

VI

JULY, 1851

(ÆT. 33-34)

July 2. It is a fresh, cool summer morning. From the road at N. Barrett's, on my way to P. Blood's at 8.30 A. M., the Great Meadows have a slight bluish misty tinge in part; elsewhere a sort of hoary sheen like a fine downiness, inconceivably fine and silvery far away, — the light reflected from the grass blades, a sea of grass hoary with light, the counterpart of the frost in spring. As yet no mower has profaned it; scarcely a footstep since the waters left it. Miles of waving grass adorning the surface of the earth.

Last night, a sultry night which compelled to leave all windows open, I heard two travellers talking aloud, was roused out of my sleep by their loud, day-like, and somewhat unearthly discourse at perchance one o'clock. From the country, whiling away the night with loud discourse. I heard the words "Theodore Parker" and "Wendell Phillips" loudly spoken, and so did half a dozen of my neighbors, who also were awakened. Such is fame. It affected [me] like Dante talking of the men of this world in the infernal regions. If the travellers had called my own name I should equally have thought it an unearthly personage which it would take me some hours into daylight to realize. O traveller, have n't you got any further than that? My genius hinted before

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A TRAVELLER

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I fairly awoke, "Improve your time." What is the night that a traveller's voice should sound so hollow in it? that a man speaking aloud in the night, speaking in regions under the earth, should utter the words "Theodore Parker"?

A traveller! I love his title. A traveller is to be revered as such. His profession is the best symbol of our life. Going from — toward —; it is the history of every one of us. I am interested in those that travel in the night.

It takes but little distance to make the hills and even the meadows look blue to-day. That principle which gives the air an azure color is more abundant.

To-day the milkweed is blossoming. Some of the raspberries are ripe, the most innocent and simple of fruits, the purest and most ethereal. Cherries are ripe. Strawberries in the gardens have passed their prime.

Many large trees, especially elms, about a house are a surer indication of old family distinction and worth than any evidence of wealth. Any evidence of care bestowed on these trees secures the traveller's respect as for a nobler husbandry than the raising of corn and potatoes.

I passed a regular country dooryard this forenoon, the unpainted one-story house, long and low with projecting stoop, a deep grass-plot unfenced for yard, hens and chickens scratching amid the chip dirt about the door, — this last the main feature, relics of wood-piles, sites of the wooden towers.

The nightshade has bloomed and the prinus, or winterberry.

July 5. The vetch-like flower by the Marlborough road, the *Tephrosia Virginica*, is in blossom, with mixed red and yellowish blossoms. Also the white fine-flowered Jersey tea (*Ceanothus Americana*), and, by the side of wood-paths, the humble cow-wheat (*Apocynum*, etc.). The blue flower by the roadside, slender but pretty spike, is the pale lobelia (*L. pallida*). The reddish blossoms of the umbelled wintergreen (*Pyrola umbellata*) are now in perfection and are exceedingly beautiful. Also the white sweet-scented flowers of the *P. rotundifolia*.

It is a remarkably cool, clear, breezy atmosphere to-day. One would say there were fewer flowers just now than there have been and are to be; *i. e.* we do not look so much for the blossoming of new flowers. The earliest small fruits are just beginning to be ripe,—the raspberry, thimble-berry, blueberry, etc. We have no longer the blossoms of those which must ripen their fruits in early autumn.

I am interested in those fields in the woods where the potato is cultivated, growing in the light, dry, sandy soil, free from weeds; now in blossom, the slight vine not crowded in the hill. I think they do not promise many potatoes, though mealy and wholesome like nuts. Many fields have now received their last hoeing, and the farmers' work seems to be soon over with them. What a pleasant interview he must have had with them! What a liberal education with these professors! Better than a university. It is pleasing to consider man's cultivating this plant thus assiduously, without reference to any crop it may yield him, as if he were to cultivate

johnswort in like manner. What influences does he receive from this long intercourse.

The flowers of the umbelled pyrola, or common wintergreen, are really very handsome now, dangling red from their little umbels like jewelry,—especially the unexpanded buds with their red calyx-leaves against the white globe of petals.

There is a handsome wood-path on the east side of White Pond. The shadows of the pine stems and branches falling across the path, which is perfectly red with pine-needles, make a very handsome carpet. Here is a small road running north and south along the edge of the wood, which would be a good place to walk by moonlight.

The calamint grows by the lane beyond Seven-Star Lane; now in blossom.

As we come over Hubbard's Bridge between 5 and 6 p. m., the sun getting low, a cool wind blowing up the valley, we sit awhile on the rails which are destined for the new railing. The light on the Indian hill is very soft and glorious, giving the idea of the most wonderful fertility. The most barren hills are gilded like waving grain-fields. What a paradise to sail by! The cliffs and woods up the stream are nearer and have more shadow and actuality about them. This retired bridge is a favorite spot with me. I have witnessed many a fair sunset from it.

July 6. Sunday. I walked by night last moon, and saw its disk reflected in Walden Pond, the broken disk, now here, now there, a pure and memorable flame

unearthly bright, like a cucullo¹ of a water-bug. Ah! but that first faint tinge of moonlight on the gap! (seen some time ago),² — a silvery light from the east before day had departed in the west. What an immeasurable interval there is between the first tinge of moonlight which we detect, lighting with mysterious, silvery, poetic light the western slopes, like a paler grass, and the last wave of daylight on the eastern slopes! It is wonderful how our senses ever span so vast an interval, how from being aware of the one we become aware of the other. And now the night wind blows, — from where? What gave it birth? It suggests an interval equal to that between the most distant periods recorded in history. The silver age is not more distant from the golden than moonlight is from sunlight. I am looking into the west, where the red clouds still indicate the course of departing day. I turn and see the silent, spiritual, contemplative moonlight shedding the softest imaginable light on the western slopes of the hills, as if, after a thousand years of polishing, their surfaces were just beginning to be bright, — a pale whitish lustre. Already the crickets chirp to the moon a different strain, and the night wind rustles the leaves of the wood. A different dynasty has commenced. Yet moonlight, like daylight, is more valuable for what it suggests than for what it actually is. It is a long past season of which I dream. And the reason is perchance because it is a more sacred and glorious season, to which I instantly refer all glorious actions in past time. Let a nobler landscape present itself, let a purer air blow, and I locate all the worthies

¹ [See p. 252.]

² [Night of June 12. See p. 249.]

of the world. Ah, there is the mysterious light which for some hours has illustrated Asia and the scene of Alexander's victories, now at length, after two or three hours spent in surmounting the billows of the Atlantic, come to shine on America. There, on that illustrated sand-bank, was revealed an antiquity beside which Nineveh is young. Such a light as sufficed for the earliest ages. From what star has it arrived on this planet? Yet even at midday I see the full moon shining in the sky. What if, in some vales, only its light is reflected? What if there are some spirits which walk in its light alone still? who separate the moonlight from the sunlight, and are shined on by the former only? I passed from dynasty to dynasty, from one age of the world to another age of the world, from Jove perchance back to Saturn. What river of Lethe was there to run between? I bade farewell to that light setting in the west and turned to salute the new light rising in the east.

There is some advantage in being the humblest, cheapest, least dignified man in the village, so that the very stable boys shall damn you. Methinks I enjoy that advantage to an unusual extent. There is many a coarsely well-meaning fellow, who knows only the skin of me, who addresses me familiarly by my Christian name. I get the whole good of him and lose nothing myself. There is "Sam," the jailer, — whom I never call Sam, however, — who exclaimed last evening: "Thoreau, are you going up the street pretty soon? Well, just take a couple of these handbills along and drop one in at Hoar's piazza and one at Holbrook's,

and I'll do as much for you another time." I am not above being used, aye abused, sometimes.

The red clover heads are now turned black. They no longer impart that rosaceous tinge to the meadows and fertile fields. It is but a short time that their rich bloom lasts. The white is black or withering also. Whiteweed still looks white in the fields. Blue-eyed grass is now rarely seen. The grass in the fields and meadows is not so fresh and fair as it was a fortnight ago. It is dryer and riper and ready for the mowers. Now June is past. June is the month for grass and flowers. Now grass is turning to hay, and flowers to fruits. Already I gather ripe blueberries on the hills. The red-topped grass is in its prime, tingeing the fields with red.

It is a free, flowing wind, with wet clouds in the sky, though the sun shines. The distant hills look unusually near in this atmosphere. Acton meeting-houses seen to stand on the side of some hills, Nagog or Nashoba, beyond, as never before. Nobscot looks like a high pasture in the sunlight not far off. From time to time I hear a few drops of rain falling on the leaves, but none is felt and the sun does not cease to shine. All serious showers go round me and get out of my way.

The clasping harebell is certainly a pretty flower, and so is the tephrosia. The poke has blossomed and the indigo-weed.

July 7. The intimations of the night are divine, methinks. Men might meet in the morning and report the news of the night, — what divine suggestions have been made to them. I find that I carry with me into

the day often some such hint derived from the gods, — such impulses to purity, to heroism, to literary effort even, as are never day-born.¹

One of those mornings which usher in no day, but rather an endless morning, a protracted auroral season, for clouds prolong the twilight the livelong day.

And now that there is an interregnum in the blossoming of the flowers, so is there in the singing of the birds. The golden robin is rarely heard, and the bobolink, etc.

I rejoice when in a dream I have loved virtue and nobleness.

Where is Grecian history? It is when in the morning I recall the intimations of the night.

The moon is now more than half full. When I come through the village at 10 o'clock this cold night, cold as in May, the heavy shadows of the elms covering the ground with their rich tracery impress me as if men had got so much more than they had bargained for, not only trees to stand in the air, but to checker the ground with their shadows. At night they lie along the earth. They tower, they arch, they droop over the streets like chandeliers of darkness. In my walk the other afternoon, I saw the sun shining into the depths of a thick pine wood, checkering the ground like moonlight and illuminating the lichen-covered bark of a large white pine, from which it was reflected through the surrounding thicket as from another sun. This was so deep in the woods that you would have said no sun could penetrate thither.

¹ [See pp. 213, 214.]

I have been to-night with Anthony Wright to look through Perez Blood's telescope a second time. A dozen of Blood's neighbors were swept along in the stream of our curiosity. One who lived half a mile this side said that Blood had been down that way within a day or two with his terrestrial, or day, glass, looking into the eastern horizon [at] the hills of Billerica, Burlington, and Woburn. I was amused to see what sort of respect this man with a telescope had obtained from his neighbors, something akin to that which savages award to civilized men, though in this case the interval between the parties was very slight. Mr. Blood, with his skull-cap on, his short figure, his north European figure, made me think of Tycho Brahe. He did not invite us into his house this cool evening, — men nor women, — nor did he ever before to my knowledge. I am still contented to see the stars with my naked eye. Mr. Wright asked him what his instrument cost. He answered, "Well, that is something I don't like to tell." (Stuttering or hesitating in his speech a little as usual.) "It is a very proper question, however." "Yes," said I, "and you think that you have given a very proper answer."

Returning, my companion, Wright, the sexton, told me how dusty he found it digging a grave that afternoon, — for one who had been a pupil of mine. For two feet, he said, notwithstanding the rain, he found the soil as dry as ashes.

With a certain wariness, but not without a slight shudder at the danger oftentimes, I perceive how near I had come to admitting into my mind the details of

some trivial affair, as a case at court; and I am astonished to observe how willing men are to lumber their minds with such rubbish, — to permit idle rumors, tales, incidents, even of an insignificant kind, to intrude upon what should be the sacred ground of the thoughts. Shall the temple of our thought be a public arena where the most trivial affairs of the market and the gossip of the tea-table is discussed, — a dusty, noisy, trivial place? Or shall it be a quarter of heaven itself, a place consecrated to the service of the gods, a hypæthral temple? I find it so difficult to dispose of the few facts which to me are significant, that I hesitate to burden my mind with the most insignificant, which only a divine mind could illustrate. Such is, for the most part, the news, — in newspapers and conversation. It is important to preserve the mind's chastity in this respect. Think of admitting the details of a single case of the criminal court into the mind, to stalk profanely through its very *sanctum sanctorum* for an hour, aye, for many hours! to make a very bar-room of your mind's inmost apartment, as if for a moment the dust of the street had occupied you, aye, the very street itself, with all its travel, passed through your very mind of minds, your thoughts' shrine, with all its filth and bustle! Would it not be an intellectual suicide? By all manner of boards and traps, threatening the extreme penalty of the divine law, excluding trespassers from these grounds, it behooves us to preserve the purity and sanctity of the mind.¹ It is so hard to forget what it is worse than useless to remember. If I am to be a channel or thor-

¹ [Channing, p. 85.]

oughfare, I prefer that it be of the mountain springs, and not the town sewers, — the Parnassian streams. There is inspiration, the divine gossip which comes to the ear of the attentive mind from the courts of heaven; there is the profane and stale revelation of the bar-room and the police court. The same ear is fitted to receive both communications. Only the character of the individual determines to which source chiefly it shall be open and to which closed. I believe that the mind can be profaned by the habit of attending to trivial things, so that all our thoughts shall be tinged with triviality. They shall be dusty as stones in the street. Our very minds shall be paved and macadamized, as it were, their foundation broken into fragments for the wheels of travel to roll over. If we have thus desecrated ourselves, the remedy will be, by circumspection and wariness, by our aspiration and devotion, to consecrate ourselves, to make a fane of the mind. I think that we should treat our minds as innocent and ingenuous children whose guardians we are, — be careful what objects and what subjects we thrust on their attention. Even the facts of science may dust the mind by their dryness, unless they are in a sense effaced each morning, or rather rendered fertile by the dews of fresh and living truth. Every thought that passes through the mind helps to wear and tear it, and to deepen the ruts, which, as in the streets of Pompeii, evince how much it has been used. How many things there are concerning which we might well deliberate whether we had better know them!¹ Routine, conven-

¹ [*Cape Cod, and Miscellanies*, pp. 473-476; *Misc.*, Riv. 276-279.]

tionality, manners, etc., etc., — how insensibly an undue attention to these dissipates and impoverishes the mind, robs it of its simplicity and strength, emasculates it!

