

VIII

OCTOBER, 1859

(ÆT. 42)

Oct. 1. P. M. — To the beeches.

Looking down from Pine Hill, I see a fish hawk over Walden.

The shrub oaks on this hill are now at their height, both with respect to their tints and their fruit. The plateaus and little hollows are crowded with them three to five feet high, the pretty fruit, varying in size, pointedness, and downiness, being now generally turned brown, with light, converging meridional lines. Many leading shoots are perfectly bare of leaves, the effect of the frost, and on some bushes half the cups are empty, but these cups generally bear the marks of squirrels' teeth, and probably but few acorns have fallen of themselves yet. However, they are just ready to fall, and if you bend back the peduncles on these bare and frost-touched shoots, you find them just ready to come off, separating at the base of the peduncle, and the peduncle remaining attached to the fruit. The squirrels, probably striped, must be very busy here nowadays. Though many twigs are bare, these clusters of brown fruit in their grayish-brown cups are unnoticed and almost invisible, unless you are looking for them, above the ground, which is strewn with their similarly colored leaves; *i. e.*, this leaf-strewn earth has the same general gray and brown color with the twigs and fruit, and you may

brush against great wreaths of fruit without noticing them. You press through dense groves full of this interesting fruit, each seeming prettier than the last. Now is the time for shrub oak acorns, then, if not for others. I see where the squirrels have left the shells on rocks and stumps. They take the acorn out of its cup on the bush, leaving the cup there with a piece bit out of its edge.

The little beechnut burs are mostly empty, and the ground is strewn with the nuts mostly empty and abortive. Yet I pluck some apparently full grown with meat. This fruit is apparently now at its height.

Oct. 2. Rain in the night and cloudy this forenoon.

We had all our dog-days in September this year. It was too dry before, even for fungi. Only the last three weeks have we had any fungi to speak of. Nowadays I see most of the election-cake fungi, with crickets and slugs eating them. I see a cricket feeding on an apple, into which he has eaten so deep that only his posteriors project, but he does not desist a moment though I shake the apple and finally drop it on the ground.

P. M. — To *lygodium*.

One of the large black birches on Tarbell's land is turned completely brownish-yellow and has lost half its leaves; the other is green still.

I see in the corn-field above this birch, collected about the trunk of an oak, on the ground, fifty to a hundred ears of corn which have been stripped to the cob, evidently by the squirrels. Apparently a great

part of the kernels remain on the ground, but in every case the germ has been eaten out. It is apparent that the squirrel prefers this part, for he has not carried off the rest.

I perceive in various places, in low ground, this afternoon, the sour scent of cinnamon ferns decaying. It is an agreeable phenomenon, reminding me of the season and of past years.

So many maple and pine and other leaves have now fallen that in the woods, at least, you walk over a carpet of fallen leaves.

As I sat on an old pigeon-stand, not used this year, on the hill south of the swamp, at the foot of a tree, set up with perches nailed on it, a pigeon hawk, as I take it, came and perched on the tree. As if it had been wont to catch pigeons at such places.

That large *lechea*, now so freshly green and sometimes scarlet, looks as if it would make a pretty edging like box, as has been suggested. The *Aster undulatus* and *Solidago cæsia* and often *puberula* are particularly prominent now, looking late and bright, attracting bees, etc. I see the *S. cæsia* so covered with the little fuzzy gnats as to be whitened by them. How bright the *S. puberula* in sprout-lands, — its yellow wand,¹ — perhaps in the midst of a clump of little scarlet or dark-purple black oaks! The *A. undulatus* looks fairer than ever, now that flowers are more scarce.

The climbing fern is perfectly fresh, — and apparently therefore an evergreen, — the more easily found amid the withered cinnamon and flowering ferns.

¹ Quite generally withered and fuzzy Oct. 14th, 1861.

Acorns generally, as I notice, — swamp white, shrub, black, and white, — are turned brown; but few are still green. Yet few, except of shrub oaks, have fallen. I hear them fall, however, as I stand under the trees. This would be the time to notice them.

How much pleasanter to go along the edge of the woods, through the field in the rear of the farmhouse, whence you see only its gray roof and its haystacks, than to keep the road by its door! This we think as we return behind Martial Miles's. I observed that many pignuts had fallen yesterday, though quite green.

Some of the *Umbelliferae*, now gone to seed, are very pretty to examine. The *Cicuta maculata*, for instance, the concave umbel is so well spaced, the different umbellets (?) like so many constellations or separate systems in the firmament.

Hear a hylodes in the swamp.

Oct. 3. P. M. — To Bateman's Pond; back by hog-pasture and old Carlisle road.

Some faces that I see are so gross that they affect me like a part of the person improperly exposed, and it occurs to me that they might be covered, and, if necessary, some other, and perhaps better-looking, part of the person be exposed.

It is somewhat cooler and more autumnal. A great many leaves have fallen and the trees begin to look thin. You incline to sit in a sunny and sheltered place. This season, the fall, which we have now entered on, commenced, I may say, as long ago as when the first frost was seen and felt in low ground in August. From that

time, even, the year has been gradually winding up its accounts. Cold, methinks, has been the great agent which has checked the growth of plants, condensed their energies, and caused their fruits to ripen, in September especially. Perchance man never ripens within the tropics.¹

I see on a wall a myrtle-bird in its October dress, looking very much like a small sparrow. Also everywhere about the edge of the woods this afternoon, sylvias rather large and of a greenish yellow above and beneath, perhaps white vent, and much dark brown above, getting their food on the white birches. The same in very distant places. Perhaps it is the birch louse they eat. What bird is this?² It is quite unlike the sparrow-like myrtle-bird above described, unless some of them are of this color now.

The *Woodsia Ilvensis* is partly withering or withered on the rocks, but not so much as the dicksonia. Yet it is evidently not evergreen.

I see the ground strewn with *Populus grandidentata* leaves in one place on the old Carlisle road, where one third are fallen. These yellow leaves are all thickly brown-spotted and are very handsome, somewhat leopard-like. It would seem that they begin to decay in spots at intervals all over the leaf, producing a very pretty effect. Think of the myriad variously tinted and spotted and worm-eaten leaves which now combine to produce the general impression of autumn! The ground is here strewn with thousands, any one of which,

¹ *Vide* [pp. 368, 369, 373, and 375].

² [Probably the black-poll warbler.]

if you carry it home, it will refresh and delight you to behold. If we have not the leopard and jaguar and tiger in our woods, we have all their spots and rosettes and stripes in our autumn-tinted leaves.

The ash trees are at their height now, if not earlier. Many of their leaves have fallen.

The dicksonia ferns by the old Carlisle road-side are now almost all withered to dark cinnamon, and the large cinnamon ferns in Buttrick's wood are no longer noticed.

Looking from the hog-pasture over the valley of Spencer Brook westward, we see the smoke rising from a huge chimney above a gray roof amid the woods, at a distance, where some family is preparing its evening meal. There are few more agreeable sights than this to the pedestrian traveller. No cloud is fairer to him than that little bluish one which issues from the chimney. It suggests all of domestic felicity beneath. There beneath, we suppose, that life is lived of which we have only dreamed. In our minds we clothe each unseen inhabitant with all the success, with all the serenity, which we can conceive of. If old, we imagine him serene; if young, hopeful. Nothing can exceed the perfect peace which reigns there. We have only to see a gray roof with its plume of smoke curling up amid the trees to have this faith. There we suspect no coarse haste or bustle, but serene labors which proceed at the same pace with the declining day. *There* is no hiring in the barn nor in the kitchen. Why does any distant prospect ever charm us? Because we instantly and inevitably imagine a life to be lived there such as is not lived else-

where, or where we are. We presume that success is the rule. We forever carry a perfect sampler in our minds. Why are distant valleys, why lakes, why mountains in the horizon, ever fair to us? Because we realize for a moment that they may be the home of man, and that man's life may be in harmony with them. Shall I say that we thus forever delude ourselves? We do not suspect that *that* farmer goes to the depot with his milk. *There* the milk is not watered. We are constrained to imagine a life in harmony with the scenery and the hour. The sky and clouds, and the earth itself, with their beauty forever preach to us, saying, Such an abode we offer you, to such and such a life we encourage you. *There* is not haggard poverty and harassing debt. There is not intemperance, moroseness, meanness, or vulgarity. Men go about sketching, painting landscapes, or writing verses which celebrate man's opportunities. To go into an actual farmer's family at evening, see the tired laborers come in from their day's work thinking of their wages, the sluttish help in the kitchen and sink-room, the indifferent stolidity and patient misery which only the spirits of the youngest children rise above, — that suggests one train of thoughts. To look down on that roof from a distance in an October evening, when its smoke is ascending peacefully to join the kindred clouds above, — that suggests a different train of thoughts. We think that we see these fair abodes and are elated beyond all speech, when we see only our own roofs, perchance. We are ever busy hiring house and lands and peopling them in our imaginations. There is no beauty in the sky, but in the eye that sees

it. Health, high spirits, serenity, these are the great landscape-painters. Turners, Claudes, Rembrandts are nothing to them. We never see any beauty but as the garment of some virtue. Men love to walk in those picture-galleries still, because they have not quite forgotten their early dreams. When I see only the roof of a house above the woods and do not know whose it is, I presume that one of the worthies of the world dwells beneath it, and for a season I am exhilarated at the thought. I would fain sketch it that others may share my pleasure. But commonly, if I see or know the occupant, I am affected as by the sight of the almshouse or hospital.

Wild apples are perhaps at their height, or perhaps only the earlier ones.

Those *P. grandidentata* leaves are wildly rich. So handsomely formed and floridly scalloped, to begin with, — a fine chrome yellow now richly spotted with dark brown like a leopard's skin, — they cover the still green sward by the roadside and the gray road thick as a pavement, each one worthy to be admired as a gem or work of Oriental art.

Among sound leaves I think of the fever-bush, *Rhus radicans*, beech, and shrub oak.

It was mainly the frost of September 15 and 16 that put an end to the summer, that put the finishing stroke to the already withering grass, and left it to bleach in the fields, turning russet with blackberry vines intermixed, earlier than usual. The same frost suddenly cut off the mikania and browned the button-bushes, causing the upper leaves at length to fall. It must be the frost that

ripens nuts, — acorns, for example, — browning them. Frost and cold paint the acorn and the chestnut.

The hickory has spots with a central ring, evidently produced by an insect.

Consider the infinite promise of a man, so that the sight of his roof at a distance suggests an idyll or pastoral, or of his grave an Elegy in a Country Churchyard. How all poets have idealized the farmer's life! What graceful figures and unworldly characters they have assigned to them! Serene as the sky, emulating nature with their calm and peaceful lives. As I come by a farmer's to-day, the house of one who died some two years ago, I see the decrepit form of one whom he had engaged to "carry through," taking his property at a venture, feebly tying up a bundle of fagots with his knee on it, though time is fast loosening the bundle that he is. When I look down on that roof I am not reminded of the mortgage which the village bank has on that property, — that that family long since sold itself to the devil and wrote the deed with their blood. I am not reminded that the old man I see in the yard is one who has lived beyond his calculated time, whom the young one is merely "carrying through" in fulfillment of his contract; that the man at the pump is watering the milk. I am not reminded of the idiot that sits by the kitchen fire.

Oct. 4. When I have made a visit where my expectations are not met, I feel as if I owed my hosts an apology for troubling them so. If I am disappointed, I find that I have no right to visit them.

I have always found that what are called the best of manners are the worst, for they are simply the shell without the meat. They cover no life at all. *They* are the universal slaveholders, who treat men as things. Nobody holds you more cheap than the man of manners. They are marks by the help of which the wearers ignore you and remain concealed themselves. Are they such great characters that they feel obliged to make the journey of life incognito? Sailors swear; gentlemen make their manners to you.

All men sympathize by their lower natures; the few, only, by their higher. The appetites of the mistress are commonly the same as those of her servant, but her society is commonly more select. The help may have some of the tenderloin, but she must eat it in the kitchen.

