



# Brookline Historical Society

Incorporated April 29, 1901

**Fall meeting:** "Brookline and the China Trade", slide presentation by Wayne Altree.

**Date:** Sunday, September 24, 3 p.m.

**Place:** Administration Building at Hellenic College, 50 Goddard Ave., Brookline (use upper parking lot).

**All members and their guests are invited to attend.**

## **President's Report**

The connections that weave together Brookline History are wondrous to behold. We begin with the notion of Miriam Sargon -- our 1990 incoming president -- that the society's continuing efforts to tell the story of the diverse ethnic groups that make up Brookline ought to extend to the Chinese community -- and what better time than 1989, when China is so much on the minds of all of us.

From that notion is born the idea of Brookline in the China Trade as a topic -- why not explore the first contacts between Brookline and China, dating back to the colonial era, when trade with China was the source of much of early New England's prosperity.

That connects us to the Weld family, prominent among the China traders from Brookline. And the Weld family connects us to the site of our meeting -- the administration building of Hellenic College at 50 Goddard Ave., the sole remaining building from the Weld family estate.

Miriam Sargon also gets credit for engaging our speaker, Wayne Altree, who is a leading authority on the papers of yet another China-trading family: the Heards. We hope to make the meeting an occasion to welcome representatives of several Chinese-American organizations in Brookline, including the Chinese Parents Association of the Brookline Schools and members of Brookline's Chinese Christian Church, as well as students from Brookline High School's Chinese Studies department.

Don't miss this exciting meeting.

More connections: At our last meeting we heard two excellent presentations on the subject of landscape gardening in Brookline. As it happens, one of the town's gardening notables was Amy Lowell, also of poetry fame. As chance would have it, a paper from the society's archives explored Amy Lowell's poetic roots in Brookline. In this issue of the newsletter, I've combined both aspects -- the poet and gardener -- to round out, so to speak, the Amy Lowell portrait.

-- John VanScoyoc

## The Golden Age of Brookline Gardening

*(Adapted from a slide talk given June 4, 1989 to the spring meeting of the Brookline Historical Society)*

**By B. June Hutchinson**

We're going to look today at three houses in Brookline and what they represent in terms of the development of landscape gardening in America.

I've titled this little talk, "A Landscape Garden: 19th Century Brookline", taking the words, "a landscape garden" from the description, circa 1841, of Brookline by Andrew Jackson Downing, who was our first landscape architect.

He wrote the first American book on landscape architecture in that year and he had been here to Brookline two years before and seen this wonderful little village, and he described it in his first book this way:

"The whole of this neighborhood of Brookline is a kind of landscape garden. There's nothing in America as charming as the lanes which lead from one villa or cottage to another. No animals are allowed to run at large. An open gate with tempting vistas and glimpses under pendant bows give it quite an arcadian air of rural freedom. These lanes are closed with a profusion of trees and shrubbery, almost to the carriage tracks, and curve and wind about in a manner quite bewildering to the stranger."

Remember that this is Brookline, circa 1860.

This is the beginning of the time when Americans started thinking about planning a house that really suited them as individuals; and fit their children, as you see in this slide. Remember that before the Victorian period, houses tended to be very symmetrical, very small, and very much in the style that the colonists brought from England.

With the beginning of the Victorian period, however, houses changed dramatically. Each person building a house tended to get involved in the process.

Equally astounding, people were working outside and tending their gardens in this period, and Downing, our first landscape architect, advised them to plan their gardens as carefully as their homes. That's exactly what's going on in this slide, circa 1870. The gardener or the young owner of the house is on the right with the shovel and he's looking very carefully at the plant to figure out where to put the next plant. And of course that was an entirely new concept in this country. And Downing first talked about it -- planning, then planting.

The impetus for the lawns that we all labor so hard over today came from the Victorian period. They are possible due to the technology that evolved in the Victorian period, but specifically the invention by Matthew Bunting in England in the 1830s of the rolling grass cutter.

Women had never been out to enjoy leisure in the outside before. It was not thought a fit thing to do. For the first time in the Victorian period, lawn games came to us from England and women as well as men came out for their leisure entertainment on the lawn. When they came out, they gardened as well.