Knowledge does not come to us by details but by *lieferungs* from the gods. What else is it to wash and purify ourselves? Conventionalities are as bad as impurities.¹ Only thought which is expressed by the mind in repose — as it were, lying on its back and contemplating the heavens — is adequately and fully expressed. What are sidelong, transient, passing half-views? The writer expressing his thought must be as well seated as the astronomer contemplating the heavens; he must not occupy a constrained position. The facts, the experience, we are well poised upon! which secures our whole attention!

The senses of children are unprofaned. Their whole body is one sense; they take a physical pleasure in riding on a rail, they love to teeter. So does the unviolated, the unsophisticated mind derive an inexpressible pleasure from the simplest exercise of thoughts.

I can express adequately only the thought which I *love* to express. All the faculties in repose but the one you are using, the whole energy concentrated in that. Be ever so little distracted, your thoughts so little confused, your engagements so few, your attention so free, your existence so mundane, that in all places and in all hours you can hear the sound of crickets in those seasons when they are to be heard. It is a mark of serenity and health of mind when a person hears this sound much,

¹ [*Cape Cod, and Miscellanies*, pp. 475, 476; *Misc.*, Riv. 279.]

— in streets of cities as well as in fields. Some ears never hear this sound; are called deaf. Is it not because they have so long attended to other sounds?

July 8. Tuesday. Walked along the Clamshell bank after sundown. A cloudy sky. The heads of the grass in the pasture behind Dennis's have a reddish cast, but another grass, with a lighter-colored stem and leaves, on the higher parts of the field gives a yellowish tinge to those parts, as if they reflected a misty sunlight. Even much later in the night these light spots were distinguishable. I am struck by the cool, juicy, pickled-cucumber green of the potato-fields now. How lusty these vines look! The pasture naturally exhibits at this season no such living green as the cultivated fields. I perceive that flower of the lowlands now, with a peculiar leaf and conspicuous white umbels.¹

Here are mulleins covering a field (the Clamshell field) where three years [ago] were none noticeable, but a smooth uninterrupted pasture sod. Two years ago it was plowed for the first time for many years, and millet and corn and potatoes planted, and now *where the millet grew* these mulleins have sprung up. Who can write the history of these fields? The millet does not perpetuate itself, but the few seeds of the mullein, which perchance were brought here with it, are still multiplying the race.

The thick heads of the yellow dock warn me of the lapse of time.

¹ Rue [*i. e.* meadow-rue].

Here are some rich rye-fields waving over all the land, their heads nodding in the evening breeze with an apparently alternating motion; *i. e.* they do not all bend at once by ranks, but separately, and hence this agreeable alternation. How rich a sight this cereal fruit, now yellow for the cradle, — *flavus!* It is an impenetrable phalanx. I walk for half a mile beside these Macedonians, looking in vain for an opening. There is no Arnold Winkelried to gather these spear-heads upon his breast and make an opening for me. This is food for man. The earth labors not in vain; it is bearing its burden. The yellow, waving, rustling rye extends far up and over the hills on either side, a kind of pinafore to nature, leaving only a narrow and dark passage at the bottom of a deep ravine. How rankly it has grown! How it hastes to maturity! I discover that there is such a goddess as Ceres. These long grain-fields which you must respect, — must go round, — occupying the ground like an army. The small trees and shrubs seen dimly in its midst are overwhelmed by the grain as by an inundation. They are seen only as indistinct forms of bushes and green leaves mixed with the yellow stalks. There are certain crops which give me the idea of bounty, of the *Alma Natura*.¹ They are the grains. Potatoes do not so fill the lap of earth. This rye excludes everything else and takes possession of the soil. The farmer says, "Next year I will raise a crop of rye;" and he proceeds to clear away the brush, and either plows it, or, if it is too uneven or stony, burns and harrows it only, and scatters the seed with faith. And all winter

¹ [See *Journal*, vol. i, p. 59.]

the earth keeps his secret, — unless it did leak out somewhat in the fall, — and in the spring this early green on the hillsides betrays him. When I see this luxuriant crop spreading far and wide in spite of rock and bushes and unevenness of ground, I cannot help thinking that it must have been unexpected by the farmer himself, and regarded by him as a lucky accident for which to thank fortune. This, to reward a transient faith, the gods had given. As if he must have forgotten that he did it, until he saw the waving grain inviting his sickle.

July 9. When I got out of the cars at Porter's, Cambridge, this morning, I was pleased to see the handsome blue flowers of the succory or endive (*Cichorium Intybus*), which reminded me that within the hour I had been whirled into a new botanical region. They must be extremely rare, if they occur at all, in Concord. This weed is handsomer than most garden flowers. Saw there also the *Cucubalus Behen*, or bladder campion, also the autumnal dandelion (*Apargia autumnalis*).

Visited the Observatory. Bond said they were cataloguing the stars at Washington (?), or trying to. They do not at Cambridge; of no use with their force. Have not force enough now to make mag[netic] obs[ervations]. When I asked if an observer with the small telescope could find employment, he said, Oh yes, there was employment enough for observation with the naked eye, observing the changes in the brilliancy of stars, etc., etc., if they could only get some good observers. One is glad to hear that the naked eye still retains some importance in the estimation of astronomers.

Coming out of town, — willingly as usual, — when I saw that reach of Charles River just above the depot, the fair, still water this cloudy evening suggesting the way to eternal peace and beauty, whence it flows, the placid, lake-like fresh water, so unlike the salt brine, affected me not a little. I was reminded of the way in which Wordsworth so coldly speaks of some natural visions or scenes "giving him pleasure." This is perhaps the first vision of elysium on this route from Boston. And just then I saw an encampment of Penobscots, their wigwams appearing above the railroad fence, they, too, looking up the river as they sat on the ground, and enjoying the scene. What can be more impressive than to look up a noble river just at evening, — one, perchance, which you have never explored, — and behold its placid waters, reflecting the woods and sky, lapsing inaudibly toward the ocean; to behold as a lake, but know it as a river, tempting the beholder to explore it and his own destiny at once? Haunt of waterfowl. This was above the factories, — all that I saw. That water could never have flowed under a factory. How *then* could it have reflected the sky?

July 10. A gorgeous sunset after rain, with horizontal bars of clouds, red sashes to the western window, barry clouds hanging like a curtain over the window of the west, damask. First there is a low arch of the storm clouds in the west, under which is seen the clearer, fairer, serener sky and more distant sunset clouds, and under all, on the horizon's edge, heavier, massive dark clouds, not to be distinguished from the mountains.

How many times I have seen this kind of sunset, — the most gorgeous sight in nature! From the hill behind Minott's I see the birds flying against this red sky, the sun having set; one looks like a bat. Now between two stupendous mountains of the low stratum under the evening red, clothed in slightly rosaceous amber light, through a magnificent gorge, far, far away, as perchance may occur in pictures of the Spanish coast viewed from the Mediterranean, I see a city, the eternal city of the west, the phantom city, in whose streets no traveller has trod, over whose pavements the horses of the sun have already hurried, some Salamanca of the imagination. But it lasts only for a moment, for now the changing light has wrought such changes in it that I see the resemblance no longer.

A softer amber sky than in any picture. The swallows are improving this short day, twittering as they fly, and the huckleberry-bird¹ repeats his jingling strain, and the song sparrow, more honest than most.

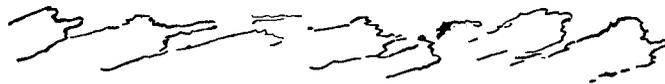
I am always struck by the centrality of the observer's position. He always stands fronting the middle of the arch, and does not suspect at first that a thousand observers on a thousand hills behold the sunset sky from equally favorable positions.

And now I turn and observe the dark masses of the trees in the east, not green but black. While the sun was setting in the west, the trees were rising in the east.

I perceive that the low stratum of dark clouds under

¹ [Thoreau's name for the field sparrow (*Spizella pusilla*, or, as it was called by Nuttall, *Fringilla junco*). He had the name from his old friend Minott.]

the red sky all dips one way, and to a remarkable degree presents the appearance of the butt ends of cannons slanted toward the sky, thus:—



Such uniformity on a large scale is unexpected and pleasant to detect, evincing the simplicity of the laws of their formation. Uniformity in the shapes of clouds of a single stratum is always to be detected, the same wind shaping clouds of the like consistency and in like positions. No doubt an experienced observer could discover the states of the upper atmosphere by studying the forms and characters of the clouds. I traced the distinct form of the cannon in seven instances, stretching over the whole length of the cloud, many a mile in the horizon.

And the nighthawk dashes past in the twilight with mottled (?) wing, within a rod of me.

July 11. Friday. At 7.15 P. M. with W. E. C. go forth to see the moon, the glimpses of the moon. We think she is not quite full; we can detect a little flatness on the eastern side. Shall we wear thick coats? The day has been warm enough, but how cool will the night be? It is not sultry, as the last night. As a general rule, it is best to wear your thickest coat even in a July night. Which way shall we walk? Northwest, that we may see the moon returning? But on that side the river prevents our walking in the fields, and on other accounts that direction is not so attractive. We go toward Bear

Garden Hill. The sun is setting. The meadow-sweet has bloomed. These dry hills and pastures are the places to walk by moonlight. The moon is silvery still, not yet inaugurated. The trec-tops are seen against the amber west. I seem to see the outlines of one spruce among them, distinguishable afar. My thoughts expand and flourish most on this barren hill, where in the twilight I see the moss spreading in rings and prevailing over the short, thin grass, carpeting the earth, adding a few inches of green to its circle annually while it dies within.

As we round the sandy promontory, we try the sand and rocks with our hands. The sand is cool on the surface but warmer a few inches beneath, though the contrast is not so great as it was in May. The larger rocks are perceptibly warm. I pluck the blossom of the milkweed in the twilight and find how sweet it smells. The white blossoms of the Jersey tea dot the hillside, with the yarrow everywhere. Some woods are black as clouds; if we knew not they were green by day, they would appear blacker still. When we sit, we hear the mosquitoes hum. The woodland paths are not the same by night as by day; if they are a little grown up, the eye cannot find them, but must give the reins to the feet, as the traveller to his horse. So we went through the aspens at the base of the Cliffs, their round leaves reflecting the lingering twilight on the one side, the waxing moonlight on the other. Always the path was unexpectedly open.

Now we are getting into moonlight. We see it reflected from particular stumps in the depths of the darkest woods, and from the stems of trees, as if it

selected what to shine on,¹ — a silvery light. It is a light, of course, which we have had all day, but which we have not appreciated, and proves how remarkable a lesser light can be when a greater has departed. How simply and naturally the moon presides! 'T is true she was eclipsed by the sun, but now she acquires an almost equal respect and worship by reflecting and representing him, with some new quality, perchance, added to his light, showing how original the disciple may be who still in midday is seen, though pale and cloud-like, beside his master. Such is a worthy disciple. In his master's presence he still is seen and preserves a distinct existence; and in his absence he reflects and represents him, not without adding some new quality to his light, not servile and never rival. As the master withdraws himself, the disciple, who was a pale cloud before, begins to emit a silvery light, acquiring at last a tinge of golden as the darkness deepens, but not enough to scorch the seeds which have been planted or to dry up the fertilizing dews which are falling.

Passing now near Well Meadow Head toward Baker's orchard. The sweet-fern and indigo-weed fill the path up to one's middle, wetting us with dews so high. The leaves are shining and flowing.² We waded through the luxuriant vegetation, seeing no bottom. Looking back toward the Cliffs, some dead trees in the horizon, high on the rocks, make a wild New Hampshire prospect. There is the faintest possible mist over the pond-holes, where the frogs are eructating, like the falling of huge drops, the bursting of mephitic air-bubbles rising from

¹ [*Excursions*, p. 327; Riv. 402.] ² [*Excursions*, p. 327; Riv. 402.]

the bottom, a sort of blubbering, — such conversation as I *have* heard between men, a belching conversation, expressing a sympathy of stomachs and abdomens. The peculiar appearance of the indigo-weed, its misty massiveness, is striking. In Baker's orchard the thick grass looks like a sea of mowing in this weird moonlight, a bottomless sea of grass. Our feet must be imaginative, must know the earth in imagination only, as well as our heads. We sit on the fence, and, where it is broken and interrupted, the fallen and slanting rails are lost in the grass (really thin and wiry) as in water. We even see our tracks a long way behind, where we have brushed off the dew. The clouds are peculiarly wispy to-night, somewhat like fine flames, not massed and dark nor downy, not thick, but slight, thin wisps of mist.

I hear the sound of Heywood's Brook falling into Fair Haven Pond, inexpressibly refreshing to my senses. It seems to flow through my very bones. I hear it with insatiable thirst. It allays some sandy heat in me. It affects my circulations; methinks my arteries have sympathy with it. What is it I hear but the pure water-falls within me, in the circulation of my blood, the streams that fall into my heart? What mists do I ever see but such as hang over and rise from my blood? The sound of this gurgling water, running thus by night as by day, falls on all my dashes, fills all my buckets, overflows my float-boards, turns all the machinery of my nature, makes me a flume, a sluice-way, to the springs of nature. Thus I am washed; thus I drink and quench my thirst.¹ Where the streams fall

¹ [See p. 155.]

into the lake, if they are only a few inches more elevated, all walkers may hear.

On the high path through Baker's wood I see, or rather feel, the tephrosia. Now we come out into the open pasture. And under those woods of elm and button-wood, where still no light is seen, repose a family of human beings. By night there is less to distinguish this locality from the woods and meadows we have threaded. We might go very near to farmhouses covered with ornamental trees and standing on a highroad, thinking that [we] were in the most retired woods and fields still. Having yielded to sleep, man is a less obtrusive inhabitant of nature. Now, having reached the dry pastures again, we are surrounded by a flood of moonlight. The dim cart-path over the sward curves gracefully through the pitch pines, ever to some more fairy-like spot. The rails in the fences shine like silver. We know not whether we are sitting on the ruins of a wall, or the materials which are to compose a new one. I see, half a mile off, a phosphorescent arc on the hillside, where Bartlett's Cliff reflects the moonlight. Going by the shanty, I smell the excrements of its inhabitants, which I had never smelt before.

