

II

SEPTEMBER, 1857

(ÆT. 40)

Sept. 1. Tuesday. P. M. — To Fair Haven Pond by boat.

Landing at Bittern Cliff, I see that fine purple grass; how long? At Baker's shore, I at length distinguished fairly the *Sagittaria simplex*, which I have known so long, the small one with simple leaves. But this year there are very few of them, being nearly drowned out by the high water.

On the west side of Fair Haven Pond, an abundance of the *Utricularia purpurea* and of the whorled, etc., whose finely dissected leaves are a rich sight in the water. Again I observe that the heart-leaf, as it decays, preserves fresh and green for some time within, or in its centre, a finely dissected green leaf, suggesting that it has passed through this stage in its development. Immersed leaves often present this form, but [it] seems that even emersed ones remember it. High blackberries are still in their prime on Lee's Cliff, but huckleberries soft and wormy, many of them.

I have finally settled for myself the question of the two varieties of *Polygonum amphibium*. I think there are not even two varieties. As formerly, I observe again to-day a *Polygonum amphibium* extending from the shore six feet into the water. In the water, of course,

the stem is prostrate, rank, and has something serpent-like in its aspect. From the shore end rise erect flowering branches whose leaves are more or less roughish and prickly on the midrib beneath. On the water end the leaves are long-petioled, *heart-shaped*, and perfectly smooth. *Vide* a specimen pressed. I have seen this same plant growing erect in the *driest* soil, by the roadside, and it ranges from this quite into the water.

Sept. 2. Wednesday. P. M. — To Yellow Birches.

Measured the thorn at Yellow Birch Swamp. At one foot from ground it is a foot and ten inches in circumference. The first branch is at two feet seven inches. The tree spreads about eighteen feet. The height is about seventeen feet.

A yellow birch some rods north was, at three feet from ground, four feet plus in circumference. A second, northeast of it, was, at four feet, five feet five inches in circumference. It branched at eight feet, the branches extending north two and a third rods, but south only one and a half. Was some fifty or sixty feet high. The third, or largest, yellow birch, at the cellar, was, at three feet from the ground on the inside or at the ground on the outside, just below the branches, ten feet nine inches in circumference. It divides to three branches at ground on the upper side, and these almost immediately to three more, so low and horizontal that you can easily step into it. It extends two rods east and one west, the ends of the branches coming down to height of head all round, nearly. It is about

two thirds as high as wide, or thirty-three feet high. Looking from the west, of an irregular diamond shape resting on the ground. The roots inclose some cellar stones. All these birches were measured at the smallest place between the ground and branches. Large yellow birches branch low and form a dense broom-like head of many long tapering branches.

In the botrychium swamp, where the fever-bush is the prevailing underwood, I see a *Rhus radicans* running up a buttonwood which is some forty feet high. It first makes a complete circle about it horizontally at the ground, then goes winding up it in a serpentine manner on the southwest (?) side, thirty feet at least, or as far as I could see, beginning to put out a few twigs at seven or eight feet. It is a vine one and a half and two inches wide, somewhat flattened, clinging close and flat to the tree by innumerable brown fibres which invest itself and adhere to the bark on each side in a thick web. You can hardly tell if it is alive or dead with[out] looking upward. Remembering that it was poisonous to some to handle, it had altogether a venomous look. It made me think of a venomous beast of prey which had sprung upon the tree and had it in its clutches, as the glutton is said to cling to the deer while it sucks its blood. It had fastened on it, as a leopard or panther on a deer and there was no escape. It was not married to the buttonwood, as the vine to the poplar. I saw a still larger one the other day in Natick on an elm.

Some bass trees blossomed sparingly after all, for I see some fruit.

Sept. 3. P. M. — Rode to Prospect Hill, Waltham. The *Polygonum Pennsylvanicum* there. One *Chimaphila maculata* on the hill. Tufts of *Woodsia Ilvensis*. *Hedysotis longifolia* still flowering commonly, near the top, in a thin wood. *Gerardia tenuifolia* by the road in Lincoln, and a slate-colored snowbird back.

Sept. 4. P. M. — To Bateman's Pond.

Rudbeckia laciniata (?) by Dodge's Brook, north of the road; how long? *Cornus sericea* berries begin to ripen. The leaves of the light-colored spruce in the spruce swamp are erect like the white!

Penetrating through the thicket of that swamp, I see a great many very straight and slender upright shoots, the slenderest and tallest that I ever saw. They are the *Prinos laevigatus*. I cut one and brought it home in a ring around my neck, — it was flexible enough for that, — and found it to be seven and a half feet long and quite straight, eleven fortieths of an inch in diameter at the ground and three fortieths [in] diameter at the other end, only the last foot or so of this year's growth. It had a light-grayish bark, rough-dotted. Generally they were five or six feet high and not bigger than a pipe-stem anywhere. This comes of its growing in dense dark swamps, where it makes a good part of the underwood.

