

## V

FEBRUARY, 1852

(ÆT. 34)

*Feb. 1.* When I hear that a friend on whom I relied has spoken of me, not with cold words perhaps, but even with a cold and indifferent tone, to another, ah! what treachery I feel it to be! — the sum of all crimes against humanity. My friend may cherish a thousand suspicions against me, and they may but represent his faith and expectations, till he cherishes them so heartlessly that he can speak of them.

If I have not succeeded in my friendships, it was because I demanded more of them and did not put up with what I could get; and I got no more partly because I gave so little.

I must be dumb to those who, I have not faith, appreciate my actions, not knowing the springs of them.

While we preach obedience to human laws and to that portion of the divine laws set forth in the New Testament, the natural laws of genius, of love and friendship, we do not preach nor insist upon. How many a seeming heartlessness is to be explained by the very abundance of the heart! How much of seeming recklessness, even selfishness, is to be explained by obedience to this code of the divine laws! It is evident that as buyers and sellers we obey a very different law from what we do as lovers and friends. The Hindoo is

not to be tried in all things by the Christian standard, nor the Christian by the Hindoo. How much fidelity to law of a kind not commonly recognized, how much magnanimity even, may be thrown away on mankind! The hero obeys his own law, the Christian his, the lover and friend theirs; they are to some extent different codes. What incessant tragedy between men when one silently obeys the code of friendship, the other the code of philanthropy, in their dealings with one another. As our constitutions, our geniuses, are different, so are our standards, and we are amenable to different codes. My neighbor asks me in vain to be good as he is good. I must be good as I am made to be good, whether I am heathen or Christian. Every man's laws are hard enough to obey. The Christian falls as far short of obeying the heathen's moral law as the heathen does. One of little faith looks for his rewards and punishments to the next world, and, despairing of this world, behaves accordingly in it; another thinks the present a worthy occasion and arena, sacrifices to it, and expects to hear sympathizing voices. The man who believes in another world and not in this is wont to put me off with Christianity. The present moment in which we talk is of a little less value to him than the next world. So we are said to hope in proportion as we do not realize. It is all hope deferred. But one grain of realization, of instant life, on which we stand, is equivalent to acres of the leaf of hope hammered out to gild our prospect. The former so qualifies the vision that it gilds all that we look upon with the foil of truth. We must meet the hero

on heroic grounds. Some tribes inhabit the mountains; some dwell on the plain. We discourage one another. We obey different laws.

Is not the midnight like Central Africa to most? Are we not tempted to explore it, to penetrate to the shores of its Lake Tchad, to discover the sources of its Nile, perchance in the Mountains of the Moon? Who knows what fertility, what beauty in the animal and vegetable kingdom, are there to be found,<sup>1</sup> what primeval simplicity and reflection of the truth among its dusky inhabitants? We illuminate only the first hours of the night. The light behind the face of the clock on the State-House in Philadelphia extinguished at 11 o'clock p. m. with punctuality, to save oil. Those hours are resigned to a few watchmen in the cities, watching for the disgrace of humanity. Shall we never have watchmen on the country's hills, of another sort, watching for the glory of God? Watch on city walls for a foe, not on country hills for a friend!

In the Mountains of the Moon, in the Central Africa of the night, — there is where all Niles hide their heads. The expeditions up the Niles extend but to the Cataracts, past the ruins of Thebes, or perchance to the mouth of the White Nile; but it is the Black Nile that concerns us.<sup>2</sup> Of some of the great rivers, like the Nile and the Orinoco (?), men still only conjecture the sources.

Shall we put our heads out the chamber window and ask the watchmen, the city police, to tell us of the night, — what its signs of gladness are? Are these the

<sup>1</sup> [*Excursions*, p. 323; *Riv.* 397.]

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

questions we shall put to the watchmen? Who, then, shall we put them to? Or is there none who can answer them?

Each thing is attracted to each, and running to coalesce like drops of water. The fingers incline to be webbed and run together. When I hold mine up to the light and bring them near together, such are the laws of light that, just before they touch, a web appears to grow on them and unite them. So of objects seen through imperfections in glass.

It depends upon how a man has spent his day, whether he has any right to be in his bed. So spend some hours that you may have a right to sleep in the sunshine.

My friends! my friends! it does not cheer me to see them. They but express their want of faith in me or in mankind; their coldest, cruelest thought comes clothed in polite and easy-spoken words at last. I am silent to their invitations, because I do not *feel* invited, and we have no reasons to give for what we do *not* do. One says, "Love me out of this mire;" the other says, "Come out of it and be lovely." One speaks with scorn of the scorners.

In the winter the botanist can study lichens.

The recent rush to California and the attitude of the world, even of its philosophers and prophets, in relation to it appears to me to reflect the greatest disgrace on mankind. That so many are ready to get their living by the lottery of gold-digging without contributing any value to society, and that the great majority who stay at home justify them in this both by precept and

example! It matches the infatuation of the Hindoos who have cast themselves under the car of Juggernaut. I know of no more startling development of the morality of trade and all the modes of getting a living than the rush to California affords. Of what significance the philosophy, or poetry, or religion of a world that will rush to the lottery of California gold-digging on the receipt of the first news, to live by luck, to get the means of commanding the labor of others less lucky, *i. e.* of slaveholding, without contributing any value to society? And that is called enterprise, and the devil is only a little more enterprising! The philosophy and poetry and religion of such a mankind are not worth the dust of a puffball. The hog that *roots* his own living, and so makes manure, would be ashamed of such company. If I could command the wealth of all the worlds by lifting my finger, I would not pay such a price for it. It makes God to be a moneyed gentleman who scatters a handful of pennies in order to see mankind scramble for them. Going to California. It is only three thousand miles nearer to hell. I will resign my life sooner than live by luck. The world's raffle. A subsistence in the domains of nature a thing to be raffled for! No wonder that they gamble there. I never heard that they did anything else there. What a comment, what a satire, on our institutions! The conclusion will be that mankind will hang itself upon a tree. And who would interfere to cut it down. And have all the precepts in all the bibles taught men only this? and is the last and most admirable invention of the Yankee race only an improved muck-rake? — patented too!

If one came hither to sell lottery tickets, bringing satisfactory credentials, and the prizes were seats in heaven, this world would buy them with a rush.<sup>1</sup>

Did God direct us so to get our living, digging where we never planted, — and He would perchance reward us with lumps of gold?<sup>2</sup> It is a text, oh! for the Jonahs of this generation, and yet the pulpits are as silent as immortal Greece [?], silent, some of them, because the preacher is gone to California himself. The gold of California is a touchstone which has betrayed the rottenness, the baseness, of mankind. Satan, from one of his elevations, showed mankind the kingdom of California, and they entered into a compact with him at once.

God gave a man a certificate of righteousness which entitled him to food and raiment, but the rest were discontented and envied him. But at last news came that one had discovered a depository of like certificates, intended also for the righteous in times to come, and a cry went up from all lands, and sinners rushed thither from all parts and appropriated them.

God gave the righteous man a certificate entitling him to food and raiment, but the unrighteous man found a facsimile of the same in God's coffers, and appropriated it, and obtained food and raiment like the former.<sup>3</sup>

There are some things which God may afford to smile at; man cannot.

<sup>1</sup> [*Cape Cod, and Miscellanies*, pp. 463, 464; *Misc.*, Riv. 263, 264.]

<sup>2</sup> [*Cape Cod, and Miscellanies*, p. 464; *Misc.*, Riv. 264.]

<sup>3</sup> [*Ibid.*]

*Feb. 2.* Sir Francis Head says that in America "the moon looks larger" than in Europe. Here, then, more moonshine is to be expected. Perhaps the sun looks larger also. Such are the advantages of the New World.

The same writer says, "the heavens of America appear infinitely higher," "the stars are brighter." These, too, are encouraging facts, symbolical of the height to which the philosophy and poetry and religion of her inhabitants may one day soar. At length, perchance, the immaterial heaven will appear as much higher to the American mind, and the intimations that star it will appear as much brighter. For I believe that climate does thus react on man, and that there is something in the mountain air that feeds the spirit and inspires. We shall be more imaginative; we shall be clearer, as our sky, bluer, fresher; broader and more comprehensive in our understanding, like our plains; our intellect on a grander scale, like our thunder and lightning, our rivers and our lakes, and mountains and forests. Are not these advantages? Will not man grow to greater perfection intellectually as well as physically under these influences? Or is it unimportant how many foggy days there are in his life?<sup>1</sup>

Sir F. Head thinks that the greater cold — equal to thirteen degrees of latitude — in this country is owing to the extensive forests, which prevent the sun and wind from melting the snows, which therefore accumulate on the ground and create a cold stratum of air, which, blown to warmer ones by the northwest wind, condenses the last into snow. But, in Concord woods at

<sup>1</sup> [*Excursions*, p. 222; *Riv.* 272, 273.]

any rate, the snow (in the winter) melts faster, and beside is not so deep as in the fields. Not so toward spring, on the north sides of hills and in hollows. At any rate I think he has not allowed enough for the warmth of the woods.

The moose (and beaver?) will, perchance, one day become extinct, but how naturally would a future poet imagine or sculptor carve a fabulous animal with such branching and leafy horns, when this will in fact exist as a fossil relic! His horns a sort of fucus in bone, or a lichen. The elk (moose) may stand with the gryphon and dragon and dodo, etc., etc.

The fireflies and bright-plumaged birds! do not they too indicate the peculiarities of the future American?

Head "felt that there was something indescribably awful and appalling in all these bestial, birdal, and piscial precautions" at the approach of winter, — going into winter quarters, migrating, etc.

Head, coming to Canada in the winter, to a house in the fields covered with snow, did not know that he was surrounded by a lawn and garden, with gravelled walks, flowers, and shrubbery, till the spring thawed the snow.

The race that settles and clears the land has got to deal with every tree in the forest in succession. It must be resolute and industrious, and even the stumps must be got out, — or are. It is a thorough process, this war with the wilderness, — breaking nature, taming the soil, feeding it on oats. The civilized man regards the pine tree as his enemy. He will fell it and let in the light, grub it up and raise wheat or rye there. It is no better than a fungus to him.