This is a drawing, circa 1800, of a house that stood very near here at the intersection of Pleasant and Beacon Street. It was built in the 1760s by a member of the Sewall family, reknowned because Chief Justice Ben Sewall had sentenced the witches to death. They were Tories and so their land was confiscated by the Town of Brookline during the Revolutionary War; ultimately it was bought in the early 1800s by the Stearns family. At the time of this slide the house was owned by Charles Henry Stearns, born in 1837, and the man who eventually was to found this very historical society.

This is the same house, about 1860, and the house sits with the end to the street as opposed to the front to the street. That is presumably Charles Henry's father and his mother and probably one of his sisters in the front lawn.

And this is how the house looked when Charles Henry lived there. The house stood until 1888 on the site where it was originally built. At that point the town of Brookline decided to widen Beacon Street and the house was moved to Harvard Street. But it was on this spot for the entire time we'll be looking at it. If you look carefully, you can see a carriage coming just over the rise on Beacon Street here. The house sat back under three huge elm trees, two along the street and one in the front of the house. The two along the side were sacrificed when Beacon Street was widened.

The date of this slide is about 1886, about a year before the house was moved. I can imagine the Stearns family very nostalgically taking these photographs of the house because they knew it was going to be moved.

It's important to see how the house has changed from that first charcoal drawing. The house has now been Victorianized, it has a porch stuck on the front. If you notice, the door, though, is to the right of the porch. The porch is not a typical Victorian porch as was built in the period. This is very much a house that has been caught up with the times in a very different way. At the walk to the door there is an urn or vase filled with flowers -- that was very popular in the 1880s. And most important of all, the front of the house has this

bright, broad sweep of lawn, probably the most important aspect of the Victorian garden.

In this fuzzy old photograph you'll see stretched across the lawn a wonderful old lawn tennis net where the Stearns got out and played lawn tennis. When you really wanted to go outside and be part of the garden, the garden obviously became more important and that was what happened in the Victorian period.

This is a close-up of the Stearns house and you can see the urn that marks the entrance to the front door. Victorians liked to mark the entrances to their homes somehow, and an urn is a very common way of doing it.

This is obviously a farm, a well-to-do farm but a working farm; you see beyond the tennis net all the wood stacked up. We can assume that Stearns did not yet have that big furnace that everybody put down in the basement at this point and were chucking coal into. I suspect the Stearns were still using their old fireplace.

Stearns not only farmed this land, he had a nursery here as well. He was selling plants to other people to beautify their gardens as well. This is a part of his vegetable garden, and at various points around this lawn you'll see a lot of the motifs that are typically Victorian. Up against the wall you'll see that there are vines going up lattices. Here is the tree of the clothes line -- there was always a drying space for clothes. Here's the woodpile we saw in the first slide, and here is his corn field. This is the fence running along Beacon Street and this is probably some project that Mr. Stearns was working on. He's got his wooden horse out there to cut up the wood to make something.

Although when he died Charles Henry Stearns was called a grand old man of Brookline, very honored and revered, he never lived quite as lavishly as the Sargents, whose place we will look at next.

This landscape is very different -- at the other end of the scale in terms of a farm landscape. This is a farm, but it's a gentleman's farm. The owner of this land is in the middle of the farm and his name is Charles Sprague Sargent. He directed the Arnold Arboretum from its beginning in 1872 until his death in 1927, a total of 55 years. He was never involved completely in running this farm -- he had lots of help to do that -- and he was always involved in the affairs of the arboretum. On the other hand, the landscape that he put together here was a very fine one. He not only had the knowledge and the connections to do what was just right to do in a garden, he also had the money.

This is the house that Charles Sprague Sargent and his wife, Mary Ralston, lived in with their five children. It is fronted by a huge expanse of lawn, which was always kept immaculately mowed.

The house has a conservatory or a glass walled area. If you were really interested in plants, you didn't give up your garden in the winter time. You brought it inside with you into the conservatory.

Sandra Sutton, in her biography of Sargent, points out that it was a very organized family. Sargent insisted on that; he was a very organized man. But he was always away from home. He did all sorts of trips to write his books and he was invited to speak everywhere. And his dear wife ran this huge house -- with a lot of help, of course, but she also tended to five children.

This is the stone house, surrounded by verandas, covered with vines, that Ignatius Sargent, father of Charles, lived in until he died in the 80's. The plants are put together in a very specific way, very carefully blended to look as if nature had planted them. That was an important teaching of Downing.

