

III

MAY, 1853

(ÆT. 35)

May 1. Sunday. A cold northwest wind. Now, on my return to Concord, I am struck by the increased greenness of the country, or landscape.

I find that since I left Concord, April 11th, there have blossomed here, probably nearly in the following order, these plants, including those I saw in Haverhill: dandelion, field horse-tail, *Antennaria plantaginifolia*, sweet-gale, epigæa, *Populus grandidentata*, *Salix tristis*, *Viola ovata* (Ellen Emerson found it April 20th), *Potentilla Canadensis*, comptonia, *Thalictrum anemonoides*, *Anemone nemorosa*, *V. blanda*, *P. balsamifera*, *Aquilegia Canadensis*, *Hedysotis cœrulea*, andromeda, *Fragaria Virginiana* (?) (distinguished from the other species in fruit), *Salix alba*, benzoin, *Amelanchier Canadensis* var. *Botryapium*. Peach, cultivated cherry, and the following apparently just begun: *Viola pedata*, *Ostrya Virginica*, *V. cucullata* (Ellen Emerson says she saw it the 30th ult.; it is to be looked for at Depot Field Brook). And *Rumex Acetosella* shows red and is eight inches high on Columbine Cliff.

The expanding leaves of the sugar maples now make small crosses against the sky. Other conspicuous green leaves are the gooseberry, currant, elder,

the willows just beginning, and alder, and apple trees and high blackberry, amelanchier, meadow-sweet, beside many herbaceous plants. *Drosera* (round-leaved) leaves now. Sedge-grass (early sedge) very abundant still. The *Vaccinium Pennsylvanicum* is just ready to bloom and also the *vacillans* nearly. These things observed on way—

To Cliffs.

The oak leaves on the plain are fallen. The colors are now: light blue above (where is my cyanometer? Saussure invented one, and Humboldt used it in his travels); landscape russet and greenish, spotted with fawn-colored plowed lands, with green pine and gray or reddish oak woods intermixed, and dark-blue or slate-colored water here and there. It is greenest in the meadows and where water has lately stood, and a strong, invigorating scent comes up from the fresh meadows. It is like the greenness of an apple faintly or dimly appearing through the russet.

A phœbe's nest and one cream-colored white egg at the spring-house; nest of mud, lined with grass and edged with hypnum. Channing has seen a robin's nest and eggs. I hear a black and white creeper at the Cliffs, and a chewink.

The shrub oaks are well budded. The young ivy leaves are red on Cliffs. Oaks and hickory buds just ready to open. How aromatic the balm-of-Gilead buds now!

The large woolly ferns and others stand up a foot on banks. The skunk-cabbage leaves green the warm, springy meads.

Was it not the black and yellow or spotted warbler¹ I saw by the Corner Spring? Apparently black, brown-striped, with a yellow rump and also yellow wing, shoulders, and sides of breast, with a large black spot on breast; size of phoebe nearly; note somewhat like yellowbird. Yet I think it much too dark for the myrtle-bird.

Columbine Cliff a place to look for early rue anemones and *nemorosa* and dandelions. The columbines have been out some days. How ornamental to these dark-colored perpendicular cliffs, nodding from the clefts and shelves!

The barn swallow is about.

Have we the *Viola lanceolata*?² Is not the *Botryopium* our earliest variety of amelanchier, and what difference in the fruit?

Channing says he has heard the wood thrush, brown thrasher, and stake-driver (?), since I have been gone. This and last page for birds which I find come in the interval. Did I not see the oven-bird yesterday?

May 2. Summer yellowbird on the opening *Salix alba*. Chimney swallows and the bank or else cliff ditto. Small pewee?

Our earliest gooseberry in garden has bloomed. What is that pondweed-like plant floating in a pool near Breed's, with a slender stem and linear leaves and a small whorl of minute leaves on the surface,

¹ *Vide* May 10th.

² Yes. *Vide* Hubbard's meadow, by willows.

and nutlets in the axils of the leaves, along the stem, as if now out of bloom?¹ Missouri currant.

May 4. Cattle are going up country. Hear the *tull-tull* of the chickadee (?).² The currant in bloom. The Canada plum just ready, probably to-day.³

8 A. M. — To Walden and Cliffs.

The sound of the oven-bird. Caterpillar nests two or three inches in diameter on wild cherries; caterpillars one third of an inch long.

The *Vaccinium Pennsylvanicum* appeared yesterday. The *vacillans*, *resinosum* (?), and early high blueberry will bloom in a few days. *Vide* *Cerasus pumila* by shanty path, and wild red ditto, as early. The white birch leaves are beginning to expand and are shining with some sticky matter. I must attend to their fragrance. In a warm place on the Cliffs one of their catkins shows its anthers, the golden pendant.

The woods and paths next them now ring with the silver jingle of the field sparrow, the medley of the brown thrasher, the honest *qui vive* of the chewink, or his jingle from the top of a low copse tree, while his

¹ *Callitriche verna*.

² [The word "chickadee" is crossed out and "myrtle-bird" substituted, which latter is in turn crossed out and replaced by "white-throat sparrow." The final correction would seem to have been made some years after the original entry, for in January, 1858, we find Thoreau getting what appears to be his first intimation as to the real authorship of this song (see *Journal*, vol. x.). In the manuscript notes of the excursion to the Maine Woods in 1857, the song of the white-throat is still attributed to the "myrtle-bird."]

³ Not before the 7th.

mate scratches in the dry leaves beneath; the black and white creeper is hopping along the oak boughs, head downward, pausing from time to time to utter its note like a fine, delicate saw-sharpening; and ever and anon rises clear over all the smooth, rich melody of the wood thrush. Could that have been a jay? I think it was some large, uncommon woodpecker that uttered that very loud, strange, cackling note.

The dry woods have the smell of fragrant everlasting. I am surprised by the cool drops which now, at 10 o'clock, drop from the flowers of the amelanchier, while other plants are dry, as if these had attracted more moisture. The white pines have started.

The indigo-bird and mate; dark throat and light beneath, and white spot on wings, which is not described; a hoarse note, and rapid the first two or three syllables, -- *twe twe twee*, dwelling on the last, or *twe twe twee-e*, or as if an *r* in it, *tre*, etc., not musical. The myrtle-bird, which makes me think the more that I saw the black and yellow warbler on Sunday.

I find apparently two varieties of the amelanchier, — the first I noticed, with *smooth* reddish delicate leaves and somewhat linear petals and loose racemes, petals sometimes pinkish; the second to-day, perhaps a little later than the first, leaves light-colored and downy and petals broader and perhaps not quite so long as the first, racemes more crowded. I am not sure that this is the variety *oblongifolium* of Gray.¹

It is stated in the Life of Humboldt that he proved

¹ This appears to be the *Pyrus ovalis* or swamp pyrus of Bigelow and Willdenow.

“that the expression, ‘the ocean reflects the sky,’ was a purely poetical, but not a scientifically correct one, as the sea is often blue when the sky is almost totally covered with light white clouds.” He used Saussure’s cyanometer even to measure the color of the sea. This might probably be used to measure the intensity of the color of blue flowers like lupines at a distance. Humboldt speaks of its having been proved that pine pollen falls from the atmosphere.

May 6. P. M. — To Nut Meadow Brook and Corner Spring.

Choice plum in gardens. The *Salix alba* is conspicuous and interesting in the landscape now, some bright yellow, truly golden (staminate?), some greenish, filling the air of causeways with a sweet scent. The whole landscape is many shades greener for the rain, almost a blue green. The leafing of the trees has commenced, and the forms of some, accordingly, begin to be defined. Some, however, like the large maples, elms, etc., look heavy and are defined by their samaræ and not yet by their leaves, which are not comparatively forward. I perceive the strong odor of horse-mint, rising dark above the brooks. Hear the loud echoing note of the peet-weet-weet-weet-weet. *Viola cucullata* at John Hosmer’s ditch by Clamshell Hill. Four large robin’s eggs in an apple tree. A ground-bird’s nest with eggs. *Equisetum sylvaticum* in front of Hosmer’s Gorge. I have seen no ducks since I returned from Haverhill on the 29th April. There are pretty large leaves on the young red maples (which have no

flowers), disposed crosswise, as well as on the sugar maple, but not so with larger flowering maples. The maple-tops begin to look red now with the growing keys, at a distance, — crescents of red. *Uvularia sessilifolia* just begun. Common knawel, apparently for some time, though Bigelow says July (?). Those long spear-shaped buds of the viburnum have expanded into dark but handsome leaves rather early; probably *Viburnum nudum*.

As I walk through the village at evening, when the air is still damp after the rainy morning, I perceive and am exhilarated by the sweet scent of expanding leaves. The woods are beginning to be in the gray now; leaves and flower-buds generally expanding, covered with a mealy or downy web (which now reminds me of those plants like gnaphalium, swathed in cotton), a clean dirt, which whitens the coat of the walker.

May 7. Forenoon. — Up North River to stone-heaps.

The willows (*Salix alba*) where I keep my boat resound with the hum of bees and other insects. The leaves of the aspen are perhaps the most conspicuous of any, though the *Salix alba*, from its mass and its flowers in addition, makes the greater impression. I hear the loud cackling of the flicker about the aspen at the rock. A gray squirrel is stealing along beneath. Hundreds of tortoises, painted and wood, are heard hurrying through the dry leaves on the bank, and seen tumbling into the water as my boat approaches; sometimes half a dozen and more are sunning on a floating rail, and one will remain with outstretched neck, its head

moving slowly round in a semicircle, while the boat passes within a few feet. Fresh green meadow-grass is springing up, as the water goes down, and flags. The larch has grown a quarter of an inch or more, studded with green buds; not so forward as the Scotch larch. The hemlock and the pitch pine have also started.

The keys of the white maple are more than half an inch long, not including stem; a dull-purplish cottony white. They make no such show as the red. The keys of the red are longer-stemmed but as yet much smaller. The leaves of the white are perhaps most advanced, yet lost in the fruit. The catkins of the hop-hornbeam, yellow tassels hanging from the trees, which grow on the steep bank of the Assabet, give them a light, graceful, and quite noticeable appearance. It is among the more conspicuous growths now; yet the anthers shed no pollen yet. Smaller trees and limbs which have few or no catkins have leaves, elm-like, already an inch long. The black cherry leaves are among the more conspicuous, more than an inch long. One of the many cherries which have when bruised the strong cherry scent. But this is the strongest and most rummy of all. The black oak buds are considerably expanded, probably more than any oaks. Their catkins are more than half an inch long. The swamp white oak is late, but the tips of the buds show yellowish green. The sugar maple in blossom, probably for a day or two, but since April 30th, though the peduncles are not half their length yet. Apple trees are greened with opening leaves, and their blossom-buds show the red.

As I advance up the Assabet, the lively note of the

yellowbird is borne from the willows, and the creeper is seen busy amid the lichens of the maple, and the loud, jingling *tehe tehe tehe tehe*, etc., of the chip-bird rings along the shore occasionally. The chewink is seen and heard scratching amid the dry leaves like a hen. The woods now begin to ring with the woodland note of the oven-bird. I hear the mew of the first cat-bird, and, soon after, its rich and varied melody; and there sits on a tree over the water the ungainly king-fisher, who flies off with an apparently laborious flight, sounding his alarum.

A few yellow lily pads are already spread out on the surface, tender reddish leaves, with a still crenate or scalloped border like that of some tin platters on which turnovers are cooked, while the muddy bottom is almost everywhere spotted with the large reddish ruffle-like leaves, from the midst of which the flower-stems already stand up a foot, aiming toward the light and heat. That long reddish *bent* grass abounds on the river now. That small kind of pondweed, with a whorl of small leaves on the surface and nutlets already in the axils of the very common linear leaves, is common in the river.

I hear the *witter-che* of the Maryland yellow-throat, also, on the willows. The note of the pectwect resounds along the river, — standing on the rocks laid bare by the fallen water or running along the sandy shore. The rich melody of the thrasher is also heard.

In the frog-spawn (which looks like oats in a jelly, masses as big as the fist), I distinguish the form of the pollywog, which squirms a little. The female flowers

of the sweet-gale, somewhat like but larger and more crowded than the hazel, is now an interesting sight along the edge of the river. That early cross-like plant is a foot high and budded.

The stone-heaps have been formed since I was here before, methinks about a month ago, and for the most part of fresh stones; *i. e.*, piles several feet in diameter by a foot high have evidently been made (no doubt commonly on the ruins of old ones) within a month. The stones are less than the size of a hen's egg, down to a pebble; now all under water. The Haverhill fisherman found the young of the common cel in such, and referred them to it.

I take it to be the small pewee whose smart chirp I hear so commonly. The delicate cherry-like leaf, transparent red, of the shad-bush is now interesting, especially in the sun. Some have green leaves. There is one of the former, five inches in diameter and eighteen or twenty feet high, on the Island, with only four to six flowers to a raceme. Heard a stake-driver. Saw a large snake, I think a black one, drop into the river close by; pursued, and as he found me gaining, he dived when he had reached the middle, and that was the last I saw of him. Fishing has commenced in the river. A white-throated sparrow (*Fringilla Pennsylvanica*) died in R. W. E.'s garden this morning. Half the streak over eye yellow. A passer. The odor of the sweet-briar along the side of a house. Riding through Lincoln, found the peach bloom now in prime, generally a dark pink with a lighter almost white inmixed, more striking from the complete absence of leaves,

and especially when seen against the green of pines. I can find no wild gooseberry in bloom yet. The barberry bushes are in some places now quite green.

Various grasses in bloom for a week.

With respect to leafing, the more conspicuous and forward trees and shrubs are the following, and nearly in this order, as I think, and these have formed *small* leaves: Gooseberry, aspens (not *grandidentata*), willows, *young* maples of all kinds, balm-of-Gilead (?), elder, meadow-sweet, black cherry, and is that Jersey tea on Island? or diervilla? ostrya, alder, white birch and the three others, *Pyrus arbutifolia* (?), apple, amelanchier, choke(?)-cherry, dwarf ditto, wild red, *Viburnum nudum* (?) and *Lentago*, barberry.

The following are bursting into leaf: Hazel, shrub oak, black oak and red, white pine, larch, cornel, thorns, etc., elms.

Yorrick.¹

Some birds — pewees, ground birds, robins, etc. — have already built nests and laid their eggs, before the leaves are expanded or the fields fairly green. Heard to-day that more slumbrous stertorous sound (not the hoarse one of early frogs) as I paddled up the river. Is it tortoises? These are abundantly out.

The *Viola pedata* with the large pale-blue flower is now quite common along warm sandy banks. The *ovata* is a smaller and darker and striped violet.

May 8. P. M. — To Annursnack.

A long row of elms just set out by Wheeler from his

¹ [This was Thoreau's rendering of the veery's call-note.]

gate to the old Lee place. The planting of so long a row of trees which are so stately and may endure so long deserves to be recorded. In many localities a much shorter row, or even a few scattered trees, set out sixty or a hundred years since, is the most conspicuous as well as interesting relic of the past in sight. Nothing more proves the civility of one's ancestors.