P. M. — To Conantum.

How interesting now, by wall-sides and on open springy hillsides, the large, straggling tufts of the dicksonia fern above the leaf-strewn greensward, the cold fall-green sward! They are unusually preserved about the Corner Spring, considering the earliness of this year. Long, handsome lanceolate green fronds, pointing in every direction, recurved and full of fruit, intermixed with yellowish and sere brown and shrivelled ones. The whole clump, perchance, strewn with fallen and withered maple leaves and overtopped by now withered and unnoticed osmundas. Their lingering greenness so much the more noticeable now that the leaves (generally) have changed. They affect us as if they were evergreen, such persistent life and greenness in the midst of their own decay. I do not notice them

so much in summer. No matter how much withered they are, with withered leaves that have fallen on them, moist and green they spire above them, not fearing the frosts, fragile as they are. Their greenness so much the more interesting because so many have already fallen and we know that the first severer frost will cut off them too. In the summer greenness is cheap; now it is something comparatively rare and is the emblem of life to us.

It is only when we forget all our learning that we begin to know. I do not get nearer by a hair's breadth to any natural object so long as I presume that I have an introduction to it from some learned man. To conceive of it with a total apprehension I must for the thousandth time approach it as something totally strange. If you would make acquaintance with the ferns you must forget your botany. You must get rid of what is commonly called *knowledge* of them. Not a single scientific term or distinction is the least to the purpose, for you would fain perceive something, and you must approach the object totally unprejudiced. You must be aware that *no thing* is what you have taken it to be. In what book is this world and its beauty described? Who has plotted the steps toward the discovery of beauty? You have got to be in a different state from common. Your greatest success will be simply to perceive that such things are, and you will have no communication to make to the Royal Society. If it were required to know the position of the fruit-dots or the character of the indusium, nothing could be easier than to ascertain it; but if it is required that

you be affected by ferns, that they amount to anything, signify anything, to you, that they be another sacred scripture and revelation to you, helping to redeem your life, this end is not so surely accomplished. In the one case, you take a sentence and analyze it, you decide if it is printed in large [*sic*] primer or small pica; if it is long or short, simple or compound, and how many clauses it is composed of; if the i's are all dotted, or some for variety without dots; what the color and composition of the ink and the paper; and it is considered a fair or mediocre sentence accordingly, and you assign its place among the sentences you have seen and kept specimens of. But as for the meaning of the sentence, that is as completely overlooked as if it had none. This is the Chinese, the Aristotelean, method. But if you should ever perceive the meaning you would disregard all the rest. So far science goes, and it punctually leaves off there, — tells you finally where it is to be found and its synonyms, and rests from its labors.

This is a fine and warm afternoon, Indian-summer-like, but we have not had cold enough before it.

Birds are now seen more numerous than before, as if called out by the fine weather, probably many migrating birds from the north. I see and hear probably flocks of grackles with their split and shuffling note, but no red-wings for a long time; chip-birds (but without chestnut crowns; is that the case with the young?), bay-wings on the walls and fences, and the yellow-browed sparrows. Hear the pine warblers in the pines, about the needles, and see them on the ground and on rocks, with a yellow ring round the eye (!), reddish legs,

slight whitish bar on wings. Going over the large hill-side stubble-field west of Holden Wood, I start up a large flock of shore larks; hear their *sweet sweet* and *sweet sweet sweet*, and see their tails dark beneath. They are very wary, and run in the stubble for the most part invisible, while one or two appear to act the sentinel on rock, peeping out behind it perhaps, and give their note of alarm, when away goes the whole flock. Such a flock circled back and forth several times over my head, just like ducks reconnoitring before they alight. If you look with a glass you are surprised to see how alert these spies are. When they alight in some stubbly hollow they set a watch or two on the rocks to look out for foes. They have dusky bills and legs.

The birds seem to delight in these first fine days of the fall, in the warm, hazy light, — robins, bluebirds (in families on the almost bare elms), phœbes, and probably purple finches. I hear half-strains from many of them, as the song sparrow, bluebird, etc., and the sweet *phe-be* of the chickadee.

Now the year itself begins to be ripe, ripened by the frost, like a persimmon.¹

The maidenhair fern at Conantum is apparently unhurt by frost as yet.

Oct. 6. A. M. — To Boston.

Examine the pigeon and sparrow hawks in the Natural History collection. My wings and tail are apparently the pigeon hawk's. The sparrow hawks are decidedly red-brown with bluish heads and blue or

¹ *Vide* bottom of 11th.

slate sides; also are much more thickly barred with dark on wing-coverts, back, and tail than the pigeon hawk.

Oct. 7. The pontederia seeds which I dropped into a pitcher of water have now mostly sunk. As the outside decays they become heavier than water.

Oct. 9. P. M. — Boston.

Read a lecture to Theodore Parker's society.

Aster cordifolius abundant and commonly in bloom in Roxbury. See the privet everywhere with dense pyramidal clusters of berries. *Salsola kali* common in bloom, with pretty crimson flowers. *Chenopodium maritimum* perhaps in bloom. *Senecio vulgaris* still in bloom.

Oct. 10. White-throated sparrows in yard and close up to house, together with myrtle-birds (which fly up against side of house and alight on window-sills) and, I think, tree sparrows?

Colder weather, and the cat's fur grows.

Oct. 11. P. M. — To Cliffs.

Looking under large oaks, black and white, the acorns appear to have fallen or been gathered by squirrels, etc. I see in many *distant* places stout twigs (black or scarlet oak) three or four inches long which have been gnawed off by the squirrels, with four to seven acorns on each, and left on the ground. These twigs have been gnawed off on each side of the nuts in

order to make them more portable, I suppose. The nuts all abstracted and sides of the cups broken to get them out.



The note of the chickadee, heard now in cooler weather and above many fallen leaves, has a new significance.

There was a very severe frost this morning (ground stiffened), probably a chestnut-opening frost, a season-ripening, opener of the burs that inclose the Indian summer. Such is the cold of early or middle October. The leaves and weeds had that stiff, hoary appearance.

Oct. 12. P. M. — To Hubbard's Close.

The common goldenrods on railroad causeway have begun to look hoary or gray, the down showing itself, — that November feature.

I see scattered flocks of bay-wings amid the weeds and on the fences.

There are now apparently very few ferns left (except the evergreen ones), and those are in sheltered places. This morning's frost will nearly finish them. Now for lycopodiums (the *dendroideum* not yet apparently in bloom), the *dendroideum* and *lucidulum*, etc., — how vivid a green! — lifting their heads above the moist fallen leaves.

We have now fairly begun to be surrounded with the brown of withered foliage, since the young white oaks have withered. This phenomenon begins with the very earliest frost (as this year August 17th), which kills some ferns and other most sensitive plants; and so gradually the plants, or their leaves, are killed and withered that we

scarcely notice it till we are surrounded with the scenery of November.¹

I see quinces commonly left out yet, though apples are gathered. Probably their downy coats defend them.

Going through Clintonia Swamp, I see many of those buff-brown puffballs one to two inches [in] diameter on the ground, partly open and with water in them and partly entire as yet, with a cracked surface.

The willows on the Turnpike resound with the hum of bees, almost as in spring! I see apparently yellow wasps, hornets, and small bees attracted by something on their twigs.

Oct. 13. P. M. — Up Assabet.

Many of the small hypericums, *mutilum* and *Canadense*, have survived the frosts as yet, after all. The hemlock seed is now in the midst of its fall, some of it, with the leaves, floating on the river. The cones, being thus expanded, are more conspicuous on the trees. Many feverwort berries are fresh yet, though the leaves are quite withered. They are remarkable for their peculiar color. The thorn fruit on the hill is considerably past prime, though abundant and reddening the bushes still. The common alder up the Assabet is nerved like the hornbeam. I see no acorns on the trees. They appear to have all fallen before this.

The swamp amelanchier is leafing again, as usual. What a pleasing phenomenon, perhaps an Indian-summer growth, an anticipation of the spring, like the notes of birds and frogs, etc., an evidence of warmth and

¹ Yet these same plants will wither and fall without frost.

genialness. Its buds are annually awakened by the October sun as if it were spring. The shad-bush is leafing again by the sunny swamp-side. It is like a youthful or poetic thought in old age. Several times I have been cheered by this sight when surveying in former years. The chickadee seems to lisp a sweeter note at the sight of it. I would not fear the winter more than the shad-bush which puts forth fresh and tender leaves on its approach. In the fall I will take this for my coat-of-arms. It seems to detain the sun that expands it. These twigs are so full of life that they can hardly contain themselves. They ignore winter. They anticipate spring. What faith! Away in some warm and sheltered recess in the swamp you find where these leaves have expanded. It is a foretaste of spring. In my latter years, let me have some *shad-bush* thoughts.¹

I perceive the peculiar scent of the witch-hazel in bloom for several rods around, which at first I refer to the decaying leaves. I see where dodder was killed, with the button-bush, perhaps a week.

British naturalists very generally apologize to the reader for having devoted their attention to natural history to the neglect of some important duty.

Among plants which spring in cellars (*vide* September 22d) might be mentioned funguses. I remember seeing in an old work a plate of a fungus which grew in a wine-cellar and got its name from that circumstance. It is related in *Chambers's Journal* that Sir Joseph Banks, having caused a cask of wine to be placed in a cellar in order to improve it, "at the end of three years

¹ *Vide* Nov. 25th, 1858. *Vide* mountain-ash, Oct. 30th, 1858.

he directed his butler to ascertain the state of the wine, when, on attempting to open the cellar door, he could not affect it, in consequence of some powerful obstacle; the door was consequently cut down, when the cellar was found to be completely filled with a fungous production, so firm that it was necessary to use an axe for its removal. This appeared to have grown from, or to have been nourished by, the decomposing particles of the wine, the cask being empty, and carried up to the ceiling, where it was supported by the fungus." Perhaps it was well that the fungus instead of Sir Joseph Banks drank up the wine. The life of a wine-bibber is like that of a fungus.

Oct. 14. 9 A. M. — To and around Flint's Pond with Blake.

A fine Indian-summer day. The 6th and 10th were quite cool, and any particularly warm days since may be called Indian summer (?), I think.

We sit on the rock on Pine Hill overlooking Walden. There is a thick haze almost entirely concealing the mountains.

There is wind enough to raise waves on the pond and make it bluer. What strikes me in the scenery here now is the contrast of the unusually blue water with the brilliant-tinted woods around it. The tints generally may be about at their height. The earth appears like a great inverted shield painted yellow and red, or with imbricated scales of that color, and a blue navel in the middle where the pond lies, and a distant circumference of whitish haze. The nearer woods, where chestnuts

grow, are a mass of warm, glowing [yellow] (though the larger chestnuts have lost the greater part of their leaves and generally you wade through rustling chestnut leaves in the woods), but on other sides the red and yellow are intermixed. The red, probably of scarlet oaks on the south of Fair Haven Hill, is very fair.

The beech tree at Baker's fence is past prime and many leaves fallen.

The shrub oak acorns are now all fallen, — only one or two left on, — and their cups, which are still left on, are apparently somewhat incurved at the edge as they have dried, so that probably they would not hold the acorn now. The ground is strewn also with red oak acorns now, and, as far as I can discover, acorns of all kinds have fallen.

At Baker's wall two of the walnut trees are bare but full of green nuts (in their green cases), which make a very pretty sight as they wave in the wind. So distinct you could count every one against the sky, for there is not a leaf on these trees, but other walnuts near by are yet full of leaves. You have the green nut contrasted with the clean gray trunks and limbs. These are pig-nut-shaped.

The chestnuts generally have not yet fallen, though many have. I find under one tree a great many burs, apparently not cast down by squirrels — for I see no marks of their teeth — and not yet so opened that any of the nuts fall out. They do not all wait till frosts open the burs before they fall, then.

I see a black snake, and also a striped snake, out this warm day.

I see and hear many hawks for some weeks past. On the 11th I saw one as small as I ever saw, — I thought not larger than a kingbird, — as I stood on the Cliffs, hovering over the wood about on a level with me. It sailed directly only a rod or two, then flapped its wings fast and sailed on a rod or two further. Was it not a sparrow hawk? Dr. Kneeland says he sees it hereabouts and distinguishes it partly by its smaller size.

See great numbers of crickets in the cross-road from Tuttle's to Alcott's.

Populus grandidentata up Assabet yellow, but not quite at height.