At the cleft rock by the hill just west of this swamp, — call it Cornel Rock, — I found apparently *Aspidium cristatum* (?), *q. v.* That is an interesting spot. There is the handsomest and most perfect *Cornus circinata* there that I know, now apparently its fruit

in prime, hardly light-blue but delicate bluish-white. It is the richest-looking of the cornels, with its large round leaf and showy cymes; a slender bush seven or eight feet high. There is quite a collection of rare plants there, — petty morel, *Thalictrum dioicum*, witch-hazel, etc., *Rhus radicans*, maple-leaved viburnum, polypody, *Polygonum dumetorum*, anychia. There was a strawberry vine falling over the perpendicular face of the rock, — or more than perpendicular, — which hung down dangling in the air five feet, not yet reaching the bottom, with leaves at intervals of fifteen inches. Various rocks scattered about in these woods rising just to the surface with smooth rounded surfaces, showing a fine stratification *on its edges*.

The sides of Cornus florida Ravine at Bateman's Pond are a good place for ferns. There is a *Woodsia Ilvensis*, a new one to Concord. Petty morel in the ravine, and large cardinal-flowers.

I see prenanthes radical leaf turned pale-yellow. Arum berries ripe.

Already, long before sunset, I feel the dew falling in that cold calla swamp.

Sept. 5. Saturday. I now see those brown shaving-like stipules¹ of the white pine leaves, which are falling, *i. e.* the stipules, and caught in cobwebs.

River falls suddenly, having been *high* all summer.

Sept. 6. Sunday. P. M. — To Assabet, west bank. Turned off south at Derby's Bridge and walked

¹ ? Sheaths.

through a long field, half meadow, half upland. Soapwort gentian, out not long, and dwarf cornel again. There is a handsome crescent-shaped meadow on this side, opposite Harrington's. A good-sized black oak in the pasture by the road half-way between the school-house and Brown's. Walked under Brown's hemlocks by the railroad. How commonly hemlocks grow on the north slope of a hill near its base, with only bare reddened ground beneath! This bareness probably is not due to any peculiar quality in the hemlocks, for I observe that it is the same under pitch and white pines when equally thick. I suspect that it is owing more to the shade than to the fallen leaves. I see one of those peculiarly green locusts with long and slender legs on a grass stem, which are often concealed by their color. What green, herbaceous, graminivorous ideas he must have! I wish that my thoughts were as *seasonable* as his! Some haws *begin* to be ripe.

We go along under the hill and woods north of railroad, west of Lord's land, about to the west of the swamp and to the Indian ditch. I see in the swamp black chokeberries twelve feet high at least and in fruit.

C. says that they use high blueberry wood for tholepins on the Plymouth ponds.

I observe to-day, away at the south end of our dry garden, a moist and handsome *Rana halecina*. It is the only frog that I ever see in such localities. He is quite a traveller. A very cool day.

Sept. 7. Monday. P. M. — To Dodge Brook Wood. It occurred to me some weeks ago that the river-banks

were not *quite* perfect. It is too late then, when the mikania is in bloom, because the pads are so much eaten then. Our first slight frost in some places this morning. Northwest wind to-day and cool weather; such weather as we have not had for a long time, a new experience, which arouses a corresponding breeze in us. *Rhus venenata* berries are whitening. Its leaves appear very fresh, of a rich, dark, damp green, and very little eaten by insects.

Go round by the north side of Farmer's (?) Wood, turn southeast into the shut-in field, and thence to Spencer Brook, a place for hawks. *Bidens chrysanthemoides* there; how long? There are three or four larch trees near the east edge of the meadows here. One measures two feet and seven inches in circumference at six feet from ground; begins to branch there, but is dead up to ten feet from ground, where its diameter is apparently about twelve feet; and from this it tapers regularly to the top, which is about forty-five feet from the ground, forming a regular, sharp pyramid, yet quite airy and thin, so that you could see a hawk through it pretty well. These are young and healthy trees.

Measured that large tupelo behind Merriam's, which now is covered with green fruit, and its leaves begin to redden. It is about thirty feet high, with a round head and equally broad near the ground. At one foot from the ground, it is four and a third feet in circumference; at seven feet, three and a third in circumference. The principal [branches] diverge at about fifteen or sixteen feet from the ground and tend upward; the lower

ones are small and partly dead. The lowest, at about thirteen or fourteen feet from the ground, are three or four inches in diameter, and first grow out horizontally about six feet, then, making an abrupt angle, straggle downward nearly to the ground, fifteen feet from the tree. This leaves the tree remarkably open in the middle.

Returning to my boat, at the white maple, I see a small round flock of birds, perhaps blackbirds, dart through the air, as thick as a charge of shot, — now comparatively thin, with regular intervals of sky between them, like the holes in the strainer of a watering-pot, now dense and dark, as if closing up their ranks when they roll over one another and stoop downward.

Sept. 9. Wednesday. P. M. — To the Hill for white pine cones.