The *Ribes floridum*, wild black currant, just begun by the wooden bridge just this side of the Assabet stone bridge, with dotted leaves. The thimble-berry and high blackberry leaves are among the *most* forward. That large reddish-stemmed cornel shows now narrow green buds tipped with reddish, three quarters of an inch long by one quarter wide.

Some thrashers are plainly better singers than others.

How surprising and interesting this cluster of leek buds on the rock in the Jesse Hosmer farm, composed of thick, succulent green leaves, cactus-like, tipped with dull purple, in buds from a half-inch to three inches in diameter! What tenacity of life! Its leaves so disposed (from circumference to centre) as to break joints. Some place it on a gate-post to grow high and dry above the earth for a curiosity. It may be a convenient symbol.

At the foot of Annursnack, rising from the Jesse Hosmer meadow, was surprised by the brilliant pale scarlet flowers of the painted-cup (*Castilleja coccinea*) just coming into bloom. Some may have been out a day or two. Methinks this the most high-colored and brilliant flower yet, not excepting the columbine.

In color it matches Sophia's cactus blossoms exactly. It is all the more interesting for being a painted leaf and not petal, and its spidery leaves, pinnatifid with linear divisions, increase its strangeness. It is now from three to six inches high, rising from the moist base of the hill. It is wonderful what a variety of flowers may grow within the range of a walk, and how long some very conspicuous ones may escape the most diligent walker, if you do not chance to visit their localities the right week or fortnight, when their signs are out. It is a flaming leaf. The very leaf has flowered; not the ripe tints of autumn, but the rose in the cheek of infancy; a more positive flowering. Still more abundant on the same ground was the *Erigeron bellidifolius*, robin's-plantain,¹ with a pale-purple ray still erect, like a small thimble, not yet horizontal. This, then, its very earliest date. Neither of these did I see last year, and I was affected as if I had got into a new botanical district. A kind of mint,² shoots now six or eight inches high, with a velvety purple or lake under surface to leaves.

They have cut off the woods, and with them the shad-bush, on the top of Annursnack, but laid open new and wider prospects. The landscape is in some respects more interesting because of the overcast sky, threatening rain; a cold southwest wind. I am struck and charmed by the quantity of forest, especially in the southwest, after having witnessed the bareness of the Haverhill country. It is as if every farmer had a beautiful garden and boundless plantations of trees

¹ *Vide* May 15th.

² The soft-leaved calamint.

and shrubs, such as no imperial wealth can surpass. The pyramidal pine-tops are now seen rising out of a reddish mistiness of the deciduous trees just bursting into leaf. A week ago the deciduous woods had not this misty look,¹ and the evergreens were more sharply divided from them, but now they have the appearance of being merged in or buoyed up in a mist. I am not [*sic*] sure what is the cause of the reddish line around the lower edges of the wood. It is plainly the red maple, and in many places, no doubt, the shrub oak. The oaks are plainly more gray already and some trees greenish. *Vide* again after a week.

The catkins of the black birch appear more advanced than those of the white birch. They are very large, four inches long, half a dozen gracefully drooping at the ends of the twigs bent down by their weight, conspicuous at a distance in wisps, as if dry leaves left on, very rich golden. The yellow birch is the first I have noticed fully in bloom, — considerably in advance of the others. Its flowers smell like its bark. Methinks the black and the paper birch next, and then the white, or all nearly together. The leaves of the *papyracea* unfold like a fan and are sticky. How fresh and glossy! And the catkins I gather shed pollen the next morning.

Some hickory buds are nearly two inches long. The handsome finely divided leaves of the *pedicularis* are conspicuous. It is now budded amid the painted-cups. The fruit of the *Populus grandidentata* appears puffed up and blasted into a large bright yellow [*sic*], like some

¹ [Two interrogation-points in pencil here.]

plums some seasons. The thorn bushes have so far
 leaved out on the north side of Annurnsack as
 to reveal their forms, as I look up the hill and see
 them against the light. They are remarkably uni-
 form, somewhat like this, the leading shoot finally
 rising above the rest, somewhat like a broad poplar.

May 9. Since I returned from Haverhill, not only I
 find the ducks are gone, but I no longer hear the *chill-
 lill* of the blue snowbird or the sweet strains of the
 fox-colored sparrow and the tree sparrow. The robin's
 strain is less remarkable.

I have devoted most of my day to Mr. Alcott. He
 is broad and genial, but indefinite; some would say
 feeble; forever feeling about vainly in his speech and
 touching nothing. But this is a very negative account
 of him, for he thus suggests far more than the sharp
 and definite practical mind. The feelers of his thought
 diverge, — such is the breadth of their grasp, — not
 converge; and in his society almost alone I can express
 at my leisure, with more or less success, my vaguest
 but most cherished fancy or thought. There are never
 any obstacles in the way of our meeting. He has no
 creed. He is not pledged to any institution. The sanest
 man I ever knew; the fewest crotchets, after all, has he.¹

It has occurred to me, while I am thinking with plea-
 sure of our day's intercourse, "Why should I not think
 aloud to you?" Having each some shingles of thought
 well dried, we walk and whittle them, trying our knives,
 and admiring the clear yellowish grain of the pump-

¹ [Walden, p. 296; Riv. 416.]

kin pine. We wade so gently and reverently, or we pull
 together so smoothly, that the fishes of thought are
 not scared from the stream, but come and go grandly,
 like yonder clouds that float peacefully through the
 western sky. When we walk it seems as if the heavens
 — whose mother-o'-pearl and rainbow tints come and
 go, form and dissolve — and the earth had met to-
 gether, and righteousness and peace had kissed each
 other. I have an ally against the arch-enemy. A blue-
 robed man dwells under the blue concave. The blue
 sky is a distant reflection of the azure serenity that
 looks out from under a human brow.¹ We walk to-
 gether like the most innocent children, going after
 wild pinks with case-knives. Most with whom I en-
 deavor to talk soon fetch up against some institution
 or particular way of viewing things, theirs not being a
 universal view. They will continually bring their own
 roofs or — what is not much better — their own narrow
 skylights between us and the sky, when it is the unob-
 structed heavens I would view. Get out of the way
 with your old Jewish cobwebs. Wash your windows.²

Saw on Mr. Emerson's firs several parti-colored
 warblers, or finch creepers (*Sylvia Americana*), a
 small blue and yellow bird, somewhat like but smaller
 than the indigo-bird; quite tame, about the buds
 of the firs, now showing red; often head downward.
 Heard no note. He says it has been here a day or
 two.

At sundown paddled up the river.

¹ [Walden, p. 297; Riv. 416, 417.]

² [Cape Cod, and Miscellanies, p. 469; Misc. Riv. 271.]

The pump-like note of a stake-driver from the fenny place across the Lee meadow.

The greenest and rankest grass as yet is that in the water along the sides of the river. The hylodes are peeping. I love to paddle now at evening, when the water is smooth and the air begins to be warm. The rich warble of blackbirds about retiring is loud and incessant, not to mention the notes of numerous other birds. The black willow has started, but not yet the button-bush. Again I think I heard the night-warbler. Now, at starlight, that same nighthawk or snipe squeak is heard, but no hovering. The first bat goes suddenly zigzag overhead through the dusky air; comes out of the dusk and disappears into it. That slumbrous, snoring croak, far less ringing and musical than the toad's (which is occasionally heard), now comes up from the meadow's edge. I save a floating plank, which exhales and imparts to my hands the rank scent of the muskrats which have squatted on it. I often see their fresh green excrement on rocks and wood. Already men are fishing for pouts.

This has been almost the first warm day; none yet quite so warm. Walking to the Cliffs this afternoon, I noticed, on Fair Haven Hill, a season stillness, as I looked over the distant budding forest and heard the buzzing of a fly.

May 10. 5 A. M. — Up railroad.

The *veery* note after having heard the *yorrick* for some days, in the primitive-looking pine swamp. Heard also that peculiarly wild evergreen-forest note which

I heard May 6th, from a small, lispng warbler, — *er er ter re rer ree*, — from high in the pines, as if a chickadee (?); or was it the still smaller, slenderer white-bellied bird I saw? Female (?) yellowbird (?) this morning. All at once a strain which sounded like old times and recalled a hundred associations. Not at once did I remember that a year had elapsed since I heard it, and then the idea of the bobolink was formed in my mind, yet I afterward doubted if it was not the imitation of a catbird.¹ Saw a kingbird, looking like [a] large phoebe, on a willow by the river, and heard higher the clear whistle of the oriole. New days, then, have come, ushered in by the warbling vireo, yellowbird, Maryland yellow-throat, and small pewee, and now made perfect by the twittering of the kingbird and the whistle of the oriole amid the elms (for I hear the last in various parts of the town within a few hours), which are but just beginning to leaf out, thinking of his nest there, — if not already the bobolink. The warbling vireo promised warmer days, but the oriole ushers in summer heats.

There is an old pasture behind E. Wood's incrustated with the clay-like thallus of the *bæomyces*, which is unexpectedly thin. The fruit now large.

How far the woodpecker's tapping is heard! And no wonder, for he taps very hard as well as fast, to make a hole, and the dead, dry wood is very resounding withal. Now he taps on one part of the tree, and it yields one note; then on that side, a few inches distant, and it yields another key; propped on its tail the while.

¹ It was the bobolink.

The pear has blossomed. The butternut buds are more advanced than any hickories I have noticed.

P. M. — To Saw Mill Brook and Smith's Hill.

The *Nepeta Glechoma* is out under R. Brown's poles, a pretty deep-blue, half-concealed, violet-like flower. It is the earliest flower of this character. Warm days when you begin to *think* of thin coats.

I proceed down the Turnpike. The masses of the golden willow are seen in the distance on either side the way, twice as high as the road is wide, conspicuous against the distant, still half-russet hills and forests, for the green grass hardly yet prevails over the dead stubble, and the woods are but just beginning to gray. The female willow is a shade greener. At this season the traveller passes through a golden gate on causeways where these willows are planted, as if he were approaching the entrance to Fairyland; and there will surely be found the yellowbird, and already from a distance is heard his note, a *tche tche tche tcha tchar tcha*, — ah, willow, willow. Could not he truly arrange for us the difficult family of the willows better than Borrer, or Barratt of Middletown? And as he passes between the portals, a sweet fragrance is wafted to him; he not only breathes but scents and tastes the air, and he hears the low humming or susurrus of a myriad insects which are feeding on its sweets. It is, apparently, these that attract the yellowbird. The golden gates of the year, the *May-gate*. The traveller cannot pass out of Concord by the highways in any direction without passing between such portals, — graceful, curving,

drooping, wand-like twigs, on which leaves and blossoms appear together.

It is remarkable that I saw this morning for the first time the bobolink, gold robin, and kingbird, — and have since heard the first two in various parts of the town and am satisfied that they have just come, — and, in the woods, the veery note. I hear the ringing sound of the toads borne on the rippling wind as I keep down the causeway.

He is the richest who has most use for nature as raw material of tropes and symbols with which to describe his life. If these gates of golden willows affect me, they correspond to the beauty and promise of some experience on which I am entering. If I am overflowing with life, am rich in experience for which I lack expression, then nature will be my language full of poetry, — all nature will *fable*, and every natural phenomenon be a myth. The man of science, who is not seeking for expression but for a fact to be expressed merely, studies nature as a dead language. I pray for such inward experience as will make nature significant.

That sedum (?) by Tuttle's is now a foot high; has no great cactus-like buds, and is quite distinct from the house-leek in Jesse Hosmer's field. What is it? A gooseberry which has been in blossom for some time, by the roadside on the left, between Wright's and Hosmer's old place. It is apparently *Ribes hirtellum*. Is that the swamp gooseberry of Gray, now just beginning to blossom at Saw Mill Brook? It has a divided style and stamens, etc., as yet not longer than the

calyx, though my slip has no thorns nor prickles. The leaves are deeply divided and glossy. But what is the *stout, prickly* gooseberry in the garden, with *divided* style? It seems the *Cynosbati* of Bigelow, yet not of Gray. A cerastium, apparently *viscosum*, on right hand just beyond the Hosmer house. What kind? A wild red cherry (*Cerasus Pennsylvanica*) just out by the first-named gooseberry. I was surprised by the number of bees above this gooseberry's blossoms, small and inconspicuous as they are. Indeed there is scarcely a flower which is not immediately found out by insects, and their coming must be coincident with flowers and leaves. Some of the most forward plantain-leaved antennaria is already pinkish at top.

You hear the clear whistle and see the red or fiery orange of the oriole darting through Hosmer's orchard. But its note is not melodious and rich. It is at most a clear tone, the healthiest of your city beaux and belles.

When I heard the first bobolink strain this morning I could not at first collect myself enough to tell what it was I heard,—a reminiscence of last May in all its prime occurring in the midst of the experience of this in its unripe state. Suddenly, the season being sufficiently advanced, the atmosphere in the right condition, these flashing, scintillating notes are struck out from it where that dark mote disappears through it, as sparks by a flint, with a tinkling sound. This flashing, tinkling meteor bursts through the expectant meadow air, leaving a train of tinkling notes behind. Successive regiments of birds arrive and are disbanded in our fields, like soldiers still wearing their

regimentals. I doubted at first if it were not a strain brought on a few days in advance by an imitative catbird or thrush (?) from where he had been staying.

Within a day or more, a lower and decidedly downy and small racemed amelanchier has opened, and I think that the first and slightly downy and greenish-leaved ones are associated with the decidedly smooth and red-leaved *Botryapium*. Is not this now the most conspicuous native flower? The *Vaccinium vacillans* is out.

The three colored violets, as I observe them this afternoon, are thus distinguished: the *ovata*, a dark lilac, especially in sun; the *cucullata*, oftenest slaty-blue, sometimes lilac, deeper within, more or less pale and striped; the *pedata*, large, exposed, clear pale-blue with a white spot. None like the sky, but *pedata* most like it; lilac *ovata* least like it. Yet the last is the richest-colored. The *pedata* often pale to whiteness. It begins now to be quite obvious along the side of warm and sandy woodland paths.

Saw, quite near, a skunk, in a cloud of long, coarse black and white hair, within a rod and a half, sharply staring at me with head to the ground, with its black, shining, bead-like eyes. It was at the edge of its hole. Its head is so narrow, and snout long and pointed, that it can make those deep holes in the spring. By the way, what makes these innumerable little punctures just through the grass in woodland paths, as with a stick? Is this, too, by the skunk?

The chestnut leaves are now commonly as far unfolded as the larger maples and earlier oaks and more than the elm; yet perhaps it should come after the

red and black oaks. The aspen *leaves* (*P. tremuliformis*), at least a few days since, were decidedly the most forward and conspicuous of any tree, and are still, I think, being more than an inch in diameter, light-green, but open and trembling and not in dense masses. Only the rather rare paper birch and an occasional white birch in a favorable place (I see no black nor yellow ones this afternoon) can be compared with it, and such, indeed, make now, at last, a denser green; but in the case of the golden willow it is as much flowers as leaves that make the show. But the *P. grandidentata* which have flowered show no leaves yet; only very young ones, small downy leaves now. Of sizable wild trees which blossom, the most forward in respect to leafing, methinks, are the tremble, the willows, wild black cherry, the birches (the *papyracea* especially), balm-of-Gilead, *Ostrya*. The spring growth of the larch is the most conspicuous of evergreens [*sic*], though its buds have not pushed out so far as the white pines. As on the late willows, so on the oaks, catkins and leaves appearing together. Both leaf and flower buds of the oaks, especially shrub oaks and red and black, are reddish (the white and swamp white are not at present), and hence the *reddish* mistiness of the deciduous woods at present.

