

W. H. Benedict, Prin. School No. 2  
To The Pupils of the Public Schools  
of the City of Elmira:

I am informed that you  
have chosen to honor me  
by planting <sup>an Arbor Day</sup> a tree upon your  
grounds, which is to bear my  
name. It is a most grateful  
compliment and all the more  
<sup>highly</sup> esteemed by me because of  
a love for our forests which  
a life-long hunting has  
not been sufficient to gratify,  
but rather has served to deepen  
that childish fancy which made  
every honey bee denizen  
~~the in the shadow of which~~ I  
of the forest which was my  
playground, a friend.

In nothing have man and  
nature been so persistently at  
variance as in the <sup>conservation</sup> ~~planting and~~  
~~and destruction of forests.~~ ~~preservation of forests.~~ left to her-  
self, Nature almost invariably  
finds some means to cover the  
earth with a protecting veil of  
leafage. Over every fountain she  
hangs a <sup>canopy</sup> ~~screen~~ that bars out the  
sun's hot rays and prevents it  
from drying up. On every moun-  
tain side she spreads a leafy <sup>the</sup> ~~screen~~  
which overhangs the cliffs, <sup>lines every</sup>  
defile; hides each granite crest and  
bids the ferns and mosses, <sup>spread</sup> ~~grow~~  
a dainty verdant carpet <sup>for</sup> ~~to~~  
~~its shadow~~ ~~from~~ ~~under~~ ~~to~~ ~~take~~

through which the drops trickle and  
underneath which the seeds ger-  
minate. She is no back forrester,  
applying with consummate skill  
the precepts which man has for-  
mulated with difficulty, even with  
the aid of <sup>practical examples</sup> ~~before her~~. So  
long as there are <sup>trees</sup> not enough  
and the light comes in too  
freely scorching the roots and  
strangling threatening the lives of  
her favorites, the seeds sprout  
rapidly about the parent <sup>being</sup> bolls  
and the young trees, each <sup>with</sup>  
<sup>depth</sup> its giant several hundred  
crowd thickly above the wide

= spreading roots, to keep the  
life-giving drops a little longer  
in the soil from which  
the patriarch draws its life-supply.  
Then, as they grow older she cuts  
down with ruthless hand the  
weaker ones, smothering their lives  
with darkness and out of their  
death's enriching the lives of the  
survivors.

When the whirlwind or the flood  
or the avalanche ~~so~~ sweeps  
through and leaves a bare  
gaping scar, she sends the winds  
to cover it with seeds and

makes the tangle of bramble and  
weeds that overhangs the edge  
a trap to catch new life - goes  
to restore its beauty, Then the  
far north she bids her hardy fa-  
vorites to cling close to the  
frozen earth, while in the  
tropics she sends her insect-  
choppers to pull down, tear  
up and make ready to be  
worked over, every tree that  
shows signs of age or begins  
to yield to decay. <sup>So</sup> everywhere  
she keeps the ~~earth moist~~ <sup>forest dense,</sup> the  
soil light with mouldering  
leafage, the springs alive, the

streams full, the clouds kindly,  
the earth verdant.

Man changes all this. He is the  
enemy of verdure and moisture.  
Barrenness is the product both of his  
best and worst estate. As a sav-  
age he burns the forest to  
drive out his ~~game~~ <sup>the game</sup> ~~on~~ <sup>to battle</sup>  
on which he lives, <sup>on</sup> the  
enemy he fears. In a civilized  
state, he wars himself with axe  
and sun and makes water  
and steam his agents of de-  
struction. He pulls up the roots,  
burns the seeds to cinders; bares  
the soil to the sunshine; dries

up the springs; <sup>grinds</sup> ~~scours~~ the shel-  
tering <sup>to</sup> ~~curves~~ <sup>dust</sup>; shrivels  
the ferns; bares the cliff to the  
sunshine; strips the Mountain  
of its cover; makes the  
stream a torrent in  
Spring and autumn  
and a dry bed in sum-  
mer.

By and bye, the bare  
earth shrivels; the hot dust  
smothers; <sup>the leaves;</sup> ~~and~~ the fountains  
dry up and the desert

takes the place of the fertile  
field whose fertility the  
forest nourished and  
protected.

Thus the plains of Asia  
have been made barren.  
The sand chokes the  
Euphrates. The rivers  
of sweet waters are  
transformed to wild  
creeks. Man has over-  
come Nature's benignity  
and she has revenged



himself by parching his eyeballs  
and taking out of his life the  
sweet balm of verdant shelter.

The same ~~story~~ drama of  
destruction, waste, and aridity  
is being re-enacted in the  
New World with a thousand-  
fold enhanced aridity. ~~of~~  
Twenty-four billion cubic feet  
of lumber each year is torn from  
hillside and plain, while poor Na-  
ture, do the utmost that she  
may can hardly restore a  
tenth of that amount. Mountains  
once verdant to their summits  
are already half-bare. Rivers,

that crowned gently all summer  
long, beneath the overarching  
~~green~~ green are merely stretches  
of burning rock - on <sup>small</sup> ~~small~~ <sup>along their beds</sup>  
with only slimy ooze trickling  
where once sweet waters ran,  
when the summer solstice comes.

But Nature has her revenges.  
If man destroys her arbors, she  
shrivels and parches the bodies  
and souls of her enemies. Liberty  
lies only in the shadow of the for-  
est; and civilization shrinks away  
from the desert. The treeless land is  
always the habitat of wanderers on  
wrenchings. The people that destroy the  
forest to build the city are with-  
ered by the arid blast, emitted

by the storm that sweep un-  
hindered over the treacherous Cham-  
paign - until finally the city sinks  
beneath the ~~at~~ sand left uncov-  
ered by the axe that clear  
the forests for its upbuilding.