Very few trees have any. I can only manage small ones, fifteen or twenty feet high, climbing till I can reach the dangling green pickle-like fruit in my right hand, while I hold to the main stem with my left. The cones are now all flowing with pitch, and my hands are soon so covered with it that I cannot easily cast down the cones where I would, they stick to my hands so. I cannot touch the basket, but carry it on my arm; nor can I pick up my coat, which I have taken off, unless with my teeth, or else I kick it up and catch it on my arm. Thus I go from tree to tree, from time to time rubbing my hands in brooks and mud-holes, in the hope of finding something that will remove pitch

like grease, but in vain. It is the stickiest work I ever did. I do not see how the squirrels that gnaw them off and then open them scale by scale keep their paws and whiskers clean. They must know of, or possess, some remedy for pitch that we know nothing of. How fast I could collect cones, if I could only contract with a family of squirrels to cut them off for me! Some are already brown and dry and partly open, but these commonly have hollow seeds and are worm-eaten. The cones collected in my chamber have a strong spirituous scent, almost rummy, or like a molasses hogshead, agreeable to some. They are far more effectually protected than the chestnut by its bur.

Going into the low sprout-land north of the Sam Wheeler orchard, where is a potato-field in new ground, I see the effects of the frost of the last two or three nights. The ferns and tall erechthites showing its pappus are drooping and blackened or imbrowned on all sides, also *Eupatorium pubescens*, tender young *Rhus glabra*, etc., and the air is full of the rank, sour smell of freshly withering vegetation. It is a great change produced in one frosty night. What a sudden period put to the reign of summer!

On my way home, caught one of those little red-bellied snakes in the road, where it was rather sluggish, as usual. Saw another in the road a week or two ago. The whole length was eight inches; tail alone, one and four fifths. The plates about one hundred and nineteen; scales forty and upward. It was a dark ash-color above, with darker longitudinal lines, light brick-red beneath. There were three triangular buff

spots just behind the head, one above and one each side. It is apparently *Coluber amoenus*, and perhaps this is the same with Storer's *occipito-maculatus*.

C. brings me a small *red* hypopytis. It has a faint sweet, earthy, perhaps checkerberry, scent, like that sweet mildewy fragrance of the earth in spring.

Aunts have just had their house shingled, and amid the rubbish I see sheets of the paper birch bark, which have lain on the roof so long. The common use of this formerly shows that it must have been abundant here.

Sept. 10. Thursday. P. M. — To Cardinal Ditch and Peter's.

Cardinal-flower, nearly done. Beach plum, almost ripe. Squash vines on the Great Fields, generally killed and blackened by frost (though not so much in our garden), revealing the yellow fruit, perhaps prematurely. Standing by Peter's well, the white maples by the bank of the river a mile off now give a rosaceous tinge to the edge of the meadow. I see lambkill ready to bloom a second time. Saw it out on the 20th; how long?

Sept. 11. Friday. Up railroad and to Clamshell.

Solidago puberula apparently in prime, with the *S. stricta*, near gerardia oaks. Red choke-berry ripe; how long? On the east edge of Dennis Swamp, where I saw the strange warbler once.

To my surprise I find, by the black oaks at the sand-hole east of Clamshell, the *Solidago rigida*, apparently

in prime or a little past. The heads and rays were so large I thought at first it must be a hieracium. The rays are from ten to fourteen, and three to three and a half fortieths of an inch wide. The middle leaves are *clasping* by a heart-shaped base. The heads are seven fortieths of an inch wide and seventeen fortieths long, in recurved panicles, — *these*. Eaton says truly, "Scales of the calyx round-obtuse, nerved, membranous at the edges."

My old *S. stricta* (early form) must be *S. arguta* var. *juncea*. It is now done.

Sept. 12. Saturday. P. M. — To Owl Swamp (Farmer's).

In an open part of the swamp, started a very large wood frog, which gave one leap and squatted still. I put down my finger, and, though it shrank a little at first, it permitted me to stroke it as long as I pleased. Having passed, it occurred to me to return and cultivate its acquaintance. To my surprise, it allowed me to slide my hand under it and lift it up, while it squatted cold and moist on the middle of my palm, panting naturally. I brought it close to my eye and examined it. It was very beautiful seen thus nearly, not the dull dead-leaf color which I had imagined, but its back was like burnished bronze armor defined by a varied line on each side, where, as it seemed, the plates of armor united. It had four or five dusky bars which matched exactly when the legs were folded, showing that the painter applied his brush to the animal when in that position, and reddish-orange soles to its delicate feet.

There was a conspicuous dark-brown patch along the side of the head, whose upper edge passed directly through the eye horizontally, just above its centre, so that the pupil and all below were dark and the upper portion of the iris golden. I have since taken up another in the same way.¹

Round-leaved cornel berries nearly all fallen.

Crossing east through the spruce swamp, I think that I saw a female redstart.

What is that running herbaceous vine which forms a dense green mat a rod across at the bottom of the swamp northwest of Corallorhiza Rock?² It is of the same form, stem and leaves, with the more brown hairy and woolly linnaea. It also grows in the swamp by the beech trees in Lincoln.

Sept. 13. Sunday. *Nabalus Fraseri*, top of Cliffs, — a new plant, — yet in *prime* and not long out. The *nabalus* family generally, apparently now in *prime*.

Sept. 16. A. M. — To Great Yellow Birch, with the Watsons.

Solidago latifolia in *prime* at Botrychium Swamp. Barberries very handsome now. See boys gathering them in good season. Some fever-bush berries already ripe. Watson has brought me apparently *Artemisia vulgaris*, growing naturally close to Austin's house in Lincoln; hardly in bloom.