At Saw Mill Brook, I see the flower-buds of the nodding trillium. I sit on a rock in Saw Mill Brook.

The hornbeam (*Carpinus*) is just ready to bloom, its hop-like catkins, shorter than those of the *Ostrya*, do not shed pollen just yet.¹ I was in search of this,

¹ Does next morning in pitcher.

and, not observing it at first, and having forgotten it, I sat down on a rock, with the thought that if I sat there quietly a little while I might see some flower or other object about me; unexpectedly, as I cast my eyes upward, over my head stretched a spreading branch of the carpinus full of small catkins with anthers now reddish, spread like a canopy just over my head. As it is best to sit in a grove and let the birds come to you, so, as it were, even the flowers will come to you.

I sit here surrounded by hellebores eighteen inches high or more, with handsome, regular, plaited leaves, regularly arranged around the erect stems, and a multitude of ferns are unrolling themselves, altogether making the impression of a tropical vegetation.

I hear, and have for a week, in the woods, the note of one or more small birds somewhat like a yellow-bird's. What is it? Is it the redstart? I now see one of these. The first I have distinguished. And now I feel pretty certain that my black and yellow warbler of May 1st was this. As I sit, it inquisitively hops nearer and nearer. It is one of the election-birds of rare colors which I can remember, mingled dark and reddish. This reminds me that I supposed much more variety and fertility in nature before I had learned the numbers and the names of each order. I find that I had expected such fertility in our Concord woods alone as not even the completest museum of stuffed birds of all the forms and colors from all parts of the world comes up to. The neat and active creeper hops about the trunks, its note like a squeaking twig.

I leave the woods and begin to ascend Smith's

Hill along the course of the rill. The anemonies with reddish-pink buds stand thick amid the loose grass under protecting brush or fagots, about rocks and young trees.

From the hill, I look westward over the landscape. The deciduous woods are in their hoary youth, every expanding bud swaddled with downy webs. From this more eastern hill, with the whole breadth of the river valley on the west, the mountains appear higher still, the width of the blue border is greater, — not mere peaks, or a short and shallow sierra, but a high blue table-land with broad foundations, a deep and solid base or tablet, in proportion to the peaks that rest on it. As you ascend, the near and low hills sink and flatten into the earth; no sky is seen behind them; the distant mountains rise. The truly great are distinguished. Vergers, crests of the waves of earth, which in the highest break at the summit into granitic rocks over which the air beats. A part of their hitherto concealed base is seen blue. You see, not the domes only, but the body, the façade, of these terrene temples. You see that the foundation answers to the superstructure. Moral structures. (The sweet-fern leaves among odors now.) The successive lines of haze which divide the western landscape, deeper and more misty over each intervening valley, are not yet very dense; yet there is a light atmospheric line along the base of the mountains for their whole length, formed by this denser and grosser atmosphere through which we look next the earth, which almost melts them into the atmosphere, like the contact of

molten metal with that which is unfused; but their pure, sublimed tops and main body rise, palpable sky-land above it, like the waving signal of the departing who have already left these shores. It will be worth the while to observe carefully the direction and altitude of the mountains from the Cliffs. The value of the mountains in the horizon, — would not that be a good theme for a lecture? The text for a discourse on real values, and permanent; a sermon on the mount. They are stepping-stones to heaven, — as the rider has a horse-block at his gate, — by which to mount when we would commence our pilgrimage to heaven; by which we gradually take our departure from earth, from the time when our youthful eyes first rested on them, — from this bare actual earth, which has so little of the hue of heaven. They make it easier to die and easier to live. They let us off.

(With Alcott almost alone is it possible to put all institutions behind us. Every other man owns some stock in this or that one, and will not forget it.)

Whether any picture by a human master hung on our western wall could supply their place. Whether to shovel them away and level them would really smooth the way to the true west. Whether the skies would not weep over their scars. They are valuable to mankind as is the iris of the eye to a man. They are the path of the translated. The undisputed territory between earth and heaven. In our travels rising higher and higher, we at length got to where the earth was blue. Suggesting that this earth, unless our conduct curse it, is as celestial as that sky. They are the

pastures to which we drive our thoughts on these 20ths of May. (George Baker told me the other day that he had driven cows to Winchendon, forty miles, in one day.) Men often spend a great deal on a border to their papered walls, of the costliest figure and colors, ultramarine (or what other?). This color bears a price like precious stones. We may measure our wealth, then, by the number of square rods of superficial *blue* earth in our earth border. Such proportion as it bears to the area of the visible earth, in such proportion are we heavenly-minded. Yet I doubt if I can find a man in this country who would not think it better if they were converted into solid gold, which could in no case be a blessing to all, but only a curse to a few, — and so they would be stepping-stones to hell.

Return by Mill Brook Ditch Path. There is now a multiplicity of sounds, in which the few faint spring ones are drowned. The birds are in full blast, singing, warbling, chirping, humming. Yet we do not receive more ideas through our ears than before. The storms and ducks of spring have swept by and left us to the repose of summer, the farmers to the ignoble pursuits of planting and hoeing corn and potatoes. The summer is not bracing, as when you hear the note of the jay in the cool air of October from the rustling chestnut woods. Hear the night-warbler now distinctly. It does not soon repeat its note, and disappears with the sound. I mistook a distant farmer's horn calling the men to early tea for the low hum of a bee in the grass. Heard a tree-toad. The pond, Walden, has risen considerably since the melting.

May 11. 5 A. M. — In the morning and evening, when waters are still and smooth, and dimpled by innate currents only, not disturbed by foreign winds and currents of the air, and reflect more light than at noonday. [*Sic.*]

P. M. — To Corner Spring *via* Hubbard's Bathing-Place.

The buck-bean is budded, but hard to find now. The *Viola lanceolata* is now abundant thereabouts, methinks larger and quite as fragrant (which is not saying much) as the *blanda*. How long has it been open? It is a warm afternoon, and great numbers of painted and spotted tortoises are lying in the sun in the meadow. I notice that the thin scales are peeling off of one of the painted and curled up more than half an inch at the edges, and others look as if they had just lost them, the dividing-line being of a dull cream-color. Has this lying in the sun anything to do with it? I nearly stepped upon a song sparrow and a striped snake at the same time. The bird fluttered away almost as if detained. I thought it was a case of charming, without doubt, and should think so still if I had not found her nest with five eggs there, which will account for her being so near the snake that was about to devour her. The amelanchier has a sickish fragrance. It must be the myrtle-bird which is now so common in Hubbard's Meadow Woods or Swamp, with a note somewhat like a yellowbird's, striped olive-yellow and black on back or shoulders, light or white beneath, black dim; restless bird; sharp head. The catbird has a squeaking and split note with some clear whistles.

The late pipes (*limosum*?), now nearly a foot high, are very handsome, like Oriental work, their encircled columns of some precious wood or gem, or like small bamboos, from Oriental jungles. Very much like art. The gold-thread, apparently for a day or two, though few flowers compared with buds; not at once referred to its leaf, so distant on its thread-like peduncle. The water-saxifrage also for a day or two in some places, on its tall, straight stem, rising from its whorl of leaves. Sorrel now fairly out in some places. I will put it under May 8th. A high blueberry by Potter's heater piece. A yellow lily.

The red-eye at the spring; quite a woodland note. The different moods or degrees of wildness and poetry of which the song of birds is the keynote. The wood thrush Mr. Barnum never hired nor can, though he could bribe Jenny Lind and put her into his cage. How many little birds of the warbler family are busy now about the opening buds, while I sit by the spring! They are almost as much a part of the tree as its blossoms and leaves. They come and give it voice. Its twigs feel with pleasure their little feet clasping them.

I hear the distant drumming of a partridge. Its beat, however distant and low, falls still with a remarkably forcible, almost painful, impulse on the ear, like veritable little drumsticks on our tympanum, as if it were a throbbing or fluttering in our veins or brows or the chambers of the ear, and belonging to ourselves. — as if it were produced by some little insect which had made its way up into the passages of the ear, so penetrating is it. It is as palpable to the

ear as the sharpest note of a fife. Of course, that bird can drum with its wings on a log which can go off with such a powerful whirl, beating the air. I have seen a thoroughly frightened hen and cockerel fly almost as powerfully, but neither can sustain it long. Beginning slowly and deliberately, the partridge's beat sounds faster and faster from far away under the boughs and through the aisles of the wood until it becomes a regular roll, but is speedily concluded. How many things shall we not see and be and do, when we walk there where the partridge drums!

As I stand by the river in the truly warm sun, I hear the low trump of a bullfrog, but half sounded, — doubting if it be really July, — some bassoon sounds, as it were the tuning that precedes the summer's orchestra; and all is silent again. How the air is saturated with sweetness on causeways these willowy days! The willow alone of trees as yet makes light, often *rounded masses* of verdure in large trees, stage above stage. But oftenest they are cut down at the height of four or five feet and spread out thence. There appear to be most clouds in the horizon on [one] of these days of drifting downy clouds, because, when we look that way, more fall within our field of view, but when we look upward, overhead we see the true proportion of clear blue.

The mountains are something solid which is blue, a *terra firma* in the heavens; but in the heavens there is nothing but the air. Blue is the color of the day, and the sky is blue by night as well as by day, because it knows no night.

May 12. 5.30 A. M. — To Nawshawtuct by river.

The first considerable fog I have noticed, at first as high as the trees, curling gray over the water now beneath me, as I paddle my boat, and through it I see the welling dimples of the still stream. You are pretty sure now to hear the stake-driver farther or nearer, morning or evening. Thought I heard a tanager. What are those dark-brown striped sparrow-like birds, rather tame, on hickories, size of myrtle-bird, mottled with black on breast and more or less distinct yellowish on rump and wing shoulder, at least on male; somewhat brown-creeper-looking, without long bill? The fog has now risen up as high as the houses at 6.15 and mingled with the smokes of the town. The first [*sic*] are puffed up as if they were cold, to nearly twice their size, as they sit on willows. The yellowbird has another note, *tchut tchut tchar te tchit e war*.

P. M. — To Black Birch Woods and Yellow Birch Swamp.

Veronica serpyllifolia at Flint's and along the roadsides, apparently for some time, for not only are there some frost-bitten flowers, but pods alone as large as flowers, even as if they belonged to last year. Yet is it any earlier than May? A pretty but minute bluish flower.

Some grass is seen to wave in the distance on the side of N. Barrett's warm hill, showing the lighter under sides. That is a soft, soothing, June-like impression when the most forward grass is seen to wave and the sorrel looks reddish. The year has the down

of youth on its cheek. This, too, is the era of the bobolink, now, when apple trees are ready to burst into bloom. Now it is too late to retreat from the summer adventure. You have passed the Rubicon, and will spend your summer here. Lately, for a few days, the note of the pine warbler rang through the woods, but now it is lost in the notes of other birds. Then each song was solo. Its *vetter vetter vetter vetter* rang through silent woods. Now I rarely hear it. A yellow butterfly.

The river meadows from Barrett's wall are very green where the water has gone down. A wild pear in blossom on Ponkawtasset, detected by its uprightness and no large limbs; but the blossoms, being white, are not so handsome as the apple, but are earlier.

The *V. cucullata* are large and conspicuous on Barrett's side-hill. The *ovata* blue the ground in the Boulder Field. These and the *pedata* are all more or less lilac-colored, and it produces a pleasing bewilderment to pass from clump to clump, and one species to another, and say which is the most lilac. Putting one cluster beside another more lilac, the first no longer seems lilac at all. Has not violet then always some lilac in it?

The birches (white) are now rapidly and conspicuously greening. They make the first conspicuous mass of green amid the evergreens; not grayish or hoary like the oaks; a closer-woven light-green vest. The black birch is now a beautiful sight, its long, slender, bushy branches waving in the wind (the leaf-buds but just beginning to unfold), with countless little tassel-like bunches of five or six golden catkins, spotted with

brown and three inches long, one bunch at the end of each drooping twig, hanging straight down, or dangling like heads of rye, or blown off at various angles with the horizon. All these, seen against the sky on the otherwise bare trees, make an exceedingly graceful outline, the catkin is so large and conspicuous. (On the white birch the catkins are more slender, and are concealed by the more forward leaves.) The reddish long female flowers are detected in the axils lower down. I notice that the staminate ones are apparently torn by birds, pecking at insects. Not a bunch is perfect. The yellow birch is considerably the most forward, — its flowers, not, perhaps, its leaves, which last are only expanded on young trees, though here is one large one leaved out. The yellow birch first, then the black or the paper birch, then the white. The staminate flowers of the yellow birch are already imbrowned and dry, and the female flowers large and hop-like, one inch long. The twigs of this tree are, methinks, still longer and slenderer than those of the black birch, a yard long by one sixth of an inch diameter at base without a branch at the ends of the limbs, or a yard and a half by a third of an inch with a little fork near the end, or often three inches in diameter by more than twenty feet; and so is described the whole tree, of long slender branches springing from the height of five or six feet upward in the form of a great brush. I do not know another place in town where there are black birches enough to give you the effect of a forest of these trees, but in a swamp here. They are so slender and brushy that they yield to the wind, and their tops, with gracefully

drooping twigs bent down by dangling tassel-like catkins, are all inclined one way, sweeping the air, making a peculiarly light and graceful sight.

I am surprised to find the pedicularis, or lousewort, — a yellowish one, — out, on a warm bank near the meadow-edge. The hellebore is the most forward herb, two feet high.

The tupelo shows signs of life, but is later than the black willow; not so late, nearly, as the button-bush. The oaks are in the gray. Some in warm localities already have expanded small leaves, both black, red, and shrub oak. The large light-yellowish scales of the hickory buds, also, are turned back, revealing blossom-buds and little clusters of tender leaves ready to unfold, and the now [*sic*] web of verdure is spreading thick and palpable over the forest. Shade is being born; the summer is pitching its tent; concealment will soon be afforded to the birds in which to build their nests.

The robin nowadays betrays its great bare nest and blue eggs by its anxious peeping at your approach.

Is that the so-called Canada plum, now in bloom twenty rods this side the lime-kiln in the road? And is it ever indigenous here?

The farmers on all sides are mending their fences and turning out their cows to pasture. You see where the rails have been newly sharpened, and the leafing birches have been cut and laid over gaps in the walls, as if old fences were putting forth leaves.

The beautiful round red (?) buds of the grape now, like beads, at long intervals along the bare vine.

William Wheeler has raised a new staring house beyond the Corner Bridge, and so done irreparable injury to a large section of country for walkers. It obliges us to take still more steps after weary ones, to reach the secluded fields and woods. Channing proposes that we petition him to put his house out of sight; that we send it in to him in the form of a round-robin with his name on one side and mine on the other, — so to abate a nuisance.

May 13. Methinks I hear and see the tanager now.

The middle of May is the time for many transient sylvias.

