

*Extract of a letter from HENRY WARD BEECHER.*

While visiting in the country, and published in the *New York Independent*.

It is five o'clock. \* \* \* A hundred birds, yes, five hundred, are singing as birds never sing except in the morning. A few chimneys send up a slow wreathing column of smoke, which grows every moment paler as the kindled fires below burn brighter. \* \* \* The clouds hang low on the mountain on every side. Their ragged edges comb the mountain side, and look as if they must sway the trees in their course. Yet they move with such soft and drowsy measure that not a leaf stirs. Will there be rain to-day? The heavens overhead look like it. The clouds around the mountain hang low as if there were rain coming. But the Barometer says, *No*. Then a few rounds with the scythe before breakfast. \* \* We must make hay while the sun shines. \* \* The day passes and the night. With another morning, and that Saturday morning, comes up the sun without a single cloud to wipe his face upon. The air is clear and crystal—no mist is on the river, no fleece upon the mountain, yet the barometer is sinking and has been sinking all night. It has fallen more than a quarter of an inch, and continues slowly to fall. Our plans must be laid accordingly. We will cut the clover which is to be cured in the cock, and prepare to get in all of yesterday's mowing before two o'clock. Not till about ten o'clock is any change seen. Then the sun's light seems pale, and, although no cloud is before it, some invisible vapor has struck through the atmosphere. By-and-by the clouds begin to form, loose, vast, cumbrous, that slowly roll and change their unwieldy shapes, and take on every shade of color that lies between the darkest leaden-gray and the most brilliant silver gray. While catching our hasty meal, affairs grow critical. The sun is hidden. The noon is dark. All hands are summoned. \* \* \* All the girls and ladies come forth to the fray. Delicate hands are making lively work, raking up the dispersed grass and flying with right nimble steps here and there, bent on cheating the rain of its expected prey; and now the long winnows are formed. The last load of hay from the other fields has just rolled triumphantly into the barn. \* \* \* A drop pats down on my face, another and another. Look at those baseless mountains that tower in the west, black as ink at the bottom, glowing like snow at the top edge—what gigantic evolutions! They open, unfold, change form, flash lightning through their space, close up their black gulfs, and move on with irresistible but silent march through the heated air. Far in the north the rain has begun to sheet down upon old Gray-Lock! But the sun is shining through the shower, and changing it to a golden atmosphere, in which the mountain lifts up his head like a glorified martyr amid his persecutions! only one look can we spare, and all of us run for the house, and in good time. Down comes the flood, and every drop is musical. We pity the neighbors, who, not warned by the barometer, are racing and chasing to save their outlying crops.

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*From PROF. SILLIMAN.*

The fall of mercury warns the mariner to put his ship in trim for a storm, and conveys the same kind of information to a farmer; and enables him seasonably to provide for unfavorable changes in the weather, by housing his animals and protecting his crop.