It is natural that we should be enterprising, for we are descended from the enterprising, who sought to better their fortunes in the New World.

The Yankee has no leisure to touch his hat to you, even if he were so disposed.<sup>1</sup>

*Feb. 3.* When I review the list of my acquaintances from the most impartial point of view, and consider each one's excesses and defects of character, — which are the subject of mutual ridicule, astonishment, and pity, — and I class myself among them, — I cannot help asking myself, "If this is the sane world, what must a madhouse be?" It is only by a certain flattery and an ignoring of their faults that even the best are made available for society.

I have been to the libraries (yesterday) at Cambridge and Boston. It would seem as if all things compelled us to originality. How happens it that I find not in the country, in the fields and woods, the *works* even of like-minded naturalists and poets. Those who have expressed the purest and deepest love of nature have not recorded it on the bark of the trees with the lichens; they have left no memento of it there; but if I would read their books I must go to the city, — so strange and repulsive both to them and to me, — and deal with men and institutions with whom I have no sympathy. When I have just been there on this errand, it seems too great a price to pay for access even to the works of Homer, or Chaucer, or Linnaeus. Greece and Asia Minor should henceforth bear Iliads and Odysseys as their trees lichens.

<sup>1</sup> [*Excursions*, p. 47; *Riv.* 59.]

But no! if the works of nature are to any extent collected in the forest, the works of man are to a still greater extent collected in the city. I have sometimes imagined a library, *i. e.* a collection of the works of true poets, philosophers, naturalists, etc., deposited not in a brick or marble edifice in a crowded and dusty city, guarded by cold-blooded and methodical officials and preyed on by bookworms, in which you own no share, and are not likely to, but rather far away in the depths of a primitive forest, like the ruins of Central America, where you can trace a series of crumbling alcoves, the older books protecting the most modern from the elements, partially buried by the luxuriance of nature, which the heroic student could reach only after adventures in the wilderness amid wild beasts and wild men. That, to my imagination, seems a fitter place for these interesting relics, which owe no small part of their interest to their antiquity, and whose occasion is nature, than the well-preserved edifice, with its well-preserved officials on the side of a city's square. More terrible than lions and tigers these Cerberuses.

Access to nature for original observation is secured by one ticket, by one kind of expense, but access to the works of your predecessors by a very different kind of expense. All things tend to cherish the originality of the original. Nature, at least, takes no pains to introduce him to the works of his predecessors, but only presents him with her own *Opera Omnia*.

Is it the lover of nature who has access to all that has been written on the subject of his favorite studies? No; he lives far away from this. It is the lover of

books and systems, who knows nature chiefly at second hand.

The botanists have a phrase, *mantissa*, as *Mantissa Plantarum* (Linnæus), which I suppose means an over-measure or additional matter about. A convenient term.<sup>1</sup> Also *prodromus*, as a forerunner, or preparer of the way.

"Suent" is an expressive word, applied to machinery whose joints are worn, which has got into working order, — apparently from *sueo*, to be accustomed. So of the writer's faculties.

About 6 P. M. walked to Cliffs *via* railroad.

Snow quite deep. The sun had set without a cloud in the sky, — a rare occurrence, but I missed the clouds, which make the glory of evening. The sky must have a few clouds, as the mind a few moods; nor is the evening the less serene for them. There is only a tinge of red along the horizon. The moon is nearly full to-night, and the moment is passed when the light in the east (*i. e.* of the moon) balances the light in the west. With the Latins, apparently, there was afternoon, *tempus pomeridianum* or *post meridiem*; then perhaps sunset, *sole occidente*, when *sol inclinatur vel decedit*; then perhaps evening, when the evening star reigns, *vespera* (ἕως πέρας).<sup>2</sup> *Vesperascit*, the evening approaches. (By the way, a studying, or working, by candle-light is a *lucubratio a luce* — study all night is *elucubratio* — also *labor vespertinus*. *Scrotonus* also means "in the

<sup>1</sup> [Channing, p. 299.]

<sup>2</sup> ["ἕως πέρας signifies "until the end," and is evidently given as the derivation of the Greek ἑσπέρα and Latin *vespera*.]

evening," and more than that, for Pliny says, *Praecocibus brevior [vita]<sup>1</sup> quam serotinis*, which cannot be expressed so elegantly in English.) After sundown I should have put twilight, *crepusculum* (*crepera lux* or doubtful light). Then comes decided night or *nox*, *multa nox*. Staying up all night, *pervigilium* or *pervigilatio*. The night far spent, *nox adulta*. Midnight, *nox silens vel profunda*, *meridies noctis*. A starlight night, *nox sideria*. Night-shining, *noctu lucens*. I would not be a mere *tenebrio* or *lucifugus*, shunning the daylight and delighting to skulk in darkness, but simply I am a *noctivagus*. My walk may be *pernox* but not *pernicius*. They are *Vigiliae Nocturnae*. That little bird that I hear and call the night-warbler may be translated, *Noctu suave canens*. When the moon does not shine all night, it is not a *pernox luna*.

Selenite "is a stone (as is said) in Arabia, wherein is a white, which decreases and increases with the moon" (Dictionary). My summer journal was selenitic in this sense.<sup>2</sup> It had this white spot in it.

Venus is now like a little moon in the west, and the lights in the village twinkle like stars. It is perfectly still and not very cold. The shadows of the trees on the snow are more minutely distinct than at any other season, not dark masses merely, but finely reticulated, each limb and twig represented, as cannot be in summer, both from the leaves and the inequality and darkness of the ground. The heavens appear less thickly starred and less habitable than in summer, — rather

<sup>1</sup> [The brackets are Thoreau's.]

<sup>2</sup> [*Excursions*, p. 323; *Riv.* 397.]

a few bright stars, brought nearer by this splendid twinkling in the cold sky, than countless points in the warm deeps. I hear my old acquaintance, the owl, from the causeway.

The reflector of the cars, as I stand over the Deep Cut, makes a large and dazzling light in this air. The cars do not make much noise, or else I am used to it; and now whizzes the boiling, sizzling kettle by me, in which the passengers make me think of potatoes, which a fork would show to be done by this time. The steam is denser for the cold, and more white; like the purest downy clouds in the summer sky, its volumes roll up between me and the moon, and far behind, when the cars are a mile off, it still goes shading the fields with its wreaths, — the breath of the panting traveller. I now cross from the railroad to the road. This snow, the last of which fell day before yesterday, is two feet deep, pure and powdery. There is but little on the trees except the pitch pines. From a myriad little crystal mirrors the moon is reflected, which is the untarnished sparkle of its surface. I hear a gentle rustling of the oak leaves as I go through the woods, but this snow has yet no troops of leaves on its surface. The snow evidently by its smooth crust assists in the more equal dispersion and distribution of the leaves which course over it, blown by the [wind], and perchance for this reason the oak leaves and some others hang on.

Now through the Spring Woods and up Fair Haven Hill. Here, in the midst of a clearing where the choppers have been leaving the woods in pieces to-day, and the tops of the pine trees are strewn about half buried

in snow, only the saw-logs being carried off, it is stiller and milder than by day, and I think the chopper might work here more comfortably in some respects now, but he is at home in the village, getting rest or recreation. Instead of the sound of his axe, I hear the hooting of an owl, *nocturnus ululatus*, whose haunts he is laying waste. The ground is all pure white powdery snow, which his sled, etc., has stirred up, except the scattered twigs and pine plumes. I can see every track distinctly where the teamster drove his oxen to the choppers' piles and loaded his sled, and even the tracks of his dog in the moonlight, and plainly to write this.

The moonlight now is very splendid in the untouched pine woods above the Cliffs, alternate patches of shade and light. The light has almost the brightness of sunlight, the fulgor. The stems of the trees are more obvious than by day, being simple black against the moonlight and the snow. The sough of the breeze in the pine-tops sounds far away, like the surf on a distant shore, and for all sound beside there is only the rattling or chafing of little dry twigs, — perchance a little snow falling on them, or they are so brittle that they break and fall with the motion of the trees.

My owl sounds *hōō hōō hōō, hōō*.

The landscape covered with snow, seen by moonlight from these Cliffs, encased in snowy armor two feet thick, gleaming in the moon and of spotless white. Who can believe that this is the habitable globe? The scenery is wholly arctic. Fair Haven Pond is a Baffin's Bay. Man must have ascertained the limits of the winter before he ventured to withstand it and not migrate

with the birds. No cultivated field, no house, no candle. All is as dreary as the shores of the Frozen Ocean. I can tell where there is wood and where open land for many miles in the horizon by the darkness of the former and whiteness of the latter. The trees, especially the young oaks covered with leaves, stand out distinctly in this bright light from contrast with the snow. It looks as if the snow and ice of the arctic world, traveling like a glacier, had crept down southward and overwhelmed and buried New England. And see if a man can think his summer thoughts now. But the evening star is preparing to set, and I will return. Floundering through snow, sometimes up to my middle.

Is not the sky unusually blue to-night? dark blue? Is it not always bluer when the ground is covered with snow in the winter than in summer?

The forcible writer stands bodily behind his words with his experience. He does not make books out of books, but he has been *there* in person.

Head calls the "sough" an "æolian murmur."

That is a good mythological incident told of the wounded farmer who, his foot being lacerated and held fast between his plow and a fallen tree in a forest clearing, drew his oxen to him, with difficulty smeared their horns with blood which the mosquitoes had drawn from his bare arms, and, cutting the reins [*sic*], sent them home as an advertisement to his family.

*Feb. 4. Wednesday.* A mild, thawy day. The needles of the pine are the touchstone for the air; any change in that element is revealed to the practiced eye

by their livelier green or increased motion. They are the telltales. Now they are (the white pine) a cadaverous, misty blue; anon a lively, silvery light plays on them, and they seem to erect themselves unusually; while the pitch pines are a brighter yellowish-green than usual. The sun loves to nestle in the boughs of the pine and pass rays through them.