P. M. — To Conantum.

See a goldfinch glance by on the back road and hear its cool watery twitter. A little larger than a yellow-bird, more golden, or paler (?) yellow, with black [*sic*] and on wings. A robin's nest, with young, on the causeway. At Corner Spring, stood listening to a cat-bird, sounding a good way off. Was surprised to detect the singer within a rod and a half on a low twig, the ventriloquist. Should not have believed it was he, if I had not seen the movements of his throat, corresponding to each note, — looking at this near singer whose notes sounded so far away. There is a small bird or two I have not taken pains to identify; one's note, perhaps that of May 6th, *ee, ee, te ter twee*, like a fine squeaking amid the pines.

—'s peach trees in bloom, the richest, highest color of any tree's bloom, like wine compared to beer; the trees, bare of leaves, one mass of pink, some dark, some

light, almost flame-like seen against green hillsides or the red ground where the woods have just been cut. How much more beautiful than the life of the peach-raiser! No such rich pink bloom falling through cracks in the dark shutters irradiates his soul. If only such a peach-bloom hue suffused the dark chambers of his soul! Large masses of bloom with the delicate tint which commonly belongs to minute plants only.

The bass is suddenly as forward in leaf as the white birch; leaves one inch across, how varnished, thin, and transparent! It is apparently the *Myosotis stricta*, now just in flower at Columbine Cliff, scorpion grass, minute and white, three inches high, somewhat like a cerasium. An *Arum triphyllum*, but no signs of pollen yet. Probably was set down too early last year, *i. e.* before pollen. A thorn with expanded leaves, not deeply lobed, and large red scales and a beautifully shining or varnished ash-colored twig. The male sassafras just out, probably yesterday, but the twig end is the sweetest. A big woodpecker enlarging the entrance to its nest in an apple tree. I thought it the echo of carpenters at work on Wheeler's house three quarters of a mile off. It was within four or five rods. How well the woodpecker must know by the ring if the tree is hollow, by this time!

Most of the anthers of the black ash are black and withered or blasted, but the rest show no pollen yet. Still methinks it [*is*] now in bloom; leaf-buds not started. The white ash (male), with its male buds conspicuous but not ready yet, its leaf-buds partly expanded. So, if its flowers are a little later, which is not certain, its

leaves are earlier than the last. The sweet viburnum, apparently equally advanced with the *nudum*, but not so dark-colored, in advance of cornels. Hazelnuts next to birches.

Heard a stake-driver in Hubbard's meadow from Corner road. Thus far off, I hear only, or chiefly, the last dry, hard click or stroke part of the note, sounding like the echo from some near wood of a distant stake-driving. Here only this portion of the note, but close by it is more like pumping, when the dry stroke is accompanied by the incessant sound of the pump.

May 14. Saturday. 9 A. M. — To Wayland by boat.

E. Wood has added a pair of ugly wings to his house, bare of trees and painted white, particularly conspicuous from the river. You might speak of the alar extent of this house, monopolizing so much of our horizon; but alas! it is not formed for flight, after all.

The water is considerably rough to-day, and higher than usual at this season. The black willows have started, but make no show of green. The button-bushes are yet apparently dead. The green buds of yellow lilies are bobbing up and down, already showing more or less yellow; this the most forward sign in the water. The great scalloped platters of their leaves have begun to show themselves on the surface, and the red round leaves of the white lily, now red above as well as below. A myriad of polygonums, potamogetons, and pontederias are pushing up from the bottom, but have not yet reached the surface. Dande-

lions and houstonias, etc., spot the meadows with yellow and white.

The still dead-looking willows and button-bushes are alive with red-wings,¹ now perched on a yielding twig, now pursuing a female swiftly over the meadow, now darting across the stream. No two have epaulets equally brilliant. Some are small and almost white, and others a brilliant vermilion. They are handsomer than the golden robin, methinks. The yellowbird, kingbird, and pewee, beside many swallows, are also seen. But the rich colors and the rich and varied notes of the blackbirds surpass them all.

Passing Conantum under sail at 10 o'clock, the cows in this pasture are already chewing the cud in the thin shade of the apple trees, a picture of peace, already enjoying the luxury of their green pastures. I was not prepared to find the season so far advanced. The breeze which comes over the water, sensibly cooled or freshened by it, is already grateful. Suddenly there start up from the riverside at the entrance of Fair Haven Pond, scared by our sail, two great blue herons, — slate-color rather, — slowly flapping and undulating, their projecting breast-bones very visible, — or is it possibly their necks bent back? — their legs stuck out straight behind. Getting higher by their flight, they straight come back to reconnoitre us.

Land at Lee's Cliff, where the herons have preceded us and are perched on the oaks, conspicuous from afar, and again we have a fair view of their flight.

¹ *Vide* June 11.

We find here, unexpectedly, the warmth of June. The hot, dry scent, or say warm and balmy, from ground amid the pitch pines carpeted with red needles, where a wiry green grass is springing up, reminds us of June and of wild pinks. Under the south side of the Cliff, vegetation seems a fortnight earlier than elsewhere. Not only the beautiful little veronicas (*serpyllifolia*) are abundantly out, and cowslips past their prime, columbines past prime, and saxifrage gone to seed, some of it, and dandelions, and the sod sparkling with the pure, brilliant, spotless yellow of cinquefoil, also violets and strawberries, but the glossy or varnished yellow of buttercups (*bulbosus*, also abundant, some days out) spots the hillside. The south side of these rocks is like a hothouse where the gardener has removed his glass. The air, scented with sweet-briar, may almost make you faint in imagination. The nearer the base of the rock, the more forward each plant. The trees are equally forward, red and black; leaves an inch and a half long and shoots of three inches.

The prospect from these rocks is early-June-like. You notice the tender light green of the birches, both white and paper, and the brown-red tops of the maples where their keys are. Close under the lee of the button-bushes which skirt the pond, as I look south, there is a narrow smooth strip of water, silvery and contrasting with the darker rippled body of the pond. Its edge, or the separation between this, which I will call the polished silvery border of the pond, and the dark and ruffled body, is not a straight line or film,

but an ever-varying, irregularly and finely serrated or fringed border, ever changing as the breeze falls over the bushes at an angle more or less steep, so that this moment it is a rod wide, the next not half so much. Every feature is thus fluent in the landscape.

Again we embark, now having furled our sail and taken to our oars. The air is clear and fine-grained, and as we glide by the hills I can look into the very roots of the grass amid the springing pines in their deepest valleys. The wind rises, but still it is not a cold wind. There is nothing but slate-colored water and a few red pads appearing at Lily Bay.

After leaving Rice's harbor the wind is with us again. What a fine tender *yellow* green from the meadow-grass just pushed up, where the sun strikes it at the right angle! How it contrasts with the dark bluish-green of that rye, already beginning to wave, which covers that little rounded hill by Pantry Brook! Grain waves earlier than grass. How flat the top of the muskrat's head as he swims, and his back, even with it, and then when he dives he ludicrously shows his tail. They look gray and brown, like a  rabbit, now. At Forget-me-not Spring the chrysosplenium beds are very large, rich and deep, almost out of bloom. I find none of the early blackberry in bloom. It is mostly destroyed. Already we pluck and eat the sweet flag and detect small critchierotches. The handsome comandra leaves also are prominent. In the woods which skirt the river near

Deacon Farrar's swamp, the *Populus grandidentata*, just expanding its downy leaves, makes silvery patches in the sun. It is abundant and truly silvery.

The paper birch woods at Fair Haven present this aspect: there is the somewhat dense light green of aspens (*tremuliformis*) and paper birches in the foreground next the water, both of one tint, and occasionally a red maple with brownish-red top, with—equally advanced, aye, more fully expanded, intermixed or a little higher up—very tall and slender amelan-chiers (*Botryapium?*), some twenty-five feet high, on which no signs of fruit, though I have seen them on some; some silvery *grandidentata*, and red and black oaks (some yellowish, some reddish, green), and still reddish-white oaks, just starting; and green pines for contrast, showing the silvery under sides of their leaves or the edges of their dark stages (contrasting with their shaded under sides). These are the colors of the forest-top, — the rug, looking down on it.

Tufts of coarse grass¹ are in full bloom along the riverside, — little islets big enough to support a fisherman.

Again we scare up the herons, who, methinks, will build hereabouts. They were standing by the waterside. And again they alight farther below, and we see their light-colored heads erect, and their bodies at various angles as they stoop to drink. And again they flap away with their great slate-blue wings, necks curled up (?) and legs straight out behind, and, having

¹ *Carex stricta*.

attained a great elevation, they circle back over our heads, now seemingly black as crows against the sky, — crows with long wings, they might be taken for, — but higher and higher they mount by stages in the sky, till heads and tails are lost and they are mere black wavelets amid the blue, one always following close behind the other. They are evidently mated. It would be worth the while if we could see them oftener in our sky.

Some apple trees are fairly out.

What is that small slate-colored hawk with black tips to wings?

May 15. Sunday. P. M. — To Annarsnaock.

Silvery cinquefoil now open. Its petals, perchance, show the green between them, but the beautiful under sides of the leaves more than make up for it. What was that bird beyond the Lee place, with a chickadee-like note, black head and throat, and light color round the neck and beneath; methinks longer and slenderer than the chickadee? The golden willow catkins begin to fall; their prime is past. And buttercups and silvery cinquefoil, and the first apple blossoms, and waving grass beginning to be tinged with sorrel, introduce us to a different season. The huckleberry, *resinosa*, its red flowers are open, in more favorable places several days earlier, probably; and the earliest shrub and red and black oaks in warm exposures may be set down to to-day. A red butterfly goes by. Methinks I have seen them before. The painted-cup is now abundantly and fully out. Six or eight inches high

above its spidery leaves, almost like a red flame, it stands on edge of the hill just rising from the meadow, — on the instep of the hill. It tells of July with its fiery color. It promises a heat we have not experienced yet. This is a field which lies nearer to summer. Yellow is the color of spring; red, of midsummer. Through pale golden and green we arrive at the yellow of the buttercup; through scarlet, to the fiery July red, the red lily.

The first cricket's chirrup which I have chanced to hear now falls on my ear and makes me forget all else; all else is a thin and movable crust down to that depth where he resides eternally. He already foretells autumn. Deep under the dry border of some rock in this hill-side he sits, and makes the finest singing of birds outward and insignificant, his own song is so much deeper and more significant. His voice has set me thinking, philosophizing, moralizing at once. It is not so wildly melodious, but it is wiser and more mature than that of the wood thrush. With this elixir I see clear through the summer now to autumn, and any summer work seems frivolous. I am disposed to ask this humblebee that hurries humming past so busily if he knows what he is about. At one leap I go from the just opened buttercup to the life-everlasting. This singer has antedated autumn. His strain is superior (inferior?)¹ to seasons. It annihilates time and space; the summer is for time-servers.

The *Erigeron bellidifolius* has now spread its rays out flat since last Sabbath. I may set it down to

¹ Exaltedly inferior.

May 10th, methinks. It is the first of what I may call the daisy family, sometimes almost white. What are those large conical-shaped fungi of which I see a dozen round an apple tree?  I thought them pieces of a yellowish wasp-nest, they are so honeycombed.

I looked again on the forest from this hill, which view may contrast with that of last Sunday. The mist produced by the leafing of the deciduous trees has greatly thickened now and lost much of its reddishness in the lighter green of expanding leaves, has become a brownish or yellowish green, except where it has attained distinctness in the light-green foliage of the birch, the earliest distinct foliage visible in *extensive great* masses at a great distance, the aspen not being common. The pines and other evergreens are now fast being merged in a sea of foliage.

The weather has grown rapidly warm. Methinks I wore a greatcoat here last Sunday; now an undercoat is too much. I even think of bathing in the river. I love to sit in the wind on this hill and be blown on. We bathe thus first in air; then, when the air has warmed it, in water.

Here are ten cows feeding on the hill beside me. Why do they move about so fast as they feed? They have advanced thirty rods in ten minutes, and sometimes the [last] one runs to keep up. Is it to give the grass thus a chance to grow more equally and always get a fresh bite? The tall buttercup on the west edge of Painted-Cup Meadow for a day or two at least, and the fringed polygala as long. This side stone bridge, *Barbarea vulgaris*, or common winter cress yellow rocket,

also as long. A thorn will blossom in a day or two, without varnished ashy twigs and with deep-cut lobes.

The following trees and shrubs methinks *leaf* out in nearly the following order. The more questionable, or which I have not seen, are marked — (?).

Gooseberry	Thorns	Swamp white oak
Currant	Waxwork	Chestnut oak
Trembles	Maples (??)	Hardhack (?)
Some willows	Shrub oak	<i>Salix nigra</i>
Young white, red, and sugar maples	Chinquapin oak	Grape
Balm-of-Gilead	Red "	White ash
Elder	Black "	Black "
Meadow-sweet	Scarlet " (?)	Sumach
Diervilla	Hazel	Beech (?)
Black cherry	Larch	Swamp-pink
Ostrya	White pine	Witch-hazel } (?)
Alder	Elm	Nemopanthes } (?)
Paper birch	Hornbeam (??)	Prinos
Black "	Cornels (some later ?)	Clethra
Yellow "	Chestnut	Tupelo
White "	Great-leaved poplar	Mountain laurel (??)
<i>Pyrus arbutifolia</i>	Butternut	Panicled andromeda
Apple	Hickories	Dwarf
Amelanchier	Bass	Rhodora
Choke cherry	Sassafras	Button-bush
Dwarf "	Locust (?)	Hemlock (?) ? (?) ¹
Wild red "	Celtis(?)	White spruce ¹
<i>Viburnum nudum</i>	Pitch pine	Black spruce ¹
" <i>Lentago</i>	<i>Juniperus repens</i>	
Maple-leaved viburnum (?)	Red cedar	
Barberry	White "	
	Arbor-vitæ	
	White oak	

¹ Seen a day or two after the button-bush started. The hemlock appeared later, but it may [be] because it is of slower growth.

May 16. E. Hoar saw the henbit (*Lamium amplexicaule*) a week ago from Mr. Pritchard's garden. Celandine is out a day or more, and rhodora, trillium, and yellow violets yesterday at least. Horse-chestnut to-day. What handsome long yellow, threadlike peduncles to the staminate flowers of the sugar maple! three inches long, tassel-like, appearing with the leaves.

A man is about town with a wagon-load of the *Rhododendron maximum* this evening from Gardiner, Maine. It is well budded; buds nearly an inch long; long, narrow, thick leaves, six inches long or more. He says it means the "rose of Dendrum" and will grow from a mere slip cut off and stuck in any soil, — only water it three times a day!!! No doubt of it.