Of my list of fruits for '54, all those named before August 15th were done this year by August 1st at least, except that the sumach berries still hold on, and bunch-berries undoubtedly, where they grow, also Jersey tea fruit, waxwork, privet common in gardens. Possibly some poke berries, still green, may turn, though the vines [*sic*] are killed. The birds may not have gathered quite all the mountain-ash (ours was stripped in about one day by them a week or two ago), and uva-ursi, of course, holds on. Perhaps trientalis fruit holds on. I have not noticed *Aralia nudicaulis* berries for some weeks, nor high blackberries for two or three weeks. Wild apples are perhaps now at height. Cat-tail ripe before July 31st. Alternate cornel fell long ago. Elder-berries are gone, how long? Muskmelons and watermelons with the early frosts of September 16th this year, except those up to this time in cellar. *Viburnum dentatum* probably done before October 1st.

Those on that list after October 15th (inclusive) stand thus: —

Barberries are gathered.

Thorn-apples much past prime, but many bushes still red with them.

Prinos berries fair as ever.

Red choke-berries done (though they may dry on).

Spikenard (not seen).

Fever-bush (not seen).¹

Arum probably done (?)²

Vaccinium Oxycoceus (not seen).

Grapes all fallen, probably a week or more; generally before October.

Acorns of all kinds fallen (been falling for three or four weeks); can find none on the trees.³

Rose hips (not noticed).⁴

Viburnum Lentago probably done several weeks.

Poison-dogwood all ripe some time.

Cornus sericea generally fallen by September 30th; all probably by the 12th.

Waxwork (not seen).

Woodbine (not seen).

Fever-wort many still fresh, their peculiar corn-yellow, along the withering stems, October 13th; all leaves withered.

Zizania, some black left (and green) September 30th.

Checkerberries; see none yet full grown and colored, but there are very few this year.

Shrub oak acorns all fallen (can find but one or two left).⁵

The smilacina berries of both kinds more or less shrivelled for some weeks.

Yew probably done some time.

Maple viburnum (not seen), probably done several weeks.

¹ Oct. 14th, can't find any.

² Oct. 14th, see none.

³ Yes; black oak and a great many shrub oak.

⁴ Some sweet-briar hips frost-bitten before complete change.

⁵ ! Hardly half fallen in another place.

Mitchella ripe a good while.
 Medecola probably fallen several weeks.
 Common cranberry (not seen).
 Pontederia seeds are still falling, a few.
Asclepias Cornuti apparently not yet generally discounts.¹
 Pignuts generally still green on trees.
 Wild pears (not seen).
 Button-bush balls (now too brown for beauty).
 Green-briar (condition not noticed).
 Sweet-briar (some hips apparently frost-bitten!).
 Bass berries mostly dry and brown September 30th.
 Tupelo (not seen of late).
 Bayberries (picked by birds?).

Of the above-named list, etc., those still persistent and interesting, then, are:—

- * Sumach berries of different kinds.
 Bunchberries where found.
 Privet berries “ “
- * Waxwork (?).
 Possibly a little poke (?).
 Mountain-ash (??).
- * Amphicarpæa, some time.
- * Uva-ursi.
- * Wild apples.
- * Barberries left.
- * Some thorn-apples.
- * Celtis, how long?
- * Prinos.
 Is there any spikenard?
 “ “ “ fever-bush? ²
 “ “ “ arum? ³
- * Cranberries, two kinds.⁴

¹ See one.

² Can see none the 15th.

³ Can see none the 15th.

⁴ The *Vaccinium Oxyococcus* mostly quite ripened by frost the 17th.

- * Rose hips, all kinds.
- * Poison-dogwood.
- * *R. Toxicodendron*.
- * Some fever-wort.
- * Checkerberries, hardly ripe.
- * Ground-nut.
 Smilacina (two kinds, at least), shrivelled.
- * Mitchella, fair.
- * Mallows.
 Asclepiases.
- * Hickory-nuts.
- * Green-briar (?).
- * Bayberries.

Of which those starred are the only noticeable ones, and only the following probably are in their mellow prime now:—

- Uva-ursi.
- Wild apples.
- Prinos.
- Cranberries.
- Rose hips.
- Mitchella.
- Hickory-nuts (*hardly yet*).
- Bayberries.
- Mallows.

Some *Rhus radicans* was leafless on the 13th, and some tupelos bare maybe a week or more, and button-bushes nearly bare.

My little white pines by Walden are now conspicuous in their rows, the grass, etc., having withered to tawny and the blackberry turned to scarlet. They have been almost inobvious through the summer. The dark evergreen leaves of the checkerberry also attract us now amid the shrub oaks, as on the southwest of Pine Hill.

I hear a man laughed at because he went to Europe twice in search of an imaginary wife who, he thought, was there, though he had never seen nor heard of her. But the majority have gone further while they stayed in America, have actually allied themselves to one whom they thought their wife and found out their mistake too late to mend it. It would be cruel to laugh at these.

Wise, the balloonist, says that he lost a balloon "in a *juniper bog* in the State of Maine," which he mistook for a "prairie." Does he mean a larch swamp?¹ Balloonists speak of hearing dogs bark at night and wagons rumbling over bridges.

Arbor-vitæ falling (seeds), how long?

Oct. 15. P. M. — To Botrychium Swamp.

A cold northwest wind.

I see some black oak acorns on the trees still and in some places at least half the shrub oak acorns. The last are handsomer now that they have turned so much darker.

I go along the east edge of Poplar Hill. This very cold and windy day, now that so many leaves have fallen, I begin to notice the silveriness of willows blown up in the wind, — a November sight.

The hickories at Poplar Hill (and elsewhere, as far as I perceive) are all past prime now and most half-withered or bare, very different from last year. In warmer autumns, if I remember rightly, they last several weeks later than this in some localities, one succeeding another with its splendid glow, an evidence of the genial-

¹ [Larch swamps are called "juniper bogs" in some parts of Maine.]

ness of the season. In cool and moist places, in a genial year, some are preserved green after others have changed, and by their later change and glow they prolong the season of autumnal tints very agreeably.

This is a cold fall.

The larches in A. Heywood's swamp, though a yellow-green than the white pines, are not yet sharply distinguished from them by their form, as they will be.

The oaks generally are very fair now at a distance. Standing on this hilltop this cold and blustering day, when dark and slate-colored clouds are flitting over the sky, the beauty of the scenery is enhanced by the contrast in the short intervals of sunshine. The whole surface of the country, both young woodlands and full-grown forests, whether they clothe sides of hills or their lit tops are seen over a ridge, — the birch phalanxes and huckleberry flocks [?], etc., — even to the horizon, is like a rug of many brilliant colors, with the towns in the more open and tawny spaces. The beauty or effect of the scene is enhanced, if, standing here, you see far in the horizon the red regiments of oaks alternately lit up by the sun and dimmed by the passing shadow of a cloud. As the shadows of these cold clouds flit across the landscape, the red banners of distant forests are lit up or disappear like the colors of a thousand regiments.

Pratt says that he planted a ground-nut in his garden in good soil, but they grew no bigger than a bean. He did not know but it would take more than one year, even if he planted the tuber.

The yellow birches are generally bare. *Juniperus repens* leaves have fallen, perhaps with red cedar.

The ash trees I see to-day are quite bare, apparently several or some days.

The little leaves of the mitchella, with a whitish midrib and veins, lying generally flat on the mossy ground, perhaps about the base of a tree, with their bright-scarlet twin berries sprinkled over them, may properly be said to *checker* the ground. Now, particularly, they are noticed amid the fallen leaves.

The bayberry leaves have fallen, and all the berries are gone. I suppose the birds have eaten them. Mountain laurel leaves are fallen. The yellow birches are bare, revealing the fruit (the short, thick brown catkins) now ripe and ready to scale off. How full the trees are! About as thick as the leaves were. The fever-bush is for the most part bare, and I see no berries. *Rhus radicans* too is bare. The maidenhair is for the most part withered. It is not evergreen, then. The mountain sumach which I see is bare, and some smooth ditto.

That appears to be *Aspidium cristatum* which I find evergreen in swamps, but no fertile fronds now. It is broader and denser than the plate of the English one. It cannot be a described variety of *spinulosum*, for it is only once pinnate.

I think I see myrtle-birds on white birches, and that they are the birds I saw on them a week or two ago, — apparently, or probably, after the birch lice. See a *Fringilla hyemalis*. The chickadees sing as if at home. They are not travelling singers hired by any Barnum. Theirs is an honest, homely, heartfelt melody. Shall not the voice of man express as much content as the note of a bird?

Botrychium Lunaria has shed pollen, how long? The little larches in midst of Gowing's Swamp already changed, before others elsewhere.

Each town should have a park, or rather a primitive forest, of five hundred or a thousand acres, where a stick should never be cut for fuel, a common possession forever, for instruction and recreation. We hear of cow-commons and ministerial lots, but we want *men*-commons and lay lots, inalienable forever. Let us keep the New World *new*, preserve all the advantages of living in the country. There is meadow and pasture and wood-lot for the town's poor. Why not a forest and huckleberry-field for the town's rich? All Walden Wood might have been preserved for our park forever, with Walden in its midst, and the Easterbrooks Country, an unoccupied area of some four square miles, might have been our huckleberry-field. If any owners of these tracts are about to leave the world without natural heirs who need or deserve to be specially remembered, they will do wisely to abandon their possession to all, and not will them to some individual who perhaps has enough already. As some give to Harvard College or another institution, why might not another give a forest or huckleberry-field to Concord? A town is an institution which deserves to be remembered. We boast of our system of education, but why stop at schoolmasters and schoolhouses? We are all schoolmasters, and our schoolhouse is the universe. To attend chiefly to the desk or schoolhouse while we neglect the scenery in which it is placed is absurd. If we do not look out we shall find our fine schoolhouse standing in a cow-yard at last.

The *Kalmia glauca*, now falling, is quite a brilliant scarlet. In this case you have the fresh liquid-green leaves of this year above the brilliant scarlet ones of last year. Most other evergreens exhibit only a contrast of green with yellow or yellowish.

The balm-of-Gileads by Mrs. Ripley's bare. Those beyond Barrett's Bridge green and full of leaves. The spruce leaves have fallen, — how long? — and its seeds are falling. Larch seeds falling. Celtis berries ripe, how long? *Solanum Dulcamara* berries linger over water but mostly are shrivelled. Canoe birch is now at least half fallen or more, apparently with the small white; looks in color like an aspen.

Oct. 16. Sunday. P. M. — Paddle to Puffer's and thence walk to Ledum Swamp and Conant's Wood.

A cold, clear, Novemberish day. The wind goes down and we do not sail. The button-bushes are just bare, and the black willows partly so, and the mikania all fairly gray now. I see the button-bush balls reflected on each side, and each wool-grass head and recurved withered sedge or rush is also doubled by the reflection. The *Scirpus lacustris* is generally brown, the *Juncus militaris* greener. It is rather too cool to sit still in the boat unless in a sunny and sheltered place. I have not been on the river for some time, and it is the more novel to me this cool day.

When I get to Willow Bay I see the new musquash-houses erected, conspicuous on the now nearly leafless shores. To me this is an important and suggestive sight, as, perchance, in some countries new haystacks

in the yards; as to the Esquimaux the erection of winter houses. I remember this phenomenon annually for thirty years. A more constant phenomenon here than the new haystacks in the yard, for they were erected here probably before man dwelt here and may still be erected here when man has departed. For thirty years I have annually observed, about this time or earlier, the freshly erected winter lodges of the musquash along the riverside, reminding us that, if we have no gypsies, we have a more indigenous race of furry, quadrupedal men maintaining their ground in our midst still. This may not be an annual phenomenon to you. It may not be in the Greenwich almanac or ephemeris, but it has an important place in my Kalendar. So surely as the sun appears to be in Libra or Scorpio, I see the conical winter lodges of the musquash rising above the withered pontederia and flags. There will be some reference to it, by way of parable or otherwise, in *my* New Testament. Surely, it is a defect in our Bible that it is not truly ours, but a Hebrew Bible. The most pertinent illustrations for us are to be drawn, not from Egypt or Babylonia, but from New England.

