoon to Bridge of Allan, and have been very happy ever since, as every place is sanctified by the eighth sense, Memory. I walked up here this morning (three miles, TUDIEU! a good stretch for me), and passed one of my favourite places in the world, and one that I very much affect in spirit when the body is tied down and brought immovably to anchor on a sickbed. It is a meadow and bank on a corner on the river, and is connected in my mind inseparably with Virgil's ECLOGUES. HIC CORULIS MISTOS INTER CONSEDIMUS ULMOS, or something very like that, the passage begins (only I know my short-winded Latinity must have come to grief over even this much of quotation); and here, to a wish, is just such a cavern as Menalcas might shelter himself withal from the bright noon, and, with his lips curled backward, pipe himself blue in the face, while MESSIEURS LES ARCADIENS would roll out those cloying hexameters that sing themselves in one's mouth to such a curious lifting chant.

In such weather one has the bird's need to whistle; and I, who am specially incompetent in this art, must content myself by chattering away to you on this bit of paper. All the way along I was thanking God that he had made me and the birds and everything just as they are and not otherwise; for although there was no sun, the air was so thrilled with robins and blackbirds that it made the heart tremble with joy, and the leaves are far enough forward on the underwood