The scent of bruised pine leaves where a sled has passed is a little exciting to me now. I saw this afternoon such lively blood-red colors on a white pine stump recently cut that at first I thought the chopper had cut himself. The heart of the tree was partly decayed, and here and there the sounder parts were of this vermilion (?) color, alternating with the ordinary white of the wood. Here it was apparently in the earlier stages of decay. The color was the livelier for being wet with the melting snow.

11 P. M. — Coming home through the village by this full moonlight, it seems one of the most glorious nights I ever beheld. Though the pure snow is so deep around, the air, by contrast perhaps with the recent days, is mild and even balmy to my senses, and the snow is still sticky to my feet and hands. And the sky is the most glorious blue I ever beheld, even a light blue on some sides, as if I actually saw into day, while small white, fleecy clouds, at long intervals, are drifting from west-northwest to south-southeast. If you would know the direction of the wind, look not at the clouds, which are such large bodics and confuse you, but consider in what direction the moon appears to be wading through them. The outlines of the elms were never more distinctly seen



than now. It seems a slighting of the gifts of God to go to sleep now; as if we could better afford to close our eyes to daylight, of which we see so much. Has not this blueness of the sky the same cause with the blueness in the holes in the snow, and in some distant shadows on the snow? — if, indeed, it is true that the sky is bluer in winter when the ground is covered with snow.

Heard Professor Blasius lecture on the tornado this evening. He said that nine vessels were wrecked daily in the world on an average; that Professor Dove of Berlin was the best meteorologist in his opinion, but had not studied the effects of wind in the fields so much as some here.

These nights are warmer than the days; but by morning it is colder.

Head's theory of American cold, founded on the unmelted snows of our forests, reminds me of the fish and bucket of water dispute. Is it a fact that such vast quantities of snow are slow to melt in our forests?

The audience are never tired of hearing how far the wind carried some man, woman, or child, or family Bible, but they are immediately tired if you undertake to give them a scientific account of it.

*Feb. 5.* Suppose that an equal ado were made about the *ornaments* of style in literature (as in architecture), should we be any more likely to attain to a truly beautiful and forcible style? Buonaparte said pretty truly, "Speak plain; the rest will follow." I do not believe that any writer who considered the ornaments, and not the truth simply, ever succeeded. So are made the

*belles lettres* and the *beaux arts* and their *professors*, which we can do without.<sup>1</sup>

The sky last night was a deeper, more cerulean blue than the far lighter and whiter sky of to-day.

The national flag is the emblem of patriotism, and whether that floats over the Government House or not is, even in times of peace, an all-absorbing question. The hearts of millions flutter with it. Men do believe in symbols yet and can understand some. When Sir F. Head left his Government in Upper Canada and the usual farewell had been said as the vessel moved off, he, standing on the deck, pointed for all reply to the British flag floating over his head, and a shriek, rather than a cheer, went up from the crowd on the pier, who had observed his gesture. One of the first things he had done was to run it up over the Government House at Toronto, and it made a great sensation.

Time never passes so rapidly and unaccountably as when I am engaged in recording my thoughts. The world may perchance reach its end for us in a profounder thought, and Time itself run down.

I suspect that the child plucks its first flower with an insight into its beauty and significance which the subsequent botanist never retains.

The trunks and branches of the trees are of different colors at different times and in different lights and weathers, — in sun, rain, and in the night. The oaks bare of leaves on Hubbard's hillside are now a light gray in the sun, and their boughs, seen against the pines behind, are a very agreeable maze. The stems

<sup>1</sup> [Walden, pp. 52, 53; Riv. 77.]

of the white pines also are quite gray at this distance, with their lichens. I am detained to contemplate the boughs, feathery boughs, of the white pines, tier above tier, reflecting a silvery light, with intervals between them through which you look, if you so intend your eye, into the darkness of the grove. That is, you can see both the silvery-lighted and greenish bough and the shadowy intervals as belonging to one tree, or, more truly, refer the latter to the shade behind.

Read the Englishman's history of the French and Indian wars, and then read the Frenchman's, and see how each awards the meed of glory to the other's monsters of cruelty or perfidy.

We have all sorts of histories of wars. One omits the less important skirmishes altogether, another condescends to give you the result of these and the number of killed and wounded, and if you choose to go further and consult tradition and old manuscripts or town and local histories, you may learn whether the parson was killed by a shot through the door or tomahawked at the well.

*Feb. 6.* If the woodchopper rises early, shall not the scholar sit up late?

I have been told at the pattern-room of certain print-works that the taste of the public in respect to these things was singularly whimsical, and that it was impossible to foretell what would most take with it. Of two patterns which differed only by a few threads more or less of a particular color, the one would be sold readily, the other would be unsalable, thus occasioning great

loss to the manufacturer; though it frequently happened that after the lapse of a season the unsalable goods became the most fashionable.<sup>1</sup>

If a poor man returns to a gentleman his purse, which he has found, the bystanders are astonished at his honesty, and if the gentleman does not reward him munificently, they make up a purse for him themselves.

Tuckerman very well refers science to the medicine-man of the savages. He took the first step toward science.

Dioscorides, "the second father of Botany," — what a flowery name!

The artificial system has been very properly called the dictionary, and the natural method, the grammar, of the science of botany, by botanists themselves. But are we to have nothing but grammars and dictionaries in this literature? Are there no works written in the language of the flowers?

I asked a learned and accurate naturalist, who is at the same time the courteous guardian of a public library, to direct me to those works which contained the more particular *popular* account, or *biography*, of particular flowers, from which the botanies I had met with appeared to draw sparingly, — for I trusted that each flower had had many lovers and faithful describers in past times, — but he informed me that I had read all; that no one was acquainted with them, they were only catalogued like his books.

3 P. M. Round by C. Miles's place.

It is still thawy. A mistiness makes the woods look denser, darker, and more imposing. Seen through this

<sup>1</sup> [*Walden*, p. 29; *Riv.* 44.]

veil, they are more grand and primitive. Near the C. Miles house there are some remarkably yellow lichens (parmelias?) on the rails, — ever as if the sun were about to shine forth clearly. Methinks I would have lichens on some of my rails, [even] if it were not consistent with good husbandry.

Some of our days, in June perchance, may be styled all-saints' days.

Who will not confess that the necessity to get money has helped to ripen some of his schemes?

The historian of Haverhill<sup>1</sup> commences his account of the attack on that town in 1708 by the French and Indians, by saying that one [of] the French commanders was "the infamous Hertel de Rouville, the sacker of Deerfield," that the French of that period equalled, if they did not exceed, the Indians in acts of wantonness and barbarity, and "when the former were weary of murdering 'poor, helpless women and children,' — when they were glutted with blood, it is said that M. Vaudreuil, then Governor of Canada, employed the latter to do it." He then goes on to describe the sudden and appalling attack before sunrise, the slaughter of women and infants and the brave or cowardly conduct of the inhabitants. Rolfe and Wainwright and many others were killed. The French historian Charlevoix says of Rouville that he supplied his father's place worthily and that the Governor, Vaudreuil, called him one of the two best partisans in Canada. He tells us that Rouville made a short speech to the French

<sup>1</sup> [B. L. Mirick, *The History of Haverhill, Massachusetts*, Haverhill, 1832.]

before they commenced the attack, exhorting them to forget their differences and embrace one another. "And then they said their prayers" and marched to the assault. And after giving an account of the attack, and of the subsequent actions almost totally different from the former, not having said a word about the barbarities of the savages, he proceeds to enumerate the "belles actions" of some officers who showed humanity to the prisoners on the retreat.

*Feb. 7.* The warmer weather we have had for a few days past was particularly pleasant to the poor whose wood-piles were low, whose clothes were ragged and thin. I think how the little boy must enjoy it whom I saw a week ago with his shoes truncated at the toes. Hard are the times when the infants' shoes are second-foot.

The French historian speaks of both French and Indians as "our braves (*nos Braves*)."

The village historian takes you into the village graveyard and reads the inscriptions on the monuments of the slain. Takes you to the grave of the parish priest, his wife, and child, which is honored with a Latin inscription. The French historian, who signs himself *de la Compagnie de Jésus*, who was at the waterside at Montreal when the expedition disembarked, and so heard the freshest news. To show the discrepancies, I will compare the two accounts in relation to one part of the affair alone.

The Haverhill historian says, "The retreat [of the French and Indians]<sup>1</sup> commenced about the rising of the

<sup>1</sup> [The brackets are Thoreau's.]

sun." "The town, by this time, was generally alarmed. Joseph Bradley collected a small party, . . . and secured the medicine-box and packs of the enemy, which they had left about three miles from the village. Capt. Samuel Ayer, a fearless man, and of great strength, collected a body of about twenty men, and pursued the retreating foe. He came up with them just as they were entering the woods, when they faced about, and though they numbered thirteen or more to one, still Capt. Ayer did not hesitate to give them battle. These gallant men were soon reinforced by another party, under the command of his son; and after a severe skirmish, which lasted about an hour, they retook some of the prisoners, and the enemy precipitately retreated, leaving nine of their number dead.

"The French and Indians continued their retreat, and so great were their sufferings, arising from the loss of their packs, and their consequent exposure to famine, that many of the Frenchmen returned and surrendered themselves prisoners of war; and some of the captives were dismissed, with a message that, if they were pursued, the others should be put to death. Perhaps, if they had been pursued, nearly the whole of their force might have been conquered. . . . As it was, they left thirty of their number dead, in both engagements, and many were wounded, whom they carried with them."

One Joseph Bartlett, a soldier who was carried away captive but returned after some years and published a narrative of his captivity, says that after the retreat commenced, "they then marched on together,

when Capt. Faires [Ayer], with a small company, waylaid and shot upon them, which put them to flight, so that they did not get together again until three days after."<sup>1</sup> His party, says the historian, had nothing to eat for four days "but a few sour grapes and thorn plums. They then killed a hawk and divided it among fifteen—the head fell to the share of Mr. Bartlett, which, he says, 'was the largest meal I had these four days.'" The historian concludes that between thirty and forty New-Englanders in all were either killed or taken prisoners.