Walked through that beautiful soft white pine grove

¹ Indeed they can generally be treated so. Some are reddish, as burnished copper.

² It is *chrysosplenium*.

on the west of the road in John Flint's pasture. These trees are large, but there is ample space between them, so that the ground is left grassy. Great pines two or more feet in diameter branch sometimes within two feet of the ground on each side, sending out large horizontal branches on which you can sit. Like great harps on which the wind makes music. There is no finer tree. The different stages of its soft glaucous foliage completely concealing the trunk and branches are separated by dark horizontal lines of shadow, the flakes of pine foliage, like a pile of light fleeces.

I see green and closed cones beneath, which the squirrels have thrown down. On the trees many are already open. Say within a week have begun. In one small wood, all the white pine cones are on the ground, generally unopened, evidently freshly thrown down by the squirrels, and then the greater part have already been stripped. They begin at the base of the cone, as with the pitch pine. It is evident that they have just been very busy throwing down the white pine cones in all woods. Perhaps they have stored up the seeds separately. This they can do before chestnut burs open.

Watson gave me three glow-worms which he found by the roadside in Lincoln last night. They exhibit a greenish light, only under the caudal extremity, and intermittingly, or at will. As often as I touch one in a dark morning, it stretches and shows its light for a moment, only under the last segment. An average one is five eighths of an inch long, exclusive of the head, when still; four fifths of an inch, or more, with the head, when moving; one fourth of an inch wide, broad-

est forward; and from one tenth to one eighth inch deep, nearly (at middle). They have six brown legs within about one fourth of an inch of the forward extremity. This worm is apparently composed of twelve scale-like segments, including the narrow terminal one or tail, and not including the head, which at will is drawn under the foremost scale or segment like a turtle's. (I do not remember if the other species concealed its head thus, completely.) Looking down on it, I do not see *distinctly* more than two antennæ, one on each side, whitish at base, dark-brown at tip, and apparently about the same length with the longest of the other species. The general color above is black, or say a very dark brown or blackish; the head the same. On each side two *faint* rows of light-colored dots. The first segment is *broadly* conical, and much the largest; the others very narrow in proportion to their breadth transversely, and successively narrower, slightly recurved at tip and bristle-pointed and also curved upward at the thin outer edge, while the rounded dorsal ridge is slightly elevated above this. Beneath, dirty white with two rows of black spots on each side.

They always get under the sod by day and bury themselves. They are not often much curled up, never in a ring, nor nearly so much as the other kind. They are much more restless when disturbed, both by day and night, than the others. They are a much coarser insect than the other and approach more nearly to the form of a sow-bug. I kept them more than a week.

Vide back, August 8th.

Sept. 17. Thursday. I go to Fair Haven Hill, looking at the varieties of nabalus, which have a singular prominence now in all woods and roadsides. The lower leaves are very much eaten by insects. How perfectly each plant has its turn!—as if the seasons revolved for it alone. Two months ago it would have taken a sharp eye to have detected this plant. One of those great puffballs, three inches in diameter, ripe.

Sept. 18. Friday. P. M. — Round Walden with C.

We find the water cold for bathing. Coming out on to the Lincoln road at Bartlett's path, we found an abundance of haws by the roadside, just fit to eat, quite an agreeable subacid fruit. We were glad to see anything that could be eaten so abundant. They must be a supply depended on by some creatures. These bushes bear a profusion of fruit, rather crimson than scarlet when ripe.

I hear that "Uncle Ned" of the Island told of walking along the shore of a pond where the "shells" of the mosquitoes were washed up in winrows.

As I was going through the Cut, on my way, I saw what I thought a rare high-colored flower in the sun on the sandy bank. It was a *Trifolium arvense* whose narrow leaves were turned a bright crimson, enhanced by the sun shining through it and lighting it up. Going along the low path under Bartlett's Cliff, the *Aster lavis* flowers, when seen toward the sun, are very handsome, having a purple or lilac tint.

We started a pack of grouse, which went off with a whir like cannon-balls. C. said he did not see but they

were round still and preserved the same relation to the wind and other elements that they held twenty years ago. I suggested that they were birds of the season.

Coming home through the street in a thunder-shower at ten o'clock this night, it was exceedingly dark. I met two persons within a mile, and they were obliged to call out from a rod distant lest we should run against each other. When the lightning lit up the street, almost as plain as day, I saw that it was the same *green* light that the glow-worm emits. Has the moisture something to do with it in both cases?

Sept. 19. Saturday. Still somewhat rainy, — since last evening.

Solidago arguta variety done, say a week or more.

Sept. 20. Sunday. Another mizzling day.

P. M. — To beach plums behind A. Clarke's.

We walked in some trodden path on account of the wet grass and leaves, but the fine grass overhanging paths, weighed down with dewy rain, wet our feet nevertheless. We cannot afford to omit seeing the beaded grass and wetting our feet. This is our first fall rain, and makes a dividing line between the summer and fall. Yet there has been no drought the past summer. Vegetation is unusually fresh. Methinks the grass in some shorn meadows is even greener than in the spring. You are soon wet through by the underwood if you enter the woods, — ferns, aralia, huckleberries, etc. Went through the lower side of the wood west of Peter's.