Although Charles Sprague Sargent was a lot younger than Downing, and Downing had already died in the 1850s, one of Downing's best friends in New York was a cousin of Charles Sprague Sargent's: Henry Winthrop Sargent. He had walked around his estate in New York with Downing, and Downing had helped him lay it out. He absorbed much of what Downing believed to be the proper landscape approach for America, and when Downing died at a very early age Henry Winthrop Sargent was one of those people who carried on the traditions. He would come back to Boston from New York and help Charles Sprague lay out portions of the family estate based on what he had learned from Downing up in New York along the Hudson River.

These wonderfully natural collections of trees and vines, all of which were planted by Sargent and looked just like they had always been there, weren't always there. This was an open farm mostly -- in fact it's described as a rocky farm that was worth very little when it was bought by Charles' father.

Along the pond is the evidence of very natural planting that the Victorians aspired to, but with some specific trees standing out as focal points. An important aspect of the planting was that there would be great long sweeps, as if the wooden benches were coming up to the lawn, and then there would be trees as a focal point. They would be chosen based on their form or wonderful leaf color or their very beautiful blooms.

Charles Sprague Sargent was very up to date in his gardening knowledge and was planting his flower borders at Holm Lea just exactly like William Robinson and then later Gertrude Jekyll were planting theirs in England. So at a time when a lot of farmers in this part of the world were putting bright colored annuals into beds to look like the patterns in oriental carpets, Charles Sprague Sargent was planting out his

borders in this very naturalistic way. He was very much ahead of the time.

An important part of the Victorian household, a new aspect to the house, was the porch or the veranda or the piazza. Everyone came out and sat on the porch and enjoyed their gardens and looked at this wonderful lawn that they had to keep green and cut all of the time.

This terrace of Sargent's, photographed about 1890, is exceedingly elegant. At the end of the porch the wonderful mass of plant material is all contained. Somewhere there were acres of greenhouses, and all this material came -- plant and bloom -- straight out to the porch to be displayed; then the gardeners whisked it off again if it got a little lanky and ugly and replaced it with something new.

There were tall rhododendrons in the back and hydrangeas in front and wonderful container azaleas, and, flanking the doorway into the house, a wonderfully flowered vine -- possibly June flowering clematis.

Because Charles Sprague was very involved with the Arboretum, he had the idea that he would open his estate in early June when the rhododendrons bloomed and invite people to come in and learn about gardening. These events became the garden fests that the Sargents had from the 1890s through the new century.

Great long rows of tents each held a different aspect of gardening. The public came in droves. The story is that poor old Charles Sprague sat around practically biting his nails trying to look very pleasant, but being very concerned about whether his plants were going to get walked on.

They brought out a small boat or two and put it on the pond down near Sargent Road and the children were able to have rides and the adults too. Lanterns were strung across the dock -- it was very festive.

The final garden that I want to look at is a garden that was principally the work of a woman, the poet Amy Lowell.

She was born at this house at 70 Heath Street, called "Sevenels" for the "Seven Lowells" who lived there. Her father Augustus and all of the family before, all the way back to the 1600s, had been horticulturalists. Amy inherited that. She never married, and lived in this house from her birth in 1874 until she died in 1925.

Augustus Lowell, her father, did not build this house, but it is very much a high Victorian house. It has the classic elements: a bright sweeping driveway that's

circular, and wide expanses of lawn accented with ornamental plantings.

The plant material in the front of the house is contained -- it has been brought out from the greenhouse. It probably was at least the late 1890s before Victorians began to do much in the way of planting at the foundations of their homes. The foundations were left pretty bare, maybe with some flowers or with some vines, but certainly not woody-stemmed plants, like these big rhododendrons, which were not planted, but were brought out in containers when they were in bloom.

The porch is a classic late Victorian porch with a chair and a little Chinese ceramic table. The Lowells also had a conservatory, trimmed in lattice work, and in the doorway the ubiquitous palm. If you had any sort of large window you always had a palm in the Victorian period, and better than that you had ten or a dozen because palms were very loved. They were indicative of the tropical plants that were coming newly from Africa and South America and were quite the rage.

The garden for the Lowell house was the major part of the landscape that Amy tended from her father's death in 1901 to her own death in 1925. There were quite a few Victorian trellises, and one that was simply a tree chopped off with the side branches cut back. That was very popular in this period.

