

JOURNAL

VOLUME III

THE JOURNAL OF  
HENRY DAVID THOREAU

VOLUME III

I

SEPTEMBER AND OCTOBER, 1851 (ÆT. 34)

*Sept.* 16. Met the selectmen of Sudbury, —— and —— . I trust that towns will remember that they are supposed to be fairly represented by their *select* men. From the specimen which Acton sent, I should judge that the inhabitants of that town were made up of a mixture of quiet, respectable, and even gentlemanly farmer people, well to do in the world, with a rather boisterous, coarse, and a little self-willed class; that the inhabitants of Sudbury are farmers almost exclusively, exceedingly rough and countrified and more illiterate than usual, very tenacious of their rights and dignities and difficult to deal with; that the inhabitants of Lincoln yield sooner than usual to the influence of the rising generation, and are a mixture of rather simple but clever with a well-informed and trustworthy people; that the inhabitants of Bedford are mechanics, who aspire to keep up with the age, with some of the polish of society, mingled with substantial and rather intelligent farmers.

— of Sudbury thinks the river would be still lower now if it were not for the water in the reservoir pond in Hopkinton running into it.

*Sept. 17.* Perambulated the Lincoln line.

Was it the small rough sunflower which I saw this morning at the brook near Lee's Bridge?<sup>1</sup>

Saw at James Baker's a buttonwood tree with a swarm of bees now three years in it, but honey and all inaccessible.

John W. Farrar tells of sugar maples behind Miles's in the Corner.

Did I see privet in the swamp at the Bedford stone near Giles's house?

Swamp all dry now; could not wash my hands.

*Sept. 18.* Perambulated Bedford line.

*Sept. 19.* Perambulated Carlisle line.

Large-flowered bidens, or beggar-ticks, or bur-mari-gold, now abundant by riverside. Found the bound-stones on Carlisle by the river all or mostly tipped over by the ice and water, like the pitch pines about Walden Pond. Grapes very abundant along that line. The soapwort gentian now. In an old pasture, now grown up to birches and other trees, followed the cow-paths to the old apple trees.

Mr. Isaiah Green of Carlisle, who lives nearest to the Kibbe Place, can remember when there were three or four houses around him (he is nearly eighty years old

<sup>1</sup> Probably great bidens.

and has always lived there and was born there); now he is quite retired, and the nearest road is scarcely used at all. He spoke of one old field, now grown up, which [we] were going through, as the "hog-pasture," formerly. He found the meadows so dry that it was thought to be a good time to burn out the moss.

*Sept. 20.* 3 P. M. — To Cliffs *via* Bear Hill.

As I go through the fields, endeavoring to recover my tone and sanity and to perceive things truly and simply again, after having been perambulating the bounds of the town all the week, and dealing with the most commonplace and worldly-minded men, and emphatically *trivial* things, I feel as if I had committed suicide in a sense. I am again forcibly struck with the truth of the fable of Apollo serving King Admetus, its universal applicability. A fatal coarseness is the result of mixing in the trivial affairs of men. Though I have been associating even with the *select* men of this and the surrounding towns, I feel inexpressibly begrimed. My Pegasus has lost his wings; he has turned a reptile and gone on his belly. Such things are compatible only with a cheap and superficial life.

The poet must keep himself unstained and aloof. Let him perambulate the bounds of Imagination's provinces, the realms of faery, and not the insignificant boundaries of towns.<sup>1</sup> The excursions of the imagination are so boundless, the limits of towns are so petty.

I scare up the great bittern in meadow by the Heywood Brook near the ivy. He rises buoyantly as he flies

<sup>1</sup> [Channing, p. 86.]

against the wind, and sweeps south over the willow with outstretched neck, surveying.

The ivy here is reddened. The dogwood, or poison sumach, by Hubbard's meadow is also turned reddish. Here are late buttercups and dwarf tree-primroses still. Methinks there are not many goldenrods this year. The river is remarkably low. There is a rod wide of bare shore beneath the Cliff Hill.

Last week was the warmest perhaps in the year. On Monday of the present week water was frozen in a pail under the pump. Yet to-day I hear the locust sing as in August. This week we have had most glorious autumnal weather, — cool and cloudless, bright days, filled with the fragrance of ripe grapes, preceded by frosty mornings. All tender herbs are flat in gardens and meadows. The cranberries, too, are touched.

To-day it is warmer and hazier, and there is, no doubt, some smoke in the air, from the burning of the turf and moss in low lands, where the smoke, seen at sunset, looks like a rising fog. I fear that the autumnal tints will not be brilliant this season, the frosts have commenced so early. Butter-and-eggs on Fair Haven. The cleared plateau beneath the Cliff, now covered with sprouts, shows red, green, and yellow tints, like a rich rug. I see ducks or teal flying silent, swift, and straight, the wild creatures. White pines on Fair Haven Hill begin to look parti-colored with the falling leaves, but not at a distance.

*Sept. 21. Sunday.* It is remarkably dry weather. The neighbors' wells are failing. The watering-places

for cattle in pastures, though they have been freshly scooped out, are dry. People have to go far for water to drink, and then drink it warm. The river is so low that rocks which are rarely seen show their black heads in mid-channel. I saw one which a year or two ago upset a boat and drowned a girl. You see the nests of the bream on the dry shore. I perceive that many of the leaves of shrub oaks and other bushes have been killed by the severe frosts of last week, before they have got ripe and acquired the tints of autumn, and they now look as [if] a fire had run through them, dry and crispy and brown. So far from the frost painting them, it has withered them. I notice new cabins of the muskrats in solitary swamps. The chestnut trees have suffered severely from the drought; already their leaves look withered.

Moonlight is peculiarly favorable to reflection. It is a cold and dewy light in which the vapors of the day are condensed, and though the air is obscured by darkness, it is more clear. Lunacy must be a cold excitement, not such insanity as a torrid sun on the brain would produce. In Rees's Cyclopedia it is said, "The light of the moon, condensed by the best mirrors, produces no sensible heat upon the thermometer."

I see some cows on the new Wheeler's Meadow, which a man is trying to drive to certain green parts of the meadow next to the river to feed, the hill being dried up, but they seem disinclined and not to like the coarse grass there, though it is green. And now one cow is steering for the edge of the hill, where is some greenness. I suppose that herds are attracted by a distant

greenness, though it may be a mile or more off. I doubt if a man can drive his cows to that part of their pasture where is the best feed for them, so soon as they will find it for themselves. The man tries in vain to drive them to the best part of the meadow. As soon as he is gone, they seek their own parts.

The light of the moon, sufficient though it is for the pensive walker, and not disproportionate to the inner light we have, is very inferior in quantity and intensity to that of the sun.<sup>1</sup> The Cyclopædia says that Dr. Hooke has calculated that "it would require 104,368 full moons to give a light and heat equal to that of the sun at noon," and Dr. Smith says, "The light of the full moon is but equal to a 90,900th part of the common light of the day, when the sun is hidden by a cloud."<sup>2</sup>

But the moon is not to be judged alone by the quantity of light she sends us, but also by her influence on the earth. No thinker can afford to overlook the influence of the moon any more than the astronomer can. "The moon gravitates towards the earth, and the earth reciprocally towards the moon." This statement of the astronomer would be bald and meaningless, if it were not in fact a symbolical expression of the value of all lunar influence on man. Even the astronomer admits that "the notion of the moon's influence on terrestrial things was confirmed by her manifest effect upon the ocean," but is not the poet who walks by night conscious of a tide in his thought which is to be referred to lunar influence, in which the ocean within him over-

<sup>1</sup> [*Excursions*, p. 325; Riv. 399.]

<sup>2</sup> *Vide* next page.

flows its shores and bathes the dry land?<sup>1</sup> Has he not his spring-tides and his neap-tides, the former sometimes combining with the winds of heaven to produce those memorable high tides of the calendar which leave their marks for ages, when all Broad Street is submerged, and incalculable damage is done to the ordinary shipping of the mind?

Burritt in his "Geography of the Heavens" says, "The quantity of light which we derive from the Moon when full, is at least three hundred thousand times less than that of the Sun." This is M. Bouguer's inference as stated by Laplace. Professor Leslie makes it one hundred and fifty thousand times less, older astronomers less still.

Rees says: "It is remarkable, that the moon during the week in which she is full in harvest, rises sooner after sun-setting than she does in any other full moon week in the year. By doing so she affords an immediate supply of light after sunset, which is very beneficial to the farmers for reaping and gathering in the fruits of the earth; and therefore they distinguish this full moon from all the others in the year, by calling it the harvest moon." Howitt places the Harvest Moon in August.

The retirement in which Green has lived for nearly eighty years in Carlisle is a retirement very different from and much greater than that in which the pioneer dwells at the West; for the latter dwells within sound of the surf of those billows of migration which are breaking on the shores around him, or near him, of the West, but those billows have long since swept over the spot

<sup>1</sup> [*Excursions*, p. 325; Riv. 399, 400.]

which Green inhabits, and left him in the calm sea. There is somewhat exceedingly pathetic to think of in such a life as he must have lived, — with no more to redeem it, — such a life as an average Carlisle man may be supposed to live drawn out to eighty years. And he has died, perchance, and there is nothing but the mark of his cider-mill left. Here was the cider-mill, and there the orchard, and there the hog-pasture; and so men lived, and ate, and drank, and passed away, — like vermin. Their long life was mere duration. As respectable is the life of the woodchucks, which perpetuate their race in the orchard still. That is the life of these *select-men* (!) spun out. They will be forgotten in a few years, even by such as themselves, like vermin. They will be known only like Kibbe, who is said to have been a large man who weighed two hundred and fifty, who had five or six heavy daughters who rode to Concord meeting-house on horseback, taking turns, — they were so heavy that only one could ride at once. What, then, would redeem such a life? We only know that they ate, and drank, and built barns, and died and were buried, and still, perchance, their tombstones cumber the ground.<sup>1</sup> But if I could know that there was ever entertained over their cellar-hole some divine thought, which came as a messenger of the gods, that he who resided here acted once in his life from a noble impulse, rising superior to his grovelling and penurious life, if only a single verse of poetry or of poetic prose had ever been written or spoken or conceived here beyond a doubt, I should not think it in vain that man had lived here. It would to

<sup>1</sup> [Channing, pp. 176, 177.]

some extent be true then that God had lived here. 'That all his life he lived only as a farmer — as the most valuable stock only on a farm — and in no moments as a man!

*Sept. 22.* To the Three Friends' Hill over Bear Hill.

Yesterday and to-day the stronger winds of autumn have begun to blow, and the telegraph harp has sounded loudly. I heard it especially in the Deep Cut this afternoon, the tone varying with the tension of different parts of the wire. The sound proceeds from near the posts, where the vibration is apparently more rapid. I put my ear to one of the posts, and it seemed to me as if every pore of the wood was filled with music, labored with the strain, — as if every fibre was affected and being seasoned or timed, rearranged according to a new and more harmonious law. Every swell and change or inflection of tone pervaded and seemed to proceed from the wood, the divine tree or wood, as if its very substance was transmuted. What a recipe for preserving wood, perchance, — to keep it from rotting, — to fill its pores with music! How this wild tree from the forest, stripped of its bark and set up here, rejoices to transmit this music! When no music proceeds from the wire, on applying my ear I hear the hum within the entrails of the wood, — the oracular tree acquiring, accumulating, the prophetic fury.

The resounding wood! how much the ancients would have made of it! To have a harp on so great a scale, girdling the very earth, and played on by the winds of

every latitude and longitude, and that harp were, as it were, the manifest blessing of heaven on a work of man's! Shall we not add a tenth Muse to the immortal Nine? And that the invention thus divinely honored and distinguished — on which the Muse has condescended to smile — is this magic medium of communication for mankind!

To read that the ancients stretched a wire round the earth, attaching it to the trees of the forest, by which they sent messages by one named Electricity, father of Lightning and Magnetism, swifter far than Mercury, the stern commands of war and news of peace, and that the winds caused this wire to vibrate so that it emitted a harp-like and æolian music in all the lands through which it passed, as if to express the satisfaction of the gods in this invention. Yet this is fact, and we have yet attributed the invention to no god.<sup>1</sup>

I am astonished to see how brown and sere the groundsel or "fire-weed" on hillside by Heywood's Meadow, which has been touched by frost, already is, — as if it had died long months ago, or a fire had run through it. It is a very tender plant.

Standing on Bear Hill in Lincoln. The black birches (I think they are), now yellow, on the south side of Flint's Pond, on the hillside, look like flames. The chestnut trees are brownish-yellow as well as green. It is a beautifully clear and bracing air, with just enough coolness, full of the memory of frosty mornings, through which all things are distinctly seen and the fields look as smooth as velvet. The fragrance of grapes is on the

<sup>1</sup> [Channing, pp. 201, 202.]

breeze and the red drooping barberries sparkle amid the leaves. From the hill on the south side of the pond, the forests have a singularly rounded and bowery look, clothing the hills quite down to the water's edge and leaving no shore; the ponds are like drops of dew amid and partly covering the leaves. So the great globe is luxuriously crowded without margin.

The *Utricularia cornuta*, or horned utricularia, on the sandy pond-shore, not affected by the frost.

Sept. 23. Notwithstanding the fog, the fences this morning are covered with so thick a frost that you can write your name anywhere with your nail.