The *early* decaying and variegated spotted leaves of the *Aralia nudicaulis*, which spread out flat and of uniform height some eighteen (?) inches above the forest floor, are very noticeable and interesting in our woods in early autumn, now and for some time. For more than a month it has been changing. The outlines of trees are more conspicuous and interesting such a day as this, being seen distinctly against the near misty background, — distinct and dark.

The branches of the alternate cornel are spreading and flat, somewhat cyme-like, as its fruit. Beach plums are now perfectly ripe and unexpectedly good, as good as an average cultivated plum. I get a handful, dark-purple with a bloom, as big as a good-sized grape and but little more oblong, about three quarters of an inch broad and a very little longer. I got a handkerchief full of elder-berries, though I am rather late about it, for the birds appear to have greatly thinned the cymes.

A great many small red maples in Beck Stow's Swamp are turned quite crimson, when all the trees around are still perfectly green. It looks like a gala day there.

A pitch pine and birch wood is rapidly springing up between the Beck Stow Wood and the soft white pine grove. It is now just high and thick enough to be noticed as a young wood-lot, if not mowed down.¹

Sept. 21. Monday. P. M. — To Corallorhiza Rock and Tobacco-pipe Wood, northeast of Spruce Swamp.

Peaches are now in their prime. Came through that

¹ Cut down in '59.

thick white pine wood on the east of the spruce swamp.

This is a very dense white pine grove, consisting of tall and slender trees which have been thinned, yet they are on an average only from three to six feet asunder. Perhaps half have been cut. It is a characteristic white pine grove, and I have seen many such. The trees are some ten inches in diameter, larger or smaller, and about fifty feet high. They are bare for thirty-five or forty feet up, — which is equal to at least twenty-five years of their growth, or with only a few dead twigs high up. Their green crowded tops are mere oval spear-heads in shape and almost in proportionate size, four to eight feet wide, — not enough, you would think, to keep the tree alive, still less to draw it upward. In a dark day the wood is not only thick but dark with the boles of the trees. Under this dense shade, the red-carpeted ground is almost bare of vegetation and is dark at noon. There grow *Good-yaera pubescens* and *repens*, *Corallorhiza multiflora* (going to seed), white cohosh berries, *Pyrola secunda*, and, on the low west side and also the east side, an abundance of tobacco-pipe, which has begun to turn black at the tip of the petals and leaves.

The *Solidago caesia* is very common and fresh in copses, perhaps the prevailing solidago now in woods. *Rudbeckia laciniata* done, probably some time. The warmth of the sun is just beginning to be appreciated again on the advent of cooler days.

Measured the large white willow north the road near Hildreth's. At a foot and a half from the ground

it is fourteen feet in circumference; at five feet, the smallest place, it is twelve feet in circumference. It was once still larger, for it has lost large branches.¹

Sept. 23. Wednesday. P. M. — To chestnut oaks.

Varieties of *nabalus* grow along the Walden road in the woods; also, still more abundant, by the Flint's Pond road in the woods. I observe in these places only the *N. alba* and *Fraseri*; but these are not well distinguished; they seem to be often alike in the color of the pappus. Some are very tall and slender, and the largest I saw was an *N. Fraseri*! One *N. alba* had a panicle three feet long!

The Ripley beeches have been cut. I can't find them. There is one large one, apparently on Baker's land, about two feet in diameter near the ground, but fruit hollow. I see yellow pine-sap, in the woods just east of where the beeches used to stand, just done, but the red variety is very common and quite fresh generally there.²

Sept. 24. Thursday. A. M. — Up the *Assabet*.

The river is considerably raised and also muddied by the recent rains.

I saw a red squirrel run along the bank under the hemlocks with a nut in its mouth. He stopped near the foot of a hemlock, and, hastily pawing a hole with his fore feet, dropped the nut, covered it up, and retreated part way up the trunk of the tree, all in a few moments. I approached the shore to examine the

¹ Cut down in '59.

² Oct. 14, 1858.

deposit, and he, descending betrayed no little anxiety for his treasure and made two or three motions to recover the nut before he retreated. Digging there, I found two pignuts joined together, with their green shells on, buried about an inch and a half in the soil, under the red hemlock leaves.¹ This, then, is the way forests are planted. This nut must have been brought twenty rods at least and was buried at just the right depth. If the squirrel is killed, or neglects its deposit, a hickory springs up.²

P. M. — I walked to that very dense and handsome white pine grove east of Beck Stow's Swamp. It is about fifteen rods square, the trees large, ten to twenty inches in diameter. It is separated by a wall from another pine wood with a few oaks in it on the southeast, and about thirty rods north and west are other pine and oak woods. Standing on the edge of the wood and looking through it,—for it is quite level and free from underwood, *mostly* bare, red-carpeted ground,—you would have said that there was not a hardwood tree in it, young or old, though I afterward found on one edge a middling-sized sassafras, a birch, a small tupelo, and two little scarlet oaks, but, what was more interesting, I found, on looking closely over its floor, that, alternating with thin ferns and small blueberry bushes, there was, as often as every five feet, a little oak, three to twelve inches high, and in one place I found a green acorn dropped by the base of a tree. I

¹ *Vide* Patent Office Reports, 1856, p. 59.