It was the American forests  
that were the temples of American  
liberty. It was in their invigora-  
ting shelter that the new life  
of the Western world grew strong  
and self-reliant, ~~but what shall~~  
~~take its place~~ It <sup>is</sup> ~~was~~ to the sheltering  
verdancy of occidental Europe  
~~and~~ that the world owes the  
strength, the individualism  
and the sweet domesticity

which marks the civilization  
<sup>that</sup>  
~~which~~ has sprung from cen-  
tral Europe, distinguished alike  
from the arid passion of the  
hunched Mediterranean shores,  
and the cold-blighted races  
of the hyperborean. It was the  
shadows of Peruvian forests  
and the mystic silence of  
druidic groves that ~~generated~~  
engendered the race of kings who  
conquered first the New  
World's ~~silence~~ fastnesses;  
and then set <sup>themselves</sup> ~~themselves~~ to de-  
stroy its strength - giving

silences. Will they cease their  
ruthless destruction before the  
heritage of weakness and arid-  
ness is fastened on their chil-  
dren?

Even now ~~the~~ one must  
go a good way to find the silence  
of the forest and be alone — in  
that sweetest of all loneliness, where  
leaf and boll and floweret tell  
each its own sweet story to the  
rumbler who passes so seldom  
that his coming might well be  
counted an epoch even in the lives  
of the <sup>in whose shadow he dwells.</sup> merry monarchs. I doubt if  
any one who ever knew and  
loved the woods — who ever  
knew great forests where one

might-journey on for days with-  
out ~~the~~ seeing trace of man's cult-  
lessness, can ever forget the mys-  
terious ~~echoes~~ <sup>cadences</sup> that filled its solemn  
silence;— for the great forest is never  
silent, ~~even~~ Even at its stillest  
there seems to be a sort of sentient  
resonance about it, which makes  
it seem like ~~an empty~~ <sup>a mighty</sup> temple  
empty of worshippers yet filled by  
an eternal presence which echoes  
every throb of consciousness in  
him who treads along its ~~silent~~  
~~silent~~ pillared aisles or ~~its~~ halls  
in its cloistered nooks. ~~¶~~

How many of the children of  
today will ever learn to know the  
wildwood? It cannot be learned  
from books; nor studied in pic-  
nic groups. Whoever would feel

heart = heat of nature ~~must stand~~  
~~in the do~~ must stand alone  
in the darkling forest, <sup>knowing</sup> ~~and knowing~~  
that no other human being is  
within his ken or call. And this  
was once or twice but many  
times, until the birds and the squirrels,  
the odors and the echoes, the  
creaking of the great branches, the  
rustling of the leaves, the patter of  
furry feet, the blink of bright  
beady eyes, the sway of the tree = (and),  
the murmurs of the hidden water,  
and that mystical harmony of in-  
finite murmurs no pen can  
describe, ~~falls into~~ become  
so part and parcel of himself that  
he sees and hears without taking  
note save of the infinite hear =

money

which thrills his ~~own~~ heart.

¶ Ah, how ~~sweet~~ it is even to  
steal away into some sheltered  
nook and cheat ~~memory~~ <sup>the fancy with</sup>  
~~the~~ remembered, bliss just as the  
<sup>sometimes</sup> ~~levelled~~ by the ocean-side path,  
the echoing shell to his ear and  
hears the surf beat on his na-  
tive strand. ¶ Thank God! ~~that~~ there  
are still unbragous ~~not~~ <sup>marks to</sup>  
which childhood may ~~at~~ some =  
times flee away and in the si =  
lence gather that unmerciful  
strength which God gives only to  
that soul which sometimes waits  
alone for messages from him  
which no tongue ever voices.  
¶ But how about the morrow  
and the children of the many



narrower than lie before?

We cannot save <sup>our</sup> ~~the~~ forests.  
They are doomed by the irresistible  
fatalistic greed of the American  
people. If the woodman knew that his ~~greed~~ <sup>the detraction</sup> of his eye  
would scuffle and shrivel his children's  
lives and doom their souls to  
eternal widowhood, he would still  
hack and burn and rend and  
bruise and slay and burn, &  
especially if the lumber mar-  
ket was good and prices  
high. It is the disease of his blood  
<sup>unrestrained, sensual, unscrupulous</sup>  
Generations of ~~the~~ (?) ~~destruction~~  
have made him mad to day.  
He has no pleasure in the forest =

unworn until it lies prone  
before him and he hews  
the ruthless scars tearing through  
the growing fibers. It is only  
the children who may be taught  
to love and serve, to plant  
and guard and rear. If  
they will only keep and love the  
books and copies — there may  
still be some fragrant, leafy  
temples ~~silences~~ to which the burdened souls  
and beating hearts of the coming  
morrows may steal and away  
and gather strength and joy and  
tenderness in their sweet silences.

If in any way my name may  
be used on my words may serve to  
keep alive this love for the noblest, sweetest,  
and holiest feature of earthly life, I

shall feel much highly honoured by  
the <sup>thereby</sup> ~~privilege~~ conferred and glad in-  
deed for the such privilege of doing  
something for the lightening of those  
many narrows for whom we  
are but trustees of Nature's  
~~which we hold with the~~ <sup>to use in</sup>  
blessings, ~~with divine injunction~~  
~~against work~~ holding with  
a restricted right to use and en-  
joy, but with perpetual divine  
injunction against work and  
impairment.

- Albert W. Sawyer