The partridge and the rabbit, — they still are sure to thrive like true natives of the soil, whatever revolutions occur. If the forest is cut off, many bushes spring up which afford them concealment, and they become more numerous than ever.

The sumach are among the reddest leaves at present. The telegraph harp sounds strongly to-day, in the midst of the rain. I put my ear to the trees and I hear it working terribly within, and anon it swells into a clear tone, which seems to concentrate in the core of the tree, for all the sound seems to proceed from the wood. It is as if you had entered some world-famous cathedral, resounding to some vast organ. The fibres of all things have their tension, and are strained like the strings of a lyre. I feel the very ground tremble under my feet as I stand near the post. This wire vibrates with great power, as if it would strain and rend the wood. What an awful and fateful music it must be to the worms in

the wood! No better vermifuge were needed.<sup>1</sup> No danger that worms will attack this wood; such vibrating music would thrill them to death. I scare up large flocks of sparrows in the garden.

*Sept. 24.* Returning over the causeway from Flint's Pond the other evening (22d), just at sunset, I observed that while the west was of a bright golden color under a bank of clouds, — the sun just setting, — and not a tinge of red was yet visible there, there was a distinct purple tinge in the nearer atmosphere, so that Annursnack Hill, seen through it, had an exceedingly rich empurpled look. It is rare that we perceive this purple tint in the air, telling of the juice of the wild grape and poke-berries. The empurpled hills! Methinks I have only noticed this in cooler weather.

Last night was exceedingly dark. I could not see the sidewalk in the street, but only felt it with my feet. I was obliged to whistle to warn travellers of my nearness, and then I would suddenly find myself abreast of them without having seen anything or heard their footsteps. It was cloudy and rainy weather combined with the absence of the moon. So dark a night that, if a farmer who had come in a-shopping had spent but an hour after sunset in some shop, he might find himself a prisoner in the village for the night. Thick darkness.

8 A. M. — To Lee's Bridge *via* Conantum.

It is a cool and windy morning, and I have donned a thick coat for a walk. The wind is from the north, so that the telegraph harp does not sound where I cross.

<sup>1</sup> [Channing, p. 202.]

This windy autumnal weather is very exciting and bracing, clear and cold, after the rain of yesterday, it having cleared off in the night. I see a small hawk, a pigeon (?) hawk, over the Depot Field, which can hardly fly against the wind. At Hubbard's Grove the wind roars loudly in the woods. Grapes are ripe and already shrivelled by frost; barberries also. It is cattle-show day at Lowell.

Yesterday's wind and rain has strewn the ground with leaves, especially under the apple trees. Rain coming after frost seems to loosen the hold of the leaves, making them rot off. Saw a woodchuck disappearing in his hole. The river washes up-stream before the wind, with white streaks of foam on its dark surface, diagonally to its course, showing the direction of the wind. Its surface, reflecting the sun, is dazzlingly bright. The outlines of the hills are remarkably distinct and firm, and their surfaces bare and hard, not clothed with a thick air. I notice one red tree, a red maple, against the green woodside in Conant's meadow. It is a far brighter red than the blossoms of any tree in summer and more conspicuous. The huckleberry bushes on Conantum are all turned red.

What can be handsomer for a picture than our river scenery now? Take this view from the first Conantum Cliff. First this smoothly shorn meadow on the west side of the stream, with all the swaths distinct, sprinkled with apple trees casting heavy shadows black as ink, such as can be seen only in this clear air, this strong light, one cow wandering restlessly about in it and lowing; then the blue river, scarcely darker than



and not to be distinguished from the sky, its waves driven southward, or up-stream, by the wind, making it appear to flow that way, bordered by willows and button-bushes; then the narrow meadow beyond, with varied lights and shades from its waving grass, which for some reason has not been cut this year, though so dry, now at length each grass-blade bending south before the wintry blast, as if bending for aid in that direction; then the hill rising sixty feet to a terrace-like plain covered with shrub oaks, maples, etc., now variously tinted, clad all in a livery of gay colors, every bush a feather in its cap; and further in the rear the wood-crowned Cliff some two hundred feet high, where gray rocks here and there project from amidst the bushes, with its orchard on the slope; and to the right of the Cliff the distant Lincoln hills in the horizon. The landscape so handsomely colored, the air so clear and wholesome; and the surface of the earth is so pleasingly varied, that it seems rarely fitted for the abode of man.

In Cohush Swamp the sumach leaves have turned a very deep red, but have not lost their fragrance. I notice wild apples growing luxuriantly in the midst of the swamp, rising red over the colored, painted leaves of the sumach, and reminding me that they were ripened and colored by the same influences, — some green, some yellow, some red, like the leaves.

Fell in with a man whose breath smelled of spirit which he had drunk. How could I but feel that it was his own spirit that I smelt? <sup>1</sup> Behind Miles's, Darius Miles's, that was, I asked an Irishman how many po-

<sup>1</sup> [Channing, p. 217.]

tatoes he could dig in a day, wishing to know how well they yielded. "Well, I don't keep any account," he answered; "I scratch away, and let the day's work praise itself." Aye, there's the difference between the Irishman and the Yankee; the Yankee keeps an account. The simple honesty of the Irish pleases me. A sparrow hawk, hardly so big as a nighthawk, flew over high above my head, — a pretty little graceful fellow, too small and delicate to be rapacious.

Found a grove of young sugar maples (*Acer saccharinum*) behind what was Miles's. How silently and yet startlingly the existence of these sugar maples was revealed to me, — which I had not thought grew in my immediate neighborhood, — when first I perceived the entire edges of its leaves and their obtuse sinuses.

Such near hills as Nobscot and Nashoba have lost all their azure in this clear air and plainly belong to earth. Give me clearness nevertheless, though my heavens be moved further off to pay for it.

I perceive from the hill behind Lee's that much of the river meadows is not cut, though they have been very dry. The sun-sparkle on the river is dazzlingly bright in this atmosphere, as it has not been, perchance, for many a month. It is so cold I am glad to sit behind the wall. Still the great bidens blooms by the causeway-side beyond the bridge.<sup>1</sup>

At Clematis Brook I perceive that the pods or follicles of the *Asclepias Syriaca* now point upward. Did they before all point down? Have they turned up? They are already bursting. I release some seeds with

<sup>1</sup> [Channing, pp. 217, 218.]

the long, fine silk attached. The fine threads fly apart at once, open with a spring, and then ray themselves out into a hemispherical form, each thread freeing itself from its neighbor and all reflecting prismatic or rainbow tints. The seeds, besides, are furnished with wings, which plainly keep them steady and prevent their whirling round. I let one go, and it rises slowly and uncertainly at first, now driven this way, then that, by currents which I cannot perceive, and I fear it will make shipwreck against the neighboring wood; but no, as it approaches it, it surely rises above it, and then, feeling the strong north wind, it is borne off rapidly in the opposite direction, ever rising higher and higher and tossing and heaved about with every fluctuation of the air, till, at a hundred feet above the earth and fifty rods off, steering south, I lose sight of it. How many myriads go sailing away at this season, high over hill and meadow and river, on various tacks until the wind hurls, to plant their race in new localities, who can tell how many miles distant! And for this end these silken streamers have been perfecting all summer, snugly packed in this light chest, — a perfect adaptation to this end, a prophecy not only of the fall but of future springs. Who could believe in prophecies of Daniel or of Miller that the world would end this summer, while one milkweed with faith matured its seeds?<sup>1</sup>

On Mt. Misery some very rich yellow leaves — clear yellow — of the *Populus grandidentata*, which still love to wag, and tremble in my hands. Also canoe birches there.

<sup>1</sup> [Channing, pp. 204, 205.]

The river and pond from the side of the sun look comparatively dark. As I look over the country westward and northwestward, the prospect looks already bleak and wintry. The surface of the earth between the forests is no longer green, but russet and hoary. You see distinctly eight or ten miles the russet earth and even houses, and then its outline is distinctly traced against the further blue mountains, thirty or thirty-five miles distant. You see distinctly perhaps to the height of land between the Nashua and Concord, and then the convexity of the earth conceals the further hills, though high, and your vision leaps a broad valley at once to the mountains.

Get home at noon.

At sundown the wind has all gone down.

Sept. 25. I was struck by the fitness of the expression chosen by the Irishman yesterday, — “I let the day’s work praise itself.” It was more pertinent than a scholar could have selected. But the Irishman does not trouble himself to inquire if the day’s work has not reason to blame itself.

Some men are excited by the smell of burning powder, but I thought in my dream last night how much saner to be excited by the smell of new bread.

I did not see but the seeds of the milkweed would be borne many hundred miles, and those which were ripened in New England might plant themselves in Pennsylvania. Densely packed in a little oblong chest armed with soft downy prickles and lined with a smooth silky lining, lie some one or two hundreds such pear-

shaped seeds (or like a steelyards poise), which have derived their nutriment through a band of extremely fine silken threads attached by their extremities to the core. At length, when the seeds are matured and cease to require nourishment from the parent plant, being weaned, and the pod with dryness and frost bursts, the extremities of the silken threads detach themselves from the core, and from being the conduits of nutriment to the seed become the buoyant balloon which, like some spiders' webs, bear the seeds to new and distant fields. They merely serve to buoy up the full-fed seed. Far finer than the finest thread. Think of the great variety of balloons which at this season are buoyed up by similar means! I am interested in the fate or success of every such venture which the autumn sends forth.<sup>1</sup>

I am astonished to find how much travellers, both in the East and West, permit themselves to be imposed on by a name, — that the traveller in the East, for instance, presumes so great a difference between one Asiatic and another because one bears the title of a Christian and the other not. At length he comes to a sect of Christians, — Armenians or Nestorians, — and predicates of them a far greater civilization, civility, and humanity than of their neighbors, I suspect not with much truth. At that distance and so impartially viewed, I see but little difference between a Christian and a Mahometan; and so I perceive that European and American Christians, so called, are precisely like these heathenish Armenian and Nestorian Christians,

<sup>1</sup> [Channing, p. 205.]

— not Christians, of course, in any true sense, but one other heathenish sect in the West, the difference between whose religion and that of the Mahometans is very slight and unimportant. Just such, not Christians but, as it were, heathenish Nestorian Christians, are we Americans. As if a Christian's dog were something better than a Mahometan's! I perceive no triumphant superiority in the so-called Christian over the so-called Mahometan. That nation is not Christian where the principles of humanity do not prevail, but the prejudices of race. I expect the Christian not to be superstitious, but to be distinguished by the clearness of his knowledge, the strength of his faith, the breadth of his humanity. A man of another race, an African for instance, comes to America to travel through it, and he meets with treatment exactly similar to, or worse than, that which the American meets with among the Turks, and Arabs, and Tartars. He is kicked out of the cars and hotels, or only admitted to the poorest place in them. The traveller, in both cases, finds the religion to be a mere superstition and frenzy, or rabidness.

The season of flowers may be considered as past now that the frosts have come. Fires have become comfortable. The evenings are pretty long.

2 P. M. — To bathe in Hubbard's meadow, thence to Cliffs.

It is beautiful weather, the air wonderfully clear and all objects bright and distinct. The air is of crystal purity. Both air and water are so transparent that the fisherman tries in vain to deceive the fish with his baits. Even our commonly muddy river looks clear to-day.

I find the water suddenly cold, and that the bathing days are over.

I see numerous butterflies still, yellow and small red, though not in flocks. Examined the hornets' nest near Hubbard's Grove, suspended from contiguous huckleberry bushes. The tops of the bushes appearing to grow out of it, little leafy sprigs, had a pleasing effect. An inverted cone eight or nine inches by seven or eight. I found no hornets now buzzing about it. Its entrance appeared to have been enlarged; so I concluded it had been deserted, but, looking nearer I discovered two or three dead hornets, men of war, in the entryway. Cutting off the bushes which sustained it, I proceeded to open it with my knife. First there were half a dozen layers of waved brownish paper resting loosely on one another, occupying nearly an inch in thickness, for a covering. Within were the six-sided cells in three stories, suspended from the roof and from one another by one or two suspension rods only, the lower story much smaller than the rest. And in what may be called the attic garret of the structure were two live hornets apparently partially benumbed with cold, which in the sun seemed rapidly recovering themselves, — their faculties. Most of the cells were empty, but in some were young hornets still, their heads projecting, apparently still-born, perhaps overtaken unexpectedly by cold weather. These insects appear to be very sensible to cold. The inner circles of cells were made of whitish, the outer of grayish, paper. It was like a deserted castle of the Mohawks, a few dead ones at the entrance of their castle.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> [Channing, pp. 249, 250.]

I watched the seeds of the milkweed rising higher and higher till lost in the sky, with as much interest as his friends did Mr. Lauriat.<sup>1</sup> I brought home two of the pods which were already bursting open, and amused myself from day to day with releasing the seeds and watching [them] rise slowly into the heavens till they were lost to my eye. No doubt the greater or less rapidity with which they rose would serve as a natural barometer to test the condition of the air.

The hornets' nest not brown but gray, two shades, whitish and dark, alternating on the outer layers or the covering, giving it a waved appearance.

In these cooler, windier, crystal days the note of the jay sounds a little more native. Standing on the Cliffs, I see them flitting and screaming from pine to pine beneath, displaying their gaudy blue pinions. Hawks, too, I perceive, sailing about in the clear air, looking white against the green pines, like the seeds of the milkweed. There is almost always a pair of hawks. Their shrill scream, that of the owls, and wolves are all related.

