

[New York, Spring 1881?²]

[-----]^a

Boulevard St Antoine³ that damnable merchants of inhumanity Citenian⁴ wharfrats. Why Centenus⁵ dost run a line already greased from Sirius⁶ to Capella with angularity, whereon^b ten million^c devils slide down to the farthestmost sag and piss into pendemonum■ Tell me winged soldier of Hell^c eif in the farthestmost ends of infinity wanted demons with cavernous mouths spit saliva on the balls of [-----]^d the firmament to produce deluges, hast seen the Juif errant⁷ ■ he mocks ~~destra~~ the angel of destruction, amuses himself by letting off fire works in powder mills. Citronella this damnd perfume on the Vine Clad Hills of Andulusia⁸ wafted as from a garden filled with Red hat giraffes a Rain of Boullion Soup descended on the thirsty soil and the wells and [--]^d snake holes puked ~~from the~~ miasmatic water from the richness of the rapast, prithee tells us^b Centenus, we of the finite minds, if Vesuvius constipated from derangement of the terranian^c kidneys will ever vomit up again to engulf ~~the~~ more^b Earthlice■ They tell me the milky way is formed of stars & planets so innumerable & its diameter so great that [iff?]^d if Adam was one and all the sands of the sea were cyphers they would not express a preceptible segment of the grand ring—

Doth god have a pegasus & use the milky way as a hitching ring—

Whizzozririzing an asteroid has run plump into a favorite angel. This Crank lump of matter will be used for [---- ---- -----]^d water closets in Hades^e■ two angels at a candy pull, they

stretch the viscous molasses from Vega to Acturus at every pull, flies as big as Japan buzzed around it.

A Bowery angel smoking a palm tree stubbed his toe on a comet,^c and pimples came out on his toe nail as big as a mountains, he swore so much that God made eight new planets out of the conversation & peopled and fauna'd^c & flora'd^c them eccentrically. The almighty has a vein of humor. he made these planets & peopled them to give amusements to beings on the rest of the celestial plantation. The men were 800 miles long & $\frac{1}{4}$ inch thick. they slept on telegraph poles, and animals with bodies as big as a pea with 900^c eyes each as big as a saucer lived on these long men by catching them by the feet & sucking them in like macaroni^f

In the most charming nook in Paradise amid surroundings more beautiful than are^b imaginatively conceivable, in a palace dwell Gabreal & Evangeline,⁹ each endowed with a capacity capable of enjoying that which DeQuincy,¹⁰

^c had he a brain 300 miles in diameter full of opium would never imagine—

\tAD, NjWOE, Lab., N-81-04-30:103 (*TAED* N306:45; *TAEM* 41:1200). ^aFirst line canceled and followed by dividing mark. ^bInterlined above. ^cObscured overwritten text. ^dCanceled. ^e"water closets in Hades" interlined above. ^fFollowed by dividing mark.

1. The circumstances surrounding the creation of this document are entirely unknown. Although highly unusual, the document is not unprecedented in form or tone; see Doc. 523.

2. Charles Hughes made most of the entries in this notebook in the late spring and summer.

Edison wrote this document amid a number of unused pages following a single entry dated 20 October. However, it lies between undated pages of ambiguous notes and drawings that may pertain to the disk dynamo armature that he designed in April, May, and June. These are followed first by Edison's genealogical notes and then a Hughes entry dated 12 June.

3. This Paris street is a thoroughfare to the site of the Bastille. In *A Tale of Two Cities*, Charles Dickens portrayed the St. Antoine section of Paris near the Bastille as an overcrowded slum, which it was during the French Revolution and in Dickens's own time. Sanders 1988, 43–44.

4. Edison's meaning is unclear. He may have been using an obscure form of cithern or cittern, a stringed instrument similar to the zither popular in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. The instrument was frequently decorated with a grotesquely carved head, from which arose "cittern head" and "cittern-headed" as terms of contempt. *OED*, s.vv. "cithern," "cithern."

5. Centaurus.

6. Sirius.

7. Literally, "wandering Jew."

8. Andalusia, a fertile region of southern Spain. *WGD*, "Andalusia."

9. Henry Wordsworth Longfellow's 1847 epic poem *Evangeline* told the story of the heroine and Gabriel, separated on their wedding day by the British expulsion of the Acadians from Nova Scotia. Calhoun 2004, chap. 9.

10. Thomas De Quincey (1785–1859), English critic, essayist, and exponent of German philosophy, was most noted for his 1821 work, *Confessions of an English Opium-Eater*. *Oxford DNB*, s.v. "De Quincy, Thomas."