

- What do you find engaging or unusual about the style, or the writer's point of view, of this diary entry?

30 May 1915

After breakfast we sat in the Buttercup¹ field – my love and I – and “plucked up kisses by the roots that grew upon our lips”². The sun was streaming down and the field thickly peopled with Buttercups. From where we sat we could see the whole of the valley below and Farmer 5 Whaley – a speck in the distance – working a machine in a field. We watched him idly. It was jolly to put our heads together right down deep in the Buttercups and luxuriously follow the pelting³ activities of the tiny insects crawling here and there in the forest of grass. A chicken came our way and he seemed an enormous bird from the grass-blade's point of view. How nice to be a chicken in a field of Buttercups and see them as big as Sunflowers! or to be a Gulliver⁴ in 10 the Beech Woods! to be so small as to be able to climb a Buttercup, tumble into the corolla and be dusted yellow or to be so big as to be able to pull up a Beech-tree with finger and thumb! If only a man were a magician, could play fast and loose with rigid Nature! what a multitude of rich experiences he could discover for himself!

I looked long and steadily this morning at the magnificent torso of a high forest Beech 15 and tried to project myself into its lithe tiger-like form, to feel its electric sap vitalizing all my frame out to the tip of every tingling leaf, to possess its splendid erectness in my own bones. I could have flung my arms around its fascinating body but the austerity of the great creature forbad it. Then a Hawk fired my ambition! – to be a Hawk, or a Falcon, to have a Falcon's soul, 20 a Falcon's heart – that splendid music in the cage of the thorax – and the Falcon's pride and sagacious⁵ eye!

When the sun grew too hot we went into the wood where waves of Bluebells dashed up around the foot of the Oak in front of us... I never knew before, the delight of offering oneself up; I even longed for some self-sacrifice, to have to give up something for her sake. It intoxicated me to think I was making another happy...

25 After a lunch of scrambled eggs and rhubarb and cream went up into the Beech Wood again and sat on a rug at the foot of a tree. The sun filtered in thro' the greenery. “It's like a cathedral,” I chattered away, “stained glass windows, pillars, aisles – all complete.” “It would be nice to be married in a Cathedral like this,” she said.

Adapted from the personal journal of WNP Barbellion, *The Journal of a Disappointed Man* (1919)

¹ Buttercup: a small yellow wildflower

² “plucked up kisses by the roots that grew upon our lips”: quotation from Shakespeare's *Othello*

³ pelting: paltry, insignificant

⁴ Gulliver: an allusion to a land of giants in Jonathan Swift's *Gulliver's Travels*

⁵ sagacious: discerning, wise