*Sept. 26.* Since I perambulated the bounds of the town, I find that I have in some degree confined myself, — my vision and my walks. On whatever side I look off I am reminded of the mean and narrow-minded men whom I have lately met there. What can be uglier than a country occupied by grovelling, coarse, and low-lived men? No scenery will redeem it. What can be more beautiful than any scenery inhabited by heroes? Any

<sup>1</sup> [Channing, p. 204.]

landscape would be glorious to me, if I were assured that its sky was arched over a single hero. Hornets, hyenas, and baboons are not so great a curse to a country as men of a similar character. It is a charmed circle which I have drawn around my abode, having walked not with God but with the devil. I am too well aware when I have crossed this line.

Most New England biographies and journals — John Adams's not excepted — affect me like opening of the tombs.

The prudent and seasonable farmers are already plowing against another year.

*Sept. 27.* Here is a cloudy day, and now the fisherman is out. Some tall, many-flowered, bluish-white asters are still abundant by the brook-sides.

I never found a pitcher-plant without an insect in it. The bristles about the nose of the pitcher all point inward, and insects which enter or fall in appear for this reason unable to get out again. It is some obstacle which our senses cannot appreciate. Pitcher-plants more obvious now.

We of Massachusetts boast a good deal of what we do for the education of our people, of our district-school system; and yet our district schools are as it were but infant-schools, and we have no system for the education of the great mass who are grown up. I have yet to learn that one cent is spent by this town, this political community called Concord, directly to educate the great mass of its inhabitants who have long since left the district school; for the Lyceum, impor-

tant as it is comparatively, though absolutely trifling, is supported by individuals. There are certain refining and civilizing influences, as works of art, journals and books, and scientific instruments, which this community is amply rich enough to purchase, which would educate this village, elevate its tone of thought, and, if it alone improved these opportunities, easily make it the centre of civilization in the known world, put us on a level as to opportunities at once with London and Arcadia, and secure us a culture at once superior to both. Yet we spend sixteen thousand dollars on a Town House, a hall for our political meetings mainly, and nothing to educate ourselves who are grown up. Pray is there nothing in the market, no advantages, no intellectual food worth buying? Have Paris and London and New York and Boston nothing to dispose of which this village might try and appropriate to its own use? Might not this great villager adorn his villa with a few pictures and statues, enrich himself with a choice library as available, without being cumbrous, as any in the world, with scientific instruments for such as have a taste to use them? Yet we are contented to be countrified, to be provincial. I am astonished to find that in this Nineteenth Century, in this land of free schools, we spend absolutely nothing as a town on our own education, cultivation, civilization. Each town, like each individual, has its own character, — some more, some less, cultivated. I know many towns so mean-spirited and benighted that it would be a disgrace to belong to them. I believe that some of our New England villages within thirty miles of Boston are as boor-

ish and barbarous communities as there are on the face of the earth. And how much superior are the best of them? If London has any refinement, any information to sell, why should we not buy it? Would not the town of Carlisle do well to spend sixteen thousand dollars on its own education at once, if it could only find a school-master for itself? It has one man, as I hear, who takes the *North American Review*. That will never civilize them, I fear. Why should not the town itself take the London and Edinburgh Reviews, and put itself in communication with whatever sources of light and intelligence there are in the world? Yet Carlisle is very little behind Concord in these respects. I do not know but it spends its proportional part on education. How happens it that the only libraries which the towns possess are the district school libraries, — books for children only, or for readers who must needs be written down to? Why should they not have a library, if not so extensive, yet of the same stamp and more select than the British Museum? It is not that the town cannot well afford to buy these things, but it is unaspiring and ignorant of its own wants. It sells milk, but it only builds larger barns with the money which it gets for its milk. Undoubtedly every New England village is as able to surround itself with as many civilizing influences of this kind [as] the members of the English nobility; and here there need be no peasantry. If the London *Times* is the best newspaper in the world, why does not the village of Concord take it, that its inhabitants may read it, and not the second best? If the South Sea explorers have at length got their story ready, and Congress has

neglected to make it accessible to the people, why does not Concord purchase one for its grown-up children? <sup>1</sup>

Parrot in his "Journey to Ararat," speaking of the difficulty of reaching it owing to the lateness of the season, says of the surrounding country, "As early even as the month of June vegetable life becomes in a manner extinct, from the combined influence of the sun's rays, and the aridity of the atmosphere and soil: the plains and mountain-sides, being destitute of both wood and water, have no covering but a scanty and burnt herbage, the roots of which are so rarely visited by a refreshing shower that the reparatory power of nature is all but lost, while the active animal kingdom seeks protection against the heat and drought either by burrowing in the earth, or retiring to the cool and inaccessible retreats in Caucasus and the mountains of Asia Minor."

This reminds me of what I have observed even in our own summers. With us, too, "vegetable life becomes in a manner extinct" by the end of June, and the beholder is impressed as if "the reparatory power of nature [were] all but lost."

2 P. M. — Rowed down the river to Ball's Hill.

The maples by the riverside look very green yet, — have not begun to blush, nor are the leaves touched by frost. Not so on the uplands. The river is so low that, off N. Barrett's shore, some low islands are exposed, covered with a green grass like mildew. There are all

<sup>1</sup> [See *Journal*, vol. iv, Aug. 29, 1852; also *Walden*, pp. 120-122; Riv. 171-173.]

kinds of boats chained to trees and stumps by the river-side, — some from Boston and the salt [water], — but I think that none after all is so suitable and convenient as the simple flat-bottomed and light boat that has long been made here by the farmers themselves. They are better adapted to the river than those made in Boston.

From Ball's Hill the Great Meadows, now smoothly shorn, have a quite imposing appearance, so spacious and level. There is so little of this level land in our midst. There is a shadow on the sides of the hills surrounding (a cloudy day), and where the meadow meets them it is darkest. The shadow deepens down the woody hills and is most distinctly dark where they meet the meadow line. Now the sun in the west is coming out and lights up the river a mile off, so that it shines with a white light like a burnished silver mirror. The poplar tree seems quite important to the scene. The pastures are so dry that the cows have been turned on to the meadow, but they gradually desert it, all feeding one way. The patches of sunlight on the meadow look luridly yellow, as if flames were traversing it. It is a day for fishermen. The farmers are gathering in their corn. The *Mikania scandens* and the button-bushes and the pickerel-weed are sere and flat with frost. We looked down the long reach toward Carlisle Bridge. The river, which is as low as ever, still makes a more than respectable appearance here and is of generous width. Rambled over the hills toward Tarbell's. The huckleberry bushes appear to be unusually red this fall, reddening these hills. We scared a calf out of the meadow, which ran like a ship tossed on the waves, over the hills toward Tarbell's.

They run awkwardly, red oblong squares tossing up and down like a vessel in a storm, with great commotion.<sup>1</sup> We fell into the path, printed by the feet of the calves, with no cows' tracks. The note of the yellow-hammer is heard from the edges of the fields. The soapwort gentian looks like a flower prematurely killed by the frost. The soil of these fields looks as yellowish-white as the corn-stalks themselves. Tarbell's hip-roofed house looked the picture of retirement, — of cottage size, under its noble elm, with its heap of apples before the door and the wood coming up within a few rods, — it being far off the road. The smoke from his chimney so white and vapor-like, like a winter scene. The lower limbs of the willows and maples and button-bushes are covered with the black and dry roots of the water-marigold and the ranunculi, plants with filiform, capillary, root-like submerged leaves.

Sept. 28. A considerable part of the last two nights and yesterday, a steady and rather warm rain, such as we have not had for a long time. This morning it is still completely overcast and drizzling a little. Flocks of small birds — apparently sparrows, bobolinks (or some bird of equal size with a pencilled breast which makes a musical clucking), and piping goldfinches — are flitting about like leaves and hopping up on to the bent grass stems in the garden, letting themselves down to the heavy heads, either shaking or picking out a seed or two, then alighting to pick it up. I am amused to see them hop up on to the slender, drooping grass stems;

<sup>1</sup> [Channing, p. 221.]

then slide down, or let themselves down, as it were foot over foot, with great fluttering, till they can pick at the head and release a few seeds; then alight to pick them up. They seem to prefer a coarse grass which grows like a weed in the garden between the potato-hills, also the amaranth.<sup>1</sup>

It is an ill wind that blows nobody any good. They say that this has been a good year to raise turkeys, it has been so dry. So that we shall have something to be thankful for.

Hugh Miller, in his "Old Red Sandstone," speaking of "the consistency of style which obtains among the ichthyolites of this formation" and the "microscopic beauty of these ancient fishes," says: "The artist who sculptured the cherry stone consigned it to a cabinet, and placed a microscope beside it; the microscopic beauty of these ancient fish was consigned to the twilight depths of a primeval ocean. There is a feeling which at times grows upon the painter and the statuary, as if the perception and love of the beautiful had been sublimed into a kind of moral sense. Art comes to be pursued for its own sake; the exquisite conception in the mind, or the elegant and elaborate model, becomes all in all to the worker, and the dread of criticism or the appetite of praise almost nothing. And thus, through the influence of a power somewhat akin to conscience, but whose province is not the just and the good, but the fair, the refined, the exquisite, have works prosecuted in solitude, and never intended for the world, been found fraught with loveliness." The hesitation with

<sup>1</sup> [See p. 83.]

which this is said — to say nothing of its simplicity — betrays a latent infidelity more fatal far than that of the "Vestiges of Creation," which in another work this author endeavors to correct. He describes that as an exception which is in fact the rule. The supposed want of harmony between "the perception and love of the beautiful" and a delicate moral sense betrays what kind of beauty the writer has been conversant with. He speaks of his work becoming all in all to the worker, his rising above the dread of criticism and the appetite of praise, as if these were the very rare exceptions in a great artist's life, and not the very definition of it.

#### 2 P. M. — To Conantum.

A warm, damp, mistling day, without much wind. The white pines in Hubbard's Grove have now a pretty distinct parti-colored look, — green and yellow mottled, — reminding me of some plants like the milkweed, expanding with maturity and pushing off their downy seeds. They have a singularly soft look. For a week or ten days I have ceased to look for new flowers or carry my botany in my pocket. The fall dandelion is now very fresh and abundant in its prime.

I see where the squirrels have carried off the ears of corn more than twenty rods from the corn-field into the woods. A little further on, beyond Hubbard's Brook, I saw a gray squirrel with an ear of yellow corn a foot long sitting on the fence, fifteen rods from the field. He dropped the corn, but continued to sit on the rail, where I could hardly see him, it being of the same color with himself, which I have no doubt he was well



aware of. He next took to a red maple, where his policy was to conceal himself behind the stem, hanging perfectly still there till I passed, his fur being exactly the color of the bark. When I struck the tree and tried to frighten him, he knew better than to run to the next tree, there being no continuous row by which he might escape; but he merely fled higher up and put so many leaves between us that it was difficult to discover him. When I threw up a stick to frighten him, he disappeared entirely, though I kept the best watch I could, and stood close to the foot of the tree. They are wonderfully cunning.<sup>1</sup>

The *Eupatorium purpureum* is early killed by frost and stands now all dry and brown by the sides of other herbs like the goldenrod and tansy, which are quite green and in blossom.

The railroads as much as anything appear to have unsettled the farmers. Our young Concord farmers and their young wives, hearing this bustle about them, seeing the world all going by as it were, — some daily to the cities about their business, some to California, — plainly cannot make up their minds to live the quiet, retired, old-fashioned, country-farmer's life. They are impatient if they live more than a mile from a railroad. While all their neighbors are rushing to the road, there are few who have character or bravery enough to live off the road. He is too well aware what is going on in the world not to wish to take some part in it. I was reminded of this by meeting S. Tuttle in his wagon.

The pontederia, which apparently makes the mass of

<sup>1</sup> [Channing, pp. 175, 176.]

the weeds by the side of the river, is all dead and brown and has been for some time; the year is over for it.

The mist is so thin that it is like haze or smoke in the air, imparting a softness to the landscape.

Sitting by the spruce swamp in Conant's Grove, I am reminded that this is a perfect day to visit the swamps, with its damp, mistling, mildewy air, so solemnly still. There are the spectre-like black spruces hanging with usnea moss, and in the rear rise the dark green pines and oaks on the hillside, touched here and there with livelier tints where a maple or birch may stand, this so luxuriant vegetation standing heavy, dark, sombre, like mould in a cellar. The peculiar tops of the spruce are seen against this.

I hear the barking of a red squirrel, who is alarmed at something, and a great scolding or ado among the jays, who make a great cry about nothing. The swamp is bordered with the red-berried alder, or prinos, and the button-bush. The balls of the last appear not half grown this season, — probably on account of the drought, — and now they are killed by frost.

This swamp contains beautiful specimens of the sidesaddle-flower (*Sarracenia purpurea*), better called pitcher-plant. They ray out around the dry scape and flower, which still remain, resting on rich uneven beds of a coarse reddish moss, through which the small-flowered andromeda puts up, presenting altogether a most rich and luxuriant appearance to the eye. Though the moss is comparatively dry, I cannot walk without upsetting the numerous pitchers, which are now full of water, and so wetting my feet. I once accidentally

sat down on such a bed of pitcher-plants, and found an uncommonly wet seat where I expected a dry one. These leaves are of various colors from plain green to a rich striped yellow or deep red. No plants are more richly painted and streaked than the inside of the broad lips of these. Old Josselyn called this "Hollow-leaved Lavender." No other plant, methinks, that we have is so remarkable and singular.