Talk about learning our *letters* and being *literate*! Why, the roots of *letters* are *things*. Natural objects and phenomena are the original symbols or types which express our thoughts and feelings, and yet American scholars, having little or no root in the soil, commonly strive with all their might to confine themselves to the imported symbols alone. All the true growth and experience, the living speech, they would fain reject as

"Americanisms." It is the old error, which the church, the state, the school ever commit, choosing darkness rather than light, holding fast to the old and to tradition. A more intimate knowledge, a deeper experience, will surely originate a word. When I really know that our river pursues a serpentine course to the Merrimack, shall I continue to describe it by referring to some other river no older than itself which is like it, and call it a *meander*? It is no more *meandering* than the Meander is *musketaquidding*. As well sing of the nightingale here as the Meander. What if there were a tariff on words, on language, for the encouragement of home manufactures? Have we not the genius to coin our own? Let the schoolmaster distinguish the true from the counterfeit.

They go on publishing the "chronological cycles" and "movable festivals of the Church" and the like from mere habit, but how insignificant are these compared with the annual phenomena of your life, which fall within your experience! The signs of the zodiac are not nearly of that significance to me that the sight of a dead sucker in the spring is. That is the occasion for an *immovable* festival in my church. Another kind of Lent then begins in my thoughts than you wot of. I am satisfied then to live on fish alone for a season.

Men attach a false importance to celestial phenomena as compared with terrestrial, as if it were more respectable and elevating to watch your neighbors than to mind your own affairs. The nodes of the stars are not the knots we have to untie. The phenomena of our year are one thing, those of the almanac another.

For October, for instance, instead of making the sun enter the sign of the scorpion, I would much sooner make him enter a musquash-house. Astronomy is a fashionable study, patronized by princes, but not fungi. "Royal Astronomer." The snapping turtle, too, must find a place among the constellations, though it may have to supplant some doubtful characters already there. If there is no place for him overhead, he can serve us bravely underneath, supporting the earth.

This clear, cold, Novemberish light is inspiriting. Some twigs which are bare and weeds begin to glitter with hoary light. The very edge or outline of a tawny or russet hill has this hoary light on it. Your thoughts sparkle like the water surface and the downy twigs. From the shore you look back at the silver-plated river.

Every rain exposes new arrowheads. We stop at Clamshell and dabble for a moment in the relics of a departed race.

Where we landed in front of Puffer's, found a jug which the haymakers had left in the bushes. Hid our boat there in a clump of willows, and though the ends stuck out, being a pale green and whitish, they were not visible or distinguishable at a little distance.

Passed through the sandy potato-field at Witherell's cellar-hole. Potatoes not dug; looking late and neglected now; the very vines almost vanished on some sandier hills.

When we emerged from the pleasant footpath through the birches into Witherell Glade, looking along it toward

the westering sun, the glittering white tufts of the *Andropogon scoparius*, lit up by the sun, were affectingly fair and cheering to behold. It was already a cheerful Novemberish scene. A narrow glade stretching east and west between a dense birch wood, now half bare, and a ruddy oak wood on the upper side, a ground covered with tawny stubble and fine withered grass and cistuses. Looking westward along it, your



eye fell on these lit tufts of andropogon,¹ their glowing half raised a foot or more above the ground, a lighter and more brilliant whiteness than the downiest cloud presents (though seen on one side they are grayish).² Even the lespedezas stand like frost-covered wands, and now hoary goldenrods and some bright-red blackberry vines amid the tawny grass are in harmony with the rest; and if you sharpen and rightly intend your eye you see the gleaming lines of gossamer (stretching from stubble to stubble over the whole surface) which you are breaking. How cheerful these cold but bright white waving tufts! They reflect all the sun's light without a particle of his heat, or yellow rays. A thousand such tufts now catch up the sun and send to us its light but not heat. His heat is being steadily withdrawn from us. Light without heat is getting to be the prevailing phenomenon of the day now. We economize all the warmth we get now.

The frost of the 11th, which stiffened the ground, made new havoc with vegetation, as I perceive. Many

¹ *Vide* Nov. 8th.

² *Vide* (by chance) same date, or Oct. 16th, 1858.

plants have ceased to bloom, no doubt. Many *Diplopappus linariifolius* are gone to seed, and yellowish globes. Such are the stages in the year's decline. The flowers are at the mercy of the frosts. Places where crechthites grows, more or less bare, in sprout-lands, look quite black and white (black withered leaves and white down) and wintry.

At Ledum Swamp, feeling to find the *Vaccinium Oxycoceus* berries, I am struck with the coldness of the wet sphagnum, as if I put my hands into a moss in Labrador, — a sort of winter lingering the summer through there. To my surprise, now at 3.30 p. m., some of the sphagnum in the shade is still stiff with frost, and when I break it I see the glistening spiculæ. This is the most startling evidence of winter as yet. For only on the morning of the 11th was there any stiffening of the ground elsewhere. Also in the high sedgy sprout-land south of this swamp, I see hoary or frost-like patches of sedge amid the rest, where all is dry; as if in such places (the lowest) the frost had completely bleached the grass so that it now looks like frost. I think that that is the case.

It is remarkable how, when a wood has been cut (perhaps where the soil was light) and frosts for a long while prevent a new wood from springing up there, that fine sedge (*Carex Pennsylvanica* ?) will densely cover the ground amid the stumps and dead sprouts. It is the most hardy and native of grasses there. This is the grass of the sprout-lands and woods. It wants only the sun and a reasonably dry soil. Then there are the grasses and sedges of the meadows, but the cul-

tivated fields and the pastures are commonly clothed with introduced grasses.

The nesæa is all withered, also the woodwardia. The ledum and *Andromeda Polifolia* leaves have fallen. The *Kalmia glauca* is still falling. The spruce, also, has fallen.

The ledum smells like a bee, — that peculiar scent they have. C., too, perceives it.

See a hairy woodpecker on a burnt pitch pine. He distinctly rests on his tail constantly. With what vigor he taps and bores the bark, making it fly far and wide, and then darts off with a sharp whistle!

I remark how still it is to-day, really Sabbath-like. This day, at least, we do not hear the rattle of cars nor the whistle. I cannot realize that the country was often as still as this twenty years ago.

Returning, the river is perfectly still and smooth. The broad, shallow water on each side, bathing the withered grass, looks as if it were ready to put on its veil of ice at any moment. It seems positively to invite the access of frost. I seem to hear already the creaking, shivering sound of ice there, broken by the undulations my boat makes. So near are we to winter. Then, nearer home, I hear two or three song sparrows on the button-bushes sing as in spring, — that memorable tinkle, — as if it would be last as it was first.

The few blackish leaves of pontederia rising above the water now resemble ducks at a distance, and so help to conceal them now that they are returning.

The weeds are dressed in their frost jackets, naked down to their close-fitting downy or flannel shirts. Like

athletes they challenge the winter, these bare twigs. This cold refines and condenses us. Our spirits are strong, like that pint of cider in the middle of a frozen barrel.

The cool, placid, silver-plated waters at even coolly await the frost. The musquash is steadily adding to his winter lodge. There is no need of supposing a peculiar instinct telling him how high to build his cabin. He has had a longer experience in this river-valley than we. Evergreens, I should say, fall early, both the coniferous and the broad-leaved.

That election-cake fungus which is still growing (as for some months) appears to be a *Boletus*.

I love to get out of cultivated fields where I walk on an imported sod, on English grass, and walk in the fine sedge of woodland hollows, on an American sward. In the former case my thoughts are heavy and lumpish, as if I fed on turnips. In the other I nibble ground-nuts.

Your hands begin to be cool, rowing, now. At many a place in sprout-lands, where the sedge is peculiarly flat and white or hoary, I put down my hand to feel if there is frost on it. It must be the *trace* of frost. Since the frost of the 11th, the grass and stubble has received another coat of tawny.

That andropogon bright feathery top may be put with the clematis seed and tail. Only this cold, clear sky can light them up thus.

The farmer begins to calculate how much longer he can safely leave his potatoes out.

Each ball of the button-bush reflected in the silvery

water by the riverside appears to me as distinct and important as a star in the heavens viewed through "optic glass." This, too, deserves its Kepler and Galileo.

As nature generally, on the advent of frost, puts on a russet and tawny dress, so is not man clad more in harmony with nature in the fall in a tawny suit or the different hues of Vermont gray? I would fain see him glitter like a sweet-fern twig between me and the sun.

A few green yellow lily pads lie on the surface waiting to be frozen in. All the *Lycopodium complanatum* I see to-day has shed its pollen.

Oct. 17. A smart frost this morning. Ground stiffened. Hear of ice in a tub.

P. M. — To Gowing's Swamp.

The water standing over the road at Moore's Swamp, I see the sand spotted black with many thousands of little snails with a shell, and two feelers out, slowly dragging themselves over the bottom. They reminded me by their color, number, and form of the young tadpoles.

I look for *Vaccinium Oxycoccus* in the swamp. The uneven surface of the sphagnum in which the slender vine grows comes up to my idea of a mountainous country better than many actual mountains that I have seen. Labrador mountains these are at least. The higher patches of sphagnum are changed to a dark purple, which shows a crude green where you crack it by your weight. The lower parts are yet yellowish-green merely. These interesting little cranberries are quite scarce, the vine bearing (this year, at least) only amid the higher

and drier sphagnum mountains amid the lowest bushes about the edge of the open swamp. There the dark-red berries (quite ripe) now rest, on the shelves and in the recesses of the red sphagnum. There is only enough of these berries for sauce to a botanist's Thanksgiving dinner.

What I put into my pocket, whether berry or apple, generally has to keep company with an arrowhead or two. I hear the latter chinking against a key as I walk. These are the perennial crop of Concord fields. If they were sure it would pay, we should see farmers raking the fields for them.

The rain drives me from my berrying and we take shelter under a tree. It is worth the while to sit under the lee of an apple tree trunk in the rain, if only to study the bark and its inhabitants. I do not disturb the father-long-legs which to avoid the storm has merely got round to the lee side, or under the shelter of an excrescence. Thus easily insects find their roof ready for them. Man's very size compels him to build a house. Caves and recesses big enough are too rare.

Why should we not stay at home? This is the land and we are the inhabitants so many travellers come to see. Why should we suffer ourselves to drift outside and lose all our advantages? They were bold navigators once who merely sighted these shores. We were born and bred further in the land than Captain John Smith got.

I hear that ten geese went over New Bedford some days ago.

When La Mountain and Haddock dropped down in

the Canada wilderness the other day, they came near starving, or dying of cold and wet and fatigue, not knowing where to look for food nor how to shelter themselves. Thus far we have wandered from a simple and independent life. I think that a wise and independent, self-reliant man will have a complete list of the edibles to be found in a primitive country or wilderness, a bill of fare, in his waistcoat pocket at least, to say nothing of matches and warm clothing, so that he can commence a systematic search for them without loss of time. They might have had several frogs apiece if they had known how to find them. Talk about tariffs and protection of home industry, so as to be prepared for wars and hard times!! Here we are, deriving our breadstuffs from the West, our butter stuffs from Vermont, and our tea and coffee and sugar stuffs, and much more with which we stuff ourselves, from the other side of the globe. Why, a truly prudent man will carry such a list as the above, in his mind at least, even though he walk through Broadway or Quincy Market. He will know what are the permanent resources of the land and be prepared for the hardest of times. He will go behind cities and their police; he will see through them. Is not the wilderness of mould and dry-rot forever invading and threatening them? They are but a camp abundantly supplied to-day, but gnawing their old shoes to-morrow.¹

¹ Why, a philosopher who soars higher than usual in his thoughts from time to time drops down into what is just such a wilderness to him as that was to La Mountain and Haddock, where he finds hardly one little frog gone into winter quarters to sustain him and runs screaming toward the climes of the sun.

I see all the farmers' old coats spread over the few squashes and pumpkins still left out in a pile. The arbor-vitæ sheds seeds; how long?

Oct. 18. Rains till 3 P. M., but is warmer.

P. M. — To Assabet, front of Tarbell's.

Going by Dennis Swamp on railroad, the sour scent of decaying ferns is now very strong there. *Rhus venenata* is bare, and maples and some other shrubs, and more are very thin-leaved, as alder and birches, so that the swamp, with so many fallen leaves and migrating sparrows, etc., flitting through it, has a very late look.

For falling, put the canoe birch with the small white. The beach plum is almost quite bare. The leaves of a chinquapin oak have not fallen. The long, curved, yellowish buds of the *Salix discolor* begin to show, the leaves falling; even the down has peeped out from under some.

