

VII

AUGUST, 1851

(ÆT. 34)

LEFT [Plymouth] at 9 A. M., August 1st. After Kingston came Plympton, Halifax, and Hanson, all level with frequent cedar swamps, especially the last, — also in Weymouth.

Desor and Cabot think the jellyfish *Oceania tubulosa* are buds from a polyp of genus *Syncoryne*. Desor, accounting for suspended moisture or fogs over sand-banks (or shoals), says, the heat being abstracted by radiation, the moisture is condensed in form of fog.

Lieutenant Walsh lost his lead and wire when 34,200 [feet], or more than six statute miles, had run out perpendicularly.

I could make a list of things ill-managed. We Yankees do not deserve our fame. *Viz.* [*sic*]: —

I went to a menagerie the other day, advertised by a flaming show-bill as big as a barn-door. The proprietors had taken wonderful pains to collect rare and interesting animals from all parts of the world, and then placed by them a few stupid and ignorant fellows, coachmen or stablers, who knew little or nothing about the animals and were unwilling even to communicate the little they knew. You catch a rare creature, interesting to all mankind, and then place the first biped

that comes along, with but a grain more reason in him, to exhibit and describe the former. At the expense of millions, this rare quadruped from the sun [*sic*] is obtained, and then Jack Halyard or Tom Coach-whip is hired to explain it. Why all this pains taken to catch in Africa, and no pains taken to exhibit in America? Not a cage was labelled. There was nobody to tell us how or where the animals were caught, or what they were. Probably the proprietors themselves do not know, — or what their habits are. They told me that a hyena came from South America. But hardly had we been ushered into the presence of this choice, this admirable collection, than a ring was formed for Master Jack and the pony! Were they *animals*, then, who had caught and exhibited these, and who had come to see these? Would it not be worth the while to learn something? to have some information imparted? The absurdity of importing the behemoth, and then, instead of somebody appearing [to] tell which it is, to have to *while away the time*, — though your curiosity is growing desperate to learn one fact about the creature, — to have Jack and the pony introduced!!! Why, I expected to see some descendant of Cuvier there, to improve this opportunity for a lecture on natural history!

That is what they should do, — make this an occasion for communicating some solid information. That would be fun alive! that would be a sunny day, a sun day, in one's existence, not a secular day of Shetland ponies. Not Jack and his pony and a tintamarre of musical instruments, and a man with his head in the lion's mouth. First let him prove that he has got a

head on his shoulders. I go not there to see a man hug a lion or fondle a tiger, but to learn how he is related to the wild beast. There'll be All-Fools' days enough without our creating any intentionally. The presumption is that men wish to behave like reasonable creatures; that they do not need, and are not seeking, relaxation; that they are not dissipated. Let it be a travelling zoological garden, with a travelling professor to accompany it. At present, foolishly, the professor goes alone with his poor painted illustrations of animals, while the menagerie takes another road, without its professor, — only its keepers, stupid coachmen.

I. M. June [?] & Co., or Van Amburgh & Co., are engaged in a pecuniary speculation in which certain wild beasts are used as the counters. Cuvier & Co. are engaged in giving a course of lectures on Natural History. Now why could they not put head and means together for the benefit of mankind, and still get their living? The present institution is imperfect precisely because its object is to enrich Van Amburgh & Co., and their low aim unfits them for rendering any more valuable service; but no doubt the most valuable course would also be the most valuable in a pecuniary sense. No doubt a low self-interest is a better motive force to these enterprises than no interest at all; but a high self-interest, which consists with the greatest advantage of all, would be a better still.

Item 2nd: Why have we not a decent pocket-map of the State of Massachusetts? There is the large map. Why is it not cut into half a dozen sheets and folded into a small cover for the pocket? Are there no travellers

to use it? Well, to tell the truth, there are but few, and that's the reason why. Men go by railroad, and State maps hanging in bar-rooms are small enough. The State has been admirably surveyed at a great cost, and yet Dearborn's Pocket-Map is the best one we have!

Aug. 4. Now the hardhack and meadow-sweet reign, the former one of our handsomest flowers, I think. The mayweed, too, dusty by the roadside, and in the fields I scent the sweet-scented life-everlasting, which is half expanded. The grass is withered by the drought. The potatoes begin generally to flat down. The corn is tasselled out; its crosses show in all fields above the blades. The turnips are growing in its midst.

As my eye rested on the blossom of the meadow-sweet in a hedge, I heard the note of an autumnal cricket, and was penetrated with the sense of autumn. Was it sound? or was it form? or was it scent? or was it flavor? It is now the royal month of August. When I hear this sound, I am as dry as the rye which is everywhere cut and housed, though I am drunk with the season's wine.

The farmer is the most inoffensive of men, with his barns and cattle and poultry and grain and grass. I like the smell of his hay well enough, though as grass it may be in my way.

The yellow Bethlehem-star still, and the yellow gerardia, and a bluish "savory-leaved aster."

Aug. 5. 7.30 P. M. — Moon half full. I sit beside Hubbard's Grove. A few level red bars above the horizon;

a dark, irregular bank beneath them, with a streak of red sky below, on the horizon's edge. This will describe many a sunset. It is 8 o'clock. The farmer has driven in his cows, and is cutting an armful of green corn fodder for them. Another is still patching the roof of his barn, making his hammer heard afar in the twilight, as if he took a satisfaction in his elevated work, — sitting astride the ridge, — which he wished to prolong. The robin utters a sort of cackling note, as if he had learned the ways of man. The air is still. I hear the voices of loud-talking boys in the early twilight, it must be a mile off. The swallows go over with a watery twittering.

When the moon is on the increase and half full, it is already in mid-heavens at sunset, so that there is no marked twilight intervening. I hear the whip-poor-will at a distance, but they are few of late.

It is almost dark. I hear the voices of berry-pickers coming homeward from Bear Garden. Why do they go home, as it were defeated by the approaching night? Did it never occur to them to stay overnight? The wind now rising from over Bear Garden Hill falls gently on my ear and delivers its message, the same that I have so often heard passing over bare and stony mountaintops, so uncontaminated and untamed is the wind. The air that has swept over Caucasus and the sands of Arabia comes to breathe on New England fields. The dogs bark; they are not as much stiller as man. They are on the alert, suspecting the approach of foes. The darkness perchance affects them, makes them mad and wild. The mosquitoes hum about me. I distinguish the modest moonlight on my paper.

As the twilight deepens and the moonlight is more and more bright, I begin to distinguish myself, who I am and where; as my walls contract, I become more collected and composed, and sensible of my own existence, as when a lamp is brought into a dark apartment and I see who the company are. With the coolness and the mild silvery light, I recover some sanity, my thoughts are more distinct, moderated, and tempered. Reflection is more possible while the day goes by. The intense light of the sun unfits me for meditation, makes me wander in my thought; my life is too diffuse and dissipated; routine succeeds and prevails over us; the trivial has greater power then, and most at noonday, the most trivial hour of the twenty-four. I am sobered by the moonlight. I bethink myself. It is like a cup of cold water to a thirsty man. The moonlight is more favorable to meditation than sunlight.

The sun lights this world from without, shines in at a window, but the moon is like a lamp within an apartment. It shines for us. The stars themselves make a more visible, and hence a nearer and more domestic, roof at night. Nature broods us, and has not left our germs of thought to be hatched by the sun. We feel her heat and see her body darkening over us. Our thoughts are not dissipated, but come back to us like an echo.

The different kinds of moonlight are infinite. This is not a night for contrasts of light and shade, but a faint diffused light in which there is light enough to travel, and that is all.

A road (the Corner road) that passes over the height

of land between earth and heaven, separating those streams which flow earthward from those which flow heavenward.

Ah, what a poor, dry compilation is the "Annual of Scientific Discovery!" I trust that observations are made during the year which are not chronicled there, — that some mortal may have caught a glimpse of Nature in some corner of the earth during the year 1851. One sentence of perennial poetry would make me forget, would atone for, volumes of mere science. The astronomer is as blind to the significant phenomena, or the significance of phenomena, as the wood-sawyer who wears glasses to defend his eyes from sawdust. The question is not what you look at, but what you see.

I hear now from Bear Garden Hill — I rarely walk by moonlight without hearing — the sound of a flute, or a horn, or a human voice. It is a performer I never see by day; should not recognize him if pointed out; but you may hear his performance in every horizon. He plays but one strain and goes to bed early, but I know by the character of that single strain that he is deeply dissatisfied with the manner in which he spends his day. He is a slave who is purchasing his freedom. He is Apollo watching the flocks of Admetus on every hill, and this strain he plays every evening to remind him of his heavenly descent. It is all that saves him, — his one redeeming trait. It is a reminiscence; he loves to remember his youth. He is sprung of a noble family. He is highly related, I have no doubt; was tenderly nurtured in his infancy, poor hind as he is. That noble strain he utters, instead of any jewel on his finger, or precious

locket fastened to his breast, or purple garments that came with him. The elements recognize him, and echo his strain. All the dogs know him their master, though lords and ladies, rich men and learned, know him not. He is the son of a rich man, of a famous man who served his country well. He has heard his sire's stories. I thought of the time when he would discover his parentage, obtain his inheritance and sing a strain suited to the morning hour. He cherishes hopes. I never see the man by day who plays that clarinet.

The distant lamps in the farmhouse look like fires. The trees and clouds are seen at a distance reflected in the river as by day. I see Fair Haven Pond from the Cliffs, as it were through a slight mist. It is the wildest scenery imaginable, — a Lake of the Woods. I just remembered the wildness of St. Anne's. That's the Ultima Thule of wildness to me.

What an entertainment for the traveller, this incessant motion apparently of the moon traversing the clouds! Whether you sit or stand, it is always preparing new developments for you. It is event enough for simple minds. You all alone, the moon all alone, overcoming with incessant victory whole squadrons of clouds above the forests and the lakes and rivers and the mountains. You cannot always calculate which one the moon will undertake next.¹

I see a solitary firefly over the woods.

The moon wading through clouds; though she is eclipsed by this one, I see her shining on a more distant

¹ [*Excursions*, pp. 329, 330; Riv. 405. See also pp. 383–385 of this volume.]

but lower one. The entrance into Hubbard's Wood above the spring, coming from the hill, is like the entrance to a cave; but when you are within, there are some streaks of light on the edge of the path.

All these leaves so still, none whispering, no birds in motion, — how can I be else than still and thoughtful?

Aug. 6. The motions of circus horses are not so expressive of music, do not harmonize so well with a strain of music, as those of animals of the cat kind. An Italian has just carried a hand-organ through the village. I hear it even at Walden Wood. It is as if a cheeta had skulked, howling, through the streets of the village, with knotted tail, and left its perfume there.

Neglected gardens are full of fleabane (?) now, not yet in blossom. Thoroughwort has opened, and golden-rod is gradually opening. The smooth sumach shows its red fruit. The berries of the bristly aralia are turning dark. The wild holly's scarlet fruit is seen and the red cherry (*Cerasus*). After how few steps, how little exertion, the student stands in pine woods above the Solomon's-seal and the cow-wheat, in a place still unaccountably strange and wild to him, and to all civilization! This so easy and so common, though our literature implies that it is rare! We in the country make no report of the seals and sharks in our neighborhood to those in the city. We send them only our huckleberries, not free wild thoughts.

Why does not man sleep all day as well as all night,

it seems so very natural and easy? For what is he awake?