It has been oppressively warm to-day, the first really warm, sultry-like weather, so that we were prepared for a thunder-storm at evening. At 5 P. M., dark, heavy, wet-looking clouds are seen in the northern horizon, perhaps over the Merrimack Valley, and we say it is going down the river and we shall not get a drop. The main body goes by, there is a shower in the north, and the western sky is suffused with yellow where its thin skirts are withdrawing. People stand at their doors in the warm evening, listening to the muttering of distant thunder and watching the forked lightning, now descending to the earth, now ascending to the clouds. This the first really warm day and thunder-shower. Had thunder-shower while I was in Haverhill in April. Nature appears to have passed a crisis. All slimy reptile life is wide awake. The sprayey dream of the

toad has a new sound; from the meadow the hylodes are heard more distinctly; and the tree-toad chirrups often from the elms (?). The sultry warmth and moister air has called him into life. We smell the fresher and cooler air from where the storm has passed. And now that it has grown dark, the skirts of the cloud seem to promise us a shower. It lightens incessantly right in the west; the right wing of the rear guard of the storm is steadily advancing and firing, and every flash shows the outlines of the cloud. We look out into the dark, and ever and anon comes a sudden illumination blinding our eyes, like a vast glow-worm, succeeded ere long by the roll of thunder. The first pattering of drops is heard; all west windows are hastily shut. The weak-eyed sit with their backs to windows and close the blinds. But we are disappointed, after all, and each flash reveals a narrow strip of evening red through the thin drops below the advancing cloud.

May 17. 5 A. M. — To Island by boat.

Everything has sensibly advanced during the warm and moist night. Some trees, as the small maples in the street, already look verdurous. The air has not sensibly cooled much. The chimney swallows are busily skimming low over the river and just touching the water without regard to me, as a week ago they did, and as they circle back overhead to repeat the experiment, I hear a sharp snap or short rustling of their wings. The button-bush now shows the first signs of life, on a close inspection, in its small round, smooth, greenish buds. The polygonums and pontederias are getting

above water, the latter like spoons on long handles. The *Cornus florida* is blossoming; will be fairly out to-day.¹ The *Polygonatum pubescens*; one on the Island has just opened. This is the smaller Solomon's-seal. A thorn there will blossom to-day. The *Viola palmata* is out there, in the meadow. Everywhere the huckleberry's sticky leaves are seen expanding, and the *high blueberry* is in blossom. Now is the time to admire the very young and tender leaves. The blossoms of the red oak hang down under its young leaves as under a canopy. The petals have already fallen from the *Amelanchier Botryapium*, and young berries are plainly forming. I hear the wood pewee, — *pe-a-wai*. The heat of yesterday has brought him on.

P. M. — To Corner Spring and Fair Haven Cliffs.

Myosotis laxa is out a day or two. At first does not run; is short and upright like *M. stricta*. Golden senecio will be out by to-morrow at least. The early cinquefoil is now in its prime and spots the banks and hillsides and dry meadows with its dazzling yellow. How lively! It is one of the most interesting yellow flowers. The fields are also now whitened, perhaps as much as ever, with the houstonia. The buckbean is out, apparently to-day, the singularly fuzzy-looking blossom. How inconspicuous its leaves now! The rhodora is peculiar for being, like the peach, a profusion of pink blossoms on a leafless stem. This shrub is, then, a late one to leaf out. The bobolink skims by before the wind how far without motion

¹ Involucre not spread and true flowers not open till about May 20th.

of his wings! sometimes borne sidewise as he turns his head — for thus he can fly — and tinkling, *linking*, incessantly all the way. How very beautiful, like the fairest flowers, the young black oak shoots with leaves an inch long now! like red velvet on one side and downy white on the other, with only a red edge. Compare this with the pinker white oak. The *Salix nigra* just in bloom. The trientalis, properly called star-flower, is a white star, single, double, or treble. The fringed polygala surprises us in meadows or in low woods as a rarer, richer, and more delicate color, with a singularly tender or delicate-looking leaf. As you approach midsummer, the color of flowers is more intense and fiery. The reddest flower is the flower especially. Our blood is not white, nor is it yellow, nor even blue. The nodding trillium has apparently been out a day or two. Methinks it smells like the lady's-slipper. Also the *Ranunculus recurvatus* for a day or two. The small two or three leaved Solomon's-seal is just out. The *Viola cucullata* is sometimes eight inches high, and leaves in proportion. It must be the largest of the violets except perhaps the yellow. The *V. blanda* is almost entirely out of bloom at the spring.

Returning toward Fair Haven, I perceive at Potter's fence the first whiff of that ineffable fragrance from the Wheeler meadow, — as it were the promise of strawberries, pineapples, etc., in the aroma of their flowers, so blandly sweet, — aroma that fitly fore-runs the summer and the autumn's most delicious fruits. It would certainly restore all such sick as could

be conscious of it. The odors of no garden are to be named with it. It is wafted from the garden of gardens. It appears to blow from the river meadow from the west or southwest, here about forty rods wide or more. If the air here always possessed this bland sweetness, this spot would become famous and be visited by sick and well from all parts of the earth. It would be carried off in bottles and become an article of traffic which kings would strive to monopolize. The air of Elysium cannot be more sweet.

Cardamine hirsuta out some time by the ivy tree. The *Viola lanceolata* seems to pass into the *cucullata* insensibly, but can that small round-leaved white violet now so abundantly in blossom in open low ground be the same with that large round-leaved one now about out of blossom in shady low ground? *Arabis rhomboidea* just out by the willow on the Corner causeway. The *Ranunculus repens* perhaps yesterday, with its spotted leaves and its not recurved calyx though furrowed stem. Was that a very large *Veronica serpyllifolia* by the Corner Spring? Who shall keep with the lupines? They will apparently blossom within a week under Fair Haven. The *Viola sagittata*, of which *Viola ovata* is made a variety, is now very marked there. The *V. pedata* there presents the greatest array of blue of any flower as yet. The flowers are so raised above their leaves, and so close together, that they make a more indelible impression of blue on the eye; it is almost dazzling. I blink as I look at them, they seem to reflect the blue rays so forcibly, with a slight tinge of lilac. To be sure,

there is no telling what the redder *ovata* might not do if they grew as densely, so many eyes or scales of blue side by side, forming small shields of that color four or five inches in diameter. The effect and intensity is very much increased by the numbers.

I hear the first unquestionable nighthawk squeak and see him circling far off high above the earth. It is now about 5 o'clock P. M. The tree-toads are heard in the rather moist atmosphere, as if presaging rain. I hear the dumping sound of bull(?)frogs, telling the weather is warm. The paddocks, as if too lazy to be disturbed, say now to the intruder, "don't, don't, don't, don't;" also in the morning after the first sultry night.

The chinquapin oak may be said to flower and leave out at the same time with the *ilicifolia*. It is distinguished as well by its yellow catkins as by its leaves. *Pyrus arbutifolia* is out, to-day or yesterday. A crataegus just out.

I sit now on a rock on the west slope of Fair Haven orchard, an hour before sunset, this warm, almost sultry evening, the air filled with the sweetness of apple blossoms (this is blossom week), — or I think it is mainly that meadow fragrance still, — the sun partly concealed behind a low cloud in the west, the air cleared by last evening's thunder-shower, the river now beautifully smooth (though a warm, bland breeze blows up here), full of light and reflecting the placid western sky and the dark woods which overhang it. I was surprised, on turning round, to behold the serene and everlasting beauty of the world, it was so soothing.

I saw that I could not go home to supper and lose it. It was so much fairer, serener, more beautiful, than my mood had been. The fields beyond the river have unexpectedly a smooth, lawn-like beauty, and in beautiful curves sweep round the edge of the woods. The rapidly expanding foliage of the deciduous [trees] (last evening's rain or moisture has started them) lights up with a lively yellow green the dark pines which we have so long been used to. Some patches (I speak of woods half a mile or more off) are a lively green, some gray or reddish-gray still, where white oaks stand. With the stillness of the air comes the stillness of the water. The sweetest singers among the birds are heard more distinctly now, as the reflections are seen more distinctly in the water, — the very constantly now. Methinks this serene, ambrosial beauty could hardly have been but for last evening's thunder-shower, which, to be sure, barely touched us, but cleared the air and gave a start to vegetation. The elm on the opposite side of the river has now a thin but dark verdure, almost as dark as the pines, while, as I have said, the prevailing color of the deciduous woods is a light yellowish and sunny green. The woods rarely if ever present a more beautiful aspect from afar than now. Methinks the black oak at early leafing is more red than the red oak. Ah, the beauty of this last hour of the day — when a power stills the air and smooths all waters and all minds — that partakes of the light of the day and the stillness of the night!

Sit on Cliffs. The Shrub Oak Plain, where are so

many young white oaks, is now a faint rose-color, almost like a distant peach orchard in bloom and seen against sere red ground. What might at first be taken for the color of some sere leaves and bare twigs still left, its tender red expanding leaves. You might say of the white oaks and of many black oaks at least, "When the oaks are in the red." The perfect smoothness of Fair Haven Pond, full of light and reflecting the wood so distinctly, while still occasionally the sun shines warm and brightly from behind a cloud, giving the completest contrast of sunshine and shade, is enough to make this hour memorable. The red pin-cushion gall is already formed on the new black oak leaves, with little grubs in them, and the leaves, scarcely more than two inches long, are already attacked by other foes.

Looking down from these rocks, the black oak has a very light hoary or faint silvery color; the white oak, though much less advanced, has a yet more hoary color; but the red oaks (as well as the hickories) have a lively, glossy aspen green, a shade lighter than the birch now, and their long yellowish catkins appear further advanced than the black. Some black as well as white oaks are reddish still.

The new shoots now color the whole of the juniper (creeping) with a light yellow tinge. It appears to be just in blossom,¹ and those little green berries must be already a year old; and, as it is called diœcious, these must be the fertile blossoms. This must be *Krigia Virginica* now budded, close by the juniper,

¹ [This is queried in pencil.]

and will blossom in a day or two.¹ The low blackberry, apparently, on Cliffs is out, earlier than elsewhere, and *Veronica arvensis* (?), very small, obscure pale-blue flower, and, to my surprise, *Linaria Canadensis*.

Returning slowly, I sit on the wall of the orchard by the white pine. Now the cows begin to low, and the river reflects the golden light of the sun just before his setting. The sough of the wind in the pines is more noticeable, as if the air were otherwise more still and hollow. The wood thrush has sung for some time. He touches a depth in me which no other bird's song does. He has learned to sing, and no thrumming of the strings or tuning disturbs you. Other birds may whistle pretty well, but he is the master of a finer-toned instrument. His song is musical, not from association merely, not from variety, but the character of its tone. It is all divine, — a Shakespeare among birds, and a Homer too. This sweetness of the air, does it not always first succeed a thunder-storm? Is it not a general sweetness, and not to be referred to a particular plant?

He who cuts down woods beyond a certain limit exterminates birds. How red are the scales of some hickory buds, now turned back! The fragrance of the apple blossom reminds me of a pure and innocent and unsophisticated country girl bedecked for church. The purple sunset is reflected from the surface of the river, as if its surface were tinged with *lake*. Here is a field sparrow that varies his strain very sweetly.

¹ Out on Nobscot the 22d.

Coming home from Spring by Potter's Path to the Corner road in the dusk, saw a dead-leaf-colored hylodes; detected it by its expanding and relapsing bubble, nearly twice as big as its head, as it sat on an alder twig six inches from ground and one rod from a pool.

The beach plum is out to-day.¹ The whip-poor-will sings. Large insects now fly at night. This is a somewhat sultry night. We must begin now to look out for insects about the candles. The lilac out.

Genius rises above nature; in spite of heat, in spite of cold, works and lives.

May 18. The rhodora is one of the very latest-leaving shrubs, for its leaf-buds are but just expanding, making scarcely any show yet, but quite leafless amid the blossoms. The *Celtis occidentalis* in bloom, maybe a day. Its shoots have grown two inches. It is as forward as the hickory at least; more than the elm. A red clover in blossom. A geranium budded; will open in a day or two. Surprised to see a *Ranunculus Purshii* open. A choke-cherry blossomed in a tumbler yesterday,² and probably outdoors.

Finding the *Linaria Canadensis* yesterday at the Cliffs on a very close search for flowers makes me think that, by looking very carefully in the most favored and warmest localities, you may find most flowers out some weeks even in advance of the rest of their kind.

¹ Apparently same with that by red house and Jenny Dugan's and probably not beach plum.

² On Island, May 20th.

We have had no storm this spring thus far, but it mizzles to-night. Perchance a May storm is brewing. This day it has mizzled, — as it were a dewy atmosphere, through which for the most part the sun shines. Methinks this is common at this season of the tender foliage, which requires a moist air and protection against the sun.

A singular effect produced by a mass of ferns at a little distance, some rods square, their light yellow-green tops seen above the dark masses of their fruit. At first one is puzzled to account for it. White ash fully in bloom.

May 19. Thunder-showers in the night, and it still storms, with holdings-up. A May storm, gentle and rather warm. The days of the golden willow are over for this season; their withered catkins strew the causeways and cover the water and also my boat, which is moored beneath them. The locust has grown three inches and is blossom-budded. It may come just after the white ash at least, and before the celtis. The weather toward evening still cloudy and somewhat mizzling. The foliage of the young maples, elms, etc., in the street has become, since the rain commenced, several shades darker, changing from its tender and lighter green, as if the electricity of the thunder-storm may have had some effect on it. It is best observed while it is still cloudy; almost a bluish, no longer yellowish green, it is peculiarly rich. The very grass appears to have undergone a similar change.

May 20. The 18th and 19th a rather gentle and warm May storm, — more rain, methinks, than we have had before this spring at one time. Began with thunder-showers on the night of the 18th, the flashing van of the storm, followed by the long, dripping main body, with, at very long intervals, an occasional firing or skirmishing in the rear or on the flanks.

6 A. M. — To Island by river.

Probably a red-wing blackbird's nest, of grass, hung between two button-bushes; whitish eggs with irregular black marks. Sarsaparilla (*Aralia nudicaulis*), probably two days. White oak, swamp white, and chestnut oak probably will open by the 22d.

The white ashes are in full flower now, and how long?

8 A. M. — To Flint's Pond.

Cornus Canadensis just out. Probably the *C. florida* should be set down to-day, since it just begins to shed pollen and its involucre is more open. It is a fair but cool and windy day, a strong northwest wind, and the grass, to which the rain has given such a start, conspicuously waves, showing its lighter under side, and the buttercups toss in the wind. The pitch and white pines have grown from one to five inches.

On Pine Hill.—In this clear morning light and a strong wind from the northwest, the mountains in the horizon, seen against some low, thin clouds in the background, look darker and more like earth than usual; you distinguish forest and pasture on them. This in the clear, cool atmosphere in the morning after

a rain-storm, with the wind northwest. They will grow more ethereal, melting into the sky, as the day advances.

The beech is already one of the most densely clothed trees, or rather makes a great show of verdure from the size of its fully expanded light-green leaves, though some are later. The fresh shoots on low branches are five or six inches long. It is an interesting tree to me, with its neat, close, tight-looking bark, like the dress which athletes wear, its bare instep, and roots beginning to branch like bird's feet, showing how it is planted and holds by the ground. Not merely stuck in the ground like a stick. It gives the beholder the same pleasure that it does to see the timbers of a house above and around. Do they blossom here? I found nuts, but apparently not sound, at Haverhill the other day, — last year's. There are some slender, perfectly horizontal limbs which go zigzagging, as it were creeping through the air, only two or three feet above the ground, over the side-hill, as if they corresponded to concealed rills in the ground beneath.