Now for Charlevoix's account, who happened to be at the waterside at Montreal when the French party disembarked and so got the most direct and freshest news. He says: "There were about a hundred English slain in these different attacks; many others . . . were burned (in the houses), and the number of prisoners was considerable." (This was before the retreat.) "As for booty there was none at all, they did not think of it, till it had all been consumed in the flames." Speaking of the retreat, he says: "It was made with much order, each one having taken so many provisions only as was needed for the return. This precaution was even (*encore*) more necessary than they thought. Our men had hardly made half a league, when, on entering a wood, they fell into an ambuscade, which seventy men had prepared for them, who, before discovering themselves, fired each his shot. Our braves met this discharge without wavering, and fortunately it produced no great effect. Meanwhile all the rear was already full

<sup>1</sup> [As quoted by Mirick.]

of people on foot and on horseback, who followed them closely, and there was no other course to take but to force their way through those (*que de passer sur le ventre à ceux*) who had just fired upon them."

"They took it without hesitating, each threw away his pack of provisions, and almost all his apparel (*hardes*), and without amusing themselves with firing they came at once to a hand-to-hand contest (with them) (*sans s'amuser à tirer ils en vinrent d'abord aux armes blanches*). The English, astonished at so vigorous an assault made by men whom they thought they had thrown into disorder, found themselves in that condition (*y*, there) and could not recover (themselves). So that, excepting ten or twelve who saved themselves by flight, all were killed or taken."

"We had in the two actions eighteen men wounded, three savages and five French killed, and in the number of the dead were two young officers of great promise, Hertel de Chambly, brother of Rouville, and Verchères. Many prisoners made in the attack on Haverhill saved themselves during the last combat."

Tuckerman says that Fries "states formally the *quaquaversal* affinity of plants, and hence rejects once more the notion of a single series in nature. He declares species '*unica in natura fixe circumscripta idea*,' and hence all superior sections are more or less indefinite." Just as true is this of man, even of an individual man. He is not to be referred to, or classed with, any company. He is truly singular, and, so far as systems are concerned, in a sense abnormal ever.

Tuckerman says of Linnæus, "Who, while he indi-

cated the affinities of nature, and pronounced their explication the true end of the science of plants, yet constructed also an artificial system, which so surpassed every other, that it seemed nigh to overwhelming that very knowledge of affinities, to which, as just said, he had consecrated the whole design of Botany." Again, "Fries may be said to represent that higher school of Linnæans, which started from the great naturalist's *natural doctrine*."

The English did not come here from a mere love of adventure, to truck with the savages, or to convert the savages, or to hold offices under the crown, as the French did, but to live in earnest and with freedom. The French had no *busy-ness* here. They ran over an immense extent of country, selling strong water, and collecting its furs and converting its inhabitants, — or at least baptizing its dying infants, — without improving it. The New England youth were not *coureurs de bois*.

It was freedom to hunt and fish, not to work, that they sought. Hontan says the *coureurs de bois* lived like sailors ashore.<sup>1</sup>

Feb. 8. Mrs. Buttrick says that she has five cents for making a shirt, and that if she does her best she can make one in a day.

It is interesting to see loads of hay coming down from the country nowadays, — within a week. They make them very broad and low. They do not carry hay by railroad yet. The spoils of up-country fields. A mountain of dried herbs. I had forgotten that there

<sup>1</sup> [*Excursions*, pp. 66, 67; Riv. 83, 84.]

ever was so much grass as they prove. And all these horses and oxen and cows, then, are still fed on the last summer's grass which has been dried! They still roam in the meads.

One would think that some people regarded character in man as the botanist regards character in flowers, who says, "Character characterem non antecellit nisi constantia," but this is well explained, and so that it becomes applicable to man, by this parallel aphorism of Linnæus, "Character non est, ut genus fiat, sed ut genus noscatur."

It is apparently Fries who is made to say of his own system — or it may be Tuckerman who says it — that "By this key, I have not yet found that any plants, manifestly and by consent of all allied, are sundered."

Tuckerman says cunningly, "If the rapt admirer of the wonders and the beauties of life and being might well come to learn of our knowledge the laws and the history of what he loves, let us remember that we have the best right to all the pleasure that he has discovered, and that we are not complete if we do not possess it all. Linnæus was as hearty a lover and admirer of nature as if he had been nothing more."

Night before last, our first rain for a long time; this afternoon, the first crust to walk on. It is pleasant to walk over the fields raised a foot or more above their summer level, and the prospect is altogether new.

Is not all music a hum more or less divine? I hear something new at every telegraph-post. I have not got out of hearing of one before I hear a new harp.

Thoughts of different dates will not cohere.

Carried a new cloak to Johnny Riordan. I found that the shanty was warmed by the simple social relations of the Irish. On Sunday they come from the town and stand in the doorway and so keep out the cold. One is not cold among his brothers and sisters. What if there is less fire on the hearth, if there is more in the heart!

These Irish are not succeeding so ill after all. The little boy goes to the primary school and proves a forward boy there, and the mother's brother, who has let himself in the village, tells me that he takes the *Flag of our Union* (if that is the paper edited by an Irishman). It is musical news to hear that Johnny does not love to be kept at home from school in deep snows.

In this winter often no apparent difference between rivers, ponds, and fields.

The French respected the Indians as a separate and independent people, and speak of them and contrast themselves with them, as the English have never done. They not only went to war with them, but they lived at home with them. There was a much less interval between them.<sup>1</sup>

*Feb. 9.* I am interested to see the seeds of the poke, about a dozen, shiny black with a white spot, somewhat like a saba bean in shape. The still full granary of the birds.

At 9 A. M. up river to Fair Haven Pond.

This is our month of the crusted snow. Was this the Indians'? I get over the half-buried fences at a stride, and the drifts slope up to the tops of the walls

<sup>1</sup> [*Excursions*, p. 66; Riv. 82.]

on each side. The crust is melted on the south slopes and lets me in, or where the sun has been reflected (yesterday) from a wood-side and rotted it, but the least inclination to the north is evidence of a hard surface. On the meadows and in level open fields away from the reflection of pines and oak leaves, it will generally bear.

Met Sudbury Haines on the river before the Cliffs, come a-fishing. Wearing an old coat, much patched, with many colors. He represents the Indian still. The very patches in his coat and his improvident life do so. I feel that he is as essential a part, nevertheless, of our community as the lawyer in the village. He tells me that he caught three pickerel here the other day that weighed seven pounds all together. It is the old story. The fisherman is a natural story-teller. No man's imagination plays more pranks than his, while he is tending his reels and trotting from one to another, or watching his cork in summer. He is ever waiting for the sky to fall. He has sent out a venture. He has a ticket in the lottery of fate, and who knows what it may draw? He ever expects to catch a bigger fish yet. He is the most patient and believing of men. Who else will stand so long in wet places? When the haymaker runs to shelter, he takes down his pole and bends his steps to the river, glad to have a leisure day. He is more like an inhabitant of nature. The weather concerns him. He is an observer of her phenomena.

They say that the Pasha, by some improvements in cutting down trees, has banished rain from Egypt altogether for some years past.

Men tell about the mirage to be seen in certain deserts

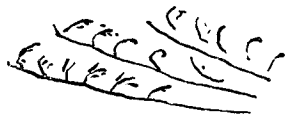
and in peculiar states of the atmosphere. The mirage is constant. The state of the atmosphere is continually varying, and, to a keen observer, objects do not twice present exactly the same appearance. If I invert my head this morning and look at the woods in the horizon, they do not look so far off and elysian-like as in the afternoon. If I am not mistaken, it is late in the afternoon that the atmosphere is in such a state that we derive the most pleasure from and are most surprised by this experiment. The prospect is thus actually a constantly varying mirage, answering to the condition of our perceptive faculties and our fluctuating imaginations. If we incline our heads never so little, the most familiar things begin to put on some new aspect. If we invert our heads completely our desecrated wood-lot appears far off, incredible, elysian, unprofaned by us. As you cannot swear through glass, no more can you swear through air, the thinnest section of it. It paints and glasses everything. When was not the air as elastic as our spirits? I cannot well conceive of greater variety than it produces by its changes from hour to hour of every day. It is a new glass placed over the picture every hour.

I did not know that the world was suffering for want of gold. The discovery of a mountain of gold would only derange the currency. I have seen a little of it. I know it is very malleable, but not so malleable as wit. A grain of it will gild a great surface, but not so much as a grain of wisdom. I do not care if the goldsmiths and jewellers find these hard times.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> [*Cape Cod, and Miscellanies*, p. 464; *Misc.*, Riv. 265.]

A man goes to the end of his garden, inverts his head, and does not know his own cottage. The novelty is in us, and it is also in nature.

When I break off a twig of green-barked sassafras, as I am going through the woods now, and smell it, I am startled to find it fragrant as in summer. It is an importation of all the spices of Oriental summers into our New England winter. Very foreign to the snow and the oak leaves. I find that the wood on the Island in Fair Haven Pond has been cut off this winter, but as the young [wood] and underwood is left, I am surprised to see so much witch-hazel there, — more than anywhere else that I know of. It shall be called Witch-Hazel Island. The spray of this shrub is remarkably re-curved in some instances; on one whole side of a large bush.



For the first time this many a year, I tasted there some of the sweet froth which had issued from the sap of a walnut or hickory lately cut. It is always cheering and somewhat unexpected to meet in nature with anything so agreeable to the human palate. So innocent a sweet. It reminded me of the days when I used to scrape this juice off the logs in my father's wood-pile.

Respecting lichens, perhaps the first question which the mass of men put is, "What ones are good to eat?" And the meagre answer is rock-tripe (*Umbilicaria*) and Iceland moss (*Cetraria Islandica*). They may next inquire which are the most beautiful. The most scientific will only assist to answer similar questions. How they

concern man, — the most elaborate and driest system must tell us better at last how they concern man.