A man must generally get away some hundreds or thousands of miles from home before he can be said to begin his travels. Why not begin his travels at home? Would he have to go far or look very closely to discover novelties? The traveller who, in this sense, pursues his travels at home, has the advantage at any rate of a long residence in the country to make his observations correct and profitable. Now the American goes to England, while the Englishman comes to America, in order to describe the country. No doubt there [are] some advantages in this kind of mutual criticism. But might there not be invented a better way of coming at the truth than this scratch-my-back-and-I-'ll-scratch-yours method? Would not the American, for instance, who had himself, perchance, travelled in England and elsewhere make the most profitable and accurate traveller in his own country? How often it happens that the traveller's principal distinction is that he is one who knows less about a country than a native! Now if he should begin with all the knowledge of a native, and add thereto the knowledge of a traveller, both natives and foreigners would be obliged to read his book; and the world would be absolutely benefited. It takes a man of genius to travel in his own country, in his native village; to make any progress between his door and his gate. But such a traveller will make the distances which Hanno and Marco Polo and Cook and Ledyard went over ridiculous. So worthy a traveller as William Bartram heads his first chapter with the words, "The author

sets sail from Philadelphia, and arrives at Charleston, from whence he begins his travels."

I am, perchance, most and most profitably interested in the things which I already know a little about; a mere and utter novelty is a mere monstrosity to me. I am interested to see the yellow pine, which we have not in Concord, though Michaux says it grows in Massachusetts; or the Oriental plane, having often heard of it and being well acquainted with its sister, the Occidental plane; or the English oak, having heard of the royal oak and having oaks ourselves; but the new Chinese flower, whose cousin I do not happen to know, I pass by with indifference. I do not know that I am very fond of novelty. I wish to get a clearer notion of what I have already some inkling.

These Italian boys with their hand-organs remind me of the keepers of wild beasts in menageries, whose whole art consists in stirring up their beasts from time to time with a pole. I am reminded of bright flowers and glancing birds and striped pards of the jungle; these delicious harmonies tear me to pieces while they charm me. The tiger's musical smile.

How some inventions have spread! Some, brought to perfection by the most enlightened nations, have been surely and rapidly communicated to the most savage. The gun, for instance. How soon after the settlement of America were comparatively remote Indian tribes, most of whose members had never seen a white man, supplied with guns! The gun is invented by the civilized man, and the savage in remote wildernesses on the other side of the globe throws away his bow and

arrows and takes up this arm. Bartram, travelling in the Southern States between 1770 and 1780, describes the warriors as so many gun-men.

Ah, yes, even here in Concord horizon Apollo is at work for King Admetus! Who is King Admetus? It is Business, with his four prime ministers Trade and Commerce and Manufactures and Agriculture. And this is what makes mythology true and interesting to us.

Aug. 8. 7.30 p. m. — To Conantum.

The moon has not yet quite filled her horns. I perceive why we so often remark a dark cloud in the west at and after sunset. It is because it is almost directly between us and the sun, and hence we see the dark side, and moreover it is much darker than it otherwise would be, because of the little light reflected from the earth at that hour. The same cloud at midday and overhead might not attract attention. There is a pure amber sky beneath the present bank, thus framed off from the rest of the heavens, which, with the outlines of small dead elms seen against it, — I hardly know if far or near, — make picture enough. Men will travel far to see less interesting sights than this. Turning away from the sun, we get this enchanting view, as when a man looks at the landscape with inverted head. Under shadow of the dark cloud which I have described, the cricket begins his strain, his ubiquitous strain. Is there a fall cricket distinct from the species we hear in spring and summer? I smell the corn-field over the brook a dozen rods off, and it reminds me of the green-corn feasts of the Indians. The evening train comes rolling

in, but none of the passengers jumping out in such haste attend to the beautiful, fresh picture which Nature has unrolled in the west and surmounted with that dark frame. The circular platter of the carrot's blossom is now perfect.

Might not this be called the Invalid's Moon, on account of the warmth of the nights? The principal employment of the farmers now seems to be getting their meadow-hay and cradling some oats, etc.

The light from the western sky is stronger still than that of the moon, and when I hold up my hand, the west side is lighted while the side toward the moon is comparatively dark. But now that I have put this dark wood (Hubbard's) between me and the west, I see the moonlight plainly on my paper; I am even startled by it. One star, too, — is it Venus? — I see in the west. Starlight! that would be a good way to mark the hour, if we were precise. Hubbard's Brook. How much the beauty of the moon is enhanced by being seen shining between two trees, or even by the neighborhood of clouds! I hear the clock striking eight faintly. I smell the late shorn meadows.

One will lose no music by not attending the oratorios and operas. The really inspiring melodies are cheap and universal, and are as audible to the poor man's son as to the rich man's. Listening to the harmonies of the universe is not allied to dissipation. My neighbors have gone to the vestry to hear "Ned Kendal," the bugler, to-night, but I am come forth to the hills to hear my bugler in the horizon. I can forego the seeming advantages of cities without misgiving. No heavenly strain is

lost to the ear that is fitted to hear it, for want of money or opportunity. I am convinced that for instrumental music all Vienna cannot serve me more than the Italian boy who seeks my door with his organ.

And now I strike the road at the causeway. It is hard, and I hear the sound of my steps, a sound which should never be heard, for it draws down my thoughts. It is more like the treadmill exercise. The fireflies are not so numerous as they have been. There is no dew as yet. The planks and railing of Hubbard's Bridge are removed. I walk over on the string-pieces, resting in the middle until the moon comes out of a cloud, that I may see my path, for between the next piers the string-pieces also are removed and there is only a rather narrow plank, let down three or four feet. I essay to cross it, but it springs a little and I mistrust myself, whether I shall not plunge into the river. Some demonic genius seems to be warning me. Attempt not the passage; you will surely be drowned. It is very real that I am thus affected. Yet I am fully aware of the absurdity of minding such suggestions. I put out my foot, but I am checked, as if that power had laid a hand on my breast and chilled me back. Nevertheless, I cross, stooping at first, and gain the other side. (I make the most of it on account of the admonition, but it was nothing to remark on. I returned the same way two hours later and made nothing of it.) It is easy to see how, by yielding to such feelings as this, men would reëstablish all the superstitions of antiquity. It is best that reason should govern us, and not these blind intimations, in which we exalt our fears into a genius.

On Conantum I sit awhile in the shade of the woods and look out on the moonlit fields. White rocks are more remarkable than by day.¹

The air is warmer than the rocks now. It is perfectly warm and I am tempted to stay out all night and observe each phenomenon of the night until day dawns. But if I should do so, I should not wonder if the town were raised to hunt me up. I could lie out here on this pinnacle rock all night without cold. To lie here on your back with nothing between your eye and the stars, — nothing but space, — they your nearest neighbors on that side, be they strange or be they tame, be they other worlds or merely ornaments to this, who could ever go to sleep under these circumstances? Sitting on the doorstep of Conant house at 9 o'clock, I hear a pear drop. How few of all the apples that fall do we hear fall! I hear a horse *sneeze* (?) from time to time in his pasture. He sees me and knows me to be a man, though I do not see him. I hear the nine o'clock bell ringing in Bedford. An unexpectedly musical sound that of a bell in the horizon always is. Pleasantly sounds the voice of one village to another. It is sweet as it is rare. Since I sat here a bright star has gone behind the stem of a tree, proving that my machine is moving, — proving it better for me than a rotating pendulum. I hear a solitary whip-poor-will, and a bullfrog on the river, — fewer sounds than in spring. The gray cliffs across the river are plain to be seen.

And now the star appears on the other side of the tree, and I must go. Still no dew up here. I see three

¹ [*Excursions*, p. 327; Riv. 402.]

scythes hanging on an apple tree. There is the wild apple tree where hangs the forgotten scythe,¹ — the rock where the shoe was left. The woods and the separate trees cast longer shadows than by day, for the moon goes lower in her course at this season. Some dew at last in the meadow. As I recross the string-pieces of the bridge, I see the water-bugs swimming briskly in the moonlight. I scent the Roman wormwood in the potato-fields.

Aug. 9. Saturday. Tansy now in bloom and the fresh white clethra. Among the pines and birches I hear the invisible locust. As I am going to the pond to bathe, I see a black cloud in the northern horizon and hear the muttering of thunder, and make haste. Before I have bathed and dressed, the gusts which precede the tempest are heard roaring in the woods, and the first black, gusty clouds have reached my zenith. Hastening toward town, I meet the rain at the edge of the wood, and take refuge under the thickest leaves, where not a drop reaches me, and, at the end of half an hour, the renewed singing of the birds alone advertises me that the rain has ceased, and it is only the dripping from the leaves which I hear in the woods. It was a splendid sunset that day, a celestial light on all the land, so that all people went to their doors and windows to look on the grass and leaves and buildings and the sky, and it was equally glorious in whatever quarter you looked; a sort of fulgor as of stereotyped lightning filled the air. Of which this is my solution. We were in the westernmost edge of

¹ [*Excursions*, p. 317; Riv. 389.]

the shower at the moment the sun was setting, and its rays shone through the cloud and the falling rain. We were, in fact, in a rainbow and it was here its arch rested on the earth. At a little distance we should have seen all the colors.

The *Ænothera biennis* along the railroad now. Do the cars disperse seeds? The *Trichostema dichotomum* is quite beautiful now in the cool of the morning. The epilobium in the woods still. Now the earliest apples begin to be ripe, but none are so good to eat as some to smell. Some knurly apple which I pick up in the road reminds me by its fragrance of all the wealth of Pomona.¹

Aug. 12. Tuesday. 1.30 A. M. — Full moon. Arose and went to the river and bathed, stepping very carefully not to disturb the household, and still carefully in the street not to disturb the neighbors. I did not walk naturally and freely till I had got over the wall. Then to Hubbard's Bridge at 2 A. M. There was a whip-poor-will in the road just beyond Goodwin's, which flew up and lighted on the fence and kept alighting on the fence within a rod of me and circling round me with a slight squeak as if inquisitive about me. I do not remember what I observed or thought in coming hither.

The traveller's whole employment is to calculate what cloud will obscure the moon and what she will triumph over. In the after-midnight hours the traveller's sole companion is the moon. All his thoughts are centred in her. She is waging continual war with the clouds

¹ [*Excursions*, p. 295; Riv. 362.]

in his behalf. What cloud will enter the lists with her next, this employs his thoughts; and when she enters on a clear field of great extent in the heavens, and shines unobstructedly, he is glad. And when she has fought her way through all the squadrons of her foes, and rides majestic in a clear sky, he cheerfully and confidently pursues his way, and rejoices in his heart. But if he sees that she has many new clouds to contend with, he pursues his way moodily, as one disappointed and aggrieved; he resents it as an injury to himself. It is his employment to watch the moon, the companion and guide of his journey, wading through clouds, and calculate what one is destined to shut out her cheering light. He traces her course, now almost completely obscured, through the ranks of her foes, and calculates where she will issue from them.¹ He is disappointed and saddened when he sees that she has many clouds to contend with.

Sitting on the sleepers of Hubbard's Bridge, which is being repaired, now, 3 o'clock A. M., I hear a cock crow. How admirably adapted to the dawn is that sound! as if made by the first rays of light rending the darkness, the creaking of the sun's axle heard already over the eastern hills.

Though man's life is trivial and handselled, Nature is holy and heroic. With what infinite faith and promise and moderation begins each new day! It is only a little after 3 o'clock, and already there is evidence of morning in the sky.

He rejoices when the moon comes forth from the

¹ [*Excursions*, pp. 329, 330; Riv. 405, 406. See also p. 374 of this volume.]

squadrons of the clouds unscathed and there are no more any obstructions in her path, and the cricket also seems to express joy in his song. It does not concern men who are asleep in their beds, but it is very important to the traveller, whether the moon shines bright and unobstructed or is obscured by clouds. It is not easy to realize the serene joy of all the earth when the moon commences to shine unobstructedly, unless you have often been a traveller by night.¹

The traveller also resents it if the wind rises and rustles the leaves or ripples the water and increases the coolness at such an hour.