² These nuts were there Oct. 8th. Gone Nov. 21st.

was surprised, I confess, to find my own theory so perfectly proved. These oaks, apparently, find such a locality unfavorable to their growth as long as the pines stand. I saw that some had been browsed by the cows which resort to the wood for shade. As an evidence that hardwood trees would not flourish under those circumstances, I found a red maple twenty-five feet high recently prostrated, as if by the wind, but still covered with green leaves, the only maple in the wood, and also two birches decaying in the same position.¹ The ground was completely strewn with white pine cones, apparently thrown down by the squirrels, still generally green and closed, but many stripped of scales, about the base of almost every pine, sometimes all of them. Now and for a week a good time to collect them. You can hardly enter such a wood but you will hear a red squirrel chiding you from his concealment in some pine-top. It is the sound most native to the locality.

Minott tells of their finding near a bushel of chestnuts in a rock, when blasting for the mill brook, at that ditch near Flint's Pond. He said it was a gray squirrel's depot.

I find the *Lycopodium dendroideum*, not quite out, just northwest of this pine grove, in the grass. It is not the variety *obscurum*, which grows at Trillium Wood, is more upright-branched and branches round.

Sept. 25. Friday. P. M. — To tupelo on Daniel B. Clark's land.

¹ [*Excursions*, pp. 190-192; Riv. 233-236.]

Stopping in my boat under the Hemlocks, I hear singular bird-like chirruping from two red squirrels. One sits high on a hemlock bough with a nut in its paws. A squirrel seems always to have a nut at hand ready to twirl in its paws. Suddenly he dodges behind the trunk of the tree, and I hear some birds in the maples across the river utter a peculiar note of alarm of the same character with the hen's (I think they were robins), and see them seeking a covert. Looking round, I see a marsh hawk beating the bushes on that side.

You notice now the dark-blue dome of the soapwort gentian in cool and shady places under the bank.

Pushing by Carter's pasture, I see, deep under water covered by the rise of the river, the cooper's poles a-soak, held down by planks and stones.

Fasten to the white maple and go inland. Wherever you may land, it would be strange if there were not some alder clump at hand to hide your oars in till your return.

The red maple has fairly begun to blush in some places by the river. I see one, by the canal behind Barrett's mill, all aglow against the sun. These first trees that change are most interesting, since they are seen against others still freshly green, — such brilliant red on green. I go half a mile out of my way to examine such a red banner. A single tree becomes the crowning beauty of some meadowy vale and attracts the attention of the traveller from afar. At the eleventh hour of the year, some tree which has stood mute and inglorious in some distant vale thus proclaims its character as effectually as [if] it stood by the highway-side,

and it leads our thoughts away from the dusty road into those brave solitudes which it inhabits. The whole tree, thus ripening in advance of its fellows, attains a singular preëminence. I am thrilled at the sight of it, bearing aloft its scarlet standard for its regiment of green-clad foresters around. The forest is the more spirited.¹

I remember that brakes had begun to decay as much as six weeks ago. Dogwood (*Rhus venenata*) is yet but pale-scarlet or yellowish. The *R. glabra* is more generally turned.

Stopped at Barrett's mill. He had a buttonwood log to saw. In an old grist-mill the festoons of cobwebs revealed by the white dust on them are an ornament. Looking over the shoulder of the miller, I drew his attention to a mouse running up a brace. "Oh, yes," said he, "we have plenty of them. Many are brought to the mill in barrels of corn, and when the barrel is placed on the platform of the hopper they scamper away."

As I came round the island, I took notice of that little ash tree on the opposite shore. It has been cut or broken off about two feet from the ground, and seven small branches have shot up from its circumference, all together forming a perfectly regular oval head about twenty-five feet high and very beautiful. With what harmony they work and carry out the idea of the tree, one twig not straying farther on this side than its fellow on that! That the tree thus has its idea to be lived up to, and, as it were, fills an invisible mould in the

¹ [*Excursions*, pp. 260, 261; Riv. 318-320.]

air, is the more evident, because if you should cut away one or all but one, the remaining branch or branches would still in time form a head in the main similar to this.

Brought home my first boat-load of wood.

Sept. 26. Saturday. A. M. — Apparently *Hypericum prolificum* in Monroe's garden, still out.

The season is waning. A wasp just looked in upon me. A very warm day for the season.

P. M. — Up river to Clamshell.

These are warm, serene, bright autumn afternoons. I see far off the various-colored gowns of cranberry-pickers against the green of the meadow. The river stands a little way over the grass again, and the summer is over. The pickerel-weed is brown, and I see musquash-houses. *Solidago rigida*, just done, within a rod southwest of the oak. I see a large black cricket on the river, a rod from shore, and a fish is leaping at it. As long as the fish leaps, it is motionless as if dead; but as soon as it feels my paddle under it, it is lively enough. I sit on Clamshell bank and look over the meadows. Hundreds of crickets have fallen into a sandy gully and now are incessantly striving to creep or leap up again over the sliding sand. This their business this September afternoon. I watch a marsh hawk circling low along the edge of the meadow, looking for a frog, and now at last it alights to rest on a tussock.