Here was a large hornets' nest, which when I went to take and first knocked on it to see if anybody was at home, out came the whole swarm upon me lively enough. I do not know why they should linger longer than their fellows whom I saw the other day, unless because the swamp is warmer. They were all within and not working, however.

I picked up two arrowheads in the field beyond.

What honest, homely, earth-loving, unaspiring houses they used to live in! Take that on Conantum for instance, — so low you can put your hand on the eaves behind. There are few whose pride could stoop to enter such a house to-day. And then the broad chimney, built for comfort, not for beauty, with no coping of bricks to catch the eye, no alto or basso rilievo.

The mist has now thickened into a fine rain, and I retreat.

*Sept. 29.* Van der Donck says of the water-beech (buttonwood), "This tree retains the leaves later than any other tree of the woods."

P. M. — To Goose Pond *via* E. Hosmer's; return by Walden.

Found Hosmer carting out manure from under his barn to make room for the winter. He said he was tired of farming, he was too old. Quoted Webster as saying that he had never eaten the bread of idleness for a single day, and thought that Lord Brougham might have said as much with truth while he was in the opposition, but he did not know that he could say as much of himself. However, he did not wish to be idle, he merely wished to rest.

Looked on Walden from the hill with the sawed pine stump on the north side. Scared up three black ducks, which rose with a great noise of their wings, striking the water. The hills this fall are unusually red, not only with the huckleberry, but the sumach and the blackberry vines.

Walden plainly can never be spoiled by the wood-chopper, for, do what you will to the shore, there will still remain this crystal well. The intense brilliancy of the red-ripe maples scattered here and there in the midst of the green oaks and hickories on its hilly shore is quite charming. They are unexpectedly and incredibly brilliant, especially on the western shore and close to the water's edge, where, alternating with yellow birches and poplars and green oaks, they remind me of a line of soldiers, redcoats and riflemen in green mixed together.<sup>1</sup>

The pine is one of the richest of trees to my eye. It stands like a great moss, a luxuriant mildew, — the pumpkin pine, — which the earth produces without effort.

<sup>1</sup> [See *Excursions*, p. 283; Riv. 347; *Journal*, Oct. 31, 1858.]

The poet writes the history of his body.

Query: Would not the cellular tissue of the grass poly make good tinder? I find that, when I light it, it burns up slowly and entirely, without blaze, like spunk.

Sept. 30. To powder-mills, and set an intermediate bound-stone on the new road there.

Saw them making hoops for powder-casks, of alder and the sprouts of the white birch, which are red with whitish spots. How interesting it is to observe a particular use discovered in any material! I am pleased to find that the artisan has good reason for preferring one material to another for a particular purpose. I am pleased to learn that a man has detected any *use* in wood or stone or any material, or, in other words, its relation to man.

The white ash has got its autumnal mulberry hue. What is the autumnal tint of the black ash? The former contrasts strongly with the other shade-trees on the village street — the elms and buttonwoods — at this season, looking almost black at the first glance. The different characters of the trees appear [more clearly] at this season, when their leaves, so to speak, are ripe, than at any other, — than in the winter, for instance, when they are little remarkable and almost uniformly gray or brown, or in the spring and summer, when they are undistinguishably green. Now a red maple, an ash, a white birch, a *Populus grandidentata*, etc., is distinguished almost as far as they are visible. It is with leaves as with fruits and woods, and animals and men; when they are mature their different characters appear.

The sun has been obscured much of the day by passing clouds, but now, at 5 P. M., the sun comes out and by the very clear and brilliant light, — though the shadows begin to fall long from the trees, — it is proved how remarkably clear or pure the atmosphere is. According to all accounts, an hour of such a light would be something quite memorable in England.

As the wood of an old Cremona, its very fibre, perchance, harmoniously transposed and educated to resound melody, has brought a great price, so methinks these telegraph-posts should bear a great price with musical instrument makers. It is prepared to be the material of harps for ages to come, as it were put asoak in and seasoning in music.<sup>1</sup>

Saw a hornets' nest on a tree over the road near the powder-mills, thirty or forty feet high.

Even the pearl, like the beautiful galls on the oaks, is said to be the production of diseases, or rather obstruction, the fish covering as with a tear some rough obstruction that has got into his shell.

Oct. 1. 5 P. M. — Just put a fugitive slave, who has taken the name of Henry Williams, into the cars for Canada. He escaped from Stafford County, Virginia, to Boston last October; has been in Shadrach's place at the Cornhill Coffee-House; had been corresponding through an agent with his master, who is his father, about buying himself, his master asking \$600, but he having been able to raise only \$500. Heard that there were writs out for two Williamses, fugitives, and was informed by his fellow-servants and employer that Auger-

[<sup>1</sup> Channing, p. 202.]

hole Burns and others of the police had called for him when he was out. Accordingly fled to Concord last night on foot, bringing a letter to our family from Mr. Lovejoy of Cambridge and another which Garrison had formerly given him on another occasion. He lodged with us, and waited in the house till funds were collected with which to forward him. Intended to dispatch him at noon through to Burlington, but when I went to buy his ticket, saw one at the depot who looked and behaved so much like a Boston policeman that I did not venture that time. An intelligent and very well-behaved man, a mulatto.

There is art to be used, not only in selecting wood for a withe, but in using it. Birch withes are twisted, I suppose in order that the fibres may be less abruptly bent; or is it only by accident that they are twisted?

The slave said he could guide himself by many other stars than the north star, whose rising and setting he knew. They steered for the north star even when it had got round and appeared to them to be in the south. They frequently followed the telegraph when there was no railroad. The slaves bring many superstitions from Africa. The fugitives sometimes superstitiously carry a turf in their hats, thinking that their success depends on it.

These days when the trees have put on their autumnal tints are the gala days of the year, when the very foliage of trees is colored like a blossom. It is a proper time for a yearly festival, an agricultural show.

Candle-light. — To Conantum.

The moon not quite half full. The twilight is much

shorter now than a month ago, probably as the atmosphere is clearer and there is less to reflect the light. The air is cool, and the ground also feels cold under my feet, as if the grass were wet with dew, which is not yet the case. I go through Wheeler's corn-field in the twilight, where the stalks are bleached almost white, and his tops are still stacked along the edge of the field. The moon is not far up above the southwestern horizon. Looking west at this hour, the earth is an unvaried, undistinguishable black in contrast with the twilight sky. It is as if you were walking in night up to your chin. There is no wind stirring. An oak tree in Hubbard's pasture stands absolutely motionless and dark against the sky. The crickets sound farther off or fainter at this season, as if they had gone deeper into the sod to avoid the cold. There are no crickets heard on the alders on the causeway. The moon looks colder in the water, though the water-bugs are still active. There is a great change between this and my last moonlight walk. I experience a comfortable warmth when I approach the south side of a dry wood, which keeps off the cooler air and also retains some of the warmth of day. The voices of travellers in the road are heard afar over the fields, even to Conantum house. The stars are brighter than before. The moon is too far west to be seen reflected in the river at Tupelo Cliff, but the stars are reflected. The river is a dark mirror with bright points feebly fluctuating. I smell the bruised horsemint, which I cannot see, while I sit on the brown rocks by the shore. I see the glow-worm under the damp cliff. No whip-poor-wills are heard to-night, and scarcely a note of any

other bird. At 8 o'clock the fogs have begun, which, with the low half-moon shining on them, look like cobwebs or thin white veils spread over the earth. They are the dreams or visions of the meadow.

The second growth of the white pine is probably softer and more beautiful than the primitive forest ever afforded. The primitive forest is more grand with its bare mossy stems and ragged branches, but exhibits no such masses of green needles trembling in the light.

The elms are generally of a dirty or brownish yellow now.

*Oct. 2. P. M.* — Some of the white pines on Fair Haven Hill have just reached the acme of their fall; others have almost entirely shed their leaves, and they are scattered over the ground and the walls. The same is the state of the pitch pines. At the Cliffs, I find the wasps prolonging their short lives on the sunny rocks, just as they endeavored to do at my house in the woods. It is a little hazy as I look into the west to-day. The shrub oaks on the terraced plain are now almost uniformly of a deep red.

*Oct. 4. Saturday.* The emigrant has for weeks been tossing on the Atlantic and perchance as long ascending the St. Lawrence with contrary winds, conversant as yet in the New World only with the dreary coast of Newfoundland and Labrador and the comparatively wild shores of the river below the Isle of Orleans. It is said that, under these circumstances, the sudden

apparition of Quebec on turning Point Levi makes a memorable impression on the beholder.<sup>1</sup>

Minott was telling me to-day that he used to know a man in Lincoln who had no floor to his barn, but waited till the ground froze, then swept it clean in his barn and threshed his grain on it. He also used to see men threshing their buckwheat in the field where it grew, having just taken off the surface down to a hardpan.

Minott used the word "gavel" to describe a parcel of stalks cast on the ground to dry. His are good old English words, and I am always sure to find them in the dictionary, though I never heard them before in my life.

I was admiring his corn-stalks disposed about the barn to dry, over or astride the braces and the timbers, of such a fresh, clean, and handsome green, retaining their strength and nutritive properties so, unlike the gross and careless husbandry of speculating, money-making farmers, who suffer their stalks to remain out till they are dry and dingy and black as chips.

Minott is, perhaps, the most poetical farmer — who most realizes to me the poetry of the farmer's life — that I know. He does nothing with haste and drudgery, but as if he loved it. He makes the most of his labor, and takes infinite satisfaction in every part of it. He is not looking forward to the sale of his crops or any pecuniary profit, but he is paid by the constant satisfaction which his labor yields him. He has not too much land to trouble him, — too much work to do, — no hired man nor

<sup>1</sup> [*Excursions*, p. 88; Riv. 109.]

boy, — but simply to amuse himself and live. He cares not so much to raise a large crop as to do his work well. He knows every pin and nail in his barn. If another linter is to be floored, he lets no hired man rob him of that amusement, but he goes slowly to the woods and, at his leisure, selects a pitch pine tree, cuts it, and hauls it or gets it hauled to the mill; and so he knows the history of his barn floor.

Farming is an amusement which has lasted him longer than gunning or fishing. He is never in a hurry to get his garden planted and yet [it] is always planted soon enough, and none in the town is kept so beautifully clean.

He always prophesies a failure of the crops, and yet is satisfied with what he gets. His barn floor is fastened down with oak pins, and he prefers them to iron spikes, which he says will rust and give way. He handles and amuses himself with every ear of his corn crop as much as a child with its playthings, and so his small crop goes a great way. He might well cry if it were carried to market. The seed of weeds is no longer in his soil.

He loves to walk in a swamp in windy weather and hear the wind groan through the pines. He keeps a cat in his barn to catch the mice. He indulges in no luxury of food or dress or furniture, yet he is not penurious but merely simple. If his sister dies before him, he may have to go to the almshouse in his old age; yet he is not poor, for he does not want riches. He gets out of each manipulation in the farmers' operations a fund of entertainment which the speculating drudge hardly knows. With never-failing rheumatism and trembling hands,

he seems yet to enjoy perennial health. Though he never reads a book, — since he has finished the "Naval Monument," — he speaks the best of English.

*Oct. 5. Sunday.* I noticed on Friday, October 3d, that the willows generally were green and unchanged. The red maples varied from green through yellow to bright red. The black cherry was green inclining to yellow. (I speak of such trees as I chanced to see.) The apple trees, green but shedding their leaves like most of the trees. Elm, a dingy yellow. White ash, from green to dark purple or mulberry. White oak, green inclining to yellow. Tupelo, reddish yellow and red; tree bushed about the head, limbs small and slanting downward. Some maples when ripe are yellow or whitish yellow, others reddish yellow, others bright red, by the accident of the season or position, — the more or less light and sun, being on the edge or in the midst of the wood; just as the fruits are more or less deeply colored. Birches, green and yellow. Swamp white oak, a yellowish green. Black ash, greenish yellow and now scred by frost. Bass, scred yellowish.

Color in the maturity of foliage is as variable and little characteristic as naturalists have found it to be for distinguishing fishes and quadrupeds, etc.

Observed that the woodchuck has two or more holes, a rod or two apart: one, or the front door, where the excavated sand is heaped up; another, not so easily discovered, very small, round, without any sand about it, — being that by which he emerged, — smaller directly at the surface than beneath, on the principle by which

a well is dug,<sup>1</sup> making as small a hole as possible at the surface to prevent caving. About these holes is now seen their manure, apparently composed chiefly of the remains of crickets, which are seen crawling over the sand. Saw a very fat woodchuck on a wall, evidently prepared to go into winter quarters.<sup>2</sup>

Still purplish asters, and late goldenrods, and fragrant life-everlasting, and purple gerardia, great bidens, etc., etc. The dogwood by the Corner road has lost every leaf, its bunches of dry greenish berries hanging straight down from the bare stout twigs as if their peduncles were broken. It has assumed its winter aspect, — a mithridatic look. The prinos berries are quite red.<sup>3</sup> The panicle hawkweed is one of those yellowish spherical or hemispherical fuzzy-seeded plants which you see about the wood-paths and fields at present, which however only a strong wind can blow far. Saw by the path-side beyond the Conant spring that singular jelly-like sort of mushroom which I saw last spring while surveying White's farm; now red, globular, three quarters of an inch in diameter, covering the coarse moss by the ruts on the path-side with jelly-covered seeds(?).