A solitary horse in his pasture was scared by the sudden sight of me, an apparition to him, standing still in the moonlight, and moved about, inspecting with alarm, but I spoke and he heard the sound of my voice; he was at once reassured and expressed his pleasure by wagging his stump of a tail, though still half a dozen rods off. How wholesome the taste of huckleberries, when now by moonlight I feel for them amid the bushes!

And now the first signs of morning attract the traveller's attention, and he cannot help rejoicing, and the moon begins gradually to fade from his recollection. The wind rises and rustles the copses. The sand is cool on the surface but warm two or three inches beneath, and the rocks are quite warm to the hand, so that he sits on them or leans against them for warmth, though indeed it is not cold elsewhere.² As I walk along the side of Fair Haven Hill, I see a ripple on the river, and

¹ [*Excursions*, pp. 329, 330; Riv. 405, 406.]

² [See *Excursions*, p. 328; Riv. 403.]

now the moon has gone behind a large and black mass of clouds, and I realize that I may not see her again in her glory this night, that perchance ere she rises from this obscurity, the sun will have risen, and she will appear but as a cloud herself, and sink unnoticed into the west (being a little after full (a day?)). As yet no sounds of awakening men; only the more frequent crowing of cocks, still standing on their perches in the barns. The milkmen are the earliest risers, — though I see no lanterns carried to their barns in the distance, — preparing to carry the milk of cows in their tin cans for men's breakfasts, even for those who dwell in distant cities. In the twilight now, by the light of the stars alone, the moon being concealed, they are pressing the bounteous streams from full udders into their milk-pails, and the sound of the streaming milk is all that breaks the sacred stillness of the dawn; distributing their milk to such as have no cows. I perceive no mosquitoes now. Are they vespertinal, like the singing of the whip-poor-will? I see the light of the obscured moon reflected from the river brightly. With what mild emphasis Nature marks the spot! — so bright and serene a sheen that does not more contrast with the night.

4 A. M. — It adds a charm, a dignity, a glory, to the earth to see the light of the moon reflected from her streams. There are but us three, the moon, the earth which wears this jewel (the moon's reflection) in her crown, and myself. Now there has come round the Cliff (on which I sit), which faces the west, all unobserved and mingled with the dusky sky of night, a lighter and more ethereal living blue, whispering of the sun

still far, far away, behind the horizon. From the summit of our atmosphere, perchance, he may already be seen by soaring spirits that inhabit those thin upper regions, and they communicate the glorious intelligence to us lower ones. The real *divine*, the heavenly, blue, the Jove-containing air, it is, I see through this dusky lower stratum. The sun gilding the summits of the air. The broad artery of light flows over all the sky. Yet not without sadness and compassion I reflect that I shall not see the moon again in her glory. (Not far from four, still in the night, I heard a nighthawk squeak and *boom*, high in the air, as I sat on the Cliff. What is said about this being less of a night bird than the whip-poor-will is perhaps to be questioned. For neither do I remember to have heard the whip-poor-will *sing* at 12 o'clock, though I met one sitting and flying between two and three this morning. I believe that both may be heard at midnight, though very rarely.) Now at *very earliest* dawn the nighthawk booms and the whip-poor-will sings. Returning down the hill by the path to where the woods [are] cut off, I see the signs of the day, the morning red. There is the lurid morning star, soon to be blotted out by a cloud.

There is an early redness in the east which I was not prepared for, changing to amber or saffron, with clouds beneath in the horizon and also above this clear streak.

The birds utter a few languid and yawning notes, as if they had not left their perches, so sensible to light to wake so soon, — a faint peeping sound from I know not what kind, a slight, innocent, half-awake sound, like the sounds which a quiet housewife makes in the

earliest dawn. Nature preserves her innocence like a beautiful child. I hear a wood thrush even now, long before sunrise, as in the heat of the day. And the pewee and the catbird and the vireo, red-eyed? I do not hear — or do not mind, perchance — the crickets now. Now whip-poor-wills commence to sing in earnest, considerably *after* the wood thrush. The wood thrush, that beautiful singer, inviting the day once more to enter his pine woods. (So you may hear the wood thrush and whip-poor-will at the same time.) Now go by two whip-poor-wills, in haste seeking some coverts from the eye of day. And the bats are flying about on the edge of the wood, improving the last moments of their day in catching insects. The moon appears at length, not yet as a cloud, but with a frozen light, ominous of her fate. The early cars sound like a wind in the woods. The chewinks make a business now of waking each other up with their low *yorrick* in the neighboring low copse. The sun would have shown before but for the cloud. Now, on his rising, not the clear sky, but the cheeks of the clouds high and wide, are tinged with red, which, like the sky before, turns gradually to saffron and then to the white light of day.

The nettle-leaved vervain (*Verbena urticifolia*) by roadside at Emerson's. What we have called hemp answers best to *Urtica dioica*, large stinging nettle? Now the great sunflower's golden disk is seen.

The days for some time have been sensibly shorter; there is time for music in the evening.

I see polygonums in blossom by roadside, white and red.

A eupatorium from Hubbard's Bridge causeway answers to *E. purpureum*, except in these doubtful points, that the former has four leaves in a whorl, is unequally serrate, the stem is *nearly* filled with a thin pith, the corymb is not merely terminal, florets eight and nine. Differs from *verticillatum* in the stem being not solid, and I perceive no difference between calyx and corolla in color, if I know what the two are. It may be one of the intermediate varieties referred to.

Aug. 15. Friday. Hypericum Canadense, Canadian St. John's-wort, distinguished by its red capsules. The petals shine under the microscope, as if they had a golden dew on them.

Cnicus pumilus, pasture thistle. How many insects a single one attracts! While you sit by it, bee after bee will visit it, and busy himself probing for honey and loading himself with pollen, regardless of your overshadowing presence. He sees its purple flower from afar, and that use there is in its color.

Oxalis stricta, upright wood-sorrel, the little yellow ternate-leaved flower in pastures and corn-fields.

Sagittaria sagittifolia, or arrowhead. It has very little root that I can find to eat.

Campanula crinoides, var. 2nd, slender bellflower, vine-like like a galium, by brook-side in Depot Field.

Impatiens, noli-me-tangere, or touch-me-not, with its dangling yellow pitchers or horns of plenty, which I have seen for a month by damp causeway thickets, but the whole plant was so tender and drooped so soon I could not get it home.

May I love and revere myself above all the gods that men have ever invented. May I never let the vestal fire go out in my recesses.

Aug. 16. Agrimonia Eupatoria, small-flowered (yellow) plant with hispid fruit, two or three feet high, Turnpike, at Tuttle's peat meadow. Hemp (*Cannabis sativa*), said by Gray to have been introduced; not named by Bigelow. Is it not a native?

It is true man can and does live by preying on other animals, but this is a miserable way of sustaining himself, and he will be regarded as a benefactor of his race, along with Prometheus and Christ, who shall teach men to live on a more innocent and wholesome diet. Is it not already acknowledged to be a reproach that man is a carnivorous animal?¹

Aug. 17. For a day or two it has been quite cool, a coolness that was felt even when sitting by an open window in a thin coat on the west side of the house in the morning, and you naturally sought the sun at that hour. The coolness concentrated your thought, however. As I could not command a sunny window, I went abroad on the morning of the 15th and lay in the sun in the fields in my thin coat, though it was rather cool even there. I feel as if this coolness would do me good. If it only makes my life more pensive! Why should pensiveness be akin to sadness? There is a certain fertile sadness which I would not avoid, but rather earnestly seek. It is positively joyful to me. It saves my life from

¹ [*Walden*, p. 238; Riv. 336.]

being trivial. My life flows with a deeper current, no longer as a shallow and brawling stream, parched and shrunken by the summer heats. This coolness comes to condense the dews and clear the atmosphere. The stillness seems more deep and significant. Each sound seems to come from out a greater thoughtfulness in nature, as if nature had acquired some character and mind. The cricket, the gurgling stream, the rushing wind amid the trees, all speak to me soberly yet encouragingly of the steady onward progress of the universe. My heart leaps into my mouth at the sound of the wind in the woods. I, whose life was but yesterday so desultory and shallow, suddenly recover my spirits, my spirituality, through my hearing. I see a goldfinch go twittering through the still, luring day, and am reminded of the peeping flocks which will soon herald the thoughtful season. Ah! if I could so live that there should be no desultory moment in all my life! that in the trivial season, when small fruits are ripe, my fruits might be ripe also! that I could match nature always with my moods! that in each season when some part of nature especially flourishes, then a corresponding part of me may not fail to flourish! Ah, I would walk, I would sit and sleep, with natural piety! What if I could pray aloud or to myself as I went along by the brook-sides a cheerful prayer like the birds! For joy I could embrace the earth; I shall delight to be buried in it. And then to think of those I love among men, who will know that I love them though I tell them not! I sometimes feel as if I were rewarded merely for expecting better hours. I did not despair of worthier moods, and

now I have occasion to be grateful for the flood of life that is flowing over me. I am not so poor: I can smell the ripening apples; the very rills are deep; the autumnal flowers, the *Trichostema dichotomum*, — not only its bright blue flower above the sand, but its strong wormwood scent which belongs to the season, — feed my spirit, endear the earth to me, make me value myself and rejoice; the quivering of pigeons' wings reminds me of the tough fibre of the air which they rend. I thank you, God. I do not deserve anything, I am unworthy of the least regard; and yet I am made to rejoice. I am impure and worthless, and yet the world is gilded for my delight and holidays are prepared for me, and my path is strewn with flowers. But I cannot thank the Giver; I cannot even whisper my thanks to those human friends I have. It seems to me that I am more rewarded for my expectations than for anything I do or can do. Ah, I would not tread on a cricket in whose song is such a revelation, so soothing and cheering to my ear! Oh, keep my senses pure! And why should I speak to my friends? for how rarely is it that I am I; and are they, then, they? We will meet, then, far away. The seeds of the summer are getting dry and falling from a thousand nodding heads. If I did not know you through thick and thin, how should I know you at all? Ah, the very brooks seem fuller of reflections than they were! Ah, such provoking sibylline sentences they are! The shallowest is all at once unfathomable. How can that depth be fathomed where a man may see himself reflected? The rill I stopped to drink at I drink in more than I expected. I satisfy and still provoke the thirst

of thirsts. Nut Meadow Brook where it crosses the road beyond Jenny Dugan's that was. I do not drink in vain. I mark that brook as if I had swallowed a water snake that would live in my stomach. I have swallowed something worth the while. The day is not what it was before I stooped to drink. Ah, I shall hear from that draught! It is not in vain that I have drunk. I have drunk an arrowhead. It flows from where all fountains rise.

How many ova have I swallowed? Who knows what will be hatched within me? There were some seeds of thought, methinks, floating in that water, which are expanding in me. The man must not drink of the running streams, the living waters, who is not prepared to have all nature reborn in him, — to suckle monsters. The snake in my stomach lifts his head to my mouth at the sound of running water. When was it that I swallowed a snake? I have got rid of the snake in my stomach. I drank of stagnant waters once. That accounts for it. I caught him by the throat and drew him out, and had a well day after all. Is there not such a thing as getting rid of the snake which you have swallowed when young, when thoughtless you stooped and drank at stagnant waters, which has worried you in your waking hours and in your sleep ever since, and appropriated the life that was yours? Will he not ascend into your mouth at the sound of running water? Then catch him boldly by the head and draw him out, though you may think his tail be curled about your vitals.