Coming home, the sun is intolerably warm on my left cheek. I perceive it is because the heat of the re-

flected sun, which is as bright as the real one, is added to that of the real one, for when I cover the reflection with my hand the heat is less intense.

That cricket seemed to know that if he lay quietly *spread out* on the surface, either the fishes would not suspect him to be an insect, or if they tried to swallow him would not be able to.

What blundering fellows these crickets are, both large and small! They were not only tumbling into the river all along shore, but into this sandy gully, to escape from which is a Sisyphus labor. I have not sat there many minutes watching two foraging crickets which have decided to climb up two tall and slender weeds almost bare of branches, as a man shins up a liberty-pole sometimes, when I find that one has climbed to the summit of my knee. They are incessantly running about on the sunny bank. Their still larger cousins, the mole crickets, are creaking loudly and incessantly all along the shore. Others have eaten themselves cavernous apartments, sitting-room and pantry at once, in windfall apples.

Speaking to Rice of that cricket's escape, he said that a snake [*sic*] in like manner would puff itself up when a snake was about to swallow him, making right up to him. He once, with several others, saw a small striped snake swim across a piece of water about half a rod wide to a half-grown bullfrog which sat on the opposite shore, and attempt to seize him, but he found that he had caught a Tartar, for the bullfrog, seeing him coming, was not afraid of him, but at once seized his head in his mouth and closed his jaws

upon it, and he thus held the snake a considerable while before the latter was able by struggling to get away.

When that cricket felt my oar, he leaped without the least hesitation or perhaps consideration, trusting to fall in a pleasanter place. He was evidently trusting to drift against some weed which would afford him a *point d'appui*.

Sept. 27. I am surprised to find that, yesterday having been a sudden very warm day, the peaches have mellowed suddenly and wilted, and I find many more fallen than even after previous rains. Better if ripened more gradually.

How out of all proportion to the *value* of an idea, when you come to one, — in Hindoo literature, for instance, — is the historical fact about it, — the when, where, etc., it was actually expressed, and what precisely it might signify to a sect of worshippers! Anything that is called history of India — or of the world — is impertinent beside any real poetry or inspired thought which is dateless.

P. M. — To Lee's Cliff by land.

Small red maples in low ground have fairly begun to burn for a week. It varies from scarlet to crimson. It looks like training-day in the meadows and swamps. They have run up their colors. A small red maple has grown, perchance, far away on some moist hillside, a mile from any road, unobserved. It has faithfully discharged the duties of a maple there, all winter and summer, neglected none of its economies, added

to its stature in the virtue which belongs to a maple, by a steady growth all summer, and is nearer heaven than in the spring, never having gone gadding abroad; and now, in this month of September, when men are turned travellers, hastening to the seaside, or the mountains, or the lakes, — in this month of travelling, — this modest maple, having ripened its seeds, still without budging an inch, travels on its reputation, runs up its scarlet flag on that hillside, to show that it has finished its summer work before all other trees, and withdraws from the contest. Thus that modest worth which no scrutiny could have detected when it was most industrious, is, by the very tint of its maturity, by its very blushes, revealed at last to the most careless and distant observer. It rejoices in its existence; its reflections are unalloyed. It is the day of thanksgiving with it. At last, its labors for the year being consummated and every leaf ripened to its full, it flashes out conspicuous to the eye of the most casual observer, with all the virtue and beauty of a maple, — *Acer rubrum*. In its hue is no regret nor pining. Its leaves have been asking their parent from time to time in a whisper, "When shall we redden?" It has faithfully husbanded its sap, and builded without babbling nearer and nearer to heaven. Long since it committed its seeds to the winds and has the satisfaction of knowing perhaps that a thousand little well-behaved and promising maples of its stock are already established in business somewhere. It deserves well of Mapledom. It has afforded a shelter to the wandering bird.¹ Its

¹ [*Excursions*, pp. 260, 261; *Riv.* 319, 320.]

same elements differently combined, and those elements are in continual revolution around the globe. This *poitrine* found here the air of France, and measurably its soil too.¹

Looking down from Nawshawtuct this afternoon, the white maples on the Assabet and below have a singular light glaucous look, almost hoary, as if curled and showing the under sides of the leaves, and they contrast with the fresh green pines and hemlocks. The swamp white oaks present some of the same crisped whitish appearance.

I see that E. Wood has sent a couple of Irishmen, with axe and bush-whack, to cut off the natural hedges of sumach, Roxbury waxwork, grapes, etc., which have sprung up by the walls on this hill farm, in order that his cows may get a little more green. And they have cut down two or three of the very rare celtis trees, not found anywhere else in town. The Lord deliver us from these vandalic proprietors! The botanist and lover of nature has, perchance, discovered some rare tree which has sprung up by a farmer's wall-side to adorn and bless it, sole representative of its kind in these parts. Strangers send for a seed or a sprig from a distance, but, walking there again, he finds that the farmer has sent a raw Irishman, a hireling just arrived on these shores, who was never there before, — and, we trust, will never be let loose there again, — who knows not whether he is hacking at the upas tree or the Tree of Knowledge, with axe and stub-scythe to exterminate it, and he will know it no

¹ [Excursions, p. 203; Riv. 249.]

more forever. What is trespassing? This Hessian, the day after he was landed, was whirled twenty miles into the interior to do this deed of vandalism on our favorite hedge. I would as soon admit a living mud turtle into my herbarium. If some are prosecuted for abusing children, others deserve to be prosecuted for maltreating the face of nature committed to their care.