In the ditch along the west side of Dennis Swamp I see half a dozen yellow-spot turtles moving about. Probably they are preparing to go into winter quarters.

I see one of the smaller thrushes to-day.

Saw a tree-toad on the ground in a sandy wood-path. It did not offer to hop away, may have been chilled by the rain (?). It is marked on the back with black, somewhat in the form of the hylodes.

Why can we not oftener refresh one another with original thoughts? If the fragrance of the dicksonia fern is so grateful and suggestive to us, how much more refreshing and encouraging — re-creating — would be fresh and fragrant thoughts communicated to us fresh from a man's experience and life! I want none of his

pity, nor sympathy, in the common sense, but that he should emit and communicate to me his essential fragrance, that he should not be forever repenting and going to church (when not otherwise sinning), but, as it were, going a-huckleberrying in the fields of thought, and enrich all the world with his visions and his joys.

Why do you flee so soon, sir, to the theatres, lecture-rooms, and museums of the city? If you will stay here awhile I will promise you strange sights. You shall walk on water; all these brooks and rivers and ponds shall be your highway. You shall see the whole earth covered a foot or more deep with purest white crystals, in which you slump or over which you glide, and all the trees and stubble glittering in icy armor.

Oct. 19.¹ When a government puts forth its strength on the side of injustice, as ours (especially to-day) to maintain slavery and kill the liberators of the slave, what a merely brute, or worse than brute, force it is seen to be! A demoniacal force! It is more manifest than ever that tyranny rules. I see this government to be effectually allied with France and Austria in oppressing mankind.

One comment I heard of by the postmaster of this village on the news of Brown's death:² "He died as the

¹ [Here begin Thoreau's notes for his first address on John Brown, delivered in Concord, Oct. 30 of this year (*Cape Cod, and Miscellanies*, pp. 409-440; *Misc.*, Riv. 197-236).]

² [It had been reported that Brown was killed at the time of his capture. (See *Cape Cod, and Miscellanies*, p. 417; *Misc.*, Riv. 207.) For matter in relation to Thoreau's John Brown speeches see *Familiar Letters*, pp. 358-360; Riv. 413-415.]

fool dieth." I should have answered this man, "He did not live as the fool liveth, and he died as he lived."

Treason! where does treason take its rise? I cannot help thinking of you as you deserve, ye governments. Can you dry up the fountains of thought? High treason which is resistance to *tyranny* here below has its origin in, and is first committed by, the power that makes and forever re-creates man. When you have caught and hung all of these human rebels, you have accomplished nothing but your own guilt, for you have not struck at the fountainhead. You presume to contend with a foe against whom West Point cadets and rifled cannon *point* not. Can all the arts of the cannon-founder tempt matter to turn against its Maker? Is the form in which he casts it more essential than the constitution of it and of himself?

I see that the same journal that contains this pregnant news from Harper's Ferry is chiefly filled, in parallel columns, with the reports of the political conventions that are now being held. But the descent is too steep to them; they should have been spared this contrast. To turn from the voices and deeds of earnest men to the cackling of political conventions! Office-seekers and speechmakers, who do not so much as lay an egg, but wear their breasts bare upon an egg of chalk. Their great game is the game of straws, or rather that universal and aboriginal game of the platter, at which the Indians cried, *Hub-bub*. Some of them generals forsooth.

It galls me to listen to the remarks of craven-hearted neighbors who speak disparagingly of Brown because he

resorted to violence, resisted the government, threw his life away! — what way have they thrown their lives, pray? — neighbors who would praise a man for attacking singly an ordinary band of thieves or murderers. Such minds are not equal to the occasion. They preserve the so-called peace of their community by deeds of petty violence every day. Look at the policeman's billy and handcuffs! Look at the jail! Look at the gallows! Look at the chaplain of the regiment! We are hoping only to live safely on the outskirts of *this* provisional army. So they defend themselves and our hen-roosts, and maintain slavery.

There sits a tyrant holding fettered four millions of slaves. Here comes their heroic liberator; if he falls, will he not still live?

C. says that he saw a loon at Walden the 15th.

P. M. — To Lee's Cliff.

The tupelo berries have all fallen; how long? Alternate cornel about bare. Hardhack half bare. Many witch-hazel nuts are not yet open. The bushes just bare. The slippery elm is nearly bare, like the common near it. Cedar berries, how long? 14th at least; probably by the time they lost their leaves. There is one sizable tree west by north of Lee's Cliff, near the wall. *Lycopodium dendroideum* (not variety) is just shedding pollen near this cedar. I see asparagus in the woods there near the cedar, four or five feet high!

Find the seedling archangelica grown about two feet high and still quite green and growing, though the full-grown plants are long since dead, root and stalk. This suggests that no doubt much of the radical spring green-

ness is of this character, — seedlings of biennials, and perhaps more of them a persistent or late growth from a perennial root, as crowfoot, whiteweed, five-finger, etc. The scent of the archangelica root is not agreeable to me. The scent of my fingers after having handled it reminds me strongly of the musquash and woodchuck, though the root itself does not; so its odor must be allied to theirs.

I find at Lee's Cliff, on the shelves and sides of the rocks, a new fern, apparently *Cystopteris fragilis*, more than half decayed or withered, though some fresher and shorter fronds at the base of the others are still quite green. It curls up so in my hat that I have difficulty in examining it. It is abundant thereabouts.

Paddling up the river the other day, those (probably canoe) birches on Mt. Misery on the edge of the hill a mile in front looked like little dark clouds, for [I] could not distinguish their white trunks against the sky.

Though the dark-blue, or ripe, creeping juniper berries are chiefly on the lower part of the branches, I see fresh green ones on old wood as big as a pipe-stem and often directly opposite to purple ones (!). They are strangely mixed up. I am not sure but some of this year's berries are already ripe. See a black and rusty hedgehog (?) caterpillar in the path.

The remarks of my neighbors upon Brown's death and supposed fate, with very few exceptions, are, "He is undoubtedly insane," "Died as the fool dieth," "Served him right;" and so they proceed to live their sane, and wise, and altogether admirable lives, reading their Plutarch a little, but chiefly pausing at that feat

of Putnam, who was let down into a wolf's den (that is quite the strongest pap that Young America is fed on); and so they nourish themselves for brave and patriotic deeds.

What is the character of that calm which follows when the law and the slaveholder prevail?

A government that pretends to be Christian and crucifies a million Christs every day!

Our foes are in our midst and all about us. Hardly a house but is divided against itself. For our foe is the all but universal woodenness (both of head and heart), the want of vitality, of man, — the effect of vice, — whence are begotten fear and superstition and bigotry and persecution and slavery of all kinds. Mere figure-heads upon a hulk, with livers in the place of hearts. A church that can never have done with excommunicating Christ while it exists. Our plains were overrun the other day with a flock of adjutant-generals, as if a brood of cockerels had been let loose there, waiting to use their spurs in what sort of glorious cause, I ask. What more probable in the future, what more certain heretofore, than in grinding in the dust four hundred thousands of feeble and timid men, women, and children? The United States exclaims: "Here are four millions of human creatures which we have stolen. We have abolished among them the relations of father, mother, children, wife, and we mean to keep them in this condition. Will you, O Massachusetts, help us to do so?" And Massachusetts promptly answers, "Aye!"

The cause is the worship of idols, which at length changes the worshipper into a stone image himself.

Every man worships his ideal of power and goodness, or God, and the New-Englander is just as much an idolater as the Hindoo.

The momentary charge at Balaclava, in obedience to a blundering command, — proving what a perfect machine the soldier is — has been celebrated by a poet laureate; but the steady and for the most part successful charge against the legions of Slavery kept up for some years in Kansas by John Brown in obedience to an infinitely higher command is unsung, — as much more memorable than that as an intelligent and conscientious man is superior to a machine.

The brutish, thick-skinned herd, who do not know a *man* by sympathy, make haste home from their ballot-boxes and churches to their Castles of Indolence, perchance to cherish their valor there with some nursery talk of knights and dragons. A whole nation will for ages cling to the memory of its Arthur, or other imaginary hero, who perhaps never assailed its peculiar institution or sin, and, being imaginary, never failed, when they are themselves the very freebooters and craven knights whom he routed, while they forget their real heroes.

The publishers and the various boards of wooden-heads can afford to reprint that story of Putnam's. You might open the district schools with the reading of it, because there is nothing about slavery or the church in it; unless it occurs to the reader that the *pastors* are *wolves* in sheep's clothing.

I have seen no hearty approbation for this man in any Abolition journal; as if it were not consistent with

their policy to express it, or maybe they did not feel it. And as for the herd of newspapers, I do not chance to know one in the country that will deliberately print anything that will ultimately and permanently reduce the number of its subscribers. They do not believe it would be *expedient*. If we do not say pleasant things, they argue, nobody will attend to us. And so they are like some auctioneers, who sing an obscene song in order to draw a crowd around them.

Another neighbor asks, Yankee-like, "What will *he* gain by it?" as if he expected to fill his pockets by this enterprise. They have no idea of gain but in this worldly sense. If it does not lead to a surprise party, if he does not get a new pair of boots and a vote of thanks, it must be a failure. Such do not know that like the seed is the fruit, and that, in the moral world, when good seed is planted, good fruit is inevitable and does not depend on our watering and cultivating; that when you plant, or bury, a hero in this field, a crop of heroes is sure to spring up. This is a seed of such force and vitality that it does not ask our leave to germinate.

Some eighteen hundred years ago Christ was crucified; this morning, perhaps, John Brown was hung. These are the two ends of a chain which I rejoice to know is not without its links.

The Republican editors, obliged to get their sentences ready for the morning edition, — and their dinner ready before afternoon, — speak of these men, not in a tone of admiration for their disinterestedness and heroism, not of sorrow even for their fate, but calling

them "deluded fanatics," "mistaken men," "insane," or "crazed." Did it ever occur to you what a *sane* set of editors we are blessed with? — not "mistaken men;" who know very well on which side their bread is buttered!

The *noble* Republican Party is in haste to exculpate itself from all sympathy with these "misguided men." Even the very men who would rejoice if he had succeeded, though in spite of all odds, are estranged from and deny him because he failed. A "dangerous man"! All the worthies and martyrs were such dangerous men. We wish that these editors and ministers were a little more *dangerous*.

It is mentioned against him and as an evidence of his insanity, "a conscientious man, very modest in his demeanor, that he was apparently inoffensive, until the subject of slavery was introduced, when he would exhibit a feeling of indignation unparalleled." (*Boston Journal*, October 21, 1859.)

If Christ should appear on earth he would on all hands be denounced as a mistaken, misguided man, insane and crazed.

The Liberator calls it "a misguided, wild, and apparently insane . . . effort."

"The American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions," which have just met in Philadelphia, did not dare as a body to protest even against the foreign slave-trade, which even many domestic slave-traders are ready to do. And I hear of Northern men, women, and children by families buying a life-membership in this society. A life-membership in the grave! You can get buried cheaper than that.

He was a superior man. He did not value his bodily life in comparison with ideal things; he did not recognize unjust human laws, but resisted them, as he was bid; and now he is called insane by all who cannot appreciate such magnanimity. He needed no babbling lawyer, making false issues, to defend him. He was more than a match for all judges that American voters, or office-holders of whatever grade, can create. He could not have been tried by a jury of his peers, because his peers did not exist.

When a man stands up serenely against the condemnation and vengeance of mankind, rising above them literally by a whole body, — though he were a slave, though he were a freeman, though he were of late the vilest murderer, who has settled that matter with himself, — the spectacle is a sublime one! — didn't ye know it, ye Garrisons, ye Buchanans, ye politicians, attorney-generals? — and we become criminal in comparison. Do yourselves the honor to recognize him. *He* needs none of your respect. What though he did not belong to your clique!

I do not believe in erecting statues to those who still live in our minds and hearts, whose bones have not yet crumbled in the earth around us, but I would rather see the statue of John Brown in the Massachusetts State-House yard than that of any other man whom I know.

What a contrast, when we turn to that political party which is so anxiously shaking its skirts clean of him and his friends and looking round for some available slaveholder to be its candidate!