The farmers are just finishing their meadow-haying. (To-day is Sunday.) Those who have early potatoes

may be digging them, or doing any other job which the haying has obliged them to postpone. For six weeks or more this has been the farmer's work, to shave the surface of the fields and meadows clean. This is done all over the country. The razor is passed over these parts of nature's face the country over. A thirteenth labor which methinks would have broken the back of Hercules, would have given him a memorable sweat, accomplished with what sweating of scythes and early and late! I chance [to] know one young man who has lost his life in this season's campaign, by overdoing. In haying time some men take double wages, and they are engaged long before in the spring. To shave all the fields and meadows of New England clean! If men did this but once, and not every year, we should never hear the last of that labor; it would be more famous in each farmer's case than Buonaparte's road over the Simplon. It has no other bulletin but the truthful "Farmer's Almanac." Ask them where scythe-snaths are made and sold, and rifles too, if it is not a real labor. In its very weapons and its passes it has the semblance of war. Mexico was won with less exertion and less true valor than are required to do one season's haying in New England. The former work was done by those who played truant and ran away from the latter. Those Mexicans were mown down more easily than the summer's crop of grass in many a farmer's fields. Is there not some work in New England men? This haying is no work for marines, nor for deserters; nor for United States troops, so called, nor for West Point cadets. It would wilt them, and they would desert. Have they not deserted? and run off to

West Point? Every field is a battle-field to the mower, — a pitched battle too, — and whole winrows of dead have covered it in the course of the season. Early and late the farmer has gone forth with his formidable scythe, weapon of time, Time's weapon, and fought the ground inch by inch. It is the summer's enterprise. And if we were a more poetic people, horns would be blown to celebrate its completion. There might be a Hay-makers' Day. New England's peaceful battles. At Bunker Hill there were some who stood at the rail-fence and behind the winrows of new-mown hay.¹ They have not yet quitted the field. They stand there still; they alone have not retreated.

The *Polygala sanguinea*, caducous polygala, in damp ground, with red or purple heads. The dandelion still blossoms, and the lupine still, belated.

I have been to Tarbell's Swamp by the Second Division this afternoon, and to the Marlborough road.

It has promised rain all day; cloudy and still and rather cool; from time to time a few drops gently spitting, but no shower. The landscape wears a sober autumnal look. I hear a drop or two on my hat. I wear a thick coat. The birds seem to know that it will not rain just yet. The swallows skim low over the pastures, twittering as they fly near me with forked tail, dashing near me as if I scared up insects for them. I see where a squirrel has been eating hazelnuts on a stump.

Tarbell's Swamp is mainly composed of low and even but dense beds of *Andromeda calyculata*, or dwarf andromeda, which bears the early flower in the spring.

¹ Stark and his companions met the enemy in the hay-field.

Here and there, mingled with it, is the water (?) andromeda; also pitch pines, birches, hardhack, and the common alder (*Alnus serrulata*), and, in separate and lower beds, the cranberry; and probably the *Rhodora Canadensis* might be found.

The lead-colored berries of the *Viburnum dentatum* now. Cow-wheat and indigo-weed still in bloom by the dry wood-path-side, and Norway cinquefoil. I detected a wild apple on the Marlborough road by its fragrance, in the thick woods; small stems, four inches in diameter, falling over or leaning like rays on every side; a clean white fruit, the ripest yellowish, a pleasant acid. The fruit covered the ground. It is unusual to meet with an early apple thus wild in the thickest woods. It seemed admirable to me. One of the noblest of fruits. With green specks under the skin.

Prenanthes alba, white-flowering prenanthes, with its strange halbert and variously shaped leaves; neottia; and hypericum.

I hear the rain (11 P. M.) distilling upon the ground, wetting the grass and leaves. The melons needed it. Their leaves were curled and their fruit stunted.

I am less somnolent for the cool season. I wake to a perennial day.

The hayer's work is done, but I hear no boasting, no firing of guns nor ringing of bells. He celebrates it by going about the work he had postponed "till after haying"! If all this steadiness and valor were spent upon some still worthier enterprise!!

All men's employments, all trades and professions, in some of their aspects are attractive. Hence the boy I

knew, having sucked cider at a minister's cider-mill, resolved to be a minister and make cider, not 'thinking, boy as he was, how little fun there was in being a minister, willing to purchase that pleasure at any price. When I saw the carpenters the other day repairing Hubbard's Bridge, their bench on the new planking they had laid over the water in the sun and air, with no railing yet to obstruct the view, I was almost ready to resolve that I would be a carpenter and work on bridges, to secure a pleasant place to work. One of the men had a fish-line cast round a sleeper, which he looked at from time to time.

John Potter told me that those root fences on the Corner road were at least sixty or seventy years old.¹ I see a solitary goldfinch now and then.

Hieracium Marianum or *scabrum*; *H. Kalmii* or *Canadense*; Marlborough road. *Leontodon autumnale* passim.

Aug. 18. It plainly makes men sad to think. Hence *pensiveness* is akin to sadness.

Some dogs, I have noticed, have a propensity to worry cows. They go off by themselves to distant pastures, and ever and anon, like four-legged devils, they worry the cows, — literally full of the devil. They are so full of the devil they know not what to do. I come to interfere between the cows and their tormentors. Ah, I grieve to see the devils escape so easily by their swift

¹ Some were drawn out of the swamp behind Abiel Wheeler's. Old lady Potter tells me she cannot remember when they were not there.

limbs, imps of mischief! They are the dog state of those boys who pull down hand-bills in the streets. Their next migration perchance will be into such dogs as these, ignoble fate! The dog, whose office it should be to guard the herd, turned its tormentor. Some courageous cow endeavoring in vain to toss the nimble devil. ⁴

Those soldiers in the Champ de Mars ¹ at Montreal convinced me that I had arrived in a foreign country under a different government, where many are under the control of one. Such perfect drill could never be in a republic. Yet it had the effect on us as when the keeper shows his animals' claws. It was the English leopard showing his claws. The royal something or other. ² I have no doubt that soldiers well drilled, as a class, are peculiarly destitute of originality and independence. The men were dressed above their condition; had the bearing of gentlemen without a corresponding intellectual culture. ³

The Irish was a familiar element, but the Scotch a novel one. The St. Andrew's Church was prominent, and sometimes I was reminded of Edinburgh, — indeed, much more than of London.

Warburton remarked, soon after landing at Quebec, that everything was cheap in that country but men. My thought, when observing how the wooden pavements were sawed by hand in the streets, instead of by machinery, because labor was cheap, how cheap men are here! ⁴

¹ [See *Excursions*, pp. 16, 17; Riv. 20.]

² [*Excursions*, p. 79; Riv. 98.]

³ [*Excursions*, p. 27; Riv. 32, 33.]

⁴ [*Excursions*, pp. 29, 30; Riv. 36.]

It is evident that a private man is not worth so much in Canada as in the United States, and if that is the bulk of a man's property, *i. e.* the being private and peculiar, he had better stay here. An Englishman, methinks, not to speak of other nations, habitually regards himself merely as a constituent part of the English nation; he holds a recognized place as such; he is a member of the royal regiment of Englishmen. And he is proud of his nation. But an American cares very little about such, and greater freedom and independence are possible to him. He is nearer to the primitive condition of man. Government lets him alone, and he lets government alone. ¹

I often thought of the Tories and refugees who settled in Canada at [the time of] the Revolution. These English were to a considerable extent their descendants.

Quebec began to be fortified in a more regular manner in 1690.

The most modern fortifications have an air of antiquity about them; they have the aspect of ruins in better or worse repair, — ruins kept in repair from the day they were built, though they were completed yesterday, — because they are not in a true sense the work of this age. I couple them with the dismantled Spanish forts to be found in so many parts of the world. They carry me back to the Middle Ages, and the siege of Jerusalem, and St. Jean d'Acre, and the days of the Bucaniers. Such works are not consistent with the development of the intellect. Huge stone structures of all kinds, both by their creation and their influence,

¹ [*Excursions*, pp. 82, 83; Riv. 102.]

rather oppress the intellect than set it free. A little thought will dismantle them as fast as they are built. They are a bungling contrivance. It is an institution as rotten as the church. The sentinel with his musket beside a man with his umbrella is spectral. There is not sufficient reason for his existence. My friend there, with a bullet resting on half an ounce of powder, does he think that he needs that argument in conversing with me? Of what use this fortification, to look at it from the soldier's point of view? General Wolfe sailed by it with impunity, and took the town of Quebec without experiencing any hindrance from its fortifications. How often do we have to read that the enemy occupied a position which commanded the old, and so the fort was evacuated!¹

How impossible it is to give that soldier a good education, without first making him virtually a deserter.²

It is as if I were to come to a country village surrounded with palisades in the old Indian style, — interesting as a relic of antiquity and barbarism. A fortified town is a man cased in the heavy armor of antiquity, and a horse-load of broadswords and small-arms slung to him, endeavoring to go about his business.

The idea seemed to be that some time the inhabitants of Canada might wish to govern themselves, and this was to hinder. But the inhabitants of California succeed well without any such establishment.³ There would be the same sense in a man's wearing a breast-plate all his days for fear somebody should fire a bullet

¹ [Excursions, pp. 77-79; Riv. 95-98.]

² [Excursions, p. 27; Riv. 33.] ³ [Excursions, p. 78; Riv. 97.]

at his vitals. The English in Canada seem to be everywhere prepared and preparing for war. In the United States they are prepared for anything; they may even be the aggressors. This is a ruin kept in a remarkably good repair. There are some eight hundred or a thousand men there to exhibit it. One regiment goes bare-legged to increase the attraction. If you wish to study the muscles of the leg about the knee, repair to Quebec.¹

Aug. 19. *Clematis Virginiana*; calamint; *Lycopus Europeus*, water horehound.

This is a world where there are flowers. Now, at 5 A. M., the fog, which in the west looks like a wreath of hard-rolled cotton-batting, is rapidly dispersing. The echo of the railroad whistle is heard the horizon round; the gravel train is starting out. The farmers are cradling oats in some places. For some days past I have noticed a *red* maple or two about the pond, though we have had no frost. The grass is very wet with dew this morning.

The way in which men cling to old institutions after the life has departed out of them, and out of themselves, reminds me of those monkeys which cling by their tails, — aye, whose tails contract about the limbs, even the dead limbs, of the forest, and they hang suspended beyond the hunter's reach long after they are dead. It is of no use to argue with such men. They have not an apprehensive intellect, but merely, as it were, a prehensile tail. Their intellect possesses merely the quality of a prehensile tail. The tail itself contracts around the dead

¹ [Excursions, p. 79; Riv. 98.]

limb even after they themselves are dead, and not till sensible corruption takes place do they fall. The black howling monkey, or caraya. According to Azara, it is extremely difficult to get at them, for "when mortally wounded they coil the tail round a branch, and hang by it with the head downwards for days after death, and until, in fact, decomposition begins to take effect." The commenting naturalist says, "A singular peculiarity of this organ is to contract at its extremity of its own accord as soon as it is extended to its full length." I relinquish argument, I wait for decomposition to take place, for the subject is dead; as I value the hide for the museum. They say, "Though you've got my soul, you sha'n't have my carcass."

P. M. — To Marlborough Road *via* Clamshell Hill, Jenny Dugan's, Round Pond, Canoe Birch Road (Deacon Dakin's), and White Pond.

How many things concur to keep a man at home, to prevent his yielding to his inclination to wander! If I would extend my walk a hundred miles, I must carry a tent on my back for shelter at night or in the rain, or at least I must carry a thick coat to be prepared for a change in the weather. So that it requires some resolution, as well as energy and foresight, to undertake the simplest journey. Man does not travel as easily as the birds migrate. He is not everywhere at home, like flies. When I think how many things I can conveniently carry, I am wont to think it most convenient to stay at home. My home, then, to a certain extent is the place where I keep my thick coat and my tent and some books which

I cannot carry; where, next, I can depend upon meeting some friends; and where, finally, I, even I, have established myself in business. But this last in my case is the least important qualification of a home.