*Feb. 10.* Now if there are any who think that I am vainglorious, that I set myself up above others and crow over their low estate, let me tell them that I could tell a pitiful story respecting myself as well as them, if my spirits held out to do it; I could encourage them with a sufficient list of failures, and could flow as humbly as the very gutters themselves; I could enumerate a list of as rank offenses as ever reached the nostrils of heaven; that I think worse of myself than they can possibly think of me, being better acquainted with the man. I put the best face on the matter. I will tell them this secret, if they will not tell it to anybody else.

Write while the heat is in you. When the farmer burns a hole in his yoke, he carries the hot iron quickly from the fire to the wood, for every moment it is less effectual to penetrate (pierce) it. It must be used instantly, or it is useless. The writer who postpones the recording of his thoughts uses an iron which has cooled to burn a hole with. He cannot inflame the minds of his audience.

We have none of those peculiar clear, vitreous, crystalline vistas in the western sky before sundown of late. There is perchance more moisture in the air. Perhaps that phenomenon does not belong to this part of the winter.

I saw yesterday on the snow on the ice, on the south side of Fair Haven Pond, some hundreds of honey-bees, dead and sunk half an inch below the crust. They had



evidently come forth from their hive (perhaps in a large hemlock on the bank close by), and had fallen on the snow chilled to death. Their bodies extended from the tree to about three rods from it toward the pond. Pratt says he would advise me to remove the dead bees, lest somebody else should be led to discover their retreat, and I may get five dollars for the swarm, and perhaps a good deal of honey.

*Feb. 11. Wednesday.* When the thermometer is down to 20° in the morning, as last month, I think of the poor dogs who have no masters. If a poor dog has no master, everybody will throw a billet of wood at him. It never rains but it pours.

It now rains, — a drizzling rain mixed with mist, which ever and anon fills the air to the height of fifteen or twenty feet. It makes what they call an old-fashioned mill privilege in the streets, *i. e.* I suppose, a privilege on a small stream good only for a part of the year.

Perhaps the best evidence of an amelioration of the climate — at least that the snows are less deep than formerly — is the snow-shoes which still lie about in so many garrets, now useless, though the population of this town has not essentially increased for seventy-five years past, and the travelling within the limits of the town accordingly not much facilitated. No man ever uses them now, yet the old men used them in their youth.

I have lived some thirty-odd years on this planet, and I have yet to hear the first syllable of valuable or even earnest advice from my seniors. They have told

me nothing, and probably can tell me nothing to the purpose. There is life, an experiment untried by me, and it does not avail me that you have tried it. If I have any valuable experience, I am sure to reflect that this my mentors said nothing about. What were mysteries to the child remain mysteries to the old man.<sup>1</sup>

It is a mistake to suppose that, in a country where railroads and steamboats, the printing-press and the church, and the usual evidences of what is called civilization exist, the condition of a very large body of the inhabitants cannot be as degraded as that of savages. Savages have their high and their low estate, and so have civilized nations. To know this I should not need to look further than to the shanties which everywhere line our railroads, that last improvement in civilization. But I will refer you to Ireland, which is marked as one of the white or enlightened spots on the map. Yet I have no doubt that that nation's rulers are as wise as the average of civilized rulers.<sup>2</sup>

*Feb. 12.* Living all winter with an open door for light and no visible wood-pile, the forms of old and young permanently contracted through long shrinking from cold, and their faces pinched by want. I have seen an old crone sitting bareheaded on the hillside, then in the middle of January, while it was raining and the ground was slowly thawing under her, knitting there. Their undeveloped limbs and faculties, buds that cannot expand on account of the severity of the season. There

<sup>1</sup> [*Walden*, p. 10; Riv. 17.]

<sup>2</sup> [*Walden*, pp. 38, 39; Riv. 56-58.]

is no greater squalidness in any part of the world!<sup>1</sup> Contrast the physical condition of the Irish with that of the North American Indian, or the South Sea Islander, or any other savage race before they were degraded by contact with the civilized man.<sup>2</sup>

*Feb. 13.* Talking with Rice this afternoon about the bees which I discovered the other day, he told me something about his bee-hunting. He and Pratt go out together once or twice a year. He takes a little tin box with a little refined sugar and water about the consistency of honey, or some honey in the comb, which comes up so high only in the box as to let the lid clear a bee's back, also some little bottles of paint — red, blue, white, etc. — and a compass properly prepared to line the bees with, the sights perhaps a foot apart. Then they ride off (this is in the fall) to some extensive wood, perhaps the west side of Sudbury. They go to some buckwheat-field or a particular species of late goldenrod which especially the bees frequent at that season, and they are sure to find honey-bees enough. They catch one by putting the box under the blossoms and then covering him with the lid, at the same time cutting off the stalk of the flower. They then set down the box, and after a while raise the lid slightly to see if the bee is feeding; if so, they take off the lid, knowing that he will not fly away till he gets ready, and catch another; and so on till they get a sufficient number. Then they thrust sticks into their little paint-bot-

<sup>1</sup> [*Walden*, p. 58; *Riv.* 57.]

<sup>2</sup> [*Walden*, pp. 38, 39; *Riv.* 57, 58.]

cles, and, with these, watching their opportunity, they give the bees each a spot of a particular color on his body, — they spot him distinctly, — and then, lying about a rod off, not to scare them, and watching them carefully all the while, they wait till one has filled his sac, and prepares to depart to his hive. They are careful to note whether he has a red or a blue jacket or what color. He rises up about ten feet and then begins to circle rapidly round and round with a hum, sometimes a circle twenty feet in diameter before he has decided which way to steer, and then suddenly shoots off in a bee-line to his hive. The hunters lie flat on their backs and watch him carefully all the while. If blue-jacket steers toward the open land where there are known to be hives, they forthwith leave out of the box all the blue-jackets, and move off a little and open the box in a new place to get rid of that family. And so they work till they come to a bee, red-jacket perhaps, that steers into the wood or swamp or in a direction to suit them. They take the point of compass exactly, and wait perhaps till red-jacket comes back, that they may ascertain his course more exactly, and also judge by the time it has taken for him to go and return, using their watches, how far off the nest is, though sometimes they are disappointed in their calculations, for it may take the [bee] more or less time to crawl into its nest, depending on its position in the tree. By the third journey he will commonly bring some of his companions. Our hunters then move forward a piece, from time to time letting out a bee to make sure of their course. After the bees have gone and come once, they generally

steer straight to their nest at once without circling round first. Sometimes the hunters, having observed this course carefully on the compass, go round a quarter of a circle and, letting out another bee, observe the course from that point, knowing that where these two lines intersect must be the nest. Rice thinks that a beeline does not vary more than fifteen or twenty feet from a straight one in going half a mile. They frequently trace the bees thus to their hives more than a mile.

He said that the last time he went out the wind was so strong that the bees made some leeway just as a bullet will, and he could not get the exact course to their hives. He has a hive of bees over in Sudbury, and he every year sows some buckwheat for them. He has visited this buckwheat when in blossom when there was more than one bee to every six inches square, and out of curiosity has caught a number of the bees and, letting them out successively, has calculated by the several courses they took whose hives they came from in almost every instance, though some had come more than two miles and others belonged to his own hive close by.

He has seen a dozen hogsheads of honey from South America on the wharf at Boston. Says they manufacture honey now from maple syrup, which you cannot tell from bee honey, taking care to throw some dead bees and bees' wings and a little honeycomb into it.

He was repaid if he found the nest, even if he did not get any honey. I am glad to know that there are such grown children left. He says the mountain honeysuckle (columbine) has a good deal of honey at the

bottom of the flower which the bee cannot get at in the usual way; it therefore gnaws a hole in it from the outside.

The actual bee-hunter and pigeon-catcher is familiar with facts in the natural history of bees and pigeons which Huber and even Audubon are totally ignorant of. I love best the unscientific man's knowledge; there is so much more humanity in it. It is connected with true *sports*.

#### 9 A. M. — To Conantum.

The rain has diminished the snow and hardened the crust, and made bare ground in many places. A yellow water, a foot or two deep, covers the ice on the meadows, but is not frozen quite hard enough to bear. As the river swells, the ice cracks along both sides over the edge of its channel, often defined by willows, and that part over the river rises with the water, but that over the meadow is held down apparently by the grass and bushes (and moreover feels the force of the freshet less), and is, accordingly, covered with water.

I sat by the little brook in Conant's meadow, where it falls over an oak rail between some boards which partially dam it, — eight or nine inches, — the bubbles on the surface making a coarse foam, the surface of which I perceive has frozen in the night, forming an irregular shell-like covering which is now partly worn away at top. These bubbles which so closely push up and crowd one another, each making haste to expand and burst (forming coarse frothy heaps), impinging on each other, remind me of the cells of honeycomb.

as if they inclined to take the same hexagonal form, — four-sided, five-sided, but the most perfect, methinks, six-sided, — but it is difficult to count them, they are so restless and burst so soon. In one place this froth had been frozen into the form of little hollow towers larger at top than at bottom, six inches high, and the bubbles were now incessantly rising through and bursting at their top, — overflowing with bubbles. I saw the ruined shells of many similar towers that had been washed down the stream.

Air being carried down by the force of this little fall and mixed with the water, deeper bubbles were formed, which rose up further down and were flattened against the transparent ice, through which they appeared like coins of all sizes from a pin-head to a dollar, poured out of a miser's pot, hesitating at first which way to troop, seeming sometimes to be detained by some inequality in the ice which they so closely hugged. The coin-like bubbles of the brook.

I traced this rill further up, to where it comes under the road, and heard its rumbling like a mill privilege from afar, but it was quite bridged over there with snow; but here and there the foam was frothing up through a hole in the snow like a little geyser, and in some places it was frozen in the form of beehives eighteen inches high and a foot wide, the most delicate flocculent masses which could not be handled, regularly formed, layer on layer, sometimes of a downy white, sometimes tinged with a delicate fawn-color, in which you could detect a slight trembling, showing that the geyser was still at work in its core. Nature handled

the froth more delicately than the spinner's machinery his roping.