And now, at half-past 10 o'clock, I hear the cockerels crow in Hubbard's barns, and morning is already anticipated. It is the feathered, wakeful thought in us that anticipates the following day. This sound is wonderfully exhilarating at all times. These birds are worth far more to me for their crowing and cackling than for their drumsticks and eggs.¹ How singular the connec-

¹ [See *Walden*, pp. 140, 141; Riv. 199.]

tion of the hen with man, — that she leaves her eggs in his barns always! She is a domestic fowl, though still a little shyish of him. I cannot [help] looking at the whole as an experiment still and wondering that in each case it succeeds. There is no doubt at last but hens may be kept. They will put their eggs in your barn by a tacit agreement. They will not wander far from your yard.

July 12. 8 P. M. — Now at least the moon is full, and I walk alone, which is best by night, if not by day always. Your companion must sympathize with the present mood. The conversation must be located where the walkers are, and vary exactly with the scene and events and the contour of the ground. Farewell to those who will talk of nature unnaturally, whose presence is an interruption. I know but one with whom I can walk. I might as well be sitting in a bar-room with them as walk and talk with most. We are never side by side in our thoughts, and we cannot hear each other's silence. Indeed, we cannot be silent. We are forever breaking silence, that is all, and mending nothing. How can they keep together who are going different ways!

I start a sparrow from her three eggs in the grass, where she had settled for the night. The earliest corn is beginning to show its tassels now, and I scent it as I walk, — its peculiar dry scent.¹ (This afternoon I gathered ripe blackberries, and felt as if the autumn had commenced.) Now perchance many sounds and sights only remind me that they once said something to

¹ [*Excursions*, p. 327; Riv. 403.]

me, and are so by association interesting. I go forth to be reminded of a previous state of existence, if perchance any memento of it is to be met with hereabouts. I have no doubt that Nature preserves her integrity. Nature is in as rude health as when Homer sang. We may at last by our sympathies be well. I see a skunk on Bear Garden Hill stealing noiselessly away from me, while the moon shines over the pitch pines, which send long shadows down the hill. Now, looking back, I see it shining on the south side of farmhouses and barns with a weird light, for I pass here half an hour later than last night. I smell the huckleberry bushes. I hear a human voice, — some laborer singing after his day's toil, — which I do not often hear. Loud it must be, for it is far away. Methinks I should know it for a white man's voice. Some strains have the melody of an instrument. Now I hear the sound of a bugle in the "Corner," reminding me of poetic wars; a few flourishes and the bugler has gone to rest. At the foot of the Cliff hill I hear the sound of the clock striking nine, as distinctly as within a quarter of a mile usually, though there is no wind. The moonlight is more perfect than last night; hardly a cloud in the sky, — only a few fleecy ones. There is more serenity and more light. I hear that sort of throttled or chuckling note as of a bird flying high, now from this side, then from that.¹ Methinks when I turn my head I see Wachusett from the side of the hill. I smell the butter-and-eggs as I walk. I am startled by the rapid transit of some wild animal across my path, a rabbit or a fox, — or you hardly

¹ [See *Excursions*, p. 326; Riv. 401.]

know if it be not a bird. Looking down from the cliffs, the leaves of the tree-tops shine more than ever by day. Here and there a lightning-bug shows his greenish light over the tops of the trees.

As I return through the orchard, a foolish robin bursts away from his perch unnaturally, with the habits of man. The air is remarkably still and unobjectionable on the hilltop, and the whole world below is covered as with a gossamer blanket of moonlight. It is just about as yellow as a blanket. It is a great dimly burnished shield with darker blotches on its surface. You have lost some light, it is true, but you have got this simple and magnificent stillness, brooding like genius.¹

July 13. Observed yesterday, while surveying near Gordon's, a bittern flying over near Gordon's, with moderate flight and outstretched neck, its breast-bone sticking out sharp like the bone in the throats of some persons, its anatomy exposed. The evergreen is very handsome in the woods now, rising somewhat spirally in a round tower of five or six stories, surmounted by a long bud. Looking across the river to Conantum from the open plains, I think how the history of the hills would read, since they have been pastured by cows, if every plowing and mowing and sowing and chopping were recorded. I hear, 4 P. M., a pigeon woodpecker on a dead pine near by, uttering a harsh and scolding scream, spying me. The chewink jingles on the tops of the bushes, and the rush

¹ *Vide* [p. 337].

sparrow,¹ the vireo, and oven-bird at a distance; and a robin sings, superior to all; and a barking dog has started something on the opposite side of the river; and now the wood thrush surpasses them all. These plains are covered with shrub oaks, birches, aspens, hickories, mingled with sweet-fern and brakes and huckleberry bushes and epilobium, now in bloom, and much fine grass. The hellebore by the brooksides has now fallen over, though it is not broken off. The cows now repose and chew the cud under the shadow of a tree, or crop the grass in the shade along the side of the woods, and when you approach to observe them they mind you just enough. I turn up the *Juniperus repens*, and see the lighter color of its leaves on the under sides, and its berries with three petal-like divisions in one end. The sweet-scented life-everlasting is budded.

This might be called the Hayer's or Haymaker's Moon, for I perceive that when the day has been oppressively warm the haymakers rest at noon and resume their mowing after sunset, sometimes quite into evening.

July 14. Passing over the Great Fields (where I have been surveying a road) this forenoon, where were some early turnips, the county commissioners plucked and pared them with their knives and ate them. I, too, tried hard to chew a mouthful of raw turnip and realize the life of cows and oxen, for it might be a useful habit in extremities. These things occur as the seasons revolve. These are things which travellers will do. How many

¹ [The field sparrow. See *Journal*, vol. i, p. 252, note.]

men have tasted a raw turnip! How few have eaten a whole one! Some bovine appetites, which find some fodder in every field. For like reasons we sometimes eat sorrel and say we love it, that we may return the hospitality of Nature by exhibiting a good appetite.

The citizen looks sharp to see if there is any dogwood or poison sumach in the swamp before he enters.

If I take the same walk by moonlight an hour later or earlier in the evening, it is as good as a different one. I love the night for its novelty; it is less prophaned than the day.¹

The creaking of the crickets seems at the very foundation of all sound. At last I cannot tell it from a ringing in my ears. It is a sound from within, not without. You cannot dispose of it by listening to it. In proportion as I am stilled I hear it. It reminds me that I am a denizen of the earth.

July 16. Wednesday. Methinks my present experience is nothing; my past experience is all in all. I think that no experience which I have to-day comes up to, or is comparable with, the experiences of my boyhood. And not only this is true, but as far back as I can remember I have unconsciously referred to the experiences of a previous state of existence. "For life is a forgetting," etc. Formerly, methought, nature developed as I developed, and grew up with me. My life was ecstasy. In youth, before I lost any of my senses, I can remember that I was all alive, and inhabited my body with inexpressible satisfaction; both its weariness

¹ [*Excursions*, p. 323; Riv. 398.]

and its refreshment were sweet to me. This earth was the most glorious musical instrument, and I was audience to its strains. To have such sweet impressions made on us, such ecstasies begotten of the breezes! I can remember how I was astonished. I said to myself, — I said to others, — "There comes into my mind such an indescribable, infinite, all-absorbing, divine, heavenly pleasure, a sense of elevation and expansion, and [I] have had nought to do with it. I perceive that I am dealt with by superior powers.¹ This is a pleasure, a joy, an existence which I have not procured myself. I speak as a witness on the stand, and tell what I have perceived." The morning and the evening were sweet to me, and I led a life aloof from society of men. I wondered if a mortal had ever known what I knew. I looked in books for some recognition of a kindred experience, but, strange to say, I found none. Indeed, I was slow to discover that other men had had this experience, for it had been possible to read books and to associate with men on other grounds. The maker of me was improving me. When I detected this interference I was profoundly moved. For years I marched as to a music in comparison with which the military music of the streets is noise and discord. I was daily intoxicated, and yet no man could call me intemperate. With all your science can you tell how it is, and whence it is, that light comes into the soul?

Set out at 3 P. M. for Nine-Acre Corner Bridge *via* Hubbard's Bridge and Conantum, returning *via* Dashing Brook, rear of Baker's, and railroad at 6.30 P. M.

¹ [Channing, p. 84.]

The song sparrow, the most familiar and New England bird, is heard in fields and pastures, setting this midsummer day to music, as if it were the music of a mossy rail or fence post; a little stream of song, cooling, rippling through the noon, — the usually unseen songster usually unheard like the cricket, it is so common, — like the poet's song, unheard by most men, whose ears are stopped with business, though perchance it sang on the fence before the farmer's house this morning for an hour. There are little strains of poetry in our animals.

Berries are just beginning to ripen, and children are planning expeditions after them. They are important as introducing children to the fields and woods, and as wild fruits of which much account is made. During the berry season the schools have a vacation, and many little fingers are busy picking these small fruits. It is ever a pastime, not a drudgery. I remember how glad I was when I was kept from school a half a day to pick huckleberries on a neighboring hill all by myself to make a pudding for the family dinner. Ah, they got nothing but the pudding, but I got invaluable experience beside! A half a day of liberty like that was like the promise of life eternal. It was emancipation in New England. O, what a day was there, my countrymen!

I see the yellow butterflies now gathered in fleets in the road, and on the flowers of the milkweed (*Asclepias pulchra*) by the roadside, a really handsome flower; also the smaller butterfly, with reddish wings, and a larger, black or steel-blue, with wings spotted red on edge, and one of equal size, reddish copper-colored. Now you may

see a boy stealing after one, hat in hand. The earliest corn begins to tassel out, and my neighbor has put his hand in the hill some days ago and abstracted some new potatoes as big as nuts, then covered up again. Now they will need — or will get — no more weeding. The lark sings in the meadow; the very essence of the afternoon is in his strain. This is a New England sound, but the cricket is heard under all sounds. Still the cars come and go with the regularity of nature, of the sun and moon. (If a hen puts her eggs elsewhere than in the barns, — in woods or among rocks, — she is said to *steal* her nest!) The twittering of swallows is in the air, reminding me of water. The meadow-sweet is now in bloom, and the yarrow prevails by all roadsides. I see the hardhack too, homely but dear plant, just opening its red clustered flowers. The small aster, too, now abounds (*Aster miser*),¹ and the tall buttercup still. After wading through a swamp the other day with my shoes in my hand, I wiped my feet with sassafras leaves, which reminded me of some Arabian practices, the bruised leaves perfuming the air and by their softness being adapted to this purpose. The tree-primrose, or scabish, still is seen over the fence. The red-wings and crow blackbirds are heard chattering on the trees, and the cow troopials are accompanying the cows in the pastures for the sake of the insects they scare up. Oftentimes the thoughtless sportsman has lodged his charge of shot in the cow's legs or body in his eagerness to obtain the birds. St. John's-wort, one of the first of yellow flowers, begins to shine along the roadside. The mul-

¹ [This is queried in pencil. See p. 278.]

lein for some time past. I see a farmer cradling his rye, John Potter. Fields are partly mown, — some English grass on the higher parts of the meadow next to the road. The farmer's work comes not all at once. In haying time there is a cessation from other labors to a considerable extent. Planting is done, and hoeing mainly; only some turnip seed is to be scattered amid the corn. I hear the kingbird twittering or chattering like a stout-chested swallow. The prunella sends back a blue ray from under my feet as I walk; the pale lobelia too. The plaintive, spring-restoring 'peep of a bluebird is occasionally heard. I met loads of hay on the road, which the oxen draw indifferently, swaggering in their gait, as if it were not fodder for them. Methinks they should testify sometimes that they are working for themselves. The whiteweed is turning black. Grapes are half grown and lead the mind forward to autumn. It is an air this afternoon that makes you indifferent to all things, — perfect summer, but with a comfortable breeziness. You know not heat nor cold. What season of the year is this? The balls of the button-bush are half formed, with its fine, glossy, red-stemmed leaf atoning for its nakedness in the spring. My eye ranges over green fields of oats, for which there is a demand then somewhere. The wild rose peeps from amid the alders and other shrubs by the roadside. The elder-blow fills the air with its scent. The angelica, with its large umbels, is gone to seed. On it I find one of those slow-moving green worms, with rings spotted black and yellow, like an East Indian production. What if these grew as large as elephants? The honest and truly fair is more mod-

estly colored. Notwithstanding the drifting clouds, you fear no rain to-day. As you walk, you smell some sweet herbage, but detect not what it is. Hay is sticking to the willows and the alders on the causeway, and the bridge is sprinkled with it. The hemlock (*Cicuta Americana*) displays its white umbels now. The yellow lilies reign in the river. The painted tortoises drop off the willow stumps as you go over the bridge. The river is now so low that you can see its bottom, shined on by the sun, and travellers stop to look at fishes as they go over, leaning on the rails. The pickerel-weed sends up its heavenly blue. The color of the cows on Fair Haven Hill, how fair a contrast to the hillside! How striking and wholesome their clean brick-red! When were they painted? How carelessly the eye rests on them, or passes them by as things of course! The tansy is budded. The devil's-needles seem to rest in air over the water. There is nothing New-English about them.

Now, at 4 p. m., I hear the pewee in the woods, and the cuckoo reminds me of some silence among the birds I had not noticed. The vireo (red-eyed?) sings like a robin at even, incessantly, — for I have now turned into Conant's woods. The oven-bird helps fill some pauses. The poison sumach shows its green berries, now unconscious of guilt. The heart-leaved loosestrife (*Lysimachia ciliata*) is seen in low open woods. The breeze displays the white under sides of the oak leaves and gives a fresh and flowing look to the woods. The river is a dark-blue winding stripe amid the green of the meadow. What is the color of the world? Green mixed with yellowish and reddish for hills and ripe grass, and

darker green for trees and forests; blue spotted with dark and white for sky and clouds, and dark blue for water. Beyond the old house I hear the squirrel chirp in the wall like a sparrow; so Nature merges her creations into one. I am refreshed by the view of Nobscot and the southwestern vales, from Conantum, seething with the blue element. Here comes a small bird with a ricochet flight and a faint twittering note like a messenger from Elysium. The rush sparrow jingles her small change, pure silver, on the counter of the pasture. From far I see the rye stacked up. A few dead trees impart the effect of wildness to the landscape, though it is a feature rare in an old settled country.