The poet must be continually watching the moods of his mind, as the astronomer watches the aspects of the heavens. What might we not expect from a long life faithfully spent in this wise? The humblest observer would see some stars shoot. A faithful description as by a disinterested person of the thoughts which visited a certain mind in threescore years and ten, as when one reports the number and character of the vehicles which pass a particular point. As travellers go round the world and report natural objects and phenomena, so faithfully let another stay at home and report the phenomena of his own life, — catalogue stars, those thoughts whose orbits are as rarely calculated as comets. It matters not whether they visit my mind or yours, — whether the meteor falls in my field or in yours, — only that it come from heaven. (I am not concerned to express that kind of truth which Nature has expressed. Who knows but I may suggest some things to her? Time was when she was indebted to such suggestions from another quarter, as her present advancement shows. I deal with the truths that recommend themselves to me, — please me, — not those merely which any system has voted to accept.) A meteorological journal of the mind. You shall observe what occurs in your latitude, I in mine.

Some institutions — most institutions, indeed — have had a divine origin. But of most that we see pre-

vailing in society nothing but the form, the shell, is left; the life is extinct, and there is nothing divine in them. Then the reformer arises inspired to reinstitute life, and whatever he does or causes to be done is a reëstablishment of that same or a similar divineness. But some, who never knew the significance of these instincts, are, by a sort of false instinct, found clinging to the shells. Those who have no knowledge of the divine appoint themselves defenders of the divine, as champions of the church, etc. I have been astonished to observe how long some audiences can endure to hear a man speak on a subject which he knows nothing about, as religion for instance, when one who has no ear for music might with the same propriety take up the time of a musical assembly with putting through his opinions on music. This young man who is the main pillar of some divine institution, — does he know what he has undertaken? If the saints were to come again on earth, would they be likely to stay at his house? would they meet with his approbation even? *Ne sutor ultra crepidam*. They who merely have a talent for affairs are forward to express their opinions. A Roman soldier sits there to decide upon the righteousness of Christ. The world does not long endure such blunders, though they are made every day. The weak-brained and pusillanimous farmers would fain abide by the institutions of their fathers. Their argument is they have not long to live, and for that little space let them not be disturbed in their slumbers; blessed are the peacemakers; let this cup pass from me, etc.

How vain it is to sit down to write when you have not stood up to live! Methinks that the moment my legs

begin to move, my thoughts begin to flow, as if I had given vent to the stream at the lower end and consequently new fountains flowed into it at the upper. A thousand rills which have their rise in the sources of thought burst forth and fertilize my brain. You need to increase the draught below, as the owners of meadows on Concord River say of the Billerica Dam. Only while we are in action is the circulation perfect. The writing which consists with habitual sitting is mechanical, wooden, dull to read.

The grass in the high pastures is almost as dry as hay. The seasons do not cease a moment to revolve, and therefore Nature rests no longer at her culminating point than at any other. If you are not out at the right instant, the summer may go by and you not see it. How much of the year is spring and fall! how little can be called summer! The grass is no sooner grown than it begins to wither. How much Nature herself suffers from drought! It seems quite as much as she can do to produce these crops.

The most inattentive walker can see how the science of geology took its rise. The inland hills and promontories betray the action of water on their rounded sides as plainly as if the work were completed yesterday. He sees it with but half an eye as he walks, and forgets his thought again. Also the level plains and more recent meadows and marine shells found on the tops of hills. The geologist painfully and elaborately follows out these suggestions, and hence his fine-spun theories.

The goldfinch, though solitary, is now one of the commonest birds in the air.

What if a man were earnestly and wisely to set about recollecting and preserving the thoughts which he has had! How many perchance are now irrecoverable! Calling in his neighbors to aid him.

I do not like to hear the name of particular States given to birds and flowers which are found in all equally, — as Maryland yellow-throat, etc., etc. The *Canadenses* and *Virginicas* may be suffered to pass for the most part, for there is historical as well as natural reason at least for them. Canada is the peculiar country of some and the northern limit of many more plants. And Virginia, which was originally the name for all the Atlantic shore, has some right to stand for the South.

The fruit of the sweet-gale by Nut Meadow Brook is of a yellowish green now and has not yet its greasy feel.

The little red-streaked and dotted excrescences on the shrub oaks I find as yet no name for.

Now for the pretty red capsules or pods of the *Hypericum Canadense*.

White goldenrod is budded along the Marlborough road.

Chickadees and jays never fail. The cricket's is a note which does not attract you to itself. It is not easy to find one.

I fear that the character of my knowledge is from year to year becoming more distinct and scientific; that, in exchange for views as wide as heaven's cope, I am being narrowed down to the field of the microscope. I see details, not wholes nor the shadow of the whole. I count some parts, and say, "I know." The cricket's chirp now fills the air in dry fields near pine woods.

Gathered our first watermelon to-day. By the Marlborough road I notice the richly veined leaves of the *Neottia pubescens*, or veined neottia, rattlesnake-plantain. I like this last name very well, though it might not be easy to convince a quibbler or proser of its fitness. We want some name to express the mystic wildness of its rich leaves. Such work as men imitate in their embroidery, unaccountably agreeable to the eye, as if it answered its end only when it met the eye of man; a reticulated leaf, visible only on one side; little things which make one pause in the woods, take captive the eye.

Here is a bees' or wasps' nest in the sandy, mouldering bank by the roadside, four inches in diameter, as if made of scales of striped brown paper. It is singular if indeed man first made paper and then discovered its resemblance to the work of the wasps, and did not derive the hint from them.

Canoe birches by road to Dakin's. Cuticle stripped off; inner bark dead and scaling off; new (inner) bark formed.

The Solomon's-seals are fruited now, with finely red-dotted berries.

There was one original name well given, *Buster* Kendal.¹ The fragrance of the clethra fills the air by watersides. In the hollows where in winter is a pond, the grass is short, thick, and green still, and here and there are tufts pulled up as if by the mouth of cows.

Small rough sunflower by side of road between canoe birch and White Pond, — *Helianthus divaricatus*.

¹ [See *Excursions*, p. 290; also *Journal*, vol. iii, p. 117.]

Lespedeza capitata, shrubby lespedeza, White Pond road and Marlborough road.

L. polystachya, hairy lespedeza, Corner road beyond Hubbard's Bridge.

Aug. 20. 2 P. M. — To Lee's Bridge *via* Hubbard's Wood, Potter's field, Conantum, returning by Abel Minott's house, Clematis Brook, Baker's pine plain, and railroad.

I hear a cricket in the Depot Field, walk a rod or two, and find the note proceeds from near a rock. Partly under a rock, between it and the roots of the grass, he lies concealed, — for I pull away the withered grass with my hands, — uttering his night-like creak, with a vibratory motion of his wings, and flattering himself that it is night, because he has shut out the day. He was a black fellow nearly an inch long, with two long, slender feelers. They plainly avoid the light and hide their heads in the grass. At any rate they regard this as the evening of the year. They are remarkably secret and unobserved, considering how much noise they make. Every milkman has heard them all his life; it is the sound that fills his ears as he drives along. But what one has ever got off his cart to go in search of one? I see smaller ones moving stealthily about, whose note I do not know. Who ever distinguished their various notes, which fill the crevices in each other's song? It would be a curious ear, indeed, that distinguished the species of the crickets which it heard, and traced even the earth-song home, each part to its particular performer. I am afraid to be so knowing. They are shy as birds, these little bodies. Those nearest

me continually cease their song as I walk, so that the singers are always a rod distant, and I cannot easily detect one. It is difficult, moreover, to judge correctly whence the sound proceeds. Perhaps this wariness is necessary to save them from insectivorous birds, which would otherwise speedily find out so loud a singer. They are somewhat protected by the universalness of the sound, each one's song being merged and lost in the general concert, as if it were the creaking of earth's axle. They are very numerous in oats and other grain, which conceals them and yet affords a clear passage. I never knew any drought or sickness so to prevail as to quench the song of the crickets; it fails not in its season, night or day.

The *Lobelia inflata*, Indian-tobacco, meets me at every turn. At first I suspect some new bluish flower in the grass, but stooping see the inflated pods. Tasting one such herb convinces me that there are such things as drugs which may either kill or cure.¹

The *Rhexia Virginica* is a showy flower at present.

How copious and precise the botanical language to describe the leaves, as well as the other parts of a plant! Botany is worth studying if only for the precision of its terms, — to learn the value of words and of system. It is wonderful how much pains has been taken to describe a flower's leaf, compared for instance with the care that is taken in describing a psychological fact. Suppose as much ingenuity (perhaps it would be needless) in making a language to express the sentiments! We are armed

¹ A farmer tells me that he knows when his horse has eaten it, because it makes him slobber badly.

with language adequate to describe each leaf in the field, or at least to distinguish it from each other, but not to describe a human character. With equally wonderful indistinctness and confusion we describe men. The precision and copiousness of botanical language applied to the description of moral qualities!

The neottia, or ladies'-tresses, behind Garfield's house. The golden robin is now a rare bird to see. Here are the small, lively-tasting blackberries, so small they are not commonly eaten. The grasshoppers seem no drier than the grass. In Lee's field are two kinds of plantain. Is the common one found there?

The willow reach by Lee's Bridge has been stripped for powder. None escapes. This morning, hearing a cart, I looked out and saw George Dugan going by with a horse-load of his willow toward Acton powder-mills, which I had seen in piles by the turnpike. Every traveller has just as particular an errand which I might likewise chance to be privy to.

Now that I am at the extremity of my walk, I see a threatening cloud blowing up from the south, which however, methinks, will not compel me to make haste.

Apios tuberosa, or *Glycine Apios*, ground-nut. The prenanthes now takes the place of the lactucas, which are gone to seed.

In the dry ditch, near Abel Minott's house that was, I see cardinal-flowers, with their red artillery, reminding me of soldiers, — red men, war, and bloodshed. Some are four and a half feet high. Thy sins shall be as scarlet. Is it my sins that I see? It shows how far a little color can go; for the flower is not large, yet it makes

itself seen from afar, and so answers the purpose for which it was colored completely. It is remarkable for its intensely brilliant scarlet color. You are slow to concede to it a high rank among flowers, but ever and anon, as you turn your eyes away, it dazzles you and you pluck it. *Scutellaria lateriflora*, side-flowering skullcap, here. This brook deserves to be called Clematis Brook (though that name is too often applied), for the clematis is very abundant, running over the alders and other bushes on its brink. Where the brook issues from the pond, the nightshade grows profusely, spreading five or six feet each way, with its red berries now ripe. It grows, too, at the upper end of the pond. But if it is the button-bush that grows in the now low water, it should rather be called the Button-Bush Pond. Now the tall rush is in its prime on the shore here, and the clematis abounds by this pond also.

I came out by the leafy-columned elm under Mt. Misery, where the trees stood up one above another, higher and higher, immeasurably far to my imagination, as on the side of a New Hampshire mountain.

On the pitch pine plain, at first the pines are far apart, with a wiry grass between, and goldenrod and hardhack and St. John's-wort and blackberry vines, each tree merely keeping down the grass for a space about itself, meditating to make a forest floor; and here and there younger pines are springing up. Further in, you come to moss-covered patches, dry, deep white moss, or almost bare mould, half covered with pine needles. Thus begins the future forest floor.

The sites of the shanties that once stood by the rail-

road in Lincoln when the Irish built it, the still remaining hollow square mounds of earth which formed their embankments, are to me instead of barrows and druidical monuments and other ruins. It is a sufficient antiquity to me since they were built, their material being earth. Now the Canada thistle and the mullein crown their tops. I see the stones which made their simple chimneys still left one upon another at one end, which were surmounted with barrels to cke them out; and clean boiled beef bones and old shoes are strewn about. Otherwise it is a clean ruin, and nothing is left but a mound, as in the graveyard.

Sium lineare, a kind of water-parsnip, whose blossom resembles the *Cicuta maculata*. The flowers of the blue vervain have now nearly reached the summit of their spikes.

A traveller who looks at things with an impartial eye may see what the oldest inhabitant has not observed.