Color, which is the poet's wealth, is so expensive that most take to mere outline or pencil sketches and become men of science.

*Feb. 14.* But this points to a distinction between the civilized man and the savage; and, no doubt, they have designs on us in making (of the life of a civilized people) an institution in which the life of the individual is to a great extent absorbed, in order, perchance, to preserve and perfect the race. But I wish to show at what a sacrifice this advantage is at present obtained, and to suggest that we may possibly so live as to secure all the advantage without suffering any of the disadvantage. What mean ye by saying that the fathers have eaten sour grapes, and the children's teeth are set on edge?

"As I live, saith the Lord God, ye shall not have occasion any more to use this proverb in Israel.

"Behold, all souls are mine; as the soul of the father, so also the soul of the son is mine: the soul that sinneth, it shall die."<sup>1</sup>

3 P. M. — Walden road to pond, thence to Cliffs.

The slight snow of last night, lodging on the limbs of the oaks, has given them the wintry and cobwebbed appearance which distinguishes them so plainly from the pines. They are great cladonias, perchance.

Met Joshua Brown returning from the pond (Walden)

<sup>1</sup> [*Walden*, pp. 34, 35; *Riv.* 52, 53.]

without having caught a fish. Has had no luck there this winter, he thinks because of the woodcutters' falling trees on to the ice. He, too, tells how many weighed a certain number of pounds. Four pounds and three quarters is the heaviest he ever caught, but the pickerel that ran off with his reel (before he got to it), which he did not see, he set at ten pounds.

I noticed a white pine, rotten within, near the pond, — or, rather, eaten out, honeycombed, by the ants, as I think, — and I was struck by the regular cellular character of the cavities they had made, separated by thin partitions, each cell about an inch and a half long, reminding me of Chinese puzzles carved in wood.

The seeds or seed-vessels of wintergreen are conspicuous above the snow.

The winter has had its seasons somewhat in this order, as near as I now remember: First there were a few glowing sunsets after raw and blustering days, setting the pines and oaks on fire with their blaze, when the summer and fall had set, — the afterglow of the year. Then, if I remember, came the snows, and true winter began, the snow growing gradually deeper and the cold more intense. I think it was before the first thaw, which this winter came before the end of December, that the main attraction in my afternoon walks (at any rate when the days were shortest and the cold most intense) was the western sky at and before sunset, when, through the vistas there between the clouds, you saw a singularly crystalline, vitreous sky, which perhaps is not seen at any other season of the year, at least not in such perfection. I will see if

we have any more this winter. Well, then there was the thaw, January thaw, which this year came in December, for it is the first thaw after long-continued cold weather and snow, when we have fairly forgotten summer. This winter was remarkable for the long continuance of severe cold weather after it had once set in. Latterly we have had, *i. e.* within a week, crusted snow, made by thaw and rain, but now I do not see the crystalline sky.

In the January thaw I should have mentioned the sand foliage in the Cut.

Now we have the swollen river, and yellow water over the meadow ice to some extent. Other epochs I might find described in my Journal.

At the Cliffs, the rocks are in some places covered with ice; and the least inclination beyond a perpendicular in their faces is betrayed by the formation of icicles at once, which hang perpendicularly, like organ pipes, in front of the rock. They are now conducting downward the melting ice and snow, which drips from their points with a slight clinking and lapsing sound, but when the sun has set will freeze there and add to the icicles' length. Where the icicles have reached the ground and are like thick pillars, they have a sort of annular appearance, somewhat like the successive swells on the legs of tables and on bed-posts. There is perhaps a harmony between the turner's taste and the law of nature in this instance. The shadow of the water flowing or pulsating behind this transparent icy crust or these stalactites in the sun imparts a semblance of life to the whole.

The traveller's is so apt to be a progress more or less rapid toward his home (I have read many a voyage round the world more than half of which, certainly, was taken up with the return voyage; he no sooner is out of sight of his native hills than he begins to tell us how he got home again) that I wonder he did not stay at home in the first place.

The laws of nature always furnish us with the best excuse for going and coming. If we do not go now, we shall find our fire out.

I hate that my motive for visiting a friend should be that I want society; that it should lie in my poverty and weakness, and not in his and my riches and strength. His friendship should make me strong enough to do without him.

*Feb. 15.* Perhaps I am descended from that Northman named "Thorer the Dog-footed." Thorer Hund — "he was the most powerful man in the North" — to judge from his name belonged to the same family. Thorer is one of the most, if not the most, common name in the chronicles of the Northmen.

*Feb. 16.* Laing says that "the Heimskringla has been hardly used by the learned men of the period in which it was first published. It appeared first in the literary world in 1697, frozen into the Latin of the Swedish antiquary, Peringskiöld."

Snorro Sturleson says, "From Thor's name comes Thorer, also Thorarinn." Again: "Earl Rognvald was King Harald's dearest friend, and the king had the

greatest regard for him. He was married to Hilda, a daughter of Rolf Nacfia, and their sons were Rolf and Thorer. . . . Rolf became a great viking, and was of so stout a growth that no horse could carry him, and wheresoever he went he must go on foot; and therefore he was called Gange-Rolf." (Laing says in a note, what Sturleson also tells in the text, Gange-Rolf, Rolf Ganger, Rolf the Walker, was the conqueror of Normandy.) "Gange-Rolf's son was William, father to Richard, and grandfather to another Richard, who was the father of Richard Longspear, and grandfather of William the Bastard, from whom all the following English kings are descended."

King Harald "set Earl Rognvald's son Thorer over Möre, and gave him his daughter Alof in marriage. Thorer, called the Silent, got the same territory his father Rognvald had possessed." His brother Einar, going into battle to take vengeance on his father's murderers, sang a kind of reproach against his brothers Rollang and Rolf for their slowness and concludes, —

"And silent Thorer sits and dreams  
At home, beside the mead-bowl's streams."

Of himself it is related that he cut a spread eagle on the back of his enemy Halfdan.

So it seems that from one branch of the family were descended the kings of England, and from the other myself.

#### Down Turnpike.

It is interesting to meet an ox with handsomely spreading horns. There is a great variety of sizes and forms, though one horn commonly matches the other. I am

willing to turn out for those that spread their branches wide. Large and spreading horns methinks indicate a certain vegetable force and naturalization in the wearer; it softens and eases off the distinction between the animal and vegetable, the unhorned animals and the trees. I should say that the horned animals approached nearer to the vegetable. The deer that run in the woods, as the moose for instance, carry perfect trees on their heads. The French call them *bois*. No wonder there are fables of centaurs and the like. No wonder there is a story of a hunter who, when his bullets failed, fired cherry-stones into the heads of his game and so trees sprouted out of them, and the hunter refreshed himself with the cherries. It is a perfect piece of mythology which belongs to these days. Oxen, which are de-animalized to some extent, approach nearer to the vegetable, perchance, than bulls and cows, and hence their bulky bodies and large and spreading horns. Nothing more natural than that the deer should appear with a tree growing out of his head. Thus is the animal allied to the vegetable kingdom and passes into it by insensible degrees. These appendages are indispensable to the beauty of the animal, as appears from the great calf look of a cow without horns, or a "bunter."

Man's relation to oxen is the same that it was in primitive ages. It is equally primitive. He has got no nearer to them. If his ox breaks through the ice, he knows no better how to get him out than if it had never happened. The helpless unwieldiness of the oxen is remarkable. I was told yesterday that when a man had got his ox out of Bateman's Pond, the latter gave a

spring, and, coming down, his hind legs slipped and spread apart on the ice, and he was split up so that he had to be killed.

This afternoon there is a clear, bright air, which, though cold and windy, I love to inhale. I see mother-o'-pearl tints, and I am not sure but this will be such a sunset as we had a month ago. The sky is a much fairer and [more] undimmed blue than usual.

The surface of the snow which fell last night is coarse like bran, with shining flakes. I see the steam-like snow-dust curling up and careering along over the fields. As I walk the bleak Walden road, it blows up over the highest drifts in the west, lit by the westering sun like the spray on a beach before the northwest wind. This drifting snow-dust has formed long, flattish drifts a few feet wide by some rods [long], with a rounded, swelling surface where it has lodged. The intermediate spaces, a rod or two wide, being swept clean and left uneven and naked, over these rollers it sweeps on to fill the road.

By the artificial system we learn the names of plants, by the natural their relations to one another; but still it remains to learn their relation to man. The poet does more for us in this department.

Linnaeus says *elementa* are simple, *naturalia* composed by divine art. And these two embrace all things on earth. Physics treats of the properties of *elementa*, natural science of *naturalia*.

*Feb. 17.* Perhaps the peculiarity of those western vistas was partly owing to the shortness of the days,

when we naturally look to the heavens and make the most of the little light, when we live an arctic life, when the woodchopper's axe reminds us of twilight at 3 o'clock P. M., when the morning and the evening literally make the whole day, when I travelled, as it were, between the portals of the night, and the path was narrow as well as blocked with snow. Then, too, the sun has the last opportunity to fill the air with vapor.

I see on the Walden road that the wind through the wall is cutting *through* the drifts, leaving a portion adhering to the stones.

It is hard for the traveller when, in a cold and blustering day, the sun and wind come from the same side. To-day the wind is northwest, or west by north, and the sun from the southwest.

The apothecium of lichens appears to be a fungus, — all fruit.

I saw Patrick Riordan carrying home an armful of fagots from the woods to his shanty, on his shoulder. How much more interesting an event is that man's supper who has just been forth in the snow to hunt, or perchance to steal, the fuel to cook it with! His bread and meat must be sweet.<sup>1</sup>

It was something to hear that the women of Waltham used the *Parmelia saxatilis* (?) in dyeing.

If you would read books on botany, go to the fathers of the science. Read Linnæus at once, and come down from him as far as you please. I lost much time reading the florists. It is remarkable how little the mass of those

<sup>1</sup> [Walden, p. 275; Riv. 386.]

interested in botany are acquainted with Linnæus. His "Philosophia Botanica," which Rousseau, Sprengel, and others praised so highly, — I doubt if it has ever been translated into English. It is simpler, more easy to understand, and more comprehensive, than any of the hundred manuals to which it has given birth. A few pages of cuts representing the different parts of plants, with the botanical names attached, is worth whole volumes of explanation.