Plenty of arums now in bloom. Probably my earliest one was in bloom, for I did not look within it. What is that pretty, transparent moss in the brooks, which holds the rain or dewdrops so beautifully on the under sides of the leaflets, through which they sparkle crystalinely? Fresh checkerberry shoots now. The cedars are full of yellowish cedar apples and minute berries just formed, the effete stamiferous blossom still on. When did they begin to bloom? I find none of the rare hedyotis yet on Bare Hill. The peach bloom is

now gone and the apple bloom come. Heard the seringo note, like a rattling watch-spring, from a flock passing swiftly overhead.

The wind makes such a din in the woods that the notes of birds are lost, and added to this is the sound of the waves of Flint's Pond breaking on the shore, — the fresh surf. The pond is spotted with whitecaps, five or six feet long by one foot, like a thin flock of sheep running toward the southeast shore. The smallest lakes can be lashed into a sort of fury by the wind, and are quite ocean-like then. These caps are a striving to dilute the water with air.

The barberry will probably blossom to-day.

Here, by the side of the pond, a fire has recently run through the young woods on the hillside. It is surprising how clean it has swept the ground, only the very lowest and dampest rotten leaves remaining, but *uvularias* and *smilacinas* have pushed up here and there conspicuously on the black ground, a foot high. At first you do not observe the full effect of the fire, walking amid the bare dead or dying trees, which wear a perfect winter aspect, which, as trees generally are not yet fully leaved out and you are still used to this, you do not notice, till you look up and see the still green tops everywhere above the height of fifteen feet. Yet the trees do not bear many marks of fire commonly; they are but little blackened except where the fire has run a few feet up a birch, or paused at a dry stump, or a young evergreen has been killed and reddened by it and is now dropping a shower of red leaves.

Hemlock will blossom to-morrow. The geranium is

just out, and the lady's-slipper. Some with old seed-vessels are still seen.

Hear again, what I have heard for a week or more sometimes, that rasping, springy note, a very hoarse chirp, — *ooh, twee twee twee*, — from a bluish bird as big as a bluebird, with some bright yellow about head, white beneath and lateral tail-feathers, and black cheeks (?). This and that sort of brown-creeper-like bird — of May 12 — and the chickadee-like bird (which may be the chickadee), and the *ah te ter twee* of deep pine woods (which also may be the chickadee), I have not identified.

Arbor-vitæ has been out some time and the butter-nut some days. Mountain-ash on the 18th. Larch apparently ten days. *Nemopantes* several days. The swamp blueberry abundantly out.

Saw a tanager in Sleepy Hollow. It most takes the eye of any bird. You here have the red-wing reversed, — the deepest scarlet of the red-wing spread over the whole body, not on the wing-coverts merely, while the wings are black. It flies through the green foliage as if it would ignite the leaves.

Of deciduous trees and shrubs, the latest to leaf out, as I find by observation to-day, must be the panicled andromeda, rhodora, and button-bush. In some places, however, the first has perfectly formed leaves, the rhodora at most not half unfolded, the button-bush for the most part just bursting buds. But I have not seen the *prinos* and perhaps one or two other shrubs. I have no doubt that the button-bush may be called the latest of all.

Is that female ash by river at Lee's Hill a new kind? In bloom fully May 18th.

Even this remote forest, which stands so far away and innocent, has this terrible foe Fire to fear. Lightning may ignite a dead tree or the dry leaves, and in a few minutes a green forest be blackened and killed. This liability to accident from which no part of nature is exempt.

Plucked to-day a bunch of *Viola pedata*, consisting of four divisions or offshoots around a central or fifth root, all *united* and about one inch in diameter at the ground and four inches at top.

	Flowers	Buds
1st division contained	10	5
2d " "	11	4
3d " "	9	4
4th " "	8	4
5th " "	11	5
	<hr/> 49	<hr/> 22

And perhaps more buds would still make their appearance, and undoubtedly half a dozen more would have blown the next day. Forming a complex, close little testudo of violet scales above their leaves.

May 21. P. M. — Up Assabet to cress, with Sophia.

Land on Island. One of the most beautiful things to me now is the reddish-ash, and, higher, the silvery, canopies of half a dozen young white oak leaves over their catkins, — thousands of little tents pitched in the air for the May training of the flowers, so many

little parasols to their tenderer flowers. Young white oaks and shrub oaks have a reddish look quite similar to their *withered* leaves in the winter.

It is still windy weather, and while I hear the bobolink strain dying away in the distance through the maples, I can [*sic*] the falling apple blossoms which I do not see, as if they were his falling notes. Yet the water is quite still and smooth by the Hemlocks, and as the weather is warm, it is a soothing sight to see it covered with dust there over the Deep Eddy.

Landed beyond the grape-vine bower and cleared out the spring of leaves and sticks and mud, and deepened it, making an outlet, and it soon ran clear and cold. The cress, which proves to be the rock cress, or herb of St. Barbara, is now luxuriant and in bloom in many places along the river, looking like mustard.

Found the *Ranunculus abortivus*, apparently some time in blossom, in the woods opposite to the cress. Put it after the *repens*.

There are, apparently, two kinds of thorns close together on Nawshawtuct, — one now and for some days in blossom, both bushes and the largest tree, — which are evidently varieties of the *Crataegus coccinea*, or scarlet-fruited thorn. The tree one is about eleven feet high by ten feet, and would be taken for an apple tree; is crowded full with white bloom very compact and handsome; the most showy of any native tree in these parts when in bloom. Its thorns are stout. But there is another kind, thin, wisp-shaped trees, not yet in bloom, with very long, slender, straight needle-shaped thorns and two or three stipules to each peduncle. As

it has the usual petioles, is not the cockspur, but may be a variety of the first-named.

The grass begins to be conspicuously reddened with sorrel. The white maple keys are nearly two inches long by a half-inch wide, in pairs, with waved inner edges like green moths ready to bear off their seeds.¹ The red maple keys are not half so large now, and are a dull red, of a similar form. The hickories are budded and show the red anthers.

May 22. Sunday. To Nobscot with W. E. C.

This is the third windy day following the two days' rain. A washing day, such as we always have at this season, methinks. The grass has sprung up as by magic since the rains. The birds are heard through the pleasant dashing wind, which enlivens everything.

It is clear June, the first day of summer. The rye, which, when I last looked, was one foot high, is now three feet high and waving and tossing its heads in the wind. We ride by these bluish-green waving rye-fields in the woods, as if an Indian juggler had made them spring up in a night. Why, the sickle and cradle will soon be taken up. Though I walk every day I am never prepared for this magical growth of the rye. I am advanced by whole months, as it were, into summer. Sorrel reddens the fields. Cows are preparing the milk for June butter. Already the falling apple blossoms fill the air and spot the roads and fields, and some are already turned dark with decay on the ground. With this warmth and wind the air is full of haze, such

¹ *Vide* May 29, 1854.

as we have not had before. The lilac is scented at every house. The wood pewee's warm note is heard. We ride through warm, sandy shrub oak roads, where the *Viola pedata* blues the edge of the path, and the sand cherry and the choke-cherry whiten it. The crickets now first are generally heard. *Houstonias* whiten the fields and are now in their prime. The thorn bushes are full of bloom. Observed a *large* sassafras tree in bloom, — a rich lemon (?) yellow.

Left our horse at the Howe tavern. The oldest date on the sign is "D. II. 1716." An old woman, who had been a servant in the family and said she was ninety-one, said this was the first house built on the spot. Went on to Nobscot. Very warm in the woods, — and hear the hoarse note of the tanager and the sweet *pe-a-wai*, — but pleasantly breezy on the bare hilltops. Can't see the mountains. Found an abundance of the *Viola Muhlenbergii*¹ (*debilis* of Bigelow), a stalked violet, pale blue and bearded.

The *krigia* out, a redder, more July, yellow than the dandelion; also a yellow Bethlehem-star and ribwort; and the mountain cranberry still here and there in blossom, though for the most part small berries formed. An abundance of saxifrage going to seed, and in their midst two or three looking densely white like the pearly everlasting — round dense white heads, apparently an abortion, an abnormal state, without stamens, etc., which I cannot find described.

The pastures on this hill and its spurs are sprinkled profusely with thorny pyramidal apple scrubs, very

¹ Also Holden farm and Pinxter-Flower Brook.

thick and stubborn, first planted by the cows, then browsed by them and kept down stubborn and thorny for years, till, as they spread, their centre is protected and beyond reach and shoots up into a tree, giving a wine-glass form to the whole; and finally perchance the bottom disappears and cows come in to stand in the shade and rub against and redden the trunk. They must make fine dark shadows, these shrubs, when the sun is low; perfectly pyramidal they are now, many of them. You see the cow-dung everywhere now with a hundred little trees springing up in it. Thus the cows create their own shade and food.¹

This hill, Nobscot, is the summit of the island (?) or cape between the Assabet and Musketaguid — perhaps the best point from which to view the Concord River valley. The Wayland hills bound it on the east; Berlin, Bolton, [and] Harvard hills on the west. The Sudbury meadows, seen here and there in distance, are of a peculiar bluish green. This is the first truly lively *summer* Sunday, what with lilacs, warm weather, waving rye, slight[ly] dusty sandy roads in some places, falling apple blossoms, etc., etc., and the wood pewee. The country people walk so quietly to church, and at five o'clock the farmer stands reading the newspaper while his cows go through the bars. I ought perhaps to have measured the great white oak by Howe's. A remarkably thick white pine wood this side of Willis's Pond!!

When yesterday Sophia and I were rowing past Mr. Prichard's land, where the river is bordered by a

¹ [See *Excursions*, p. 305; Riv. 374, 375.]

row of elms and low willows, at 6 P. M., we heard a singular note of distress as it were from a catbird — a loud, vibrating, catbird sort of note, as if the catbird's mew were imitated by a smart vibrating spring. Blackbirds and others were flitting about, apparently attracted by it. At first, thinking it was merely some peevish catbird or red-wing, I was disregarding it, but on second thought turned the bows to the shore, looking into the trees as well as over the shore, thinking some bird might be in distress, caught by a snake or in a forked twig. The hovering birds dispersed at my approach; the note of distress sounded louder and nearer as I approached the shore covered with low osiers. The sound came from the ground, not from the trees. I saw a little black animal making haste to meet the boat under the osiers. A young muskrat? a mink? No, it was a little dot of a kitten. It was scarcely six inches long from the face to the base — or I might as well say the tip — of the tail, for the latter was a short, sharp pyramid, perfectly perpendicular but not swelled in the least. It was a very handsome and very precocious kitten, in perfectly good condition, its breadth being considerably more than one third of its length. Leaving its mewing, it came scrambling over the stones as fast as its weak legs would permit, straight to me. I took it up and dropped it into the boat, but while I was pushing off it ran the length of the boat to Sophia, who held it while we rowed homeward. Evidently it had not been weaned — was smaller than we remembered that kittens ever were — almost infinitely small; yet it had hailed a

boat, its life being in danger, and saved itself. Its performance, considering its age and amount of experience, was more wonderful than that of any young mathematician or musician that I have read of. Various were the conjectures as to how the kitten came there, a quarter of a mile from a house. The possible solutions were finally reduced to three: first, it must either have been born there, or, secondly, carried there by its mother, or, thirdly, by human hands. In the first case, it had possibly brothers and sisters, one or both, and its mother had left them to go a-hunting on her own account and might be expected back. In the second, she might equally be expected to return. At any rate, not having thought of all this till we got home, we found that we had got ourselves into a scrape; for this kitten, though exceedingly interesting, required one nurse to attend it constantly for the present, and, of course, another to spell the first; and, beside, we had already a cat well-nigh grown, who manifested such a disposition toward the young stranger that we had no doubt it would have torn it in pieces in a moment if left alone with it. As nobody made up his or her mind to have it drowned, and still less to drown it, — having once looked into its innocent extremely pale blue eyes (as of milk thrice skimmed) and had his finger or his chin sucked by it, while, its eyes being shut, its little paws played a soothing tune, — it was resolved to keep it till it could be suitably disposed of. It rested nowhere, in no lap, under no covert, but still faintly cried for its mother and its accustomed supper. It ran toward every sound

or movement of a human being, and whoever crossed the room it was sure to follow at a rapid pace. It had all the ways of a cat of the maturest years; could purr divinely and raised its back to rub all boots and shoes. When it raised its foot to scratch its ear, which by the way it never hit, it was sure to fall over and roll on the floor. It climbed straight up the sitter, faintly mewling all the way, and sucked his chin. In vain, at first, its head was bent down into saucers of milk which its eyes did not see, and its chin was wetted. But soon it learned to suck a finger that had been dipped in it, and better still a rag; and then at last it slept and rested. The street was explored in vain to find its owner, and at length an Irish family took it into their cradle. Soon after we learned that a neighbor who had heard the mewling of kittens in the partition had sent for a carpenter, taken off a board, and found two the very day at noon that we sailed. That same hour it was first brought to the light a coarse Irish cook had volunteered to drown it, had carried it to the river, and without bag or sinker had cast it in! It saved itself and hailed a boat! What an eventful life! What a precocious kitten! We feared it owed its first plump condition to the water. How strong and effective the instinct of self-preservation!

Our quince blossomed yesterday. Saw many low blackberries in bloom to-day.

May 23. P. M. — To Ministerial Swamp.

The poet must bring to Nature the smooth mirror in which she is to be reflected. He must be something

superior to her, something more than natural. He must furnish equanimity. No genius will excuse him from importing the ivory which is to be his material.

That small veronica (*V. arvensis*) by Mrs. Hosmer's is the same with that on the Cliffs; there is also the smooth or *V. serpyllifolia* by her path at the brook. This is the fifth windy day. A May wind — a washing wind. Do we not always have after the early thunder-showers a May storm? The first windy weather which it is agreeable to walk or ride in — creating a lively din. That must be the *Arenaria serpyllifolia*, thyme-leaved sandwort, now for some days (weeks?) out on the Clamshell Hill. Put it with viscid myosotis. To-day I am surprised by the dark orange-yellow of the senecio. At first we had the lighter, paler spring yellows of willows (cowslips even, for do they not grow a little darker afterward?), dandelion, cinquefoil, then the darker (methinks it is a little darker than the cowslip) and deeper yellow of the buttercup; and then this broad distinction between the buttercup and the krigia and senecio, as the seasons revolve toward July. Every new flower that opens, no doubt, expresses a new mood of the human mind. Have I any dark or ripe orange-yellow thoughts to correspond? The *flavor* of my thoughts begins to correspond. Lupines now for some days, probably about the 19th. Whiteweed will open perhaps to-morrow or next day. For some time dandelions and mouse-ear have been seen gone to seed — autumnal sights. I have not yet seen a white oak (and put with it swamp white and chestnut) fairly in bloom.

The 20th, when at Flint's Pond I raked away the leaves for acorns, I found many dor-bugs either just ready to issue forth or which had taken refuge from the storm.

The geum is out, maybe one day.