Aug. 21. To a great extent the feudal system still prevails there (in Canada), and I saw that I should be a bad citizen, that any man who thought for himself and was only reasonably independent would naturally be a rebel. You could not read or hear of their laws without seeing that it was a legislating for a few and not for all. That certainly is the best government where the inhabitants are least often reminded of the government. (Where a man cannot be a poet even without danger of being made poet-laureate! Where he cannot be healthily neglected, and grow up a man, and not an Englishman merely!) Where it is the most natural thing

in the world for a government that does not understand you, to let you alone. Oh, what a government were there, my countrymen! It is a government, that English one, — and most other European ones, — that cannot afford to be forgotten, as you would naturally forget them, that cannot let you go alone, having learned to walk. It appears to me that a true Englishman can only speculate within bounds; he has to pay his respects to so many things that before he knows it he has paid all he is worth. The principal respect in which our government is more tolerable is in the fact that there is so much less of government with us. In the States it is only once in a dog's age that a man need remember his government, but here he is reminded of it every day. Government parades itself before you. It is in no sense the servant but the master.¹

What a faculty must that be which can paint the most barren landscape and humblest life in glorious colors! It is pure and invigorated senses reacting on a sound and strong imagination. Is not that the poet's case? The intellect of most men is barren. They neither fertilize nor are fertilized. It is the marriage of the soul with Nature that makes the intellect fruitful, that gives birth to imagination. When we were dead and dry as the highway, some sense which has been healthily fed will put us in relation with Nature, in sympathy with her; some grains of fertilizing pollen, floating in the air, fall on us, and suddenly the sky is all one rainbow, is full of music and fragrance and flavor. The man of intellect only, the prosaic man, is a barren,

¹ [*Excursions*, p. 83; Riv. 102, 103.]

staminiferous flower; the poet is a fertile and perfect flower. Men are such confirmed arithmeticians and slaves of business that I cannot easily find a blank-book that has not a red line or a blue one for the dollars and cents, or some such purpose.¹

As is a man's intellectual character, is not such his physical after all? Can you not infer from knowing the intellectual characters of two which is most tenacious of life, which would die the hardest and will live the longest, which is the toughest, which has most brute strength, which the most passive endurance? Methinks I could to some extent infer these things.

1 P. M. — Round Flint's Pond *via* railroad, my old field, Goose Pond, Wharf Rock, Cedar Hill, Smith's, and so back.

Bigelow, speaking of the spikes of the blue vervain (*Verbena hastata*), says, "The flowering commences at their base and is long in reaching their summit." I perceive that only one circle of buds, about half a dozen, blossoms at a time, — and there are about thirty circles in the space of three inches, — while the next circle of buds above at the same time shows the blue. Thus this triumphant blossoming circle travels upward, driving the remaining buds off into space.² I think it was the 16th of July when I first noticed them (on another plant), and now they are all within about half an inch of the top of the spikes. Yet the blossoms have got no nearer the top on long [*sic*] spikes, which had many buds, than on short ones only an inch long. Per-

¹ [Channing, pp. 85, 86.]

² [Channing, p. 214.]

haps the blossoming commenced enough earlier on the long ones to make up for the difference in length. It is very pleasant to measure the progress of the season by this and similar clocks. So you get, not the absolute time, but the true time of the season.¹ But I can measure the progress of the seasons only by observing a particular plant, for I notice that they are by no means equally advanced.

The prevailing conspicuous flowers at present are: The early goldenrods, tansy, the life-everlastings, flea-bane (though not for its flower), yarrow (rather dry), hardhack and meadow-sweet (both getting dry, also mayweed), *Eupatorium purpureum*, scabish, clethra (really a fine, sweet-scented, and this year particularly fair and fresh, flower, some unexpanded buds at top tinged with red), *Rhexia Virginica*, thoroughwort, *Polygala sanguinea*, prunella, and dog's-bane (getting stale), etc., etc. Touch-me-not (less observed), Canada snapdragon by roadside (not conspicuous). The purple gerardia now, horsemint, or *Mentha borealis*, *Veronica scutellata* (marsh speedwell), *Ranunculus acris* (tall crow-foot) still. Mowing to some extent improves the landscape to the eye of the walker. The aftermath, so fresh and green, begins now to recall the spring to my mind. In some fields fresh clover heads appear. This is certainly better than fields of lodged and withered grass. I find ground-nuts by the railroad causeway three quarters of an inch long by a third of an inch. The epilobium still. Cow-wheat (*Melampyrum Americanum*) still flourishes as much if not more than ever, and, shrubby-

¹ [Channing, p. 214.]

looking, helps cover the ground where the wood has recently been cut off, like huckleberry bushes.

There is some advantage, intellectually and spiritually, in taking wide views with the bodily eye and not pursuing an occupation which holds the body prone. There is some advantage, perhaps, in attending to the general features of the landscape over studying the particular plants and animals which inhabit it. A man may walk abroad and no more see the sky than if he walked under a shed. The poet is more in the air than the naturalist, though they may walk side by side. Granted that you are out-of-doors; but what if the outer door *is* open, if the inner door is shut! You must walk sometimes perfectly free, not prying nor inquisitive, not bent upon seeing things. Throw away a whole day for a single expansion, a single inspiration of air.

Any anomaly in vegetation makes Nature seem more real and present in her working, as the various red and yellow excrescences on young oaks. I am affected as if it were a different Nature that produced them. As if a poet were born who had designs in his head.¹

It is remarkable that animals are often obviously, manifestly, related to the plants which they feed upon or live among, — as caterpillars, butterflies, tree-toads, partridges, chewinks, — and this afternoon I noticed a yellow spider on a goldenrod; as if every condition might have its expression in some form of animated being.²

Spear-leaved goldenrod in path to northeast of Flint's Pond. *Hieracium paniculatum*, a very delicate and

¹ [Channing, p. 74.]

² [Channing, p. 215.]

slender hawkweed. I have now found all the hawkweeds. Singular these genera of plants, plants manifestly related yet distinct. They suggest a history to nature, a natural *history* in a new sense.¹

At Wharf Rock found water lobelia in blossom. I saw some smilax vines in the swamp, which were connected with trees ten feet above the ground whereon they grew and four or five feet above the surrounding bushes. This slender vine, which cannot stand erect, how did it establish that connection? Have the trees and shrubs by which it once climbed been cut down? Or perchance do the young and flexible shoots blow up in high winds and fix themselves?² On Cedar Hill, south side pond, I still hear the locust, though it has been so much colder for the last week. It is quite hazy in the west, though comparatively clear in other directions. The barberry bushes, with their drooping wreaths of fruit now turning red, bushed up with some other shrub or tree.

Aug. 22. I found last winter that it was expected by my townsmen that I would give some account of Canada because I had *visited* it, and because many of them had, and so felt interested in the subject, — visited it as the bullet visits the wall at which it is fired, and from which it rebounds as quickly, and flattened (somewhat damaged, perchance)! Yes, a certain man contracted to take fifteen hundred live Yankees through Canada, at a certain rate and within a certain time. It did not matter to him what the commodity was, if only it would pack

¹ [Channing, p. 74.]

² [Channing, p. 214.]

well and were delivered to him according to agreement at the right place and time and rightly ticketed, so much in bulk, wet or dry, on deck or in the hold, at the option of the carrier how to stow the cargo and not always right side up. In the meanwhile, it was understood that the freight was not to be willfully and intentionally debarred from seeing the country if it had eyes. It was understood that there would be a country to be seen on either side, though that was a secret advantage which the contractors seemed not to be aware of. I fear that I have not got much to say, not having seen much, for the very rapidity of the motion had a tendency to keep my eyelids closed. What I *got* by going to Canada was a cold, and not till I get a fever, which I never had, shall I know how to appreciate it.¹

It is the fault of some excellent writers — De Quincey's first impressions on seeing London suggest it to me — that they express themselves with too great fullness and detail. They give the most faithful, natural, and lifelike account of their sensations, mental and physical, but they lack moderation and sententiousness. They do not affect us by an ineffectual earnestness and a reserve of meaning, like a stutterer; they say all they mean. Their sentences are not concentrated and nutty. Sentences which suggest far more than they say, which have an atmosphere about them, which do not merely report an old, but make a new, impression; sentences which suggest as many things and are as durable as a Roman aqueduct; to frame these, that is the *art* of writing. Sentences which are expensive, towards which

¹ [*Excursions*, p. 3; Riv. 3.]

so many volumes, so much life, went; which lie like boulders on the page, up and down or across; which contain the seed of other sentences, not mere repetition, but creation; which a man might sell his grounds and castles to build. If De Quincey had suggested each of his pages in a sentence and passed on, it would have been far more excellent writing. His style is nowhere kinked and knotted up into something hard and significant, which you could swallow like a diamond, without digesting.¹

Aug. 23. Saturday. To Walden to bathe at 5.30 A. M. Traces of the heavy rains in the night. The sand and gravel are beaten hard by them. Three or four showers in succession. But the grass is not so wet as after an ordinary dew. The *Verbena hastata* at the pond has reached the top of its spike, a little in advance of what I noticed yesterday; only one or two flowers are adhering. At the commencement of my walk I saw no traces of fog, but after detected fogs over particular meadows and high up some brooks' valleys, and far in the Deep Cut the wood fog. First muskmelon this morning.

I rarely pass the shanty in the woods, where human beings are lodged, literally, no better than pigs in a sty, — little children, a grown man and his wife, and an aged grandmother living this squalid life, squatting on the ground, — but I wonder if it can be indeed true that little Julia Riordan calls this place home, comes here to rest at night and for her daily food, — in whom

¹ [Channing, pp. 229, 230.]

ladies and gentlemen in the village take an interest. Of what significance are charity and almshouses? That there they live unmolested! in one sense so many degrees below the almshouse! beneath charity! It is admirable, — Nature against almshouses. A certain wealth of nature, not poverty, it suggests. Not to identify health and contentment, eye, and independence, with the possession of this world's goods! It is not wise to waste compassion on them.

As I go through the Deep Cut, I hear one or two early humblebees, come out on the damp sandy bank, whose low hum sounds like distant horns from far in the horizon over the woods. It was long before I detected the bees that made it, so far away and musical it sounded, like the shepherds in some distant eastern vale greeting the king of day.¹

The farmers now carry — those who have got them — their early potatoes and onions to market, starting away early in the morning or at midnight. I see them returning in the afternoon with the empty barrels.

Perchance the copious rain of last night will trouble those who had not been so provident as to get their hay from the Great Meadows, where it is often lost.

P. M. — Walk to Annursnack and back over stone bridge.

I sometimes reproach myself because I do not find anything attractive in certain mere trivial employments of men, — that I skip men so commonly, and their affairs, — the professions and the trades, — do not

¹ [Channing, p. 77.]

elevate them at least in my thought and get some material for poetry out of them directly. I will not avoid, then, to go by where these men are repairing the stone bridge, — see if I cannot see poetry in that, if that will not yield me a reflection. It is narrow to be confined to woods and fields and grand aspects of nature only. The greatest and wisest will still be related to men. Why not see men standing in the sun and casting a shadow, even as trees? May not some light be reflected from them as from the stems of trees? I will try to enjoy them as animals, at least. They are perhaps better animals than men. Do not neglect to speak of men's low life and affairs with sympathy, though you ever so speak as to suggest a contrast between them and the ideal and divine. You may be excused if you are always pathetic, but do not refuse to recognize.

Resolve to read no book, to take no walk, to undertake no enterprise, but such as you can endure to give an account of to yourself. Live thus deliberately for the most part.