The evil is not merely a stagnation of blood, but a

stagnation of spirit. Of course, the mass of men, even the well-disposed but sluggish souls who are ready to abet when their conscience or sympathies are reached, cannot conceive of a man who is actuated by higher motives than they are. Accordingly they pronounce him insane, for they know that they would never act as he does as long as they are themselves.

This most hypocritical and diabolical government looks up from its seat upon four millions of gasping slaves and inquires with an assumption of innocence, "What do you assault me for? Am I not an honest man?" "Ah, sir, but your seat — your footstool — my father and mother — get off! — get off!" But there sits the incubus with all his weight, and stretching ever more and more, and for all reply answers, "Why won't you cease agitation upon this subject?"

The only government that I recognize is that power that establishes justice in the land, never that which establishes injustice. Suppose that there is a private company in Massachusetts that out of its own purse and magnanimity saves all the fugitive slaves that run to us, and protects our colored fellow-citizens, and leaves the other work to the government, so called. Is not that government fast losing its occupation and becoming contemptible to mankind? If private men are obliged to perform the offices of government, to protect the weak and dispense justice, then the government becomes only a hired man, or clerk, to perform menial or indifferent services. Of course, that is but the shadow of a government, whose existence necessitates a Vigilance Committee. But such is the character of our Northern

States generally; each has its Vigilance Committee. And, to a certain extent, these crazy governments recognize and accept this relation. They say, virtually, "We'll be glad to work for you on these terms, only don't make a noise about it." Such a government is losing its power and respectability as surely as water runs out of a leaky vessel and is held by one that can contain it.

Oct. 20. P. M. — To Ripple Lake.

Dug some artichokes behind Alcott's, the largest about one inch in diameter. Now apparently is the time to begin to dig them, the plant being considerably frost-bitten. Tried two or three roots. The main root ran down straight about six inches and then terminated abruptly, thus:



They have quite a nutty taste eaten raw.

What is that flat, spreading festuca-like grass, just killed, behind A.'s house?

As I go to Clintonia Swamp along the old cross-road, I see a large and very straggling flock of crows fly[ing] southwest from over the hill behind Bull's and contending with the strong and cold northwest wind. This is the annual phenomenon. They are on their migrations.

The beach plum is nearly bare, and so is the woodbine on the brick house. The wild red cherry by A. Brooks's Hollow is completely fallen; how long? The sand cherry in my field path is almost entirely bare. Some chinquapin is half fallen.

Scare up a yellow-legs, apparently the larger, on the

shore of Walden. It goes off with a sharp *phe phe, phe phe*.

This is the coldest day as yet; wind from the northwest. It is finger-cold as I come home, and my hands find their way to my pocket. I learn the next day that snow fell to-day in northern New York and New Hampshire, and that accounts for it. We feel the cold of it here as soon as the telegraph can inform us. La Mountain's adventure has taught us how swiftly the wind may travel to us from that quarter.

Oct. 21. P. M. — To Mason's pasture.

The brook between John Flint's house and the river is half frozen over.

The clump of mountain laurel in Mason's pasture is of a triangular form, about six rods long by a base of two and a third rods, — or seven or eight square rods, — beside some separate clumps.

It is very cold and blustering to-day. It is the breath of winter, which is encamped not far off to the north.

A great many shrub oak acorns hold on, and are a darker brown than ever.

Insane! A father and seven sons, and several more men besides, — as many, at least, as twelve disciples, — all struck with insanity at once; while the sane tyrant holds with a firmer gripe than ever his four millions of slaves, and a thousand sane editors, his abettors, are saving their country and their bacon! Just as insane as were their efforts in Kansas. Ask the tyrant who is his most dangerous foe, the sane man or the insane.

If some Captain Ingraham threatens to fire into an

Austrian vessel, we clap our hands all along the shore. It won't hit us; it won't disturb our tyranny. But let a far braver than he attack the Austria within us, we turn, we actually *fire* those same guns upon him, and cry, "Insane."

The government, its salary being insured, withdraws into the back shop, taking the Constitution with it, as farmers in the winter contrive to turn a penny by following the cooping business. When the reporter to the *Herald* (!) reports the conversation "*verbatim*," he does not know of what undying words he is made the vehicle.

Read his admirable answers to Mason and others. How they are dwarfed and defeated by the contrast! On the one side half-brutish, half-timid questioning; on the other, truth, clear as lightning, crashing into their obscene temples. They are made to stand with Pilate, and Gessler, and the Inquisition. How ineffectual their speech and action! and what a void their silence!

I speak to the stupid and timid chattels of the north, pretending to read history and their Bibles, desecrating every house and every day they breathe in! True, like the clods of the valley, they are incapable of perceiving the light, but I would fain arouse them by any stimulus to an intelligent life.

Throughout the land they, not of equal magnanimity, talk of vengeance and insanity.

Away with your broad and flat churches, and your narrow and tall churches! Take a step forward and invent a new style of outhouses. Invent a salt that will save you and defend our nostrils.

The slave-ship is on her way, crowded with its dying hundreds; a small crew of slaveholders is smothering four millions under the hatches; and yet the politician asserts that the only proper way by which deliverance is to be obtained is by "the quiet diffusion of sentiments of humanity," without any "outbreak"! And in the same breath they tell us that all is *quiet* now at Harper's Ferry. What is that that I hear cast overboard? The bodies of the dead, who have found deliverance. That is the way we are diffusing humanity, and all its sentiments with it.

Prominent and influential editors, accustomed to deal with politicians, men of an infinitely lower grade, say, in their ignorance, that he acted "on the principle of revenge." They do not know the man. They must enlarge themselves to conceive of him. I have no doubt that, if that is of any importance, the time will come when they will begin to see him as he was. They have got to conceive of a man of *ideas* and of *principle*, hard as it may be for them, and not a politician or an Indian; of a man who did not wait till he was personally interfered with or thwarted in some harmless business before he gave his life to the cause of the oppressed.

I know that there have been a few heroes in the land, but no man has ever stood up in America for the dignity of human nature so devotedly, persistently, and so effectively as this man. Ye need not trouble yourselves, Republican or any other party, to wash your skirts of him. No intelligent person will ever be convinced that he was any creature of yours. He went

and came, as he informs us, "under the auspices of John Brown, and nobody else."

Ethan Allen and Stark, though worthy soldiers in their day, were rangers in a far lower field and in a less important cause.

Insane! Do the thousands who knew him best, who have rejoiced at his deeds in Kansas and have afforded him material aid, think him insane?

It costs us nothing to be just. It enriches us infinitely to recognize greater qualities than we possess in another. We can at least express our sympathy with, and admiration for, John Brown and his companions, and this is what I now propose to do.

What has Massachusetts and the North sent a few *sane* senators to Congress for of late years? — to declare with effect what kind of sentiments? All their speeches put together and boiled down — and probably they themselves will allow it — do not match for simple and manly directness, force, and effectiveness the few casual remarks of *insane* John Brown on the floor of the Harper's Ferry engine-house. To be sure, he was not our representative. He is too fair a specimen of a man to represent the like of us. In his case there is no idle eloquence, no *made* speech. Truth is his inspirer, and earnestness his critic and polisher of his sentences. He could afford to lose his Sharp's rifles, while he retained his faculty of speech, — a Sharp's rifle of infinitely surer and longer range.

"But he won't gain anything." Well, no! I don't suppose he could get four-and-sixpence a day for being hung, take the year round. But then he stands a chance

to save a considerable part of his soul, — and such a soul! — when you do not. No doubt you can get more in your market for a quart of milk than for a quart of blood, but that is not the market that heroes carry their blood to.

So ye write in your easy-chairs, and thus he, wounded, responds from the floor of the Harper's Ferry engine-house: "No man sent me here; it was my own prompting and that of my Maker. I acknowledge no master in human form."

And in what a sweet, kindly strain he proceeds, addressing those who held him prisoner: "I think, my friends, you are guilty of a great wrong against God and humanity, and it would be perfectly right for any one to interfere with you so far as to free those you willfully and wickedly hold in bondage."

And, referring to his movement: "It is, in my opinion, the greatest service a man can render to God!"

"I pity the poor in bondage that have none to help them; that is why I am here; not to gratify any personal animosity, revenge, or vindictive spirit. It is my sympathy with the oppressed and the wronged, that are as good as you, and as precious in the sight of God."

"I want you to understand that I respect the rights of the poorest and weakest of colored people, oppressed by the slave system, just as much as I do those of the most wealthy and powerful."

Thus the *insane* man preaches, while the representatives of so-called Christians (I refer to the Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions), who pretend to

be interested in the heathen, dare not so much as protest against the foreign slave-trade!

"I wish to say, furthermore, that you had better, all you people at the South, prepare yourselves for a settlement of that question, that must come up for settlement sooner than you are prepared for it. The sooner you are prepared the better. You may dispose of me very easily. I am nearly disposed of now; but this question is still to be settled, — this negro question, I mean; the end of that is not yet."

You will perceive that not a single forcible or noticeable word is uttered by his questioners; they stand there the helpless tools in this great work. It was no human power that gathered them about this preacher.

What should we think of the Oriental Cadi behind whom worked in secret a Vigilance Committee? What shall we think of a government to which all the truly brave and just men in the land are enemies, standing between it and those whom it oppresses? Do not we Protestants know the likeness of Luther, Fox, Bunyan, when we see it? Shall we still be put to bed with our story-books, not knowing day from night?

We talk about a *representative* government, but what a monster of a government is that where the noblest faculties of the mind and the *whole* heart are not represented. A semihuman tiger or ox stalking over the earth, with its heart taken out and the top of its brain shot away.

In California and Oregon, if not nearer home, it is common to treat men exactly like deer which are hunted, and I read from time to time in Christian newspapers

how many "bucks," that is, Indian men, their sportsmen have killed.

Who is here so base, that would be a bondman? Who is here so vile, that will not love his country? If any, speak; for him have I offended. I pause for a reply.

We dream of foreign countries, of other times and races of men, placing them at a distance in history or in space; but let some significant event like the present occur in our midst, and we discover, often, this distance and this strangeness between us and our nearest neighbors. *They* are our Austrias, and Chinas, and South Sea Islands. Our crowded society becomes well spaced all at once, clean and handsome to the eye, — a city of magnificent distances. We discover why it was that we never got beyond compliments and surfaces with them before; we become aware of as many versts between us and them as there are between a wandering Tartar or Pawnee and a Chinese or American town. The thoughtful man becomes a hermit in the thoroughfares of the market-place. Impassable seas suddenly find their level between us, or dumb steppes stretch themselves out there.

I do not complain of any tactics that are effective of good, whether one wields the quill or the sword, but I shall not think him mistaken who quickest succeeds to liberate the slave. I will judge of the tactics by the fruits.

It is the difference of constitution, of intelligence, and faith, and not streams and mountains, that makes the true and impassable boundaries between individuals and

states. None but the like-minded can come plenipotentiary to our court.

They who are continually shocked by slavery have some right to be shocked by the violent death of the slaveholder, but no others. Such will be more shocked by his life than by his death.

Oct. 22. P. M. — To Cliffs and Fair Haven.

I am surprised to find in the field behind the top of the Cliffs a little vetch still perfectly fresh and *blooming*, where Wheeler had grain a year or two since, with numerous little plump pods four or five eighths of an inch long and commonly four roundish seeds to each. It must be, I think, Gray's *Vicia tetrasperma*, though he makes that have white flowers (apparently same as Bigelow's *V. pusilla*, also made to have white flowers, but Dewey calls them "bluish white"), while these are purple. Otherwise it corresponds.

A marsh hawk sails over Fair Haven Hill. In the wood-path below the Cliffs I see perfectly fresh and fair *Viola pedata* flowers, as in the spring, though but few together. No flower by its second blooming more perfectly brings back the spring to us.

In my blustering walk over the Mason and Hunt pastures yesterday, I saw much of the withered indigo-weed which was broken off and blowing about, and the seeds in its numerous black pods rattling like the rattlepod though not nearly so loud.

The very surface of the earth itself has been rapidly imbrowned of late, like the acorns in their cups, in consequence of cold and frost; and the evergreens and few

deciduous plants which are slow to wither, like Jersey tea, are more and more distinct.