2 P. M. — To the high open land between Bateman's Pond and the lime-kiln.

It is a still, cloudy afternoon, rather cool. As I go past Cheney's boat-house, the river looks lighter than the sky. The butternuts have shed nearly all their leaves, and their nuts are seen black against the sky. The white oaks are turned a reddish brown in some valleys. The

<sup>1</sup> [Channing, p. 221.]

<sup>2</sup> [*Ibid.*]

<sup>3</sup> [Channing, p. 250.]

Norway cinquefoil and a smaller cinquefoil are still in blossom, and also the late buttercup. My companion remarked that the land (for the most part consisting of decayed orchards, huckleberry pastures, and forests) on both sides of the old Carlisle road, uneven and undulating like the road, appeared to be all in motion like the traveller, travelling on with him. Found a wild russet apple, very good, of peculiar form, flattened at the poles. Some red maples have entirely lost their leaves. The black birch is straw-colored.<sup>1</sup>

The rocks in the high open pasture are peculiar and interesting to walk over, for, though presenting broad and flat surfaces, the strata are perpendicular, producing a grained and curled appearance, — this rocky crown like a hoary head covered with curly hair, — or it is like walking over the edges of the leaves of a vast book. I wonder how these rocks were ever worn even thus smooth by the elements. The strata are remarkably serpentine or waving. It appears as if you were upon the axis of elevation, geologically speaking. I do not remember any other pasture in Concord where the rocks are so remarkable for this.

What is that fleshy or knot-fleshy [?] root which we found in the soil on the rocks by Bateman's Pond, which looked so edible? All meadows and swamps have been remarkably dry this year, and are still, notwithstanding the few showers and rainy days. Witch-hazel now in bloom. I perceive the fragrance of ripe grapes in the air, and after a little search discover the ground covered with them, — where the frost has stripped the vines

<sup>1</sup> [Channing, p. 250.]

of leaves,—still fresh and plump and perfectly ripe. The little conical burs of the agrimony stick to my clothes. The pale lobelia still blooms freshly. The rough hawkweed holds up its globes of yellowish fuzzy seeds as well as the panicle. The clouds have cleared away, the sun come out, and it is warmer and very pleasant. The declining sun, falling on the willows, etc., below Mrs. Ripley's and on the water, produces a rare, soft light, such as I do not often see, a greenish yellow.<sup>1</sup> The milkweed seeds are in the air. I see one in the river, which a minnow occasionally jostles.

Stood near a small rabbit, hardly half grown, by the old Carlisle road.

I hear the red-wing blackbirds by the riverside again, as if it were a new spring. They appear to have come to bid farewell. The birds appear to depart with the coming of the frosts, which kill vegetation and, directly or indirectly, the insects on which they feed. The American bittern (*Ardea minor*) flew across the river, trailing his legs in the water, scared up by us. This, according to Peabody, is the boomer (stake-driver). In their sluggish flight they can hardly keep their legs up. Wonder if they can soar.

#### 8 P. M. — To Cliffs.

Moon three-quarters full. The nights now are very still, for there is hardly any noise of birds or of insects. The whip-poor-will is not heard, nor the mosquito; only the occasional lisp of some sparrow. The moon gives not a creamy but white, cold light, through which

<sup>1</sup> [Channing, p. 250.]

you can see far distinctly. About villages you hear the bark of dogs instead of the howl of wolves. When I descend into the valley by Wheeler's grain-field, I find it quite cold. The sand slopes in the Deep Cut gleam coldly as if covered with rime. As I go through the Spring Woods I perceive a sweet, dry scent from the underwoods like that of the fragrant life-everlasting. I suppose it is that. To appreciate the moonlight you must stand in the shade and see where a few rods or a few feet distant it falls in between the trees. It is a "milder day," made for some inhabitants whom you do not see. The fairies are a quiet, gentle folk, invented plainly to inhabit the moonlight. I frequently see a light on the ground within thick and dark woods where all around is in shadow, and haste forward, expecting to find some decayed and phosphorescent stump, but find it to be some clear moonlight that falls in between some crevice in the leaves. As moonlight is to sunlight, so are the fairies to men.

Standing on the Cliffs, no sound comes up from the woods. The earth has gradually turned more northward; the birds have fled south after the sun, and this impresses me, as well by day as by night, as a deserted country. There is a down-like mist over the river and pond, and there are no bright reflections of the moon or sheeniness from the pond in consequence, all the light being absorbed by the low fog.

Oct. 6. Monday. 12 M. — To Bedford line to set a stone by river on Bedford line.

The reach of the river between Bedford and Carlisle,



seen from a distance in the road to-day, as formerly, has a singularly ethereal, celestial, or elysian look. It is of a light sky-blue, alternating with smoother white streaks, where the surface reflects the light differently, like a milk-pan full of the milk of Valhalla partially skimmed, more gloriously and heavenly fair and pure than the sky itself. It is something more celestial than the sky above it. I never saw any water look so celestial. I have often noticed it. I believe I have seen this reach from the hill in the middle of Lincoln. We have names for the rivers of hell, but none for the rivers of heaven, unless the Milky Way be one. It is such a smooth and shining blue, like a panoply of sky-blue plates.<sup>1</sup> Our dark and muddy river has such a tint in this case as I might expect Walden or White Pond to exhibit, if they could be seen under similar circumstances, but Walden seen from Fair Haven is, if I remember, of a deep blue color tinged with green. Cerulean? Such water as that river reach appears to me of quite incalculable value, and the man who would blot that out of his prospect for a sum of money does not otherwise than to sell heaven.

George Thatcher, having searched an hour in vain this morning to find a frog, caught a pickerel with a mullein leaf.

The white ash near our house, which the other day was purple or mulberry-color, is now much more red.

7.30 P. M. — To Fair Haven Pond by boat, the moon four-fifths full, not a cloud in the sky; paddling all the way.

<sup>1</sup> [Channing, p. 251.]

The water perfectly still, and the air almost, the former gleaming like oil in the moonlight, with the moon's disk reflected in it.

When we started, saw some fishermen kindling their fire for spearing by the riverside. It was a lurid, reddish blaze, contrasting with the white light of the moon, with dense volumes of black smoke from the burning pitch pine roots rolling upward in the form of an inverted pyramid. The blaze reflected in the water, almost as distinct as the substance. It looked like tarring a ship on the shore of the Styx or Cocytus. For it is still and dark, notwithstanding the moon, and no sound but the crackling of the fire. The fishermen can be seen only near at hand, though their fire is visible far away; and then they appear as dusky, fuliginous figures, half enveloped in smoke, seen only by their enlightened sides. Like devils they look, clad in old coats to defend themselves from the fogs, one standing up forward holding the spear ready to dart, while the smoke and flames are blown in his face, the other paddling the boat slowly and silently along close to the shore with almost imperceptible motion.

The river appears indefinitely wide; there is a mist rising from the water, which increases the indefiniteness. A high bank or moonlit hill rises at a distance over the meadow on the bank, with its sandy gullies and clamshells exposed where the Indians feasted. The shore line, though close, is removed by the eye to the side of the hill. It is at high-water mark. It is continued till it meets the hill. Now the fisherman's fire, left behind, acquires some thick rays in the distance and becomes a

star. As surely as sunlight falling through an irregular chink makes a round figure on the opposite wall, so the blaze at a distance appears a star. Such is the effect of the atmosphere. The bright sheen of the moon is constantly travelling with us, and is seen at the same angle in front on the surface of the pads: and the reflection of its disk in the rippled water by our boat-side appears like bright gold pieces falling on the river's counter. This coin is incessantly poured forth as from some unseen horn of plenty at our side.

(I hear a lark singing this morn (October 7th), and yesterday saw them in the meadows. Both larks and blackbirds are heard again now occasionally, seemingly after a short absence, as if come to bid farewell.)

I do not know but the weirdness of the gleaming oily surface is enhanced by the thin fog. A few water-bugs are seen glancing in our course.

I shout like a farmer to his oxen, — a short barking shout, — and instantly the woods on the eastern shore take it up, and the western hills a little up the stream; and so it appears to rebound from one side the river valley to the other, till at length I hear a farmer call to his team far up as Fair Haven Bay, whither we are bound.

We pass through reaches where there is no fog, perhaps where a little air is stirring. Our clothes are almost wet through with the mist, as if we sat in water. Some portions of the river are much warmer than others. In one instance it was warmer in the midst of the fog than in a clear reach.

In the middle of the pond we tried the echo again.

First the hill to the right took it up; then further up the stream on the left; and then after a long pause, when we had almost given it up, — and the longer expected, the more in one sense unexpected and surprising it was, — we heard a farmer shout to his team in a distant valley, far up on the opposite side of the stream, much louder than the previous echo; and even after this we heard one shout faintly in some neighboring town. The third echo seemed more loud and distinct than the second. But why, I asked, do the echoes always travel up the stream? I turned about and shouted again, and then I found that they all appeared equally to travel down the stream, or perchance I heard only those that did so.

As we rowed to Fair Haven's eastern shore, a moonlit hill covered with shrub oaks, we could form no opinion of our progress toward it, — not seeing the water-line where it met the hill, — until we saw the weeds and sandy shore and the tall bulrushes rising above the shallow water [like] the masts of large vessels in a haven. The moon was so high that the angle of excidence [*sic*] did not permit of our seeing her reflection in the pond.

As we paddled down the stream with our backs to the moon, we saw the reflection of every wood and hill on both sides distinctly. These answering reflections — shadow to substance — impress the voyager with a sense of harmony and symmetry, as when you fold a blotted paper and produce a regular figure, — a dualism which nature loves. What you commonly see is but half. Where the shore is very low the actual and reflected trees

appear to stand foot to foot, and it is but a line that separates them, and the water and the sky almost flow into one another, and the shore seems to float. As we paddle up or down, we see the cabins of muskrats faintly rising from amid the weeds, and the strong odor of musk is borne to us from particular parts of the shore. Also the odor of a skunk is wafted from over the meadows or fields. The fog appears in some places gathered into a little pyramid or squad by itself, on the surface of the water. Home at ten.

*Oct. 7.* This morning the fog over the river and the brooks and meadows running into it has risen to the height of forty or fifty feet.

1 P. M. — To river; by boat to Corner Bridge.

A very still, warm, bright, clear afternoon. Our boat so small and low that we are close to the water.<sup>1</sup>

The muskrats all the way are now building their houses, about two thirds done. They are of an oval form (looking down on them), sloping upward from the smaller end, by which the rat apparently ascends, and composed of mouthfuls of pontederia leaf-stems (now dead), the capillaceous roots or leaves of the water-marigold (?) and other capillaceous-leaved water-plants, flag-root, a plant which looks like a cock's tail or a peacock's feather in form,<sup>2</sup> clamshells, etc., sometimes rising from amidst the dead pontederia stems or resting on the button-bushes or the willows. The mouthfuls are disposed in layers successively smaller, forming a somewhat conical mound. Seen at this stage they show some art and a

<sup>1</sup> *Vide* forward, Nov. 9th.

<sup>2</sup> The *Potamogeton Robbinsii*.

good deal of labor. We pulled one to pieces to examine the inside. There was a small cavity, which might hold two or three full-grown muskrats, just above the level of the water, quite wet and of course dark and narrow, communicating immediately with a gallery under water. There were a few pieces of the white root of some water-plant — perhaps a pontederia or a lily root — in it. There they dwell, in close contiguity to the water itself, always in a wet apartment, in a wet coat never changed, with immeasurable water in the cellar, through which is the only exit. They have reduced life to a lower scale than Diogenes. Certainly they do not fear cold, ague, or consumption. Think of bringing up a family in such a place, — worse than a Broad Street cellar. But probably these are not their breeding-places. The muskrat and the fresh-water mussel are very native to our river. The Indian, their human compeer, has departed. There is a settler whom our lowlands and our fogs do not hurt. One of the fishermen speared one last night. How long has the muskrat dined on mussels? The river mud itself will have the ague as soon as he. What occasion has he for a dentist? Their unfinished, rapidly rising nests look now like truncated cones. They seem to be all building at once in different parts of the river, and to have advanced equally far.

The weeds being dead and the weather cooler, the water is more transparent. Now is the time to observe such weeds as have not been destroyed. The fishes are plainly seen. Saw a pickerel which had swallowed a smaller fish, with the tail projecting from his mouth. There is a dirty-looking weed quite submerged, with

short, densely crowded, finely divided leaves, in dense masses atop, like the tops of spruce trees, more slender below. The shores for a great width are occupied by the dead leaves and stems of the pontederia, which give the river a very wild look. There is a strong-scented, green plant which looks like a fresh-water sponge or coral, clumsy-limbed like a dead tree, or a cactus. A long narrow grass like a fresh-water eel-grass.

The swamp white oak on the meadow, which was blown down in the spring, is still alive, as if it had been supported by the sap in its trunk. The dirt still adheres to its roots, which are of the color of an elephant's skin.

I suppose it is the *Nuphar Kalmiana* which I find in blossom in deep water, though its long stem, — four feet or more, — round and gradually tapering toward the root with no leaves apparent, makes me doubt a little. Apparently five sepals, greenish and yellow without, yellow within, eight small petals, many stamens, stigma eight-rayed.