Methinks this is the first of dog-days. The air in the distance has a peculiar blue mistiness, or furnace-like look, though, as I have said, it is not sultry yet. It is not the season for distant views. Mountains are not *clearly* blue now. The air is the opposite to what it is in October and November. You are not inclined to travel. It is a world of orchards and small-fruits now, and you can stay at home if the well has cool water in it. The black thimble-berry is an honest, homely berry, now drying up as usual. I used to have a pleasant time stringing them on herd's-grass stems, tracing the wall-sides for them. It is pleasant to walk through these elevated fields, terraced upon the side of the hill so that the eye of the walker looks off into the blue cauldron of the air at his own level. Here the haymakers have just gone to tea, — at 5 o'clock, the farmer's hour, before the afternoon is ended, while he still thinks much work may still be done before night. He does not wait

till he is strongly reminded of the night. In the distance some burdened fields are black with haycocks. Some thoughtless and cruel sportsman has killed twenty-two young partridges not much bigger than robins, against the laws of Massachusetts and humanity. At the Corner Bridge the white lilies are budded. Green apples are now so large as to remind me of coddling and the autumn again.¹ The season of fruits is arrived. The dog's-bane has a pretty, delicate bell-like flower. The Jersey tea abounds. I see the marks of the scythes in the fields, showing the breadth of each swath the mowers cut. Cool springs are now a desideratum. The geranium still hangs on. Even the creeping vines love the brooks, and I see where one slender one has struggled down and dangles into the current, which rocks it to and fro. Filberts are formed, and you may get the berry stains out of your hands with their husks, if you have any. Nightshade is in blossom. Came through the pine plains behind James Baker's, where late was open pasture, now open pitch pine woods, only here and there the grass has given place to a carpet of pine-needles. These are among our pleasantest woods, — open, level, with blackberry vines interspersed and flowers, as lady's-slippers, earlier, and pinks on the outskirts. Each tree has room enough. And now I hear the wood thrush from the shade, who loves these pine woods as well as I. I pass by Walden's scalloped shore. The epilobium reflects a pink gleam up the vales and down the hills. The chewink jingles on a bush's top. Why will the Irishman drink of a puddle by the railroad instead of

¹ [Excursions, p. 294; Riv. 361.]

digging a well? How shiftless! What death in life! He cannot be said to live who does not get pure water.

The milkweeds, or silkweeds, are rich flowers, now in blossom. The *Asclepias syriaca*, or common milkweed; its buds fly open at a touch. But handsomer much is *Asclepias pulchra*, or water silkweed. The thin green bark of this last, and indeed of the other, is so strong that a man cannot break a small strip of it by pulling. It contains a mass of fine silken fibres, arranged side by side like the strings of a fiddle-bow, and may be bent short without weakening it.

What more glorious condition of being can we imagine than from impure to be becoming pure? It is almost desirable to be impure that we may be the subject of this improvement. That I am innocent to myself! That I love and reverence my life! That I am better fitted for a lofty society to-day than I was yesterday! To make my life a sacrament! What is nature without this lofty tumbling? May I treat myself with more and more respect and tenderness. May I not forget that I am impure and vicious. May I not cease to love purity. May I go to my slumbers as expecting to arise to a new and more perfect day. May I so live and refine my life as fitting myself for a society ever higher than I actually enjoy. May I treat myself tenderly as I would treat the most innocent child whom I love; may I treat children and my friends as my newly discovered self. Let me forever go in search of myself; never for a moment think that I have found myself; be as a stranger to myself, never a familiar, seeking

acquaintance still. May I be to myself as one is to me whom I love, a dear and cherished object. What temple, what fane, what sacred place can there be but the innermost part of my own being? The possibility of my own improvement, that is to be cherished. As I regard myself, so I am. O my dear friends, I have not forgotten you. I will know you to-morrow. I associate you with my ideal self. I had ceased to have faith in myself. I thought I was grown up and become what I was intended to be, but it is earliest spring with me. In relation to virtue and innocence the oldest man is in the beginning spring and vernal season of life. It is the love of virtue makes us young ever. That is the fountain of youth, the very aspiration after the perfect. I love and worship myself with a love which absorbs my love for the world. The lecturer suggested to me that I might become better than I am. Was it not a good lecture, then? May I dream not that I shunned vice; may I dream that I loved and practiced virtue.

July 18. It is a test question affecting the youth of a person, — Have you knowledge of the morning? Do you sympathize with that season of nature? Are you abroad early, brushing the dews aside? If the sun rises on you slumbering, if you do not hear the morning cock-crow, if you do not witness the blushes of Aurora, if you are not acquainted with Venus as the morning star, what relation have you to wisdom and purity? You have then forgotten your Creator in the days of your youth! Your shutters were darkened till noon!

You rose with a sick headache! In the morning sing, as do the birds. What of those birds which should slumber on their perches till the sun was an hour high? What kind of fowl would they be and new kind of bats and owls, — hedge sparrows or larks? then took a dish of tea or hot coffee before they began to sing?

I might have added to the list of July 16th the *Aralia hispida*, bristling aralia; the heart-leaved loosestrife (*Lysimachia ciliata*); also the upright loosestrife (*L. racemosa*), with a rounded terminal raceme; the tufted vetch (*Vicia cracca*). Sweet-gale fruit now green.

I first heard the locust sing, so dry and piercing, by the side of the pine woods in the heat of the day.

July 19. Here I am thirty-four years old,¹ and yet my life is almost wholly unexpanded. How much is in the germ! There is such an interval between my ideal and the actual in many instances that I may say I am unborn. There is the instinct for society, but no society. Life is not long enough for one success. Within another thirty-four years that miracle can hardly take place. Methinks my seasons revolve more slowly than those of nature; I am differently timed. I am contented. This rapid revolution of nature, even of nature in me, why should it hurry me? Let a man step to the music which he hears, however measured. Is it important that I should mature as soon as an apple tree? aye, as soon as an oak? May not my life in nature, in proportion as it is supernatural, be only the spring and infantile por-

¹ [His birthday was July 12.]

tion of my spirit's life? Shall I turn my spring to summer? May I not sacrifice a hasty and petty completeness here to entireness there? If my curve is large, why bend it to a smaller circle? My spirit's unfolding observes not the pace of nature. The society which I was made for is not here. Shall I, then, substitute for the anticipation of that this poor reality? I would [rather] have the unmixed expectation of that than this reality. If life is a waiting, so be it. I will not be shipwrecked on a vain reality. What were any reality which I can substitute? Shall I with pains erect a heaven of blue glass over myself, though when it is done I shall be sure to gaze still on the true ethereal heaven far above, as if the former were not, — that still distant sky o'er-arching that blue expressive eye of heaven?¹ I am enamored of the blue-eyed arch of heaven.

I did not *make* this demand for a more thorough sympathy. This is not my idiosyncrasy or disease. He that made the demand will answer the demand.

My blood flows as slowly as the waves of my native Musketaquid; yet they reach the ocean sooner, perchance, than those of the Nashua.

Already the goldenrod is budded, but I can make no haste for that.

2 P. M. — The weather is warm and dry, and many leaves curl. There is a threatening cloud in the southwest. The farmers dare not spread their hay. It remains cocked in the fields. As you walk in the woods nowadays, the flies striking against your hat sound

¹ [*Walden*, pp. 358, 359; Riv. 502.]

like rain-drops. The stump or root fences on the Corner road remind me of fossil remains of mastodons, etc., exhumed and bleached in sun and rain. To-day I met with the first orange flower of autumn. What means this doubly torrid, this Bengal, tint? Yellow took sun enough, but this is the fruit of a dog-day sun. The year has but just produced it. Here is the Canada thistle in bloom, visited by butterflies and bees. The butterflies have swarmed within these few days, especially about the milkweeds. The swamp-pink still fills the air with its perfume in swamps and by the causeways, though it is far gone. The wild rose still scatters its petals over the leaves of neighboring plants. The wild morning-glory or bindweed, with its delicate red and white blossoms. I remember it ever as a goblet full of purest morning air and sparkling with dew, showing the dew-point, winding round itself for want of other support. It grows by the Hubbard Bridge causeway, near the angelica. The cherry-birds are making their *seringo* sound as they flit past. They soon find out the locality of the cherry trees. And beyond the bridge there is a goldenrod partially blossomed. Yesterday it was spring, and to-morrow it will be autumn. Where is the summer then? First came the St. John's-wort and now the goldenrod to admonish us. I hear, too, a cricket amid these stones under the blackberry vines, singing as in the fall. Ripe blackberries are multiplying. I see the red-spotted berries of the small Solomon's-seal in my path. I notice, in the decayed end of an oak post, that the silver grain is not decayed, but remains sound in thin flakes, alternating with the decayed por-

tions and giving the whole a honeycombed look. Such an object supramundane, as even a swallow may descend to light on, a dry mullein stalk for instance. I see that hens, too, follow the cows feeding near the house, like the cow troopial, and for the same object. They cannot so well scare up insects for themselves. This is the dog the cowbird uses to start up its insect game. I see yellow butterflies in pairs, pursuing each other a rod or two into the air, and now, as he had bethought himself of the danger of being devoured by a passing bird, he descends with a zigzag flight to the earth, and the other follows. The black huckleberries are now so thick among the green ones that they no longer incur suspicion of being worm-eaten.

When formerly I was looking about to see what I could do for a living, some sad experience in conforming to the wishes of friends being fresh in my mind to tax my ingenuity, I thought often and seriously of picking huckleberries; that surely I could do, and its small profits might suffice, so little capital it required, so little distraction from my wonted thoughts, I foolishly thought. While my acquaintances went unhesitatingly into trade or the professions, I thought of this occupation as most like theirs; ranging the hills all summer to pick the berries which came in my way, which I might carelessly dispose of; so to keep the flocks of King Admetus. My greatest skill has been to want but little. I also dreamed that I might gather the wild herbs, or carry evergreens to such villagers as loved to be reminded of the woods and so find my living got. But I have since learned that trade curses everything it handles; and though you

trade in messages from heaven, the whole curse of trade attaches to the business.¹

The wind rises more and more. The river and the pond are blacker than the threatening cloud in the south. The thunder mutters in the distance. The surface of the water is slightly rippled. Where the pads grow is a light green border. The woods roar. Small white clouds are hurrying across the dark-blue ground of the storm, which rests on all the woods of the south horizon. But still no rain now for some hours, as if the clouds were dissipated as fast as they reached this atmosphere.

The barberry's fruit hangs yellowish-green. What pretty covers the thick bush makes, so large and wide and drooping! The *Fringilla junco* sings still, in spite of the coming tempest, which, perchance, only threatens.

The woodchuck is a good native of the soil. The distant hillside and the grain-fields and pastures are spotted yellow or white with his recent burrows, and the small mounds remain for many years. Here where the clover has lately been cut, see what a yellow mound is brought to light!

Heavily hangs the common yellow lily (*Lilium Canadense*) in the meadows. In the thick alder copses by the causeway-side I find the *Lysimachia hybrida*. Here is the *Lactuca sanguinea* with its runcinate leaves, tall stem, and pale-crimson ray. And that green-stemmed one higher than my head, resembling the last in its leaves, is perchance the "tall lettuce," or fireweed. Can that  fine white-flowered meadow-plant with the leaf be a thalictrum?

¹ [Walden, p. 77; Riv. 110, 111.]

July 20. Sunday morning. A thunder-shower in the night. Thunder near at hand, though louder, is a more trivial and earthly sound than at a distance; likened to sounds of men. The clap which waked me last night was as if some one was moving lumber in an upper apartment, some vast hollow hall, tumbling it down and dragging it over the floor; and ever and anon the lightning filled the damp air with light, like some vast glow-worm in the fields of ether opening its wings.

The river, too, steadily yields its crop. In louring days it is remarkable how many villagers resort to it. It is of more worth than many gardens. I meet one, late in the afternoon, going to the river with his basket on his arm and his pole in hand, not ambitious to catch pick-erel this time, but he thinks he may perhaps get a mess of small fish. These [*sic*] kind of values are real and important, though but little appreciated, and he is not a wise legislator who underrates them and allows the bridges to be built low so as to prevent the passage of small boats. The town is but little conscious how much interest it has in the river, and might vote it away any day thoughtlessly. There is always to be seen either some unshaven wading man, an old mower of the river meadows, familiar with water, vibrating his long pole over the lagoons of the off-shore pads, or else some solitary fisher, in a boat behind the willows, like a mote in the sunbeams reflecting the light; and who can tell how many a mess of river fish is daily cooked in the town? They are an important article of food to many a poor family.

Some are poets, some are not, — as in relation to

getting a living, so to getting a wife. As their ideals of life vary, so do their ideals of love.

4 P. M. Annursnack. — The under sides of the leaves, exposed by the breeze, give a light bluish tinge to the woods as I look down on them. Looking at the woods west of this hill, there is a grateful dark shade under their eastern sides, where they meet the meadows, their cool night side, — a triangular segment of night, to which the sun has set. The mountains look like waves on a blue ocean tossed up by a stiff gale. The *Rhexia Virginica* is in bloom.