When I stopped to gather some blueberries by the roadside this afternoon, I heard the shrilling of a cricket or a grasshopper close to me, quite clear, almost like a bell, a stridulous sound, a clear ring, incessant, not intermittent, like the song of the black fellow I caught the other day, and not suggesting the night, but belonging to day. It was long before I could find him, though all the while within a foot or two. I did not know whether to search amid the grass and stones or amid the leaves. At last, by accident I saw him, he shrilling all the while under an alder leaf two feet from the ground, — a

slender green fellow with long feelers and transparent wings. When he shrilled, his wings, which opened on each other in the form of a heart perpendicularly to his body like the wings of fairies, vibrated swiftly on each other. The apparently wingless female, as I thought, was near.

We experience pleasure when an elevated field or even road in which we may be walking holds its level toward the horizon at a tangent to the earth, is not convex with the earth's surface, but an absolute level.

On or under east side of Annurnack, *Epilobium coloratum*, colored willow-herb, near the spring. Also *Polygonum sagittatum*, scratch-grass.

The Price Farm road, one of those everlasting roads which the sun delights to shine along in an August afternoon, playing truant; which seem to stretch themselves with terrene jest as the weary traveller journeys on; where there are three white sandy furrows (*livæ*), two for the wheels and one between them for the horse, with endless green grass borders between and room on each side for huckleberries and birches; where the walls indulge in freaks, not always parallel to the ruts, and goldenrod yellows all the path; which some elms began to border and shade once, but left off in despair, it was so long; from no point on which can you be said to be at any definite distance from a town.

I associate the beauty of Quebec with the steel-like and flashing air.¹

Our little river reaches are not to be forgotten. I noticed that seen northward on the Assabet from the

¹ [*Excursions*, p. 88; Riv. 109.]

Causeway Bridge near the second stone bridge. There was [a] man in a boat in the sun, just disappearing in the distance round a bend, lifting high his arms and dipping his paddle as if he were a vision bound to land of the blessed, — far off, as in picture. When I see Concord to purpose, I see it as if it were not real but painted, and what wonder if I do not speak to *thee*? I saw a snake by the roadside and touched him with my foot to see if he were alive. He had a toad in his jaws, which he was preparing to swallow with his jaws distended to three times his width, but he relinquished his prey in haste and fled; and I thought, as the toad jumped leisurely away with his slime-covered hind-quarters glistening in the sun, as if I, his deliverer, wished to interrupt his meditations, — without a shriek or fainting, — I thought what a healthy indifference he manifested. Is not this the broad earth still? he said.¹

Aug. 24. *Mollugo verticillata*, carpet-weed, flat, whorl-leaved weed in gardens, with small white flowers. *Portulaca oleracea*, purslane, with its yellow blossoms. *Chelone glabra*. I have seen the small mulleins as big as a ninepence in the fields for a day or two.²

The weather is warmer again after a week or more of cool days. There is greater average warmth, but not such intolerable heats as in July. The nights especially are more equably warm now, even when the day has been comparatively rather cool. There are few days now, fewer than in July, when you cannot lie at your length on the grass. You have now forgotten winter

¹ [Channing, pp. 287, 288.]

² [The word "mulleins" is queried in pencil.]

and its fashions, and have learned new summer fashions. Your life may be out-of-doors now mainly.

Rattlesnake grass is ripe. The pods of the *Asclepias pulchra* stand  up pointedly like slender vases on a salver, — an open salver truly! Those of the *Asclepias Syriaca* hang down. The interregnum in the blossoming of flowers being well over, many small flowers blossom now in the low grounds, having just reached their summer. It is now dry enough, and they feel the heat their tenderness required. The autumnal flowers, — goldenrods, asters, and johnswort, — though they have made demonstrations, have not yet commenced to reign. The tansy is already getting stale; it is perhaps the first conspicuous yellow flower that passes from the stage.¹

In Hubbard's Swamp, where the blueberries, dangle-berries, and especially the pyrus or choke-berries were so abundant last summer, there is now perhaps not one (unless a blueberry) to be found. Where the choke-berries held on all last winter, the black and the red.

The common skullcap (*Scutellaria galericulata*), quite a handsome and middling-large blue flower. *Lobelia pallida* still. Pointed cleavers or clivers (*Galium asprellum*). Is that the naked viburnum, so common, with its white, red, then purple berries, in Hubbard's meadow?²

Did I find the dwarf tree-primrose in Hubbard's meadow to-day? *Stachys aspera*, hedge-nettle or woundwort, a rather handsome purplish flower. The capsules of the *Iris versicolor*, or blue flag, are now ready for humming [?]. Elderberries are ripe.

¹ [Channing, p. 215.]

² Yes.

Aug. 25. Monday. What the little regular, rounded, light-blue flower in Heywood Brook which I make Class V, Order 1? Also the small purplish flower growing on the mud in Hubbard's meadow, perchance C. XIV, with one pistil? What the bean vine in the garden, Class VIII, Order 1? I do not find the name of the large white polygonum of the river. Was it the fili-form ranunculus which I found on Hubbard's shore? *Hypericum Virginicum*, mixed yellow and purple. The black rough fruit of the skunk-cabbage, though green within, barely rising above the level of the ground; you see where it has been cut in two by the mowers in the meadows. *Polygonum amphibium*, red, in river. *Lysimachia hybrida* still. Checkerberry in bloom. Blue-eyed grass still. *Rhus copallina*, mountain or dwarf sumach. I now know all of the *Rhus* genus in Bigelow. We have all but the staghorn in Concord. What a miserable name has the *Gratiola aurea*, hedge hyssop! Whose hedge does it grow by, pray, in this part of the world?¹

Aug. 26. A cool and even piercing wind blows to-day, making all shrubs to bow and trees to wave; such as we could not have had in July. I speak not of its coolness but its strength and steadiness. The wind and the coldness increased as the day advanced, and finally the wind went down with the sun. I was compelled to put on an extra coat for my walk. The ground is strewn with windfalls, and much fruit will consequently be lost.

The wind roars amid the pines like the surf. You can hardly hear the crickets for the din, or the cars. I think

¹ [Channing, p. 215.]

the last must be considerably delayed when their course is against it. Indeed it is difficult to enjoy a quiet thought. You sympathize too much with the commotion and restlessness of the elements. Such a blowing, stirring, bustling day, — what does it mean? All light things decamp; straws and loose leaves change their places. Such a blowing day is no doubt indispensable in the economy of nature. The whole country is a sea-shore, and the wind is the surf that breaks on it. It shows the white and silvery under sides of the leaves. Do plants and trees need to be thus tried and twisted? Is it a first intimation to the sap to cease to ascend, to thicken their stems? The *Gerardia pedicularia*, bushy gerardia, I find on the White Pond road.

I perceive that some farmers are cutting turf now. They require the driest season of the year. There is something agreeable to my thoughts in thus burning a part of the earth, the stock of fuel is so inexhaustible. Nature looks not mean and niggardly, but like an ample loaf. Is not he a rich man who owns a peat meadow? It is to enjoy the luxury of wealth. It must be a luxury to sit around the fire in winter days and nights and burn these dry slices of the meadow which contain roots of all herbs. You dry and burn the very earth itself. It is a fact kindred with salt-licks. The meadow is strewn with the fresh bars, bearing the marks of the fork, and the turf-cutter is wheeling them out with his barrow. To sit and see the world aglow and try to imagine how it would seem to have it so destroyed!

Woodchucks are seen tumbling into their holes on all sides.

Aug. 27. I see the volumes of smoke — not quite the blaze — from burning brush, as I suppose, far in the western horizon. I believe it is at this season of the year chiefly that you see this sight. It is always a question with some whether it is not a fire in the woods, or some building. It is an interesting feature in the scenery at this season. The farmer's simple enterprises.

The vervain which I examined by the railroad the other day has still a quarter of an inch to the top of its spikes. Hawkweed groundsel (*Senecio hieracifolius*) (fireweed). *Rubus sempervirens*, evergreen raspberry, the small low blackberry, is now in fruit. The *Medeola Virginica*, cucumber-root, the whorl-leaved plant, is now in green fruit. *Polygala cruciata*, cross-leaved polygala, in the meadow between Trillium Woods and railroad. This is rare and new to me. It has a very sweet, but as it were intermittent, fragrance, as of checkerberry and mayflowers combined. The handsome calyx-leaves.¹

Aug. 28. The pretty little blue flower in the Heywood Brook, Class V, Order 1. Corolla about one sixth of an inch in diameter, with five rounded segments; stamens and pistil shorter than corolla; calyx with five acute segments and acute sinuses; leaves not opposite, lanceolate, spatulate, blunt, somewhat hairy on upper side with a midrib only, sessile; flowers in a loose raceme on rather long pedicels. Whole plant decumbent, curving upward. Wet ground. Said to be like the forget-me-not.

¹ [Channing, p. 216.]

Raphanus Raphanistrum, or wild radish, in meadows.

I find three or four ordinary laborers to-day putting up the necessary outdoor fixtures for a magnetic telegraph from Boston to Burlington. They carry along a basket full of simple implements, like travelling tinkers, and, with a little rude soldering, and twisting, and straightening of wires, the work is done. It is a work which seems to admit of the greatest latitude of ignorance and bungling, and as if you might set your hired man with the poorest head and hands to building a magnetic telegraph. All great inventions stoop thus low to succeed, for the understanding is but little above the feet. They preserve so low a tone; they are simple almost to coarseness and commonplaceness. Somebody had told them what he wanted, and sent them forth with a coil of wire to make a magnetic telegraph. It seems not so wonderful an invention as a common cart or a plow.

Evening. — A new moon visible in the east [*sic*]. How unexpectedly it always appears! You easily lose it in the sky. The whip-poor-will sings, but not so commonly as in spring. The bats are active.

The poet is a man who lives at last by watching his moods. An old poet comes at last to watch his moods as narrowly as a cat does a mouse.

I omit the unusual — the hurricanes and earthquakes — and describe the common. This has the greatest charm and is the true theme of poetry. You may have the extraordinary for your province, if you will let me have the ordinary. Give me the obscure life, the cot-

tage of the poor and humble, the workdays of the world, the barren fields, the smallest share of all things but poetic perception. Give me but the eyes to see the things which you possess.¹

Aug. 29. Though it is early, my neighbor's hens have strayed far into the fog toward the river. I find a wasp in my window, which already appears to be taking refuge from winter and unspeakable fate.

Those who first built it, coming from old France, with the memory and tradition of feudal days and customs weighing on them, were unquestionably behind their age, and those who now inhabit it and repair it are behind their ancestors. It is as if the inhabitants of Boston should go down to Fort Independence, or the inhabitants of New York should go over to Castle William, to live. I rubbed my eyes to be sure that I was in the Nineteenth Century. That would be a good place to read Froissart's Chronicles, I thought. It is a specimen of the Old World in the New. It is such a reminiscence of the Middle Ages as one of Scott's novels. Those old chevaliers thought they could transplant the feudal system to America. It has been set out, but it has not thriven.²

Might I not walk a little further, till I hear new crickets, till their creak has acquired some novelty, as if they were a new species whose habitat I had reached?³

The air is filled with mist, yet a transparent mist, a principle in it you might call *flavor*, which ripens fruits.

¹ [Channing, p. 87.]

² [*Excursions*, p. 81; Riv. 100, 101.]

³ [Channing, p. 70.]

This haziness seems to confine and concentrate the sunlight, as if you lived in a halo. It is August.

A flock of forty-four young turkeys with their old [*sic*], half a mile from a house on Conantum by the river, the old faintly gobbling, the half-grown young peeping. Turkey-men!

Gerardia glauca (*quercifolia*, says one), tall gerardia, one flower only left; also *Corydalis glauca*.