This is Amy in her garden in 1923, two years before she died. It's said that she worked in her garden from about 4 or 4:30 every day until about 7:30. She was a very eccentric woman and apparently slept most of the day. She was always rather stout and she was quite short. Apparently she got around this garden, as sloping as it was, with a great deal of agility.

This is one of the last pictures of Amy, taken just before she died in 1925. It's very interesting that most of the pictures show her either with flowers or with books. A lot of her poetry began with flowery titles. I think that probably points out the main thrusts of her life -- gardening and verse.

Andrew Jackson Downing, at the end of his first book about American landscape, in 1841, writes the following:

"Our first most sacred associations are connected with gardens. Our most simple and most defined perceptions of beauty are combined in them. Gardening is capable of affording us the highest and most intellectual enjoyment to be found in any cares or pleasures belonging in the soil."

I hope you all have a garden to bring some of that pleasure too.



Charles Sprague Sargent estate



The Sargent estate.



Amy Lowell -- poet and gardener.



The Sewall-Stearns estate -- an early example of Victorian landscape gardening in America.

**Reprint--****Amy Lowell, Brookline poet**

(Adapted from a paper originally presented April 26, 1970.)

By Peter C. Rollins

... Amy, as a Lowell, was expected to adopt an aggressive and mastering posture toward the world, but as a young child with a need for affection to sustain her, she had only the coachman and other servants. Her mother was an invalid both before and after Amy's birth, and her father, Augustus Lowell, at the age of fifty-two, was uninterested and unaffectionate. A later visitor to "Sevenels" gives a none-too-positive picture of the relationship between a young, expansive Amy and her parents. As Elizabeth Ward Perkins was to recall, the atmosphere was charged with exuberance when the elder children were at home:

"To the visiting girl, fresh from two years abroad, the drama of life in Sevenels, the Lowell house in Brookline, was literally as good as a play. All the children, a dozen years older than her friend, Amy, married and unmarried, were at home; men, authorities already in government and astronomy, the women keen for civic betterment and public affairs... As they gathered for the overabundant meals of the era, it seemed to the stranger quite possible that the art of listening might be dispensed with, having become superfluous. Any two members of the family could talk and listen simultaneously, effecting a great economy in time and patience, for conflicting opinions might be stated, registered, and answered at the same moment. New England reserve did not prevail at the large table. No Latins or Slavs could have discussed more fervently, or with more expressive gesture, the local happenings or larger questions of the day."

Here again we have a taste of the atmosphere in which being a Lowell required one to be keen-minded, quick witted and intellectually aggressive.

As Amy's imagination developed, and her exposure to literature led her to Thackeray, Victor Hugo, and finally, Shelley and Keats, Amy was to become a poet herself. As she says in the concluding paragraph of this essay on her childhood reading, the exposure to the English Romantic poets:

"was my Waterloo...I surrendered completely to poetry, and with that surrender the chapter of my childhood definitely closed..."

But more of this later.

Amy Lowell's first published work was offered to the public when she was thirteen. With the help of her mother and sister, she wrote some children's stories that were collected under the title *Dream Drops or Stories from Fairyland by a Dreamer*. Given what we

already know about the innermost thoughts of the young girl, it is no surprise to find countless imaginary figures in those stories, nor do the rather unpleasant situations which these figures confront come as any shock to us. Foster Damon, a biographer of Amy Lowell, concludes that these stories reflect "an imagination rejoicing in its own powers, exploring the five senses and the four elements," and that the stories are "vivid, vigorous, original...without the least trace of eccentricity." Mr. Damon's conclusions are enthusiastic, but they may point more to his own exposure to, and acceptance of, this kind of literature that serve as an accurate analysis of their content or import. For example, I find the following opening paragraphs of one story to be quite germane to troubling aspects of young Amy Lowell's life:

"Once upon a time, a little girl named Rosa said to her mother, yawning, 'Oh! how dull it is here, I have no children to play with.' 'Go out and dig in your garden' her mother replied, and prepare it for the pretty flowers you expect to plant in it by and by; and think how much pleasure you will have yourself, and be able to give others."

The little girl exits, begins to dig, discovers a trap door, which, as you probably have already guessed, opens into fairyland, which is a garden, but a garden of fantasy:

"... a very large garden, the velvet turf divided by paths of brilliant colors, and bordered by trees bearing for fruits dazzling jewels, emeralds, rubies, sapphires, amethysts..the paths seemed covered with powdered gems.."