July 21. 8 A. M. — The forenoon is fuller of light. The butterflies on the flowers look like other and frequently larger flowers themselves. Now I yearn for one of those old, meandering, dry, uninhabited roads, which lead away from towns, which lead us away from temptation, which conduct to the outside of earth, over its uppermost crust; where you may forget in what country you are travelling; where no farmer can complain that you are treading down his grass, no gentleman who has recently constructed a seat in the country that you are trespassing; on which you can go off at half-cock and wave adieu to the village; along which you may travel like a pilgrim, going nowhither; where travellers are not too often to be met; where my spirit is free; where the walls and fences are not cared for; where your head is more in heaven than your feet are on earth; which have long reaches where you can see the approaching traveller half a mile off and be pre-

pared for him; not so luxuriant a soil as to attract men; some root and stump fences which do not need attention; where travellers have no occasion to stop, but pass along and leave you to your thoughts; where it makes no odds which way you face, whether you are going or coming, whether it is morning or evening, mid-noon or midnight; where earth is cheap enough by being public; where you can walk and think with least obstruction, there being nothing to measure progress by; where you can pace when your breast is full, and cherish your moodiness; where you are not in false relations with men, are not dining nor conversing with them; by which you may go to the uttermost parts of the earth. It is wide enough, wide as the thoughts it allows to visit you. Sometimes it is some particular half-dozen rods which I wish to find myself pacing over, as where certain airs blow; then my life will come to me, methinks; like a hunter I walk in wait for it. When I am against this bare promontory of a huckle-berry hill, then forsooth my thoughts will expand. Is it some influence, as a vapor which exhales from the ground, or something in the gales which blow there, or in all things there brought together agreeably to my spirit? The walls must not be too high, imprisoning me, but low, with numerous gaps. The trees must not be too numerous, nor the hills too near, bounding the view, nor the soil too rich, attracting the attention to the earth. It must simply be the way and the life, — a way that was never known to be repaired, nor to need repair, within the memory of the oldest inhabitant. I cannot walk habitually in those ways that are liable to

be mended; for sure it was the devil only that wore them. Never by the beel of thinkers (of thought) were they worn; the zephyrs could repair that damage. The saunterer wears out no road, even though he travel on it, and therefore should pay no highway, or rather *low* way, tax. He may be taxed to construct a higher way than men travel. A way which no geese defile, nor hiss along it, but only sometimes their wild brethren fly far overhead; which the kingbird and the swallow twitter over, and the song sparrow sings on its rails; where the small red butterfly is at home on the yarrow, and no boys threaten it with imprisoning hat. There I can walk and stalk and pace and plod. Which nobody but Jonas Potter travels beside me; where no cow but his is tempted to linger for the herbage by its side; where the guide-board is fallen, and now the hand points to heaven significantly, — to a Sudbury and Marlborough in the skies. That's a road I can travel, that the particular Sudbury I am bound for, six miles an hour, or two, as you please; and few there be that enter thereon. There I can walk, and recover the lost child that I am without any ringing of a bell; where there was nothing ever discovered to detain a traveller, but all went through about their business; where I never passed the time of day with any, — indifferent to me were the arbitrary divisions of time; where Tullus Hostilius might have disappeared, — at any rate has never been seen. The road to the Corner! the ninety and nine acres that you go through to get there! I would rather see it again, though I saw it this morning, than Gray's churchyard. The road whence

you may hear a stake-driver, a whip-poor-will, a quail in a midsummer day, a — yes, a quail comes nearest to the *gum-c*¹ bird heard there; where it would not be sport for a sportsman to go. And the mayweed looks up in my face, — not there; the pale lobelia, the Canada snapdragon, rather. A little hardhack and meadow-sweet peep over the fence, — nothing more serious to obstruct the view, — and thimble-berries are the food of thought, before the drought, along by the walls.²

It is they who go to Brighton and to market that wear out the roads, and they should pay all the tax. The deliberate pace of a thinker never made a road the worse for travelling on.

There I have freedom in my thought, and in my soul am free. Excepting the omnipresent butcher with his calf-cart, followed by a distracted and anxious cow.³

Be it known that in Concord, where the first forcible resistance to British aggression was made in the year 1775, they chop up the young calves and give them to the hens to make them lay, it being considered the cheapest and most profitable food for them, and they sell the milk to Boston.

On the promenade deck of the world, an outside passenger. The inattentive, ever strange baker, whom no weather detains, that does not bake his bread in this hemisphere, — and therefore it is dry before it

¹ [So Channing (p. 128), who calls it "one of Thoreau's names for some bird, so named by the farmers." The word as written is far from clear.]

² *Vide* p. [373].

³ [Channing, pp. 126–128.]

gets here. Ah! there is a road where you might advertise to fly, and make no preparations till the time comes; where your wings will sprout if anywhere, where your feet are not confined to earth. An airy head makes light walking.

Where I am not confined and balked by the sight of distant farmhouses which I have not gone past. In roads the obstructions are not under my feet, — I care not for rough ground or wet even, — but they are in my vision and in the thoughts or associations which I am compelled to entertain. I must be fancy-free; I must feel that, wet or dry, high or low, it is the genuine surface of the planet, and not a little chip-dirt or a compost-heap, or made land or redeemed. Where I can sit by the wall-side and not be peered at by any old ladies going a-shopping, not have to bow to one whom I may have seen in my youth, — at least, not more than once. I am engaged and cannot be polite. Did you ever hear of such a thing as a man sitting in the road, and then have four eyes levelled at you? Have we any more right sometimes to look at one than to point a revolver at him; it might go off; and so, perchance, we might *see* him, — though there is not so much danger of *that*, — which would be equally fatal, if it *should* ever happen, though perhaps it never has.

A thinker's weight is in his thought, not in his tread; when he thinks freely, his body weighs nothing. He cannot tread down your grass, farmers.¹

I thought to walk this forenoon instead of this afternoon, for I have not been in the fields and woods much

¹ [Channing, pp. 128, 129.]

of late except when surveying, but the least affair of that kind is as if you had [a] black veil drawn over your face which shut out nature, as that eccentric and melancholy minister whom I have heard of.¹ It may be the fairest day in all the year and you shall not know it. One little chore to do, one little commission to fulfill, one message to carry, would spoil heaven itself. Talk about a lover being engaged! He is the only man in all the world who is free. And all you get is your dollars. To go forth before the heat is intolerable, and see what is the difference between forenoon and afternoon. It seems there is a little more coolness in the air; there is still some dew, even on this short grass in the shade of the walls and woods; and a feeling of vigor the walker has. There are few sounds but the slight twittering of swallows, and the *springy* note of the sparrow in the grass or trees, and a lark in the meadow (now at 8 A. M.), and the cricket under all to ally the hour to night. Day is, in fact, about as still as night. Draw the veil of night over this landscape, and these sounds would not disturb nor be inconsistent for their loudness with the night. It is a difference of white and black. Nature is in a white sleep. It threatens to be a hot day, and the hay-makers are whetting their scythes in the fields, where they have been out since 4 o'clock. When I have seen them in the twilight commencing their labors, I have been impressed as if it were last night. There is something ghastly about such very early labor. I cannot detect the whole and characteristic difference between

¹ [See Hawthorne's story "The Minister's Black Veil" and footnote to the title, *Twice-Told Tales*, Riverside Edition, p. 52.]

this and afternoon, though it is positive and decided enough, as my instincts know. By 2 o'clock it will be warmer and hazier, obscuring the mountains, and the leaves will curl, and the dust will rise more readily. Every herb is fresher now, has recovered from yesterday's drought. The cooler air of night still lingers in the fields, as by night the warm air of day. The noon is perchance the time to stay in the house.

There is no glory so bright but the veil of business can hide it effectually. With most men life is postponed to some trivial business, and so therefore is heaven. Men think foolishly they may abuse and misspend life as they please and when they get to heaven turn over a new leaf.

I see the track of a bare human foot in the dusty road, the toes and muscles all faithfully imprinted. Such a sight is so rare that it affects me with surprise, as the footprint on the shore of Juan Fernandez did Crusoe. It is equally rare here. I am affected as if some Indian or South-Sea-Islander had been along, some man who had a foot. I am slow to be convinced that any of my neighbors — the judge on the bench, the parson in the pulpit — might have made that or something like it, however irregular. It is pleasant as it is to see the tracks of cows and deer and birds. I am brought so much nearer to the tracker — when again I think of the sole of my own foot — than when I behold that of his shoe merely, or am introduced to him and converse with him in the usual way. I am disposed to say to the judge whom I meet, "Make tracks."

Men are very generally spoiled by being so civil and

well-disposed. You can have no profitable conversation with them, they are so conciliatory, determined to agree with you. They exhibit such long-suffering and kindness in a short interview. I would meet with some provoking strangeness, so that we may be guest and host and refresh one another. It is possible for a man wholly to disappear and be merged in his manners. The thousand and one gentlemen whom I meet, I meet despairingly and but to part from them, for I am not cheered by the hope of any rudeness from them. A cross man, a coarse man, an eccentric man, a silent, a man who does not drill well, — of him there is some hope. Your gentlemen, they are all alike. They utter their opinions as if it was not a man that uttered them. It is "just as you please;" they are indifferent to everything. They will talk with you for nothing. The interesting man will rather avoid [you], and it is a rare chance if you get so far as talk with him. The laborers whom I know, the loafers, fishers, and hunters, I can spin yarns with profitably, for it is hands off; they are they and I am I still; they do not come to me and quarter themselves on me for a day or an hour to be treated politely, they do not cast themselves on me for entertainment, they do not approach me with a flag of truce. They do not go out of themselves to meet me. I am never electrified by my gentleman; he is not an electric eel, but one of the common kind that slip through your hands, however hard you clutch them, and leave them covered with slime. He is a man, every inch of him; is worth a groom.

To eat berries on the dry pastures of Conantum, as if

they were the food of thought, dry as itself! Berries are now thick enough to pick.

9 A. M. On Conantum. — A quarter of a mile is distance enough to make the atmosphere look blue now. This is never the case in spring or early summer. It was fit that I should see an indigo-bird here, concerned about its young, a perfect embodiment of the darkest blue that ever fills the valleys at this season. The meadow-grass reflecting the light has a bluish cast also.

Remember thy Creator in the days of thy youth; *i. e.*, lay up a store of natural influences. Sing while you may, before the evil days come. He that hath ears, let him hear. See, hear, smell, taste, etc., while these senses are fresh and pure.

There is always a kind of fine æolian harp music to be heard in the air. I hear now, as it were, the mellow sound of distant horns in the hollow mansions of the upper air, a sound to make all men divinely insane that hear it, far away overhead, subsiding into my ear. To ears that are expanded what a harp this world is! The occupied ear thinks that beyond the cricket no sound can be heard, but there is an immortal melody that may be heard morning, noon, and night, by ears that can attend, and from time to time this man or that hears it, having ears that were made for music. To hear this the hardback and the meadow-sweet *aspire*. They are thus beautifully painted, because they are tinged in the lower stratum of that melody.

I eat these berries as simply and naturally as thoughts come to my mind.

Never yet did I chance to sit in a house, except my own house in the woods, and hear a wood thrush sing. Would it not be well to sit in such a chamber within sound of the finest songster of the grove?

The quail, invisible, whistles, and who attends?

10 A. M. — The white lily has opened. How could it stand these heats? It has pantingly opened, and now lies stretched out by its too long stem on the surface of the shrunken river. The air grows more and more blue, making pretty effects when one wood is seen from another through a little interval. Some pigeons here are resting in the thickest of the white pines during the heat of the day, migrating, no doubt. They are unwilling to move for me. Flies buzz and rain about my hat, and the dead twigs and leaves of the white pine, which the choppers have left here, exhale a dry and almost sickening scent. A cuckoo chuckles, half throttled, on a neighboring tree, and now, flying into the pine, scares out a pigeon, which flies with its handsome tail spread, dashes this side and that between the trees helplessly, like a ship carrying too much sail in midst of a small creek, some great amiral; having no room to manœuvre, — a fluttering flight.

The mountains can scarcely be seen for the blue haze, — only Wachusett and the near ones. The thorny apple bush on Conantum has lately sent up branches from its top, resolved to become a tree; and these spreading (and bearing fruit), the whole has the form of a vast hour-glass. The lower part being the most dense by far, you would say the sand had run out.¹

¹ [*Excursions*, p. 305; Riv. 375.]

I now return through Conant's leafy woods by the spring, whose floor is sprinkled with sunlight, — low trees which yet effectually shade you.

The dusty mayweed now blooms by the roadside, one of the humblest flowers. The rough hawkweed, too, by the damp roadside, resembling in its flower the autumnal dandelion. That was probably the *Verbena hastata*, or common blue vervain, which I found the other day by Walden Pond.

The *Antirrhinum Canadense*, Canada snapdragon, in the Corner road; and the ragged orchis on Conantum.

8.30 P. M. — The streets of the village are much more interesting to me at this hour of a summer evening than by day. Neighbors, and also farmers, come a-shopping after their day's haying, are chatting in the streets, and I hear the sound of many musical instruments and of singing from various houses. For a short hour or two the inhabitants are sensibly employed. The evening is devoted to poetry, such as the villagers can appreciate.

How rare to meet with a farmer who is a man of sentiment! Yet there was one, Gen. Joshua Buttrick, who died the other day, who is said to have lived in his sentiments. He used to say that the smell of burning powder excited him.

It is said that Mirabeau took to highway robbery "to ascertain what degree of resolution was necessary in order to place one's self in formal opposition to the most sacred laws of society." He declared that "a soldier who fights in the ranks does not require half so much courage as a foot-pad." "Honor and religion have

never stood in the way of a well-considered and a firm resolve.¹ Tell me, Du Saillant, when you lead your regiment into the heat of battle, to conquer a province to which he whom you call your master has no right whatever, do you consider that you are performing a better action than mine, in stopping your friend on the king's highway, and demanding his purse?"

"I obey without reasoning," replied the count.

"And I reason without obeying, when obedience appears to me to be contrary to reason," rejoined Mirabeau.²

This was good and manly, as the world goes; and yet it was desperate. A saner man would have found opportunities enough to put himself in formal opposition to the most sacred laws of society, and so test his resolution, in the natural course of events, without violating the laws of his own nature. It is not for a man to *put himself* in such an attitude to society, but to *maintain* himself in whatever attitude he finds himself through obedience to the laws of his being, which will never be one of opposition to a just government.³ Cut the leather only where the shoe pinches. Let us not have a rabid virtue that will be revenged on society, — that falls on it, not like the morning dew, but like the fervid noonday sun, to wither it.

July 22. The season of morning fogs has arrived. I think it is connected with dog-days. Perhaps it is owing

¹ [Walden, p. 355; Riv. 497.]

² *Harper's New Monthly*, vol. i, p. 648, from *Chambers' Edinburgh Journal*.

³ [Walden, p. 355; Riv. 497.]

to the greater contrast between the night and the day, the nights being nearly as cold, while the days are warmer? Before I rise from my couch, I see the ambrosial fog stretched over the river, draping the trees. It is the summer's vapor bath. What purity in the color! It is almost musical; it is positively fragrant. How faery-like it has visited our fields. I am struck by its firm outlines, as distinct as a pillow's edge, about the height of my house. A great crescent over the course of the river from southwest to northeast. Already, 5.30 A. M., some parts of the river are bare. It goes off in a body down the river, before this air, and does not rise into the heavens. It retreats, and I do not see how it is dissipated. This slight, thin vapor which is left to curl over the surface of the still, dark water, still as glass, seems not [to] be the same thing, — of a different quality. I hear the cockerels crow through it, and the rich crow of young roosters, that sound indicative of the bravest, rudest health, hoarse without cold, hoarse with rude health. That crow is all-nature-compelling; famine and pestilence flee before it. These are our fairest days, which are born in a fog.