According to Linnæus's classification, I come under the head of the *Miscellaneous* Botanophilists, — "Botanophili sunt, qui varia de vegetabilibus tradiderunt, licet ea non proprie de scientiam Botanicam spectant," — either one of the *Biologi* (*Panegyrica plerumque exclamarunt*) or *Poetæ*.

*Feb.* 18. When Eystein the Bad ravaged the land of Drontheim, "he then offered the people either his slave Thoror Faxe, or his dog, whose name was Sauer, to be their king. They preferred the dog, as they thought they would sooner get rid of him. Now the dog was, by witchcraft, gifted with three men's wisdom; and when he barked, he spoke one word and barked two. A collar and chain of gold and silver were made for him, and his courtiers carried him in their hands when the weather or ways were foul. A throne was erected for him, and he sat upon a high place, as kings are used to sit. . . . It is told that the occasion of his death was that the wolves one day broke into his fold, and his courtiers stirred him up to defend his cattle; but when he ran down from his mound, and attacked the wolves, they tore him to



pieces." Now I think if he had spoken two words and barked only one, he would have been wiser still and never fallen into the clutches of the wolves.

By some traits in the saga concerning King Hakon the Good, I am reminded of the concessions which some politicians and religionists, who are all things to all men, make. Hakon was unpopular on account of his attempts to spread Christianity, and to conciliate his subjects he drank out of the horn which had been blessed in Odin's name at a festival of sacrifice, but as he drank he made the sign of the cross over it. And one of his earls told the people that he was making the sign of Thor's hammer over it. "On this," it is said, "there was quietness for the evening. The next day, when the people sat down to table, the bonders pressed the king strongly to eat of horse flesh [this was an evidence of paganism];<sup>1</sup> and as he would on no account do so, they wanted him to drink of the soup; and as he would not do this, they insisted he should at least taste the gravy; and on his refusal they were going to lay hands on him. Earl Sigurd came and made peace among them, by asking the king to hold his mouth over the handle of the kettle, upon which the fat smoke of the boiled horse flesh had settled itself; and the king first laid a linen cloth over the handle, and then gaped over it, and returned to the throne; but neither party was satisfied with this." On another day the Earl "brought it so far that the king took some bits of horse liver, and emptied all the goblets the bonders filled for him." This Hakon had a daughter *Thora*.

<sup>1</sup> [The brackets are Thoreau's.]

Thorer Klakke was one "who had been long on Viking expeditions."

Thorer Hiort "was quicker on foot than any man."

I have a commonplace-book for facts and another for poetry, but I find it difficult always to preserve the vague distinction which I had in my mind, for the most interesting and beautiful facts are so much the more poetry and that is their success. They are *translated* from earth to heaven. I see that if my facts were sufficiently vital and significant, — perhaps transmuted more into the substance of the human mind, — I should need but one book of poetry to contain them all.

#### P. M. — To Fair Haven Hill.

One discovery in meteorology, one significant observation, is a good deal. I am grateful to the man who introduces order among the clouds. Yet I look up into the heavens so fancy free, I am almost glad not to know any law for the winds.

I find the partridges among the fallen pine-tops on Fair Haven these afternoons, an hour before sundown, ready to commence budding in the neighboring orchard.

The mosses on the rocks look green where the snow has melted. This must be one of the spring signs, when spring comes.

It is impossible for the same person to see things from the poet's point of view and that of the man of science. The poet's second love may be science, not his first, — when use has worn off the bloom. I realize that men may be born to a condition of mind at which

others arrive in middle age by the decay of their poetic faculties.

*Feb. 19.* The sky appears broader now than it did. The day has opened its eyelids wider. The lengthening of the days, commenced a good while ago, is a kind of forerunner of the spring. Of course it is then that the ameliorating cause begins to work.

#### To White Pond.

Considering the melon-rind arrangement of the clouds, by an ocular illusion the bars appearing to approach each other in the east and west horizons, I am prompted to ask whether the melons will not be found to lie in this direction oftenest.

The strains from my muse are as rare nowadays, or of late years, as the notes of birds in the winter, — the faintest occasional tinkling sound, and mostly of the woodpecker kind or the harsh jay or crow. It never melts into a song. Only the *day-day-day* of an inquisitive titmouse.

Everywhere snow, gathered into sloping drifts about the walls and fences, and, beneath the snow, the frozen ground, and men are compelled to deposit the summer's provision in burrows in the earth like the ground squirrel. Many creatures, daunted by the prospect, migrated in the fall, but man remains and walks over the frozen snow-crust and over the stiffened rivers and ponds, and draws now upon his summer stores. Life is reduced to its lowest terms. There is no home for you now, in this freezing wind, but in that shelter which you prepared in the summer. You steer straight across

the fields to that in season. I can with difficulty tell when I am over the river. There is a similar crust over my heart. Where I rambled in the summer and gathered flowers and rested on the grass by the brook-side in the shade, now no grass nor flowers, no brook nor shade, but cold, unvaried snow, stretching mile after mile, and no place to sit.

Look at White Pond, that crystal drop that was, in which the umbrageous shore was reflected, and schools of fabulous perch and shiners rose to the surface, and with difficulty you made your way along the pebbly shore in a summer afternoon to the bathing-place. Now you stalk rapidly across where it was, muffled in your cloak, over a more level snow-field than usual, furrowed by the wind, its finny inhabitants and its pebbly shore all hidden and forgotten, and you would shudder at the thought of wetting your feet in it.

Returning across the river just as the sun was setting behind the Hollowell place, the ice eastward of me a few rods, where the snow was blown off, was as green as bottle glass, seen at the right angle, though all around, above and below, was one unvaried white, — a vitreous glass green. Just as I have seen the river green in a winter morning. This phenomenon is to be put with the blue in the crevices of the snow.

So, likewise, give me leave, or require me, to mend my work, and I will chip down the vessel on both sides to a level with the notches which I have made.

A fine display of the northern lights after 10 p. m., flashing up from all parts of the horizon to the zenith, where there was a kind of core formed, stretching south-

southeast [and] north-northwest, surrounded by what looked like a permanent white cloud, which, however, was very variable in its form. The light flashes or trembles upward, as if it were the light of the sun reflected from a frozen mist which undulated in the wind in the upper atmosphere.

*Feb. 20.* Erling had a son Thorer. It is said of the former that "both winter and summer it was the custom in his house to drink at the mid-day meal according to a measure, but at the night meal there was no measure in drinking."

Kings are not they who go abroad to conquer kingdoms, but who stay at home and mind their business, proving first their ability to govern their families and themselves. "King Sigurd Syr was standing in his corn-field when the messengers came to him. . . . He had many people on his farm. Some were then shearing corn, some bound it together, some drove it to the building, some unloaded it and put it in stack or barn; but the king and two men with him went sometimes into the field, sometimes to the place where the corn was put into the barn." He "attended carefully to his cattle and husbandry, and managed his housekeeping himself. He was nowise given to pomp and was rather taciturn. But he was a man of the best understanding in Norway." After hearing the messengers, he replied: "The news ye bring me is weighty, and ye bring it forward in great heat. Already before now Aasta has been taken up much with people who were not so near to her: and I see she is still of the same disposition.

She takes this up with great warmth; but can she lead her son out of the business with the same splendor she is leading him into it?"

Fate will go all lengths to aid her protégés. When the Swedish king and Olaf, king of Norway, threw lots for the possession of a farm, "the Swedish king threw two sixes, and said King Olaf need scarcely throw. He replied, while shaking the dice in his hand, 'Although there be two sixes on the dice, it would be easy, sire, for God Almighty to let them turn up in my favor.' Then he threw, and had sixes also. Now the Swedish king threw again, and had again two sixes. Olaf, king of Norway, then threw, and had six upon one dice, and the other split in two, so as to make seven eyes in all upon it; and the farm was adjudged to the king of Norway."

There was a Thorer Sel, who "was a man of low birth, but had swung himself up in the world as an active man."

There was a Northman named "Rane Thin-nose."

There is a long story about Thorer Hund's expedition to Biarmeland.

"*Ludr*, the lure," says Laing in note, "is a long tube or roll of birch-bark used as a horn by the herdboys in the mountains of Norway."

There was a "Thorer the Low."

There was a giant of a man named Ganka-Thorer and his brother, who joined King Olaf's army. The king inquired if they were Christians.

"Ganka-Thorer replies, that he is neither Christian nor heathen. 'I and my comrades have no faith but on

ourselves, our strength, and the luck of victory; and with this faith we slip through sufficiently well.'

"The king replies, 'A great pity it is that such brave slaughtering fellows do not believe in Christ their Creator.'

"Thorer replies, 'Is there any Christian man, king, in thy following, who stands so high in the air as we two brothers?'"

In King Olaf's last battle, he "hewed at Thorer Hund, and struck him across the shoulders; but the sword would not cut, and it was as if dust flew from his reindeer-skin coat." There are some verses about it. But Thorer, having had a hand in the death of the king, left the country. "He went all the way to Jerusalem, and many people say he never came back."

*Poeta nascitur non fit*, but under what conditions is the poet born? Perchance there is such a thing as a perpetual propagation or reproduction of the human without any recreation, as all botanists assert respecting plants, and as Meyer in particular concerning lichens, who says that "the pulverulent matter of Lichens is that which is subject to this kind of indefinite propagation, while the sporules lying in the shields are the only part that will really multiply the species."

Every gardener practices budding and grafting, but only Van Mons and his equals cultivate seedlings and produce new and valuable varieties. The genius is a seedling, often precocious or made to bear fruit early, as Van Mons treated his pears. The common man is the Baldwin, propagated by mere offshoots or repetitions of the parent stock. At least, if all men are to be

regarded as seedlings, the greater part are exceedingly like the parent stock.