Other stories in *Dream Drops* tell of lonely children who seek companions in the world of sleep. These companions are the characters from *Little Lord Fauntleroy*, *Alice in Wonderland*, *Little Rollo*, and Cooper's *Leatherstocking Tales*. In one story, "The Good Little Henry," a little boy seeks "the plant of life to cure my poor sick mother, who is dying." He performs a series of Herculean labors to purchase the valuable plant. His reward at the end of his labors is to have a mother well enough so that she can forget her self-absorption and devote some attention to him. The unstated irony of such a story as "Good Little Henry" by Amy Lowell, age thirteen, is not unlike that of the Horatio Alger tales of industry and pluck. No young hero who could perform all of these grueling tasks of self-assertion and mastery could again revert to the passivity and childlike nature of the boy described at the end of the story.

*Dream Drops* was written when Amy was thirteen. The next record of her growth which I could find are her diaries of 1889 and 1890, when she is fifteen and sixteen. I will read selected entries in chronological sequence, making my interpretations known as I progress.

One of the first characteristic comments by Amy related to her feelings about school. A child who was ignored by parents and indulged by servants was not well disposed toward the close supervision which the teacher-student relationship provided:

2 Jan. "School began, nasty old thing, I *hate* it..We are going to have gymnastics in school under Dr. Possey, a Swede, studied for 3 years to teach us how to wiggle our thumbs, *etc*, hope he knows how by this time."

A day later, she adds to this mordant condemnation of things institutional:

3 Jan. "Everything horrid, school as stupid as death. No, not death, that would have some contentment and some pleasure in it, stupid as music lessons."

It may be worthwhile to note here that most biographers of Amy see in these passages the first glimmering of a heavily sarcastic, and finally masculine and brutal personality taking shape in the none-too-beautiful adolescent. My response is somewhat different. What I see coming to light here is a kind of independence and vigor of personality which, for all its built-in repressions, reacts sharply against those imposed from without. In many ways, Amy is most like a Lowell in these statements of resentment.

On 8 and 10 January are two important entries: On the eighth of January, Amy was allowed to view the inner-rooms of the newly constructed Athletic Club. After seeing the indoor track, the swimming pool, the exercise rooms, and the steam bath, she reflected in her diary:

8 Jan. "...wouldn't it be nice to be a man..being a man would be *fun* : no dependence, go where you please, do what you please. I can imagine falling in love with a woman, but not with a man, I should *like* to be a man, and fall in love with a woman. Ah, well! What must be must be..."

The entry of 10 January concludes with an easily overlooked but nonetheless significant statement, "I hate effusion."

Here is the beginning of a second level of internal psychic conflict for Amy Lowell. The first level related to the severe standards of conduct and character held to by her unloving parents. This second level involves the problem of female identity, a problem which is often exploited by Amy's unsympathetic biographers and critics. Yet the conflict, as it begins to develop, is very understandable. In many ways, the stern individualism inculcated by the Lowell ethic is here running head-on into one of the obstacles to really valid self-expression. "Manliness" in this setting is identified with the quality of independence and self-reliance. My judgment at this point is that the society, and not Amy Lowell, is at fault for her sense of conflict.

Amy, as we have noted, was not easily convinced that she, as a woman, should immediately be relegated to an inferior status. After all, she was also a Lowell, and Lowells had high ambitions:

13 Jan. "What would I not give to be a poet. Well day dreams are day dreams and I shall never be a poet."

Later in the month, she considers the career opportunities for her in the rising field of photography:

22 Jan. "Miss Amy Lowell, the leading photographer of today! Oh dear, *dreams are but dreams*."

But such aspirations are often undercut by her sense of inferiority as a female, and the problem of communicating her loneliness to others:

16 Jan. "Papa is going to his club tonight -- I wish I was a man...I am dying to be a boy and go to a swimming bath.."

9 Jan. "...I don't think anybody (unless they know me *very* well) would guess how sensitive I really am about things."

During this period of adolescent conflict, Amy discovers that she can withdraw from a hostile world by being sick. During her frequent illnesses and consequent absences from the small private school she attended, she plowed into the literature that would ultimately lead her to poetry. Thackeray, all of Dickens, Scott, Victor Hugo became her companions, and reading served as her solace from the problematic world unsympathetic to the sensitive and the female.