Saw the *Ardea minor* walking along the shore, like a hen with long green legs. Its pencilled throat is so like the reeds and shore, amid which it holds its head erect to watch the passer, that it is difficult to discern it. You can get very near it, for it is unwilling to fly, preferring to hide amid the weeds. The lower parts of the willows and the button-bushes are black with the capillaceous leaves and stems of the water-marigold, etc.<sup>1</sup>

The raw edge of the rushes (common *Juncus militaris* I think it is), two to four feet high, in dense fields along

<sup>1</sup> [This is queried in pencil.]

the shore, in various stages of decay, looks like a level rainbow skirting the water's edge and reflected in the water, though a single one, or a few near at hand, do not exhibit very marked or distinct colors. But [at] a distance from a shore which is lined with them, the colors are very distinct and produce a pleasing effect, — first, next the water, a few inches of pink; then a faint narrow line, or halo, of yellowish; then a broad and lively green, the proper color of the rush; then a sunny yellow, passing into the brown of the dead and scered tops. The different parts of the plant from the surface of the water to its tip, when you look at the edge of a large and dense field of them, produce five distinct horizontal and parallel bars of different colors like a level rainbow, — a rainbow-like effect, — making a pleasing border to the river in a bright day like this; and occasionally the sunlight from the rippled surface produced by our boat, reflected on them, enhances the effect. The colors pass into each other so gradually and indefinitely, as if it were the reflection of the sun falling on a mist.

The rounded hills beyond the clamshells look velvety smooth as we are floating down the stream, covered with the now red blackberry vines. The oaks look light against the sky, rising story above story. I see small whitish and pinkish polygonums along the waterside.

There is a great difference between this season and a month ago, — warm as this happens to be, — as between one period of your life and another. A little frost is at the bottom of it.

It is a remarkable difference between night and day on the river, that there is no fog by day.

*Oct. 8. Wednesday.* A slight wind now fills the air with elm leaves. The nights have been cool of late, so that a fire has been comfortable, but the last was quite warm.

2 P. M. — To the Marlborough road.

This day is very warm, yet not bright like the last, but hazy. Picked up an Indian gouge on Dennis's Hill. The foliage has lost its very bright tints now; it is more dull, looks dry, or as if burnt, even. The very ground or grass is crisped with drought, and yields a crispy sound to my feet. The woods are brownish, reddish, yellowish merely, excepting of course the evergreens. It is so warm that I am obliged to take off my neck-handkerchief and laborers complain of the heat.

By the side of J. P. Brown's grain-field I picked up some white oak acorns in the path by the wood-side, which I found to be unexpectedly sweet and palatable, the bitterness being scarcely perceptible. To my taste they are quite as good as chestnuts. No wonder the first men lived on acorns. Such as these are no mean food, such as they are represented to be. Their sweetness is like the sweetness of bread, and to have discovered this palatableness in this neglected nut, the whole world is to me the sweeter for it. I am related again to the first men. What can be handsomer, wear better to the eye, than the color of the acorn, like the leaves on which they fall polished, or varnished? To find that acorns are edible, — it is a greater addition to one's stock of life than would be imagined. I should be at least equally pleased if I were to find that the grass tasted sweet and nutritious. It increases the number of my friends; it diminishes the

number of my foes. How easily at this season I could feed myself in the woods! There is mast for me too, as well as for the pigeon and the squirrel. This Dodonean fruit.

The goldfinches are in the air. I hear a blackbird also, and see a downy woodpecker, and see and hear a hairy one. The seeds of the pasture thistle are not so buoyed up by their down as the milkweed.

In the forenoon commonly I see nature only through a window; in the afternoon my study or apartment in which I sit is a vale.

The farmers are ditching, — redeeming more meadow, — getting corn, collecting their apples, threshing, etc.

I cannot but believe that acorns were intended to be the food of man. They are agreeable to the palate, as the mother's milk to the babe. The sweet acorn tree is famous and well known to the boys. There can be no question respecting the wholesomeness of this diet.

This warm day is a godsend to the wasps. I see them buzzing about the broken windows of deserted buildings, as Jenny Dugan's, — the yellow-knotted. I smell the dry leaves like hay from the woods. Some elms are already bare. The basswood here is quite sere. The pines are still shedding their leaves. This brook by Jenny's is always a pleasant sight and sound to me. In the spring I saw the sucker here. It is remarkable through what narrow and shallow brooks a sucker will be seen to dart, and a trout. I perceive that some white oaks are quite red. The black oaks are yellowish. I know not surely whether the brighter red and more divided leaf is that of the red or the scarlet oak. The jointed polygonum in the Marlborough road is an in-

teresting flower, it is so late, so bright a red,—though inobvious from its minuteness, — without leaves, above the sand like sorrel, mixed with other minute flowers and the empty chalices of the trichostema. I saw one blue curl still adhering. The puffballs are split open and rayed out on the sand like five or *ten* (!) fingers. The milkweed seeds must be carried far, for it is only when a strong wind is blowing that they are loosened from their pods. An arrowhead at the desert. *Spergula arvensis* — corn-spurry (some call it tares) — at the acorn tree. Filled my pockets with acorns. Found another gouge on Dennis's Hill. To have found the Indian gouges and tasted sweet acorns, — is it not enough for one afternoon?

The sun set red in haze, visible fifteen minutes before setting, and the moon rose in like manner at the same time.

This evening, I am obliged to sit with my door and window open, in a thin coat, which I have not done for three weeks at least.

A warm night like this at this season produces its effect on the village. The boys are heard at play in the street now, at 9 o'clock, in greater force and with more noise than usual. My neighbor has got out his flute.

There is more fog than usual. The moon is full. The tops of the woods in the horizon seen above the fog look exactly like long, low black clouds, the fog being the color of the sky.

Oct. 9. Heard two screech owls in the night. Boiled a quart of acorns for breakfast, but found them not so palatable as raw, having acquired a bitterish taste, per-

chance from being boiled with the shells and skins; yet one would soon get accustomed to this.

The sound of foxhounds in the woods, heard now, at 9 A. M., in the village, reminds me of mild winter mornings.

## 2 P. M. — To Conantum.

In the maple woods the ground is strewn with new-fallen leaves. I hear the green locust again on the alders of the causeway, but he is turned a straw-color. The warm weather has revived them. All the acorns on the same tree are not equally sweet. They appear to dry sweet. From Conantum I see them getting hay from the meadow below the Cliffs. It must have been quite dry when cut. The black ash has lost its leaves, and the white here is dry and brownish yellow, not having turned mulberry. I see half a dozen snakes in this walk, green and striped (one very young striped one), who appear to be out enjoying the sun. They appear to make the most of the last warm days of the year. The hills and plain on the opposite side of the river are covered with deep warm red leaves of shrub oaks. On Lee's hillside by the pond, the old leaves of some pitch pines are almost of a golden-yellow hue, seen in the sunlight, — a rich autumnal look. The green are, as it were, set in the yellow.

The witch-hazel here is in full blossom on this magical hillside, while its broad yellow leaves are falling. Some bushes are completely bare of leaves, and leather-colored they strew the ground. It is an extremely interesting plant, — October and November's child, and yet

reminds me of the very earliest spring. Its blossoms smell like the spring, like the willow catkins; by their color as well as fragrance they belong to the saffron dawn of the year, suggesting amid all these signs of autumn, falling leaves and frost, that the life of Nature, by which she eternally flourishes, is untouched. It stands here in the shadow on the side of the hill, while the sunlight from over the top of the hill lights up its topmost sprays and yellow blossoms. Its spray, so jointed and angular, is not to be mistaken for any other. I lie on my back with joy under its boughs. While its leaves fall, its blossoms spring. The autumn, then, is indeed a spring. All the year is a spring. I see two blackbirds high overhead, going south, but I am going north in my thought with these hazel blossoms. It is a faery place. This is a part of the immortality of the soul. When I was thinking that it bloomed too late for bees or other insects to extract honey from its flowers, — that perchance they yielded no honey, — I saw a bee upon it. How important, then, to the bees this late-blossoming plant!

The circling hawk steers himself through the air, like the skater, without a visible motion.

The hoary cinquefoil in blossom.

A large sassafras tree behind Lee's, two feet diameter at ground. As I return over the bridge, I hear a song sparrow singing on the willows exactly as in spring. I see a large sucker rise to the surface of the river. I hear the crickets singing loudly in the walls as they have not done (so loudly) for some weeks, while the sun is going down shorn of his rays by the haze.

There is a thick bed of leaves in the road under Hubbard's elms. This reminds me of Cato, as if the ancients made more use of nature. He says, "*Stramenta si deerunt, frondem iligneam legito, eam substernito ovibus bubusque.*" (If litter is wanting, gather the leaves of the holm oak and strew them under your sheep and oxen.) In another place he says, "*Circum vias ulmos serito, et partim populos, uti frondem ovibus et bubus habeas.*" I suppose they were getting that dry meadow grass for litter. There is little or no use made by us of the leaves of trees, not even for beds, unless it be sometimes to rake them up in the woods and cast into hog-pens or compost-heaps.

Cut a stout purple cane of pokeweed.

Oct. 10. The air this morning is full of bluebirds, and again it is spring. There are many things to indicate the renewing of spring at this season. The blossoming of spring flowers, — not to mention the witch-hazel, — the notes of spring birds, the springing of grain and grass and other plants.

Ah, I yearn toward thee, my friend, but I have not confidence in thee. We do not believe in the same God. I am not thou; thou art not I. We trust each other to-day, but we distrust to-morrow. Even when I meet thee unexpectedly, I part from thee with disappointment. Though I enjoy thee more than other men, yet I am more disappointed with thee than with others. I know a noble man; what is it hinders me from knowing him better? I know not how it is that our distrust, our hate, is stronger than our love. Here I have been on

what the world would call friendly terms with one fourteen years, have pleased my imagination sometimes with loving him; and yet our hate is stronger than our love. Why are we related, yet thus unsatisfactorily? We almost are a sore to one another. Ah, I am afraid because thy relations are not my relations. Because I have experienced that in some respects we are strange to one another, strange as some wild creature. Ever and anon there will come the consciousness to mar our love that, change the theme but a hair's breadth, and we are tragically strange to one another. We do not know what hinders us from coming together. But when I consider what my friend's relations and acquaintances are, what his tastes and habits, then the difference between us gets named. I see that all these friends and acquaintances and tastes and habits are indeed my friend's self. In the first place, my friend is prouder than I am, — and I am very proud, perchance.

2 P. M. — To Flint's Pond.

It was the seed-vessel of the Canada snapdragon in the Marlborough road that I mistook for a new flower. This is still in bloom in the Deep Cut. The chickadee, sounding all alone, now that birds are getting scarce, reminds me of the winter, in which it almost alone is heard.

How agreeable to the eye at this season the color of new-fallen leaves (I am going through the young woods where the locusts grow near Goose Pond), sere and crisp! When freshly fallen, with their forms and their veins still distinct, they have a certain life in them still. The chestnut leaves now almost completely cover the ground

under the trees, lying up light and deep, so clean and wholesome, whether to look at or handle or smell, — the tawny leaves, nature's color. They look as if they might all yield a wholesome tea. They are rustling down fast from the young chestnuts, leaving their bare and blackish-looking stems. You make a great noise now walking in the woods, on account of the dry leaves, especially chestnut and oak and maple, that cover the ground. I wish that we might make more use of leaves than we do. We wait till they are reduced to virgin mould. Might we not fill beds with them? or use them for fodder or litter? After they have been flattened by the snow and rain, they will be much less obvious. Now is the time to enjoy the dry leaves. Now all nature is a dried herb, full of medicinal odors. I love to hear of a preference given to one kind of leaves over another for beds. Some maples which a week ago were a mass of yellow foliage are now a fine gray smoke, as it were, and their leaves cover the ground.

Plants have two states, certainly, — the green and the dry. The lespedeza and primrose heads, etc., etc., — I look on these with interest, as if they were newly blossoming plants.

Going through Britton's clearing, I find a black snake out enjoying the sun. I perceive his lustrous greenish blackness. He holds up his head and threatens; then dashes off into the woods, making a great rustling among the leaves. This might be called snake summer or snakes' week.

Our Irish washwoman, seeing me playing with the milkweed seeds, said they filled beds with that down in



her country. They are not indigenous in Europe, at any rate.

The horned utricularia by Flint's Pond still. There a gunner has built his bower to shoot ducks from, far out amid the rushes. The nightshade leaves have turned a very dark purple, almost steel-blue, lighter, more like mulberry, underneath, with light glossy, viscid or sticky spots above, as if covered with dew. I do not think of any other leaf of this color. The delicate pinkish leaves of the *Hypericum Virginicum* about the shore of the pond. The yellow leaves of the clethra mixed with the green.

The stones of Flint's Pond shore are comparatively flat, as the pond is flatter than Walden. The young trees and bushes — perhaps the birches particularly — are covered now with a small yellowish insect like a louse, spotted with green above, which cover the hat and clothes of him who goes through them. Now certainly is the season for rushes, for, most other weeds being dead, these are the more obvious along the shore of the ponds and rivers. A very fair canoe birch near Flint's Pond.

