

THE WRITINGS OF
HENRY DAVID THOREAU

JOURNAL

EDITED BY BRADFORD TORREY

I

1837-1846



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PUBLISHERS' NOTE

ASIDE from the use Thoreau himself made of his Journal in writing his more formal works, the first extensive publication of the Journal material began in 1881 with "Early Spring in Massachusetts." This volume consisted of extracts covering the month of March and parts of February and April, arranged according to the days of the month, the entries for the successive years following one another under each day. It was edited by Thoreau's friend Mr. H. G. O. Blake, to whom the Journal was bequeathed by Miss Sophia Thoreau, who died in 1876. It was succeeded in 1884 by a volume entitled "Summer," which in reality covered only the early summer, and that, in turn, by "Winter" in 1887 and "Autumn" in 1892, all made by Mr. Blake on the same principle. These volumes, from the first to the last, were received with delight by the ever-increasing body of Thoreau's admirers, but they have served to whet rather than satisfy the appetite of readers, and it has long been evident that they ought not to stand alone as representing this important phase of Thoreau's activity. The publishers therefore gladly seized the opportunity afforded, when the Journal, on the death of Mr. Blake, passed into the hands of Mr. E. H. Russell of Worcester, who was desirous of giving it to the public in its entirety, and they at once made arrangements with him to bring it out *in extenso* as soon as the long labor of copying and comparing the manuscripts could be completed. As editor

the publishers have been so fortunate as to secure Mr. Bradford Torrey, who is eminently qualified to consider Thoreau both as a writer and as an observer of nature.

EDITOR'S PREFACE

CONCERNING this first practically complete printing of Thoreau's Journal it seems proper to make the following explanations, in addition to those contained in the Publishers' Note:—

1. It has been found necessary, if the Journal was to be of comfortable use by ordinary readers, to punctuate it throughout. Otherwise each reader would have been compelled to do the work for himself. A literal reproduction, like the literal reproduction of Milton's minor poems, for example, may some day be of interest to antiquaries and special students; but such an edition could never be adapted, more than the literal reproduction of Milton's manuscripts, to the needs of those who read for pleasure and general profit.

2. Certain things have been omitted; *i. e.*, incomplete sentences, where parts of pages have been torn out by the writer; long quotations, especially from Latin authors, entered without comment, as in a commonplace-book; Maine woods matter — "Chesuncook" and "The Allegash and East Branch" — already printed *in extenso* in the volume entitled "The Maine Woods;" a few long lists of plants, etc., recapitulating matter contained in the preceding pages; the word *ultimo*, or *ult.*, which in hundreds of instances is written where the context makes it plain that *instant* was the word intended; a proper name here and there, out of regard for the feelings of possible relatives or descendants of

the persons mentioned; guesses at the identification of particular plants,—willows, goldenrods, and the like,—often accompanied by tediously minute technical descriptions, the whole evidently meant as mere memoranda for the writer's possible future guidance, and believed to be of no interest now, even to the botanical reader.

3. In the case of passages which Thoreau had revised, mostly in pencil, the editor has commonly printed the original form when the amended one has been followed in already printed volumes. In other cases the amended version has been given. Corrections of error have always been allowed to stand, except that, where it is plain that the correction must have been made at a date later than that of the original entry, the correction has been printed as a footnote, without brackets.

4. The footnotes of the editor are always in brackets.

5. Where parts of the Journal have been printed in the author's books, the editor and his associate, as far as their knowledge has gone, have indicated the fact, citing first the present and then the Riverside edition,—thus: "*Week*, p. 305; Riv. 379." References to "Channing" are to "Thoreau, the Poet-Naturalist," by William Ellery Channing, new edition, edited by Mr. F. B. Sanborn. References to "Sanborn" are to "Henry D. Thoreau," by F. B. Sanborn, in the *American Men of Letters*.

6. The earlier manuscript volumes of the Journal, as we now have them, are evidently not the originals, but are made up of selections from volumes that appear to have been destroyed by the author.

It remains only to add the editor's very hearty acknowledgements to his associate, Mr. Francis H. Allen, who has overseen and verified the copying of the manuscript, an onerous task, and in every way, by counsel and labor, has facilitated, not to say made possible, the completion of the work.

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