Had one of those sudden cool gusts, which filled the air with dust from the road, shook the houses, and caused the elms to labor and drop many leaves, early in afternoon. No such gust since spring.

Sept. 29. All sorts of men come to Cattle-Show. I see one with a blue hat.

I hear that some have gathered fringed gentian. Pines have begun to be parti-colored with yellow leaves.

Sept. 30. Ground white with frost this morning.

P. M. — To Walden.

Young oaks generally reddening, etc., etc. *Rhus Toxicodendron* turned yellow and red, handsomely dotted with brown.

At Wheeler's Wood by railroad, heard a cat owl hooting at 3.30 P. M., which was repeatedly answered by another some forty rods off.

Talked with Minott, who was sitting, as usual, in his wood-shed. His hen and chickens, finding it cold these nights on the trees behind the house, had begun last night to roost in the shed, and one by one walked or hopped up a ladder within a foot of his shoulder to the loft above. He sits there so much like a fixture

that they do not regard him. It has got to be so cool, then, that tender chickens seek a shelter at night; but I saw the hens at Clark's (the R. Brown house) were still going to roost in the apple trees. M. asks the peddlers if they've got anything that'll cure the rheumatism, and often buys a wash of them.

I was telling him how some crows two or three weeks ago came flying with a scolding caw toward me as I stood on "Cornel Rock," and alighted within fifty feet on a dead tree above my head, unusually bold. Then away go all but one, perchance, to a tall pine in the swamp, twenty rods off; anon he follows. Again they go quite out of sight amid the tree-tops, leaving one behind. This one, at last, quite at his leisure, flaps away cawing, knowing well where to find his mates, though you might think he must winter alone.

Minott said that as he was going over to Lincoln one day thirty or forty years ago, taking his way through Ebby Hubbard's woods, he heard a great flock of crows cawing over his head, and one alighted just within gunshot. He raised his little gun marked London, which he knew would fetch down anything that was within gunshot, and down came the crow; but he was not killed, only so filled with shot that he could not fly. As he was going by John Wyman's at the pond, with the live crow in his hand, Wyman asked him what he was going to do with that crow, to which he answered, "Nothing in particular,"—he happened to alight within gunshot, and so he shot him. Wyman said that he'd like to have him. "What do you want to do with him?" asked M. "If you'll give

him to me, I'll tell you," said the other. To which Minott said, "You may have him and welcome." Wyman then proceeded to inform him that the crows had eaten a great space in Josh Jones the blacksmith's corn-field, which Minott had passed just below the almshouse, and that Jones had told him that if he could kill a crow in his corn-field he would give him half a bushel of rye. He could guess what he wanted the crow for. So Wyman took the crow and the next time he went into town he tossed him over the wall into the corn-field and then shot him, and, carrying the dead crow to Jones, he got his half-bushel of rye.

[Here, and at several following points, matter relative to the recent Maine excursion is omitted as having been already used in "The Maine Woods."]

The mist and mizzling rain there¹ was like the sparkling dust of amethysts.

The Watsons tell me that Uncle Ned uses the expression "a glade" for the sheen of the moon on the water, which is, I see, according to Bailey, being from *κλάδος*, a branch. Helps thinks "a glade" such a path through a forest as an army would cut with a sword. . . .

What poor crack-brains we are! easily upset and unable to take care of ourselves! If there were a precipice at our doors, some would be found jumping off to-day for fear that, if they survived, they might jump off to-morrow. . . .

Consider what actual phenomena await us. To say nothing of life, which may be rare and difficult to detect, and death, which is startling enough, we cannot begin

¹ [At Mt. Kinco, Moosehead Lake.]

to conceive of anything so surprising and thrilling but that something more surprising may be actually presented to us.¹ . . .

According to the Upanishads, "As water, when rained down on elevated ground, runs scattered off in the valleys, so ever runs after difference a person who beholds attributes different (from the soul)."

"As pure water, which is thrown down on pure ground, remains alike, so also, O Gautama, is the soul of the thinker who knows."

Minott says he is seventy-five years old.

Minott said he had seen a couple of pigeons go over at last, as he sat in his shed. At first he thought they were doves, but he soon saw that they were pigeons, they flew so straight and fast.

He says that that tall clock which still ticks in the corner belonged to old John Beaton, who died before he was born; thought it was two hundred years old!! Some of the rest of the furniture came from the same source. His gun marked London was one that Beaton sent to England for, for a young man that lived with him. I read on John Beaton's tombstone near the powder-house that he died in 1776, aged seventy-four.

¹ [Apropos of the phosphorescent wood of *Maine Woods*, pp. 198-201 (Riv. 245-248).]