I saw the tall lettuce yesterday (*Lactuca elongata*), whose top or main shoot had been broken off, and it had put up various stems, with entire and lanceolate, not runcinate leaves as usual, thus making what some botanists have called a variety, β . *linearis*. So I have met with some geniuses who, having met with some such accident maiming them, have been developed in some such *monstrous* and partial, though original, way. They were original in being less than themselves.

Yes, your leaf is peculiar, and some would make of you a distinct variety, but to me you appear like the puny result of an accident and misfortune, for you have lost your main shoot, and the leaves which would have grown runcinate are small and lanceolate.

The last Sunday afternoon I smelled the clear pork frying for a farmer's supper thirty rods off (what a Sunday supper!), the windows being open, and could imagine the *clear* tea without milk which usually accompanies it.

Now the cat-o'-nine-tails are seen in the impenetrable meadows, and the tall green rush is perfecting its tufts. The spotted polygonum (*P. Persicaria*) by the roadside.

I scare up a woodcock from some moist place at midday.

The pewee and kingbird are killing bees, perched on a post or a dead twig.

I bathe me in the river. I lie down where it is shallow, amid the weeds over its sandy bottom; but it seems shrunken and parched; I find it difficult to get *wet* through. I would fain be the channel of a mountain brook. I bathe, and in a few hours I bathe again, not remembering that I was wetted before. When I come to the river, I take off my clothes and carry them over, then bathe and wash off the mud and continue my walk. I would fain take rivers in my walks endwise.

There was a singular charm for me in those French names, — more than in the things themselves. The names of Italian and Grecian cities, villages, and natural features are not more poetic to me than the

names of those humble Canadian villages. To be told by a habitant, when I asked the name of a village in sight, that is St. Féréol or St. Anne's! But I was quite taken off my feet when, running back to inquire what river we were crossing, and thinking for a long time he said *la rivière d'océan*, it flashed upon me at last that it was *La Rivière du Chien*.¹

There was so much grace and sentiment and refinement in the names, how could they be coarse who took them so often on their lips, — St. Anne's, St. Joseph's; the holy Anne's, the holy Joseph's! Next to the Indian, the French missionary and voyageur and Catholic habitant have named the natural features of the land. The *prairie*, the *voyageur*! Or does every man think his neighbor is the richer and more fortunate man, his neighbor's fields the richest?

It needed only a little outlandishness in the names, a little foreign accent, a few more vowels in the words, to make me locate all my ideals at once. How prepared we are for another world than this! We are no sooner over the line of the States than we expect to see men leading poetic lives, — nothing so natural, that is the presumption. The names of the mountains, and the streams, and the villages reel with the intoxication of poetry — Longueuil, Chambly, Barhillon (?), Montilly (?).²

Where there were books only, to find realities. Of course we assign to the place the idea which the written

¹ [*Excursions*, pp. 56, 57; Riv. 69, 70.]

² [*Excursions*, p. 57; Riv. 71.]

history or poem suggested. Quebec, of course, is never seen for what it simply is to practical eyes, but as the local habitation of those thoughts and visions which we have derived from reading of Wolfe and Montcalm, Montgomery and Arnold. It is hard to make me attend to the geology of Cape Diamond or the botany of the Plains of Abraham.¹ How glad we are to find that there is another race of men! for they may be more successful and fortunate than we.

Canada is not a place for railroads to terminate in, or for criminals to run to.²

July 23. Wednesday. I remember the last moon, shining through a creamy atmosphere, with a tear in the eye of Nature and her tresses dishevelled and drooping, sliding up the sky, the glistening air, the leaves shining with dew, pulsating upward; an atmosphere unworn, unprophaned by day. What self-healing in Nature! — swept by the dews.

For some weeks past the roadsides and the dry and trivial fields have been covered with the field trefoil (*Trifolium arvense*), now in bloom.

8 A. M. — A comfortable breeze blowing. Methinks I can write better in the afternoon, for the novelty of it, if I should go abroad this morning. My genius makes distinctions which my understanding cannot, and which my senses do not report. If I should reverse the usual, — go forth and saunter in the fields all the

¹ [*Excursions*, p. 88; Riv. 109, 110.]

² [*Excursions*, p. 57; Riv. 71.]

forenoon, then sit down in my chamber in the afternoon, which it is so unusual for me to do, — it would be like a new season to me, and the novelty of it [would] inspire me. The wind has fairly blown me outdoors; the elements were so lively and active, and I so sympathized with them, that I could not sit while the wind went by. And I am reminded that we should especially improve the summer to live out-of-doors. When we may so easily, it behoves us to break up this custom of sitting in the house, for it is but a custom, and I am not sure that it has the sanction of common sense. A man no sooner gets up than he sits down again. Fowls leave their perch in the morning, and beasts their lairs, unless they are such as go abroad only by night. The cockerel does not take up a new perch *in the barn*, and he is the embodiment of health and common sense. Is the literary man to live always or chiefly sitting in a chamber through which nature enters by a window only? What is the use of the summer?

You must walk so gently as to hear the finest sounds, the faculties being in repose. Your mind must not perspire. True, out of doors my thought is commonly drowned, as it were, and shrunken, pressed down by stupendous piles of light ethereal influences, for the pressure of the atmosphere is still fifteen pounds to a square inch. I can do little more than preserve the equilibrium and resist the pressure of the atmosphere. I can only nod like the rye-heads in the breeze. I expand more surely in my chamber, as far as expression goes, as if that pressure were taken off; but here out-doors is the place to store up influences.

The swallow's twitter is the sound of the lapsing waves of the air, or when they break and burst, as his wings represent the ripple. He has more air in his bones than other birds; his feet are defective. The fish of the air. His note is the voice of the air. As fishes may hear the sound of waves lapsing on the surface and see the outlines of the ripples, so we hear the note and see the flight of swallows.

The influences which make for one walk more than another, and one day more than another, are much more ethereal than terrestrial. It is the quality of the air much more than the quality of the ground that concerns the walker, — cheers or depresses him. What he may find in the air, not what he may find on the ground.

On such a road (the Corner) I walk securely, seeing far and wide on both sides, as if I were flanked by light infantry on the hills, to rout the provincials, as the British marched into Concord, while my grenadier thoughts keep the main road. That is, my light-armed and wandering thoughts scour the neighboring fields, and so I know if the coast is clear. With what a breadth of van I advance! I am not bounded by the walls. I think more than the road full. (Going southwesterly.)

While I am abroad, the ovipositors plant their seeds in me; I am fly-blown with thought, and go home to hatch and brood over them.

I was too discursive and rambling in my thought for the chamber, and must go where the wind blows on me walking.

A little brook crossing the road (the Corner road),

a few inches' depth of transparent water rippling over yellow sand and pebbles, the pure blood of nature. How miraculously crystal-like, how exquisite, fine, and subtle, and liquid this element, which an imperceptible inclination in the channel causes to flow thus surely and swiftly! How obedient to its instinct, to the faintest suggestion of the hills! If inclined but a hair's breadth, it is in a torrent haste to obey. And all the revolutions of the planet — nature is so exquisitely adjusted — and the attraction of the stars do not disturb this equipoise, but the rills still flow the same way, and the water levels are not disturbed.

We are not so much like debauchees as in the afternoon.

The mind is subject to moods, as the shadows of clouds pass over the earth. Pay not too much heed to them. Let not the traveller stop for them. They consist with the fairest weather. By the mood of my mind, I suddenly felt dissuaded from continuing my walk, but I observed at the same instant that the shadow of a cloud was passing over [the] spot on which I stood, though it was of small extent, which, if it had no connection with my mood, at any rate suggested how transient and little to be regarded that mood was. I kept on, and in a moment the sun shone on my walk within and without.

The button-bush in blossom. The tobacco-pipe in damp woods. Certain localities only a few rods square in the fields and on the hills, sometimes the other side of a wall, attract me as if they had been the scene of pleasure in another state of existence.

But this habit of close observation, — in Humboldt, Darwin, and others. Is it to be kept up long, this science? Do not tread on the heels of your experience. Be impressed without making a minute of it. Poetry puts an interval between the impression and the expression, — waits till the seed germinates naturally.

July 24. 5 A. M. — The street and fields betray the drought and look more parched than at noon; they look as I feel, — languid and thin and feeling my nerves. The potatoes and the elms and the herbage by the roadside, though there is a slight dew, seem to rise out of an arid and thirsty soil into the atmosphere of a furnace slightly cooled down. The leaves of the elms are yellow. Ah! now I see what the noon was and what it may be again. The effects of drought are never more apparent than at dawn. Nature is like a hen panting with open mouth, in the grass, as the morning after a debauch.

July 25. Friday. Started for Clark's Island at 7 A. M.

At 9 A. M. took the Hingham boat and was landed at Hull. There was a pleasure party on board, apparently boys and girls belonging to the South End, going to Hingham. There was a large proportion of ill-dressed and ill-mannered boys of Irish extraction. A sad sight to behold! Little boys of twelve years, prematurely old, sucking cigars! I felt that if I were their mothers I should whip them and send them to bed. Such children should be dealt with as for stealing or impurity. The opening of this valve for the safety of the city!

Oh, what a wretched resource! What right have parents to beget, to bring up, and attempt to *educate* children in a city? I thought of infanticide among the Orientals with complacency. I seemed to hear infant voices lisp, "Give us a fair chance, parents." There is no such squalidness in the country. You would have said that they must all have come from the house of correction and the farm-school, but such a company do the boys in Boston streets make. The birds have more care for their young, — where they place their nests. What are a city's charities? She cannot be charitable any more than the old philosopher could move the earth, unless she has a resting-place without herself. A true culture is more possible to the savage than to the boy of average intellect, born of average parents, in a great city. I believe that they perish miserably. How can they be kept clean, physically or morally? It is folly to attempt to educate children within a city; the first step must be to remove them out of it. It seemed a groping and helpless philanthropy that I heard of.

I heard a boy telling the story of Nix's Mate to some girls, as we passed that spot, how "he said, 'If I am guilty, this island will remain; but if I am innocent, it will be washed away,' and now it is all washed away."¹ This was a simple and strong expression of feeling suitable to the occasion, by which he committed the evidence of his innocence to the dumb isle, such as the boy could appreciate, a proper sailor's legend; and I was reminded that it is the illiterate and unimaginative class that seizes on and transmits the legends in which

¹ [*Cape Cod*, p. 267; Riv. 323.]

the more cultivated delight. No fastidious poet dwelling in Boston had tampered with it, — no narrow poet, but broad mankind, sailors from all ports sailing by. They, sitting on the deck, were the literary academy that sat upon its periods.

On the beach at Hull, and afterwards all along the shore to Plymouth, I saw the datura, the variety (red-stemmed), methinks, which some call *Tatula* instead of *Stramonium*. I felt as if I was on the highway of the world, at sight of this cosmopolite and veteran traveller. It told of commerce and sailors' yarns without end. It grows luxuriantly in sand and gravel. This Captain Cook among plants, this Norseman or sea pirate, viking or king of the bays, the beaches. It is not an innocent plant; it suggests commerce, with its attendant vices.¹

Saw a public house where I landed at Hull, made like some barns which I have seen, of boards with a cleat nailed over the cracks, without clapboards or paint, evidently very simple and cheap, yet neat and convenient as well as airy. It interested me, as the New House at Long Island did not, as it brought the luxury and comfort of the seashore within reach of the less wealthy. It was such an exhibition of good sense as I was not prepared for and do not remember to have seen before. Ascended to the top of the hill, where is the old French fort, with the well said to be ninety feet deep, now covered.² I saw some horses standing on the very top of the ramparts, the highest part of Hull, where

¹ [*Cape Cod*, p. 14; Riv. 15.]

² [*Cape Cod*, p. 16; Riv. 17.]

there was hardly room to turn round, for the sake of the breeze.¹ It was excessively warm, and their instincts, or their experience perchance, guided them as surely to the summit as it did me. Here is the telegraph, nine miles from Boston, whose State-House was just visible, — movable signs on a pole with holes in them for the passage of the wind. A man about the telegraph station thought it the highest point in the harbor; said they could tell the kind of vessel thirty miles off, the number at masthead ten or twelve miles, name on hull six or seven miles. They can see furthest in the fall. There is a mist summer and winter, when the contrast between the temperature of the sea and the air is greatest. I did not see why this hill should not be fortified as well as George's Island, it being higher and also commanding the main channel. However, an enemy could go by all the forts in the dark, as Wolfe did at Quebec.² They are bungling contrivances.

Here the bank is rapidly washing away. On every side, in Boston Harbor, the evidences of the wasting away of the islands are so obvious and striking that they appear to be wasting faster than they are. You will sometimes see a springing hill, showing by the interrupted arch of its surface against the sky how much space [it] must have occupied where there is now water, as at Point Allerton, — what botanists call *premorse*.  Hull looks as if it had been two islands, since connected by a beach. I was struck by the gracefully curving

¹ [*Cape Cod*, p. 14; Riv. 15.]

² [See *Excursions*, p. 79; Riv. 98.]

and fantastic shore of a small island (Hog Island) inside of Hull, where everything seemed to be gently laps- ing into futurity, as if the inhabitants should bear a ripple } for device on their coat-of-arms, a } wave passing over them, with the datura growing on their shores. The wrecks of isles fancifully arranged into a new shore. To see the sea nibbling thus voraciously at the continents!¹ A man at the telegraph told me of a white oak pole a foot and a half in diameter, forty feet high, and four feet or more in the rock at Minot's Ledge, with four guys, which stood only one year. Stone piled up cob-fashion near same place stood eight years.

Hull pretty good land, but bare of trees — only a few cherries for the most part — and mostly uncultivated, being owned by few. I heard the voices of men shouting aboard a vessel half a mile from the shore, which sounded as if they were in a barn in the country, they being between the sails. It was not a sea sound. It was a purely rural sound.²

Man needs to know but little more than a lobster in order to catch him in his traps. Here were many lobster traps on the shore. The beds of dry seaweed or eel-grass on the beach remind me of narrow shavings. On the farther hill in Hull, I saw a field full of Canada thistles close up to the fences on all sides, while beyond them there was none. So much for these fields having been subjected to different culture. So a differ-

¹ [*Cape Cod*, p. 15; Riv. 15, 16.]