On 30 April each year, the Lowell family emigrated to Brookline. Amy always called Brookline "home," and felt that she could express herself more unselfconsciously in the rural setting. Often the diary's pages for these seasons are left without entries, except the brief words "baseball," "tennis," or "tennis tournament." As Amy reflected upon the changed atmosphere for her exuberant spirits:

30 April "...How much easier it is to talk to the boys out here.."

It is also in Brookline (where boys were easier to talk to) that Amy has her first crush on a boy, Paul Hamlyn. In her description of the difficulties of expressing herself, we have an excellent picture of Amy's inner turmoil:

5 Nov. "...Paul talked to me, all the time (as they go out for a ramble over the countryside) but he talked to Amy Cabot all the time coming home. To Stevie .. I made some remarks that were meant to be sarcastic, but he is too deadly dull, everybody may not think so though. He probably thought I was a *fool* to try to make myself out bright, and I know I was for minding who Paul talked to .. I *tried* to get interested in what Stevie was saying, but couldn't for the life

of me. I shall probably read this some years hence and think what a *fool* I was. Yes, I know it is true. Nobody will ever know it though, for I have given up letting Polly .. read this. It's too private."

Leaving Brookline for the Town House in Boston meant moving away from Paul Hamlyn. On 18 November she reflects: "We are going to town on Wednesday. Oh Dear!!!!" And on arriving at the Town House she records:

20 Nov. "Fough! I hate this old hole. However, I am not going to think of myself this winter; I wonder when I shall see Paul again. Poor, Dear Boy!!!! I miss him, and the others very much. It is dreadful in here! Boo-hoo-hoo-hoo!"

During this period of loneliness and Boston winter, the theater supplied the single positive life experience for Amy. Books were a consolation for loneliness, books served as companions in times of withdrawal, but the theater portrayed living persons acting under the most intense emotions. Furthermore, many of the intensely feeling persons on the stage were women. Amy attended as many as three plays or operas per week while in town. Obviously, this was a dimension of her and her peers' education which has yet to be explored by cultural historians. As we shall see, the acting of Eleanora Duse will later inspire an older Amy Lowell to commit herself to the fulfilling, feeling, individualistic role as poetess. We can imagine what an actress must have meant to Amy and countless other girls like her: an actress could legitimately express the strongest emotions in a socially acceptable environment. Furthermore, the actress' strong emotions could have a deep effect upon an attentive and sympathetic audience. The actress was, in many ways, the consummate woman.

For the young Amy, the bonds of self-destructive adolescent introspection were yet to be loosened. In her confusion, any novelty was welcomed. (The shopper at Coolidge Corner who is frightened or bemused by teenage behavior might here take note.) In the middle of December, her horse breaks out of control, with thrilling speed and danger:

16 Dec. "..Beziq was so fresh that he nearly ran away. We had great fun. (Her Maid was terrified.) You bet! At least I did."

Later in the year, in March, the boredom was relieved by a near destruction of the house by fire:

11 Mar. "..Mama upset the lamp and nearly set the house on fire. Quite exciting!"

Ironically, and to her great disadvantage, Amy was fundamentally unable to relax and enjoy what pleasures were offered to her by society and the companionship of her peers. We have already noted

that her taste in children's literature was a generation behind that of her peers. The future flaunter of conventional modes of behavior, although yearning for the society of her Brookline neighbors, strictly refused to participate in an innocent dancing party on the Lord's day:

16 Mar. "..Went into Walter Cabot's house. I believe the others danced; but I don't like that sort of thing on Sunday one bit."

It is during this adolescent period of inner-conflict that Amy discovered an anthology of English poetry called *Imagination and Fancy*, collected by Leigh Hunt. It is not difficult to imagine how this emotionally starved, brilliant young girl responded to Leigh Hunt's description of poetry and the role of the poet:

"..Poetry is imaginative passion...He who has thought, feeling, expression, imagination, action, character, and continuity, all in the largest amount and highest degree, is the greatest poet.."

As Amy herself explains in her essay, "That Bookcase," the discovery of Keats and Shelley through Leigh Hunt marked an end to one era of her life:

"..There indeed was my Waterloo, I surrendered completely to poetry, and with that surrender the chapter of my childhood definitely closed.."

Soon after she surrendered to the influence of poetry, she began to give poetic readings in her room on the third floor of "Sevenels." In what she later called her "sky parlor," she began to try on the role of poetess, and to find that role not merely a pleasing one, but one which allowed all of her contradictory emotions to have an active and cathartic play.