The witch-hazel loves a hillside with or without wood or shrubs. It is always pleasant to come upon it unexpectedly as you are threading the woods in such places. Methinks I attribute to it some elvish quality apart from its fame. It affects a hillside partially covered with young copsewood. I love to behold its *gray speckled stems*. The leaf first green, then yellow for a short season, then, when it touches the ground, tawny leather-color. As I stood amid the witch-hazels near Flint's

Pond, a flock of a dozen chickadees came flitting and singing about me with great ado, — a most cheering and enlivening sound, — with incessant *day-day-day* and a fine wiry strain betweenwhiles, flitting ever nearer and nearer and nearer, inquisitively, till the boldest was within five feet of me; then suddenly, their curiosity satiated, they flit by degrees further away and disappear, and I hear with regret their retreating *day-day-days*.

Saw a smooth sumach beyond Cyrus Smith's, very large.

The elms in the village have lost many of their leaves, and their shadows by moonlight are not so heavy as last month.

Another warm night.

*Oct. 12. Sunday.* Yesterday afternoon, saw by the brook-side above Emerson's the dwarf primrose in blossom, the Norway cinquefoil and fall dandelions which are now drying up, the houstonia, buttercups, small goldenrods, and various asters, more or less purplish.

The seeds of the bidens, — without florets, — or beggar-ticks, with four-barbed awns like hay-hooks, now adhere to your clothes, so that you are all bristling with them. Certainly they adhere to nothing so readily as to woolen cloth, as if in the creation of them the invention of woolen clothing by man had been foreseen. How tenacious of its purpose to spread and plant its race! By all methods nature secures this end, whether by the balloon, or parachute, or hook, or barbed spear like this, or mere lightness which the winds can waft. What are those seeds, big as skunk-cabbage seeds,

amid leafless stalks like pontederia in the brooks, now bending their stems ready to plant themselves at the bottom?

The swamp-pink buds begin to show.

Blackbirds and larks are about, and the flicker or yellow-hammer, so beautifully spotted (in the hand), and the goldfinches. I see a cow in the meadow with a new-dropped calf by her side.

The *Anemone nemorosa* in bloom and the *Potentilla sarmentosa*, or running cinquefoil, which springs in April, now again springing.

I love very well this cloudy afternoon, so sober and favorable to reflection after so many bright ones. What if the clouds shut out the heavens, provided they concentrate my thoughts and make a more celestial heaven below! I hear the crickets plainer; I wander less in my thoughts, am less dissipated; am aware how shallow was the current of my thoughts before. Deep streams are dark, as if there were a cloud in their sky; shallow ones are bright and sparkling, reflecting the sun from their bottoms. The very wind on my cheek seems more fraught with meaning.

Many maples around the edges of the meadows are now quite bare, like smoke.

I seem to be more constantly merged in nature; my intellectual life is more obedient to nature than formerly, but perchance less obedient to spirit. I have less memorable seasons. I exact less of myself. I am getting used to my meanness, getting to accept my low estate. O if I could be discontented with myself! If I could feel anguish at each descent!

The sweet-fern is losing its leaves. I see where a field of oats has been cradled, by the railroad, — alternate white and dark green stripes, the width of a swath, running across the field. I find it arises from the stubble being bent a particular way by the cradle, as the cradler advanced, and accordingly reflecting the light but one way, and if I look over the field from the other side, the first swath will be dark and the latter white.

Minott shells all his corn by hand. He has got a boxful ready for the mill. He will not winnow it, for he says the chaff (?) makes it lie loose and dry faster. He tells me that Jacob Baker, who raises as fair corn as anybody, gives all the corn of his own raising to his stock, and buys the flat yellow corn of the South for bread; and yet the Northern corn is worth the most per bushel. Minott did not like this kind of farming any better than I. Baker also buys a great quantity of "shorts" below for his cows, to make more milk. He remembers when a Prescott, who lived where E. Hosmer does, used to let his hogs run in the woods in the fall, and they grew quite fat on the acorns, etc., they found, but now there are few nuts, and it is against the law. He tells me of places in the woods which to his eyes are unchanged since he was a boy, as natural as life. He tells me, then, that in some respects he is still a boy. And yet the gray squirrels were ten then to one now. But for the most part, he says, the world is turned upside down.

P. M. — To Cliffs.

I hear Lincoln bell tolling for church. At first I thought of the telegraph harp. Heard at a distance,

the sound of a bell acquires a certain vibratory hum, as it were from the air through which it passes, like a harp. All music is a harp music at length, as if the atmosphere were full of strings vibrating to this music. It is not the mere sound of the bell, but the humming in the air, that enchants me, just [as the] azure tint which much air or distance imparts delights the eye. It is not so much the object, as the object clothed with an azure veil. All sound heard at a great distance thus tends to produce the same music, vibrating the strings of the universal lyre. There comes to me a melody which the air has strained, which has conversed with every leaf and needle of the woods. It is by no means the sound of the bell as heard near at hand, and which at this distance I can plainly distinguish, but its vibrating echoes, that portion of the sound which the elements take up and modulate, — a sound which is very much modified, sifted, and refined before it reaches my ear. The echo is to some extent an independent sound, and therein is the magic and charm of it. It is not merely a repetition of my voice, but it is in some measure the voice of the wood.<sup>1</sup>

A cloudy, misty day with rain more or less steady. This gentle rain is fast loosening the leaves, — I see them filling the air at the least puff, — and it is also flattening down the layer which has already fallen. The pines on Fair Haven have shed nearly all their leaves. Butter-and-eggs still blooms. Barrels of apples lie under the trees. The Smiths have carried their last load of peaches to market.

<sup>1</sup> [Walden, pp. 136, 137; Riv. 192, 193.]

To-day no part of the heavens is so clear and bright as Fair Haven Pond and the river. Though the air [is] quite misty, yet the island wood is distinctly reflected. Ever and anon I see the mist thickening in the south-west and concealing trees which were before seen, and revealing the direction and limits of the valleys, — precursor of harder rain which soon passes again.

Minott calls the stake-driver "belcher-squelcher." Says he has seen them when making the noise. They go *slug-toot, slug-toot, slug-toot*. Told me of his hunting gray squirrels with old Colonel Brooks's hound. How the latter came into the yard one day, and he spoke to him, patted him, went into the house, took down his gun marked London, thought he would go a-squirrel-hunting. Went over among the ledges, away from Brooks's, for Tige had a dreadful strong voice and could be heard as far as a cannon, and he was plaguy afraid Brooks would hear him. How Tige treed them on the oaks on the plain below the Cliffs. He could tell by his bark when he had treed one; he never told a lie. And so he got six or seven. How Tige told him from a distance that he had got one, but when he came up he could see nothing; but still he knew that Tige never told a lie, and at length he saw his head, in a crotch high up in the top of a very tall oak, and though he did n't expect to get him, he knocked him over.

Oct. 13. Drizzling, misty showers still, with a little misty sunshine at intervals. The trees have lost many of their leaves in the last twenty-four hours. The sun has got so low that it will do to let his rays in on the

earth; the cattle do not need their shade now, nor men. Warmth is more desirable now than shade.

The alert and energetic man leads a more intellectual life in winter than in summer. In summer the animal and vegetable in him are perfected as in a torrid zone; he lives in his senses mainly. In winter cold reason and not warm passion has her sway; he lives in thought and reflection; he lives a more spiritual, a less sensual, life. If he has passed a merely sensual summer, he passes his winter in a torpid state like some reptiles and other animals.

The mind of man in the two seasons is like the atmosphere of summer compared with the atmosphere of winter. He depends more on himself in winter, — on his own resources, — less on outward aid. Insects, it is true, disappear for the most part, and those animals which depend upon them; but the nobler animals abide with man the severity of winter. He migrates into his mind, to perpetual summer. And to the healthy man the winter of his discontent never comes.

Mr. Pratt told me that Jonas (?) Melvin found a honey-bees' nest lately near Beck Stow's swamp with twenty-five pounds of honey in it, in the top [of] a maple tree which was blown down. There is now a large swarm in the meeting-house chimney, in a flue not used. Many swarms have gone off that have not been heard from.

Oct. 14. Down the railroad before sunrise.

A freight-train in the Deep Cut. The sun rising over the woods. When the vapor from the engine rose above the woods, the level rays of the rising sun fell on it. It

presented the same redness, — morning red, — inclining to saffron, which the clouds in the eastern horizon do.

There was but little wind this morning, yet I heard the telegraph harp. It does not require a strong wind to wake its strings; it depends more on its direction and the tension of the wire apparently. A gentle but steady breeze will often call forth its finest strains, when a strong but unsteady gale, blowing at the wrong angle withal, fails to elicit any melodious sound.

In the psychological world there are phenomena analogous to what zoölogists call *alternate reproduction*, in which it requires several generations unlike each other to evolve the perfect animal. Some men's lives are but an aspiration, a yearning toward a higher state, and they are wholly misapprehended, until they are referred to, or traced through, all their metamorphoses. We cannot pronounce upon a man's intellectual and moral state until we foresee what metamorphosis it is preparing him for.

It is said that "the working bees . . . are barren females. The attributes of their sex . . . seem to consist only in their solicitude for the welfare of the new generation, of which they are the natural guardians, but not the parents." (Agassiz and Gould.<sup>1</sup>) This phenomenon is paralleled in man by maiden aunts and bachelor uncles, who perform a similar function.

"The muskrat," according to Agassiz and Gould, "is found from the mouth of Mackenzie's River to Florida." It is moreover of a type peculiar to temperate America. He is a native American surely. He neither dies of con-

<sup>1</sup> [Principles of Zoölogy, Boston, 1851.]

sumption in New England nor of fever and ague at the South and West. Thoroughly acclimated and naturalized.

"The hyenas, wild-boars, and rhinoceroses of the Cape of Good Hope have no analogues on the American continent." At the last menagerie I visited they told me that one of the hyenas came from South America!

There is something significant and interesting in the fact that the fauna of Europe and that of the United States are very similar, pointing to the fitness of this country for the settlement of Europeans.

They say, "There are . . . many species of animals whose numbers are daily diminishing, and whose extinction may be foreseen; as the Canada deer (Wapiti), the Ibex of the Alps, the Lämmergeyer, the bison, the beaver, the wild turkey, etc." With these, of course, is to be associated the Indian.

They say that the house-fly has followed man in his migrations.

One would say that the Yankee belonged properly to the *northern* temperate fauna, the region of the pines.

Oct. 15. *Wednesday*. 8.30 A. M. — Up the river in a boat to Pelham's Pond with W. E. C.

(But first a neighbor sent in a girl to inquire if I knew where worm-seed grew, otherwise called "Jerusalem-oak" (so said the recipe which she brought cut out of a newspaper), for her mistress's hen had the "gapes." But I answered that this was a Southern plant and [I] knew not where it was to be had. Referred her to the poultry book. Also the next proprietor commenced

stoning and settling down the stone for a new well, an operation which I wished to witness, purely beautiful, simple, and necessary. The stones laid on a wheel, and continually added to above as it is settled down by digging under the wheel. Also Goodwin, with a partridge and a stout mess of large pickerel, applied to me to dispose of a mud turtle which he had found moving the mud in a ditch. Some men will be in the way to see such movements.)

The muskrat-houses appear now for the most part to be finished. Some, it is true, are still rising. They line the river all the way. Some are as big as small haystacks. The river is still quite low, though a foot or more higher than when I was last on it. There is quite a wind, and the sky is full of flitting clouds, so that sky and water are quite unlike that warm, bright, transparent day when I last sailed on the river, when the surface was of such oily smoothness. You could not now study the river bottom for the black waves and the streaks of foam. When the sun shines brightest to-day, its pyramidal-shaped sheen (when for a short time we are looking up-stream, for we row) is dazzling and blinding. It is pleasant to hear the sound of the waves and feel the surging of the boat, — an inspiring sound, as if you were bound on adventures. It is delightful to be tossed about in such a harmless storm, and see the waves look so angry and black. We see objects on shore — trees, etc., — much better from the boat, — from a low point of view. It brings them against the sky, into a novel point of view at least. The otherwise low on the meadows, as well as the hills, is conspicuous. I perceive that the bul-

rushes are nibbled along the shore, as if they had been cut by a scythe, yet in such positions as no mower could have reached, even outside the flags. Probably the muskrat was the mower, — for his houses. In this cool sunlight, Fair Haven Hill shows to advantage. Every rock and shrub and protuberance has justice done it, the sun shining at [an] angle on the hill and giving each a shadow. The hills have a hard and distinct outline, and I see into their very texture. On Fair Haven I see the sunlit light-green grass in the hollows where snow makes water sometimes, and on the russet slopes. Cut three white pine boughs opposite Fair Haven, and set them up in the bow of our boat for a sail. It was pleasant [to] hear the water begin to ripple under the prow, telling of our easy progress. We thus without a tack made the south side of Fair Haven, then threw our sails overboard, and the moment after mistook them for green bushes or weeds which had sprung from the bottom unusually far from shore. Then to hear the wind sough in your sail, — that is to be a sailor and hear a land sound. The grayish-whitish mikania, all fuzzy, covers the endless button-bushes, which are now bare of leaves. Observed the verification of the Scripture saying “as a dog returneth to his vomit.” Our black pup, sole passenger in the stern, perhaps made seasick, vomited, then cleaned the boat again most faithfully and with a bright eye, licking his chops and looking round for more.