² [*Cape Cod*, pp. 14, 15; Riv. 15.]

ent culture in the case of men brings in different weeds. As are the virtues, so are the vices. Weeds come in with the seeds, though perhaps much more in the manure. Each kind of culture will introduce its own weeds.

I am bothered to walk with those who wish to keep step with me. It is not necessary to keep step with your companion, as some endeavor to do.

They told me at Hull that they burned the *stem* of the kelp chiefly for potash. Chemistry is not a splitting hairs when you have got half a dozen raw Irishmen in the laboratory.

As I walked on the beach (Nantasket), panting with thirst, a man pointed to a white spot on the side of a distant hill (Strawberry Hill he called it) which rose from the gravelly beach, and said that there was a pure and cold and unfailing spring; and I could not help admiring that in this town of Hull, of which I had heard, but now for the first time saw, a single spring should appear to me and should be of so much value. I found Hull indeed, but there was also a spring on that parched, unsheltered shore; the spring, though I did not visit it, made the deepest impression on my mind. Hull, the place of the spring and of the well. This is what the traveller would remember. All that he remembered of Rome was a spring on the Capitoline Hill!¹

It is the most perfect seashore I have seen.² The rockweed falls over you like the *tresses* of mermaids,

¹ [Cape Cod, pp. 15, 16; Riv. 16.]

² [Cape Cod, pp. 16, 17; Riv. 17, 18.]

and you see the propriety of that epithet. You cannot swim among these weeds and pull yourself up by them without thinking of mermen and mermaids.

The barnacles on the rocks, which make a whitish strip a few feet in width just above the weeds, remind me of some vegetable growth which I have seen, — surrounded by a circle of calyx-like or petal-like shells like some buds or seed-vessels. They, too, clinging to the rocks like the weeds; lying along the seams of the rock like buttons on a waistcoat.

I saw in Cohasset, separated from the sea only by a narrow beach, a very large and handsome but shallow lake, of at least four hundred acres, with five rocky islets in it; which the sea had tossed over the beach in the great storm in the spring, and, after the alewives had passed into it, stopped up its outlet; and now the alewives were dying by thousands, and the inhabitants apprehended a pestilence as the water evaporated. The water was very foul.¹

The rockweed is considered the best for manure. I saw them drying the Irish moss in quantities at Jerusalem Village in Cohasset. It is said to be used for sizing calico. Finding myself on the edge of a thunder-storm, I stopped a few moments at the Rock House in Cohasset, close to the shore. There was scarcely rain enough to wet one, and no wind. I was therefore surprised to hear afterward, through a young man who had just returned from Liverpool, that there was a severe squall at quarantine ground, only seven or eight miles northwest of me, such as he had not experienced

¹ [Cape Cod, pp. 16, 17; Riv. 17-19.]

for three years, which sunk several boats and caused some vessels to drag their anchors and come near going ashore; proving that the gust which struck the water there must have been of very limited breadth, for I was or might have been overlooking the spot and felt no wind. This rocky shore is called Pleasant Cove on large maps; on the map of Cohasset alone, the name seems to be confined to the cove where I first saw the wreck of the St. John alone.¹

Brush Island, opposite this, with a hut on it, not permanently inhabited. It takes but little soil to tempt men to inhabit such places. I saw here the American holly (*Ilex opaca*), which is not found further north than Massachusetts, but south and west. The yellow gerardia in the woods.

July 26. At Cohasset. — Called on Captain Snow, who remembered hearing fishermen say that they “fitted out at Thorcau’s;” remembered him. He had commanded a packet between Boston or New York and England. Spoke of the wave which he sometimes met on the Atlantic coming against the wind, and which indicated that the wind was blowing from an opposite quarter at a distance, the undulation travelling faster than the wind. They see Cape Cod loom here. Thought the Bay between here and Cape Ann thirty fathoms deep; between here and Cape Cod, sixty or seventy fathoms. The “Annual of Scientific Discovery” for 1851 says, quoting a Mr. A. G. Findley, “Waves travel very great distances, and are often raised by distant

¹ [*Cape Cod*, pp. 16, 18; Riv. 17, 19.]

hurricanes, having been felt simultaneously at St. Helena and Ascension, though 600 miles apart, and it is probable that ground swells often originate at the Cape of Good Hope, 3000 miles distant.” Sailors tell of tide-rips. Some are thought to be occasioned by earthquakes.

The ocean at Cohasset did not look as if any were ever shipwrecked in it. Not a vestige of a wreck left. It was not grand and sublime now, but beautiful. The water held in the little hollows of the rocks, on the receding of the tide, is so crystal-pure that you cannot believe it salt, but wish to drink it.¹

The architect of a Minot Rock lighthouse might profitably spend a day studying the worn rocks of Cohasset shore, and learn the power of the waves, see what kind of sand the sea is using to grind them down.

A fine delicate seaweed, which some properly enough call sea-green. Saw here the staghorn, or velvet, sumach (*Rhus typhina*), so called from form of young branches, a size larger than the *Rhus glabra* common with us. The *Plantago maritima*, or sea plantain, properly named. I guessed its name before I knew what it was called by botanists. The American sea-rocket (*Bunias edentula*) I suppose it was that I saw, — the succulent plant with much cut leaves and small pinkish (?) flowers.

July 27. Sunday. Walked from Cohasset to Duxbury and sailed thence to Clark’s Island.

Visited the large tupelo tree (*Nyssa multiflora*) in

¹ [*Cape Cod*, pp. 17, 18; Riv. 18, 19.]

Scituate, whose rounded and open top, like some umbelliferous plant's, I could see from Mr. Sewal's, the tree which George Emerson went twenty-five miles to see, called sometimes snag-tree and swamp hornbeam, also pepperidge and gum-tree. Hard to split. We have it in Concord. Cardinal-flower in bloom. Scituate meeting-houses on very high ground; the principal one a landmark for sailors. Saw the buckthorn, which is naturalized. One of Marshfield meeting-houses on the height of land on my road. The country generally descends westerly toward the sources of Taunton River.

After taking the road by Webster's beyond South Marshfield, I walked a long way at noon, hot and thirsty, before I could find a suitable place to sit and eat my dinner, — a place where the shade and the sward pleased me. At length I was obliged to put up with a small shade close to the ruts, where the only stream I had seen for some time crossed the road. Here, also, numerous robins came to cool and wash themselves and to drink. They stood in the water up to their bellies, from time to time wetting their wings and tails and also ducking their heads and sprinkling the water over themselves; then they sat on a fence near by to dry. Then a goldfinch came and did the same, accompanied by the less brilliant female. These birds evidently enjoyed their bath greatly, and it seemed indispensable to them.

A neighbor of Webster's told me that he had hard on to sixteen hundred acres and was still buying more, — a farm and factory within the year; cultivated a hundred and fifty acres. I saw twelve acres of potatoes

together, the same of rye and wheat, and more me-thinks of buckwheat. Fifteen or sixteen men, Irish mostly, at ten dollars a month, doing the work of fifty, with a Yankee overseer, long a resident of Marshfield, named Wright. Would eat only the produce of his farm during the few weeks he was at home, — brown bread and butter and milk, — and sent out for a pig's cheek to eat with his greens. Ate only what grew on his farm, but drank more than ran on his farm.

Took refuge from the rain at a Mr. Stetson's in Duxbury.

I forgot to say that I passed the Winslow House, now belonging to Webster. This land was granted to the family in 1637.

Sailed with tavern-keeper Winsor, who was going out mackereling. Seven men, stripping up their clothes, each bearing an armful of wood and one some new potatoes, walked to the boats, then shoved them out a dozen rods over the mud, then rowed half a mile to the schooner of forty-three tons. They expected [to] be gone about a week, and to begin to fish perhaps the next morning. Fresh mackerel which they carried to Boston. Had four dories, and commonly fished from them. Else they fished on the starboard side aft, where their lines hung ready with the old baits on, two to a man. I had the experience of going on a mackerel cruise.

They went aboard their schooner in a leisurely way this Sunday evening, with a fair but very slight wind, the sun now setting clear and shining on the vessel after several thunder-showers. I was struck by the small

quantity of supplies which they appeared to take. We climbed aboard, and there we were in a mackerel schooner. The baits were not dry on the hooks. Winsor cast overboard the foul juice of mackerels mixed with rain-water which remained in his trough. There was the mill in which to grind up the mackerel for bait, and the trough to hold it, and the long-handled dipper to cast it overboard with; and already in the harbor we saw the surface rippled with schools of small mackerel. They proceeded leisurely to weigh anchor, and then to raise their two sails. There was one passenger, going for health or amusement, who had been to California. I had the experience of going a-mackereling, though I was landed on an island before we got out of the harbor. They expected to commence fishing the next morning. It had been a very warm day with frequent thunder-showers. I had walked from Cohasset to Duxbury, and had walked about the latter town to find a passage to Clark's Island, about three miles distant, but no boat could stir, they said, at that state of the tide.¹ The tide was down, and boats were left high and dry. At length I was directed to Winsor's tavern, where perchance I might find some mackerel-fishers, who were going to sail that night to be ready for fishing in the morning, and, as they would pass near the island, they would take me. I found it so. Winsor himself was going. I told him he was the very man for me; but I must wait an hour. So I ate supper with them. Then one after another of his crew was seen straggling to the

¹ [Here he tells the story in a different form, showing an intention of using it later.]

shore, for the most part in high boots, — some made of india-rubber, — some with their pants stripped up. There were seven for this schooner, beside a passenger and myself. The leisurely manner in which they proceeded struck me. I had taken off my shoes and stockings and prepared to wade. Each of the seven took an armful of pine wood and walked with it to the two boats, which lay at high-water mark in the mud; then they resolved that each should bring one more armful and that would be enough. They had already got a barrel of water and had some more in the schooner, also a bucket of new potatoes. Then, dividing into two parties, we pulled and shoved the boats a dozen rods over the mud and water till they floated, then rowed half a mile or more over the shallow water to the little schooner and climbed aboard. Many seals had their heads out. We gathered about the helmsman and talked about the compass, which was affected by the iron in the vessel, etc., etc.¹

Clark's Island, Sunday night. — On Friday night December 8th, O. S., the Pilgrims, exploring in the shallow, landed on Clark's Island (so called from the master's mate of the *May-Flower*), where they spent three nights and kept their first Sabbath. On Monday, or the 11th, O. S., they landed on the Rock. This island contains about eighty-six acres and was once covered with red cedars which were sold at Boston for gate-posts. I saw a few left, one, two feet in diameter at the ground, which was probably standing when the Pilgrims came.

¹ [*Cape Cod*, pp. 182-184; Riv. 219-221.]

Ed. Watson, who could remember them nearly fifty years, had observed but little change in them. Hutchinson calls this one of the best islands in Massachusetts Bay. The town kept it at first as a sacred place, but finally sold it in 1690 to Samuel Lucas, Elkanah Watson, and George Morton. Saw a stag's-horn sumach five or six inches in diameter and eighteen feet high. Here was the marsh goldenrod (*Solidago laxvigata*) not yet in blossom; a small bluish flower in the marshes, which they called rosemary; a kind of chenopodium which appeared distinct from the common; and a short oval-leaved, set-looking plant which I suppose is *Glaux maritima*, sea milkwort, or saltwort.  Skates' eggs, called in England skate-barrows from their form, on the sand. The old cedars were flat-topped, spreading, the stratum of the wind drawn out.

July 28. Monday morning. Sailed [to] the Gurnet, which runs down seven miles into the bay from Marshfield. Heard the *peep* of the *beach-bird*. Saw some ring-necks in company with peeps. They told of eagles which had flown low over the island lately. Went by Saquish. Gathered a basketful of Irish moss bleached on the beach. Saw a field full of pink-blossomed potatoes at the lighthouse, remarkably luxuriant and full of blossoms; also some French barley. Old fort and barracks by lighthouse. Visited lobster houses or huts there, where they use lobsters to catch bait for lobsters. Saw on the shanties signs from ships, as "Justice Story" and "Margueritta." To obtain bait is sometimes the

main thing. Samphire (*Salicornia*), which they pickle; also a kind of prickly samphire, which I suppose is saltwort, or *Salsola Caroliniana*. Well at Clark's Island twenty-seven and three quarters feet deep. Cut the rock-wood on the rocks at low tide once in two or three years. Very valuable; more than they have time to save.

Uncle Ned told of a man who went off fishing from back of Wellfleet in calm weather, and with great difficulty got ashore through the surf. Those in the other boat, who had landed, were unwilling to take the responsibility of telling them when to pull for shore; the one who had the helm was inexperienced. They were swamped at once. So treacherous is this shore. Before the wind comes, perchance, the sea may run so as to upset and drown you on the shore. At first they thought to pull for Provincetown, but night was coming on, and that was distant many a long mile. Their case was a desperate one. When they came near the shore and saw the terrific breakers that intervened, they were deterred. They were thoroughly frightened.¹

Were troubled with skunks on this island; they must have come over on the ice. Foxes they had seen; had killed one woodchuck; even a large *mud turtle*, which they *conjectured some bird must have dropped*. Muskrats they had seen, and killed two raccoons once. I went a-clamming just before night. This the clam-digger, borrowed of Uncle Bill (Watson) in his schooner home. The clams nearly a foot deep, but I broke many in digging. Said not to be good now, but we found them good eaten fresh. No sale for 

¹ [*Cape Cod*, p. 157; Riv. 187, 188.]

them now; fetch twenty-five cents a bucket in their season. Barry caught squids as bait for bass. We found many dead clams, — their shells full of sand, — called sand clams.¹ By a new clam law any one can dig clams here. Brown's Island, so called, a shoal off the Gurnet, thought to have been an isle once, a dangerous place.

 Saw here fences, the posts set in cross sleepers, made to be removed in winter.

The finest music in a menagerie, its wildest strains, have something in them akin to the cries of the tigers and leopards heard in their native forests. Those strains are not unfitted to the assemblage of wild beasts. They express to my ear what the tiger's stripes and the leopard's spots express to my eye; and they appear to grin with satisfaction at the sound. That nature has any place at all for music is very good.