The slope from the last generation to this seems steeper than any part of history. I hear with surprise this afternoon that the ox-wagon was rarely seen fifty years ago; they used the ox-cart here almost exclusively then, even to team wood to Boston.

The law requires wood to be four feet long from the middle of the carf to the middle of the carf, yet the honest deacon and farmer directs his hired men to cut his wood "four feet a little scant." He does it as naturally as he breathes.

We love to see nature clad, whether in earth or a human body. Nobody likes to set his house under that part of the hill where the sod is broken and the sand is flowing.

#### P. M.—To Flint's Pond.

The last two or three days have been *among* the coldest in the winter, though not so cold as a few weeks ago. I notice, in the low ground covered with bushes near Flint's Pond, many little rabbit-paths in the snow, where they have travelled in each other's tracks, or many times back and forth, six inches wide. This, too, is probably their summer habit. The rock by the pond is remarkable for its umbilicaria (?).

I saw a mole (?) run along under the bank by the edge of the pond, but it was only by watching long and sharply that I glimpsed him now and then, he ran so close to the ground and under rather than over anything, as roots and beds of leaves and twigs, and yet

without making any noise. No wonder that we so rarely see these animals, though their tracks are so common. I have been astonished to observe before, after holding them in my hand, how quickly they will bury themselves and glide along just beneath the surface, whatever it may be composed of, — grass or leaves or twigs or earth or snow. So some men are sly and subterranean in their ways, and skulk, though often they raise a mound of earth or snow above their backs, which betrays rather than conceals them. For privacy they prefer to travel in a gallery like the mole, though it sometimes happens that it is arched above the ground when they think themselves deep in the sod. The mole goes behind and beneath, rather than before and above.

*Feb. 21.* "As fat as a hen in the forehead," — a saying which I heard my father use this morning.

*Feb. 22.* Went to Plymouth to lecture or preach all day.

*Bacomyces roseus* (βαύς, small, and μύκης, a fungus).

Saw in Plymouth, near Billington Sea, the *Prinos glaber*, or evergreen winterberry. It must be the same with the black-berried bush behind Provincetown.

A mild, misty day. The red (?) oaks about Billington Sea fringed with usneas, which in this damp air appear in perfection. The trunks and main stems of the trees have, as it were, suddenly leaved out in the winter, — a very lively light green, — and these ringlets and ends of usnea are so expanded and puffed out

with light and life, with their reddish or rosaceous fruit, it is a true lichen day. They take the place of leaves in the winter. The clusters dripping with moisture, expanded as it were by electricity, sometimes completely investing the stem of the tree.

I understood that there were two only of the sixth generation from the Pilgrims still alive (in Plymouth?).

Every man will take such views as he can afford to take. Views one would think were the most expensive guests to entertain. I perceive that the reason my neighbor cannot entertain certain views is the narrow limit within which he is obliged to live, on account of the smallness of his means. His instinct tells him that it will not do to relax his hold here and take hold where he cannot keep hold.

*Feb. 24.* P. M. — Railroad causeway.

I am reminded of spring by the quality of the air. The cock-crowing and even the telegraph harp prophesy it, though the ground is for the most part covered with snow. It is a natural resurrection, an experience of immortality. Observe the poplar's swollen buds and the brightness of the willow's bark.<sup>1</sup>

The telegraph harp reminds me of Anacreon. That is the glory of Greece, that we are reminded of her only when in our best estate, our elysian days, when our senses are young and healthy again. I could find a name for every strain or intonation of the harp from one or other of the Grecian bards. I often hear Mimnermus, often Menander.

<sup>1</sup> Probably not.

I am too late by a day or two for the sand foliage on the east side of the Deep Cut. It is glorious to see the soil again, here where a shovel, perchance, will enter it and find no frost. The frost is partly come out of this bank, and it is become dry again in the sun.

The very sound of men's work reminds, advertises, me of the coming of spring. As I now hear at a distance the sound of the laborer's sledge on the rails.

The *empressement* of a little dog when he starts any wild thing in the woods! The woods ring with his barking as if the tragedy of Actæon were being acted over again.

Talked with two men and a boy fishing on Fair Haven, just before sunset. (Heard the dog bark in Baker's wood as I came down the brook.) They had caught a fine parcel of pickerel and perch. The perch especially were full of spawn. The boy had caught a large bream which had risen to the surface, in his hands. They had none of them ever seen one before in the winter, though they sometimes catch chivins. They had also kicked to death a muskrat that was crossing the southwest end of the pond on the snow. They told me of two otters being killed in Sudbury this winter, beside some coons near here.

As we grow older, is it not ominous that we have more to write about evening, less about morning? We must associate more with the early hours.

Feb. 26. The east side of Deep Cut nearly dry; sand has ceased flowing; west side just beginning. Now

begin to see the *Cladonia rangiferina* ("reindeer moss") in the dry pastures. Observed for the first time on and about Bear Hill in Lincoln the *Parmelia conspersa* (?), "greenish straw-colored," and what I suppose is *P. saxatilis*, "glaucous-cinereous." The *P. conspersa* is a very handsome and memorable lichen, which every child has admired. I love to find it where the rocks will split into their laminae so that I can easily carry away a specimen. The low hills in the northeast beyond Bedford, seen from Bear Hill about 4.30 P. M., were remarkably dark blue, much more blue than the mountains in the northwest. The sky was in great part concealed by white clouds. Had this blue the same cause with the blue in the crevices of the snow?

Returned across Flint's Pond and the wood-lot, where some Irishman must have tried his first experiment in chopping, his first winter, where the trees were hacked off two feet from the ground, as if with a hatchet, — standing on every side of the tree by turns, and crossing the carl a hundred ways. The owner can commonly tell when an Irishman has trespassed on his wood-lot.

We are told to-day that civilization is making rapid progress; the tendency is ever upward; substantial justice is done even by human courts; you may trust the good intentions of mankind. We read to-morrow in the newspapers that the French nation is on the eve of going to war with England to give employment to her army. What is the influence of men of principle, or how numerous are they? How many moral teachers has society? This Russian war is popular. Of course

so many as she has will resist her. How many resist her? How many have I heard speak with warning voice? utter wise warnings? The preacher's standard of morality is no higher than that of his audience. He studies to conciliate his hearers and never to offend them. Does the threatened war between France and England evince any more enlightenment than a war between two savage tribes, as the Iroquois and the Hurons? Is it founded in better reason?

*Feb. 27.* The mosses now are in fruit — or have sent up their filaments with calyptræ.

The main river is not yet open but in very few places, but the North Branch, which is so much more rapid, is open near Tarbell's and Harrington's, where I walked to-day, and, flowing with full tide bordered with ice on either side, sparkles in the clear, cool air, — a silvery sparkle as from a stream that would not soil the sky.

Half the ground is covered with snow. It is a moderately cool and pleasant day near the end of winter. We have almost completely forgotten summer. This restless and now swollen stream has burst its icy fetters, and as I stand looking up it westward for half a mile, where it winds slightly under a high bank, its surface is lit up here and there with a fine-grained silvery sparkle which makes the river appear something celestial, — more than a terrestrial river, — which might have suggested that which surrounded the shield in Homer. If rivers come out of their icy prison thus bright and immortal, shall not I too resume my spring life with joy

and hope? Have I no hopes to sparkle on the surface of life's current?

It is worth the while to have our faith revived by seeing where a river swells and eddies about a half-buried rock, — dimples on the surface of water.

This has truly been a month of crusted snow. Now the snow-patches, which partially melt one part of the day or week, freeze at another, so that the walker traverses them with tolerable ease.

Crossed the river on ice.

To-night a circle round the moon. The buds of the aspen show a part of their down or silky catkins (?). The bank by Tarbell's road is a grand place for *Cladonia Scyphifera*<sup>1</sup> of various kinds.

*Feb. 28.* To-day it snows again, covering the ground.

To get the value of the storm we must be out a long time and travel far in it, so that it may fairly penetrate our skin, and we be as it were turned inside out to it, and there be no part in us but is wet or weather-beaten, — so that we become storm men instead of fair-weather men. Some men speak of having been wetted to the skin once as a memorable event in their lives, which, notwithstanding the croakers, they survived.

The snow is finally turned to a drenching rain.

*Feb. 29.* High winds last night and this morning, which made some tremble for their roofs and kept them awake half the night. Before which it cleared off in the night. The house shakes, and the beds and tables

<sup>1</sup> [The *Scyphifera* form a subdivision of the genus *Cladonia*.]

rock. This morning is clear and cold. Our neighbor's chimney was blown down last night.

Simplicity is the law of nature for men as well as for flowers. When the tapestry (corolla) of the nuptial bed (calyx) is excessive, luxuriant, it is unproductive. Linnæus says, "Luxuriant flowers are none natural but all monsters," and so for the most part abortive, and when *proliferous* "they but increase the monstrous deformity." "Luxurians flos tegmenta fructificationis ita multiplicat, ut essentielles equidem partes destruantur." "Oritur luxurians flos plerumque ab alimento luxuriante."

Such a flower has no true progeny and can only be *reproduced* by the humble mode of cuttings from its stem or roots. "Anthophilorum et Hortulanorum deliciae sunt flores pleni," not of nature. The fertile flowers are single, not double.

P. M. — To Pine Hill across Walden.

The high wind takes off the oak leaves. I see them scrambling up the slopes of the Deep Cut, hurry-scurry over the slippery snow-crust, like a flock of squirrels. The ice on Walden is of a dull white as I look directly down on it, but not half a dozen rods distant on every side it is a light-blue color.

For the past month there has been more sea-room in the day, without so great danger of running aground on one of those two promontories that make it arduous to navigate the winter day, the morning or the evening. It is a narrow pass, and you must go through with the tide. Might not some of my pages be called "The Short Days of Winter"?

From Pine Hill, looking westward, I see the snow-crust shine in the sun as far as the eye can reach, — snow which fell but yesterday morning. Then, before night, came the rain; then, in the night, the freezing northwest wind, and where day before yesterday was half the ground bare, is this sheeny snow-crust to-day.