We comment on the boats of different patterns, — dories (?), punts, bread-troughs, flatirons, etc., etc., — which we pass, the prevailing our genuine dead-river boats, not to be matched by Boston carpenters. One

farmer blacksmith whom we know, whose boat we pass in Sudbury, has got a horseshoe nailed about the sculling-hole; — keeps off the witches too? The water carriages of various patterns and in various conditions, — some for pleasure (against the gentleman's seat?); some for ducking, small and portable; some for honest fishing, broad and leaky but not cranky; some with spearing fixtures; some stout and square-endish for hay boats; one canal-boat or mud-scow in the weeds, not worth getting down the stream, like some vast pike that could swallow all the rest, proper craft for our river.

In some places in the meadows opposite Bound Rock, the river seemed to have come to an end, it was so narrow suddenly. After getting in sight of Sherman's Bridge, counted nineteen birches on the right-hand shore in one whirl.

Now commenced the remarkable meandering of the river, so that we seemed for some [time] to be now running up, then running down parallel with a long, low hill, tacking over the meadow in spite of ourselves. Landed at Sherman's Bridge. An apple tree, made scrubby by being browsed by cows. Through what early hardships it may attain to bear a sweet fruit!<sup>1</sup> No wonder it is prompted to grow thorns at last, to defend itself from such foes.<sup>2</sup> The pup nibbles clams, or plays with a bone no matter how dry. Thus the dog can be taken on a river voyage, but the cat cannot. She is too set in her ways. Now again for the Great Meadows. What meandering! The Serpentine, our river should be called.

<sup>1</sup> [*Excursions*, p. 306; Riv. 376.]

<sup>2</sup> [*Excursions*, p. 304; Riv. 373.]

What makes the river love to delay here? Here come to study the law of meandering. We see the vast meadow studded with haycocks. We suspect that we have got to visit them all. It proves even so. Now we run down one haycock, now another. The distance made is frequently not more than a third the distance gone. Between Sherman's Bridge and Causeway Bridge is about a mile and three quarters in a straight line, but we judged that we went more than three miles. Here the "pipes" (at first) line the shore, and muskrat-houses still. A duck (a loon?) sails within gunshot, unwilling to fly; also a stake-driver (*Ardea minor*) rises with prominent breast or throat bone, as if badly loaded, his ship. Now no button-bushes line the stream, the changeable (?) stream; no rocks exist; the shores are lined with, first, in the water, still green polygonum, then wide fields of dead pontederia, then great bulrushes, then various reeds, sedges, or tall grasses, also dead thalictrum(?), — or is it cicuta? Just this side the causeway bridges a field, like a tall corn-field, of tall rustling reeds (?), ten feet high with broadish leaves and large, now seedy tufts, standing amid the button-bushes and great bulrushes.<sup>1</sup> I remember to have seen none elsewhere in this vicinity, unless at Fresh Pond, and there are they not straighter? Also, just beyond the bridges, very tall flags from six to eight feet high, leaves like the cat-tail but no tail. What are they?<sup>2</sup> We pass under two bridges above the Causeway Bridge. After passing under the first one of these two, — at the mouth of Larnum Brook, which is fed from Blandford's Pond,

<sup>1</sup> *Arundo Phragmites*?

<sup>2</sup> Yes, a tall kind of cat-tail.

comes from Marlborough through Mill Village, and has a branch, Hop Brook, from south of Nobscot, — we see Nobscot, very handsome in a purplish atmosphere in the west, over a *very* deep meadow, which makes far up. A good way to skate to Nobscot, or within a mile or two. To see a distant hill from the surface of water over a low and very broad meadow, much better than to see it from another hill. This perhaps the most novel and so memorable prospect we got.

Walked across half a mile to Pelham's Pond, whose waves were dashing quite grandly. A house near, with two grand elms in front. I have seen other elms in Wayland. This pond a good point to skate to in winter, when it is easily accessible. Now we should have to draw our boat.

On the return, as in going, we expended nearly as much time and labor in counteracting the boat's tendency to whirl round, it is so miserably built. Now and then, — aye, aye, almost an everlasting *now*, — it will take the bits in its mouth and go round in spite of us, though we row on one side only, for the wind fills the after part of the boat, which is nearly out of water, and we therefore get along best and fastest when the wind is strong and dead ahead. That's the kind of wind we advertise to race in. To row a boat thus all the day, with an hour's intermission, making fishes of ourselves as it were, putting on these long fins, realizing the finny life! Surely oars and paddles are but the fins which a man may use.

The very pads stand perpendicular (on their edges) before this wind, — which appears to have worked more to the north, — showing their red under sides. The

muskrats have exposed the clamshells to us in heaps all along the shore; else most [would] not know that a clam existed. If it were not for muskrats, how little would the fisherman see or know of fresh-water clamshells or clams! In the Great Meadows again the loon (?) rises, and again alights, and a heron (?) too flies sluggishly away, with vast wings, and small ducks which seem to have no tails, but their wings set quite aft. The crows ashore are making an ado, perchance about some carrion. We taste some swamp white oak acorns at the south end of Bound Rock Meadow.

The sun sets when we are off Israel Rice's. A few golden coppery clouds, intensely glowing, like fishes in some molten metal of the sky, and then the small scattered clouds grow blue-black above, or one half, and reddish or pink the other half, and after a short twilight the night sets in. We think it is pleasantest to be on the water at this hour. We row across Fair Haven in the thickening twilight and far below it, steadily and without speaking. As the night draws on her veil, the shores retreat; we only keep in the middle of this low stream of light; we know not whether we float in the air or in the lower regions. We seem to recede from the trees on shore or the island very slowly, and yet a few reaches make all our voyage. Nature has divided it agreeably into reaches. The reflections of the stars in the water are dim and elongated like the zodiacal light straight down into the depths, but no mist rises to-night. It is pleasant not to get home till after dark, — to steer by the lights of the villagers. The lamps in the houses twinkle now like stars; they shine doubly bright.

Rowed about twenty-four miles, going and coming. In a straight line it would be fifteen and one half.

*Oct. 16.* The new moon, seen by day, reminds me of a poet's cheese. Surveying for Loring to-day. Saw the Indian Ditch, so called. A plant newly leaving out, a shrub; looks somewhat like shad blossom. To-night the spearers are out again.

*Oct. 17.* Surveying for Loring. A severe frost this morning, which puts [us] one remove further from summer.

*Oct. 19.* The Indian (?) Ditch crosses the road beyond Loring's, running south seven and one half west, or within about two and a half degrees of the true meridian. According to Stephen Hosmer's plan of Thomas Jones's woodland, made in 1766, the ditch where Derby and Loring bound on it must be about eighty-four rods from old town line.

To the northern voyager who does not see the sun for three months, night is expanded into winter, and day into summer.

Observed to-day on the edge of a wood-lot of Loring's, where his shrub oaks bounded on a neighbor's small pitch pines, which grew very close together, that the line of separation was remarkably straight and distinct, neither a shrub oak nor a pine passing its limit, the ground where the pines grew having apparently been cultivated so far, and its edges defined by the plow.

A surveyor must be curious in studying the wounds of



trees, to distinguish a natural disease or scar from the "blazing" of an axe.

Has the aspen (?) poplar any more of a red heart than the other? The powder man does not want the red-hearted. Even this poor wood has its use.

Observed an oak, — a red or black, — at a pigeon-place, whose top limbs were cut off perhaps a month ago; the leaves had dried a sort of snuff-yellow and rather glossy.

Oct. 22. The pines, both white and pitch, have now shed their leaves, and the ground in the pine woods is strewn with the newly fallen needles. The fragrant life-everlasting is still fresh, and the Canada snapdragon still blooms blue by the roadside. The rain and dampness have given birth to a new crop of mushrooms. The small willow-like shrub (sage willow (?), *Salix longirostris*, Mx.) is shedding its small leaves, which turn black in drying and cover the path.

Oct. 23. It is never too late to learn. I observed to-day the Irishman who helped me survey *twisting* the branch of a birch for a withe, and *before* he cut it off; and also, wishing to stick a tall, smooth pole in the ground, cut a notch in the side of it by which to drive it with a hatchet.

Oct. 26. I awoke this morning to infinite regret. In my dream I had been riding, but the horses bit each other and occasioned endless trouble and anxiety, and it was my employment to hold their heads apart. Next I sailed over the sea in a small vessel such as the North-

men used, as it were to the Bay of Fundy, and thence overland I sailed, still over the shallows about the sources of rivers toward the deeper *channel* of a stream which emptied into the Gulf beyond, — the Miramichi, was it? Again I was in my own small pleasure-boat, learning to sail on the sea, and I raised my sail before my anchor, which I dragged far into the sea. I saw the buttons which had come off the coats of drowned men, and suddenly I saw my dog — when I knew not that I had one — standing in the sea up to his chin, to warm his legs, which had been wet, which the cool wind numbed. And then I was walking in a meadow, where the dry season permitted me to walk further than usual, and there I met Mr. Alcott, and we fell to quoting and referring to grand and pleasing couplets and single lines which we had read in times past; and I quoted one which in my waking hours I have no knowledge of, but in my dream it was familiar enough. I only know that those which I quoted expressed regret, and were like the following, though they were not these, *viz.* —

"The short parenthesis of life was sweet,"

"The remembrance of youth is a sigh," etc.

It had the word "memory" in it!! And then again the instant that I awoke, methought I was a musical instrument from which I heard a strain die out, — a bugle, or a clarionet, or a flute. My body was the organ and channel of melody, as a flute is of the music that is breathed through it. My flesh sounded and vibrated still to the strain, and my nerves were the chords of the lyre. I awoke, therefore, to an infinite regret, — to find myself, not the thoroughfare of glorious and world-

stirring inspirations, but a scuttle full of dirt, such a thoroughfare only as the street and the kennel, where, perchance, the wind may sometimes draw forth a strain of music from a straw.

I can partly account for this. Last evening I was reading Laing's account of the Northmen, and though I did not write in my Journal, I remember feeling a fertile regret, and deriving even an inexpressible satisfaction, as it were, from my ability to feel regret, which made that evening richer than those which had preceded it. I heard the last strain or flourish, as I woke, played on my body as the instrument. Such I knew I had been and might be again, and my regret arose from the consciousness how little like a musical instrument my body was now.

Oct. 27. This morning I wake and find it snowing and the ground covered with snow: quite unexpectedly, for last night it was rainy but not cold.

The obstacles which the heart meets with are like granite blocks which one alone cannot move. She who was as the morning light to me is now neither the morning star nor the evening star. We meet but to find each other further asunder, and the oftener we meet the more rapid our divergence. So a star of the first magnitude pales in the heavens, not from any fault in the observer's eye nor from any fault in itself, perchance, but because its progress in its own system has put a greater distance between.

The night is oracular. What have been the intimations of the night? I ask. How have you passed the night? Good-night!

My friend will be bold to conjecture; he will guess bravely at the significance of my words.

The cold numbs my fingers this morning. The strong northwest wind blows the damp snow along almost horizontally. The birds fly about as if seeking shelter.

Perhaps it was the young of the purple finch that I saw sliding down the grass stems some weeks ago; or was it the white-throated finch? <sup>1</sup>

Winter, with its *inwardness*, is upon us. A man is constrained to sit down, and to think.

The *Ardea minor* still with us. Saw a woodcock <sup>2</sup> feeding, probing the mud with its long bill, under the railroad bridge within two feet of me for a long time. Could not scare it far away. What a disproportionate length of bill! It is a sort of badge they [wear] as a punishment for greediness in a former state.

The highest arch of the stone bridge is six feet eight inches above the present surface of the water, which I should think was more than a foot higher than it has been this summer, and is four inches below the long stone in the east abutment.

Oct. 31. The wild apples are now getting palatable. I find a few left on distant trees, which the farmer thinks it not worth his while to gather. He thinks that he has better in his barrels, but he is mistaken, unless he has a walker's appetite and imagination, neither of which can he have.<sup>3</sup> These apples cannot be too knurly and rusty and crabbed (to look at). The knurliest will have some redeeming traits, even to the eyes.

<sup>1</sup> [See p. 29.]    <sup>2</sup> Or snipe?    <sup>3</sup> [Excursions, p. 308; Riv. 378.]

You will discover some evening redness dashed or sprinkled on some protuberance or in some cavity. It is rare that the summer lets an apple go without streaking or spotting it on some part of its sphere, though perchance one side may only seem to betray that it has once fallen in a brick-yard, and the other have been bespattered from a roily ink-bottle.<sup>1</sup> Some red stains it will have, commemorating the mornings and evenings it has witnessed ; some dark and rusty blotches, in memory of the clouds and foggy mildewy days that have passed over it ; and a spacious field of green, reflecting the general face of nature, — green even as the fields ; or yellowish ground, if it has a sunny flavor, — yellow as the harvests, or russet as the hills.<sup>2</sup> The saunterer's apple not even the saunterer can eat in the house.<sup>3</sup> The noblest of fruits is the apple. Let the most beautiful or swiftest have it.<sup>4</sup>

The robins now fly in flocks.

<sup>1</sup> [*Excursions*, p. 314; Riv. 385, 386.]

<sup>2</sup> [*Excursions*, p. 314; Riv. 386.]

<sup>3</sup> [*Excursions*, p. 311; Riv. 382.]

<sup>4</sup> [*Excursions*, p. 297; Riv. 364, 365.]