Aug. 30. *Saturday*. I perceive in the Norway cinquefoil (*Potentilla Norvegica*), now nearly out of blossom, that the alternate five leaves of the calyx are closing over the seeds to protect them. This evidence of forethought, this simple *reflection* in a double sense of the term, in this flower, is affecting to me, as if it said to me: "Even I am doing my appointed work in this world faithfully. Not even do I, however obscurely I may grow among the other loftier and more famous plants, shirk my work, humble weed as I am. Not even when I have blossomed, and have lost my painted petals and am preparing to die down to my root, do I forget to fall with my arms around my babe, faithful to the last, that the infant may be found preserved in the arms of the frozen mother." That thus all the Norway cinquefoils in the world had curled back their calyx leaves, their warm cloaks, when now their flowering season was past, over their progeny, from the time they were created! There is one door closed, of the closing year. Nature ordered this bending back of the calyx leaves, and every year since this plant was created her order has been faithfully obeyed, and this plant acts

not an obscure, but essential, part in the revolution of the seasons. I am not ashamed to be contemporary with the Norway cinquefoil. May I perform my part as well!¹ There is so much done toward closing up the year's accounts. It is as good as if I saw the great globe go round. It is as if I saw the Janus doors of the year closing. The fall of each humblest flower marks the annual period of some phase of human life, experience. I can be said to note the flower's fall only when I see in it the symbol of my own change. When I experience this, then the flower appears to me.

Drosera rotundifolia in Moore's new field ditch. The *Viola pedata* and the *houstonia* now. What is the peculiarity of these flowers that *they* blossom again? Is it merely because they blossomed so early in the spring, and now are ready for a new spring? They impress me as so much more native or naturalized here.

We love to see Nature fruitful in whatever kind. It assures us of her vigor and that she may equally bring forth the fruits which we prize. I love to see the acorns plenty, even on the shrub oaks, aye, and the nightshade berries. I love to see the potato balls numerous and large, as I go through a low field, poisonous though they look, the plant thus, as it were, bearing fruit at both ends, saying ever and anon, "Not only these tubers I offer you for the present, but if you will have new varieties, — if these do not satisfy you, — plant these seeds."² What abundance! what luxuriance! what bounty! The potato balls, which are worth-

¹ [Channing, p. 74.]

² [Channing, pp. 74, 215.]

less to the farmer, combine to make the general impression of the year's fruitfulness. It is as cheering to me as the rapid increase of the population of New York.

Aug. 31. *Proserpinaca palustris*, spear-leaved proserpinaca, mermaid-weed. (This in Hubbard's Grove on my way to Conantum.) A hornets' (?) nest in a rather tall huckleberry bush, the stems projecting through it, the leaves spreading over it. How these fellows avail themselves of the vegetables! They kept arriving, the great fellows, but I never saw whence they came, but only heard the buzz just at the entrance. (With whitish abdomens.) At length, after I have stood before the nest five minutes, during which time they had taken no notice of me, two seemed to be consulting at the entrance, and then one made a threatening dash at me and returned to the nest. I took the hint and retired. They spoke as plainly as man could have done.¹

I see that the farmers have begun to top their corn.

Examined my old friend the green locust (?), shrilling on an alder leaf.

What relation does the fall dandelion bear to the spring dandelion? There is a rank scent of tansy now on some roads, disagreeable to many people from being associated in their minds with funerals, where it is sometimes put into the coffin and about the corpse. I have not observed much St. John's-wort yet. *Galium triflorum*, three-flowered cleavers, in Conant's Spring Swamp; also fever-bush there, now budded for next

¹ [Channing, p. 249.]

year. Tobacco-pipe (*Monotropa uniflora*) in Spring Swamp Path. I came out of the thick, dark, swampy wood as from night into day. Having forgotten the daylight, I was surprised to see how bright it was. I had light enough, methought, and here was an afternoon sun illumining all the landscape. It was a surprise to me to see how much brighter an ordinary afternoon is than the light which penetrates a thick wood.

One of these drooping clusters of potato balls would be as good a symbol, emblem, of the year's fertility as anything, — better surely than a bunch of grapes. Fruit of the strong soil, containing potash (?). The vintage is come; the olive is ripe.

"I come to pluck your berries harsh and crude;
And with forc'd fingers rude,
Shatter your leaves before the mellowing year;"

Why not for my coat-of-arms, for device, a drooping cluster of potato balls, — in a *potato* field? ¹

What right has a New England poet to sing of wine, who never saw a vineyard, who obtains his liquor from the grocer, who would not dare, if he could, tell him what it is composed of. A Yankee singing in praise of wine! It is not sour grapes in this case, it is sweet grapes; the more inaccessible they are the sweeter they are. It seemed to me that the year had nothing so much to brag of as these potato balls. Do they not concern New-Englanders a thousand times more than all her grapes? In Moore's new field they grow, cultivated with the bog hoe, manured with ashes and sphagnum. How they take to the virgin soil! ² Shannon tells me that he took

¹ [Channing, pp. 75, 216.]

² [Channing, p. 216.]

a piece of bog land of Augustus Hayden, cleared, turned up the stumps and roots and burned it over, making a coat of ashes six inches deep, then planted potatoes. He never put a hoe to it till he went to dig them; then between 8 o'clock A. M. and 5 P. M. he and another man dug and housed seventy-five bushels apiece!!

Cohush now in fruit, ivory-white berries tipped *now* with black on stout red pedicels, — *Actæa alba*. *Collinsonia Canadensis*, horseweed. I had discovered this singular flower there new to me, and, having a botany by me, looked it out. What a surprise and disappointment, what an insult and impertinence to my curiosity and expectation, to have given me the name "horseweed!"

Cohush Swamp is about twenty rods by three or four. Among rarer plants it contains the basswood, the black (as well as white) ash, the fever-bush, the cohush, the collinsonia, not to mention sassafras, poison sumach, ivy, agrimony, *Arum triphyllum*, (sweet viburnum (?) in hedges near by), ground-nut, touch-me-not (as high as your head), and *Eupatorium purpureum* (eight feet, eight inches high, with a large convex corymb (hemispherical) of many stories, fourteen inches wide; width of plant from tip of leaf to tip of leaf two feet, diameter of stalk one inch at ground, leaves seven in a whorl). Rare plants seem to love certain localities. As if the original Conant had been a botanist and endeavored to form an arboretum. A natural arboretum?

The handsome sweet viburnum berries, now red on one cheek.

It was the filiform crowfoot (*Ranunculus filiformis*)

that I saw by the riverside the other day and to-day. The season advances apace. The flowers of the nettle-leaved vervain are now near the ends of the spike, like the blue. *Utricularia inflata*, whorled bladderwort, floating on the water at same place. *Gentiana Saponaria* budded. *Gerardia flava* at Conant's Grove.

Half an hour before sunset I was at Tupelo Cliff, when, looking up from my botanizing (I had been examining the *Ranunculus filiformis*, the *Sium latifolium* (? ?), and the obtuse galium on the muddy shore), I saw the seal of evening on the river. There was a quiet beauty in the landscape at that hour which my senses were prepared to appreciate. The sun going down on the west side, that hand being already in shadow for the most part, but his rays lighting up the water and the willows and pads even more than before. His rays then fell at right angles on their stems. I sitting on the old brown geologic rocks, their feet submerged and covered with weedy moss (*utricularia* roots?). Sometimes their tops are submerged. The cardinal-flowers standing by me. The trivialness of the day is past. The greater stillness, the *serenity* of the air, its coolness and transparency, the mistiness being condensed, are favorable to thought. (The pensive eve.) The coolness of evening comes to condense the haze of noon and make the air transparent and the outline of objects firm and distinct, and chaste (chaste eve); even as I am made more vigorous by my bath, am more *continent* of thought. After bathing, even at noonday, a man realizes a morning or evening life.¹ The evening air is such a bath

¹ [Channing, pp. 301, 302.]

for both mind and body. When I have walked all day in vain under the torrid sun, and the world has been all trivial, — as well field and wood as highway, — then at eve the sun goes down westward, and the wind goes down with it, and the dews begin to purify the air and make it transparent, and the lakes and rivers acquire a glassy stillness, reflecting the skies, the reflex of the day. I too am at the top of my condition for perceiving beauty. Thus, long after feeding, the diviner faculties begin to be fed, to feel their oats, their nutriment, and are not oppressed by the belly's load. It is abstinence from loading the belly anew until the brain and divine faculties have felt their vigor. Not till some hours does my food invigorate my brain, — ascendeth into the brain. We practice at this hour an involuntary abstinence. We are comparatively chaste and temperate as Eve herself; the nutriment is just reaching the brain. Every sound is music now. The grating of some distant boat which a man is launching on the rocky bottom, — though here is no man nor inhabited house, nor even cultivated field, in sight, — this is heard with such distinctness that I listen with pleasure as if it was [*sic*] music. The attractive point is that line where the water meets the land, not distinct, but known to exist. The willows are not the less interesting because of their nakedness below. How rich, like what we love to read of South American primitive forests, is the scenery of this river! What luxuriance of weeds, what depth of mud along its sides! These old antehistoric, geologic, antediluvian rocks, which only primitive wading birds, still lingering among us, are worthy to tread. The season

which we seem to *live* in anticipation of is arrived. The water, indeed, reflects heaven because my mind does; such is its own serenity, its transparency and stillness.

With what sober joy I stand to let the water drip from me and feel my fresh vigor, who have been bathing in the same tub which the muskrat uses! Such a medicated bath as only nature furnishes. A fish leaps, and the dimple he makes is observed now. How ample and generous was nature! My inheritance is not narrow.¹ Here is no other this evening. Those resorts which I most love and frequent, numerous and vast as they are, are as it were given up to me, as much as if I were an autocrat or owner of the world, and by my edicts excluded men from my territories. Perchance there is some advantage here not enjoyed in older countries. There are said to be two thousand inhabitants in Concord, and yet I find such ample space and verge, even miles of walking every day in which I do not meet nor see a human being, and often not very recent traces of them. So much of man as there is in your mind, there will be in your eye. Methinks that for a great part of the time, as much as it is possible, I walk as one possessing the advantages of human culture, fresh from society of men, but turned loose into the woods, the only man in nature, walking and meditating to a great extent as if man and his customs and institutions were not. The catbird, or the jay, is sure of the whole of your ear now. Each noise is like a stain on pure glass. The rivers now, these great blue subterranean heavens, reflecting the supernal skies and red-tinted clouds.

¹ [Channing, p. 301.]

A fly (or gnat?) will often buzz round you and persecute you like an imp. How much of imp-like, pestering character they express! (I hear a boy driving home his cows.) What unanimity between the water and the sky! — one only a little denser element than the other. The grossest part of heaven. Think of a mirror on so large a scale! Standing on distant hills, you see the heavens reflected, the evening sky, in some low lake or river in the valley, as perfectly as in any mirror they could be. Does it not prove how intimate heaven is with earth?

We commonly sacrifice to supper this serene and sacred hour. Our customs turn the hour of sunset to a trivial time, as at the meeting of two roads, one coming from the noon, the other leading to the night. It might be [well] if our repasts were taken out-of-doors, in view of the sunset and the rising stars; if there were two persons whose pulses beat together, if men cared for the *κόσμος*, or *beauty* of the world; if men were *social* in a high and rare sense; if they associated on high levels; if we took in with our tea a draught of the transparent, dew-freighted evening air; if, with our bread and butter, we took a slice of the red western sky; if the smoking, steaming urn were the vapor on a thousand lakes and rivers and meads.

The air of the valleys at this hour is the distilled essence of all those fragrances which during the day have been filling and have been dispersed in the atmosphere. The fine fragrances, perchance, which have floated in the upper atmospheres have settled to these low vales!

I talked of buying *Conantum* once, but for want of money we did not come to terms. But I have farmed it in my own fashion every year since.

I have no objection to giving the names of some naturalists, men of flowers, to plants, if by their lives they have identified themselves with them. There may be a few *Kalmias*. But it must be done very sparingly, or, rather, discriminatingly, and no man's name be used who has not been such a lover of flowers that the flowers themselves may be supposed thus to reciprocate his love.