As I rise the hill beyond Geum Meadow I perceive the sweet fragrance of the season from over the turf; as if the vales were vast saucers full of strawberries, as if our walks were on the rim of such a saucer. With this, couple the fact that directly the fresh shoots of the firs and spruces will have the fragrance of strawberries. White clover. I see the light purple of the rhodora enlivening the edges of swamps — another color the sun wears. It is a beautiful shrub seen afar, and makes a great show from the abundance of its bloom unconcealed by leaves, rising above the andromeda. Is it not the most showy *high-colored* flower or shrub? Flowers are the different colors of the sunlight.

Saw a great silvery-grayish cocoon, perchance of an emperor moth, on a scrub apple six inches from the ground, reminding me of a hornet's or wasp's nest — the great silk bag — two and one half inches long by nearly two inches, with a hole by which, apparently, the perfect insect had flown. What a rich stuff the shining silky, silvery bag!

At the Ministerial Swamp I find the spruce leaf-buds have not yet burst their envelopes except at the tops of the trees where they have pushed out and are perfect handsome cones containing a bundle of leaves. The large staminate blossoms are now dry and effete, and the young cones more than one half inch long.

Perhaps they should come between the red cedar and the larch. Put the first the last of May; the spruce, both white and black, end of the first week of May, and larch directly after, till I know better. It is glorious to stand in the midst of the andromeda, which so level and thick fills the swamp, and look up at the blue spruce trees. The edges of the scales of the young cones, which are at the tops of the trees (where the branches make light and open crosses), seen against the sunlit sky or against the light merely, being transparent, are a splendid crimson color, as if the condensed fire of all sunsets were reflected from them, like the richest damask or ruby-throated hummingbird's breast. They glow with the crimson fires of the sunset sky, reflected over the swamp — unspeakably rare and precious rubies as you thus look up at them; but climb the tree and look down on them, and they are comparatively dull and opaque. These are the rubies of the swamp. Already the just bursting leaf-buds emit that rare strawberry fragrance. It is one of the most glowing, beautiful, brilliant effects in nature, exactly like the reflections from the breast of the ruby-throated hummingbird; as if a hundred ruby-throated hummingbirds sat on the topmost crosses of the trees, their breasts turned to the sun. The dwarf andromeda is for the most part just prepared to leave out, though some twigs have grown an inch.

How different the ramrod jingle of the chewink or any bird's note sounds now at 5 P. M. in the cooler, stiller air, when also the humming of insects is more distinctly heard, and perchance some impurity has

begun to sink to earth strained by the air. Or is it, perchance, to be referred to the cooler, more clarified and pensive state of the mind, when dews have begun to descend in it and clarify it? Chaste eve! A certain lateness in the sound, pleasing to hear, which releases me from the obligation to return in any particular season. I have passed the Rubicon of staying out. I have said to myself, that way is not homeward; I will wander further from what I have called my home — to the home which is forever inviting me. In such an hour the freedom of the woods is offered me, and the birds sing my dispensation. In dreams the links of life are united: we forget that our friends are dead; we know them as of old.

An abundance of pure white fringed polygalas, very delicate, by the path at Harrington's mud-hole. Thus many flowers have their nun sisters, dressed in white. At Loring's Wood heard and saw a tanager. That contrast of a *red* bird with the green pines and the blue sky! Even when I have heard his note and look for him and find the bloody fellow, sitting on a dead twig of a pine, I am always startled. (They seem to love the darkest and thickest pines.) That incredible red, with the green and blue, as if these were the trinity we wanted. Yet with his hoarse note he pays for his color. I am transported; these are not the woods I ordinarily walk in. He sunk Concord in his thought. How he enhances the wildness and wealth of the woods! This and the emperor moth make the tropical phenomena of our zone. There is warmth in the pewee's strain, but this bird's colors and his note tell of Brazil.

Even in remotest woods the trivial noon has its rule and its limit. When the chaste and pensive eve draws on, suddenly the walker begins to reflect.

When I listened this evening at the door, I heard no hylodes;¹ but methinks I did hear toads on the river, — unless they were frogs.²

May 24. The smooth speedwell is in its prime now, whitening the sides of the back road, above the Swamp Bridge and front of Hubbard's. Its sweet little pansy-like face looks up on all sides. This and the *Myosotis laxa* are the two most beautiful *little* flowers yet, if I remember rightly.

P. M. — Talked, or tried to talk, with R. W. E. Lost my time — nay, almost my identity. He, assuming a false opposition where there was no difference of opinion, talked to the wind — told me what I knew — and I lost my time trying to imagine myself somebody else to oppose him.

The wild pink was out day before yesterday.

May 25. Wednesday. Election day. — Rain yesterday afternoon and to-day. Heard the popping of guns last night and this morning, nevertheless.

I quarrel with most botanists' description of different species, say of willows. It is a difference without a distinction. No stress is laid upon the peculiarity of the species in question, and it requires a very careful examination and comparison to detect any difference in the description. Having described you one species, he begins

¹ Heard a few next evening, also the 27th. ² *Vide* May 30th.

again at the beginning when he comes to the next and describes it *absolutely*, wasting time; in fact does not describe the species, but rather the genus or family; as if, in describing the particular races of men, you should say of each in its turn that it is but dust and to dust it shall return. The object should be to describe not those particulars in which a species resembles its genus, for they are many and that would be but a negative description, but those in which it is peculiar, for they are few and positive.

Steady fisherman's rain, without wind, straight down, flooding the ground and spattering on it, beating off the blossoms of apples and thorns, etc. Within the last week or so the grass and leaves have grown many shades darker, and if we had leaped from last Wednesday to this, we should have been startled by the change — the dark bluish green of rank grass especially. How rapidly the young twigs shoot — the herbs, trees, shrubs no sooner leaf out than they shoot forward surprisingly, as if they had acquired a head by being repressed so long. The[y] do not grow nearly so rapidly at any [other] season. Many do most of their growing for the year in a week or two at this season. They *shoot* — they *spring* — and the rest of the year they harden and mature, and perhaps have a second spring in the latter part of summer or in the fall. The hedge-mustard is just out.

Two young men who borrowed my boat the other day returned from the riverside through Channing's yard, quietly. It was almost the only way for them. But, as they passed out his gate, C. boorishly walked

out his house behind them in his shirt-sleeves, and shut his gate again behind them as if to shut them out. It was just that sort of behavior which, if he had met with it in Italy or France, he would have complained of, whose meanness he would have condemned.

May 26. P. M. — To Lee's Cliff.

No breaking away, but the clouds have ceased to drop rain awhile and the birds are very lively. The waters are dark, and our attention is confined to earth. Saw two striped snakes deliberately drop from the stone bank wall into the river at Hubbard's Bridge and remain under water while we looked. Do not perceive the meadow fragrance in this wet weather. A high blueberry bush by roadside beyond the bridge very full of blossoms. It has the more florid and blossoming effect because the leaves are few and quite distinct, or standing out from the flowers — the countless inverted white mugs (in rows and everywhere as on counters or shelves) with their peculiar green calyxes. If there are as many berries as blossoms we shall fare well.

Now is the time to walk in low, damp maple copses and see the tender, luxuriant foliage that has pushed up, mushroom-like, before the sun has come to harden it — the ferns of various species and in various stages, some now in their most perfect and beautiful condition, completely unfolded, tender and delicate, but perfect in all their details, far more than any lace work — the most elaborate leaf we have. So flat, just from the laundry, as if pressed by some invisible flat-

iron in the air. Unfolding with such mathematical precision in the free air, — green, starched and pressed, — might they not be transferred, patterns for Mechlin and Brussels? Skunk-cabbage, nodding trillium with concealed flowers, sarsaparilla, and arums, uvularias in thick-sown regiments now past their prime — a rank growth of these, forming an almost uninterrupted counter of green leaves a foot or two above the damp ground. *Actæa alba* some time. Maidenhair — frames of basins spirally arranged. The pitch pines just out, with crowded bunches of staminate blossoms about the new shoots.

That barberry bush near the bars on Conantum is methinks now the most beautiful, light, and graceful bush that I ever saw in bloom. It is shaped like a haycock, broad and dense, yet light as if some leaven had raised it. But how orientally beautiful now, seen through this dark mizzling air, its parallel or rather concentric wreaths composed of leaves and flowers keeping each other apart and lightening the whole mass, each wreath above composed of rich dark-green leaves, below of drooping racemes of lively yellow flowers! Its beauty consists in a great measure in this intimate mixture of flowers and leaves, the small rich-colored flowers not being too much massed. It suggests the yellow-robed priests perchance of Thibet (?). The lowest wreaths lie on the ground. But go not so near as to be disturbed by that sickening buttery odor, as of an underdone batter pudding, all eggs but no spice. Who would think this would bake into such a red acid fruit?

Woodchucks seen tumbling into their holes.

The *Galium aparine*, common cleavers, a new one and the earliest, several days out, perhaps, high up at the base of the rocks under Lee's Cliff. In the same place *Turritis stricta*, straight tower-mustard, a slender towering plant with a delicate whitish or purplish-white blossom; not in Bigelow, nor located in New England by Gray. Side-flowering sandwort is abundant, for some time, by wall of Lee's field near Garfield's. The *Cratogeomys Crus-Galli* is all ready to blossom close by the barberry bush on Conantum. It is distinguished by its leaves, which are wedge-obovate with a short petiole and shining on the upper side, as if varnished and the varnish had soaked in in spots. What is that soft-leaved rubus (?), three-leaved with the odd one wedge-based, now in bloom? I see no thorns on my slip.

May 27. 5.30 A. M. — To Island.

The *Cornus florida* now fairly out, and the involucre are now not greenish-white but white tipped with reddish — like a small flock of white birds passing — three and a half inches in diameter, the larger ones, as I find by measuring. It is something quite novel in the tree line. That needle-shaped variety of thorn is now almost *fully* out on Lee's Hill; *i. e.* half the flowers open. Amelanchier berries are as large as small peas. How beautiful the geranium flower-buds just opening! — little purple cylindrical tubes or hoods — cigarettes — with the petals lapped over and round each other. One opens visibly in a pitcher before me. Heard

a stake-driver yesterday in the rain. It sounded exactly like a man pumping, while another man struck on the head of the pump with an axe, the last strokes sounding peculiarly dry and hard like a forcible echo from the wood-side. One would think all Concord would be built on piles by this time. Very deliberately they drive, and in the intervals are considering the progress of the pile into the soft mud. They are working by the day. He is early and late at his work, building his stake[?]-house, yet did anybody ever see the pile he had driven? He has come back from his Southern tour to finish that job of spile-driving which he undertook last year. It is heavy work — not to be hurried. Only green hands are overhasty.

A turtle walking is as if a man were to try to walk by sticking his legs and arms merely out the windows.

P. M. — To Saw Mill Brook.

Cleared up last night after two and a half days' rain. This, with the two days' rain the 18th and 19th, makes our May rain — and more rain either of the two than at any other time this spring. Coming out into the sun after this rain, with my thick clothes, I find it unexpectedly and oppressively warm. Yet the heat seems tempered by a certain moisture still lingering in the air. (Methinks I heard a cuckoo yesterday and a quail (?) to-day.) A new season has commenced — summer — leafy June. The elms begin to droop and are heavy with shade. The buttercups in the churchyard are now in perfection, and it is surprising what a fairyland they make on some hillsides, looking more

glossy and bright than ever after the rain. The vireo, too, is heard more than ever on the elms; his note begins to prevail. The broad pads lying on the surface of the ditches on the Turnpike seem to reflect a fierce heat upon the traveller. Yellow clover is out — how long? Hellebore a day or two at Saw Mill Brook — its great spike of green flowers with yellow anthers. Its great plaited leaves look like a green shirt bosom; drawn out smooth they prove to be basins. Was that *Stellaria longifolia* in bloom in the low ground at Saw Mill Brook? The crickets, which I have heard for a week now more and more, as much as anything mark a new season. They are importers of thought into the world — the poor trivial world; wholesale dealers in that article. Blue-eyed grass has been out some time, as I judge by the size of its seed-vessel. The river does not look blue from Smith's Hill, — nor has it from any point for some time past, — but indistinctly slaty and rippling, as through a mistiness. Is it not getting to be too warm? A gray down or lint comes off of the leaves and shoots, which have grown so rapidly during the warm wet weather, and whitens the clothes with clean dirt. This is the state of the woods — the beardless woods, with downy cheek as yet. Sit in shade nowadays. The bullfrogs lie spread out on the surface of Flint's Pond. Holding down my head, the young rushes begin to look thick and green in the shallow water advancing into the deep.

8 P. M. — Up Union Turnpike.

The reign of insects commences this warm evening

after the rains. They could not come out before. I hear from the pitch pine woods beyond E. Wood's a vast faint hum, as of a factory far enough off to be musical. I can fancy it something ambrosial from starlit mansions, a faint murmuring harp music rising from all groves; and soon insects are felt on the hands and face, and dor-bugs are heard humming by, or entangled in the pines, like winged bullets. I suppose that those dor-bugs which I saw the other day just beginning to stir under the dead leaves have now first issued forth. They never mistake their time. Between the pines here, white and pitch, whose outlines are dimly seen, — the rising grass cool and damp beneath, — they are heard like a thousand bullets. The toads, too, completely fill the air with their dreamy snore; so that I wonder that everybody does not remark upon it and, the first time they hear it, do not rush to the riverside and the pools and capture a thousand; but hardly the naturalists know whence the sound proceeds, and nobody else seems to hear it at all. The whole air trembles with it, and hearing has no other pillow but this rippling one. Tree-toads, too, keep up an incessant din from elms (?) — when near, drowning the common toads.

The toads gradually ceased after midnight and I heard not one in the morning. They want much muggy warmth.

May 28. A rose in a garden.

5 P. M. — To Lupine Hill by boat.

The carnival of the year commencing — a warm, moist,

hazy air, the water already smooth and uncommonly high, the river overflowing, and yellow lilies all drowned, their stems not long enough to reach the surface. I see the boat-club, or three or four in pink shirts, rowing at a distance. Beech-drops out apparently some days, the old bridge landing at Nawshawtuact; also just out green-briar. Already the ringing croak of a toad *begins* to be heard here and there along the river, and the *troonk* of a bullfrog from time to time. What is peculiar now, beginning yesterday, after rains, is the sudden heat, and the more general sound of insects by day, and the loud ringing croak of common toads and tree-toads at evening and in the night. Our river has so little current that when the wind has gone down, as at present, it is dark and perfectly smooth, and at present dusty as a stagnant pool in every part of it; far from there being any murmur, there is no ripple nor eddy for the most part. Hubbard has plowed up the low-lying field at the bathing-place and planted it with potatoes; and now we find that the field we resort to was equally used by the Indians, for their arrowheads are now exposed by the plow. The sidesaddle-flower conspicuous, but no pollen yet. The bulbous arethusa out a day or two — probably yesterday. Though in a measure prepared for it, still its beauty surprised me; it is by far the highest and richest color yet. Its intense color in the midst of the green meadow made it look twice as large as reality; it looks very foreign in the midst of our plants — its richly speckled, curled, and bearded lip. Devil's-needles begin to fly; saw one the 14th. Thesium just

out. This hazy afternoon the sun is shorn of his beams now at six o'clock, and the lupines do not look so well for it; their lilac tints show best looking at them towards the sun, for they are transparent. Last night in the dark they were all a pale, whitish color like the moon by day — a mere dull luminousness, as if they reflected light absorbed by day. Seen from this point now, the pitch pines on Bear Garden Hill, the fresh green foliage of the deciduous trees now so prevails, the pitch pines, which lately looked green, are of a dark-brownish or mulberry color by contrast, and the white pines almost as dark, but bluer. In this haziness no doubt they are a *little* darker than usual. The grass on pretty high ground is wet with dew an hour before sunset. Whiteweed now, and cotton-grass. For three quarters of an hour the sun is a great round red ball in the west, reflected in the water; at first a scarlet, but as it descends growing more purple and crimson and larger, with a blue bar of a cloud across it; still reflected in the water, two suns, one above the other, below the hilly bank; as if it were a round hole in the cope of heaven, through which we looked into a crimson atmosphere. If such scenes were painted faithfully they would be pronounced unnatural. It is remarkable at how little distance a hillside covered with lupines looks blue, while a house or board painted blue is seen so great a distance.