F. hyemalis quite common for a week past.

One would say that the modern Christian was a man who had consented to say all the prayers in their liturgy, provided you would let him go straight to bed and sleep quietly afterward. All his prayers begin with "Now I lay me down to sleep." He has consented to perform certain old-established charities, too, after a fashion, but he does n't wish to hear of any new-fangled ones; he does n't want to have any codicils added to the contract, to fit it to the present time, — unexpected demands made on him, after he has said his prayers. He shows the whites of his eyes on the Sabbath and the blacks all the rest of the week.

It was evidently far from being a wild and desperate and insane attempt. It was a well-matured plan.

The very fact that he had no rabble or troop of hirelings about him would alone distinguish him from ordinary heroes. His company was small indeed, because few could be found worthy to pass muster. He would have no rowdy or swaggerer, no profane swearer, for, as he said, he always found these men to fail at last. He would have only men of principle, and they are few. When it was observed that if he had had a chaplain his would have been a perfect Cromwellian company, he said that he would have had a chaplain if he could [have] found one who could perform that service suitably.

Each one who there laid down his life for the poor and oppressed was thus a picked man, culled out of many

thousands, if not millions; a man of principle, of rare courage, and of devoted humanity; ready to lay down their lives any moment for the weak and enslaved. It may be doubted if there were any more their equals in all the land, for their leader scoured the land far and wide, seeking to swell his troop. These alone stood forward, prepared to step between the oppressor and the oppressed. Surely they were the very best men you could select to be hung. That was the greatest compliment this country could pay them. They were ripe for the gallows.

I regard this event as a touchstone designed to bring out with glaring distinctness the character of this government.

A man of Spartan habits, who at sixty has scruples about his diet at your table, must eat sparingly and fare hard, as becomes a soldier, he says, and one who is ever fitting himself for difficult enterprises.

A man of rare common sense and directness of speech, as of action; a Transcendentalist above all, a man of ideals and principles,—that was what distinguished him. Of unwavering purposes, not to be dissuaded but by an experience and wisdom greater than his own. Not yielding to a whim or transient impulse, but carrying out the purpose of a life.

He did not go to the college called Harvard; he was not fed on the pap that is there furnished. As he phrased it, "I know no more of grammar than one of your calves." But he went to the great university of the West, where he sedulously pursued the study of Liberty, for which he had early betrayed a fondness,

and, having taken many degrees, he finally commenced the practice of Humanity, as you all know.

I see now that it was necessary that the bravest and humanest man in all the country should be hung. Perhaps he saw it himself. If any leniency were shown him, any compromise made with him, any treating with him at all, by the government, he might be suspected.

We needed to be thus assisted to see our government by the light of history. It needed to see itself.

Compare the platform of any or all of the political parties, which deem themselves sane, with the platform on which he lay and uttered these things!!

I foresee the time when the painter will paint that scene, the poet will sing it, the historian record it, and, with the Landing of the Pilgrims and the Declaration of Independence, it will be the ornament of some future national gallery, when the present form of slavery shall be no more. We shall then be at liberty to weep for John Brown. Then and not till then we will take our revenge.

I rejoice that I live in this age, that I was his contemporary.

When I consider the spectacle of himself, and his six sons, and his son-in-law, enlisted for this fight, proceeding coolly, reverently, humanely to work, while almost all America stood ranked on the other side, I say again that it affects me as a sublime spectacle. For months if not years, sleeping and waking upon it, summering and wintering the thought, without expecting any reward but a good conscience and the gratitude of those made free.

If he had had any journal advocating "his cause," it would have been fatal to his efficiency, — any "organ," as the phrase is, monotonously and wearisomely playing that same old tune, and then passing round the hat. If he had acted in any way so as to gain the respect or toleration of the government, he might have been suspected. It was the fact that the tyrant must give place to him, or he to the tyrant, that distinguished him from all other reformers that I know.

For once the Sharp's rifle and the revolver were employed in a righteous cause. The tools were in the hands of one who could use them. I know that the mass of my neighbors think that the only righteous use that can be made of them is to fight duels with them when we are insulted by other nations, or hunt Indians, or shoot fugitive slaves with them.

Talk of political parties and their platforms! he could not have any platform but that of the Harper's Ferry engine-house.

I am aware that I anticipate a little, — that he was still, at the last accounts, alive in the hands of his foes; but that being the case, I find myself most naturally thinking and speaking of him as physically dead.

The same indignation that cleared the temple once will clear it again. The question is not about the weapon, but the spirit in which you use it. No man has appeared in America as yet who loved his fellow-man so well and treated him so tenderly. He lived for him; he took up his life and he laid it down for him.

Though you may not approve of his methods or his

principles, cease to call names, to cry mad dog. The method is nothing; the spirit is all in all. It is the deed, the devotion, the soul of the man. For you this is at present a question of magnanimity. If the schoolboy, forgetting himself, rushed to the rescue of his drowning playmate, what though he knock down somebody on his way, what though he does not go to the same church with you, or his father belong to the same political party! Would you not like to claim kindred with him in this, though in no other thing he is like, or likely, to you?

Heroes have fought well on their stumps when their legs were shot off, but I never heard of any good done by a government that had no heart, or at least had not brains of a high order.

This is not the time to hear what Tom, Dick, or Harry is doing, or in such a case would have done. We shall have time enough to find that out in, if we do not know it already. We ask you to the extent of your ability to appreciate *this man* and *his deed*, in spite of the difference between you and him. Who cares whether he belonged to your clique, or party, or sect, or not?

A man does a brave and humane deed, and at once, on all sides, we hear people and parties declaring: "I didn't do it, nor countenance *him* to do it, in any conceivable way. It can't fairly be inferred from my past career." Now, I am not interested to hear you define your position. I don't know that I ever was, or ever shall be. I am not now, at any rate. I think [it] is mere egotism, and impertinent.

On the whole my respect for my fellow-men, except

as one may outweigh a million, is not being increased these days. I have noticed the cold-blooded way in which newspaper-writers and men generally speak of this event, as if an ordinary malefactor, though one of unusual pluck, — as the Governor of Virginia says, using the language of the cockpit, “the *gamest* man he ever saw,” — had been caught and were about to be hung. He was not dreaming of his foes when the Governor thought he looked so brave.

Think of him, — of his rare qualities! — such a man as it takes ages to make, and ages to understand; no mock hero, not the representative of any party. A man such as the sun may never rise upon again in this benighted land, to whose making went the costliest material, the finest adamant, the purest gold; sent to be the redeemer of those in captivity; — and the only use to which you can put him, after mature deliberation, is to hang him at the end of a rope. I need not describe him. He has stood where I now stand; you have all seen him. You who pretend to care for Christ crucified, consider what you are about to do to him who offered himself to be the savior of four millions of men!

I wish to correct the tone and some of the statements of the newspapers respecting the life and character and last action of John Brown. The newspapers seem to ignore, or perhaps they are really ignorant of, the fact that there are at least as many as one or two individuals to a town throughout the North who think much as I do about him and his enterprise. I do not hesitate to assert that they are an important and growing party.

I speak for the slave when I say that I prefer the philanthropy of John Brown to that philanthropy which neither shoots me nor liberates me.

Talk of failure and throwing his life away! he is not dead yet in any sense, and if he were dead he would still live. Were the battles of Black Jack and Ossa-watomic and many encounters of less note useless and a failure? I think that it was he more than any other who made Kansas as free as she is, who taught the slaveholder that it was not safe for him to carry his slaves thither. None of the political parties have ever accomplished anything of the sort. It was he who taught Missouri that it was not profitable to hold slaves in that neighborhood. Was it a failure to deliver from bondage thirteen human beings and walk off with them by broad daylight, for weeks if not months, at a leisurely pace, through one State after another, for half the length of the North, conspicuous to all parties, with a price set upon his head, going into a court-room on his way and telling what he had done? To face singly in his work of righteousness the whole power of this unrighteous government, and successfully too! Who has gained the most ground within five years, — Brown or the Slave Power?

And this, not because the government was lenient, but because none of its menials dared to touch him. They counted the cost and concluded that a thousand dollars was not enough.

There are a few — there are more than you suppose — who cannot help thinking of that man now in the clutches of the enraged slaveholder.

He is one of that class of whom we hear a great deal, but, for the most part, see nothing at all, — the Puritans. It is in vain to kill him. He died lately in the time of Cromwell, but he reappeared here. Why should he not? Some of the Puritan stock are said to have come over and settled in New England. They were a class that did something else than celebrate their forefathers' day and eat parched corn in remembrance of their ancestors. They were neither Democrats nor Republicans. They were men of simple habits, straightforward, prayerful; not thinking much of rulers who did not fear God, not making many compromises, or seeking after available candidates.

He is of the same age with the century. He is what is called a thin and wiry-looking man, being composed of nerves instead of flesh, some five feet nine or ten inches high, with a sharp eye, and the last time he was hereabouts wore a long white beard; with a very soldier-like bearing.

I understand his grandfather was an officer in the Revolution; that he himself was born in Connecticut, but early went to Ohio with his father. His father was a contractor who furnished beef to the army there in the last war, and young Brown, accompanying his father to the camp and assisting him in his employment, saw considerable of military life, — more perhaps than he would if he had been a soldier, for he was sometimes present at the councils of the officers. He saw enough, at any rate, to disgust him with war and excite in him a great abhorrence of it; so much so that, though he was offered some petty office in the army, he not

only refused it, but also refused to train when he was warned, and was fined for it. He was then about eighteen. He said that few persons had any conception of the cost, even the pecuniary cost, of firing a single bullet in war. Above all, he learned by experience how armies were collected, supplied, and maintained in the field for a length of time, — a work which required at least as much experience and skill as to lead them in battle. And he then resolved that he would never have anything to do with war, unless it were a war for liberty. I should say that he was an old-fashioned man in his respect for the Constitution and the Declaration of Independence, and his faith in the permanence of this Union. Slavery he saw to be wholly opposed to all of these, and he was its determined foe.

When the troubles first broke out in Kansas, he sent several of his sons thither to strengthen the party of the Free State men, fitting them out with such weapons as he had, telling them if the troubles should increase, and there should be need of him, he should follow, to assist them with his hand and counsel. It was not long before he felt it to be his duty to give the Free State men of Kansas, who had no leader of experience, the benefit of what experience he had had.

At a time when scarcely a man from the Free States was able to reach Kansas by any direct route, at least without having his arms taken from him, he, carrying what imperfect firelocks and other weapons he could collect, openly drove an ox-cart through Missouri, with his surveyor's compass exposed in it, and, passing for a simple surveyor, who by his very profession must

be neutral, he met with no resistance and in the course of his leisurely journey became thoroughly acquainted with the plans of the Border Ruffians. For some time after his arrival he pursued, before he was known, similar tactics. When, for instance, he saw a knot of the Ruffians on the prairie, discussing, of course, the single topic that then occupied their minds, he would take his compass and one of his sons, and perhaps proceed to run an imaginary line which passed through the very spot on which that conclave had assembled, and then of course he would have some talk with them, learn their news and their plans, and when he had heard all they had to impart, he would resume his surveying, and run on his line till he was out of sight. This is enough to show that his plans were not crazily laid.

For a good part of his life he was a surveyor, part of the time, I think, in Illinois. At one time he was engaged in wool-growing, and went to Europe once as the agent of some wool-growers; and there too he carried his common sense with him. I have been told, for instance, that he made such a remark as this, — that he saw why the soil of England was so rich and that of Germany (or a part of it at least) so exhausted, and he thought of writing to some of the crowned heads about it. It was because in England the peasantry lived on the soil which they cultivated, while in Germany they were gathered into villages at night. It would be worth the while to have collected all the remarks of such a traveller.

Of course, he is not so foolish as to ask or expect

any favors from the government, nor probably will his friends for him.

No wonder it struck the politicians and preachers generally very forcibly that either he was insane or they, and they, being the painters, or judges, this time, decided, naturally enough, that it must be he. Such, however, as far as I learn, has not been nor is likely to be the decision of those who have recently stood face to face to him and who are now about to hang him. They have not condescended to such insult. The slaveholders and the slaves who have really dealt with him are not likely sincerely to question his sanity, but rather political or religious parties, who stand further off from a living man.

I almost fear to hear of his deliverance, doubting if a prolonged life, if any life, can do as much good as his death.