July 29. Tuesday. A northeast wind with rain, but the sea is the wilder for it. I heard the surf roar on the Gurnet [in] the night, which, as Uncle Ned and Freeman said, showed that the wind would work round east and we should have rainy weather. It was the wave reaching the shore before the wind. The ocean was heaped up somewhere to the eastward, and this roar was occasioned by its effort to preserve its equilibrium. The rut of the sea.² In the afternoon I sailed to Plymouth, three miles, notwithstanding the drizzling rain, or "drisk," as Uncle Ned called it. We passed round the head of Plymouth beach, which is three miles long. I did not know till

¹ [*Cape Cod*, pp. 109, 110; Riv. 129.]

² [See *Cape Cod*, pp. 97, 98; Riv. 115.]

afterward that I had landed where the Pilgrims did and passed over the Rock on Hedge's Wharf. Returning, we had more wind and tacking to do.

Saw many seals together on a flat. Singular that these strange animals should be so abundant here and yet the man who lives a few miles inland never hear of them. To him there is no report of the sea, though he may read the Plymouth paper. The Boston papers do not tell us that they have seals in the Harbor. The inhabitants of Plymouth do not seem to be aware of it. I always think of seals in connection with Esquimaux or some other outlandish people, not in connection with those who live on the shores of Boston and Plymouth harbors. Yet from their windows they may daily see a family [of] seals, the real *Phoca vitulina*, collected on a flat or sporting in the waves. I saw one dashing through the waves just ahead of our boat, going to join his companions on the bar, — as strange to me as the merman. No less wild, essentially, than when the Pilgrims came is this harbor.

It being low tide, we landed on a flat which makes out from Clark's Island, to while away the time, not being able to get quite up yet. I found numerous *large* holes of the sea clam in this sand (no small clams), and dug them out easily and rapidly with my hands. Could have got a large quantity in a short time; but here they do not eat them; think they will make you sick. They were not so deep in the sand, not more than five or six inches. I saw where one had squirted full ten feet before the wind, as appeared by the marks of the drops on the sand. Some small ones I found not more than a

quarter of an inch in length. Le Baron brought me [a] round clam or quahog alive, with a very thick shell, and not so nearly an isosceles triangle as the sea clam, — more like this:  with a protuberance on

the back. The sea clam:  A small, narrow clam  which they called the bank clam; also crab-cases, handsomely spotted. Small crab always in a cockle-shell if not in a case of his own. A cockle as large as my fist. Mussels, small ones, empty shells; an extensive bank where they had died. Occasionally a large deep-sea mussel, which some kelp had brought up. We caught some sand eels seven or eight inches long, — *Ammodytes tobianus*, according to Storer, and not the *A. lancea* of Yarrell, though the size of the last comes nearer. They were in the shallow pools left on the sand (the flat was here pure naked yellowish sand), and quickly buried themselves when pursued. They are used as bait for bass. Found some sand-circles or sandpaper, like top of a stone jug cut off, with a large nose; said to be made by the foot of the large cockle, which has some glutinous matter on it.¹ A circle of sand about as thick as thick pasteboard. It reminded me of the caddis-worm cases, skate-barrows, etc., etc. I observed the shell of a sea clam one valve of which was filled exactly even full with sand, — evenly as if it had been heaped and then scraped off, as when men measure by the peck. This was a fresher one of the myriad sand-clams, and it suggested to me how the stone clams which I had seen on Cape Cod might have been formed.

¹ The nidus of the animal of *Natica*, — cells with eggs in sand.

Perchance a clamshell was the mould in which they were cast, and a slight hardening of the level surface, before the whole is turned to stone, causes them to split in two. The sand was full of stone clams in the mould.¹ I saw the kelp attached to stones half as big as my head, which it had transported. I do not think I ever saw the kelp *in situ*. Also attached to a deep-sea mussel. The kelp is like a broad ruffled belt. The middle portion is thicker and flat, the edges for two or three inches thinner and fuller, so that it is fulled or ruffled, as if the edges had been hammered. The extremity is generally worn and ragged from the lashing of the waves. It is the prototype of a fringed belt. Uncle Ned said that the cows ate it.² We saw in the shallow water a long, round green grass, six or eight feet long, clogging up the channel. Round grass, I think they called it. We caught a lobster, as you might catch a mud turtle in the country, in the shallow water, pushing him ashore with the paddle, taking hold of his tail to avoid being bitten. They are obliged to put wooden plugs or wedges beside their claws to prevent their tearing each other to pieces. All weeds are bleached on the beach.

This sailing on salt water was something new to me. The boat is such a living creature, even this clumsy one sailing within five points of the wind. The sailboat is an admirable invention, by which you compel the wind to transport you even against itself. It is easier to guide than a horse; the slightest pressure on the tiller suffices. I think the inventor must have been greatly

¹ [*Cape Cod*, pp. 109, 110 ; Riv. 129.]

² [*Cape Cod*, pp. 68, 69 ; Riv. 79.]

surprised, as well as delighted, at the success of his experiment. It is so contrary to expectation, as if the elements were disposed to favor you. This deep, unfordable sea! but this wind ever blowing over it to transport you! At 10 P. M. it was perfectly fair and bright starlight.

July 30. Wednesday. The house here stands within a grove of balm-of-Gileads, horse-chestnuts, cherries, apples, and plums, etc. Uncle Bill, who lives in his schooner, — not turned up Numidian fashion, but anchored in the mud, — whom I meant to call on yesterday morn, lo! had run over to “the Pines” last evening, fearing an easterly storm. He outrode the great gale in the spring alone in the harbor, dashing about. He goes after rockweed, lighters vessels, and saves wrecks. Now I see him lying in the mud over at the Pines in the horizon, which place he cannot leave if he will, till flood-tide; but he will not, it seems. This waiting for the tide is a singular feature in the life by the shore. In leaving your boat to-day you must always have reference to what you are going to do the next day. A frequent answer is, “Well, you can’t start for two hours yet.” It is something new to a landsman, and at first he is not disposed to wait.¹ I saw some heaps of shells left by the Indians near the northern end of the island. They were a rod in diameter and a foot or more high in the middle, and covered with a shorter and greener grass than the surrounding field. Found one imperfect arrowhead.

At 10 A. M. sailed to Webster’s, past Powder Point in

¹ [*Cape Cod*, pp. 141, 142; Riv. 168, 169.]

Duxbury. We could see his land from the island. I was steersman and learned the meaning of some nautical phrases, — “luff,” to keep the boat close to the wind till the sails begin to flap; “bear away,” to put the sail more at right angles with the wind; a “close haul,” when the sails are brought and belayed nearly or quite in a line with the vessel. On the marshes we saw patches of a “black grass.” A large field of wheat at Webster’s, — half a dozen acres at least, — many apple trees, three-thorned acacias, tulip-trees; cranberry experiment; seaweed spread under his tomatoes. Wild geese with black and gray heads and necks, not so heavy and clumsy as the tame Bremens. Large, noisy Hongkong geese. Handsome calves. Three thousand (?) acres of marsh.

Talked with Webster’s nearest neighbor, Captain Hewit, whose small farm he surrounds and endeavors in vain to buy. A fair specimen of a retired Yankee sea-captain turned farmer. Proud of the quantity of carrots he had raised on a small patch. It was better husbandry than Webster’s. He told a story of his buying a cargo for his owners at St. Petersburg just as peace was declared in the last war. These men are not so remarkable for anything as the quality of hardness. The very fixedness and rigidity of their jaws and necks express a sort of adamantine hardness. This is what they have learned by contact with the elements. The man who does not grow rigid with years and experience! Where is he? What avails it to grow hard merely? The harder you are, the more brittle really, like the bones of the old. How much rarer and better to grow

mellow! A sort of stone fruit the man bears commonly; a bare stone it is, without any sweet and mellow pericarp around it. It is like the peach which has dried to the stone as the season advanced; it is dwindled to a dry stone with its almond. In presence of one of these hard men I think: "How brittle! How easily you would crack! What a poor and lame conclusion!" I can think of nothing but a stone in his head. Truly genial men do not grow [hard]. It is the result of despair, this attitude of resistance. They behave like men already driven to the wall. Notwithstanding that the speaker trembles with infirmity while he speaks, — his hand on the spade, — it is such a trembling as betrays a stony nature. His hand trembles so that the full glass of cider which he prizes to a drop will have lost half its contents before it reaches his lips, as if a tempest had arisen in it. Hopelessly hard. But there is another view of him. He is somebody. He has an opinion to express, if you will wait to hear him. A certain manliness and refreshing resistance is in him. He generally makes Webster a call, but Webster does not want to see you more than twenty minutes. It does not take him long to say all he has got to say. He had not seen him to speak to him since he had come home this time. He had sent him over a couple of fine cod the night before. Such a man as Hewitt sees not finely but coarsely.

The eagle given by Lawrence on the hill in the buckwheat field.

July 31. Thursday. Those same round shells (*Scutella parma (placenta)* ?) on the sand as at Cape Cod, the

live ones reddish, the dead white. Went off early this morning with Uncle Ned to catch bass with the small fish I had found on the sand the night before. Two of his neighbor Albert Watson's boys were there, — not James, the oldest, but Edward, the sailor, and Mortimer (or Mort), — in their boat. They killed some striped bass (*Labrax lineatus*) with paddles in a shallow creek in the sand, and caught some lobsters. I remarked that the seashore was singularly clean, for, notwithstanding the spattering of the water and mud and squirting of the clams and wading to and fro the boat, my best black pants retained no stains nor dirt, as they would acquire from walking in the country. I caught a bass with a young — haik? (perchance), trailing thirty feet behind while Uncle Ned paddled. They catch them in England with a "trawl-net." Sometimes they weigh seventy-five pounds here.

At 11 A. M. set sail to Plymouth. We went somewhat out of a direct course, to take advantage of the tide, which was coming in. Saw the site of the first house, which was burned, on Leyden Street. Walked up the same, parallel with the Town Brook. Hill from which Billington Sea was discovered hardly a mile from the shore, on Watson's grounds. Watson's Hill, where treaty was made across brook south of Burying Hill. At Watson's,¹ the oriental plane, *Abies Douglasii*, ginkgo tree (*q. v.* on Common), a foreign hardhack, English oak (dark-colored, small leaf), Spanish chest-

¹ [Marston Watson, Thoreau's friend and correspondent. See *Familiar Letters*, *passim*, and especially note to letter of April 25, 1858.]

nut, Chinese arbor-vitæ, Norway spruce (like our fir balsam), a new kind of fir balsam. Black eagle one of the good cherries. Fuchsias in hothouse. Earth bank covered with cement.

Mr. Thomas Russell, who cannot be seventy, at whose house on Leyden Street I took tea and spent the evening, told me that he remembered to have seen Ebenezer Cobb, a native of Plymouth, who died in Kingston in 1801, aged one hundred and seven, who remembered to have had personal knowledge of Peregrine White, saw him an old man riding on horseback (he lived to be eighty-three). White was born at Cape Cod Harbor before the Pilgrims got to Plymouth. C. Sturgis's mother told me the same of herself at the same time. She remembered Cobb sitting in an arm chair like the one she herself occupied, with his silver locks falling about his shoulders, twirling one thumb over the other. Lyell in first volume, "Second Visit," page 97, published 1849,¹ says: "Colonel Perkins, of Boston, . . . informed me, in 1846, that there was but one link wanting in the chain of personal communication between him and Peregrine White, the first white child born in Massachusetts, a few days after the Pilgrims landed. White lived to an advanced age, and was known to a man of the name of Cobb, whom Colonel Perkins visited, in 1807, with some friends who yet survive. Cobb died in 1808, the year after Colonel Perkins saw him."

Russell told me that he once bought some *primitive* woodland in Plymouth which was sold at auction —

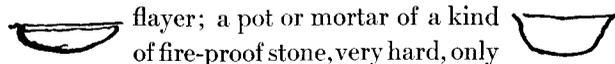
¹ [Sir Charles Lyell, *A Second Visit to the United States.*]

the biggest pitch pines two feet diameter — for *eight shillings* an acre. If he had bought enough, it would have been a fortune. There is still forest in this town which the axe has not touched, says George Bradford. According to Thatcher's History of Plymouth, there were 11,662 acres of woodland in 1831, or twenty square miles. Pilgrims first saw Billington Sea about January 1st; visited it January 8th. The oldest stone in the Plymouth Burying Ground, 1681. (Coles (?) Hill, where those who died the first winter were buried, is said to have been levelled and sown to conceal loss from Indians.) Oldest on our hill, 1677. In Mrs. Plympton's garden on Leyden Street, running down to Town Brook, saw an abundance of pears, gathered excellent June-eating apples, saw a large lilac about eight inches diameter. Methinks a soil may improve when at length it has shaded itself with vegetation.

William S. Russell, the registrar at the court-house, showed the oldest town records, for all are preserved. On first page a plan of Leyden Street dated December, 1620, with names of settlers. They have a great many folios. The writing plain. Saw the charter granted by the Plymouth Company to the Pilgrims, signed by Warwick, dated 1629, and the box in which it was brought over, with the seal.

Pilgrim Hall. They used to crack off pieces of the Forefathers' Rock for visitors with a cold chisel, till the town forbade it. The stone remaining at wharf is about seven feet square. Saw two old armchairs that came over in the Mayflower, the large picture by Sargent, Standish's sword, gun-barrel with which Philip

was killed, mug and pocket-book of Clark the mate, iron pot of Standish, old pipe-tongs. Indian relics: a



flayer; a pot or mortar of a kind of fire-proof stone, very hard, only seven or eight inches long. A commission from Cromwell to Winslow (?), his signature torn off. They talk of a monument on the Rock. The Burying Hill 165 feet high. Manomet 394 feet high by State map. Saw more pears at Washburn's garden. No graves of Pilgrims.

Seaweed generally used along shore. Saw the *Prinos glabra*, ink-berry, at Billington Sea. Sandy plain with oaks of various kinds cut in less than twenty years. No communication with Sandwich. Plymouth end of world; fifty miles thither by railroad. Old Colony road poor property. Nothing saves Plymouth but the Rock. Fern-leaved beach.

Saw the king crab (*Limulus polyphemus*), horseshoe and saucepan fish, at the Island, covered with sea-green and buried in the sand for concealment.

In Plymouth the *Convolvulus arvensis*, small bind-weed.