A sprig of wilted fir now grown an inch emits that rich fragrance somewhat like strawberries and pine-apples, yet peculiar.

Mayhew, in his "London Labour and London

Poor," treating of the costermongers, or those who get their living in the streets of London, speaks of "the muscular irritability begotten by continued wandering," making one "unable to rest for any time in one place." Mentions the instance of a girl who had been accustomed to sell sprats in the streets, who having been taken into a gentleman's house out of charity, "the pressure of shoes was intolerable to her." "But no sooner did she hear from her friends, that sprats were again in the market, than as if there were some magical influence in the fish, she at once requested to be freed from the confinement, and permitted to return to her old calling." I am perhaps equally accustomed to a roaming field-life, experience a good deal of that muscular irritability, and have a good many friends who let me know when sprats are in the market.

May 29. These last two days, with their sultry, hazy air, are the first that suggest the expression "the furnace-like heat." Bathing has begun. In the evening and during the night the ring of the toads fills the air, so that some have to shut the windows toward the river, but when you awake in the morning not one is to be heard. As it grows warmer in the forenoon I hear a few again; but still I do not hear them numerous and loudly as earlier in the season at that hour, though far more numerous and loudly at night.

P. M. — To Hosmer's Holden place.

Thimble-berry two or three days. Cattle stand in

the river by the bridge for coolness. Place my hat lightly on my head that the air may circulate beneath. Wild roses budded before you know it — will be out often before you know they are budded. Fields are whitened with mouse-ear gone to seed — a mass of white fuzz blowing off one side — and also with dandelion globes of seeds. Some plants have already reached their fall. How still the hot noon; people have retired behind blinds. Yet the kingbird — lively bird, with white belly and tail edged with white, and with its lively twittering — stirs and keeps the air brisk. I see men and women through open windows in white undress taking their Sunday-afternoon nap, overcome with heat. At A. Hosmer's hill on the Union Turnpike I see the tanager hoarsely warbling in the shade; the surprising red bird, a small morsel of Brazil, advanced picket of that Brazilian army, — parrot-like. But no more shall we see; it is only an affair of outposts. It appears as if he loved to contrast himself with the green of the forest. These are afternoons when you expect a thunder-shower before night; the outlines of cloudy cumuli are dimly seen through the hazy, furnace-like air rising in the west. *Spergularia rubra*, spurry sandwort, in the roadside ditch on left just beyond A. Hosmer's hill; also *Veronica peregrina* (?) a good while. The last also in Great Fields in the path.

Raspberry out. That exceedingly neat and interesting little flower blue-eyed grass now claims our attention. The barrenest pastures wear now a green and luxuriant aspect. I see many of those round,

white, pigeon-egg fungi in the grass since the rains. Do they become puffballs? The thyme-leaved veronica shows its modest face in little crescent-shaped regiments in every little hollow in the pastures where there is moisture, and around stumps and in the road ditches. The *Cratægus Crus-Galli* this side the Holden place on left, probably yesterday, thorns three inches long, flowers with anthers not conspicuously red. The *Viola debilis* near west end of Holden farm in meadow south side of road.

May 30. The morning wind forever blows; the poem of the world is uninterrupted, but few are the ears that hear it. Forever that strain of the harp which soothed the Cerberus and called me back to life is sounding. Olympus is the outside of the earth everywhere.

5 A. M. — To Cliffs.

High blackberry out. As I go by Hayden's in the still cool morning, the farmer's door is open — probably his cattle have been attended to — and the odor of the bacon which is being fried for his breakfast fills the air. The dog lies with his paws hanging over the door-sill this agreeably cool morning. The cistus out, probably yesterday, — a simple and delicate flower, its stamens all swept to one side. It upholds a delicate saffron-golden (?) basin about nine inches from the ground.

As I look off from Fair Haven I perceive that that downy, silvery hoariness has mostly left the leaves (it now comes off on to the clothes), and they are of

a uniform smooth light green, while the pines are a dirty dark brown, almost purple, and are mostly merged and lost in the deciduous trees. The *Erigeron bellidifolius* is a tender-looking, pale-purple, aster-like flower a foot high in little squads, nodding in the wind on the bare slopes of hill pastures. Young bush-like black cherries a day or two, on Cliffs and in such favorable places. The hylodes were about done peeping before those last few warm days, — when the toads began in earnest in the river, — but last night being somewhat cooler they were not so loud.

P. M. — To Carlisle Bridge by boat.

A strong but somewhat gusty southerly wind, before which C. and I sailed all the way from home to Carlisle Bridge in not far from an hour; the river unusually high for the season. Very pleasant to feel the strong, fresh southerly wind from over the water. There are no clouds in the sky, but a high haziness, as if the moisture drawn up by yesterday's heat was condensed by to-day's comparative coolness. The water a dull slate-color and waves running high, — a dirty yellow where they break, — and long streaks of white foam, six or eight feet apart, stretching north and south between Concord and Bedford, — without end. The common blue flag just out at Ball's Hill. The white maples, especially those shaped like large bushes, on the banks are now full of foliage, showing the white under sides of the leaves in the wind, and the swamp white oak, having similar silvery under sides to its leaves, and both growing abundantly and prevailing

here along the river, make or impart a peculiar flashing light to the scenery in windy weather, all bright, flashing, and cheerful. On the meadows are large yellow-green patches of ferns beginning to prevail. Passed a large boat anchored off in the meadows not far from the boundary of Concord. It was quite a piece of ocean scenery, we saw it so long before reaching it and so long after; and it looked larger than reality, what with the roaring of the wind in our shrouds and the dashing of the waves. The incessant drifting about of a boat so anchored by a long cable, playing with its halter, now showing more, now less, of its side, is a pleasing sight. Landed at a high lupine bank by Carlisle Bridge. How many such lupine banks there are! — whose blue you detect many rods off. There I found, methinks, minute *Specularia perfoliata*, with small crenate clasping leaves alternate at some distance apart, on upright stems about three inches high, but apparently *fruiting in the bud*. Also the *Silene antirrhina* very abundant there. The *Viola palmata*, which is later, and therefore, methinks, fresher than most, is now quite prevalent, one of the most common, in fact, in low ground and a very handsome purple, with more red than usual in its violet. The pines now dotted with white shoots, the pitch pines a little reddish, are an interesting sight now. Whence came all those dead suckers, a dozen at least, which we saw floating to-day, some on their sides, transversely barred, some on their backs with their white bellies up and dark fins on each side? Why are they suckers only that we see? Can it be because the spearers have

thrown them away? Or has some bird of prey dropped them? I rarely see other fish floating. Melvin gave George Brooks some pink azaleas yesterday, said to have grown in the north part of the town.¹ The white maple keys falling and covering the river.

May 31. Some incidents in my life have seemed far more allegorical than actual; they were so significant that they plainly served no other use. That is, I have been more impressed by their allegorical significance and fitness; they have been like myths or passages in a myth, rather than mere incidents or history which have to wait to become significant. Quite in harmony with my subjective philosophy. This, for instance: that, when I thought I knew the flowers so well, the beautiful purple azalea or pinxter-flower should be shown me by the hunter who found it. Such facts are lifted quite above the level of the actual. They are all just such events as my imagination prepares me for, no matter how incredible. Perfectly in keeping with my life and characteristic. Ever and anon something will occur which my philosophy has not dreamed of. The limits of the actual are set some thoughts further off. That which had seemed a rigid wall of vast thickness unexpectedly proves a thin and undulating drapery. The boundaries of the actual are no more fixed and rigid than the elasticity of our imaginations. The fact that a rare and beautiful flower which we never saw, perhaps never heard [of], for which therefore there was no place in our thoughts,

¹ *Vide* forward [next page].

may at length be found in our immediate neighborhood, is very suggestive.

P. M. — A change in the weather. It is comparatively cool since last night, and the air is very clear accordingly; none of that haze in it occasioned by the late heat. Yesterday was another very windy day, making the sixth, I believe, of this May, the 23d having been the last. The leaves are now fairly expanded — that has been the work of May — and are of a dark summer greenness. Some have even begun to cut the rankest grass in front yards. May has been, on the whole, a pleasant month, with a few days of gentle rain-storm, — fishermen's rains, — straight down and spattering on the earth, — and the last week quite warm, even somewhat sultry and summer-like. The bulk of the planting has been done this month, and there have been half a dozen days of strong, breezy and gusty, but not cold, winds, — northwest and then southwest and south. It is surprising to see how many leaves are already attacked by insects, — leaf-rollers, pincushion galls, one kind of oak-balls, etc., etc.; and many a shrub and tree, black cherry and shrub oak, is no sooner leaved out than it is completely stripped by its caterpillar foes.

I am going in search of the *Azalea nudiflora*. Sophia brought home a single flower without twig or leaf from Mrs. Brooks's last evening. Mrs. Brooks, I find, has a large twig in a vase of water, still pretty fresh, which she says George Melvin gave to her son George. I called at his office. He says that Melvin came in to

Mr. Gourgas's office, where he and others were sitting Saturday evening, with his arms full and gave each a sprig, but he does n't know where he got it. Somebody, I heard, had seen it at Captain Jarvis's; so I went there. I found that they had some still pretty fresh in the house. Melvin gave it to them Saturday night, but they did not know where he got it. A young man working at Stedman Buttrick's said it was a secret; there was only one bush in the town; Melvin knew of it and Stedman knew; when asked, Melvin said he got it in the swamp, or from a bush, etc. The young man thought it grew on the Island across the river on the Wheeler farm. I went on to Melvin's house, though I did not expect to find him at home at this hour, so early in the afternoon. (Saw the wood-sorrel out, a day or two perhaps, by the way.) At length I saw his dog by the door, and knew he was at home.

He was sitting in the shade, bareheaded, at his back door. He had a large pailful of the azalea recently plucked and in the shade behind his house, which he said he was going to carry to town at evening. He had also a sprig set out. He had been out all the forenoon and said he had got seven pickerel, — perhaps ten [?]. Apparently he had been drinking and was just getting over it. At first he was a little shy about telling me where the azalea grew, but I saw that I should get it out of him. He dilly-dallied a little; called to his neighbor Farmer, whom he called "Razor," to know if he could tell me where that flower grew. He called it, by the way, the "red honeysuckle." This was to prolong the time and make the most of his secret. I felt

pretty sure the plant was to be found on Wheeler's land beyond the river, as the young man had said, for I had remembered how, some weeks before this, when I went up the Assabet after the yellow rocket, I saw Melvin, who had just crossed with his dog, and when I landed to pluck the rocket he appeared out of the woods, said he was after a fish-pole, and asked me the name of my flower. Did n't think it was very handsome, — "not so handsome as the honeysuckle, is it?" And now I knew it was his "red honeysuckle," and not the columbine, he meant. Well, I told him he had better tell me where it was; I was a botanist and ought to know. But he thought I could n't possibly find it by his directions. I told him he'd better tell me and have the glory of it, for I should surely find it if he did n't; I'd got a clue to it, and should n't give it up. I should go over the river for it. I could smell it a good way, you know. He thought I could smell it half a mile, and he wondered that I had n't stumbled on it, or Channing. Channing, he said, came close by it once, when it was in flower. He thought he'd surely find it then; but he did n't, and he said nothing to him.

He told me he found it about ten years ago, and he went to it every year. It blossomed at the old election time, and he thought it "the handsomest flower that grows." Yarrow just out.

In the meanwhile, Farmer, who was hoeing, came up to the wall, and we fell into a talk about Dodge's Brook, which runs through his farm. A man in Cambridge, he said, had recently written to Mr. Monroe about it, but he did n't know why. All he knew about

the brook was that he had seen it dry and then again, after a week of dry weather in which no rain fell, it would be full again, and either the writer or Monroe said there were only two such brooks in all North America. One of its sources—he thought the principal one—was in his land. We all went to it. It was in a meadow,—rather a dry one, once a swamp. He said it never ceased to flow at the head now, since he dug it out, and never froze there. He ran a pole down eight or nine feet into the mud to show me the depth. He had minnows there in a large deep pool, and cast an insect into the water, which they presently rose to and swallowed. Fifteen years ago he dug it out nine feet deep and found spruce logs as big as his leg, which the beavers had gnawed, with the marks of their teeth very distinct upon them; but they soon crumbled away on coming to the air. Melvin, meanwhile, was telling me of a pair of geese he had seen which were breeding in the Bedford Swamp. He had seen them within a day. Last year he got a large brood (11?) of black ducks there.

We went on down the brook, — Melvin and I and his dog, — and crossed the river in his boat, and he conducted me to where the *Azalea nudiflora* grew, — it was a little past its prime, perhaps, — and showed me how near Channing came. ("You won't tell him what I said; will you?" said he.) I offered to pay him for his trouble, but he would n't take anything. He had just as lief I'd know as not. He thought it first came out last Wednesday, on the 25th.

Azalea nudiflora, — purple azalea, pinxter-flower,

—but Gray and Bigelow say nothing about its *clamminess*. It is a conspicuously beautiful flowering shrub, with the sweet fragrance of the common swamp-pink, but the flowers are larger and, in this case, a fine lively rosy pink, not so clammy as the other, and, being earlier, it is free from the insects which often infest and spoil the first, though I find a very few little flies on them. With a broader, somewhat downy pale-green leaf. Growing in the shade of large wood, like the laurel. The flowers, being in naked umbels, are so much the more conspicuous. (The *Viola debilis* by the brook, near the azalea.) It is a flower with the fragrance of the swamp[-pink], without its extreme clamminess and consequent insects, and with a high and beautiful color and larger segments to the corolla, with very much exerted stamens and pistil. Eaton says the *nudiflora* is “not viscous;” names half a dozen varieties and among them *A. partita* (flesh-colored flowers, 5-parted to the base), but then this is viscous. And it cannot be his species *A. nitida*, with glabrous and shining and small leaves. It must be an undescribed variety—a viscous one — of *A. nudiflora*.

Melvin says the gray squirrel nests are made of leaves, the red squirrel of pine stuff. Jarvis tells me that Stedman Buttrick once hired Melvin to work for him on condition that he should not take his gun into the field, but he had known him to do so when Buttrick was away and earn two or three dollars with his game beside his day's work, but of course the last was neglected.

There is a little danger of a frost to-night.