No doubt many of you have seen the little manuscript book which he carried about him, during the Kansas troubles, — his "orderly book," as I think he called it, — containing the names of his small company, a score at most, and half of them his own family, and the rules which bound them together, — a contract which many of them have sealed with their blood. There was one rule, as I remember, which prohibited prophane swearing in his camp.

I believe that he never was able to find more than a score or so of recruits whom he would accept, and only ten or a dozen in whom he had perfect faith.

Perhaps anxious politicians may prove that only seventeen white men and five negroes were concerned

in this enterprise, but the anxiety to prove this might suggest to themselves that all is not told. Why do they still dodge the truth? Do they not realize why they are so anxious? It is because of a dim consciousness of the fact, which they do not distinctly face, that at least five millions of the inhabitants of the United States who were not pining to attempt, would have rejoiced if it had succeeded. They at most only criticise the tactics.

He said that if any man offered himself to be a soldier under him who was forward to tell what he could or would do if he could only get sight of the enemy, he had but little confidence in him.

One writer says, I know not with what motive, that it is a fact "illustrative of Brown's insanity, that he has charts of nearly all the great battle-fields of Europe." I fear that his collection is not to be compared for completeness with that which this government possesses, however his sanity may be compared with its, though it did not make them itself, but there are two or three fields in Kansas of which he did not need to make any chart.

At any rate, I do not think it is sane to spend one's whole life talking or writing about this matter, and I have not done so. A man may have other affairs to attend to.

The murderer always knows that he is justly punished; but when a government takes the life of a man without the consent of his conscience, it is an audacious government, and is taking a step toward its own dissolution. Is it not possible that an individual may be right and a government wrong? Are laws to be enforced

simply because they were made, and declared by any number of men to be good, when they are *not* good? Is there any necessity for a man's being a tool to perform a deed of which he disapproves? Is it the intention of lawmakers that good men shall be hung ever? Are judges to interpret the law according to the letter, and not the spirit? Who is it whose safety requires that Captain Brown be hung? Is it indispensable to any Northern man? If you do not wish it, say so distinctly. What right have you to enter into a compact with yourself (even) that you *will* do thus or so, against your better nature? Is it for *you* to *make up* your mind, — to *form* any resolution whatever, — and not accept the convictions that are forced upon you, and which even pass your *understanding*?

Any man knows when he is justified, and not all the wits in the world can enlighten him on that point.

I do not believe in lawyers, — in that mode of defending or attacking a man, — because you descend to meet the judge on his own ground, and, in cases of the highest importance, it is of no consequence whether a man breaks a human law or not. Let lawyers decide trivial cases. If they were interpreters of the everlasting laws which rightfully bind man, that would be another thing.

Just as we are doing away with duelling or fighting one another with pistols, I think that we may in course of time do away with fighting one another with lawyers. Such improvements are not altogether unheard of. A counterfeiting law-factory, standing half in a slave land and half in a free! What kind of laws for freemen can

you expect from that? Substantial justice!! There's nothing substantial about it, but the Judge's salary and the lawyer's fee.

The thought of that man's position and probable fate is spoiling many a man's day here at the North for other thinking. We do not think of buying any crape this time.

It seems that one of his abettors had lived there for years, and Brown took all his measures deliberately. The country was mountainous, and it was given out that they were concerned in mining operations, and to play this part required very little invention on his part, such had been his previous pursuits and habits. Having been a surveyor, he would not make a strange figure in the fields and woods; this, too, would account [for] quantities of spades and pickaxes, and strangers from time to time visiting and conferring with him in a somewhat mysterious manner.

I have no respect for the judgment of any man who can read the report of that conversation and still call the principal *insane*. It has the ring of a saner sanity than an ordinary discipline and habits of life, than an ordinary organization, secures. Take any sentence of it, — "Any questions that I can honorably answer, I will; not otherwise. So far as I am myself concerned, I have told everything truthfully. I value my word, sir."

He never overstated anything, but spoke within bounds. I remember particularly how, in his speech here, he referred to what his family had suffered in Kansas, never giving the least vent to his pent-up fire. It was a volcano with an ordinary chimney-flue. Also,

referring to the deeds of certain Border Ruffians, he said, rapidly paring away his speech, like an experienced soldier keeping a reserve of force and meaning, "They had a perfect right to be hung."

I would fain do my best to correct, etc., little as I know of him.

But I believe, without having any outward evidence, that many have already silently retracted their words.

They (Allen and Stark) may have possessed some of his love of liberty, indignation, and courage to face their country's foes, but they had not the rare qualities — the peculiar courage and self-reliance — which could enable them to face their country itself, and all mankind, in behalf of the oppressed.

He could give you information on various subjects, for he had travelled widely and observed closely. He said that the Indians with whom he dealt in Kansas were perhaps the richest people in a pecuniary sense on the earth. The money that this government annually paid them gave so much to each member of the community. They were, moreover, more intelligent than the mass of the Border Ruffians, or that class of the inhabitants of Missouri.

Much of the time of late years he has had to skulk in the swamps of Kansas with a price set upon his head, suffering from sickness and poverty and exposure, befriended only by Indians and [a] few white men. When surprise was expressed that he was not taken, he accounted for it by saying that it was perfectly well understood that he would not be taken alive. He would even show himself openly in towns which were half

composed of Border Ruffians, and transact some business, without delaying long, and yet nobody attempted to arrest [him], because, as he said, a small party did not like to undertake it, and a large one could not be got together in season.

I thought the same of his speech which I heard some years ago, — that he was not in the least a rhetorician, was not talking to Buncombe or his constituents anywhere, who had no need to invent anything, but to tell the simple truth and communicate his resolution. Therefore he appeared incomparably strong, and eloquence in Congress or elsewhere was at a discount. It was like the speeches of Cromwell compared with those of an ordinary king.

They have tried a long time; they have hung a good many, but never found the right one before.

Dispersing the sentiments of humanity! As if they were ever found unaccompanied by its deeds! as if you could disperse them as easily as water with a watering-pot and they were good only to lay the dust with!

A few ministers are doing their duty in New York. This use of the word "insane" has got to be a mere trope.

Newspaper-editors talk as if it were impossible that a man could be "divinely appointed" in these days to do any work whatever, as if vows and religion were out of date as connected with any man's daily work, and as if a man's death were a failure and his continued life, be it of whatever character, were a success. They argue that it is a proof of his *insanity* that he thought he was appointed to do this work which he did, — that he did not suspect himself for a moment!

If they do not mean this, then they do not speak the truth and say what they mean. They are simply at their old tricks still.

He said truly that the reason why such greatly superior numbers quailed before him with a handful of men only was, as some of his prisoners stated, that the former *lacked a cause*, — a kind of armor which he and his party never lacked. He said that when the time arrived, few men were found willing to lay down their lives in defense of what they knew to be wrong. They did not like that this should be their last act in this world.

As if the agent to abolish slavery could only be somebody "appointed" by the President or some political party.

All this — his insanity (monomania, says one), etc. — made him to be "dreaded by the Missourians as a supernatural being." Sure enough, a hero in the midst of us cowards is always so dreaded. He is just that thing. He shows himself superior to nature. He has a spark of divinity in him.

"Unless above himself he can
Erect himself, how poor a thing is man!"

I have read all the newspapers I could get within a week, and I do not remember in them a single expression of sympathy for these men.

Most of them decided not to print the full report of Brown's words in the armory "to the exclusion of other matter." Why, they have *mattered*, and there is no safety for them but in excluding the dead part and

giving place to the living and healthy. But I object not so much to what they have not done as to what they have done.

He was by descent and birth a New England farmer, a man of great common sense, deliberate and practical as that class, and tenfold more so. He was like the best of those who stood at our bridge once, on Lexington Common, and on Bunker Hill, only he was firmer and higher-principled than any that I chance to have heard of as there. It was no Abolition lecturer that converted him.

A Western paper says, to account for his escape from so many perils, that he was concealed under a "rural exterior," as if in that prairie land a hero should by good rights wear a citizen's dress only. It would appear from published letters that the women of the land are where the men should be. What sort of violence is that which is encouraged not by soldiers but by citizens, not so much by laymen as by ministers of the Gospel, not so much by the fighting sects as by Quakers, and not so much by Quaker men as Quaker women? The enemy may well "quake" at the thought of it. Is not that a righteous war where the best are thus opposed to the worst?

Governor Wise speaks far more justly and admiringly of him than any Northern editor that I have heard of. "They are themselves mistaken who take him to be a madman. . . . He is cool, collected, and indomitable, and it is but just to him to say that he was humane to his prisoners. . . . And he inspired me with great trust in his integrity as a man of truth. He is a

fanatic, vain and garrulous (!!), but firm, truthful, and intelligent. His men, too, who survive, are like him. . . . Colonel Washington says that he was the coolest and firmest man he ever saw in defying danger and death. With one son dead by his side, and another shot through, he felt the pulse of his dying son with one hand, and held his rifle with the other, and commanded his men with the utmost composure, encouraging them to be firm, and to sell their lives as dear as they could. Of the three white prisoners, Brown, Stevens, and Coppoc, it was hard to say which was the most firm." There is another man with whom the South and a good part of the North heartily sympathize. His name is Walker.

I subscribed a trifle when he was here three years ago, I had so much confidence in the man, — that he would do right, — but it would seem that he had not confidence enough in me, nor in anybody else that I know, to communicate his plans to us.

I do not wish to kill or to be killed, but I can foresee circumstances in which both of these things would be by me unavoidable. In extremities I could even be killed.

This event advertises me that there is such a fact as death, — the possibility of a man's dying. It seems as if no man had ever died in America; for in order to die you must first have lived. I don't believe in the hearses and palls and funerals that they have had. There was no death in the case, because there had been no life; they merely rotted or sloughed off, pretty much as they had rotted or sloughed along. No temple's veil was rent,

only a hole dug somewhere. The best of them fairly ran down like a clock. I hear a good many pretend that they are going to die; or that they have died, for aught I know. Nonsense! I'll defy them to do it. They have n't got life enough in them. They'll deliquesce like fungi, and keep a hundred eulogists mopping the spot where they left off. Only half a dozen or so have died since the world began. *Memento mori!* they don't understand that sublime sentence which some worthy got sculptured on his gravestone once. They've understood it in a grovelling and snivelling sense. They've wholly forgotten how to die. Be sure you die. Finish your work. Know when to leave off. Men make a needless ado about taking lives, — capital punishment. Where is there any life to take? You don't know what it means to let the dead bury the dead.

Beauty stands veiled the while, and music is a screeching lie.

These men, in teaching us how to die, have at the same time taught us how to live. If this man's acts and words do not create a revival, it will be the severest possible satire on the acts and words of those who are said to have effected such things.

Do you ever think you have died, or are going to die, sir? No! there is no hope of you, sir. You have n't got your lesson yet. You've got to stay after school.

It is the best news that America has ever heard.

Franklin, — Washington, — they were let off without dying; these were merely missing one day.

It has already quickened the public pulse of the North; it has infused more, and more generous, blood

into her veins and heart than any number of years of what is called commercial and political prosperity could. How many a man who was lately contemplating suicide has now something to live for!

Mr. Giddings says of them that "their sad fate will occupy a brief page in the history of our nation." Does he think that the history of the Republican Party — hitherto, for it may be re-created by his death — will be in the proportion of a sentence to that page?

When I reflect to what a cause this man devoted himself, and how religiously, and then reflect to what cause his judges and all who condemn him so angrily and fluently devote themselves, I see that they are as far apart as the heavens and earth are asunder. The amount of it is our "leading men" are a harmless kind of folk, and they know well enough that *they* were not divinely appointed, but elected by the votes of their party.

The most sensible of the apparently editorial articles on this event that I have met with is in the *Wheeling Intelligence*. *Vide* Supplement to Journal, October 29th.¹

Swamp-pink and waxwork were bare October 23d; how long?

Oct. 28. Goldenrods and asters have been altogether *lingering* some days. Walnuts commonly fall, and the black walnuts at Smith's are at least half fallen.

¹ [This "supplement" does not appear among the manuscript volumes of the journal.]

They are of the form and size of a small lemon and — what is singular — have a rich nutmeg fragrance. They are now turning dark-brown. Gray says it is rare in the Eastern but very common in the Western States. Is it indigenous in Massachusetts?¹ If so, it is much the most remarkable nut that we have.

¹ Emerson says it is, but rare.